



From Words to Deeds: Inform, Involve, Integrate

Opinion Paper on Improving Communication between the City of
Montreal and Young Montrealers

Synthesis

November 2010

Recent technological and social transformations have not only upset strategies to come into contact with citizens, but have also changed citizens' expectations. In this context, recognizing the rapid evolution of communications and the difficulty of reaching and mobilizing young people, the *Conseil jeunesse de Montréal* (CjM) wanted to address the issue of communications between the City of Montreal and young Montrealers. This opinion paper seeks to initiate a reflection process on new strategies to establish a dialogue with young people, inform them on activities and issues that concern them and encourage them to get involved civically.

This opinion paper identifies the strengths of a city that relies upon communication, participation and inclusion. It presents a portrait of the situation in Montreal, focusing on the means used to reach young Montrealers, and then validates the relevance of the tools developed with regards to their needs and expectations in terms of communications. The points of view of young Montrealers was gathered through a survey of 503 Montrealers aged 12 to 30, and workshops held in two educational institutions. Finally, the members of the *Conseil Jeunesse de Montréal* present various recommendations based on this analysis in four main courses of action (Inform, Adapt, Include and Involve, and Design).

Communication: An Ongoing Challenge

Communication involves a relationship between two entities, and is thereby a source of social ties. It is of great importance for a city, whose role is, among other things, to ensure social cohesion.

Towards a Communicative City

The essence of a communicative city is based both on how the city communicates, and on the actions it poses to facilitate communication between the actors (Gumper and Drucker, 2008).

A communicative city is characterized by the four following dimensions:

- Social dimension: refers to a city that promotes interaction through various communication tools and strategies to generate cohesion;
- Political dimension: refers to a city focusing on decision making processes that are decentralized and inclusive;
- Ethical dimension: refers to a city that is tolerant and considerate towards diversity;
- Politico-spatial dimension: refers to a city open to the outside and connected to its environment (Carpentier, 2008).

Thus, according to Jeffres (2008), a communicative city possesses an environment that:

- promotes the integration of its residents;
- allows its citizens to be involved in civic activities and participate through a variety of roles;
- answers the needs for information of its citizens;
- allows a balance between mobility and stability.

Our reflection on a communicative city also led us to consider the city as a means of communication through the interaction offered by its public squares, urban places or crossroads (Gumper and Drucker, 2008). The shapes of a city can encourage or impede communication.

Towards a Participatory City

The effective participation of young people depends on:

- empowerment;
- real hold on the situation;
- understanding of the issues involved;
- adequate transfer of information;
- strong and lasting partnership between youth and adults (GTV, 2006).

The communicational requirements are important because it's not only a question of informing young people but to cooperate, listen and adapt our structures and methods to accommodate them. A research from Vromen and Collin (2010) tells us that youth participation involves:

- initiatives undertaken by young people and taking place in their own territories rather than in the existing forums;
- projects where young people are heard and their positions taken into account;
- projects leading to real impacts on their lives;
- participatory approaches that are flexible and informal while drawing on various tools and where participants have the opportunity to be creative and have fun.

The Challenges of Communication and Youth Involvement

To promote communication and youth involvement, Le Bigot (2004) offers different strategies:

- Prioritize A) concrete over abstract concepts, B) immediate over delayed results, and C) proximity over distance. Thus, this is a matter of involving young people in practical and local projects, within a reasonable timeline and leading to tangible results;

- Enable young people to develop their own projects while working with adults and being guided by them;
- Rethink youth organizations according to youth universe, and promote active civic participation beyond consultation;
- Develop young people's autonomy by multiplying opportunities for volunteer work, exchanges or apprenticeships;
- Reach out to young people on their turf (schools, parks, cafes, etc.);
- Involve young people in developing the contents of activities addressed to them;
- Validate the contents with youth ambassadors.

To reach young people and be progressive, communication of the future should be more "citizen" oriented in order to become a tool for democracy and governance (Le Bigot, 2004). This shift implies an adequate response to the growing need for information, the adoption of new technologies, and anticipating changes. Moreover, it invites contents that are in agreement with young people's expectations, that are self-improving, updated and conveyed by user-friendly instruments and channels that are linked to young people's territories.

Once these requirements for a communicative and participatory city are integrated, the city must examine the challenges ahead, and the communication strategies to implement.

Communication Strategies Targeting Youth in the City of Montreal

Although the City of Montreal has a central service for communications and relations with citizens, many municipal actors develop specific communication tools to reach citizens. Indeed, municipal communication occurs at different scales:

- The Central-city and its numerous branches organize massive communication campaigns;
- The 19 boroughs and their services communicate with citizens on projects happening in their territory;
- The 300 community partners and associations of the City of Montreal develop their own communication tools.

From this diversity of actors rise three types of interaction:

- Interaction between municipal youth workers and partners (coordination of actions and sharing of expertise);
- Interaction between local (boroughs and partners) and central (Central-city) bodies;
- Interaction between youth workers and young people.

These three levels raise specific issues: the worker-worker level calls for tools for information exchange and sharing; the local-central level calls for harmonization of communications; and the worker-youth level calls for the development of new targeted communication tools.

Key Challenges for the City of Montreal in Youth Communication

Considering the Need for Targeted Urban Communication

The City of Montreal and its boroughs rely on mainstream messages and tools to disseminate their information. In an age of personalized communication, this approach is questioned. Web tools adapted for young people appear to be limited to certain services. The *Réseau des bibliothèques publiques de Montréal* is among the few services to have an interactive Web platform tailored to young people. Otherwise, targeted communication is ad hoc and limited to specific projects. Youth transversality remains to be developed in the City of Montreal. Information is available, but scattered, general and not quite tailored for young Montrealers.

Ideas to explore:

- *Customize communications to suit specific audiences;*
- *Adopt youth specific communication plan;*
- *Develop interactive web strategies adapted to young Montrealers;*
- *Develop an image for the City of Montreal that is less corporate.*

Collecting and Centralizing Information According to Age and Interests

On top of being impersonal, the communication approach of the City of Montreal is not centralized. The City website and the communications that are produced collate information geographically (by borough) and administratively (by branch), but rarely with regards to age and interest¹. It is thus necessary to seek information by segments. Only the major networks (*Réseau des grands parcs*, *Réseau des bibliothèques publiques de Montréal*, *Réseau Accès culture*) provide continuity of information throughout Montreal. Moreover, despite partnerships with community and associative bodies to present a diverse range of services, little promotion of their activities is done on the City website. Given these facts, a youth portal gathering information from the City of Montreal and its partners is needed to facilitate access to activities and services they offer.

Ideas to explore:

- *Improve the partnership approach of the City of Montreal in terms of services to citizens by referencing and publicizing properly the activities offered by partners;*
- *Develop a youth portal collating information targeting young Montrealers;*
- *Develop an interactive theme map of municipal sport facilities;*

¹ Although there are « Families », « Youth » and « Seniors » tabs in the City website, the tab « Montreal for youth » is an arbitrary amalgam of information, not updated, where the activities for children and youths are mixed.

- *Ensure the promotion of activities and assets of the territory of Montreal beyond the offer from the municipal administration.*

Networking of Projects and Youth Workers in Montreal

The City of Montreal maintains a network of some 150 youth organizations. However, a lever seems necessary to maximize the action, ensure a continuous flow of information beyond occasional joint action meetings, and encourage the circulation of information dedicated to youth. A visit to the *Table de concertation jeunesse d'Ahuntsic*, in April 2010, has allowed us to validate the usefulness of a Web platform that gathers all the information related to youth (activities, services, resources, documentation, etc.). Among the advantages, the following points were raised: easier cross-referencing between organizations, sharing of expertise and experience, and better coordination of activities on the territory.

Ideas to explore:

- *Support joint action tables dedicated to young Montrealers;*
- *Promote the flow of information between partners by developing new tools for collaboration and monitoring best practices;*
- *Bank on field workers to promote youth activities.*

Building Bridges between Schools and Municipal Organizations

Montreal is positioning itself as a City of Knowledge. However, despite some successes, too few bridges exist between the City and academic networks. The City of Montreal would be well advised to implement various actions to bridge its services with school networks, and to mobilize the expertise of young Montrealers. The experience of the *Conseil jeunesse de Montréal*, at the 2010 Workshops, has highlighted the great receptivity of the academic community to develop such partnerships.

Ideas to explore:

- *Develop partnerships with the academic community of Montreal;*
- *Develop opportunities for collaboration between the City of Montreal and students as part of their curriculum;*
- *Improve communication between city agencies and schools.*

Mobilizing Allies within the Community and Private Sectors

Several partnerships can be established with the community sector of Montreal in order to effectively reach young people. For example, some youth clubs (*Maisons de jeunes*) organize tours of municipal services with their participants. Such partnerships allow young people to better understand and identify municipal activities and services. It also allows the development of a sense of belonging while strengthening the identity to Montreal.

Ideas to explore:

- *Develop alliances with local players to promote resources and services.*

Promoting Equity and Harmonization in Urban Communication

The boroughs of the City of Montreal have extensive autonomy in the production of their communications. These differentiated communications allow each borough to develop an image and an urban signature of their own, but also complicate the search for information. Thus, for three boroughs, we face three directories that are designed differently and display different content. In addition, the quantity, quality and relevance of communication tools developed are highly variable from one borough to another, which raises questions in terms of equity, access to information and unity within the territory.

Ideas to explore:

- *Ensure equity of information for citizens between the boroughs, with regards to quantity, quality and access of information;*
- *Offer similar layout in the production of material by the boroughs in order to facilitate the search for information;*
- *Ensure some graphic continuity in the material produced by the boroughs in order to generate unity;*
- *Create a directory of services offered in Montreal which include the information from the boroughs.*

Tooling up Young People: Inform... to Participate

Active civic participation involves the free flow of empowering information². This information must also be presented in a user friendly fashion to allow everyone to integrate urban issues. This concern matters particularly when it comes to young citizens. The Rosemont–Petite-Patrie borough and its project for the redevelopment of the Bellechasse sector serves here as an example. The borough's website offers extensive documentation to understand the issues involved, and the public is invited to comment in a discussion forum. The participatory approach has included a younger group through a workshop on urban design with some thirty 5th and 6th graders.

² *Empowering information* refers here and throughout the text to information that makes a citizen more apt to understand a topic and reinforces his or her power to act.

Ideas to explore:

- *Use new interactive media to exchange information with young people and enable them to express themselves on matters that concern them;*
- *Adequately inform citizens so they can fully engage in the development of their city;*
- *Establish a program for civic education and create panels of expert-citizens.*

Adapting the Structures and Reaching out to Young People

With the adoption of its policy on public consultation and participation, the City of Montreal is committed to promote the exercise of participatory democracy that blends harmoniously with representative democracy. However, in terms of youth participations, much work remains. Democratic and participatory bodies within the City of Montreal, such as borough councils, the city council, the *Office de consultation publiques de Montréal* and standing committees have procedural formulas that are heavy and complex, often not suited for young people.

Efforts should thus be made to promote and adapt venues where young people would speak up. The consultations held in March 2009 by the CjM in collaboration with the Agglomeration Council's standing committee on public safety are an example. The adaptation of the formula included: a user-friendly layout of the meeting room, much room left to exchange and expression, and a tour formula (sites known by youths and easily accessible by public transportation).

Ideas to explore:

- *Adapt participative and consultative bodies to promote youth participation;*
- *Address themes reaching young people and their concerns;*
- *Inform young people about options with regards to their involvement as citizens.*

Designing to Promote Meetings: In Praise of Multifunctionality

The new urbanism brings metamorphosis and constantly reinvents the city. The appropriation of the *Place de l'Homme* at the Park Jean-Drapeau with the summer event *Piknic Electronik* on Sundays, or the famous Tam-tams on the Mont-Royal illustrate the necessary flexibility to create a city that is young and vibrant.

The creation of user-friendly service hubs also contributes to urban renewal. Although proximity remains essential, multifunctional sites would facilitate access to information and services. The development of service hubs is already completed in some sectors. In Saint-Léonard, for example, the concentration of municipal services around the Borough Hall allows easy access to all facilities. In addition to a geographical grouping of municipal services, a grouping of government and community services would be desirable

to create an urban core at the heart of the boroughs³. A coffee-shop and terrace at the reception, for example, would invite the population to gather informally.

Ideas to explore:

- *Think the City as a place for exchange and gatherings;*
- *Overcome urban fractures;*
- *Create user-friendly service hubs;*
- *Multiply places for youth socialization and diversify their forms.*

Promotion and Outreach of Youth Activities

The positive influence of young Montrealers is a central element of improving communication. The City of Montreal supports various initiatives that promote the actions and talents of young Montrealers⁴. These initiatives are interesting, but remain unknown and little publicized. Other actions of that nature should be encouraged to promote a positive image of emerging Montrealers and their potential for change. Beyond the economic and cultural aspects, we can think of scholarships in support of social development projects initiated by young Montrealers.

Ideas to explore:

- *Promote a positive image of young Montrealers;*
- *Multiply venues where young people can showcase their talents;*
- *Demonstrate to young Montrealers that their involvement is important for the development of Montreal.*

Adapting Communications: Communication for and by Young People

An effective strategy for disseminating information to young people is to allow them to produce or co-produce its content. This is the strategy used for the Biblioclip contest organized by the *Réseau des bibliothèques publiques de Montréal* (www.biblioclip.com). In 2010, the contest offered four awards, from \$1,000 to \$4,000 for the best videos promoting the diversity of services provided in public libraries. This initiative gives the City the opportunity to publicise its library network, stimulate youth creativity, and produce promotional content tailored to that audience.

Ideas to explore:

- *Promote youth information that is produced with the participation of young people;*
- *Organize events for and by youth.*

³ The *Centre Lafond* of Rosemont is a good example of community services synergy.

⁴ The *Fondation du maire de Montréal pour la jeunesse*, the site *Artère* (Emerging artists of Montreal) and the delegation of eight young Montrealers at the Shanghai Exposition in 2010 are good initiatives from the City of Montreal to valorize youth.

Urban Communication under the Scrutiny of Young Montrealers

To target young people's needs in terms of communication, the CjM has conducted a survey, from April to July 2010, with young Montrealers aged 12 to 30 years. We polled young people on their knowledge of services offered by the City of Montreal and its partners, on their expectations with regards to information, and on the communication tools to favour. We also gathered their suggestions to improve communications. A total of 503 respondents participated in the survey⁵.

Summary of our Survey

The findings from the analysis of data collected during the survey are the following:

- The main ***sources of information*** on youth activities available in Montreal are the people around them (64.7%) and the social media (52.9%).
- Of the 15 ***information tools*** suggested in the questionnaire, the three viewed as most effective by young people are: television, Websites and social media.
- Young people generally maintain good ***relationships with staff*** of the City of Montreal.
- The highest ***expectations*** of young people in terms of urban communication are to be better informed about cultural, social and recreation activities, and to see more public places and civic celebrations. However, when questioned on the ***most important dimension*** of urban communication, 38% of respondents mentioned the implementation of strategies promoting civic involvement of young people (participating in decisions that affect them).
- ***For young people, Montreal is*** a city: cosmopolitan (28%), festive (26%) and cultural (25%). These are dimensions to promote to mobilize young people and to encourage retention.
- 45.4% of respondents had visited the ***Website of the City of Montreal*** over the last 6 months. The lack of interactivity and the difficulty to find the desired information are the dimensions of improvement identified by participants.
- When asked about their ***place of recreation and cultural activities***, 63.4% of respondents answered *downtown* and 55.3% answered *their borough*.

⁵ It should be stressed here that the small size of our sample calls for caution when extrapolating to the general population. However, it can establish a diagnostic of urban communication from the point of view of young Montrealers and lead to some solutions.

- Over the past year (2009-2010), 57.4% of young Montrealers had participated in an **activity (sport and recreation)** of the City of Montreal or its community partners. For the 42.6% who did not participate, *lack of interest* is involved for 33.9% of them while 30.2% mentioned *lack of information*.
- **Civic activities and celebrations** seem a good way to reach young people. Over the past two years, nearly 64% of young Montrealers had participated in an activity of that type. Outdoor concerts and block parties were the most popular among respondents.
- **Young people are seldom consulted** when projects are taking place in their borough. 83.4% of respondents report never having been consulted by the City of Montreal or the community stakeholders to discuss a project. However, young respondent seem little interested in the proposed consultative and participatory processes. Information and education efforts seem necessary to engage youth in such practices.
- Among Montrealers aged 18 to 30 who participated in the survey (198 respondent), 24.3% had attended a **city or borough council**. Of these, 29.5% rated the experience long and tedious and 22.7% believe that citizens are given little time to speak. For those who have never participated (76.2%), 44.2% were unaware of this opportunity.
- 58% of respondent aged 12 to 30 never had the opportunity to talk about **municipal politics** during **high school**.
- Over 55% of young Montrealers have expressed their interest, great interest or possible interest to **communicate with the following individuals**: fellows citizens from their borough who share common issues (64.6%), the mayor of Montreal (62.2%), an elected official from their borough (61.1%), a member of the Conseil jeunesse de Montréal (58.2%).
- The means favoured by young Montrealers to **pass on their points of view** are: 1) Participating in a survey 2) Participating in a development project, and 3) Participating in a public consultation.
- Our survey showed that several **services, bodies and themes related to Montreal** were poorly known. However, young people are relatively familiar with **fields of municipal jurisdiction**. The fight against poverty is the only rather unknown jurisdiction.
- Young Montrealers have **significant needs for information** on all the topics about which they were interviewed. Indeed, in terms of employment, sports and recreation, cultural activities or civic involvement, more than half of respondents said their needs for information are important or very important.

- When asked about different ***communication strategies observed abroad***, young Montrealers were rather in favour of the following: multiservice kiosks for youth in each borough, online magazine produced by young reporters, interactive platform allowing them to express themselves on various issues, visit of elected officials in school to explain their functions, bodies representing young people at the borough's level.

Survey: The Youth Portal

As part of its assessment, the Conseil jeunesse de Montréal considers the possibility of setting up an interactive ***youth portal*** that would better connect with young people. In this context, young Montrealers were asked about the relevance of such a tool. They were interested in the approach: 27% were very interested and 42% were interested.

When asked about ***desired tools, sections and information*** within a portal, young Montrealers prioritized the following: a calendar of cultural and civic activities (68.9%) and information on possible activities (63.4%). Also, they are particularly interested in a grouping of information on activities throughout Montreal. Respondents have also suggested the following: a page presenting job offers and internships with the City of Montreal; a "suggestion box" section to resolve neighbourhood problems; links with youth organizations of the territory; a historical section presenting major issues over the years; webcam access to CjM meetings.

Survey: How to Interest Young Montrealers in Participating in Youth Activities

In our survey, we asked respondents, to give us their proposals to attract young Montrealers to citizen participation. Amongst them, 212 provided answers that are quite exciting, and in continuity with the vision of experts.

To encourage civic participation of young people, respondents propose the following to the City of Montreal:

- Demonstrate the impact and importance of involving young people (over 15%);
- Partner with educational institutions to incorporate municipal politics and participation issues into the curriculum (over 15%);
- Deal with topics reaching young Montrealers (15%);
- Inform young people in advance on issues and opportunities for participation (13%);
- Build on user friendly participatory formulas (9%);
- Encourage attentive listening and consideration of young people while promoting their participation (7%);
- Meet young people in their communities rather than expect them to get to services (6%).

Survey: Proposals to Improve Communication between the City of Montreal and Young Montrealers

In our survey, we asked respondents to give us their suggestions for improving communication between the City of Montreal and young Montrealers. Amongst them, 187 have provided answers. They proposed the following to the City of Montreal and its stakeholders:

- **Focus on the creation of events, activities and places for youth (16%)**
 - *There should be more places for young people under 18. Even places where they can express themselves and give their political opinion. (Respondent)*
- **Further involve and consult young people (16%)**
 - *Allow young people to get involved socially and practically in projects that matters to them. Not only hear them on what they wish for the City, but combine forces to make a difference. (Respondent)*
- **Modernize communication and communication tools (15%)**
 - *I believe it is essential that the City communicate with young people through Web 2.0 and social media to engage them in communication. (Respondent)*
- **Listen to and value young people (14%)**
 - *Giving a voice, credibility, to these young people. (Respondent)*
- **Meet with youth in their territory and be more present in the field (13%)**
 - *The City of Montreal should go to educational institutions to share with young people, and promote its activities. (Respondent)*
- **Better inform young people and better publicize the activities and opportunities for participation (11%)**
 - *Better inform young people about issues that concern them in the City. (Respondent)*
- **Transform municipal politics and promote greater access to elected officials (13%)**

Workshop on “Communication, Social Networks and Power”

In support of the survey and with the collaboration of university and college teachers, the CjM has produced three workshops in April 2010. These workshops benefit from the advice and expertise of over 90 students from the fields of communication, public relations and recreation. Here are presented the findings of our communication experts of the workshop on “Communication, Social Networks and Power” held at the *Université du Québec à Montréal*.

When asked about strategies to ***mobilize existing networks***, promote networking within various youth projects, and deploy networks all the way to young people themselves, students have proposed the following actions:

- Promote the relevance of the representation and participation of youth within existing networks (community-based, political, civic);
- Engage young people in places they frequent (schools, parks, etc.);

- Identify young people who can act as liaison to mobilize youth;
- Establish a forum of youth workers to share practices;
- Involve youth in existing forums rather than create parallel bodies;
- Reach out marginal young people by promoting participation and focusing on their interest to create practices that speak to them;
- Create bridges between networks or formal and informal events;
- Focus on a scale of engagement that is close to young people.

Regarding the transition from vertical communication to **network communication**, young experts have offered the following possible solutions:

- Allow the people, including young people, to submit themes for debate during civic assemblies;
- Bring elected officials closer to young people and insure better listening;
- Develop interactive tools such as a forum led by a city representative;
- Provide a platform to young people to showcase positive actions taken by their peers.

In terms of technological tools and the role of **social media** networking, the following observations were made by students:

- Social media are an opportunity for clustering on the basis of common interests and a place where it is possible to exchange ideas freely;
- Interactive media such as forums could ease the consultative and participatory process by allowing to focus on themes of concern for the population;
- With interactive tools, it would be possible to reach a wider audience than the ones who usually go to municipal or boroughs assemblies;
- Social media are interesting mobilization tools for elected officials, but also allow opponents of certain policies to organize easily;
- Social media allow elected city officials to take the pulse of the population.

Our recommendations

Urban communication, as discussed in this document, is at the heart of a healthy relationship between citizens and their city and between citizens themselves. Although the City of Montreal has initiated actions to improve communication with young people, efforts should be deployed to turn Montreal into a true communicative city. To this end, the *Conseil jeunesse de Montréal* wishes to make the following recommendations:

1. Demonstrate innovation in urban communication

Creativity is a must, not only to be part of the club of communicative cities, but also to go beyond what is done abroad and become a true leader in communication and relations with citizens. Because of the way its tools are evolving, communication is a field in rapid transformation that requires anticipation, not catching-up.

Inform

To meet the growing needs of young people for information, so they can fulfill their multiple roles and take full advantage of the services that are available, the CjM recommends the following:

2. Segment available information according to population's age and interests

Given the abundance of information that is available, it is imperative to personalize communications based on targeted audiences.

3. Develop a youth-specific communication strategy

Broadcasted contents must be consistent with youth expectations, expandable and updated. In addition, they must be conveyed by instruments and channels that are user-friendly and engaging to young people.

- a. Set up a **youth lookout** to gather information related to young people in the City of Montreal and its partners;
- b. Develop **new tools to broadcast information** based on the means favoured by young people;
- c. Allocate a **budget** to youth communication;
- d. **Experiment** with young people or CjM members the tools developed for them.

4. Establish a youth portal

Our survey has confirmed the interest of young Montrealers for a true youth portal to collect information dedicated to them and providing space for expression. This interest was also evident among community partners. They see an opportunity to channel and relay information. This portal must be interactive and enable young people's ownership through content production for and by them.

5. Develop tools for citizen involvement and community recognition

Our survey revealed the importance of developing partnerships with educational institutions and embracing the municipal dimension in their curriculum to engage young people in civic participation. Thus, the CjM recommends the following:

- a. Develop, like the SPVM, an *edukit* on municipal bodies, politics and issues;
- b. Plan *class visits of elected officials* (school tours) to explain their role;
- c. *Inform young people on projects* on the workbench in their borough and invite them to communicate their vision.

Moreover, beyond school, young people must reclaim urban and civic resources. For this, the CjM recommends the following:

- d. Organize *tours of municipal services* with young people;
- e. Mandate field agents to promote with young people their power of influence as citizens and *support them in the appropriate forums*.

6. Ensure the outreach of the full spectrum of activities in Montreal

Promoting the City of Montreal and presenting a young image of the town also involves the promotion of its cultural vitality, events and festivals. Thus, like Amsterdam, it is recommended that the municipal site informs the public about the full spectrum of activities on the territory. If such an enterprise appears too complex, the City of Montreal could partner with existing resources (quoifaireaujourd'hui, voir, vitrine, atuvu, camuz, etc.), or at least refer the citizens to these resources.

Adapt

7. Adapt and diversify the tools of civic participation

Our study showed that efforts should be made to adapt existing participatory structures to the expectations of young citizens in terms of proximity, access, and usability. In this sense, the CjM recommends the following:

- a. Adopt, when possible or when young people are targeted, *user-friendly approach or tour formula* for public consultations and town councils;
- b. Build *bridges between citizens and elected officials* (responsiveness of elected officials to ideas expressed at public events);
- c. Create *youth councils at the borough level* to enable young people to get really involved in issues that have a tangible impact on their immediate environment.

8. Promote co-development of projects and contents with young people

Through contests, activities offered by the City or the use of Web 2.0, it is now possible to involve young people in the production of contents dedicated to them. In addition, focus should be put on projects by and for young people. This involves coaching youth initiatives and assigned budgets.

9. Develop multiservice kiosks for youth

Like the city of Paris, Montreal kiosks for youth would consist of an information hub for all activities available in Montreal, services for youth, and startup of youth projects. Through their user-friendly approach, kiosks are also meeting places and clusters for cultural promotion for young people. For such a project, community partners would be enlisted to develop interesting youth packages.

Value

10. Adopt a youth policy

At the risk of being redundant, the CjM considers that the valorisation of young Montrealers and the adoption of youth-specific communication strategies requires the adoption of a youth policy in Montreal. As we have seen, the adoption of a family policy brought a particular attention to this group during subsequent communication campaigns from the City.

Furthermore, such a policy would provide a lever for youth interventions, encourage greater cohesion of action at the municipal level, promote the development of collaborative tools and focus on the 12 to 30's age group.

11. Renew and rejuvenate the image of the City of Montreal

Like the City of Montpellier, the City of Montreal would do well to capitalize on its youth character, its cultural quality and its dimension of *City of Knowledge* and *University Town*. The brand image currently conveyed by the City of Montreal is not conducive to development of a sense of belonging among young Montrealers.

12. Increase the involvement of young Montrealers

It is important to provide a forum for projects developed by young people.

Involve

13. Inform young people to encourage their true commitment

To really get involved in the destiny of their city, young Montrealers must possess the necessary information in relation to ongoing projects, as well as to opportunities and terms of involvement. Communication then becomes a lever for participation. Thus, the CjM recommends the following:

- a. Ensure the circulation of empowering information, basis of true involvement;
- b. Inform young people on opportunities for civic participation and involvement;
- c. Explain to young people “how to” get involved.

14. Allow rich interactions between the City of Montreal, its elected officials and young citizens

According to surveyed young Montrealers, attentive listening and consideration are key dimensions of good communication. Thus, it is important to maximize the opportunities for exchanges with young people so that they feel included and involved. In this sense, the CjM recommends the following:

- a. Bring together elected officials and young citizens during meetings in places they frequent and by attending youth events;
- b. Be transparent.

15. Develop tools to promote citizens’ expression

Good governance requires a deep understanding of the people’s needs and aspirations. Moreover, many communication tools allow the pooling of knowledge to develop solutions. To that effect, the CjM recommends the following:

- a. Develop the reflex to listen to the people through surveys, consultations and focus groups.
- b. Provide an online citizen forum allowing discussions on issues and develop collective solutions.

Design

As we have seen, a communicative city is also a city whose design promotes exchange and meeting with others. Thus the CjM recommends the following:

16. Multiply youth events, activities and sites

Young Montrealers have testified of the importance to have opportunities for youth gatherings, but also to meet other generations. Indeed, it matters to offer young people space in the city.

17. Focus on flexible design that allows citizens to develop a sense of belonging

To promote greater sense of belonging to the city, and to avoid rapid obsolescence of sites, a flexible design is required. It is therefore necessary to get out of functionalism and embrace versatility that can be easily invested and shaped by the population⁶.

18. Design the city to allow exchanges and meetings

Urban mobility has an impact on the interactions between citizens and on the unity of the city. In this context, it is important to:

- a. Overcome urban breaks to ensure fluidity between neighbourhoods and promote meetings (ex: elimination of Van Horne interchange).

19. Create user-friendly service hubs that are close to citizens

Since the recent decentralization, boroughs are prominent in the dynamics of Montreal. Furthermore, progressively, we notice a personalization of the boroughs and the emergence of strong local identities. Thus, as a lever for this community shift, the CjM recommends the following:

- a. ***Create service hubs in each borough***
Those hubs could consolidate municipal and provincial services to form true resources centres;
- b. ***Ensure multifunctionality of municipal sites*** by combining formal functions (services) with non-formal functions (café, rest area, park) so as to make the experience enjoyable. The borough of Saint-Léonard can be cited here as an example in terms of service clustering and usability. The bistro facing the Maison de la culture Maisonneuve also illustrates this movement.

⁶ The display modules considered by the City of Montreal on its street furniture (Gervais, 2009) are part of this possible appropriation of public space.

c. ***Combine attractions to entice new users***

To entice new users, the advantage of multifunctionality applies also for Montreal attractions. The Jazzy 4 to 8 of the *Jardin botanique* combines culture and nature and reflects this new strategy.