

# Phase 4. **DECIDE** on scenarios

## **What ?**

You have identified the most promising solution for improving the urban environment of your project area, and it is now time to make some decisions. This phase involves soliciting input from citizens and all parties directly and indirectly involved in the process.

### **Explain and bring people together**

This step assesses the social acceptability of the project and seeks an equitable equilibrium among the different stakeholders' often diverging points of view. It is probably an illusion to think that a perfect consensus can be obtained. However, it is always possible, with clear communication and real co-operation work, to bring parties closer together and arrive at a common position that satisfies everyone.

During this phase of the process, it is a good idea to go beyond the relatively small circle of people already participating. Many citizens and stakeholders are not as aware of urban design issues, but it is important to consult them as well. These people have something to say because they also experience the same space on a daily basis. Additional effort is necessary to promote activities in order to get them involved.

The proposed solutions must be explained simply and clearly, so they can be easily understood. This way, everyone will be fully informed and have the information required to express

their acceptance of the solutions. Citizens should also be encouraged to suggest adjustments and improvements to the solutions. At the end of the exercise, this will increase the chances that the accepted solutions faithfully reflect the needs of all residents.

### **Define the action plan**

It is up to the work committee to structure the accepted proposals into a detailed action plan. The action plan addresses the various issues and problems that were identified. It must provide specific solutions for each situation that needs to be corrected. In brief, the action plan translates the words into actions.

### ***Remember***

It is important to validate a draft of the plan with the major project partners, including the decision makers, who will be the ones to implement the plan and ultimately make the final decisions. This ensures that the plan is realistic, accurately reflects the previous steps, and that the efforts required for the design projects will be accepted.

## Why ?

- Validate the priority issues and sites with citizens and stakeholders.
- Assess their acceptance of the solutions that resulted from the exploration phase, and collect any new ideas.
- Decide on the best actions to take in everyone's interests and collect these measures in a well-structured action plan.

## Who ?

- Decision makers
- Citizens
- Stakeholders that are project partners
- Other local stakeholders, e.g., those from schools and community groups

## How ?

- Scenario validation workshop
- Mediation workshop
- Work session with groups of informed and mobilized citizens
- Work session with municipal professionals
- Production of an illustrated action plan with specific and localized actions



## Example 1

### Scenario validation workshop for the Southeastern Notre-Dame-de-Grâce neighbourhood

In November 2010, citizens and stakeholders of the Southeastern Notre-Dame-de-Grâce neighbourhood were invited, during a consultation meeting, to give their opinions on the design scenarios developed to promote walking and cycling. The scenarios were designed to improve access to popular places, facilitate links between the northern and southern parts of the neighbourhood, expand the bicycle network and improve access to the Vendôme subway station. The scenarios were presented in the form of consultation kiosks.

**A design scenario is an idea, concept or technical solution illustrated on a plan, a cross-sectional view of a street, a visual simulation or a model. To facilitate comprehension, the following are provided: a brief description, the strengths and limits of the proposal, the problems it seeks to resolve, and an estimate of the costs to complete it.**

Participants moved freely from one kiosk to another and could talk to the facilitators to get more details on the scenarios.

When they felt ready, they indicated their level of support for each scenario on an evaluation scale. They could also provide written comments about the different scenarios to specify what they liked and did not like.

#### Practical tips

Present the scenarios transparently: the strengths and weaknesses of each must be presented so that participants can compare them objectively.

Make the scenarios easy to understand: participants should be able to grasp the proposed measures and their impacts so they can take a position.

Train the kiosk facilitators: they should have a good grasp of the current situation and the proposals so they can answer participants' questions and help them choose.



A citizen writes her comments about a design scenario.



Street cross-sectional view. Design proposal for an underpass on Girouard Avenue.

## Example 2

### A participatory budget at Habitations Rosemont

As part of a project to redesign exterior spaces for Habitations Rosemont in Montréal, the MUEC tested a participatory budget process with residents to select the designs to be implemented.

**A participatory budget is a participatory democratic process through which citizens decide how to spend budget funds.**

During an initial activity, 26 residents of Habitations Rosemont reviewed different design concepts that a landscape architect had defined based on the ideas that they had submitted. The spaces to be redesigned were divided into four zones, and design options were suggested for each one. The options took into account the amount budgeted (\$150,000), and the associated costs were presented to participants. Working in subgroups, the residents discussed the advantages and disadvantages of each option, keeping in mind the needs of various groups (children, families, etc.).

Thirty-four residents selected the designs that they preferred at a second meeting. With the help of a digital voting tool and hand-held clickers, they voted for a combination of their favourite designs, respecting the total budget available. The design proposals that received the most votes in each zone became the final choice.

Residents pointed out that the process removed some barriers between tenant groups, who generally mixed little with one another. During the activities, some seniors visited the community garage, which is usually only for families. Similarly, several families attended activities held in the seniors' tower. Mixed discussion groups held during the workshops encouraged residents to speak with each other.



Courtyard development proposal that was put to the vote.



Residents of Habitations Rosemont on the evening of the vote.