



31/08/2020

AGE FRIENDLY POLICY

Montreal West





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MAYOR'S FOREWORD



The Town of Montreal West has immense respect for its residents and, in particular, for its seniors. They contribute undeniably to the community through their involvement and the vastness of their experience. It is natural that we should strive to provide them the most peaceful and pleasant living environment possible. Our wish is that they enjoy each passing day without worrying about their ability to stay in their Town.

Our seniors have devoted a lot of their time to ensure our future generations become rising stars. We must tell them that concrete actions will be carried out to allow their adventure to continue at home and in their community.

By adopting our *Municipalité Amie de Aînés* Policy and Action Plan for 2020-2025, the Municipal Council affirms its desire to create the right conditions for seniors in Montreal West to stay happily in their community.

Therefore, we are committed to coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the action plan, in close collaboration with the Municipal Council, Municipal services and the MADA Steering Committee.

I will take this opportunity to thank the members of the MADA Steering Committee as well as the seniors who participated in the various consultations. Thanks to the work they have undertaken, we have the chance to reap the fruits of their efforts.

Beny Masella,
Mayor and friend of our Seniors



A WORD FROM THE CHAIRPERSON



Montreal West's small size coupled with the wealth of services it offers have helped cultivate a very strong sense of community and loyalty. Many residents have lived here for decades and have shown a great desire to remain in the community as they age.

Therefore, we have received a lot of constructive citizen engagement since embarking upon our goal to become an Age-Friendly Community. While our seniors have let us know that they appreciate the current range of services, they have also pointed out certain shortcomings and provided suggestions for improvement.

The end result is this document, our Age-Friendly Plan of Action, the first of its type in Montreal West. It is the result of the collaboration and cooperation of a great many people over the past two and a half years.

First and foremost, I would like to thank the MADA Steering Committee. This very dedicated group met numerous times to develop a mandate, undertake widespread consultation, and create an Action Plan. I cannot thank the members enough for their perseverance, insight, hard work, and their wonderful spirit. It was my great pleasure to chair this amazing group of volunteers.

I would also like to acknowledge the assistance given by Dr. Christina Wolfson, a Montreal West resident, and her team from the Neuroepidemiology Research Unit of the Research Institute of the McGill University Health Centre. Their assistance in the design and analysis of our survey was most appreciated.

Finally, I also want to acknowledge the many residents who completed the questionnaire and participated in the focus groups and consultations. The plan was made much stronger by their valuable input.

As with all strategic plans, this is a living document which will evolve and be reviewed on a regular basis. I look forward to continuing our efforts to ensure that Montreal West remains both a wonderful town to grow up in and a wonderful one to age in as well.

Colleen Feeney,
Councillor and friend of our seniors
Chair, MADA Steering Committee



STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

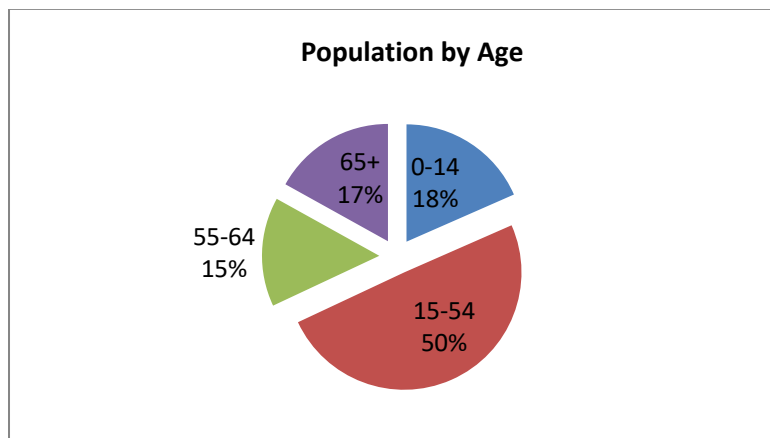
- **Colleen Feeney**, Chair, Montreal West Councillor
- **Fred Braman**, MW Senior Resident representative
- **Paula Cordeau**, Director, Montreal West Department of Recreation and Culture
- **Karen Derouaux**, Counsellor, Alzheimer Group, AGI
- **Stéphanie Dupont**, Community Worker, Program for the Support of Senior's Autonomy, CIUSSS Centre-Ouest-de-l'île-de-Montréal, MW Resident
- **Joan Foster**, Home Care Nurse, Program for the Support of Senior's Autonomy, CIUSSS Centre-Ouest-de-l'île-de-Montréal, MW Resident
- **Zelda Freitas**, Social Worker/Coordinator/Area of Expertise - Caregiving, Center for Research and Expertise in Social Gerontology (CREGÉS), MW Resident
- **Dr. Shannon Hebblethwaite**, Director, Concordia University engAGE Center on Aging
- **Megan Joy**, Faculty member, Concordia University, Area Leader, engAGE Center on Aging
- **Rosalind Knitter**, MW Senior Resident representative
- **Joanne MacPhail**, MW Senior Resident representative
- **Sheri McLeod**, Executive Director, NDG Senior Citizens' Council
- **Marion Scully**, Montreal West Culture, Leisure and Special Events Coordinator
- **Ron Smith**, MW Senior Resident representative
- **Tracie Swim**, Extra Miles, Senior Visiting Program, MW Resident
- **Raffaella Di Stasio**, Director General, Town of Montreal West, ex-officio member



TOWN PROFILE

As elsewhere in Canada, the senior population in Montreal West is growing as a result of decreasing birth rates, increasing life expectancy, and the advancing age of the Baby Boomer cohort.

According to the 2016 Canadian census, Montreal West was home to 5,050 residents, a small decrease of 35 from the census of 2011.



Among this population, 855 residents, or 16.9%, are adults aged 65 and over. This is a 20% increase from five years earlier.

By 2036, 22.6% of the population is estimated to be 65 years of age or older with a third of residents over the age of 55.

Montreal West Projected Population: Percentage by Age Group¹

Age	2016	2021	2026	2036
55+	32.0%	32.7%	32.9%	34.0%
60+	24.0%	25.3%	26.7%	28.2%
65+	16.9%	18.4%	20.1%	22.6%

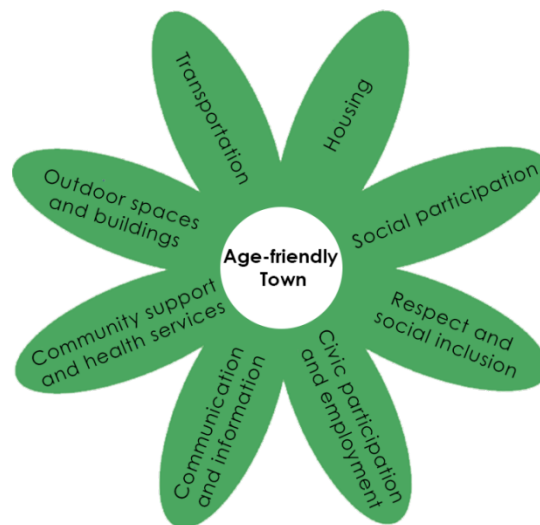
This demographic shift will likely be the most significant factor in the planning and delivery of services for all governments and organizations. Municipalities must learn to adapt services to support residents' well-being. This is why, in 2018, Montreal West undertook the project to become an Age-Friendly municipality.

¹ Based on projections of Institut de la statistique du Québec December 2019

WHAT IS AN AGE-FRIENDLY MUNICIPALITY?

The concept of Age-Friendly Municipalities was developed by the World Health Organization in 2005. They define an age-friendly municipality as one which encourages active aging by optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age. It is a place that works to improve the livelihood of people of all ages.

In practical terms, an age-friendly city adapts its structures and services to be accessible to and inclusive of older people with varying needs and capacities. Based on this definition, the WHO has described the characteristics of an Age-Friendly community according to the following 8 factors or domains:



Using these guidelines, the Town of Montreal West, in consultation with residents, developed a plan with concrete objectives and actions to ensure our policies, programs, services and infrastructure are designed to enable older people to stay healthy, connected, and living in their home or community for as long as comfortably possible.

The effect is even more widespread however. An age-friendly community benefits residents of *all* ages as it strives to provide a safe and secure neighbourhood with the necessary supports and services to enhance all these eight important aspects of life. Becoming an age-friendly municipality makes Montreal West a better town for all.



METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE

In order to identify the needs of the community and determine how the Town can support them with our services and facilities, the Steering Committee solicited input from residents using a variety of methods.

Survey: With the help of McGill University and Concordia University's Center for Aging, a questionnaire was developed and mailed out to over 1200 residents aged 60 and over. The survey was based on the eight principal topics identified by the World Health Organization (WHO) determining a municipality's age-friendliness. The questionnaire was completed by 425 respondents. The results also included over 75 pages of comments, providing a rich source of information.

Focus Groups: Six focus groups involving 40 residents aged 60 and over were also conducted. Participants held in-depth discussions of the survey results, highlighting their satisfaction with and expectations of services provided by the Town, and suggesting possible improvements.

Key Informant Interviews: Two one-hour interviews were held with key individuals who regularly interact with seniors in the Town, to get their opinion on how the Town can best serve that population.

Public Consultations: The survey results were presented by McGill and Concordia Universities at two public consultations. These were followed by round-table discussions involving another 60 residents.

At the conclusion of the consultations, the information was consolidated, needs were identified, and a Plan of Action was developed setting out objectives and actions.

Community Feedback: Prior to its finalization, the Plan of Action was available on the Montreal West website and residents were invited to comment on it.

All these methods helped us to:

- better understand the needs and expectations of residents 60 years of age and older
- assess the strengths and weaknesses of the Town's existing services
- develop this Plan of Action based on the WHO criteria which addresses the most salient issues for our seniors



OUR POLICY OBJECTIVE

The objective of this policy is to make Montreal West a more age-friendly community, empowering residents of all ages to participate as full and meaningful community members. It defines our commitment to providing a supportive living environment for our seniors. It is based on the principles of Healthy Aging and involves creating an environment that fosters participation, health and security.

OUR DEFINITION OF SENIOR

For practical reasons, in our MADA action plan, we have defined a senior as anyone aged 65 and over, to be consistent with the data we are using from Statistics Canada which uses this age categorization. As part of our process, since the Action Plan extends from 2020-2025, all residents aged 60 and over were consulted.

OUR VALUES

To serve and promote the well-being of seniors in our Town, this plan is based on the following values:

Community: which reflects a strong sense of belonging to the Town, supporting opportunities for older residents to stay in the community as they age

Respect: which promotes respect for individuals of all ages through mutual understanding

Participation: where people have an opportunity to participate in physical and social activities

Safety: where we promote safety and security in the outside environment, in public buildings and in emergency situations

Openness: where we facilitate access to information and encourage consultation



PLAN OF ACTION 2020-2025

OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS

The outside environment and public buildings have a major impact on the mobility, independence and quality of life of older people, and affect their ability to age in place.

When people view a neighbourhood as safe and accessible it encourages outdoor activities and engagement with the community. Accessibility involves removing barriers that limit opportunities for those with disabilities, including older adults with age-related impairments, some which may require the use of wheelchairs or walkers.

Some of the barriers noted in our consultations included: lack of accessibility of public buildings, insufficient night lighting on some residential streets, and poor condition of sidewalks.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Promote safety and independent movement throughout the Town
 - ensure sidewalks are well maintained and adequately cleared of snow, ice and other obstructions
 - develop a system for reporting sidewalk cracks and potholes
 - continue the plan to replace and improve lighting on streets
 - follow best practices to provide visible, well-lit crosswalks with clear signage
 - provide more access to public washrooms and better signage as to their location
- 2) Improve general accessibility to public buildings
 - increase the number of buildings with access ramps and rails
 - increase the number of automatic doors in the public buildings
 - seek funding to install elevators in buildings where possible
 - provide adequate interior lighting in public buildings, particularly for meeting spaces
 - ensure renovations to public buildings are designed to be senior-friendly inside and out
 - add maps of the town in appropriate places that indicate all public buildings, washrooms, and services
- 3) Improve the quality and features of public space to encourage active lifestyles
 - ensure our parks are senior-friendly, with water fountains and benches in the shade
 - upgrade the walking/running track in Hodgson Field
 - develop a park walk with signage and benches
 - integrate greenery and street furniture within existing landscape
 - explore the development of a community garden



TOWN OF MONTREAL WEST
AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY

- encourage enhancements to our public buildings and library adapted to the needs of seniors
- seek grants to build a new recreation center adapted to the needs of seniors

4) Urban Planning

- adopt urban planning guidelines to promote age-friendliness in commercial establishments (e.g. ramps, wider aisles)
- encourage new commercial establishments with a variety of amenities so as to improve the walkability of Town



TRANSPORTATION

Transportation, particularly accessible and affordable public transport, is a key factor in active aging. Transportation allows people not only to access amenities of daily life, but also to participate in activities, connect with family and friends, and contribute to their communities.

Almost 90% of survey respondents reported that their primary form of transportation is driving. Walking and public transportation (bus and train) are the next most common. Those who use public transportation indicate that the inconvenient schedules and lack of shelters in bad weather are the main detractors.

The condition and design of transportation-related infrastructure such as signage, traffic lights and sidewalks also affects personal mobility.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Facilitate seniors' access to public transit
 - approach the STM and EXO regarding the possibility of increasing the diversity and frequency of bus and train routes and improved rates for seniors
 - request that the STM increase the number of bus shelters
 - approach EXO to provide increased train station access and better maintenance of train platform, especially in winter
 - increase access to information on train and bus schedules

- 2) Facilitate pedestrian and bicycle safety in town
 - provide signage and investigate options to ensure pedestrians, bicycles, baby carriages, mobility scooters, etc. can safely co-exist on Westminster
 - consider the addition of bike paths in the Town

- 3) Provide means for more senior participation in Town events
 - evaluate the possibility of car pools or volunteer drivers to Town facilities
 - explore a volunteer shuttle for Town events ex. Remembrance Day, Canada Day



COMMUNICATION

Staying connected to people, activities and events, and the ability to access information, is vital for active aging. It reduces isolation and promotes participation. Age-friendly communities ensure that information about community events or available services is timely, relevant and readily accessible in a variety of formats suitable for older adults.

The survey showed that 94% of respondents have access to the internet, and 40% consult the Town website for information. However, the vast majority reported finding out about events and services primarily through The Informer, a Montreal West monthly newspaper. Unfortunately, they also reported that its door-to-door delivery was not always reliable.

Respondents felt that the website needed improvement and lacked information on various topics of interest to them, such as health and community services. Consolidating information relevant to seniors on one web page would facilitate their search for information.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Facilitate access to information for seniors
 - develop a seniors' webpage on the Montreal West website with information pertaining to services for seniors
 - assess specific information needs for seniors not already served by existing communication tools
 - ask The Informer to seek ways to ensure more reliable delivery
 - report regularly in The Informer on issues related to our age-friendly community
 - install message board(s) in central location(s) providing information on Town events
 - consider including a page on senior resources in the Recreation Services booklet
 - consider holding a technology workshop for seniors
 - build an inventory of neighbourhood organizations and gathering places where information can be effectively distributed to seniors
- 2) Establish mechanisms for ongoing consultation
 - establish a seniors' advisory committee to identify needs and resources and follow up on the MADA Plan of Action
 - consider an annual consultation with seniors
- 3) Establish a plan of action to reach seniors in times of emergency
 - seek to identify isolated or vulnerable seniors
 - create mechanisms for communicating with them, particularly in times of emergency
 - collaborate with existing Emergency Preparedness programs, e.g. Montreal West Emergency Preparedness Plan, Fire Department (SIM) Emergency Evacuation Assistance Program



HOUSING

Housing is essential to safety and well-being. Appropriate housing and support that allows older people to access community and social services within their community and has a great effect on their independence and quality of life. The availability of appropriate, affordable housing allowing older adults to age at home is essential in age-friendly communities.

Although 90% of survey respondents currently own their own home, a good number are contemplating downsizing in the foreseeable future due to issues related to health, home maintenance and/or cost. Over 85% stated that staying in Montreal West as they age was important or very important to them. Indeed, the lack of appropriate housing and accessible housing options (rental units, condos or a seniors' home) was the number one concern voiced in all the surveys, focus groups and public consultations conducted.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Increase the housing options for seniors wishing to remain in Montreal West
 - create an inventory of existing housing by category, e.g. duplex, condo, apartment
 - identify areas for potential future development
 - promote housing developments adapted to the needs of seniors
 - research the feasibility and impact of other housing alternatives for seniors: intergenerational dwellings, co-living, granny flats
 - consider revising by-laws if necessary to encourage a diverse range of housing
 - explore options for affordable social housing for seniors (long term)

- 2) Help seniors to continue living independently in their own homes
 - make information available on home help services (e.g. household maintenance, snow removal)
 - publicize available resources on house adaption including information on tax credits and other government financial assistance programs
 - inform seniors that they can set up a payment plan for property tax installments



SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

Social participation and social support are clearly connected to good mental and physical health. Participating in social, cultural, spiritual and family activities in the community allows older people to exercise their competence. It also helps them maintain or establish supportive and caring relationships and is the key to staying informed.

Although the Town of Montreal West currently offers a number of senior programs, those surveyed expressed a need for increased informal gathering opportunities and for inter-generational and educational activities.

Lack of awareness of activities and events was identified as a possible reason for non-participation. A concerted effort should be made to encourage and motivate older people to participate, especially those who are isolated or less mobile.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Foster the participation of seniors in Town activities
 - ensure a sense of belonging to the community is maintained, including outreach to former MW senior residents
 - find ways to attract the pre-seniors and "younger" seniors to the 50+ Club
 - develop ways to reach out to caregivers, and to seniors who are isolated or less mobile to invite them to participate in events

- 2) Promote healthy, active living
 - maintain fitness programming for seniors
 - explore setting up a walking group
 - set up educational workshops on health and wellness
 - remain open to pilot new recreational programs based on demand
 - consider alternate pricing structures for programs for seniors
 - identify recreational resources available within nearby communities

- 3) Promote the social integration of seniors
 - set up a social space for people to gather informally
 - organize social events such as dances, pub nights, cafes targeted to seniors
 - collaborate with local organizations for social events



RESPECT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

According to the World Health Organization, although older adults generally felt respected, there were also times when they experienced a lack of consideration from others. This is often due to little contact between generations, and a widespread ignorance about aging among younger generations.

A general feeling of respect and recognition of the role that older adults play in our society is a critical component for establishing an age-friendly community. Age-friendly communities foster positive images of aging and inter-generational understanding.

While most older people surveyed in Montreal West felt respected and included, there was a desire for more inter-generational events and opportunities to participate in Town affairs.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Provide opportunities for community groups to come together to promote mutual understanding
 - create opportunities for inter-generational interaction and activities
 - plan community outreach to discuss ageism
 - set up awareness programs in schools to sensitize students to aging
 - explore initiating a "caring neighbour" campaign
 - sensitize the businesses to the needs of seniors

- 2) Publically recognize the contribution of seniors to the community
 - continue to acknowledge the contributions of seniors to the community through Volunteer Night, articles in The Informer, etc.
 - take steps to recognize National Seniors' Day and Caregiver Week
 - review volunteering opportunities to reflect the various ways people can volunteer



COMMUNITY SUPPORT, HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Health and support services are essential to maintaining vitality and independence for older adults. This includes a wide network of services, including hospitals, healthcare providers, caregivers, family supports, home care, and community organizations. When evaluating age-friendliness, access to quality services that support physical and mental well-being is crucial.

Generally, Montreal West seniors consider themselves in good health and feel well served by the network of resources available. However, a good number would like to know more about the services which are offered. Many respondents reported requiring help for various tasks, notably home maintenance, income tax preparation and house cleaning. They were looking for more information on where these services could be obtained.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Publicize and promote available Health and Social Services and Community Resources
 - continue partnerships with local health services (flu clinic, foot clinic)
 - list available resources on a seniors' webpage on the Montreal West website
 - promote a lecture series on relevant topics: health, finances, legal issues, home security
 - report on and possibly film the lecture series to reach a larger audience
 - consider hosting a community services exhibition
 - continue to regularly promote and distribute all materials that inform seniors of services and resources, for example the Seniors' Community Notebook

- 2) Take measures to increase the safety and well-being of our senior population
 - investigate programs that provide "check-ins" and social support
 - establish a group of volunteers to periodically reach out to isolated residents and collaborate with existing programs
 - investigate activating a "block captain" communications network in the Town
 - encourage seniors to subscribe to the Town alert systems: Code RED and e-bulletin
 - encourage individuals at greater risk to subscribe to the emergency evacuation list kept by the Fire Department
ville.montreal.qc.ca/sim/en/emergency-evacuation-assistance-program
 - explore the possibility of providing a way for seniors to access various services they need (home repairs, house cleaning, help with banking, etc.)



EMPLOYMENT & CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Older adults do not stop contributing to their communities upon retirement. Many continue to do paid or voluntary work. An age-friendly community offers opportunities for older adults to continue to contribute to their communities through employment and volunteerism.

Volunteerism is an important form of social engagement. It contributes to the social and economic well-being of seniors and their communities. It can also satisfy a variety of needs from increased health and fitness, to opportunities for socializing and the satisfaction of sharing and learning new skills.

We have many engaged seniors and lifelong volunteers in Montreal West. They are a politically active group, attend public meetings, and almost half of those surveyed volunteer on a weekly basis. While many of them want to continue and even seek new opportunities, others are feeling overburdened and need some relief. A new generation of volunteers is needed to take their place. The recruitment of younger seniors is a key challenge.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Increase meaningful volunteer opportunities for older residents
 - help residents discover and get training for volunteer positions
 - develop succession planning for volunteers, reaching out to recent retirees
 - inform residents of both the need for and the positive benefits of volunteering
 - create a list of volunteer jobs for the Town based on needs
 - investigate the need for a Volunteer Coordinator

- 2) Encourage the participation of seniors in Town affairs
 - encourage the involvement of seniors in consultations on Town issues
 - ensure a member of Council has the responsibility for the Seniors' dossier
 - announce opportunities for membership on Town committees in The Informer whenever possible