

Workshops 4.1 - 4.2 (and 4.4)

Citizen representation and consultation and participation mechanisms

1. THE PROPOSAL

As a vast and populous metropolis made up of many vibrant communities that are very attached to their roots, Montréal is in search of a structure that supports local dynamics and meets the needs of Montrealers in each of the boroughs where they live. The phase-in process of new City of Montréal is a change of "regime" in terms both of the division of powers and of the institutions of government themselves. At the same time, the City has to provide efficient and fair government and avoid jurisdictional conflicts. Montrealers and their elected officials are experiencing a period of adaptation and transition to a new democratic environment. Montrealers are by and large educated, skilled and forward-looking people who play an active role in the present and the future of their city. This proposal seeks to define the means whereby Montrealers assume ownership their city and feel more confident about their ability to fully exercise their rights as citizens within the institutions of municipal democracy, and to make Montréal a recognized leader in the practice of representative and participatory democracy.

1.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL

At the sectoral and borough summits, Montrealers have been very clear about their desire to contribute to the advent of the new City and play a role in its affairs. In order to do so, they have asked to be better informed about the City, its constituent parts and the way powers are divided up between the borough councils and City Council. They are also asking that their municipal institutions be more transparent. Democracy is predicated on respect for the individual, and some have insisted that services be available to them in both languages. Above all, Montrealers expect concrete measures on the part of the City and want their elected representatives to take action to foster and maintain a relationship of trust with the population.

Given these expectations and needs, the combined proposal of workshops 4.1 and 4.2 is as follows:

- a) To develop the best possible conditions for the practice of representative democracy.
- b) To institute participatory democracy in all of the City's decision-making bodies with mechanisms of consultation, participation, and follow-up that are credible, transparent and effective.
- c) Allocate a budget dedicated to the support of participatory democracy.

The points on public participation in the proposals of Workshop 4.4 (Optimal sharing of responsibilities and resources between the boroughs and the central administration) have been integrated into Goal 1.2.2 of this workshop.

1.2 GOALS AND ACTIONS

1.2.1 Goal 1: To develop the best possible conditions for the practice of representative democracy

To achieve the key objective of favouring greater participation in the democratic life of the City, concerted efforts in the direction of more equitable representation will be required. The review of the electoral map has been presented as one opportunity to more effectively structure citizen representation. Other subjects that need to be debated and acted upon include the number and role of elected officials in the boroughs, the electoral system, and the participation of generally under-represented groups of citizens such as women, members of the ethnocultural communities, young people and people with disabilities in municipal elections.

The proposed actions that relate to this goal are as follows.

ACTION 1: Initiate a discussion on the electoral system and organize a consultation under the aegis of the Office de consultation publique. The main issues to be put to public discussion are:

- the division of the territory into electoral districts and the number of voters per district.;
- the number of boroughs and the number of city councillors;
- the role and number of borough councillors;
- the procedure for appointing borough presidents;
- the electoral system;
- party financing;
- financing of candidates

- ways to make more effective use of the City's institutions.

Possible amendments to the Charter and to the Act Respecting Elections and Referendums in Municipalities/ December 2003

ACTION 2:

Promote participation by seniors, people with disabilities, people who are illiterate, young people, members of ethnocultural communities and visible minorities, as well as people with low incomes in the next general election, and adopt measures to encourage these groups to put forward candidates for office.

Adopt a concrete plan of action including:

- an arrangement for meetings between elected officials and young people at City Hall and in the schools/2002 – 2005;
- a democratic/civic education and involvement project for young people based on the "Kids Voting USA" model, developed with school boards and Mouvement Desjardins;
- setting up offices in schools and residences for the elderly to disseminate information and review electoral lists.
- within the framework of the MRCI-City of Montréal agreement and together with community organizations, carrying out information and awareness-raising projects in the boroughs;

This would involve an initial implementation of these projects in seven boroughs identified as having a strong presence of members of ethnocultural communities (CDN-NDG, LaSalle, Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, Montréal-Nord, Verdun, Ville-Marie, Villeray-St-Michel-Parc-Extension)/2005 (prior to the election):

With regard to representation of women and their participation, make a commitment to:

- aim for the equal representation of women in decision-making bodies where the City delegates elected officials (such as the CMM) or where it makes appointments (such as the Conseil interculturel de Montréal). This representation should take into account Montréal's diversity;
- introduce incentive measures that make it possible to increase the participation of women in future municipal elections as electors and candidates alike.

ACTION 3: Make the democratic institutions of the City of Montréal – the Executive Committee, City Council and the borough councils – more transparent, and institute ongoing communications on their operation, deliberations and decisions to make the new City known to its citizens by:

- distributing door-to-door and in all municipal and public facilities an information brochure on the new City and its institutions, i.e., the jurisdictions of the borough councils, City Council, Executive Committee; the commissions of City Council and the borough councils; the Office de la consultation publique, etc., including an overview of Montréal's administrative organization/in cooperation with the MAMM (September 2002);
- maintaining access to services in English and French, in the boroughs and in central departments, at the same level as existed before the municipal reform (January 2002);
- making public urban planning and development notices as well as the agendas, decisions and supporting documents of the Executive Committee, City Council and borough council available via the City's Web site, borough offices and targeted groups and agencies, and ensure that this information is also disseminated by e-mail in accordance with a list of interested people and organizations (Fall 2002);
- proceeding within a reasonable timeframe with a trial distribution of this information and required documentation that promotes real citizen participation, to 10 groups and agencies per borough (Fall 2002);
- having the City adopt a concept and culture of providing citizens and councillors with

- information that is complete, useful, understandable, and readily accessible;
- ❑ studying the possibility of using public spaces that belong to the City or to the STM and community media to directly inform citizens of the City's projects, activities, and decisions; and
 - ❑ conducting a study on the feasibility of creating an Internet portal dedicated to decision-making at the City of Montréal, including all of the available information and the various aspects of the "business" relationship between the municipal administration and Montrealers.

Also to be announced soon:

ACTION 4: Hold trial public Executive Committee meetings/June 2002.

ACTION 5: Create the position of an impartial and independent ombudsman/Fall 2002.

Other actions being developed include:

ACTION 6: Adopt a new contract tendering policy/Fall 2002.

ACTION 7: Adopt a code of ethics for elected officials and public employees/Fall 2002.

1.2.2 Goal 2: To institute credible, transparent and effective public consultation and participation mechanisms

One major issue in coming years will be to ensure recognition of public consultation and participation. The challenges will be to promote effective use of citizen consultation and participation, to work to integrate them into the planning and decision-making processes of the City and the boroughs, and to make sure that all groups of citizens do indeed take part.

These challenges apply not only to development projects, but also to major policy definition initiatives, whether it be the city plan, policies on economic, cultural or social development, the budget or staffing in the boroughs. It is crucial that Montréal provide credible, transparent and effective consultation mechanisms, promote a culture of participation within the municipal administration and develop skills in this area.

- ACTION 8:** Set up a democracy project with an external follow-up mechanism; the mandate for this project would be given to an external standing committee made up of the main Montréal players who would formulate, at least once a year, recommendations to the City Council targeting the improvement of participatory practices within the City.
- ACTION 9:** Give the democracy project the mandate to study a draft municipal charter of citizens' rights and responsibilities modelled after the European Human Rights Charter.
- ACTION 10:** Amend the Charter to entrench a set of principles on public consultation and participation, and adopt a policy framework. Introduce into the Charter a right of citizens to initiate public consultations, subject to specific conditions and criteria.
- Policy framework: Spring 2003
- Amendments to the Charter: June 2003
- ACTION 11:** Clarify the responsibilities of the Office de consultation publique, especially with respect to consultations on major projects.
- Request any needed amendments to the Charter/December 2002
- ACTION 12:** In each borough, develop mechanisms for public consultation and participation involving citizens, and develop joint-action processes with partners/Fall 2002.
- Institute a procedure for statutory meetings between elected officials and citizens.
- Produce a guide for the boroughs on the various forms of participation and the rules that will ensure their credibility.
- ACTION 13:** Integrate public consultation and participation right from the time of identification of needs or right from the development phase of projects, programs or policies into the City's planning and decision-making processes so that citizens' expectations and concerns are factored in at the outset.

Adopt new planning and decision-making processes/Early 2003

ACTION 14: Engage in public consultation prior to the development of the City's urban plan.

ACTION 15: Develop mechanisms to obtain the points of view of Montrealers on the urban plan of the Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal (CMM), its transportation plan, its residual materials management plan, and its social housing plan.

ACTION 16: Assess progress in the phasing-in of the new City, with a mechanism to identify any needed adjustments to jurisdictions shared by the boroughs and the central administration, including public study of possible changes.

Assessment submitted to Council: Early 2003

Jurisdictional adjustments: 2003

ACTION 17: Develop skills in public consultation and participation, providing elected officials and public employees with training and professional development (courses, seminars, conferences, workshops) as part of the institutional training program.

Priority clientele: elected officials, urban planning and development managers and professionals/Spring 2003 - Fall 2003.

ACTION 18: Provide means of support for participation.

18.1: Produce four practical guides for citizens, public employees, and private, public, and community developers/Spring 2003.

Citizens: preparing for a public hearing/writing and presenting a brief/presenting an opinion orally.

Public employees: developing a project with citizen participation/presenting projects at public hearings and interacting with members of a commission and

the public/communicating in public consultation and participation processes.

Developers (private/public/community): conducting voluntary consultations at the project development stage/ communicating and interacting with the public

General: how to develop a public consultation and participation program.

18.2: For community and university sectors (community services), set up a network of competent resources to help citizens participate in public consultations.

18.3: Offer municipal employees training aimed at implementing a culture of transparency and availability to councillors and citizens.

18.4: Together with community and other partners, have the City and Democracy Project develop an education and awareness-raising program about the political and economic functions of the City and the metropolitan area for all citizens interested in public consultation and participatory democracy.

Set up means to support and promote the participation of residents in all aspects of the democratic life of the City of Montréal:

- ❑ recognize the role of community organizations in promoting citizen participation and representation
- ❑ define the participation mechanisms so as to address those populations (mentioned in Action 2) that have been excluded
- ❑ ensure that there is a budget to set up these mechanisms and provide the support mentioned at both the borough and City levels
- ❑ involve the required partners in every stage of this exercise

ACTION 19: Adopt ongoing procedures and mechanisms to evaluate and improve consultation and participation processes:

- Work with academics to define performance criteria and follow-up mechanisms.

Process evaluation/2004