



Mercier-Est, Mercier-Ouest and Hochelaga-Maisonneuve

THE TERRITORY AND ITS POPULATION

Located in the southeast part of the city along the St. Lawrence River, the neighbourhoods of Mercier-Est, Mercier-Ouest and Hochelaga-Maisonneuve (Ho-Ma) have been part of the same Montreal borough since the city amalgamated in 2002. They are divided, if not ghettoized, by Autoroute 25, the Louis-Hippolyte Lafontaine Bridge-Tunnel (which splits Mercier in two), industrial areas, the Longue-Pointe military base, railroads and the Port of Montreal.

Because of their shared industrial and working-class history, the neighbourhoods in the territory suffered a great deal during the 1980s recession. A number of companies closed their doors, leaving behind tracts of vacant land and many unemployed workers. Since the start of the 2000s, the area and its real estate sector – particularly in Ho-Ma – have started to rebound. In fact the neighbourhood has begun to gentrify as new condo units are created, either through new construction or factory-condoization projects. Developers buy and renovate large apartments, then substantially increase the rent. A more recent but growing phenomenon is owners renting accommodation to tourists through Airbnb; local actors say the community has over 1,000 such vacation rentals.

In the coming years, residential and economic development projects will bring significant change to Mercier-Ouest. A major redevelopment plan is underway to turn the Assomption-Sud-Longue-Pointe area, bordered by avenue Souigny, the Canadian National rail yards, Autoroute 25 and Montreal's port facilities, into a green industrial park. The Écoparc industriel de la Grande Prairie is based on sustainable development principles and will be a model for the peaceful coexistence of industrial and residential areas. The goal of the Specific Urban Redevelopment Project in Assomption-Nord (Programme particulier d'urbanisme, or PPU) is to transform the industrial area at the junction of the Ho-Ma and Mercier-Ouest neighbourhoods. Over the next 20 years, this long-term residential and commercial development project will create over 1,600 jobs and involve building nearly 3,000 housing units.

Neighbourhoods with similar yet distinct realities

Mercier-Ouest and Ho-Ma both have roughly 45,000 residents and share the same factors of poverty, namely: a significant concentration of individuals and seniors living alone in Mercier-Ouest and in Ho-Ma; a low income rate among seniors twice as high in Ho-Ma as in Montreal; and a greater prevalence of individuals with low education. However, the populations of the three neighbourhoods differ in terms of age.

Hochelaga-Maisonneuve

Only 10% of Ho-Ma residents are seniors. However, adults make up a large demographic group (78%), which is significantly higher than the Montreal percentage (68%), and there are relatively few young people and families with children. Although families make up a smaller percentage of Ho-Ma's population, they and their children still have many needs.

SNAPSHOT OF THE TERRITORY

HOCHELAGA-MAISONNEUVE

Average-sized neighbourhoods

Population: 47,835

Large number of adults

The demographic weight of adults represents 78% of the total population (68% in Montreal). The percentage of individuals aged 15-29 is significantly higher than the Montreal average (25%, compared to an average of 20% on the island).

The lowest percentage of children, families and seniors of any neighbourhood in the borough

11% of children aged 0-14 (Montreal: 16%), 10% of residents 65 and over (Montreal: 17%) and 52% of families with children (Montreal: 63%).

Living alone: as in downtown neighbourhoods, a common occurrence in Ho-Ma

One in four residents (28%) lives alone (Montreal: 18%), a particularly widespread phenomenon among seniors, half of whom (52%) live alone (Montreal: 36%).

Large (but decreasing) number of single-parent families

45% of neighbourhood families are single-parent households (Montreal: 33%), with a higher percentage (50%) in the southwest.

Between 2006 and 2016, the number of single-parent families dropped by 20.5% (Montreal: -1.5%).

More than one in four people lives in poverty

28% of the neighbourhood population lives on a low income (Montreal: 21%).



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For instance, among children who attend kindergarten, 34% lack school-readiness skills (compared to 29% in Montreal). Between 2006 and 2016, the number of single-parent families dropped by 20.5% (-1.5% in Montreal), a fact that can be ascribed to the arrival of many two-parent families. These new households, as well as existing families who suffered through an 8-year period in which three elementary schools closed, welcomed the reopening of Baril Elementary School in 2017 and the Saint-Nom-de-Jésus alternative school in 2019.

Ho-Ma is the only neighbourhood in the borough where the low-income rate, for the entire population and for all age groups, is higher than the Montreal average. This situation is all the more pronounced in the southwest, which is experiencing less gentrification than the rest of the neighbourhood. Poverty-related factors are on the rise: mental health issues, drug use, sex work, as well as many run-down buildings, including rent-controlled housing.

The percentage of individuals without a high school diploma has dropped significantly in the past ten years, and is now comparable to the Montreal rate. The decrease may be partly explained by gentrification, the large number of young adults (many of whom are probably students), and efforts to reduce the dropout rate. In the southwest, the rate of people without a high school diploma is still higher (22%) than the rate for the neighbourhood as a whole (18%) and the island.

The neighbourhood's high residential mobility rate (57%, compared to the Montreal average of 43%) can be explained by such factors as: the large number of students; young families living in small condos who move out of the neighbourhood when their family grows; and other, less well-off individuals, who are forced to move to more affordable areas.

The neighbourhood is predominantly francophone, with French being the mother tongue for 82% of residents (Montreal: 46%). The immigrant population remains well below the island average, which is 16% compared to 34%.

These socio-economic characteristics, along with the high proportion of tenants (74% compared to 60% in Montreal), impact the neighbourhood in many ways, making it a place with some extremely vulnerable population groups that continue to be a cause for concern.

Mercier-Ouest

Mercier-Ouest has a high percentage of seniors (22%, compared to 17% in Montreal), many of whom live alone (40%); unlike Ho-Ma, that neighbourhood has fewer families and young people than the Montreal average.

However, in recent years, the number of students at local schools has increased. This caused the CSDM (Commission scolaire de Montréal) to take over two surplus buildings, which had previously been rented to community groups, and turn them into schools. This situation has created a shortage of operating space for local agencies, many of whom have had to move.

Low income measures in Mercier-Ouest are similar to the Montreal averages, except for in Longue-Pointe, where one quarter of children and seniors face poverty. Some areas, such as Guybourg and Longue-Pointe, have a higher percentage of single-parent families (41% and 37%, respectively).

Many young people and seniors live on a low income

Nearly one third (30%) of young people under 18 grow up in a low-income household (Montreal: 23%).

40% of seniors live in poverty (Montreal: 21%); one of the highest rates of any Montreal neighbourhood. In the southwest, one in two seniors (49%) lives on a low income.

Strong francophone majority

The mother tongue of 82% of residents is French (Montreal: 46%).

Percentage of immigrants among the lowest of any Montreal neighbourhood

16% of immigrants (Montreal: 34%).

Significant issues associated with youth success

34% of young children start kindergarten without the basic school-readiness skills (29% in Montreal).

27% dropout rate among secondary school students, compared to 18% in Montreal (2013-2014).

Adults with low education similar to the Montreal average

18% of young people 15 and over do not have a high school diploma (Montreal: 17%). Between 2006 and 2016, the rate dropped by 10 percentage points. The rate in the southwest is higher than it is on the island (22%).

Large renter population with a high rate of residential mobility

74% of households are renters (Montreal: 60%).

57% of residents moved in the last five years (Montreal: 43%).

Despite average monthly rental costs that are lower than in Montreal (\$748 compared to \$851), more than one in three renter households (36%) spends too much of their income (30% or more) on rent (Montreal: 37%).

MERCIER-OUEST

Average-sized neighbourhood

Population: 43,410

Large number of seniors

More than one in five residents (22%) is 65 and over (Montreal: 17%).

Mercier-Est, Mercier-Ouest and Hochelaga-Maisonneuve

While Ho-Ma and Mercier-Est have a lower percentage of immigrants than Montreal, the rate gets closer to the island average in Mercier-Ouest, which has the borough's largest number of immigrants (28% of the population). As many newcomers choose to live in Mercier-Ouest rather than other parts of the borough, they account for a significant portion of the neighbourhood's immigrant population.

MERCIER-EST

In Mercier-Est, the percentages of families and young people are similar to the Montreal rates. However, there are more children in this community than elsewhere in the borough and, between 2011 and 2016, the number of young people grew at three times the rate for the island.

In fact, according to demographic forecasts used by Quebec's MEES (Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur), over the next three years, the number of students in Mercier-Est will grow twice as fast as in Mercier-Ouest, and four times as fast as in Ho-Ma, leading to a significant shortage of classrooms.

The neighbourhood's low-income measures are similar to the Montreal averages, except in the southern part, where there is a high rate of child poverty. There are more single-parent families in this area (41%) than in Montreal (34%), and there are also more adults with low education than there are in Montreal (22%, compared to 17%).

While the number of people from visible minority groups in Mercier-Est is below the Montreal average (22% compared to 33%), the visible minority population is growing faster there than it is for the island as a whole, gradually turning Mercier-Est into a more ethno-culturally diverse community.

COMMUNITY DYNAMICS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Hochelaga-Maisonneuve

Historically, central neighbourhoods such as Ho-Ma pioneered independent community action in Quebec. This militant past explains the network of close to one hundred agencies operating in a variety of sectors throughout the territory. Relationships between the various social development actors and stakeholders are complex, and tensions can sometimes arise. Over decades, the neighbourhood has relied on a few leaders who were recognized as pillars of continuity and community partnership. However, over the past several years, several of these leaders have retired or are preparing to do so. In 2013-2014, these changes in leadership precipitated the adoption of a more integrated approach that turned the sector-based round table into six working committees. The goal of these committees is to address the issues and needs of vulnerable populations, fight against poverty and social exclusion, and make lasting improvements to the neighbourhood's quality of life.

In 2017, with support from the borough, local stakeholders held a forum on gentrification with the goal of understanding population movements and their effects. Both before and after the forum, the Hochelaga-Maisonneuve Round Table was working to create a 2016-2021 neighbourhood plan. While local stakeholders were unable to agree on an integrated neighbourhood plan, in the fall of 2018 they adopted two priorities: promote better living together and encourage citizens to participate in the democratic process.

However, the proportions of young people under 15 (14%) and families with children (59%) are lower than the Montreal averages (16% and 63%, respectively).

One in three families is a single-parent household

35% of families are single-parent households (Montreal: 33%). In Longue-Pointe and Guybourg, these rates climb to 37% and 41%, respectively.

Large number of seniors and adults living alone

21% of residents live alone (Montreal: 18%), with the rate climbing to 40% for seniors (Montreal: 36%).

There are more seniors living alone in Longue-Pointe, where one in four adults (24%) and one in two seniors (47%) lives alone.

Low income measures similar to the Montreal averages

18% of neighbourhood residents, 22% of children aged 0-5 and 20% of people under 65 live on a low income (in Montreal, respectively 21%, 23% and 21%). Longue-Pointe has higher percentages of young children (26%) and seniors (25%) in this situation.

Growing ethno-cultural diversity

A hub for immigrants to the neighbourhood

11,665 immigrants, or more than a quarter of the neighbourhood's population, live in Mercier-Ouest (28% compared to 34% in Montreal).

2,735, or 7%, are recent immigrants, which is similar to the Montreal average.

Among households with young people aged 0-17, 49% are immigrant families (Montreal: 51%).

The number of neighbourhood residents that belong to visible minority groups grew twice as much as it did for the whole island (+73% compared to +37%).

Rate of adults with low education higher than the Montreal average

The rate of people aged 15 and over without a high school diploma is higher than on the island of Montreal: 20% in Mercier-Ouest (Montreal: 17%), with the rate climbing to 26% in Guybourg.

The lowest residential mobility rate of any neighbourhood in the borough

65% of households are renters (Montreal: 60%).

41% of residents have moved in the past five years (Montreal: 43%).

Mercier-Est, Mercier-Ouest and Hochelaga-Maisonneuve

These priorities would become the cornerstones of work done by the committees and the basis for projects submitted as part of Hochelaga's Integrated Urban Revitalization (IUR) program (located in the southwest part of the neighbourhood) and the Projet 200 portes project, designed to reach neighbourhood families.

In 2019-2020, Centraide is making a total investment of \$1,5 million to support 14 agencies and projects in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, including the community round table.

Mercier-Ouest

While smaller, the community network in Mercier-Ouest is very active. The Mercier-Ouest Quartier en santé round table plays a key role in coordinating agency activities and getting residents involved. In 2016, it launched a strategic planning process involving local social development actors during which they set priorities for the entire neighbourhood. The priorities for the coming years are: inclusion and intercultural relations, improving living environments, tailoring services to population needs, and finding new ways to reach these populations.

Fighting poverty in this neighbourhood is a complex undertaking because deprivation is widespread throughout the territory, and also because it has three distinct and even ghettoized areas. Because a number of community agencies have moved elsewhere in recent years – a situation which has reduced local services – local stakeholders have pooled their resources to adopt a more integrated approach. This approach is exemplified by efforts to create better living environments and a local food system as part of the Centraide-led Collective Impact Project (CIP). It is also evident in the active role played by the local round table, along with four adjoining neighbourhoods, in organizing a Seniors' Forum in May 2016.

More recently, the IUR came up with a new initiative for Guybourg – Longue-Pointe, a ghettoized area in the south. Headed by the local round table and supported by various partners, the initiative proposes ways to address the area's particular needs, specifically high rates of single parenthood and low education.

In 2019-2020, Centraide is making a total investment of \$623,180 to support six agencies and projects in Mercier-Ouest, including the community round table. The agencies that receive support address issues related to young people, families and living conditions.

Mercier-Est

Mercier-Est's community network consists of only a few agencies that must each address a particular issue. The community round table (Solidarité Mercier-Est) plays a key role in coordinating initiatives and circulating information. Upon implementation of the most recent integrated action plan, the community adopted a more effective governance structure enabling it to pursue a consistent development strategy for the entire community. In 2019, the round table will implement a new strategic planning process, culminating in a major Social Forum in the fall, where stakeholders and residents will discuss priorities and how to achieve them.

Poverty is widespread throughout Mercier-Est, making efforts to fight it more difficult. In order to more effectively address this issue and reach out to isolated people, the round table is implementing the Mercier-Est en réseau project, part of the CIP.

Average monthly rental costs (\$797) are the highest of any neighbourhood in the borough, but still below the Montreal average (\$851).

30% of renter households spend too much of their income (30% or more) on rent (Montreal: 37%).

MERCIER-EST

Average-sized neighbourhood with a growing population

Population: 44,780

Between 2011 and 2016, strong population growth of +5.4%, which represents an increase of nearly 3,000 people (Montreal: +2.9%).

The highest numbers of young people and families of any neighbourhood in the borough

62% of families with children (Montreal: 63%).

16% of children aged 0-14 (Montreal: 16%).

Mercier-Est also has the highest number of young people (7,080) and families (7,325) of any neighbourhood in the borough.

Between 2011 and 2016, the number of young people grew at three times the rate on the island: +18% (Montreal: +6%).

At the other end of the age spectrum, there are 17% of seniors (Montreal: 17%).

Percentage of adults and seniors living alone similar to the Montreal averages

18% of adults live alone (Montreal: 18%).

36% of seniors live alone (Montreal: 36%).

Single-parent households a common phenomenon

Percentage of single-parent families higher than the Montreal average: 41% or 2,965 families (Montreal: 33%).

There are more single-parent families in the southern parts of the neighbourhood: Saint-Victor (45%) and Saint-François-d'Assise – Saint-Bernard (43%).

Low numbers of immigrants

Percentage of immigrants (19%) and recent immigrants (4%) is much lower than the rates in Montreal (respectively 34% and 7%).

Growing ethno-cultural diversity

Between 2006 and 2016, the number of residents that belong to visible minority groups grew three times as much as it did for the island: +125% (Montreal: +37%).

Mercier-Est, Mercier-Ouest and Hochelaga-Maisonneuve

The goal is to break residents' isolation through actions such as: creating networks of local stakeholders and citizen organizers, finding new ways to reach target populations, and creating new partnerships with businesses and institutions.

The southern part of Mercier-Est is a ghettoized area divided by a railway that is an obstacle to local travel. Because this area has more vulnerability factors – low income among young children, single parenthood, people living alone and low education – than the rest of the neighbourhood, it is receiving assistance through an IUR initiative. Much has been done in recent years: the commercial revitalization of rue Hochelaga, the creation of public spaces and squares as well as pedestrian areas and traffic calming measures, and housing projects such as the condo development at the intersection of Hochelaga and Honoré-Beaugrand.

In 2019-2020, Centraide is making a total investment of \$848,220 to support eight agencies in Mercier-Est, including the community round table. The agencies that receive support address issues related to young people, families, seniors and living conditions.

ISSUES THAT ENGAGE CENTRAIDE

Hochelaga-Maisonneuve:

– Living conditions

A housing shortage combined with increasing gentrification makes it a growing challenge for incumbent populations to coexist with incoming ones. In certain parts of the neighbourhood, 80% of households are renters, and 30% to 40% of renter households spend more than 30% of their income on rent. Areas with the highest number of low-income families and individuals struggle with issues of access to healthy food. Centraide will therefore focus on initiatives that strengthen the local food system and provide access to adequate, affordable housing.

– Isolation of different segments of the population

The neighbourhood shows evidence of a number of isolation-related factors, specifically among seniors, low-income women living alone and among many young people between 15 and 30. Centraide will support promising community initiatives that can reach these vulnerable populations and break their isolation.

– Youth success

The low education rate among young people remains a concern, and many of them are at risk of running away or have already left home. In addition to low income, there are other risk factors, such as mental health issues, addiction, and sex work. Centraide will work with the community and focus on strategies that support youth success.

Mercier-Ouest:

– Building welcoming and inclusive living environments

As the Mercier-Ouest community network is relatively small, Centraide will focus its attention on initiatives that promote living environments designed to break people's isolation, that share resources and that are adapted to the neighbourhood's new situation. Given the area's growing ethno-cultural diversity, Centraide will focus on community agencies that ensure their approach and practices properly support people and create an inclusive environment for all residents.

Low income rates slightly lower than in Montreal
18% of residents and 19% of seniors live on a low income (Montreal: 21%).

The rate for young children is similar to the Montreal average (22% compared to 23% in Montreal). Saint-Victor and Saint-François-d'Assise – Saint-Bernard have higher rates of children aged 0-5 who live in a low-income household (respectively 24% and 27%).

Issues related to youth success

31% of children start kindergarten without the basic school-readiness skills (Montreal: 29%). This rate varies between 29% and 38%, depending on the neighbourhood.

High school dropout rate: 22%, compared to 18% in Montreal (2013-2014).

Higher rate of adults with low education than on the island

Percentage of people 15 and over without a high school diploma: 22% (Montreal: 17%). One quarter (25%) of Saint-Victor and Saint-François-d'Assise – Saint-Bernard residents is undereducated.

Lowest percentage of renters of any neighbourhood in the borough

55% of households are renters (Montreal: 60%). Average monthly rental cost: \$738 (Montreal: \$851).

Nearly one in three households (31%) spends too much of their income (30% or more) on rent (Montreal: 37%).

Residential mobility rate similar to the Montreal average (44% compared to 43% in Montreal).

Demographic and economic data: 2016 Census; Québec Survey of Child Development in Kindergarten (QSCDK 2017), Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur, Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux du Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal, 2019; Programme particulier d'urbanisme (PPU – Specific Urban Redevelopment Project) Assomption Nord, 2017; Plan triennal de répartition et de destination des immeubles scolaires 2019-2022, Commission scolaire de Montréal, 2018.

Mercier-Est, Mercier-Ouest and Hochelaga-Maisonneuve

– Living conditions

Centraide will continue to support collective projects that are rolled out as part of the CIP, and will focus particular attention on the development of a local food system and, more specifically, on initiatives that are implemented using pooled resources. Mercier-Ouest residents also struggle with access to quality affordable housing, so Centraide will encourage the development of projects that promote accessible housing in healthy and positive living environments.

– Youth success

Some parts of Mercier-Ouest have a higher incidence of single parenthood and low income among children. In addition, almost half of the neighbourhood's families are now immigrants. Centraide will therefore focus on initiatives designed to provide appropriate responses to the many and diverse needs of young people and families.

Mercier-Est:

– Isolation of different segments of the population

While only a few agencies operate here, poverty exists throughout the neighbourhood. Because of this fact, and in order to reach the more isolated residents who are either unfamiliar with or unaccustomed to using the territory's resources, Centraide will encourage the development of innovative, collaborative initiatives, particularly those that are part of the CIP.

– Youth success

In Mercier-Est, one in three children starts kindergarten without the basic school-readiness skills, and more than one young person in five drops out of high school without their first School-leaving Certificate. Also, while Mercier-Est now has a larger population of 0-14 year-olds, there are very few facilities for them. Given this, Centraide will stay focussed on issues related to youth success and encourage initiatives that support their development.

– Diversity and inclusion

While there are currently only a few immigrants living here, there has nevertheless been a marked increase in ethno-cultural diversity. Centraide will therefore help agencies and the community adapt their practices in order to ensure inclusivity for all residents.

– Living conditions

Local stakeholders list food security and housing as the most pressing issues for the neighbourhood's vulnerable populations. Centraide will work with its partners to provide more affordable housing, and develop a comprehensive food security system that is aligned with the needs expressed by citizens and local stakeholders.

INVESTMENT

FROM CENTRAIDE OF GREATER MONTREAL 2019-2020

HOCHELAGA-MAISONNEUVE

Youth and families

- Auberge du cœur l'Escalier
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Montreal
- Carrefour Familial Hochelaga
- Carrefour Parenfants
- Fondation de la Visite (La) – Hochelaga-Maisonneuve
- Je Passe Partout
- Maison À Petits Pas (La)
- Maison des Enfants de l'île de Montréal (La)

Inclusion

- Accueil pour immigrants (ALPA)

Living conditions

- Chic Resto Pop (Le)
- Information and Referral Centre of Greater Montreal**

Neighbourhood life

- CCSE Maisonneuve
- YMCA – Hochelaga-Maisonneuve Community Centre

Community development

- Table de quartier Hochelaga-Maisonneuve (La)

MERCIER-OUEST

Youth and families

- Escalier Famille Le Triolet
- Projet Harmonie (Le)

Living conditions

- ACEF de l'Est de Montréal*
- Groupe d'entraide de Mercier-Ouest (GEMO)
- Un système alimentaire local et solide dans Mercier-Ouest (Collectif Impact Project CIP)

Community development

- Mercier-Ouest, Quartier en santé

MERCIER-EST

Youth and families

- Antre-Jeunes de Mercier-Est (L')
- Maison des familles de Mercier-Est (La)

Living conditions

- Infologis de l'est de l'île de Montréal*
- Service d'éducation et de sécurité alimentaire de Mercier-Est (SÉSAME)

Neighbourhood life

- Almage Senior Community Centre*
- Chez-nous de Mercier-Est (Le)

Community development

- Solidarité Mercier-Est

Inclusion

- Un réseau de connexion pour briser l'isolement (Collective Impact Project CIP)

*Agencies that provide services in the borough or the east part of the Island of Montreal.

**Agencies that provide services in one or more regions.