



Table de Quartier Sud de l'Ouest de l'Île

Citizens' Forum in Kirkland

Report

June 17, 2014



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Centraide du Grand Montréal
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We would like to thank the event planning committee, our volunteers and supporters for their efforts to make the Citizens' Forum in Kirkland a successful one.

Special thank you to our organizing committee and contributors : la Ville de Kirkland, CRC, CSSS ODI, M.I.D.I., Université de Montréal, AJOI, John Abbott College.



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**Santé
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Introduction

The Table de Quartier Sud de l'Ouest de l'Île (TQSÔI) is a non-profit organization uniting citizens, organizations and decision-makers in order to foster social development and to improve the quality of life in the Southern part of the West Island. Social development lies at the heart of the TQSÔI's work. It is a process that unites multiple communities beginning with identification of community needs and preoccupations.

In November of 2013, the TQSÔI kick-started a process to enable community members to engage in meaningful conversations in order to voice their needs and concerns around the quality of life in their community. It was hoped that all of the ideas, comments and feedback that was collected could be used for further social development planning of the territory.

In support of this approach, an event planning committee was set-up, with a mandate to plan and organize a series of Citizens' Forums. The first Forum took place in Pointe-Claire on November 21st 2013, followed by a second in Beaconsfield, on March 20th 2014 and the final one of the first series took place on June 17th 2014, in the city of Kirkland.

This report will provide the reader with a summary of the active conversations that took place at each table, that were recorded by discussion animators or as written by forum participants. This document will also summarize the rich and fruitful exchanges, as well as the recommendations that were proposed by participants. The satisfaction survey results collected at the Forum is also included within the document.

It is our intention that the discussions that took place during the various Forum events will contribute to mapping out collective ideas and implementing concrete action for improving social development and quality of life in the Southern West Island.

Objectives of the Citizens' Forum

The TQSÔI held its third Citizens' Forum on June 17th, 2014 in the city of Kirkland. This event was directly related to its mission - to improve quality of life and encourage social development in the Southern West Island. The open format of forum discussions sparked interesting dialogue on many of the issues that are of shared concern to citizens, organizations and decision-makers.

The main objective of Citizens' Forum is to identify the needs and give voice to concerns of the community. The Forum in Kirkland attracted a smaller number of participants than previous forums, however, those who did participate were committed and enthusiastic.

Citizens, representatives of community groups and organizations, as well elected government officials showed their interest in a variety of topics that were representative of various

dimensions of social development. Forum participants also brought forward their recommendations on what can be done to improve the quality of life in their community.

In total, one or the other of five broad categories were explored and discussed by participants in each of three discussion groups:

- Access to Health and Social Services,
- Transportation,
- Food Security,
- Poverty and Social Inclusion
- Sports and Leisure

Proceedings of the evening

The evening began with a welcome speech and a short TQSOI presentation. The purpose of this presentation was to provide information on the mission and objectives of the Table de Quartier, as well as to explain the proceedings of the evening and objectives of the forum.

Discussion groups were formed following the opening presentation. The Forum attracted 25 participants, mainly representatives of community groups and organisations, as well as citizens and elected officials. Given the smaller number of participants, the format for discussion varied slightly in order to allow for optimum participation. Nonetheless, people had ample time and opportunity to bring forth their issues and to discuss at length and to varying degrees five different topics as identified by the participants: Access to Health and Social Services, Food Security, Poverty and Social Exclusion, Sports and Leisure, Transportation.



Each participant was invited to write on a *Post-It* note a primary concern relating to the issue being addressed in their discussion group. They were encouraged to voice their input and to share individual viewpoints with the rest of the group. Nearing the end of discussion, everyone was asked to jot down on cue cards any ideas, suggestions or possible avenues for further action.

Group animators facilitated the conversations that took place and ensured that each person had an opportunity to express an opinion. They diligently recorded and prepared a summary of the issues, priorities and possible solutions that surfaced throughout the discussions. Each summary was shared with all the participants during the Plenary session that concluded the event.

Summary of discussions

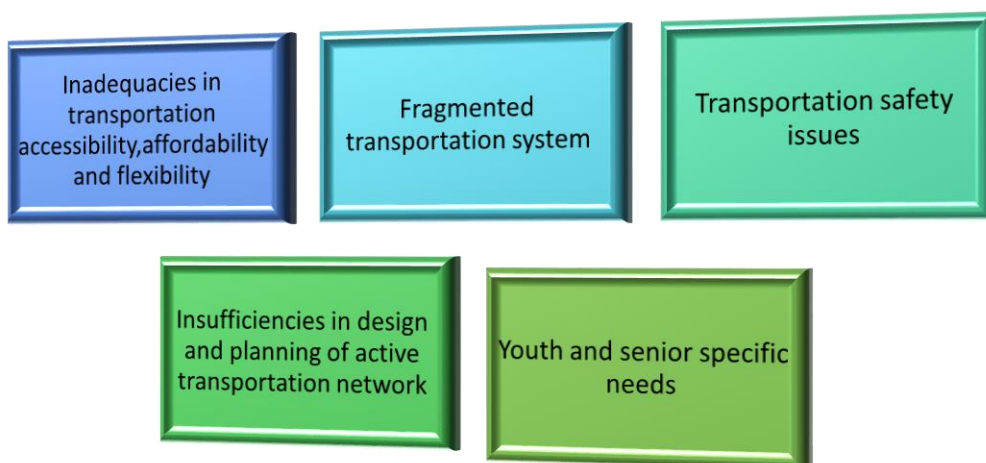
Transportation



Participants at the forum identified a number of subjects relating to active and public transport. Issues around underdevelopment of bike paths, as well as poor train and bus services pervaded the discussions. The need for more express buses was brought up as an important component to improving bus services and it was viewed as essential to link bus-routes between the North and South sectors of the West Island.

Vital concerns were also raised in relation to adequate transportation resources for seniors, as well as parking for train users. Many people felt that there is a lack of effective transportation options for seniors.

Highlights of discussion from priorities



Several participants took issue with the lack of accessibility, affordability and flexibility of transportation. Inadequate and inefficient transportation were identified as barriers to access for seniors and youth. Deficient and fragmented transportation systems, as well as infrequent service along local transportation routes within or between cities, were seen by participants as important stumbling blocks to providing adequate services.

Safety issues regarding bike path routes and North-South connections, as well as shortcomings in active transport networks were salient points of discussion by participants. Bike paths are deemed to be lacking in planning and design as they do not tend to lead to popular places, particularly those accessed by youth, such as schools and shopping malls.

Below is a complete list of the priorities as discussed by participants:

- Transportation resources for seniors
- More express buses needed
- Very few buses linking the North and South of West Island.
- No bike paths in Pointe Claire, along the Lakeshore.
- Transport en commun trop cher pour les jeunes et démunies
- Les trains ne couvrent pas toute la journée. Des quartiers n'ont pas d'accès facilement aux gares.
- Un réseau de transport déficitaire; le lien entre le nord et le sud est fragmentaire (2 à 3 autobus).
- Bus connections between the north and the south are not efficient and not frequent
- 440 urban boulevard
- Corridor Île Bizard
- Arteries in West Island are blocked
- No buses in the Baie D'Urfe industrial park
- STM trial period of 4 months is not long enough for people to change habits in transportation
- Bus schedules limit transportation options (ex: bus 209 ends early between Dorval and Pierrefonds)
- There is no north-south safe connection by bicycle
- There needs to be bike routes that lead to popular places such as malls, schools, etc.
- Bikers do not follow paths, traffic signals, etc.
- Better service on the train de l'Ouest line to encourage more people to take it

Priorities (as written by participants)

- *Lots of delays*
- *Drivers are not understanding*
- *Bike path in Pointe-Claire is needed because it is not safe for people currently*
- *Bike path in Pointe-Claire along Lakeshore*
- *Mettre des raques à bicyclette sur les autobus*
- *Transportation resources for seniors*

Recommendations (as written by participants)

- *Buses should come more often-- waiting period of 30 minutes is long in winter*
- *Shuttle bus for areas that do not have regular routes*
- *Urban boulevard connecting autoroute 40 and Gouin boulevard*
- *Connect autoroute 20 and autoroute 40 through an urban boulevard*
- *Support from provincial elected officials in making improvements*
- *Put bike holders in front and back of bus*
- *More Navette d'Or funding (only exists in Pointe-Claire)*
- *Bring stops closer to senior homes (not residences) to be able to bring them to appointments, grocery, etc*
- *Elderly can't get nowhere! Seniors have too many difficulties getting to services, appointments, doctors, for transportation concerns, being alone, etc., therefore, services would have to come to them like in the old days where doctors and nurses came to your home and there was milk and bread delivery*
- *Bring services to elderly, to their place*
- *Put a lane on the lakeshore for bike paths (very narrow in Pointe-Claire Village)*
- *Start an advocacy group to promote the issue and right to safe road*
- *Educate political representatives*

Access to health and social services



Access to health and social services was a topic addressed by one of the three discussion groups. Discussions revealed a wide array of concerns such as cuts in homecare services, the plight of someone in need and the reduced time allotted to each client in service delivery. People described the challenges to accessing tangible and intangible resources, in particular, buildings, resources, services and supplies, as well as knowledge and information. Belief in the social-system is at a low, due to difficulties in either accessing or in making full use of services.

Participants were especially keen on vocalizing their concerns about how to reach vulnerable populations that are living in isolation or new arrivals to the West Island or to Quebec.

Highlights of discussion from priorities



Below is a complete list of the priorities as discussed by participants:

- Communication both directions between elected members of Parliament and communities. How can we be accessible and open?
- Do citizens know resources that we have in the West Island? Especially for newcomers to know where to turn for help? Outreach?
- How can library help in networking-connecting-informing?
- Accessibility to information. Resources, information needed, networking services and support for people in poverty
- How to reach out to vulnerable people in our community?
- How to have our elected leaders keep in touch and responsive?
- Physical accessibility issues with buildings
- Accessibility to homecare services for someone in need (time being cut by CLSC/CSSS)
- How can we pull together and offer resources to those in need in our community?
- How can we pull our elected leaders of all 3 levels of government?
- How can we change the «culture of helping», not a shameful thing, to a positive thing to enrich everyone's life?
- Vulnerable is not = to poor
- No-one wants to ask for help
- How to help people to help themselves? How can we help newcomers?
- Income Tax services are offered at Volunteer West Island
- Are people accessing available services? Do they know about community organizations and accessing these resources particularly newcomers to West Island or new arrivals to Québec?
- Do we have volunteers who would help people fill out forms in French? Volunteers for a language bank?
- Concern of homelessness of youth in the West Island. How is this issue being addressed? What needs to be addressed? How to involve private sector: business and property owners, etc in finding a solution?
- How to have our elected leaders stay in close contact with citizens and responsive?
- How to reach out to vulnerable people in our community? How can we bring support and caring door-to-door?
- Need to do more outreach as a caring supportive community and remove stigma of receiving help
- Communication, info on resources, pool resources (community organizations, library, elected officials and citizens) to work together, ex.: bank of languages of volunteer for translation, build a network to be pro-active and help people «navigate the system»
- Outreach and advocacy: «Welcome Wagon» for community services
- Break barriers of perceptions—from needs to enriching our lives

- How can we communicate our combined resources to ensuring that all residents can benefit from our many resources? We want to make the West Island community the one that enriches the lives of all our residents
- Reputation and credibility of community group, positive experiences versus shameful experiences: Approach tailored to the West Island culture

Priorities (as written by participants)

- *Local economy*
- *How to communicate*
- *Citizens' access*
- *Citizens helping themselves*
- *Role of library in social development of community*
- *How can library help to share info and outreach to vulnerable groups*
- *Poverty and food security: families, children, seniors*
- *Access to advocacy*
- *Services and supplies*
- *Home care services being cut – clients not receiving what they need and are worried for future*
- *Accessibility to: information, physical access, advocacy*
- *Keys: networking and communication*
- *Resource facilitation: knowledge, access*
- *Keys: networking and communication*
- *Concerns about latest Real-estate developement, less green spaces in some areas, particularly around Fairview Mall. Is there any planning? Urban planning and future impact is a concern*

Recommendations (as written by participants)

- *MP office as a source of referrals and to know issues of citizens, that comes outside of any other sources*
- *Newcomer workshops at Public Libraries: forms, government documents, addressing language barriers*
- *Ressource facilitation (knowledge/access)*
- *Communication, networking*
- *Navigating the system*
- *Removing stigma of receiving help – positive marketing*
- *Pointe-Claire library (or all libraries) can they help newcomers, immigrants to complete forms for immigration, social services, etc? Provide volunteers to help, use Volunteer West Island*

- *Have a streamlined and centralized service to help people to navigate through the system in French (example: social services, government)*
- *Communication with new citizens, welcome wagon, library*

Poverty and social exclusion



Highlights of discussion from priorities



Below is a complete list of the priorities as discussed by participants:

- Les jeunes ont de la difficulté à avoir des projets de vie à long terme et à se projeter dans l'avenir face à leur carrière et emplois.
- Accès à plus de services psychosociaux pour les jeunes à risque (écoute, support, faire connaître ressources et services à leur disposition

Priorities (as written by participants)

- *Les jeunes ont de la difficulté à avoir des objectifs de vie à long terme face à leur carrière et emplois*

Recommendations (as written by participants)

- *Faire des jardins éducatifs (faire pousser fruits et légumes, fines herbes, fleurs*
- *Offrir du temps et de l'écoute aux jeunes pour mieux répondre à leurs besoins (25% des citoyens de Kirkland sont âgés entre 10 et 24 ans*
- *Jeunes: «What's the point?» - Create an event for Youth 12-17 and 18-30 to make youth feel important and cared for and make them discover how they're important for the development of society.*

Leisure and sport



One of three discussion groups raised the issue of *Leisure and Sport*. During this discussion, people underscored the importance of making leisure and sports services accessible and adapting them to the needs of youth. Encouraging positive uses of spaces was seen as a way to develop social aptitudes and would go a long way in reducing delinquency.

We gained insight from comments that were equally persuasive and fervent in bringing home the idea and the importance of providing places, opportunities as well as the means that would give youth the chance to take full advantage of appropriate spaces and to develop according to individual interests and skills.

Highlights of discussion from priorities



Priorities (as written by participants)

- *Accès pour les jeunes à une offre de services loisirs/sports adaptés à leurs besoins et favorisant une appropriation positive des espaces (habiletés sociales, réduction des actes de petites délinquance)*

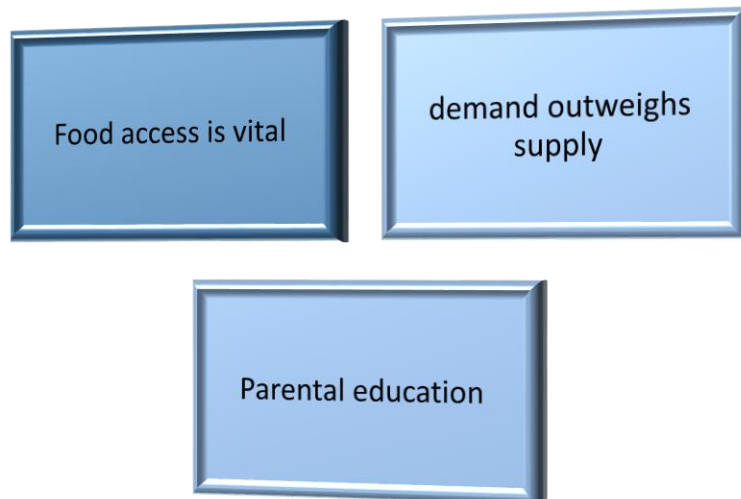
Food security



Access to food remains at the high end of priorities. According to participants, a significant amount of people require assistance, this is especially true for seniors and not just those residing in poor areas. They also stated that, despite food drives organized by the Salvation Army, none of it remains in the West Island. Moreover, and especially alarming is that Food Bank resources are depleted or on the verge of being so. There is an on-going recognition that there needs to be parental education on food security.

Another pressing issue identified stems from an urgency to make improvements in the effectiveness of food distribution and to deliver it directly to the homes of seniors.

Highlights of discussion from priorities



Below is a complete list of the priorities as discussed by participants:

- *Wealth, no poverty is a myth. In reality, there are children and seniors and families who don't have food security*
- *Food banks are lacking food*
- *Seniors from all-over needing food, not only in poor areas*
- *Lots more people needing help*
- *Food drive with Salvation Army is popular but none of it stays in the West Island*
- *Food delivery for seniors at home*
- *Parental education*
- *Accessibility to food*

Priorities (as written by participants)

- *Access to food*
- *Food delivery for seniors at home*
- *Agriculture urbaine*
- *Sécurité alimentaire*

Recommendations (as written by participants)

- *Collective kitchens (break social isolation, sharing, etc)*
- *Find places like Équipe Entreprise and Meals on Wheels to increase food delivery*
- *Increase Bonne Boite Bonne Bouffe*
- *Plus d'agriculture urbaine (sécurité alimentaire)*
- *Ask big companies like Metro, IGA to donate the 1/3 of the food they throw out that is still edible*
- *Have cities rotate and do monthly drives to provide continuous support to food banks*
- *Door-to-door food drives*
- *Faire des jardins éducatifs et pousser des légumes et fruits, fines herbes et fleurs, etc., (potager)*

Event evaluation report

All participants were encouraged to fill-out a survey in order to assist organizers in assessing the degree of satisfaction with the event. In all, a total of five surveys were completed, providing us with essential and relevant feedback and enabling us to gage the level of satisfaction of people that attended the Forum. From this survey, we were able to decipher what motivated people to participate and to determine the most pressing priorities as voiced by participants. The questions, responses and results of the survey are provided below.

What motivated you to attend this forum?

Many people came to the Forum for the purpose of learning more about the needs of the community. Still others came to express their concerns, and were encouraged to participate due to an involvement in the community.



- Invitation
- Community involvement
- Concern and desire to work together to help. These are all our issues, or will be
- L'importance de développement social
- To learn more about our community, the services and the people

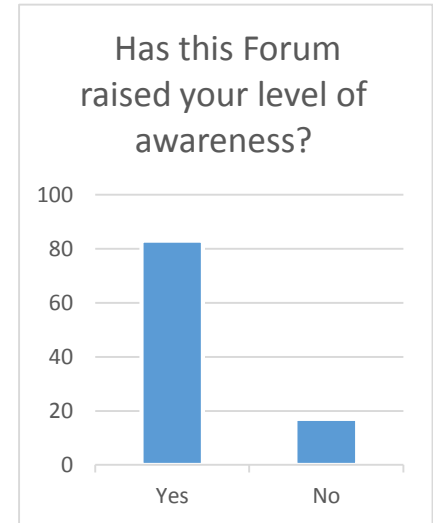
Did the forum allow you to express your thoughts and concerns?

The response was overwhelmingly positive, 100 % replied that the Forum allowed them to express their opinions.

Has this Forum raised your level of awareness?

One extremely positive result of the event is that participants wanted to understand local issues and, by the end of the Forum, had a heightened awareness of issues of which they were previously unaware.

In total, 83% of participants attributed an increased level of awareness to their participation in the Forum. They heard a variety of opinions on different issues and, consequently, felt that they had increased their knowledge, were able to establish contacts or achieved clarity on a number of issues. There was a distinct recognition that they were also engaging in concrete action. Here are some revealing comments:



How this Forum raised your level of awareness?

- Issues I was not aware of
- More information/contacts/clarification/action

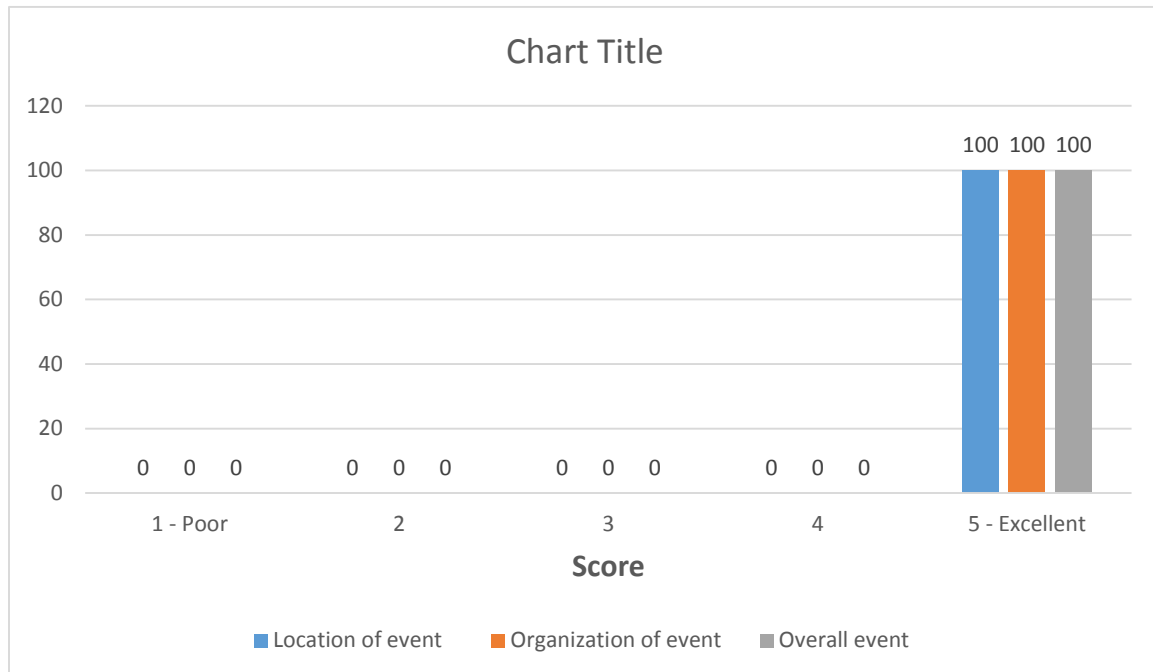
Would you attend another Citizens' Forum?

In total, 100% of respondents replied that they would like to participate in another Citizens' Forum.

An additional question related to the level of participation measured the willingness and the intent to be involved or informed of TQSOI activities: 40% of respondents subscribed to TQSOI newsletter, 40% signed the membership form, 20% indicated that they would want to be a part of a planning committee and 60% replied that they would want to attend future events.

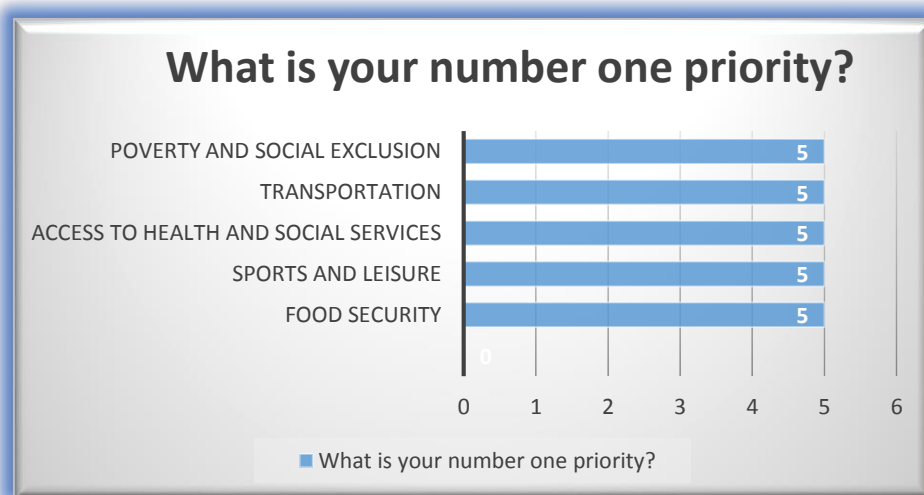
Evaluation of the: Location of event, Organization of event, Overall event

In relation to the degree of satisfaction with the event, on a scale of 1 to 5, 5-excellent to 1-poor, of those participants that responded to the questionnaire, 100% scored the event as 5 or «*Excellent*» for its location. A matching score of 100% was recorded for both organization and overall appreciation of the event.



What is your number one priority?

A final question asked participants to name the first and foremost priority; many identified more than one per topic.



- Solutions to community issues.
- Access to community services
- Communication/networking and resource facilitation for: knowledge, information, accessibility and advocacy
- L'intinérance
- Food banks
- Seniors

Some comments from participants

Forum participants expressed their appreciation of this initiative through concrete feedback and comments. One participant was grateful for the opportunity and expressed this sentiment in the form of «*Thank you*». Another deemed the experience as a medium towards achieving positive social action. Still another participant found value in the mechanism for dialogue as it proved to be especially useful for voicing an opinion or point of view. Teamwork was also noteworthy.

Following the Forum

Subsequent to the Forum held in Kirkland, a number of initiatives were taken to deliver the concerns and ideas expressed by Forum participants to decision-makers, primary or affected stakeholders or the community at-large.

The results of *Citizens' Forum* will be included in an upcoming *Portrait of the Population of the Southern West Island*.

