

CO-DESIGNING THE ACTIVE CITY

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Q&A

Participatory Urban Planning: An Approach to Foster the Development of Healthy Built Environments

1. How to best involve the community in these trade-off decisions when the money piece is a major driving factor (post concept design)?

Participatory budgeting, as explained in greater detail in question 8 of this document and on the website BudgetParticipatifQuebec.ca, is one mechanism to involve the community in budgeting decisions and trade-offs.

2. When including multiple stakeholders, including the public, how do you balance differing priorities and viewpoints? (E.g. consider evidenced based and population health vs individual convenience)

The process itself mitigates this concern. In the early stages of the participatory planning process, we spend a long time engaging with residents and listening to their concerns, without rushing into a solutions phase. By the time we are working on solutions, we do this with a strong understanding of residents' concerns, and with residents around the table, designing alongside the professionals. This allows for a clear and open flow of communication, which can help residents to learn about potential solutions that are evidence-based while helping professionals to relate to individual experiences and build empathy with residents. We've found that it's a quite effective way to encourage compromise and build consensus!

3. Was the private sector engaged in some of the projects and how did you go about engaging this sector? What role did it play?

In the Ontario context, the private sector has been involved in our co-design workshops. People from private consultancies and firms have given their expertise (often times in-kind) to the development of the community visions, by participating in the design workshops. We have also partnered more directly with private-sector partners to facilitate citizen engagement processes on their behalf on a fee-for-service basis.

4. How should we approach the non-expert (residents and users of a neighbourhood) point of view?

The experience of professionals and that of residents and users of a neighbourhood must be seen as complementary. Their experience and testimony become additional inputs that need to be considered during the planning and design phases undertaken by the professionals.



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5. As for funding, is it always assumed by the municipalities?

Some of the case studies presented in the webinar are part of the Active Neighbourhoods Canada project, which is funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada as part of the [Innovation Strategy: Achieving Healthier Weights in Canada's Communities](#). Other case studies were conducted by the city with its own cost and funding project.

6. From your point of view, are Quebec's elected officials in favor of participatory urban planning?

It is not possible to answer for all elected officials, but the participatory process has, undoubtedly, many benefits for them. Think of the proximity with the residents that allows a better understanding of their reality. The participatory approach can also become a privileged interface between the administration and the population during the land-use planning process.

7. Does ANC conduct projects in rural areas?

Yes. The [Sustainable Calgary team worked in the community of High River](#), a rural community of 13,500 people in Alberta, to develop an active mobility strategy. The Centre for Active Transportation team worked with [Haliburton Village in Haliburton County](#). The participatory urban planning approach in favor of health adapts to urban contexts, such as [Calgary](#) or [Toronto](#), suburban, such as [Saguenay](#) or [Shawinigan](#), and rural.

8. Have you applied the participatory budgeting in your projects? If so, were the impacts positive?

The Montreal Urban Ecology Centre (MUEC) is actively working with the Participatory Budgeting Project to share expertise on participatory budgeting and promote this democratic practice in Quebec and Canada. I invite you to visit [BudgetParticipatifQuebec.ca](#) (French only) to learn more about the MUEC practice and to inspire you with other Quebec models.



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