



LAVAL

## Highlighting collective skills

Active Neighbourhoods Canada (ANC) uses the principles of participatory urban planning to transform communities. Dynamic citizens and organizations who are prepared to commit to the process are essential to the success of any ANC project. So how do we proceed when civil society in the community has already been active and committed for many years? In Chomedey, Laval, the challenge facing the Montréal Urban Ecology Centre (MUEC) was to put into action all those years of initiative and learning without repeating the work that had already been done.

## SHARING THE LEARNING OF A NEIGHBOURHOOD

The initial meeting with the various organizations already active in the neighbourhood was crucial to the project's success. Numerous plans, policies and diagnostics had already been done in the area. The mandate was clear: it was time for action and bringing the various actors and sectors together.

The MUEC mapped the stakeholders and, with local partners, recommended the creation of a local working group. This helped strengthen links and build synergies and positive momentum around the project. The very productive meetings led to a reflection on everything accomplished in the neighbourhood to that point. The participants realized that while different groups had done much work, it was time to take action. Several unifying activities for residents were then organized.

*Local stakeholders set a clear priority: put citizens back at the heart of decision-making.*

A key moment was an exploratory walk that brought together community groups working in public health, social services, transportation and housing, municipal professionals, department heads, elected representatives, the police and parents. The group visited sites that residents had identified as having high-priority safety problems. By the end of the walk, the issues had been clearly exposed and understood.



## PUT INTO ACTION SEVERAL YEARS OF WORK

The priority expressed by local residents was clear: putting residents back at the centre of the process. After several meetings, another priority emerged: getting different stakeholders and sectors to work together.

We therefore took advantage of existing sites and activities, where residents were already coming together, to go meet and talk with them, particularly young people and families. It was important to avoid repeating or duplicating past activities. Instead, the focus was on taking action and identifying the neighbourhood's priorities with the help of its residents.

Without that crucial coordination work, the many stakeholders might have kept working separately, without realizing that the sum of their work had already brought them very close to the goal. The coordination work paid off, because now Chomedey is well on its way to becoming greener, more active and healthier.



**VIEW THE PORTRAIT HERE:**

*Aménagements en faveur des déplacements actifs dans Chomedey. Diagnostic et recommandations*  
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