

Phase 1. LAUNCH the project

What ?

To carry out a participatory planning project, it is important to identify and involve local stakeholders from the start and establish partnerships. By calling on community leaders, you will help establish relationships with other stakeholders in the area. It is very useful to mobilize the people responsible for making decisions regarding the physical transformation of the community (e.g., municipal elected officials and housing project managers). Other partners could include people interested in the project and those who can mobilize the community. Experience has shown the importance of creating formal partnerships with these stakeholders by creating a working committee, which will establish an operating framework for a project. This framework should foster open communication between all groups who play a role in the area.

Create a working committee

Creating a working committee that represents the area and brings together key stakeholders will be decisive for completing the project. The working committee has the following mandate:

- Identify limitations that projects must work within;
- Mobilize resources;
- Mobilize the community;
- Provide technical support;
- Identify and collect existing information.

A work team (3 to 5 people), drawn from this committee, is designated to manage and run the project. This smaller group defines the general aspects of the project, plans and implements the participatory urban planning process and mediates among members if there is a conflict. The other members of the committee form a larger circle of contributors not necessarily involved in all planning aspects.

Managing the process

Specific guidelines are necessary to ensure things move smoothly and the participatory planning initiative is successful. To establish an appropriate operating framework, the following elements are necessary:

- Define the project area;
- Determine goals, targets and monitoring indicators;
- Clearly identify the stakeholders;
- Clarify everyone's roles and responsibilities;
- Establish a schedule;
- Calculate available financial, human and material resources.

Within the framework adapted to the project, actions are taken to ensure that a collective vision for the future of the neighbourhood or target site emerges.

Practical tips

A planning schedule is a good way to have an overall idea of the process in the beginning. As time goes by, adjustments can be made to activities (choice, number, timing, etc.). Activities should be planned two to three months in advance.

Remember

The time needed for the project launch phase is often underestimated. It is essential to allocate the time required to create a strong partnership, one which can evolve and respond to project developments.

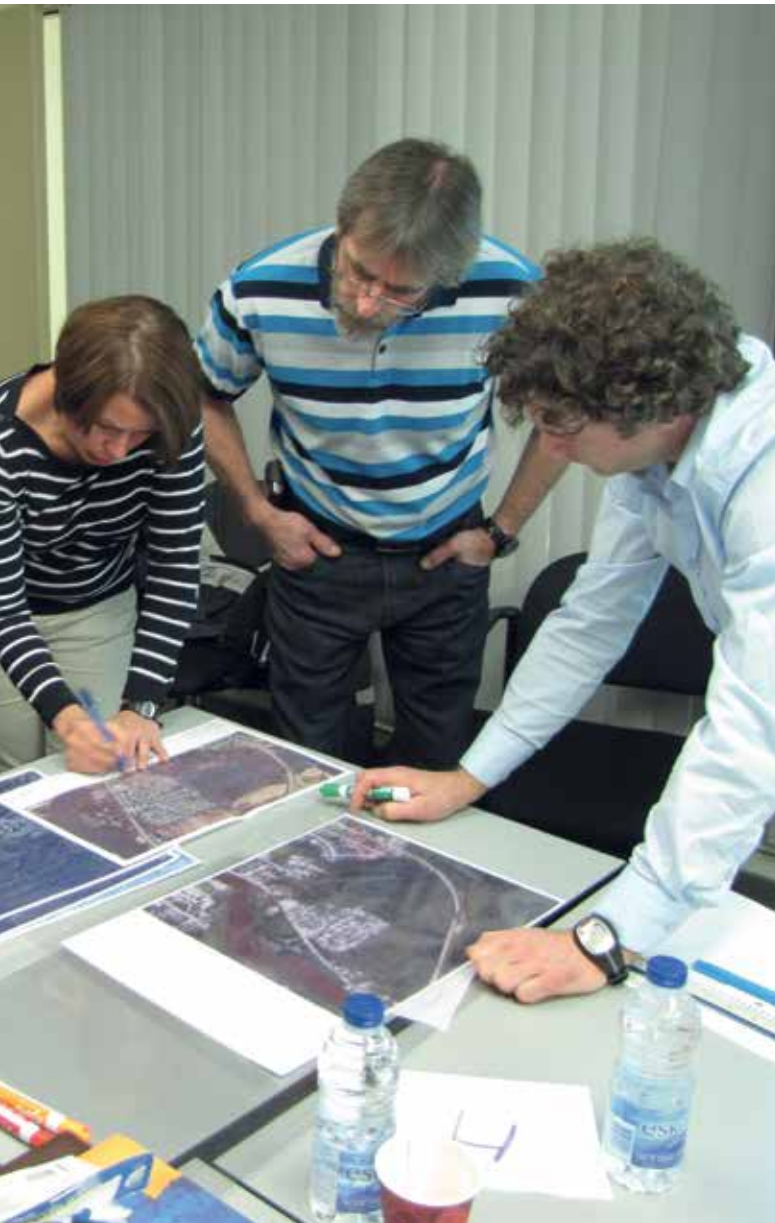
Why ?

To establish project foundations through a solid partnership

Collaboration is essential to the success and sustainability of any participatory process. The process should not rest on the shoulders of just one stakeholder.

- The launch phase is where we determine how each stakeholder will contribute and the ground rules for managing a participatory process.
- Decision makers (such as municipal elected officials and professionals and housing project managers) are responsible for implementing changes to the built environment in the medium and long term. Consequently, it is essential to work in partnership with stakeholders that will later make the changes happen.
- Mobilizing citizens requires a great deal of time and effort. It is important to create links with local organizations and citizen leaders of the community who have direct links with citizens and goals that are compatible with those of the project.





Who ?

Bring together the appropriate partners

Create a committee of key people, in light of the project context:

- Committed and expert citizens;
- Municipal elected officials and professionals;
- Members of community networks;
- Representatives of schools, universities and public health.

How ?

Some activities for identifying and rallying partners:

- Establish a partnership agreement;
- Force field³;
- Stakeholder mapping;
- Define the vision for the project area.

Remember

Two key elements of successful participatory urban planning project are:

1. Allocate the budget, human and material resources needed;
2. Respect the work pace of local and community partners and other stakeholders.

³ The force field activity is designed to understand the factors that contribute to a problem, a situation or a project and those that counteract it. Source: Chevalier, Buckles and Bourassa, 2013.

Example 1

A neighbourhood vision in Southeastern Notre-Dame-de-Grâce

At the beginning of the Southeastern Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (NDG) Green, Active, and Healthy Neighbourhood project in Montréal, about 30 citizens and local stakeholders met to define their vision for the neighbourhood. Their goal was to look into the future toward a collective ideal to strive for.

During the kick-off public meeting, participants carried out a “flower” exercise. They were invited to identify three elements that give them a sense of belonging to the neighbourhood (the roots of the flower) and to imagine three things that they would like to see change (the petals). The answers were then presented at a plenary meeting at the end.

Based on the participant’s suggestions, the project leaders drafted a neighbourhood vision statement and used a visual to illustrate the principal ideas. The vision statement was assessed by the residents during a later activity. The shared vision guided the reflection and proposals during the entire project.

Remember

A visioning exercise is a simple activity that reinforces a sense of belonging to the neighbourhood and the project.

The vision statement also serves to remind project leaders of the local colour.

A diversity of citizens and stakeholders is necessary to ensure that the community is well represented.

The vision statement should be evaluated after a few years and, if necessary, revised.

Key points of the vision for Southeastern NDG



Southeastern NDG citizens define their vision of a Green Neighbourhood.

Example 2

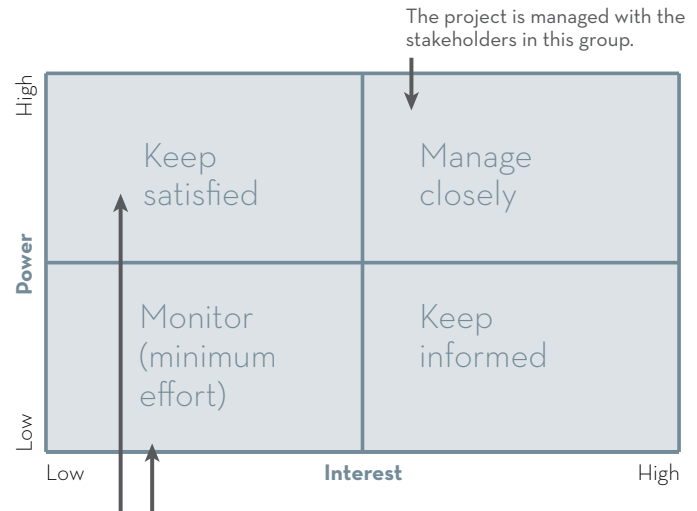
Stakeholder mapping in Chomedey

The urban planning committee for the integrated urban revitalization of Chomedey (RUI Committee), the City of Laval and the MUEC led a participatory urban planning project in Laval. At the beginning of the project, the committee wanted to understand the stakeholder profile and identify potential partners to include in the process. A stakeholder mapping exercise was done for this purpose.

Stakeholder mapping consists of evaluating the degree of interest and the influence of stakeholders relevant to the project. It can be used to determine what type of relationship should be developed with each stakeholder and at what point of the project to involve them.

A list of stakeholders in the area was developed, and their relevance to the project was evaluated. All of the stakeholders were located in a matrix to estimate the type and intensity of the relationships to establish with them during the project.

Stakeholder		
Goal		
Position regarding project		
Power		
Interest		
When to involve them		
Strategy		
Other		



Strengthening the relationships with these stakeholders can move them into the “Manage closely” group.

In summary, stakeholder mapping is used to:

- Confirm or correct a perception regarding a stakeholder;
- Identify possible alliances and potential obstacles to participation;
- Adopt a specific approach for every stakeholder to optimize their participation.

Remember

Since some information is confidential, do not distribute this document.

The position of stakeholders may change over time: the map should be revised for each phase.