



The West Island

THE TERRITORY AND ITS POPULATION

The West Island takes up a third of the entire territory of the Island of Montreal and has 13% of its population, with over 235,000 people. Administratively, this territory is fairly complex, as it comprises 12 municipalities found to the north and south of Autoroute 40. The north contains four cities-turned-boroughs of the City of Montreal (Roxboro, Pierrefonds, Sainte-Geneviève, L'Île-Bizard) along with a neighbouring municipality (Dollard-Des-Ormeaux). The south has seven municipalities: Beaconsfield, Baie-D'Urfé, Dorval, Kirkland, Senneville, Pointe-Claire and Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue.

The West Island is characterized by a high rate of children (17% children aged 0 to 14 years, compared to the Montreal average of 15%) and families (68%, compared to 63%), half of whom reside in Pierrefonds and Dollard-Des-Ormeaux.

Despite the notable demographic weight of youth, the territory's aging population is more significant than that of Montreal. While youth had a clear advantage in 2006, the gap between children under 14 and seniors decreased considerably in 2011. In general, the territory has the characteristics of a well-off suburb, with a low-income rate well below the Montreal average (12%, compared to 25%). However, the West Island nevertheless has vulnerable sectors and major social problems.

Diverse socioeconomic realities

The north and south parts of the West Island have different social and economic realities. Generally, the north part has higher percentages of people in a situation of poverty or who are vulnerable. A total of nearly 27,000 people have a low income, more than half of whom live in Pierrefonds and Dollard-Des-Ormeaux, two of the West Island's most populated communities by far. More than half of immigrants in the West Island (58%) also live in this sector. Multiple social problems crop up together in sectors that local stakeholders consider vulnerable: Cloverdale-À-Ma-Baie, Pierrefonds-Centre, Roxboro, Sainte-Geneviève and Dollard-Des-Ormeaux-Est. Compared to the West Island as a whole, these sectors have a higher percentage of low-income individuals, more children who aren't ready to start school, more single-parent families, and higher numbers of new immigrants.

In the south, certain sectors such as Dorval, Pointe-Claire and Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue are more affected by problems related to poverty and social isolation (e.g., the high cost of housing, food insecurity, and a lack of access to services).

SNAPSHOT OF THE TERRITORY

The West Island represents 13% of the population of the Island of Montreal
Total population of 235,000.

A territory separated in two (north and south) by Autoroute 40 and that includes 12 municipalities

The north has five neighbourhoods, the most populated of which are Pierrefonds (62,530 people) and Dollard-Des-Ormeaux (49,635), followed far behind by L'Île-Bizard (14,640), Roxboro (5,880) and Sainte-Geneviève (3,455).

The south has seven neighbourhoods: Pointe-Claire (30,790), Kirkland (21,255), Beaconsfield (19,505), Dorval (18,210), Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue (5,075), Baie-D'Urfé (3,850) and Senneville (920).

Significant presence of youth and families, most of whom live in Pierrefonds and Dollard-Des-Ormeaux

17% youth under the age of 14 for the entire West Island, compared to 15% on the Island of Montreal.

For the entire territory, the rate of families with children exceeds that of Montreal (68%, compared to 63%) and represents 44,780 families. Half of these families reside in Pierrefonds (12,145, or 27% families) and Dollard-Des-Ormeaux (9,840, or 23% families).

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COMMUNITY DYNAMICS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Centraide of Greater Montreal supports 14 agencies and projects in the West Island, including two neighbourhood roundtables (one in the north and one in the south), for a total investment of \$1,248,771 in 2015-2016.

The West Island is a large territory in both area and population. For vulnerable people, two main factors can hamper their access to resources: the dispersion of community agencies and limited public transit service. Some agencies are located in the most disadvantaged areas and mainly serve the surrounding population (e.g., Coopérative d'habitation Village Cloverdale), while others have a supraregional mandate and cover the entire West Island.

What's more, these agencies work in a relatively complex context due to the West Island's multiple administrative bodies and their corresponding realities.

This complexity poses big challenges for the coordination of social development. For a long time, the territory's actions have been coordinated on a more sectoral basis (e.g., separate roundtables for the needs of seniors and for children, youth and families) rather than a territorial one. Over the past few years, the territory's consultation dynamics have changed a great deal. While a neighbourhood roundtable already existed in the north, its counterpart in the south (the Table de Quartier du Sud de l'Ouest-de-l'Île) only formalized its existence in 2014 but is continuing the coordination work initiated several years ago. This table has achieved solid momentum and has become the 30th neighbourhood roundtable to join the Initiative montréalaise de soutien au développement social local (IMSDSL). Thanks to its work, the little-known realities of vulnerable people in the south (single parents, isolated seniors and newcomers, etc.) have been better documented and communicated.

Also in 2014, Concertation Ouest-de-l'Île (CODI) was created out of a multi-year reflection and collective mobilization process. This body addresses issues shared by the entire West Island (particularly those of transportation and housing) that were identified as priorities at the first social development forum in 2010. The goal is to facilitate collaboration between the roundtables in the north and south and coordinate actions with sectoral roundtables and other key actors in the West Island's development (i.e., elected officials, centres for local development, the economic sector, and the STM). The West Island's particular characteristics mean that local stakeholders have to innovate when it comes to coordinated social development.

A population that is still young but aging quickly

The gap between youth and seniors has decreased significantly (-4%) since 2006, as the demographic weight of seniors has grown (13% to 15%) while that of youth has decreased (19% to 17%).

Low-income rate considerably below the Montreal averages for the total population and for all population groups across the territory, with the exception of Sainte-Geneviève

Low-income rate for all municipalities half the rate of Montreal (12%, compared to 25%), except in Sainte-Geneviève (29%).

The low-income rate for children aged 0 to 5 years is also significantly higher in Sainte-Geneviève, where it reaches 38% (the Island of Montreal: 29%).

27,000 people living with a low income, more than half of whom reside in Pierrefonds and Dollard-Des-Ormeaux

9,250 in Pierrefonds and 6,005 in Dollard-Des-Ormeaux.

Higher number of immigrants in the north

58% of immigrants in the West Island reside in Pierrefonds (23,800), and Dollard-Des-Ormeaux (19,405). Since 2006, these numbers have increased by 27% and 8%, respectively.

Three out of five recent immigrants (62%) in the West Island live in Pierrefonds and Dollard-Des-Ormeaux.

Pierrefonds has the highest number of recent immigrants (4,150) out of all 12 municipalities, which represents significant growth since 2006 (+37%).

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ISSUES THAT ENGAGE CENTRAIDE

Some issues identified as priorities by the community are in line with Centraide's mission and orientations:

— Action in sectors with a higher concentration of poverty

In the north: Children, youth and families

Stakeholders in the north part of the territory are particularly active in the area of early childhood development and support for families, especially in the most disadvantaged areas. The community's concerns include supporting the development of parenting skills, devising initiatives to better reach out to the parents of Allophone children, fostering the transition from primary to secondary school, and harmonizing academic perseverance efforts among institutional stakeholders. In the area of early childhood development, we are closely following key projects, such as the one supported by WIAIH (an agency for people with intellectual disabilities or autism) and the Centre Kizmet to create a family centre in Sainte-Geneviève that meets needs in a sector where 38% of children aged 0 to 5 live with a low income.

Social problems related to youth and the development of their full potential are found in both underprivileged areas (in the north) and more affluent areas (in the south), where many youth face "latchkey syndrome." Young people primarily face psychosocial problems such as drug and alcohol use, school problems, psychological distress and severe conduct disorders. Sectors with a concentration of youth from an immigrant background (such as Cloverdale and Dollard-Des-Ormeaux-Est) require services and initiatives that are adapted to such problems as communication, culture shock and social isolation.

We encourage the community to continue optimizing initiatives to address local needs and priorities. For example, we hope that different initiatives for children and youth in the north will become part of a broader vision of social development. In this context, the roundtable should further develop its leadership to address issues like food security and access to affordable housing, which are some of the determining factors of poverty for children, youth and their families.

In the south: Improving the living conditions of vulnerable people

In this sector, the roundtable and its partners have developed more detailed knowledge of the needs and realities of vulnerable people. This work has also pushed them to think about possible solutions to related problems. The fact that the community has disseminated a comprehensive profile of needs—and that local stakeholders have taken ownership of this profile—should help the community develop a common vision to target and more effectively coordinate existing initiatives or even develop new collective actions. Centraide will pay attention to the needs of agencies and the roundtable that may arise from the implementation of a coordinated action plan.

Low percentages of single-parent families, with the exception of Sainte-Geneviève

Rate of single-parent families varies from 15% (Kirkland and Baie-D'Urfé) to 28% (Dorval). Rate of single-parent families highest in Sainte-Geneviève at 41% (Island of Montreal: 33%).

In actual numbers, Pierrefonds (3,075), Dollard-Des-Ormeaux (2,175) and Pointe-Claire (1,280) are the sectors with the most single-parent families.

Early childhood development and school readiness are two major issues in multiple sectors in the north

The percentages of children who are vulnerable in at least one area of development when they start kindergarten are above the Montreal average (29%) for Pierrefonds Centre Nord (31%), Cloverdale-À-Ma-Baie (35%), Dollard-Des-Ormeaux-Est (36%) and Sainte-Geneviève (37%).

Under-representation of renter households, in contrast with Montreal (except in Sainte-Geneviève)

Percentages of renter households for all municipalities much lower than the Montreal average (61%), ranging from 6% (Kirkland) to 41% (Dorval and Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue). Only the Sainte-Geneviève sector has a higher rate than Montreal (65%).

Demographic and economic data: 2011 Census, Québec Survey of Child Development in Kindergarten (QSCDK 2012).

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– Joint social development

Over the past few years, we have seen organizations and communities work together more to improve the living conditions and quality of life of their community's most vulnerable people. These coordination and consultation efforts have led to profiles to diagnose problems and create action plans for the entire territory. The next steps should let the roundtables in the north and south develop and implement a coordinated action plan. Centraide wants to encourage and support agencies and communities to continue in this direction. In the long term, this planning should lead to more effective initiatives, particularly when it comes to poverty.

Challenges remain as to how to align the neighbourhood roundtables' response to local needs with the work of Concertation Ouest-de-l'Île, which deals with the supraregional priorities of transportation and housing. We want to help the West Island strengthen its collective ability to act, particularly through the development of skills and leadership.

– Accessibility of services

For the entire West Island, the lack of public transit services makes it hard for people without a car to get around the territory. Agencies must deal with this reality, which has a major impact on people's ability to meet their basic needs, such as getting enough food to eat. Points of service or even mobile services are solutions that community agencies still need to explore to better reach their target populations. Centraide will pay particular attention to new initiatives that improve food security and accessibility.

INVESTMENT FROM CENTRAIDE OF GREATER MONTREAL 2015 - 2016

Volunteer action

- Volunteer West Island
- West Island Citizen Advocacy

Living conditions

- West Island Community Resource Centre

Community development

- Community Council – West Island South
- Table de quartier du Nord-Ouest de l'Île de Montréal

Youth and families

- Big Brothers Big Sisters of West Island
- Carrefour des 6-12 ans de Pierrefonds-Est
- Cloverdale Multi-Ressources
- Projet communautaire de Pierrefonds
- West Island Youth Action (AJOI)

Inclusion

- Friends for Mental Health, West Island
- WIAIH: for people with an intellectual disability or autism

Neighbourhood life

- West Island Women's Centre
- YMCA—West-Island Community Centre