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Collective intelligence has
found expression in our
halls for 15 years



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A word from our president

The year 2017 marked the 15th anniversary of the Office de consultation publique de Montréal. Created through legislation in 2002, the Office has played an important role in connecting representative democracy and participatory democracy in Montréal. After 15 years of public consultation, the OCPM has worked on 140 projects, held 544 information and hearing of opinions sessions, received 3943 briefs and allowed tens of thousands of people to participate in City management. Our most popular consultations in terms of number of participants have been on the Mount Royal Protection and Enhancement Plan in 2008, VertMtl in 2015, and the Downtown Strategy in 2017. Each of those consultations attracted over 3000 people who attended one of the public meetings, filed a brief with the commission, or participated on our digital platforms. Throughout the consultations, the OCPM confirmed its threefold vocation: to understand and highlight concerns expressed by citizens; to analyze relevant issues; and to identify, with a view to assisting in the decision-making process of elected officials, the desirable, acceptable and unacceptable aspects of each project.



An anniversary is often a good time to take stock, draw lessons from experience, and open avenues of reflection and analysis. Our 15th anniversary is no exception.

The OCPM was established in 2002, following the report of the commission chaired by Mr. Gérald Tremblay, which had been given a mandate by the Bourque administration to consult Montrealers on the urban planning consultation policy. The report underscored the importance of establishing an independent mechanism in Montréal, in accordance with the rules of the art and relevant ethics, to structure public debate concerning projects of metropolitan scope. That mission was written into section 75 of the city charter, allowing the Office to carry out mandates entrusted to it by the Montréal executive committee and city council by making any relevant recommendations to elected officials following its consultations.

Transparency and accessibility

Our society has greatly evolved over the past 15 years. We have completed our transition into the era of collective intelligence and citizen participation. Civil society – including citizens, corporations, associations and interest groups of all sorts – are now asking to be much more closely involved in decisions concerning changes in their living environments and city management. The lightning speed at which technologies are evolving, the multiplication of communication networks and the democratization of information support the creative vitality transforming the means by which citizens interact with their environment. New ideas, such as the sharing economy and circular economy, are radically changing citizens' values and aspirations.

In addition to those changes in our society, the management of the city has become more complex. The globalization of issues, interdependence of economies and emergence of new social fractures and solidarity are factors with which we must now contend.

In that context, to preserve openings for citizen participation created by the Montréal Charter of Rights and Responsibilities and the City's public consultation and participation policy, our consultation mechanisms and the bodies carrying them out have multiplied, leaving citizens somewhat unsure as to the real scope of their contributions and the rules governing such exercises.

The words solidarity, coherence and inclusion summarize the essence of messages received by the Office in its consultations. Those values are also included in the documents guiding Montréal's development and serving as reference material for our commissioners' reports, such as the Master Plan, the Montréal Charter of Rights and Responsibilities, the Family Policy and the Strategy for the inclusion of affordable housing.

However, an inclusive solidarity city is first and foremost one that provides all of its citizens with equal opportunities to voice their opinions.

That is why, in this anniversary year, the Office wanted to take an objective look not only at the deployment of its experience and the credibility of its mechanisms, but especially at the people touched by its consultations. The above has shown us that we have made great progress, over the course of just a few years, in the diversification of participating publics, notably in terms of women's participation.

One lesson that can be drawn from that multi-faceted analysis is that progress occurs when we establish measures removing obstacles to participation. Many avenues are open to the Office to help it to attain optimal representativeness in its processes over the coming years. Firstly, in terms of tools to reach citizens, which should remain in line with societal and technological developments. Then, in terms of the transfer of expertise, which we hope goes both ways while conducting our analyses of the corpus of consultations, our international collaborations and our training offering. Lastly, in terms of our processes, which have to constantly be reinvented based on the solid foundation we have developed, and by striving to remain current, credible, transparent and accessible.

Long live the Office de consultation publique de Montréal!



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The OCPM started out as a tool to help in public decision-making, and remains one to this day.

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Participation without exclusion: retrospective of the 15 years of the OCPM

For 15 years, the mandate of the OPCM has always been to establish favourable conditions to allow all citizens to contribute to decisions that concern them. Putting collective intelligence at the service of city development through participation without exclusion is an important facet of the OCPM's commitment.



Our reflection on our own practices has led to two important observations.

Some segments of the population are removed from citizen participation processes, notably young people, members of visible minorities, immigrants, people in situations of social disaffiliation, and groups of women. We have also observed a need to offer consultations better adapted to the city's new socio-demographic realities. The consultation on Montrealers' dependence on fossil energies in 2015 served as an exceptional testing ground in that respect.

The wish to ensure that public consultations are accessible to all has become so important that we decided to make it the theme of the 17th Conference of the IOPD, held in Montréal. As part of the events highlighting the 15th anniversary of the OCPM, we also published a Cahier entitled *Participation sans exclusion : rétrospective des 15 ans*

de l'OCPM. The Cahier, conducted by an independent researcher, aims to review the contribution of the OCPM to the reinforcement of diversified and inclusive citizen participation. The publication has been available on our Web site since November 2017.

Some inspiring practices, success factors as well as issues and challenges were identified by analysing, in a collaborative research effort, actions and strategies established to promote citizen participation in five of the public consultations carried out by the Office.

Inspiring practices

With a view to making public consultation as accessible as possible, we adapted some practices to the context of the environment by organizing activities, workshops and means of participation based on challenges experienced by targeted populations.



For example, we developed documentation in plain language, provided on-site daycare services, and organized role-playing games, creative workshops in living environments, workshops on public consultation and exercising citizenship, and citizen contributory activities adaptable to the various groups wishing to participate.



The pre-consultation exercises usually organized at the beginning of the process also allow us to conduct preparatory tours with various groups from targeted areas and to draw up a map of stakeholders to ensure that the consultation activities we are planning reach all of them.



We also organize consensus-building activities by establishing, for example, connections with organizations that welcome new arrivals, or by setting up steering committees with the players concerned from the various communities.

Success factors

The adaptability of tools and processes to the specific nature of the territory and population concerned, combined with joint-action with community organizations leading to the creation of links with community representatives have been identified as factors for success in achieving inclusive participation. The ethics and thoroughness that we apply to guarantee the transparency and foreseeability of the processes, the attitude of openness and the sensitivity with which we strive to conduct the consultations also seem to ensure our success in terms of inclusion.



Issues and challenges

The research results also brought to light challenges related to the inclusion of populations at risk of exclusion. One of the challenges identified is the pursuit of popular education efforts aimed at demystifying the exercise of local democracy and public participation for the Montréal population. If trying out new tools and new ways of doing things, notably through new technologies, remains a challenge, it also brings new opportunities for cooperation with citizens. Lastly, in general terms, increasing the visibility of the OCPM represents a major challenge to achieve inclusive public consultations.



**S'APPROPRIER LA VILLE
LES CAHIERS
DE L'OCPM**

PARTICIPATION SANS EXCLUSION :
RÉTROSPECTIVE DES 15 ANS DE L'OCPM

OFFICE
DE CONSULTATION PUBLIQUE
DE MONTRÉAL

Novembre 2017

See the Cahier at
ocpm.qc.ca/publications

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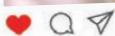
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The OCPM organized the 17th Conference of the IOPD

One of the high points of the celebrations of the 15th anniversary of the OCPM was definitely the holding of the 17th Conference of the International Observatory on Participatory Democracy (IOPD), from June 16 to 19.



The International Observatory on Participatory Democracy is a space open to all cities of the world and all bodies, organizations and research centres seeking to learn about, share and implement experiences related to participatory democracy on a local level, with a view to furthering democracy in city governments. The network was created in 2001 within the framework of decentralized cooperation projects of the European Commission's URBAL program. Today, the IOPD helps to develop the production of innovative knowledge serving local governments in the area of citizen participation. The presidency is assigned to a city, through a decision of the annual meeting of members. That city then becomes the site of the annual conference of the IOPD. The Permanent Secretariat of the Observatory is in Barcelona. The IOPD also maintains regional branches, one in Dakar, Senegal, for Africa, and one in Porto Alegre, Brazil, for Latin America, except for Argentina, which is served by a branch in Cordoba.

It was within the context of the 15th anniversary of the Office and the 375th anniversary of Montréal, during the 16th Conference held in Matola (Mozambique) in May 2016, that Montréal submitted its candidacy to assume the presidency of the Observatory for 2017.

The Conference, held at the UQÀM's Cœur des sciences pavilion, brought together some 500 participants, including 80 speakers from 35 different countries. The central theme of the meeting was "*Participation without Exclusion.*"



It aimed to answer a number of questions:

How do we ensure that all strata of the population participate in participatory democracy activities?

How do we avoid the exclusion of certain groups, notably among minority groups, citizens with less formal education or lesser access to information?



What are the causes of under-representation of certain groups in participatory democracy processes? Is it possible to achieve greater in-person participation?

What can we do to ensure that families, young people, immigrants and seniors participate in the debate?

In this digital age, what can we do to ensure that information and communications technologies do not also become tools of exclusion?



Moreover, what are the specific advantages and limitations of virtual participation compared with in-person participation?

For all of those questions, the Conference provided opportunities for both formal and informal discussions among all participants, making them aware of the large number of projects and activities carried out around the world in terms of participatory democracy in urban environments. For Montréal participants, it offered a more in-depth understanding of the participatory budget, a leading practice in many areas of the world. Although it is quite common in Latin America, Africa and Europe, that method of citizen participation is not as widespread here.



500
participants

80
speakers

35
countries

As host of the Conference, the Office de consultation publique de Montréal had the opportunity to showcase its rather unique methods of citizen participation, particularly its role as a neutral third party in planning and holding public consultations seen as tools to assist in the decision-making of Montréal elected officials.

The participants came from three different areas: local governments; university research centres; and civil society. They included participatory democracy practitioners and thinkers, both at the level of municipal structures (elected officials and technicians) and associations and institutions focusing on a wide variety of practices. The Conference received financial support from the Government of Québec, the Ville de Montréal, and the Organisation internationale de la francophonie (OIF).





The Office is seen as
**useful,
credible and
impartial**

According to a 2017 Léger survey

Over

80% of Montrealers believe that it is **USEFUL** to have in Montréal an **INDEPENDENT** organization to gather citizens' opinions on urban- and land-use planning projects and major City policies.

According to a 2017 Léger survey



OUR COMMISSIONERS

For the past 15 years, the commissioners have ensured the thoroughness and quality of our public consultations. Their wide variety of experience and education fosters good complementarity within the commissions, allowing them to examine projects from different perspectives.

Who are the Office commissioners?

Let us begin with the formal criteria. The commissioners are individuals appointed by the Montréal city council to fulfil that role. They may be appointed on a permanent basis, for a mandate not exceeding four years, or they may be appointed as supplementary, or ad hoc on-call commissioners, again for a maximum term of four years. The position of president of the Office also has the status of full-time commissioner for a period of four years. The people appointed must have “*special competence as regards public consultation*,” (section 76 of the City Charter). Moreover, “*The members of the city council or of a borough council and the officers and employees of the city are disqualified from exercising the functions of president or commissioner*,” (section 78 of the Charter).

A little history

In its first four years of operation, from 2002 to 2006, the Office, in addition to having a full-time president, benefited from the services of two full-time commissioners, Catherine Chauvin and Jean Paré. Since 2006, the position of president has remained full time, but all of the commissioners are on an ad hoc, or on-call basis. There have been three presidents since the beginnings of the Office. The first president, from 2002 to 2006, was Mr. Jean-François Viau. He was followed by Ms. Louise Roy, from 2006 to 2014, and then by Ms. Dominique Ollivier, who has held the position since 2014.



Our commissioners in numbers

Since the creation of the Office in 2002, 68 people have occupied positions as commissioners, 34 men and 34 women, which represents perfect parity. Of that group, 12 are immigrants, i.e. 17.6%, and seven are Anglophones, i.e. 10.2%.

A diverse team

The education and background of the commissioners are extremely varied. They include administrators, from both the public and private sectors and, of course, given the nature of the consultations of the Office, the group also comprises a fair number of urban planners, architects, and landscape architects. However, the range of educational backgrounds is very broad and eclectic. Some of the commissioners have studied linguistics, biology, theology, philosophy or anthropology. Others are mathematicians, notaries, lawyers, university professors, unionists, criminologists, engineers, geographers or political scientists.

That great variety, both in terms of experience and education, is undoubtedly one of the key factors in our success. It allows us to set up commissions that will examine the projects submitted for consultation from different perspectives that complete each other, enhance discussions and promote in-depth examination of issues relevant to each project.



Find out more about our commissioners by reading their biographical notes on our Web site: ocpm.qc.ca/equipe-commissaires

15 years of citizens participating in the future of the city

Almost 140 public consultations have taken place since the creation of the OCPM in 2002. The participation of Montrealers is constantly increasing, and the results of their efforts are now evident throughout the city.



Over the past 15 years, the Office de consultation publique de Montréal (OCPM), whose mission is to carry out public consultation mandates with regard to land-use planning and development matters under municipal jurisdiction, has organized approximately 20 upstream and downstream consultations on detailed planning projects. Most of them involved Special Planning Programs (SPP) or Plans de développement urbain, économique et social (PDUES). Added to that list were major co-construction projects, combining land-use planning and political coherence exercises, such as the Plan de développement de la Métropole and the Downtown Strategy. On the occasion of its 15th anniversary, the OCPM sought to assess the impact of its consultations on the citizens' participation and their power to influence decisions. In doing so, we noticed that some themes recurred from one consultation to the next, that the procedures established for our public consultations are evolving and becoming more complex in an effort to reach the greatest possible number of people, but also that the lack of feedback or systematic follow-up may hinder some

participants' willingness to take part in future activities.

The main messages

Beyond issues that are specific to each individual project, three main messages are reiterated in most of our consultations: a pleasant living environment, solidarity and coherence.

For the participants, a pleasant living environment refers to the vision of their neighbourhood to which they aspire. The notion of a complete, family neighbourhood focused on active and public transportation, and comprising a variety of uses, green spaces, businesses, and local services is often brought up and associated with a pleasant living environment by participants.

Solidarity, or the idea of an integral neighbourhood, is also a recurring theme in our consultations dealing with land-use planning. That solidarity is most often expressed in asking for a more diverse social mix, notably in terms of housing.



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An integral, inclusive city is first and foremost one that provides all of its citizens with equal opportunities to voice their opinions.

Dominique Ollivier

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The alleviation of the effects of gentrification, the Montréal inclusion strategy and the maintenance and upkeep of the existing rental housing stock are recurring themes. The preservation of the employment zones for neighbourhood residents and joint-action with stakeholders are also regularly addressed by participants in their suggestions and comments, along with the idea of integral neighbourhoods.

Participants also frequently mention coherent decision-making and action. An integrating vision to guide an area's development in accordance with municipal policies is a frequent request, as is consistency between orientations and concrete activities established for their implementation.

The processes

Our review revealed that our public consultations are increasingly employing a combination of means, including consensus-building, creative and prospective workshops, exhibitions, open-house days complete with booths, and various colloquia and forums.

The consultation processes are becoming more complex, notably with the addition of new activities, mainly in cases of upstream consultations and major co-construction exercises combining land-use planning and economic development of the downtown area.

From traditional methods to the integration of new tools

Technological innovations are also increasingly employed in our consultation processes. Such innovations serve as tools complementing conventional consultation processes. They also stimulate the participation of some segments of the population that do not normally participate in great numbers in our consultations.

Ever increasing participation

Our 15 years of existence and more than 140 public consultation projects have revealed that participation is constantly increasing. We have also noticed that online participation has not replaced in-person participation in any meaningful way. To the contrary, the use of online participation processes seems to have stimulated participation in activities requiring a physical presence, such as information and hearing of opinions sessions.





We have also found that online participation seems to promote the participation of women, who contribute in greater numbers online than in-person activities.

The OCPM has also focused on factors that influence participation. Six factors seem to alter participation levels. A project's scope and level of controversy affect participation, as some subjects are more polarizing than others, either because of the number of people who are directly affected, or because they generate controversy, and therefore divided points of view among various groups.

The degree of mobilization of the groups concerned is also an influencing factor. For some subjects, such as environmental and transportation issues, organized groups already exist that can reach large numbers of people. Neighbourhoods with long histories of social demands, where the community environment is very structured, are generally conducive to major mobilizations surrounding local issues.

The regulatory nature of a mandate affects the perception of influence that

participants may have and, consequently, participation itself. In order to participate, residents must feel that their contribution is useful. Some stages of mandates for specific projects are usually structured by laws and by-laws. In absolute numbers, such mandates generate lower participation than upstream mandates aiming to generate ideas and using more flexible modes of participation.

By increasing times and locations for participation, we diversify opportunities to participate, and thereby increase overall participation.

The communication efforts of the OCPM play an important role in increasing participation in general. Combined with traditional communication methods, the use of social media has had a major influence on the visibility of the organization and on citizen mobilization, at very little cost. The popularization of mandates and the mapping of stakeholders make it possible to target groups to be reached and to demystify the level of effort required to achieve significant participation.

The diversification of participation tools makes it possible to express one's

opinion in a variety of ways, allowing those wishing to participate to do so according to their interests and abilities. For example, if you are not comfortable with the written word, you may express your opinion orally; if you are intimidated by hearing of opinions sessions, you may express your opinion online.

Having noted that participation in the OCPM's various activities is on the rise, we turned our attention to what happens to recommendations stemming from the comments, suggestions and concerns of people who participated in our consultations. To what extent are they followed, and why?

Follow-up on recommendations

According to the provisions of the Charter of Ville de Montréal, once the commissions' reports have been submitted and made public, no follow-up on the recommendations is required on the part of the municipal administration. When it does occur, the follow-up usually consists of a grid compiling the recommendations of the commission and actions taken or to be taken by the various City departments. The follow-up grid is automatically posted online in the documentation file of the relevant project as soon as the OCPM receives it.

For a number of years, the OCPM has been requesting better follow-up on its recommendations, notably to give participants the feeling that their contributions serve a purpose, and thereby foster their future involvement. The feedback from the municipal administration is important, as it allows participants to see how their interventions have influenced the continuation of projects and to fully understand the upcoming steps in their implementation.





Be better equipped to follow-up on decisions that concern you!

Consult our guide at ocpm.qc.ca/publications

The participation of women

In 2017, for the first time, the contribution of women was comparable to that of men in the annual count. In fact, for the information and hearing of opinions sessions of the nine consultations we held in 2017, 350 women expressed their opinions, compared with 361 men.

This year, we joined the initiative MTElles, led by Concertation Montréal, which targets the equal participation of men and women in municipal democratic and community life. This is an opportunity for us to pursue our efforts to make our consultations more accessible, focusing specifically on the participation of women, as well as an interesting opportunity to work together with Montréal partners.

The internal organization of the Office is already a good reflection of the diversity we are striving to attain. We have an equal number of women and men as commissioners. The permanent staff of the Office also attests to our concern for parity. We are very proud to be able to rely on the contribution of experienced staff with varied educations and backgrounds.

Because we believe that all citizens should have equal opportunities to express their opinions, we have improved our practices over the years. The following paragraphs illustrate a few more or less extensive courses of action that we consider promising.

For example, we would like to hold more consultation activities in living environments to reach people closer to home and allow participation in small groups, often in less formal settings. That is a recurring example, suggested by researchers as a means to promote the participation of women.

Since last year, we have also systematically provided free on-site childcare services during our public consultation information sessions.

We have also given a great deal of thought to the advantages and challenges of online participation. We have accomplished much since Wikicity, our 2014 event on citizen participation in the digital age. We have developed new tools: in addition to online questionnaires, we now have opinions online on a page allowing us to sort opinions by theme for consultations on more complex subjects; we also tested an online deliberation platform during the consultation on reducing Montrealers' dependence on fossil energies. The results are quite revealing: for the three major consultations offering online participation and for which we recorded statistics comparing participation by men and women, the online participation allowed greater participation by women (increases of between 5 and 9%) compared with traditional activities (public meetings and oral or written presentations of opinions).





Although we still hold many consultations where participants are primarily men, we also have many examples of consultations where the participation of women surpassed that of men. We have found that for projects of a highly local nature involving issues pertaining to neighbourhood life, the projects that affect children (soccer centre and schools) and those involving public health and quality of life, such as the one on urban agriculture, women respond in great numbers.

Conversely, real estate projects, especially those located downtown, are files where women are still minority contributors. Although those results

may be explained in part by the majority proportion of men as spokespeople for organizations, entrepreneurs and real estate owners, there is undoubtedly work to be done to attract the interest of women in that type of project and promote their participation.

We firmly believe that to build an inclusive city and develop inclusive public policies, the voices of all citizens in all their diversity should have access to inclusive mechanisms to be heard. We are very proud to have taken another step towards that noble objective in 2017.

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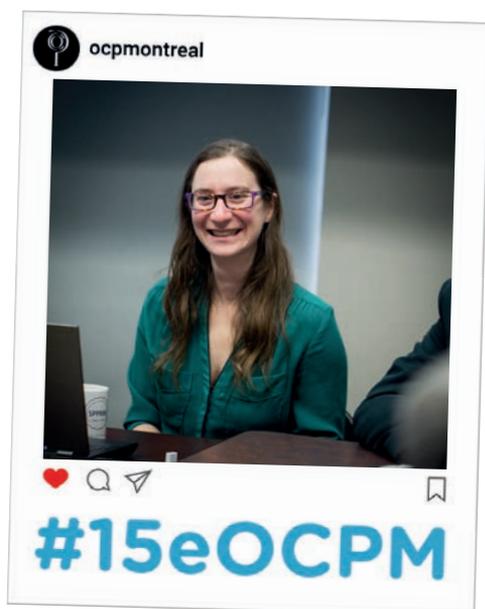
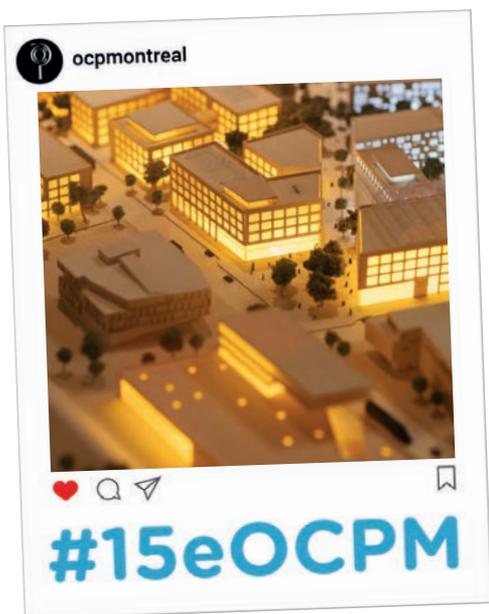
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