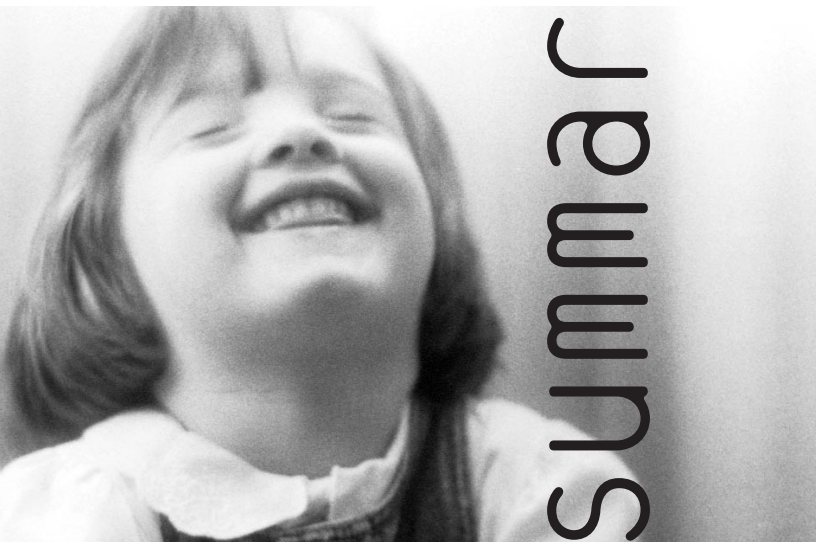


summary



terms of reference  
for family policy

montréal, a city for children

Consultation Document  
May 2007





Montréal's action plan for families is the result of cooperation between well over 250 members of local organizations and government employees, who collaborated in individual borough citizen committees headed by an elected Chair. Each of these citizen committees produced a *Local Action Plan for Families*. These proposals are in the process of being adopted by the various boroughs and most of them have a timeline of three years. Thanks to ongoing communication with the family citizen committees, and in order to direct their efforts toward a similar goal, the city has produced a parallel document: the *Terms of Reference for Family Policy*. This document identifies common issues, provides a definition of the family and proposes goals and targets. City Services also produced a *Collective Action Plan for Families* that lists initiatives to be taken throughout the city. The timeline for the collective plan is two years.

The city's Office de consultation publique will hold public consultations on the *Terms of Reference for Family Policy* as well as the document that outlines how these terms will be put into practice in 2008-2009, i.e., the *Collective Action Plan for Families*.



The administration made a commitment to do so because Montrealers are becoming increasingly conscious of the fact that families play a specific, unique role in building their community.

Contrary to the rest of Québec, where the population is starting to decline, the number of people living on the Island of Montréal continues to grow. This trend will probably continue until 2026, at which point the population will have risen from 1,854,000 in 2006 to over 2,100,000. But we want to do better. More specifically, we want to make it possible for more young Montrealers to start their families in Montréal.

Montréal's development strategy, entitled *Imaginer, réaliser Montréal 2025* can only be put into effect by a population that includes a wide range of age groups. Ideally, these groups will show support for one another through intergenerational ties and cultural integration and this, in turn, will create energy, learning and the sharing of ideas and projects.

why produce an Action plan for Families?

Montréal is currently home to 250,000 families (255,405 in 2006), or 20% of all the families in Québec. It is also home to 430,000 children (431,515 in 2006) or 19.6% of all young Quebecers. Of that number 241,792 were students in 2005-2006, which represents 22% of school-age children in the province.

**A very slight increase in population.**

Although families living in Montréal are diverse and numerous, even with the influx of international immigration, the city is struggling to maintain its population size in relation to the larger metropolitan community. In the five years between 2001-2002 and 2005-2006, Montréal recorded a net loss of 52,000 people between the ages of 25 and 39 as well as 32,000 children under the age of 14, all of whom left for the north or south shores. However, young families are necessary to keep our population well-balanced and energized.

**A strong point:**

a recent survey conducted by Conseil jeunesse de Montréal showed that young people identify with Montréal.



**recognizing,  
consolidating and  
developing them**

**Montréal's quality of life** is regularly acknowledged to be among the best in the world.

**High-quality and varied residential housing stock.** Montréal has large areas of residential housing that are well-suited to the needs of young families. The city has many two-storey and single-family homes, row houses as well as duplexes, triplexes, etc. that offer direct access to yards and gardens.

**Lively, nearby service cores.** Our urban centres provide an array of conveniently located commercial, institutional, community and municipal services that are accessible on foot or by bicycle from the surrounding residential streets.

**Our public transit system** is very advanced and is among the best in North America. The transportation proposal, submitted for review in the summer of 2007, suggests that improving and developing public transport should be an essential pre-condition of the city's sustainable development plan.

**Its exceptional cultural amenities** make Montréal a world-class cultural and learning destination and provide Montréal families with access to an array of original, high-quality cultural offerings.

**On the sports and recreation front, the city stands out** in terms of its extensive facilities: 94 pools, 36 indoor skating rinks, 200 outdoor skating rinks, 40 sports centres and over 1,200 different sports fields.

**Seventeen large-scale parks and other green spaces** are well distributed throughout the city. This network includes different environments: hills, islands, wooded areas, rivers, etc. These parks could potentially attract many Montréal teenagers.

**Bicycle path network.** The city has 400 km of bicycle paths that Montrealers use to get to work or school, go on family outings or go for a spin in the early evening.

**Our streets and neighbourhoods are extremely safe.** Montrealers enjoy a level of safety that is unparalleled in North America. The city and its borough partners are constantly working to reduce potential threats to the safety of their citizens through such actions as better traffic control, zero tolerance regarding antisocial public behaviour, anti-street gang initiatives, the *montréal.net* program and removal of graffiti.

**An overall healthful environment.** Recent studies have shown that urban centres which are planned in such a way as to allow walking and cycling create conditions that promote good health.

**Our city's cultural diversity.** Experience has allowed us to perceive this diversity as a means of enrichment and a way of becoming more open to the world. Many parents choose the city precisely for the opportunity it provides to be in contact with different kinds of diversity.



building on our assets

# A challenge

**A safety network.** Generations of generous, effective people have created a network of community organizations that work to promote the daily well-being of Montréal families. These networks exist in every neighbourhood in Montréal.

**The pursuit of knowledge.** For a city of our size, the range of educational services we offer—from daycares through CEGEPs to our four universities—is truly exceptional.

**An international city.** Students are well aware of the importance of being part of an international network of information exchange and cooperation. Montréal provides ready access to these networks and, by the same token, opportunities to embark on an international career.



## not just for the City but for the whole community

**Housing.** Helping Montréal families is not just the government's responsibility. The private sector, mortgage and insurance companies, developers and construction firms, could also ask themselves what they can do to improve conditions for families.

The City can undertake initiatives that complement those of the private sector. Specifically, it can facilitate the development of diversified housing, improve the existing residential housing stock and promote Montréal's assets to families.

In an initiative that will take many years of consistent effort, the City has adopted strong legislation to combat the lack of exterior cleanliness of certain residential buildings.

**Transportation.** A good public transportation system enables young people to travel freely around the city. At the same time, it offers parents some peace of mind, as they do not have to worry about whether or not their children are driving home at the end of the evening.

**Safety.** Encouraging drivers to slow down and drive more carefully would make the most significant contribution toward helping parents of young children, as well as pedestrians and cyclists, feel safer.

The second most important factor is antisocial behaviour. In those parks where it is necessary, a regular stream of visitors such as police officers, bicycle patrols, blue-collar workers, activity organizers, young children and daycare workers, etc. appears to be effectively counteracting this phenomenon.

In collaboration with a number of community organizations, the City is undertaking a number of initiatives aimed at reducing the prevalence of street gangs.

As another way of increasing its citizens' sense of safety, the City is also continuing to combat graffiti and other attacks against public cleanliness.

### summary



### What sort of family do we mean?

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 ethnocultural 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.

The Montréal family also refers to the family network that responds to the needs of children. Our definition therefore also includes the extended family and the role it plays in supporting the resident family and in the lives of children and young adults.



## Montréal's Action Plan for Families

**Placing family values at the centre of initiatives** undertaken by the City itself and the boroughs, and making families aware, by every means possible—municipal publications, the Internet, newsletters, actual facilities and services—that Montréal considers families to be its most important component.

**Strengthen and develop the quality of life for families currently living in Montréal.**

**Set a "Montréal Family Goal" to be achieved by 2012**, by convincing young Montrealers to settle in their city.

In the long term, **attract and retain** enough Montréal families to maintain a healthy population balance within the city.

**Promote intergenerational ties.**





**Who are the plan's main beneficiaries?**

**Families currently living in Montréal:** The municipal administration wants to let them know that their presence is appreciated and that they are an essential part of our common future.

**The City proposes that both itself and its partners** implement strategies to create and maintain a sense of belonging among Montréal residents since the city is the most likely place to find people who want to settle here. These strategies should primarily be aimed at four target groups:

- > Young adults between 25 and 34; whether they are original Mont-realers or immigrants, recent graduates from abroad or from other Québec regions, it is vital to attract this group;
- > 35- to 44-year-olds; it is important to create a sense of belonging among members of this group, who already have one child, some-times two and are thinking about moving for several reasons, usu-ally because they want a bigger home;
- > Recently immigrated families; by improving the quality of life in the neighbourhood where they initially settle;
- > Commuters or "daytime Montrealers" who work in the city and use its services and amenities but do not live there: their number is estimated at approximately 300,000.

primary goals

primary goals

# duration, support and timelines

## A long-term action plan

**Local citizen committees** and long-term alliances in each borough.

**A permanent municipal citizen committee** will be set up, comprising the relevant politician, partners from community organizations and one administrative officer to ensure follow-up.

**Annual objectives** set in 2008

**No budget required for implementation**

**Annual presentation of accounts for audit**



## Introduction

In Europe, as in North America, families are taking a renewed interest in cities...and vice versa. Generally, these cities pursue two goals: first, they work at balancing neighbourhood demographic and socioeconomic elements; second, they strive to reduce the social costs of urban sprawl and the consequent travel time for families, since work-life balance is becoming increasingly important for this group.

To reach these goals, a twofold thrust is required:

- > Promote Montréal's assets to families, and work on improving them;
- > Encourage major players within the community to acknowledge the important role families play in our common future and invite them to either become involved in the City's efforts to prioritize family issues or else add a family-centred component to their own initiatives.

Many of the City's areas of responsibility affect families: public security, planning and maintenance of public space (parks, sidewalks, etc.), traffic, public transit, sports and recreation. And, although other levels of government and the private sector are primarily responsible for these, it also plays a role in housing and culture. The measures outlined in the action plan focus on its own areas of responsibility. However, factors that significantly affect the quality of life for families do not fall under the City's jurisdiction: education, employment and the fight against poverty are all handled by higher levels of government. Other aspects, such as work-life balance and, on a larger scale, social development, concern all players, whether individuals, companies or government. Also, the work of non-profit organizations is crucial to families, both to maintaining a certain standard of living for them as well as to supporting underprivileged or struggling families in various ways.

**This plan is intended as the first step. The initiatives it proposes should take shape over the next two years or, at the very least, start to be implemented.**

Almost every borough has set up a permanent corporate citizen committee on families; and the next step will be taken by this group.

Basically, this consultation process is designed to ask our partners the following questions:

- > Are we tackling the right issues?
- > Will the proposed initiatives provide maximum impact?
- > What significant initiatives can you, as major players, undertake in your respective areas in order to make **Montréal, a city for children?**

# Overall Plan— 2008-2009

## 1. The importance of immediate action

The number of people living on the Island of Montréal continues to grow. This trend will probably continue until 2026, at which point the population will have risen from 1,854,000 in 2006 to over 2,100,000. After 2026, currently available data suggests a gradual decline in our population. In spite of these numbers we want to do better. In fact, we want to reverse that later trend and encourage more young Montrealers to start their families in Montréal.

## 2. Montréal makes a commitment

All members of society, but especially young people, are aware of the urgency of adopting a sustainable development focus in order to better protect our planet. Living in the city is consistent with that new and important focus. In 2005, with the support of its partners, Montréal adopted its first Strategic Sustainable Development Plan. To date, over 100 partner organizations have taken part in these measures and have made concrete contributions to improving the quality of life of resident families.

The City's action plan for families has three key components:

### Clear objectives

The objectives are outlined above, in the summary of the Terms of Reference.

### Speedy, collaborative action

- > Set up a citizen committee on families
- > Starting in 2008, set up an annual action plan for all areas that fall under the jurisdiction of the City proper
- > Implement annual auditing of accounts

### Effective methods of communication

- > Ensure that its family-oriented initiatives are mentioned on its Website and in all government publications and press releases
- > Create a label that can be used to refer to all family-oriented initiatives

These outreach attempts are primarily aimed at young families. However, they are also intended for the City's many partners, as a means of encouraging them to implement all family-oriented initiatives and adopt a family-centred approach.



### 3. Recommendations for the Collective Action Plan

The Action Plan brings together all the short-term (i.e., for 2008–2009) recommendations made by the City's central services in response to the primary needs of families. This collective plan is already supported by the Local Action Plans for families that have been or will be adopted by the boroughs in their areas of jurisdiction. The Collective Action Plan for families is divided into five sections that cover all the municipality's main family-oriented initiatives. Each section is sub-divided along the same lines: Our Assets, Current Issues, Present Accomplishments, Ongoing Commitment to Action and Call for Partners.

The five sections are as follows:

#### **Living neighbourhoods.**

This section describes how Montréal neighbourhoods are generally laid out in response to the needs of families, and outlines existing initiatives for preserving those characteristics and contributing to neighbourhood development.

#### **Housing.**

This section deals with the enormous potential of the current housing pool for families, issues of cost, renovation programs, new construction and other issues.

#### **Traffic and transportation.**

Speed limits, driver and pedestrian behaviour, transit plan measures, green neighbourhoods, prioritizing public transit and pedestrian rights, bicycle paths, etc.

#### **Public security.**

The attitude and perceptions of Montrealers with regard to safety; community networks, police presence and courses of action.

#### **Culture, sports and recreation.**

Access to culture, funding these kinds of activities, upgrading sports and recreation facilities, an exceptional environment, a more family-centred approach.







montréal, ville avec enfants

Montréal 