

SUMMARY OF POSITION PAPER FROM THE CONSEIL DES MONTRÉALAISES  
FOR REAL GENDER EQUALITY BETWEEN MONTREALERS

SUBMITTED TO THE CITY COUNCIL'S  
COMMISSION PERMANENTE SUR LE DÉVELOPPEMENT CULTUREL  
ET LA QUALITÉ DU MILIEU DE VIE

ON DRAFT POLICY  
PROMOTING THE EQUAL INVOLVEMENT OF WOMEN AND MEN IN THE MONTRÉAL COMMUNITY  
POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

October 2007



Montréal 

This position paper presents the *Conseil des Montréalaises'* analysis of the draft policy, **Promoting the equal involvement of women and men in the Montréal community**, drawn up by the administration of the Ville de Montréal, and contains recommendations intended to improve measures viewed as too diffident. The *Conseil des Montréalaises'* recommendations stem from its prior work, from the needs expressed by female citizens and women's groups, and from analysis realized in collaboration with partners. Furthermore, in its position paper, the *Conseil* draws attention to the fact that gender-based data gathering and implementation of Gender-Based Analysis (GBA) constitute concrete means of action to achieve equality.

Reaching equality between men and women is a considerable but indispensable challenge for any democratic society. Gains will benefit the population as a whole and foster the metropolis' development. The *Conseil des Montréalaises* salutes the Ville de Montréal's efforts to insure that women's equality in law becomes equality in fact.

### **Becoming a leader in governance matters**

Equality between men and women cannot be achieved without parity within governance-related bodies. The number of elected women, at the municipal, provincial or federal level, is far from reflecting Quebec society demographics. The *Conseil des Montréalaises* is concerned by the low number of women holding key positions within the power structure, in view of their long standing involvement as active citizens.

To correct this situation, the *Conseil des Montréalaises* proposes many courses of action, one of which is setting up programs to support elected representatives. Numerous international studies have shown the necessity of establishing precise timetables and measurable targets in order to reach parity in governance. Thus, the *Conseil* invites the Ville de Montréal to appoint, within five years, an equal number of men and women in various bodies of the municipal public administration: executive committee, city council, borough councils, boards of directors where the City holds one or many seats, and upper-level management positions. Municipal political parties must also do their part to promote women candidates. All these measures aim at allowing women citizens to take their place in the Ville de Montréal decision-making process, for women's needs to be heard.

### **The City as an employer**

The *Conseil des Montréalaises* wants the Ville de Montréal to be an exemplary employer. To do so, the *Conseil* recommends the City settle the matter of pay equity and implement the *Equal access to employment* program, specifically targeting women, people from ethnic communities and visible minorities, aboriginal people, and people with disabilities.

Also, partnerships with educational institutions could mitigate the effects of labour shortages in fields where women are underrepresented by encouraging young girls in pursuing their training in those fields. Once hired, women working in non traditional trades should be supported with retention programs.

The *Conseil des Montréalaises* recommends the City post its vacant positions in such a way that all employees may apply, even if the position is not in their borough or within their department. This measure would promote personal mobility and allow men and women to obtain a position closer to their place of residence. The City should also work at raising the number of women working full time on permanent positions. At this time, only 33% of female city workers enjoy such conditions. The *Conseil des Montréalaises* also recommends the City develop a standardized model for professional service contract in order to assure a satisfactory minimum

salary range to individuals and enterprises collaborating with the City on a contractual basis. Contract awarding process may also include parity objectives.

Working conditions are also a matter of interest for the *Conseil des Montréalaises*. The *Conseil* requests that the Ville de Montréal offers a safe work environment, free of discrimination and harassment, of psychological or sexual nature. Thus, the City must be proactive by enforcing its *Respect for the individuals* policy to speed up change within organisational culture when needed. Furthermore, measures related to balancing work and family life must be developed, in view of the fact that women are still the main care providers for children and elderly relatives, and doing most household tasks.

### **Services available to female residents**

The *Conseil des Montréalaises* has also given great consideration to municipal services provided by the Ville de Montréal as they have a direct impact on its population's life and work conditions. It is important that these services be financially and geographically accessible, and that means to promote those services (local media, Internet, community groups, schools, brochures, etc.) be diversified to ensure that as many people as possible benefit from them.

Among services offered by the Ville de Montréal, housing is certainly crucial in the fight against poverty. The City must offer housing that is of high standard, safe, roomy and affordable. Progress evaluation of the City's housing program must be carried out with measurable criteria.

Recreation is another service impacting individual's quality of life and self-fulfilment. By consulting not only young girls and women registered in cultural or sporting activities but also women who are not participating, the boroughs would have a precise portrait of women's leisure needs in their area.

Discrimination is a factor that has a direct impact on equality between men and women. The *Conseil des Montréalaises* insists it has been demonstrated that women from ethnocultural communities, particularly from visible minorities, and native women, are doubly discriminated due to their gender and origin. The City must consider their reality when implementing measures to fight racism and discrimination in its territory.

The *Conseil des Montréalaises* also formulates recommendations regarding urban safety, as too many women are afraid to go out in the evening. On that matter, the *Conseil* invites the Ville de Montréal to provide financial support for urban lighting overhaul efforts in boroughs that are applying safe design principles in their public projects. The *Conseil* is aware that the capacity to get around is a determining factor in a person's social and economic integration in the city. As such, it calls upon the City to make sure that urban transportation remains financially, geographically, and physically accessible, as well as comfortable and safe for everyone.

Finally, the *Conseil des Montréalaises* condemns violence, in all forms, experienced by young girls and women. Among other things, it recommends the City promote actions directed at young boys and girls to prevent violence, and strengthen its funding of organizations dedicated to preventing juvenile prostitution, and trafficking of women and children.

### **Women as drivers of economic development**

As workers, executives or entrepreneurs, women are contributing to the economic growth of the City. However, their situation is, in many respects, quite different than of their male counterparts. That's why the *Conseil des Montréalaises* wishes that the Ville de Montréal, in collaboration with partners, would document women entrepreneurs' reality in order to better support the growth of

their enterprise. For example, the City could require that local development centres establish gender-based portraits of entrepreneurs in their area. The Ville de Montréal must also support women's entrepreneurship by setting goals for contract awards, thus contributing to the strengthening of their enterprise. The *Conseil* recommends the City incite women's participation in knowledge development and strategic activities for Montréal and encourage a greater representation of women within organizations and institutions devoted to the economy.

Other contributing factors to Montréal's development are voluntary work, household tasks, and care giving to close relatives. Often disregarded as GDP measurement criteria, those activities are nevertheless essential. The *Conseil* believes it would be pertinent to take them into account when establishing new prosperity indicators to evaluate Montréal's economic growth strategy.

### **Presence of women on the international scene**

The *Conseil des Montréalaises* supports the Ville de Montréal's intent to promote, throughout the world, good practices in terms of gender equality. To set the example, the *Conseil* calls upon the City to encourage parity within its own delegations. In doing so, the City must also take origin into consideration in order to insure that women from ethnocultural communities are represented.

### **General framework measures**

The *Conseil des Montréalaises* believes that success in implementing the policy **Promoting the equal involvement of women and men in the Montréal community** will arise from setting up general framework measures. The *Conseil* reiterates the importance of establishing timetables to reach parity goals in each policy axis. Moreover, the *Conseil* recommends tying central services, as well as boroughs, to this policy by gaining their assent and commitment to implement a triennial and recurring action plan which would include realistic objectives and precise timetables. Only a clear and resolute commitment to see those measures through – from all concerned actors – will let us achieve gender equality between Montrealers.