



NDG COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN & ACTION PLAN 2016 – 2021

PART I

NDG COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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This document is the first of three that collectively represent the NDG Community Strategic Plan 2016-2021. Part I is a report on the strategic planning and action planning process and presents the context, tools and outcomes of the NDG Community Strategic Plan. Part II includes annexes to this report with details, tools and other data. Part III presents the Action Plan 2018-2021.

For more information or to find out how to become involved in the Strategic Plan, please contact its coordinator, Riley Dalys-Fine at rileydfine@ndg.ca or at 514-484-1471 ext. 223.

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INTRODUCTION



The NDG Community Council, in its role as the Table de Quartier for NDG, is responsible for facilitating, leading and tracking progress on the NDG Community Strategic Plan.

The NDG Community Strategic Plan 2016 - 2021 (www.ndg.ca) is a collective framework to harmonize a wide range of activities and services across the community and a vision for the future of our neighbourhood. It was developed through years of consultation and collaboration with residents and stakeholders across NDG, with the following objectives in mind:

- Working together on a common community vision;
- Harmonizing plans, actions and projects that share similar objectives;
- Building a sense of solidarity within the community sector;
- Collectively identifying the basic community priorities of NDG;
- Working proactively rather than reactively as a community;
- Strengthening community influence over projects that affect them.

Throughout the planning process we have worked with various community stakeholders in order to represent as much as possible the different needs and voices of our neighbourhood. This process was facilitated by a team of consultants specializing in community development (see **Annex A** and **Annex B** for acknowledgments and the Coordinating Structure).

STRATEGIC PLANNING PHASES

CONSULTATION PHASE

Oct 2016—May 2017

- Surveys, focus groups, interviews, research, and inter-generational activities were conducted

ACTION PLANNING PHASE

March 2018

- Five task force groups including representation of priority sectors and community organizations created actionable outcomes for their respective goals.

ACTION PLAN RATIFICATION

October 2018

- Final version of the Action Plan to be ratified by the governing committee and NDG Community Council Board of Directors.

QUALITY OF LIFE CONFERENCE

May 13, 2017

- Participants worked in break-out groups, tackling questions such as 'What do you like about NDG? What needs to change?' and 'How can we make that happen, together?'
- Data analysis continues throughout summer 2017.

ACTION PLANNING EXPO

June 6, 2018

- An interactive exposition where the objectives, strategies, actions, timeline, resources and anticipated outcomes of the Action Planning phase were presented.

CONSULTATION PHASE



The NDG Community Strategic Plan 2016-2021 was proposed by the Coordination Committee of the Strategic Plan and endorsed by the Board of Directors of the NDG Community Council on December 6th, 2017.

This plan was developed by and for the community of NDG through the participation of residents, local businesses, community organizations and local institutions. A coordination committee (COCO-PS) guided the process to develop a plan based on data and on broad consultation. Consultations were held between October 2016 and October 2017 and included an online survey, focus groups with key community leaders, meetings with local coalitions (tables), an inter-generational lunch and sharing session, a meeting of the NDG Round Table and eight meetings of the COCO-PS. The Quality of Life conference reached 180 residents and organizations through a dynamic day of information sharing and visioning. In selecting themes and priorities for the strategic plan, the COCO-PS used the following criteria (see **Annex C**):

- Does it make sense for this goal or objective to appear in a neighbourhood-wide plan? Is it vast and complex enough to require the input of multiple stakeholders?
- Is there another group or table already taking the lead on this goal? If so, how can the COCO-PS partners mobilize to help realize that goal?
- Is this a cross-cutting issue; that is, does it affect several different populations and groups?
- Is it realistic and are we able to have a measurable impact on this issue?
- How urgent is the issue to local organizations and the people with whom we work?

This strategic plan represents collective directions for the community until 2021. The collective actions put forward in this plan will prioritize and involve people in the four priority sectors of Westhaven, Fielding-Walkley, Benny Farm and St-Raymond (for more information on the four priority sectors, consult our website at www.ndg.ca).

This is our community plan, and we hope that residents, organizations, businesses, elected officials and institutions alike use it as an opportunity to connect with each other in new ways to work towards improving NDG for all. Together, we can contribute to building a dynamic, flourishing and inclusive neighbourhood where everyone can participate in their community, thrive and reach their full potential.

KEY EVENTS — 5TH QUALITY OF LIFE CONFERENCE

On May 13th, 2017 the fifth NDG Quality of Life conference was held at St Raymond's Community center and drew approximately 180 people from diverse backgrounds from across NDG, including strong representation from local community organizations and institutions. The consultation team designed the day based on participatory action and open space, allowing for a dynamic day of information sharing and visioning.

A new 'snapshot of NDG' statistical portrait was shared, along with a dynamic presentation of the NDG Community Council. Silvano de la Llata, Ph.D., professor in Geography, Planning and Environment at Concordia University gave the keynote address on the importance of people-centred design in urban planning, followed by a performance by youth from the Loyola Centre. Over 20 volunteers made the day a success. Participants worked in break-out groups, tackling questions such as 'What do you like about NDG?' 'What needs to change?' and 'How can we make that happen, together?'

The themes that emerged became part of the NDG Community Strategic Plan 2016-2021. The data generated during the Quality of Life conference was analysed through the summer of 2017 and five goals and 16 objectives were proposed as an initial draft Community Strategic Plan (data from the conference can be found in **Annex D**). At the beginning of 2018, the action planning process was launched and a task force group was formed for each of the five goals.





The timing of the strategic planning process provided an opportunity to create a data profile of NDG. The process occurred before 2016 census data had been segmented for the community or analyzed by local organizations. As a result, the following portrait was compiled from a variety of sources including rich qualitative data from interviews and focus groups.

KEY STATISTICS AND PORTRAIT DIAGNOSTIC

A few key statistics illustrate the needs in NDG:

- 27.6% of NDG residents are low-income, compared to 22.7% in Montreal overall. ⁽¹⁾
- 73% of NDG residents are renters.
- Four out of ten renters devote more than 30% of their overall household revenues to rental costs.
- 18.7% of the population lives alone, which is an indicator associated with social 'défavorisation.'
- Children under 6 years old from a low-income family: 1,180 or 26.0% (29.3% on the Island of Montreal) ⁽²⁾
- 77 % of residents in CDN-NDG were born outside of Canada, and 19,555 people were considered new immigrants and started their immigration process during the five years preceding the 2016 census. ⁽³⁾

Below is the complete statistical snapshot presented at the Quality of Life conference in 2017 (for the power point presentation please consult www.ndg.ca in the section on Strategic Planning).

Population and Age: According to 2011 census data, there are 67,720 residents of NDG. The age range is similar to Montreal overall, with children 0-4 years old representing 5.7% of the population, 5-14 years old representing 9.9%, 15-24 years old representing 12.8%, 25-44 years representing 31.9%, 45-64 years representing 25.5% and 65+ years representing 14.3% (Statistics Canada, 2011).

Language: NDG is a multilingual community with over 70 languages spoken in the neighbourhood. NDG also has a high percentage of residents who speak both French and English, at 65.4% compared to 55.8% in Montreal overall (Statistics Canada, 2011).

Immigration and Diversity: From 2006 to 2011, the number of residents who identify as visible minorities grew 24.8% and the Chinese community almost doubled in size (Martin Belzile, sans date, diagnostic et analyse des enjeux socioéconomiques, quartiers Côte-des-Neiges et Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, recensement 2011). Several service providers recognized this demographic shift and that immigration settlement was most common in the sectors of Walkley-Fielding, Saint-Raymond and Westhaven (as expressed in interviews and focus groups).

Housing: NDG has higher rates of renter households than the Montreal average, with 65% of total households being renter households compared to 61% in Montreal. 44% of these households dedicate a high percentage (30% or more) of their income to rent compared to 41% for the Island of Montreal. 13% of housing units require major repairs compared to 9% in Montreal (Statistics Canada, 2011)

1. Source: Profil Socio-démographique Recensement 2016. Arrondissement de CDN-NDG, mai 2018

2. Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 Census, National Household Survey via Centraide

3. IDEM for note 14

KEY STATISTICS AND PORTRAIT DIAGNOSTIC (CONTINUED)

Community Building: A common theme throughout the strategic planning process was the level of engagement and activity led by both NDG residents and community organizations. There is a long history of roundtables in NDG with over 12 currently active. The annual music festival Porchfest features over 90 musical acts, while NDG Arts Week reaches over 10,000 people every summer. The new Benny Library and Cultural Centre has provided new programming to the community. At the same time, many organizations are struggling to meet the needs of the community. Over ten organizations reported that they are looking for space, some organizations have closed and many organizations are having difficulty paying their staff a decent wage.

Safety and Security: The reported sense of safety and security varies for NDG residents. Certain services are making a difference such as the eight street workers operating in NDG including one dedicated to seniors. Also, the Aller-retour program offered by Station 11 police ensures an unsolicited visit to a home within a month after a potential domestic violence incident is operating. At the same time, senior women report that they do not walk alone at night especially in the winter and cases of racial profiling continue to be reported.

Economy: NDG is generally considered to be a well-off community, yet 27% of residents are low-income, with rates even higher in Westhaven, Saint-Raymond, Benny Farm and Walkley (Centraide profile, 2014). In a recent analysis of the working poor in Montreal (Étude travailleurs pauvres, 2016), there was a 29% increase in the number of working poor from 2006 to 2011 in CDN-NDG. Fifty percent of working poor in CDN-NDG have children, and immigrants who have arrived in Canada in the last ten years make up a third of the working poor. Sales and manufacturing are the most common sectors, but CDN-NDG had the highest number of working poor in the health field across all of Montreal.

Interviews and focus groups also revealed local concerns about the number of empty storefronts in the neighbourhood, particularly on the main floor of condominiums, which could otherwise support the local economy.

Education: NDG is a very educated community, with a high percentage of residents with a university degree and a small percentage, 11.8% of residents without a diploma or degree, compared to 18.9% on the Island of Montreal (Centraide Profile, 2014). At present, the Commission scolaire de Montréal (CSDM) is over capacity and in need of 15 classrooms, some of which are under construction at this time (May 2017)

Health and Well-being: There are a mix of needs and available services that support health and well-being in NDG . There are three food deserts (as identified by the Direction Santé Publique) in the neighbourhood that are located in low-income communities. In 2016, 642 youth accessed Head and Hands medical clinic, 103 of whom would not have otherwise had access to Quebec healthcare (Head and Hands annual report, 2016). The Benny Farm CLSC clinic is open on weekdays only, with no evening or weekend hours provided. The local community centres offer a range of programming for all ages, including free sports, recreation and after-school programming.

Environment: NDG residents care about their local environment. NDG has the best tree canopy in Montreal and seven green alleys in progress. NDG has the highest number of 311 calls concerning their trees. In August 2017, a microburst damaged many trees in NDG, knocking down dozens in NDG Park. At residents' request, the Borough has approved several tree trunks to be used for sculptures in the park.

Data on local transportation reveals both successes and challenges. There is a new reserved bus lane for the #105 Sherbrooke bus, but the STM seniors shuttle has been cancelled. There are also fewer car-sharing vehicles in NDG compared to most other boroughs, limiting access to alternatives to car ownership. The Falaise St. Jacques and Dalle Park project would provide greater accessibility by foot and bike to the rest of Montreal. However, the project needs provincial support in order to move forward.



GOALS AND CONTEXT

Goal 1: Increase capacity of community organizations offering services in NDG

Goal 2: Increase availability of long-term, accessible, multi-purpose buildings and green spaces for organizations and residents

Goal 3: Enhance opportunities for employment & economic development

Goal 4: Increase availability and quality of affordable housing

Goal 5: Increase access to and improve diversity and quality of public and community services

Goal 1: Increase capacity of community organizations offering services in NDG

NDG is a diverse, vibrant neighbourhood with strong network of over 30 neighbourhood-based community organizations working daily to ensure that the needs of the most isolated and marginalized people are met through empowering, innovative and cost-efficient means. Despite their importance to the neighbourhood, local community organizations face ongoing challenges related to funding, governance, space and the increased complexity and intensity of work in the non-profit sector.

At the time of this report, Centraide du Grand Montréal is funding five local community organizations in NDG and offering additional funding for the community strategic planning and evaluation processes for the 2016-2021 planning cycle. A decrease in donations received by Centraide during their annual giving campaign necessitated restructuring on their part. The impact ranges from changing and reduced core funding in the case of the NDG Community Council to a complete discontinuation of funding in the case of Women on the Rise. NDG is already underfunded and cuts from various funders led to the closing of several organisations in the past few years, including the NDG Black Community Association, Au Pois Chic, Black Star and Centre MultiEthnique. Project funding from public and private sector funders has been secured in NDG through the work of several groups; more information will be available following the Funding Realities Project in Summer 2018.

Goal 2: Increase availability of long-term, accessible, multi-purpose buildings and green spaces for organizations and residents

Since the last strategic plan, the neighbourhood lost two important spaces which had housed local community organizations. The sale of the Rosedale Queen-Mary United Church resulted in the relocation of three different non-profits and resident-led groups and the NDG Food Depot was forced to move following the sale of the Trinity Memorial Anglican Church to private developers. The future of the Empress Building on Sherbrooke Street is still unresolved, while the Loyola Centre and Walkley Centre are in talks with the CDN-NDG Borough for the potential creation of a much-needed new community space in north-west NDG. There are also some positive stories with respect to community space; Head & Hands acquired the former Benny Library building in 2017 with the support of the members of the NDG Space Coalition, the CDN-NDG Borough and key funders. Bienvenue à NDG also moved to a new location in 2018 that will allow them to expand their French courses in NDG, serving a critical need in the neighbourhood.

Goal 3: Enhance opportunities for employment & economic development

Important shifts since the last community strategic plan have been a direct result of some austerity measures and restructuring in the government as well as a decline in overall support to social and community development services in both the public and private sector. Both the provincially run NDG CLE and CDN CLE (Centre Local d'Emploi) were closed increasing demand for local community organizations to meet job-search needs. The CDEC (Corporation de développement économique) CDN-NDG also closed, replaced by the PME Montréal Centre-Ville. The MUHC superhospital opened in NDG in 2015, purportedly creating new jobs for local residents, however, a recent report indicates that our neighbourhood has the highest number of the working poor in the health sector across Montreal ⁽⁴⁾.

4. Les travailleurs pauvres dans le RMR de Montréal" Xavier LeLoup, Florence Desrochers, et Damaris Rose. Institut national de la recherche scientifique. Centre - Urbanisation Culture Société. Octobre, 2016

GOALS AND CONTEXT (CONTINUED)

Goal 4: Increase availability and quality of affordable housing

Logis Action NDG was incubated by the NDG Community Council before incorporating as its own non-profit since the last strategic planning cycle. Logis Action is the only tenants rights organization in NDG, and operates on a budget of less than \$60,000 per year, despite the fact that 73% of NDG residents are renters.

Rental costs are at risk of increasing in particular in apartments with more than 20 units due to factors which include a recent municipal tax increase. Condo buildings, meanwhile, continue to be developed in NDG at a rapid rate, leaving limited space for new affordable housing.

Goal 5: Increase access to and improve diversity & quality of public & community services

NDG has a strong social and cultural identity, with residents taking leadership and building projects that meet local needs. This is demonstrated by recent initiatives such as Porchfest, Art Hives, Theatre NDG, the NDG Pedestrian and Cyclists Association, and Sauvons La Falaise. Collectively, these and other initiatives offer free activities for everyone, help to break isolation and integrate new families to the neighbourhood. The role of the NDG Community Council as a fiduciary to some of these start-ups and resident-led initiatives has been crucial.

Since the last strategic plan, we have also seen improvements to some public services, such as the new Benny Library and Cultural Centre, increased bus service and a new bus lane on Sherbrooke Street, more Bixi stations and the addition of the MUHC superhospital in NDG. The CSDM added a school in the St-Raymond's neighbourhood and is currently rebuilding St-Catherine-de-Sienne elementary school. The NDG Working Group on Health hosted the Community Health Forum in 2017. Despite these achievements, many NDG residents lack access to basic health, social and recreational services due to multiple barriers. The NDG Senior Citizens' Council produced the "Age Friendly NDG Community Assessment" in 2016 and cited that "Public transit is unaffordable for many low income boomers and also for some seniors (despite the 65 plus discount fare); this reduces their access to health, social and community services and social opportunities and contributes significantly to their social isolation.

ACTION PLANNING PHASE

Over 70 people responded to our call to volunteer as task force members (see **Annex E**). This is a significant and unprecedented response that demonstrates the high interest residents have to become more engaged in community life. We had representation of the four priority sectors in NDG and involvement from many community organizations and institutional partners. Due to scheduling constraints, not everyone who expressed an interest could participate. The work of the task forces was coordinated by the Steering Committee, a subcommittee of the COCO-PS.

A total of 35 residents, community organization representatives and institutional partners made up the participants of the five task force groups. We surveyed task force members twice during the action planning phase about their experience participating: once at the end of the first meeting and then again at the last meeting. The questions from the final survey distributed and the aggregated responses can be found in **Annex F**.



KEY EVENTS —EXPO! 2018

An interactive exposition to share the results of the task force groups' planning work with the community was held on June 6, 2018 and was attended by more than 70 people, just prior to the NDG Community Council's AGM. Stations set up around the room represented each task force group's Action Plan for the goal they worked on and a one-pager summarizing the action planning work was distributed. Community organizers, volunteers, community organizations and residents all came together to learn about the progress and exciting new ideas for the community. A Summary of the Strategic Planning process for the EXPO can be found in **Annex G**.



MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Initial evaluation discussions and planning were done with the Steering Committee and were facilitated with a participatory evaluation approach by an evaluation consultant. The Steering Committee identified that the primary purpose of the evaluation is to track the progress of the NDG Community Strategic Plan 2016-2021, in order to report on developments and results to collaborators, stakeholders and the wider community. The Steering Committee also emphasized that the implicit and equally important purposes of evaluation are for: adjustment and course correction to the action plan and its implementation and sustaining momentum by tracking activities and highlighting achievements.

The Steering Committee's immediate focus was developing monitoring methods. The monitoring activities developed are described in the Checklist for Monitoring & Evaluation Tasks (see **Annex H**). Following a yearly 'reflection session' (see Guide for Reflection Session Discussion in **Annex I**), it is expected that a report on activities (see Reporting on Action Plan Template in **Annex J**) and an updated action plan will be submitted annually to the COCO-PS. In addition, a yearly session to exchange on lessons learned among the table and coalition coordinators is planned.

Although evaluation plans to capture outcomes may be developed in the future, a list of common outcomes has been generated, based on the initial action plans, such as the number of new projects and the number of new collaborations and partnerships developed. A draft Monitoring and Evaluation Framework Table is in **Annex K**.

The Steering Committee hopes that the evaluation will serve to document and leave a legacy for future community planning processes as well as generate and share learnings and knowledge with its colleagues doing similar work in other parts of the City, such as the Coalition des Tables de Quartiers de Montreal.

Further development of an evaluation plan will be done once the local tables, coalitions and committees that will be implementing the action plans have adopted and appropriated them, and are in a position to refine outcome indicators. The scope of the evaluation planning also should be explored by the COCO-PS. Some options to consider are: 1) developing evaluation plans for all the actions plans but phase-in their implementation over time; 2) selecting a limited number of evaluation plans to implement; and 3) developing an evaluation plan which focuses on the strengthening collaboration practices, such as *"Have we developed how to work together better as a result the experience of implementing the NDG Community Strategic Plan 2016-2021?"*