

Projet de plan de développement de Montréal –

Mémoire déposé par

RÉSEAU¹ pour la stratégie urbaine de la communauté autochtone de Montréal

[Le texte ci-dessous est disponible en français selon le besoin.]



Context

The NETWORK's goal is to improve the quality of life of Aboriginal people living in the greater Montreal area through a coordinated and concerted approach that will align our collective interests in supporting locally driven initiatives. The mandate of the NETWORK is to act as the decisional body and provide opportunities for organizations serving the Aboriginal people in the greater Montreal area to broaden their achievements by – and create measurable and sustainable improvements in – the following: sharing information and transferring knowledge about Aboriginal people's needs – including available services, useful resources, and potential opportunities; prioritizing needs; developing joint projects that address gaps in and duplication of services; and creating and strengthening work relationships among partners.

The *Projet de plan de développement de Montréal* was brought to the attention of the RÉSEAU by Élise Naud, Office de consultation publique de Montréal. Ms. Naud requested a memoire commenting on the content of the plan, more specifically in relation to social issues and the Aboriginal ²population in Montreal. The following comments, supported by the non-governmental members of the NETWORK's Steering Committee, were produced by Allison Reid and Vivien Carli (members and consultants for the RÉSEAU), with input from the YMCA (Y du centre, Montréal).

Comments

1. Lack of emphasis on socio-community development, and lack of recognition of the needs of marginalized populations in urban planning and the public sphere

Surprisingly, the plan has a small section tailored to the importance of addressing social issues in Montreal (see section: *Intervenir en priorité dans les secteurs défavorisés*, p.71), and completely lacks a discussion on the integration of social needs in urban planning and development. Further, this section addresses highly complex issues in a simplified and vague manner.

¹ English: Montreal Urban Aboriginal Community Strategy Network (NETWORK)

² It is important to note that the Aboriginal population in Montreal is highly diverse (First Nations, Inuit, Métis, status, non-status, etc.) though for sake of simplicity the term 'Aboriginal' is being used.

It is therefore being suggested that the section title *Intervenir en priorité dans les secteurs défavorisés* should be changed to 'advancing the well-being and social development' in order to focus on the promoting improvements rather than negatively labelling marginalized groups.

The section should also be expanded to highlight more in detail some of the key issues in Montreal and how different groups (e.g. youth) are particularly affected. The section should also refer to how the city is dealing with the marginalization of specific groups like the Aboriginal population.

The plan should also outline more in depth how the city aims to address social issues and how the city will work in collaboration with local organizations to do so. It should also refer to the importance of local partnerships to address the social issues and to promote the efficacy and efficiency of service delivery and use of resources. Regarding the diversity of social issues, and the groups and needs involved, the plan should place some emphasis on the importance of a tailored approach when finding solutions. For example, it has been shown that a culturally appropriate approach to service delivery and program development is crucial for improving the well-being of certain individuals within the Aboriginal population.

The following statement is supported: "la Ville a récemment fait valoir la nécessité de mieux intervenir face à cette situation et de mieux coordonner l'aide spécifique à apporter à cette population démunie, notamment par les services sociaux et de la santé" (p.71), particularly in reference to homeless population in the city. However, it is also being recommended to expand this statement to include the support for prevention services for aboriginal people arriving in Montreal. It is important to note that the Aboriginal population in Montreal is the fastest growing out of all Canadian cities (Census 2006) and key groups³ have noted a significant growth in the number of aboriginal people and level of poverty and homelessness in Montreal, in part due to the lack of support services for new arrivals.

2. Lack of reference to the Aboriginal population*

While the *Plan de développement* does not touch on any specific cultural or ethnic group, it is being suggested that the plan make reference to the Aboriginal population in Montreal, and that it is in fact growing⁴. The reason for this reference is that this population represents the First Peoples of Canada and that Montreal is officially Mohawk, First Nations territory, therefore the reference is out of respect and recognition. Most Montreal residents are unaware of this piece of history, and therefore including the information in the plan is a means of building awareness in the hope of improving cohabitation and relations between populations.

In addition, considering that the Aboriginal population in Montreal is the fastest growing out of all Canadian cities, this phenomenon should be taken into consideration in the plan as it makes reference to the changing demographics of Montreal and its impact of future police and development.

3. Cohabitation and displacement

The plan refers to the re-development and revitalization of public spaces. It is important to note that re-development and revitalization often leads to displacement of certain populations as cities gentrify and grow. This displacement often implies that social issues are not being prevented or addressed, and thus are being shifted from one area to another. The result is continued disorder and poor social cohesion in the city. The plan should therefore address how the city will prevent displacement during these events, and how the city will take the necessary measures with local partners, before, during and after all processes involving re-development and revitalization of public spaces, to ensure cohabitation. This could be included as part of the plan's principles 'Une ville inclusive et solidaire' (p.14).

³ Including Projets Autochtones du Québec, Native Women-s Shelter of Montreal, MAKIVIK Corporation

⁴ Montreal has the fastest growing Aboriginal population out of all Canadian cities.

4. Public transportation

Regarding the plan's focus on public transportation, it speaks to the "*accroissement de l'offre de services et de déplacements*" (p.26). In response to this statement, it is being suggested that a revenue based access policy be promoted. This would allow low-income and vulnerable persons to gain access to this service.

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