



# Centre-Sud and Downtown Montreal

## THE TERRITORY AND ITS POPULATION

The Centre-Sud and Downtown neighbourhoods are two average-sized yet very distinct areas in the heart of the city. These communities are in the borough of Ville-Marie, which is bordered by the St. Lawrence River to the south, Sherbrooke Street to the north, Hochelaga-Maisonneuve to the east and Atwater Street to the west. The Downtown area is a hub for multiple activities (economic, cultural, commercial, etc.) and is a territory where residents co-exist with transient populations, such as workers, students, tourists and business owners. The Centre-Sud, on the other hand, has a more residential character. Things are changing in the borough of Ville-Marie, as real estate development and many large-scale projects are redefining its dynamics and urban landscape.

The Centre-Sud and Downtown area share many characteristics. The percentage of people living on a low income is much higher than the Montreal average. This population includes many workers who are poor despite having a job, and both neighbourhoods have high rates of poor workers. They have a high percentage of renters and major residential mobility, which influence the community dynamics of these neighbourhoods. The territory is also characterized by a significant percentage of people living alone (one out of three), a reality that is associated with greater social and economic vulnerability.

Although many common traits shape both neighbourhoods, each one has particular features. The Centre-Sud has a high level of concentrated poverty. Its many social problems directly influence residents' quality of life and feeling of safety. These issues include keeping families in the area, providing access to decent housing and local access to quality and affordable food, creating a green and safe neighbourhood, and more. Although the percentage of people aged 18 and under is somewhat low (11%), this population segment is particularly affected by poverty. Over 40% of children aged 0 to 5 live in a family with a low income. Many Centre-Sud schools are underprivileged, and the fight against school dropouts is a major challenge. Many children belong to single-parent families, which represent one out of two families in this sector. Immigration is below the Montreal average, although ethnocultural diversity has been growing, particularly among families with children.

In Downtown Montreal, which includes Faubourg Saint-Laurent (east of Robert-Bourassa Boulevard) and the Peter-McGill sector (to the west), areas of poverty can be found alongside well-off sectors. For example, in Peter-McGill, there is a high income gap among residents who live to the north and to the south of Sherbrooke Street. The southern sector therefore has more vulnerable people, including seniors living alone, single-parent families and newcomers. The distinctive features of the Downtown area include a high concentration of young adults, particularly in Peter-McGill (45%), which is partly explained by the presence of university students.

## SNAPSHOT OF THE TERRITORY

### Distinct neighbourhoods, shared realities

#### Average-sized neighbourhoods

31,000 people in the Centre-Sud, 14,545 in Faubourg Saint-Laurent and 28,240 in Peter-McGill.

#### Significant and concentrated poverty in all neighbourhoods

A large portion of the population lives on a low income: 46% in Peter-McGill, 40% in Faubourg Saint-Laurent and 34% in the Centre-Sud (25% in Montreal).

Also, 20,070 residents in Downtown Montreal and 10,210 residents in the Centre-Sud live on a low income.

Poverty affects young children in particular: 43% in the Centre-Sud, 42% in Faubourg Saint-Laurent and 41% in Peter-McGill (29% in Montreal).

These neighbourhoods also have high rates of workers who are poor despite having employment income: 19.7% in Peter-McGill, 16.0% in Faubourg Saint-Laurent and 15.7% in the Centre-Sud (11.5% in Montreal).

#### One third of the population lives alone

36% of residents in Faubourg Saint-Laurent, 33% in Peter-McGill and 32% in the Centre-Sud live alone (18% in Montreal).

#### About half as many children compared to Montreal

Young people under 18 account for 11% of the population in the Centre-Sud, 9% in Faubourg Saint-Laurent and 8% in Peter-McGill (19% in Montreal).



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However, this area has half as many children compared to Montreal as a whole, and many families with children are immigrants. Overall, the population of Downtown Montreal is very diverse and includes many recent newcomers.

## COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL FABRIC

In the Centre-Sud, Centraide of Greater Montreal supports 14 agencies and projects, including the Table de développement social Centre-Sud<sup>1</sup>, for a total investment of \$1,617,359 in 2016/2017. In Downtown Montreal for the same year, 15 agencies and projects, including two neighbourhood roundtables (the Table de concertation du Faubourg Saint-Laurent and the Peter-McGill Community Council) are receiving support, for a total investment of \$2,193,535. These agencies act both locally and regionally. Note that the Centre-Sud and Peter-McGill neighbourhoods were also selected for the Collective Impact Project (CIP), whose mission is to support actions that neighbourhoods have identified to reduce poverty in a concrete way.

### Centre-Sud

The Centre-Sud community fabric is dense and diverse. It has a strong tradition of popular and community engagement. Approximately 100 community groups are active in multiple areas. Over the past few years, work done by members and partners of the Table de développement social Centre-Sud has contributed to significant improvement in community dynamics and collective work in the neighbourhood. Local stakeholders have also noticed greater citizen involvement.

The group involved with the Table de développement social Centre-Sud has also demonstrated an ability to work collectively. The community's energy fosters collective work and has attracted the involvement of different stakeholders. This roundtable is coordinating the implementation of an action plan to meet the needs prioritized by the community, such as keeping families in the area, providing access to affordable housing, revitalizing the Sainte-Marie sector, focusing on health and healthy lifestyles, as well as supporting academic perseverance. Although a large number of poverty indicators have persisted in the area, projects stemming from the action plan are helping to revamp the Centre-Sud's image as a neighbourhood whose living conditions are improving, especially for families.

### Downtown Montreal

Downtown Montreal is the seat of many social agencies that work beyond the neighbourhood's limits. A number of agencies also primarily serve the local population, such as agencies located near the Habitations Jeanne-Mance, a housing project with nearly 800 units for low-income families and seniors.

The Table de concertation du Faubourg Saint-Laurent is a platform for communication and dialogue between different stakeholders for any issue regarding the well-being of people who live in or visit this territory that is undergoing profound change. Despite nearby transit and services, Faubourg Saint-Laurent poses challenges for residents that are specific to a downtown core, such as co-existing with transient populations (workers, students, festival-goers) and the homeless. In response to these challenges, citizen engagement supported by the roundtable is organized around the vision of a "residential neighbourhood that's a great place to live."

<sup>1</sup> The roundtable is coordinated by the Corporation de développement communautaire Centre-Sud.

### Notable presence of young adults

While one third of residents are aged 20 to 34 in the Centre-Sud (36%) and Faubourg Saint-Laurent (33%), this age group represents almost half the population of Peter-McGill (45%), compared to 23% in Montreal. One reason for this is the significant presence of students.

### Renter neighbourhoods with high residential mobility

These three neighbourhoods have very high percentages of renters: 82% in Peter-McGill, 80% in the Centre-Sud and 72% in Faubourg Saint-Laurent (61% in Montreal).

Respectively, 58%, 61% and 66% of households in the Centre-Sud, Faubourg Saint-Laurent and Peter-McGill have moved in the past five years (44% in Montreal).

## CENTRE-SUD

### Underprivileged schools

The five primary schools and the one secondary school in the neighbourhood show significant poverty indicators.

### Single parents: A reality for one out of two families

49% compared to 33% in Montreal.

### Almost twice as many seniors live in poverty compared to Montreal

37% compared to 21% in Montreal.

### Lower percentage of immigrants than in Montreal

22% compared to 33% in Montreal.

### Difficult living conditions

Despite rents that are lower than the Montreal average, two renter households out of five (42%) dedicate too much of their income (over 30%) to rent (41% in Montreal).

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The roundtable is also helping with the development and monitoring of major work sites in the area (CHUM, Pôle du Quartier Latin, Quartier des spectacles, and others). Its work focuses on social inclusion, access to housing and services, and neighbourly relations. Stakeholders on the roundtable are currently updating this neighbourhood plan. Further to the west, the Peter-McGill Community Council has brought together the sector's social development stakeholders. The roundtable's actions include integrating youth organizations, getting the family services agency Families Downtown involved on the roundtable, and even increasing the coordination of initiatives to tackle homelessness. In this neighbourhood with a very diverse population and high residential mobility, the roundtable is looking to help residents develop a sense of belonging. Engaging citizens is difficult due to the lack of community infrastructure and public facilities that foster a sense of belonging to the neighbourhood, particularly for families. A study of population needs has helped develop avenues to address this issue. Priorities for this community include creating a public primary school for the neighbourhood, providing access to affordable housing and green space, and increasing residents' feeling of safety.

## ISSUES THAT ENGAGE CENTRAIDE

### Centre-Sud

#### Collective action

Combined efforts are ongoing to promote collective action and improve community and partner dynamics. The team, members and partners of the Table de développement social Centre-Sud are currently deploying diverse strategies to support the quality of communications across the neighbourhood, grow citizen involvement, allow stakeholders to share expertise, and even help collaborations and partnerships flourish in the community. Centraide wants to continue providing support to the Centre-Sud community so that it can develop and reinforce its ability to act collectively.

#### Families

Families and children are a main priority for social stakeholders, particularly in Sainte-Marie (east of the Centre-Sud). Breaking families out of social isolation and improving their living conditions (particularly through food security and access to affordable family housing) are important factors to develop the full potential of children and youth. Initiatives have also been launched to reinforce assistance and support for families and young children, especially when it comes to school readiness. To help young people along the road to greater academic success, social stakeholders have implemented developmental projects to build relationships between schools, families and the community. To meet the needs of poor and vulnerable families, Centraide intends to maintain its support for inclusive and collective strategies that foster ethnocultural diversity.

#### Community space

The availability of community space is a major concern for agencies in the Centre-Sud. Centraide will continue to pay attention to collective solutions that emerge in the community, particularly those that could have a developmental impact for the neighbourhood.

### Downtown Montreal

#### Citizen involvement

Citizen involvement is a particular challenge for central neighbourhoods, which are hubs for multiple activities and where transient populations and permanent residents occupy the same space.

## DOWNTOWN MONTREAL

### A contrasting socioeconomic situation in Peter-McGill

54% of the population south of Sherbrooke Street has a low income compared to 25% to the north.

Several vulnerable groups are larger in the south: seniors living alone (54% in the south and 36% in the north), single-parent families (32% in the south and 27% in the north), and recent immigrants (65% in the south and 48% in the north).

### Seniors and poverty: Two realities in Downtown Montreal

55% of seniors in Faubourg Saint-Laurent have a low income; in Peter-McGill, 18% of seniors live with this reality and are mainly found in the southern sector (18% in Montreal).

### High numbers of recent immigrants

37% immigrants in Faubourg Saint-Laurent and 42% in Peter-McGill (33% in Montreal).

9% recent immigrants in Faubourg Saint-Laurent and 15% in Peter-McGill (8% in Montreal).

### Large presence of members of visible minorities

40% compared to 30% in Montreal.

*Demographic and economic data: 2011 Census, National Household Survey.*

# Centre-Sud and Downtown Montreal

In the context of many large-scale projects, such as upscale building developments with limited community infrastructure, the neighbourhood has few places to maintain or establish community life. The community has to tackle the challenge of implementing strategies to reach out to and engage citizens, especially the most vulnerable. Centraide encourages the development of approaches that empower people to develop their full potential and actively participate in society. Getting residents to participate in projects that have an impact on their communities can help balance social diversity, develop people's sense of belonging, and improve the quality of life and living conditions for the local population.

## Identification of needs

Centraide of Greater Montreal wants to continue the process to define the needs of the vulnerable population of Downtown Montreal and develop a more in-depth understanding of people's lived experiences. We will remain responsive to any resulting collaborative strategies that foster developmental community initiatives in the fight against poverty and social exclusion.

## INTERNEIGHBOURHOOD ISSUES (Centre-Sud and Downtown Montreal)

### A special strategy for Downtown Montreal

Various community stakeholders have become engaged and want to influence different initiatives from Montreal's 2030 Downtown strategy. The goal of this oversight and these actions around social development issues is to ensure that residents' voices are heard.

### From the regional to the local

Centraide supports a considerable number of regional agencies in Downtown Montreal and a smaller number in the Centre-Sud. The main area and population of these agencies extend beyond the territory's borders. With variable intensity, these agencies also have to respond to local issues and meet residents' needs. Complementary initiatives and resources as well as the sharing of expertise between local and regional agencies should enhance the response to neighbourhood challenges. Centraide is therefore looking to better understand the role that regional agencies can play in territorial development.

### Homelessness

Homelessness and its associated problems (mental health, addiction, etc.) continue to be major issues for Downtown Montreal, and these issues spill over into adjacent neighbourhoods, such as the Centre-Sud. Because of the complex nature of both neighbourhoods' specific reality, Centraide is encouraging strategies that focus on agency partnerships and expertise sharing to improve the response to the needs of isolated or marginalized people and to enhance residents' ability to live together.

## INVESTMENT FROM CENTRAIDE OF GREATER MONTREAL 2016-2017

### CENTRE-SUD

#### Community development

- Corporation de développement communautaire Centre-Sud

#### Neighbourhood life

- Au coup de pouce Centre-Sud
- Carrefour de Ressources en Interculturel (CRIC)
- Centre d'éducation et d'action des femmes de Montréal

#### Youth and families

- Projet T.R.I.P. (drug addiction, therapeutic relationship, information, prevention)
- Relance Jeunes et Familles (La)
- Ruelle de l'Avenir
- Spectre de rue

#### As well as 6 regional agencies

- Association québécoise des parents et amis de la personne atteinte de maladie mentale (AQPAMM)
- Centre St-Pierre
- En Marge 12-17
- Regroupement des cuisines collectives du Québec
- Réseau d'aide aux personnes seules et itinérantes de Montréal (RAPSIM) (Le)
- Union des travailleurs et travailleuses accidenté(e)s de Montréal (UTTAM)

### DOWNTOWN MONTREAL

#### Community development

- Peter-McGill Community Council
- Table de concertation du Faubourg Saint-Laurent

#### Living conditions

- Programme de consultation budgétaire et de formation – Option consommateurs

#### Neighbourhood life

- Action centre-ville (Montréal)
- YMCA – Downtown Branch Community Centre

#### Volunteer action

- Volunteer Bureau of Montreal

#### Youth and families

- Passages : ressources pour jeunes femmes en difficulté

#### As well as 8 regional agencies

- Business Volunteers
- Camp Saint-Donat
- Centre d'écoute et d'intervention Face à Face
- Chez Doris, The Women's Shelter Foundation
- Chinese Family Service of Greater Montreal
- Montreal Diet Dispensary
- Women's Y of Montreal (YWCA)
- YMCAs of Québec (head office)