

family reference framework



montréal, a city for children

Consultation Document
May 2007



MESSAGE from Gérald Tremblay



Montréal is growing with children!

We have committed ourselves to promote family life in Montréal in order to ensure that the next generation is more present than ever in Montréal.

Our goal is to provide families with an environment in which children and parents can enjoy an exceptional quality of life and flourish in an environment that is safe and pleasant from every point of view. Montréalers of all backgrounds, young and old, must be able to find housing, to move freely about the city, to take part in recreational activities and to access services that give them the desire to reach their full potential in Montréal.

In this regard, we worked closely with the boroughs, elected officials, neighbourhood organizations, citizens and families to define our directions and goals. Last fall, Montréal began mobilizing to produce its Plan d'action famille (action plan for families). Citizens, elected officials and professionals from the City joined forces to come up with a project that would benefit Montréal families. Now barely a year later, here is the result.

Starting in 2008, local action plans for families and the City's plan will be put into operation. And with that, we will be preparing the future of Montréal.

Gérald Tremblay

Mayor of Montréal

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Montréal is an exceptional place to raise a family. The goal of Montréal's action plan for families is to make this fact better known and to improve what our metropolis has to offer families. Every day, our children live and grow in vibrant neighbourhoods where everything is within walking distance. They have the opportunity to open their minds to the world in daily contact with children of different cultures. They have access to an extraordinary variety of cultural, sports and leisure activities and a wide choice of schools—all in a safe environment. Public transit, large green spaces, bike paths and a multitude of projects tied into sustainable development enable them to benefit from the advantages of city life and nature at the same time.

Montréal is truly a place to grow. To our young families, we say: "Help Montréal to grow and our city will help your children grow!"

Marie-Andrée Beaudoin

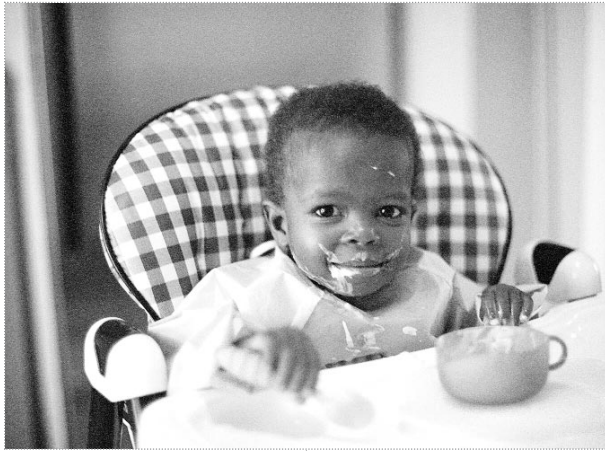
Mayor of the borough of Ahuntsic-Cartierville
Executive Committee member responsible for the family

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Beaudoin".

MESSAGE de Marie-Andrée Beaudoin

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The action plan for families project comprises three levels of documents: the reference framework, *Montréal, a city for children*; local action plans for families; and the Collective Action Plan for Families.

This version of the reference framework, *Montréal, a city for children*, is the product of an exchange between all parties—from neighbourhood offices to the committee of elected officials—who were actively involved in preparing an action plan for families for Montréal. Earlier versions helped guide the work of the borough offices that drafted or worked on drafting local action plans for families. Following public consultation, the document will be submitted to City Council for adoption in early 2008. It will then become an integral part of Montréal's action plan for families, as the official reference framework that applies to the entire City.



Why produce an action plan for families?

The Administration is committed to it.

The City administration has committed itself to adopting an action plan for families. There are several reasons for this decision, one of the main ones being to showcase the quality of life that Montréal offers families and the City's willingness to work constantly to improve it.

Montrealers are increasingly aware of the specific and invaluable support of families in building their community.

In shaking off beliefs inherited from the past, the Quiet Revolution threw into question the place and concept of family, and the birth rate in Québec dropped to the lowest in the Western world. In the last few years, the value of "the family" has reaffirmed itself: no other place exists to introduce a human being into the world and to fashion that individual into a person who can contribute to the life of the community. One fact is becoming more and more accepted: a community is a liv-

ing organism and the barometer of its overall health is its ability to perpetuate itself. The City administration has made its choice: it wants Montréal to be a city of families, a group of neighbourhoods within boroughs where it is good to live and raise children.

The population of the Island of Montréal is growing each year and this should continue until 2026. The number of residents will increase from 1,854,000 in 2006 to more than 2,100,000 in 2026, unlike the rest of Québec, where the population has started to decline. But we want to do better and, in particular, to enable more and more young Montrealers to start families in Montréal.

For several years now, demographers have observed a declining population in the regions of Québec. This trend, which appears to be inescapable, will reach Montréal only in 2026. And the aging of the population will occur more gradually in the city

than in the regions. The City administration, in collaboration with several research experts in Montréal, reflected on this state. Each year, tens of thousands of persons move to the big city and just as many people leave it. But what needs to be recognized is that a good portion of these annual departures translates into increased suburbanization and the progressive erosion of Montréal's middle class. Too few young couples are choosing to establish their families here. By deciding to sustain Montréal's status as a city of families, the City administration is calling on the community to act in unison to strengthen and develop a quality of life that will support a population in which a sufficiently large middle class can fulfill its role, side by side with a less affluent population. The City administration is also proposing that collective action be taken to support young Montrealers in their choice of settling their families in Montréal.



1

Some boroughs have action plans for families, but the adoption of an action plan for families for the entire City should send a clear signal and find an echo in all sectors of our community.

Lachine, Saint-Laurent and Verdun have had a family policy for more than 10 years; Outremont and Anjou recently adopted their policy, while Rosemont-La Petite-Patrie and LaSalle began drafting a policy in 2006. Montréal's first action plan for families will involve all its units and call on the community to work together to make Montréal a city of families. The plan will showcase the thousands of daily actions by community organizations, shops and businesses, public service networks, the City core and the boroughs on behalf of families and will enable us to make improvements.

Imagining—Building Montréal 2025, a plan for the economic future of Montréal, can only be realized by a population within which age groups support themselves through intergenerational exchange and cultural integration: in areas of energy, learning, development of ideas and development of businesses.

Montréal has a duty to itself and to all of Québec. As Québec's economic heart and the seat of a concentration of activities in leading sectors, Montréal necessarily competes globally in innovation. The city needs a young, creative population that is constantly renewing itself. This will not only affect Montrealers' standard of living in the decades to come, but also the standard of living of Quebecers in all the regions of the province. We have the responsibility to maintain an optimal population level in Montréal and to foster the growth of a young, well-educated future generation that is proud to identify itself with Montréal.



the issues

**Fact: Montréal is a city
of 255,000 families
and 431,000 children.**

More than one-quarter million Montréal families with children (255,405 in 2006) account for 20% of all families in Québec, and 431,515 Montréal children (2006 figures) account for 19.6% of all young Quebecers. In 2005–2006, 241,792 Montréal children represented 22% of the province's student population. Assuming that these trends continue, the Institut de la Statistique du Québec estimates that, within a growing population, the number of young people will increase slightly between now and 2026 on the Island of Montréal, contrary to what is expected in most regions of Québec.

Like all cities in the province, Montréal has a high number of single-parent families, which represent 35.3% of all families with children. Women head 84% of these families. The highest concentration is in six boroughs, where single-parent families account for 40.2 to 44.5% of families with children. Lastly, in certain city blocks (census units of Statistics Canada that include 400 to 700 persons—a block of homes), the concentration of single-parent families ranges from 60% to 70% and, in 17 of these census units, the rate climbs to 100%.

There are several hundred thousand reasons, therefore, to increase efforts to create a choice place for families to grow in the kind of society that Montréalers want and that the City wants to promote—a society founded on the values of collaboration, solidarity, public spirit and belonging... values to which we subscribe in our family lives.

In spite of this large, varied and rich presence of families in Montréal, the City has trouble maintaining its relative demographic weight within the metropolitan community, in spite of support of immigration from abroad. Its capacity to retain and sustain young families is weakened by, among other things, the increase in real estate prices and the costs of housing and by the move to the suburbs. As well, there are current unfavourable perceptions of the advantages of family life in the Montréal milieu, in particular in the area of safety—in spite of statistics that show a net decrease in crimes. These perceptions are, unfortunately, widespread in the real estate sector. In the five years between 2001–2002 and 2005–2006, Montréal recorded a net loss of 52,000 persons between the ages of 25 and 39 and of 32,000 chil-

dren ages 14 years and under, who went to live in the suburbs north and south of the city. The presence of young families is necessary for Montréal to maintain a demographic dynamism and to ensure a balance between the age groups.



2

the issues

Mainstay: identification with Montréal

A recent survey conducted by the Conseil jeunesse de Montréal highlighted the extent to which young Montrealers identify with their city. The Conseil jeunesse sought the opinion of both young people and the population at large about the attachment of youth to Montréal. Other research has shown that those individuals who were born in Montréal are significantly more likely to want to live in or move back to the city. We can therefore tap into a strong sense of belonging, which, in many cases, has deep historical roots, and work to encourage it even more.

Building on our assets: recognizing, consolidating and developing them

Montréal is endowed with valuable assets for family living. While we are fully aware of our shortcomings, we need to remember that Montrealers are winners in many ways. This awareness should serve to inspire our action plans and showcase the strengths of our urban environment.

Quality of life

Montréal's quality of life is regularly recognized as among the best in the world and in the top group of cities.

High-quality and varied housing inventory

From heritage buildings to contemporary designs, Montréal has housing and properties to suit every taste. In spite of perceptions to the contrary, large segments of Montréal's housing inventory are well-adapted to the needs of parents and children. Two-storey houses and single-family units, row houses, duplexes and other "plexes" have direct access to courtyards and gardens in vibrant and well-located neighbourhoods. Nonetheless, construction of new residential projects remains inadequate to meet the needs of families.



Lively, nearby service cores

Urban cores offer an array of commercial, institutional, community and municipal services in close proximity to residential streets and accessible on foot or by bicycle. Developed around former village centres or more recent urban creations, these shopping and restaurant areas have public services, such as CLSCs, grafted onto them. Community agencies are headquartered here. The borough's reception and information rooms and, sometimes, the mayor's office are located here. The church and church hall continue to be welcoming places for young and old alike to meet and enjoy social activities. The school, swimming pool, library and community centre are less than a block away. More and more, these urban cores or "village cores," as some refer to them, offer a reason to identify with a particular neighbourhood and have become the pride of residents. Several of these cores are of historical value, but what truly impresses is their vitality and constant ability to adapt to change.

Public transit system

We have a well-designed public transit system that is a cut above others in North America. The Montréal metro is among the most attractive and efficient in the world, but after more than 40 years of service, major investments are needed in the next few years to upgrade the service. The transportation plan, which was tabled for consultation in the summer of 2007, addresses the need for improvement and expansion of a public transit system as an essential condition for the sustainable development of Montréal.

Exceptional cultural offerings

Montréal is a world-class cultural metropolis. Its broad diversity and openness to the world contribute to making the city a place where creative talent is valued—an educational space in its own right. Montréal has a wealth of cultural offerings whose originality and quality are especially inviting to families.

Outstanding sports and leisure facilities

An Olympic host city with infrastructures prized by the international sports elite, Montréal also has an array of sports facilities that all citizens can use, including 94 swimming pools, 36 arenas, 40 sports centres, 200 outdoor skating rinks and more than 1,200 sports fields of different kinds. Whether for playing sports competitively or for pure pleasure, there is something for everyone.

Network of parks and green spaces

Some 1,000 neighbourhood and area parks provide a variety of spaces and activities to meet the needs of the families that visit them daily. Our 17 large parks are pleasantly located in a variety of landscapes— island, mountain, woodland and riverbank—that are accessible to all. The collection of parks, created over the last 25 years, should be a source of great pride and a reason to identify even more with the city. Montréal families already enjoy the parks and they still hold great attraction for young Montrealers.

Network of bike paths

With its 400 km of bike paths, Montréal is well placed among bicycle-friendly cities. Residents can use the network to cycle to and from work and school, enjoy a family outing or take an early evening ride with the children. The City's transportation plan outlines its intentions to develop this network.

Very real safety of our streets and neighbourhoods

The level of security that Montrealers enjoy is unmatched in North America. The City and its partner agencies in the boroughs work together to reduce sources of insecurity: improving traffic control, applying zero tolerance to unruly behaviour in public, controlling street gangs, operating the programme Montréal.net and removing graffiti.



A generally healthier environment

Recent studies have shown that urban centres, especially those that encourage walking and cycling, create a set of conditions that significantly promote better health. Residents are more likely to walk to work, school and recreational centres and to do their errands. Better still: post-Kyoto, urban centres are seen as future champions of the environment. Recycling efforts and efforts to curb greenhouse gas emissions are capturing the imagination of increasing generations who share these values.

Cultural diversity

The City's cultural diversity is a source of human development and wealth for those who live here. Montrealers see the city as a bridge to a broad diversity of cultures and lifestyles. For more than a century, city residents have experienced successive waves of immigration. It is normal to go through a stage of mistrust before developing an appreciation of our differences. Today, Montrealers view this experience as an opportunity to be open to the world and to enrich their lives. Many parents choose to live in the city because

of the contact with diversity in all its forms—racial, religious and cultural—and because of the valuable educational environment it creates. As one mother put it, "After growing up in the heart of downtown, my daughters are ready to face the world."

Partnership networks

Generations of productive and generous people have woven the fabric of the community agencies that work each day to better the lives of Montréal families. These networks are everywhere in Montréal and have developed a wealth of experience and know-how. They are the borough's lead partners in assisting families, and vital partners in maintaining our quality of life.

City of knowledge

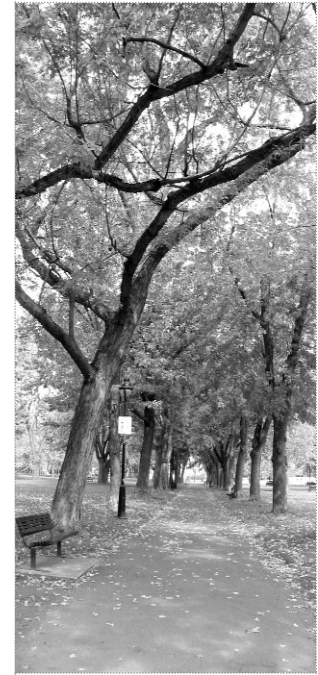
For a city its size, Montréal has an outstanding range of educational services. Diversity and quality are the order of the day—from child care services through to CEGEP and four universities. The public and private school systems compete resourcefully to provide vocational training and general education. Completing the picture are the City's libraries and a wide variety of day camps.

An international city

Most young people who pursue their studies recognize the importance of joining international exchange and cooperation networks. As a recognized international city, Montréal offers them an entry point into these networks and, subsequently, a faster track to an international career.

To sum up...

These assets are part of what makes us a city and a human community. But few Montrealers are sufficiently aware of them, and most stakeholders undervalue them. We should be proud of what we have and use these assets as a foundation for our action plans. We need to avoid analysis paralysis and move ahead by leaps and bounds. Everything that makes our city a model of quality of life needs to be strengthened and supported by each and every one of us, in order to ensure that these assets grow and keep us competitive... and that this wealth is spread more equitably between neighbourhoods.



**A challenge—not just for
the City but for the whole
community**



Because families are the nucleus of the community, we are issuing challenges to the entire community to help make Montréal a city of families. This call to action is already contained in the provisions of the *Montréal Charter of Rights and Responsibilities*, which sets out to make us all responsible for our common destiny.

Housing

Montréal has a long history of intervening in the housing field. The City's sustained efforts in the areas of social, community and affordable private housing, coupled with an ongoing dialogue with all the stakeholders, including promoters, contribute to the vitality of a remarkable socially diverse city. Yet the housing situation is still in need of specific actions to keep and attract families and to build their loyalty. Achieving these goals will require imagination and the mobilization of the players in all sectors.

Beyond governments, whose investments we hope will continue, how can the private sector—mortgage lenders, insurers, promoters and builders, and, why not, employers—put their shoulder to the grindstone to help Montréal families? We are issuing the challenge!

The City has a complementary role to play with the private sector to support the creation of diversified housing, to improve the existing housing inventory and to publicize the assets that Montréal has to offer families. Regarding home-ownership promotion, the City's support takes the form of a contribution to financial assistance programs and support to the creation of affordable projects (such as the SHDM's Accès-Condos projects). The City suggests pilot projects, disseminates innovative experiments adapted to families' expectations and offers land sites on which to build these projects.

The City also plays a role in maintaining a fair asking price so that products are accessible to families. The Québec programs that it manages—and to which it contributes—support the creation of social, community and private housing at affordable prices. Through these programs, the City ensures that it attracts a family clientele, in particular into those sectors with public transit and nearby schools.

The City has taken a resolute stand in attacking the lack of cleanliness in too many housing units by adopting a bylaw with teeth. This situation will require many years of sustained efforts.

In order to be a city of families, you first need to house families. We are issuing this challenge to everyone. Its success will depend on the generous collaboration and imagination of all partners.

Service cores are part of the identity of most Montréal neighbourhoods and an integral part of Montréal's housing project proposal. The individuals, businesses and associations that invigorate these cores and help them grow must be convinced of the role that this collective wealth plays in the quality of life of families. For many parents and children, these service cores are the main reason that they love their neighbourhood and identify with it. The collective challenge being issued to all decision makers is to work over time to preserve and grow these cores.

Transportation

The main challenges for the community include a good public transit system that can serve employment centres and the inner boroughs, a fully developed network of bike paths and a pedestrian-friendly public space. These challenges are issued to the community as a whole because they involve the collective investment of funds and a reassessment of individual habits. A good transit system teaches children behaviour for a lifetime because it actively integrates lifestyle habits with the responsible use of shared resources. A good transit system gives teens the freedom to travel around the city and peace of mind to parents who no longer have to worry about their “teen” behind the wheel of a car at night.



Sense of security

There are several things that we can do collectively to ensure a sense of security.

The boroughs’ family task force have raised the importance of examining our behaviour as drivers. Data prepared by the Service de police of the Ville de Montréal suggests that reducing speed and driving more prudently would be the greatest contribution we could make to ensuring parents with young children, as well as pedestrians and cyclists, feel safer. The City has already taken action by deploying 133 additional traffic officers. But there is also a collective challenge: to seriously question our driving habits in town.

The second challenge is to address the lack of civility, in particular in public places such as parks. Youth in several parks have already become aware of the presence, on a rotational basis, of city employees (police officers, bike patrollers, blue collar workers, leisure activities animators, as well as visiting youngsters from daycare centres accompanied by their animators). This presence has served as a deterrent when needed.

The City, together with many community agencies, has made considerable strides to reduce the phenomenon of street gangs. Here again, success depends on collective action in the form of a challenge to the families themselves. The community is standing with them to help these young people, who are children in trouble.

Lastly, fighting for cleanliness in public spaces and against graffiti also has a role in creating a sense of security. This is also something we can work collectively.

Maintaining, strengthening and developing our assets

Like all human beings, we tend to undervalue what we have. We need to recognize all the assets that have made Montréal a city of families. We need to acknowledge who we are in order to develop these strengths. Each of the assets will require us to continue deploying energy.

Parks and green spaces

One important asset for the community and families is a diversified network of neighbourhood parks and green spaces that provide daily opportunities to relax or to engage in physical activity. Continued efforts are needed to improve these spaces so that they fill the need for contact with nature and for a place to meet and take part in those activities that people ask for most often.

definition

**What sort of family
do we mean?**

Given the above and the critical challenges facing our community in the future, Montréal's family policy has adopted a definition of the family that allots a large place to children.

The family is a grouping of people living under the same roof, in a single-family house or dwelling. We could call it the "resident" family. The definition includes all current forms of the resident family and in no way indicates a preference for any of them: *Two-parent families with one or more children, which still make up the statistical majority (two-thirds) and lone-parent families primarily headed by a woman, which are sufficiently widespread to make up the other third. These various forms have different faces. Many recently immigrated members of ethno-cultural communities live in large families but there are also different kinds of blended families that change over time. There are families comprising one adult, sometimes a senior, who is in charge of a child, families with no biological connection and same-sex families with children.* Basically, the family our action plan refers to is made up of one child, and one adult who assumes responsibility for it.

But the Montréal family is more than that. It includes uncles, aunts, grandparents and older brothers and sisters who have left home but who remain supportive and provide occasional or regular assistance to the parents of the "resident" family in their role as father and mother. This family network mobilizes around the needs of the children. Our definition, therefore, includes the "family network" in the role it assumes in relation to the resident family, as a support in raising the children and young adults.

We chose this definition because it reflects our realities and is the one used in policies that the boroughs have drafted or are in the process of drafting, and because it allows us to prepare specific actions that are likely to bear fruit.



3

definition

Goals of Montréal's action plan for families

To position “family” value at the heart of all actions taken by City administration and by the boroughs and to communicate to families by all available means—public documents, Internet portal, bulletins, services and facilities—that Montréal considers families to be its prime builders.

The intent of the plan is to ensure not only that new actions are taken but also that the “why” and especially the “for whom” of these actions are always clear.

Strengthen and expand the quality of life of families currently living in Montréal.

The plan’s main beneficiaries should be those families that currently live in Montréal. The City administration is concerned on a daily basis with maintaining and improving the quality of life of these families. This should continue and be reinforced by action plans contained in this policy. The local composition of the population, the marked presence of ethnocultural communities and that of single-parent families, and other local characteristics suggest that city services may need to be adapted

to family diversity. In the case of single-parent families, which are significantly more numerous in Montréal (35.3%) than in the regions (26%), a link can be made with a measure in the Québec government’s draft policy on gender equality (recently made public), which uses gender-based analysis (GBA) to assess to what extent services, as scheduled and structured, take into account these family groups.

Set a “Montréal Family Target” to be met between now and 2012, in particular by convincing more and more young Montrealers to make the city their home

Each of the local action plans for families drawn up by the boroughs, in partnership with the local community, have a set target: the number of resident families to maintain or reach by 2012. Using a trend observed in the 1996 and 2001 census figures, the boroughs each identified a target number of families for 2012, the existing assets that could be used as support and priority actions that should be taken. This added up to the target city.

Over the long term, attract, retain and build the loyalty of a sufficient number of families in Montréal to maintain a healthy human ecosystem

In late 2006/early 2007, the City brought together experts who helped clarify this goal. While it was apparent that there is no ideal size for a city and that cities that saw their size greatly diminish were still able to maintain an exceptional quality of life for their residents, it was equally apparent to these experts that any substantial decrease in the population of Montréal would necessarily bring with it economic decline and poverty for the City and the province a whole. The reason was that the cities that managed to maintain their quality of life in spite of significant losses of population did so because they were regional in nature and because their country’s metropolis retained or increased its population.

Encourage intergenerational ties

The primary support for a family with children usually comes from the “family network,” in particular the grandparents. Their role can never be emphasized enough. This fact needs to be taken seriously and turned

into a goal that can bring about all kinds of realignments in municipal action and in the action of the private partners of a family shift. For example, seniors’ residences are often located on the periphery of neighbourhoods where families live, rather than downtown. Is this the best approach? Should zoning be used to encourage intergenerational homes? Parents are influential in helping their children to buy a house. Could this intergenerational solidarity be a solution for the future? Montréal “plexes” in several neighbourhoods already offer this possibility.

Who are the plan's main beneficiaries?



Families currently living in Montréal: the City administration wants to send the message that their presence is not only recognized but is vital to our common future.

By maintaining services and public funding, Montréal wants to continue creating a thriving environment for these families. A large percentage of fairly simple measures have been proposed in local action plans for families to carry this message. Several recent directional documents and actions plans and those in the process of being drawn up are taking the City as a whole in this direction in an effort to meet the specific needs of families.

> **Imagining—Building Montréal 2025** aims to make Montréal an outstanding place to live and to provide more quality jobs

> The **Stratégie municipale en habitation** confirms the administration's desire to make Montréal an inclusive society

> The **Strategy for the Inclusion of Affordable Housing** seeks to encourage social diversity

> The **plan d'urbanisme** for the City and each of the boroughs' local chapters emphasizes the quality of the living environment

> The **Cultural Development Policy** seeks to make Montréal a cultural metropolis

> The **Politique de paix et de sécurité** sets out to build a sense of security and safety in Montréal

> The **Charte du piéton** proposes a new sharing of the road to make walking more appealing, safer and more enjoyable

> The **Plan de transport** (transportation plan) emphasizes efficiency by spotlighting public transit and the value of active ways of getting from place to place, in particular by walking and cycling

> The **Montréal Charter of Rights and Responsibilities** sets out the rights of families, women and the handicapped

> **Montréal's first strategic plan for sustainable development**

> **Ville de Montréal's 2007 Action Plan** (deals with universal accessibility)

> The **Heritage Policy**

> The **Politique de l'arbre** (Montréal tree policy)

> The **Politique de la protection et de mise en valeur des milieux naturels** (policy on protecting and promoting natural environments)

The City proposes a strategy of retaining and building loyalty among Montréal households for itself and its partners.

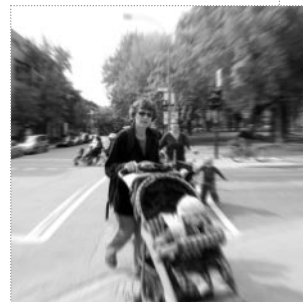
Montréal has the main pool of people who are likely to settle in the city. We need to aim our efforts at four target groups:

> Young people, 25 to 34 years of age, who have to be “hooked in”: they might be Montrealers or immigrants or graduates recently arrived from abroad or from other regions of Québec and who have come to Montréal in the hopes of pursuing their studies or working several years in the city. Some have already started a family, and many are on the verge of doing so.

> The contingent of 35- to 44-year-olds whose loyalty needs to be built up: they already have one child, sometimes two, and have several reasons for wanting to move, in particular the need for a larger dwelling, the choice of school or the impression that the quality of family life is better off the Island.

> The families of recent immigrants: the quality of life in the neighbourhood where they first settle needs to be promoted, so that parents and children choose to stay permanently in Montréal.

> Montrealers by day, that is, people who work in Montréal and often use services and leisure facilities but who do not live here: estimates put their number at approximately 300,000. By choosing a lifestyle, instead of a house in the suburbs, they need to look at the extra commute time—time lost to family—the added expense of a second car and the stress of it all.



players

**Who are the players
and what are their roles?**

Local communities: administration and civil society

Borough administrations and civil society partners have leading roles to play. They are called upon from the very start to join in the effort. To succeed, action plans must, above all, be community projects. Everyone has a part to play in reaching the goals. Boroughs will be doing their share, but as part of a common effort. Associations, businesses and stores are also being called upon to do their share. For example, some stores in Montréal have a corner where children can play while their parents shop. Another example of community effort is integrated city revitalization projects in which local leaders become involved in relaunching an entire neighbourhood. Finally, associations may also lead the battle to make people feel safe because they know how to disseminate information to their members that tells the real story and encourages a positive perception.

Community groups and multi-network round tables, each in their own way, occupy a major place in supporting families and enriching family life in Montréal.

Montréal community and its networks of partners

A similar collaboration between partners is needed to address major issues involving the entire City, such as housing costs, safety, transportation, the environment and culture. Community network, business networks and merchants associations, as well as major Montréal institutions, are invited to make a commitment to support the family.

Schools and the health care network

Montréal's schools and CLSCs play a very important role in local dynamics. Within the framework of this draft policy, the hope is that CLSCs and neighbourhood schools can deepen their collaboration at the local level to create a synergy in the community that encourages families. Numerous ties already exist, but there is still room for more.

The Québec government

For more than 15 years now, successive Québec governments have maintained the cap and called on municipalities to adopt action plans for families. Montréal is benefiting from this help in formulating policy and preparing action plans. Other networks that depend on government funding, such as the school system and the health care system, also have a role to play in building a city of families. Montréal depends on active collaboration to do this. The City will be putting efforts in the areas that are under its jurisdiction.

However, the Québec government is a major player through its constitutional responsibilities and the action of its networks.

In the housing area, the government must continue to invest in the programs that Montréal needs (including home ownership funding, social and affordable housing support, help with renovations and so forth). It should also respect and support the directions taken by the City in favour of social diversity and a balanced approach to meeting various needs.



Schools

Raising a child also involves choosing a school. Montréal schools have a student population that comes from a broad diversity of places. Schools also reflect neighbourhood values and problems. This is a true asset.

Daycare centres

There are a great number of daycare centres in Montréal, but more facilities will be needed to meet the demands of family life. Boroughs are doing everything in their power to provide these facilities, but government funding remains key.

Health care and social services

The proximity and accessibility of health care services are pluses for Montréal families. These pluses need to be preserved and expanded.

Employment

The variety of jobs available in Montreal is another plus to living on the Island. But all public institutions, starting with governments, can do more to support innovation and employment.

Integration and retention of immigrants

The current formula of Québec's regionalization of immigration policy, which seems to pit Montréal against the regions as a place for immigrants to settle, is unnecessarily antagonistic and should make way to more research into how best to integrate immigrants.



duration, support and timelines

A long-term action plan

A local family office and lasting alliances

Our environment is rapidly evolving. No action plan can hope to guide development for the next 10 years. Hence the reason, from the very beginning, for establishing family offices in each of the boroughs to act permanent places to evaluate and adjust the action plans on a yearly basis. Year after year with time, the family offices will prove their effectiveness.

A City family office

A permanent family office has been set up and includes a policy maker, civil society partners and an administrator to ensure follow-up.

Yearly goals starting in 2008

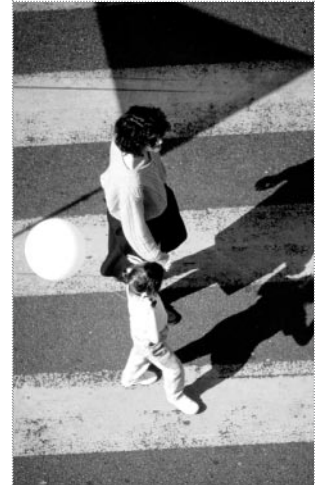
The action plans are based on yearly goals starting in 2008.

Implementation without added funds

The action plans consist of simple measures whose costs should be absorbed within the current operating and capital budgets. The approach is meant to be realistic and, at the same time, to encourage creativity. There is no point in beginning to collectively draw up a wish list that we do not have the means to implement. On the other hand, implementing many of the actions can be done at no cost. So why not start with these? In this way, we can be guaranteed results. And, little by little, as the earlier priorities are achieved, larger-scale projects can support the action plan for families, in particular through the three-year fixed assets program.

Yearly reporting

Success will depend on the continued mobilization of players and regular yearly reporting by the borough council (for local action plans) and the City council (for the collective action plan).



duration, support and timelines

Development support and responsibilities

Responsibility for drafting the Plan d'action famille (action plan for families) was entrusted to Marie-Andrée Beaudoin, Executive Committee member and mayor of the borough of Ahuntsic-Cartierville, in collaboration with Jane Cowell-Poitras, associate adviser and city councillor for the borough of Lachine, who has extensive experience with the action plan for families. Administrative responsibility was entrusted to Rachel Laperrière, assistant director general of the Service du développement culturel, de la qualité du milieu de vie et de la diversité ethnoculturelle.

Various committees were formed to carry out the mandate: a committee of elected officials (one elected official per borough designated by the borough mayor), a steering committee made up of, among others, four borough directors and representatives of corporate services, the Conférence régionale des élus and the Carrefour action municipale et famille. This initiative was also aided by two advisory committees: the Comité Famille of the Conférence régionale des élus acting as external adviser, and an internal committee comprised of City staff. The Conseil jeunesse de Montréal, which authored several opinions tied closely to the issues dealt with by the Family Action Committee, also collaborated on this initiative. All the work was coordinated and supported by a team from the Montréal Summit Secretariat.







montréal, a city for children

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