



#### Montréal in brief

2<sup>nd</sup> largest city in Canada

Québec's metropolis

2 million residents (3.5 including the metropolitan area)

Great population diversity





# Public consultations in Montréal

- Public consultations are an important part of the democratic process
- ☐ The objective of the consultations is to improve projects by taking into account public concerns and expertise
- May be held either by elected officials,
  private firms or the OCPM
- Since its creation, in 2002, the OCPM has held almost 200 consultations
- Since 2010, the OCPM has held five consultations at the citizens' initiative





## The role of the OCPM

- The OCPM holds its consultations transparently, openly and independently
- Its members are neither elected officials nor municipal employees
- Its consultations deal with development projects and public policies at a borough or city level
- □ The OCPM may hold a public consultation only if mandated by the city council or executive committee (including for the Right of Initiative)

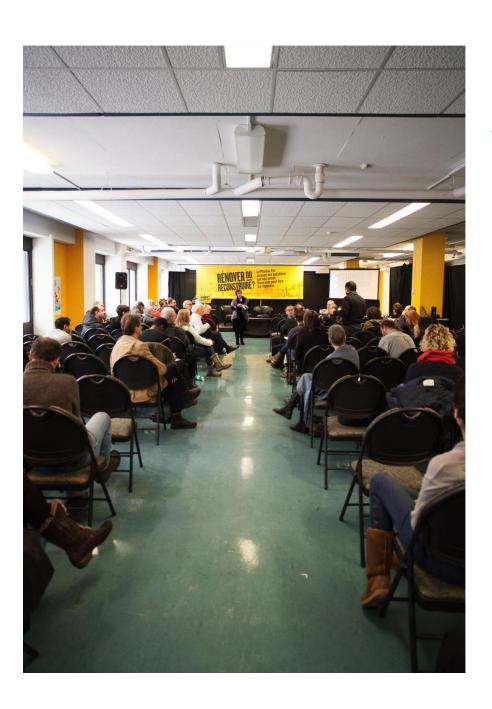
# The recommandations of the OCPM

- □ Distinguish among the desirable, the acceptable, and the unacceptable
- Aim to make objective and enlightening recommendations to decision-makers, away from external pressures
- Are based on all the opinions presented during the consultation
- Are made public and presented to elected officials by the president of the Office
- ☐ The OCPM plays no role in project follow-up



### Public consultations at the citizens' initiative

- Since 2010, the Right of Initiative has allowed Montrealers to obtain public consultations on anything that falls under Montréal or borough jurisdiction (except for the budget, fees and taxes)
- May be initiated by any resident or group of Montréal citizens ages 15 and +
- May deal with an ongoing project or a new issue
- Require the submission of a petition with 15,000 signatures for the city or with a number of signatures based on 5% (max 5,000) of the population for a borough
- A consultation that is deemed eligible may be entrusted to a municipal commission or the OCPM
- An initiative leads to a public consultation and recommendations (not to the cancellation or approval of a project)



## The Right of Initiative since 2010

- Since its creation, a dozen petition campaigns have been initiated, eight of which resulted in a public consultation
- Some had to do with new issues, while others sought to contest a project already under way
- Most of those initiatives were at the city level, while two were at a borough level
- ☐ The others were abandoned

## Two issues, two initiatives

- Urban agriculture in Montréal: a new issue for Montréal
- □ Private-vehicle through-traffic in Mount Royal park: from dispute to compromise

## Example 1: Urban agriculture in Montréal

- □ In 2012, a group of citizens got together to maintain, increase and promote the place of urban agriculture in Montréal.
- A major mobilization enabled a coalition of organizations to collect 29,000 signatures within a few weeks
- The OCPM established an innovative process to allow experts and citizens to become familiar with and express themselves on the subject
- Recommendations were well received by petitioners and elected officials alike

## A few observations

- The consultation allowed the general public to become well versed on the subject through extensive news coverage on urban agriculture
- ☐ The consultation compelled the municipal administration to acquire expertise
- The OCPM adapted its consultation techniques for the uninitiated
- Record participation for a public consultation in Montréal
- Beginning of a new era in public participation

# Example 2: Automobile through-traffic on Mount Royal

- A deadly accident reignited the public debate on banning automobiles in Mount Royal park
- □ Following municipal elections, the new elected officials announced the closing of park access routes to automobiles
- □ Two parallel petition campaigns were initiated, one by opponents and another by proponents of the ban
- ☐ The City of Montréal went ahead with the decision, but gave the OCPM the mandate to evaluate "the pilot project" from the citizens' point of view and to propose a vision for the future

## A few observations

- The consultation took place in a context of great dissatisfaction of part of the population strongly mobilized either in favour of or against the pilot project
- □ 15,000 people expressed their opinions
- Opponents and proponents of the project were forced to take into account the point of view of their adversaries
- Despite their differences, points of convergence evolved
- ☐ The OCPM recommended measures to reduce traffic by developing a "recreational road"
- The City of Montréal is implementing the recommendations of the OCPM

## In conclusion

- Public consultations contribute to citizens' appropriation of their city
- All public consultations require resources and time
- The independence and neutrality of the public consultation body raises the population's level of trust and lends credibility to the process
- ☐ The diversity of consultation activities allows broader participation and the expression of a greater variety of opinions

