

## **Title: A New Chapter in the Social Development of the Southern West Island: The Community has its say!**

Over 80 people attended the priority selection event of the Table de Quartier Sud de l'Ouest de l'Île (TQSOI) held last Saturday, November 28, 2015. Community partners serving the young, adult and senior clientele of the West Island, as well as citizens and elected officials came together to reflect and choose the priorities to be included in a 5-year action plan.

This exercise has helped to give specific directions to the territorial social development planning efforts of the TQSOI.

The priorities selected, in order of votes received, are: Transport, Health & Social Services, Poverty & Social Exclusion, Affordable Housing and Food Security.

These themes will be further explored during meetings of the working committees that will prepare the action plan of interventions to be presented to the public by Spring 2016.

### **Did you know?**

Here is some information about the selected topics:

**Transportation:** Public transportation in the territory is difficult due to lack of accessibility, and because it is poorly adapted to run smoothly between municipalities. Is it normal for a journey of a few kilometres to take two hours by public transit?

**Health & Social Services:** Lack of access to a family doctor is obvious when we see that there are only 58.5 doctors per 100 000 residents of the territory, versus 85 doctors per 100 000 in Montreal. Additionally, there is a lack of medical clinics and specialists.

**Poverty & Social Exclusion:** There is a hidden poverty in the territory despite the fact that the Southern West Island is seen as wealthy. Seniors and single parents on low income are the unwitting victims.

**Affordable Housing:** The community has low ratios of rental housing and the little that exists is more expensive than in Montreal. Social Housing is virtually non-existent and is located far from services needed for daily life.

**Food Security:** There is a direct link between the themes mentioned above and citizens who are financially vulnerable. Often residents don't have access to fresh fruits & vegetables within walking distance. Many rely on food banks. Additionally, the inadequacy of transport poses an additional barrier, especially for those who have no car and have to rely on public transportation.

### **The context:**

Social development is an innovative approach to community work. It aims to improve the quality of life for all, allowing all the citizens of the territory to develop their full potential through meaningful

participation in social activities and to partake in the collective wealth while also contributing to it. This creates an environment that encourages cooperation and coexistence of various social and cultural groups within the community by fostering cohesion, integration and social participation while improving the conditions and the quality of life of the community as a whole.

The Table de Quartier Sud de l'Ouest de l'Île (TQSOI) serves the south of the West Island, a region consisting of seven municipalities: Baie d'Urfé, Beaconsfield, Dorval, Kirkland, Pointe-Claire, Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue and Senneville.

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