Abstract
The Westmount 2010 Baseline Study provides a “snapshot” view of Westmount as a city and as a community in 2010. Major projects underway in areas directly adjacent to the city, particularly the MUHC Glen Campus development and the Ville-Marie Expressway and Turcot Interchange reconstruction are expected to affect Westmount residents’ quality of life. The baseline study offers indicators worth monitoring over the upcoming years in order to assess the true impact of these mega-projects on the local community. Based on an analysis of demographic characteristics, built form, population density, and real estate costs, it is apparent that Westmount is comprised of two distinct communities: Lower Westmount and Upper Westmount. Whereas Upper Westmount represents a stable, extremely affluent community, Lower Westmount is more diverse and more vulnerable to change. Key indicators, focused on Lower Westmount, include demographic shifts toward an aging, more affluent community; household income that does not keep pace with increasing real estate costs; and a transportation network that prioritizes automobile mobility over other modes. Given the existing conditions and trends revealed in the baseline study, it is expected that Westmount will be facing some complex challenges in the upcoming years that may be further exacerbated by the presence of the MUHC Glen Campus and the reconstruction of Turcot Interchange. The City of Westmount may use its commitment to sustainable development and civic engagement as a source of inspiration and guidance in addressing the issues raised in this report.

Cite as

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The Westmount 2010 Baseline Study was conducted by student researchers from the School of Urban Planning at McGill University under the direction of Professor Lisa Bornstein and with the guidance of research coordinator, Jason Prince. It is part of a long-term research project, Making Megaprojects Work for Communities, a Community-University Research Alliance (CURA) project funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

Making Megaprojects Work for Communities is an action-research project seeking to understand how new, large-scale public facilities, or “megaprojects”, can impact communities and the city at large. Research focuses on the relationship between the new McGill University Health Centre (MUHC) Glen Campus Superhospital and the surrounding neighbourhoods in the Notre-Dame-de-Grace and Saint-Henri districts and the City of Westmount.

Many people provided important information and guidance that was instrumental to helping produce the content for this baseline study. Special thanks goes to those who took time out of their busy schedules to speak with us. These include Joanne Poirier, City of Westmount director of urban planning department; Joshua Wolfe, City of Westmount sustainability coordinator; Peter Giambattisto, City of Westmount Public Works chief surveyor; Mary Stark, director of the Contactivity Centre; David Lapoint, Westmount Arena and Pool assistant director of recreation; and Andy Dodge, real estate analyst and columnist for the Westmount Examiner.

Fellow colleagues and other professors who assisted in this study include Molly Johnson, Jill Merriman, Jacob Larson, Jonathan Hong and Professor Ahmed El-Geneidy
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Executive Summary

The Westmount 2010 Baseline Study offers a synopsis of notable characteristics and key indicators that together paint a picture of Westmount as a city and as a community in the year 2010. The construction and operation of the MUHC Glen Campus project as well as the proposed reconstruction of the Ville-Marie Expressway and Turcot Interchange provided the impetus for conducting a baseline study for Westmount. It is anticipated that these large projects may impact Westmount residents’ quality of life.

Beginning with the Context section, there is an overview of Westmount’s geographic location, population, and neighbourhood areas as well as a brief summary of the city’s rich history. The Community section provides information on community amenities and the community profile, which includes a description and analysis of demographic shifts that may affect the character of Westmount in the fairly near future. The community profile also outlines two distinct communities existing in Westmount, based on distinguishing demographic characteristics as well as differences in the built form and population density, which are spatially represented as Upper and Lower Westmount.

Next, the Governance section provides an overview of the local city government and civic involvement, including main goals and objectives for 2010. This is followed by the City Planning section, which summarizes the Westmount Planning Programme and related by-laws with particular focus on planning projects, past, present and proposed.

The Built Environment and Transportation sections offer an overview of the current status of each as they stand today. Challenges and opportunities related to each topic is offered, including the issue of traffic congestion and the fact that Westmount is almost completely built-out with little space for new development.

An analysis of local commercial corridors and general real estate trends is found in the Business and Economic Development section, which again points toward further changes in the city’s demographic and business composition. This section provides new analysis for the city of trends and emerging issues. Special attention is given to the apparent mismatch between household income and real estate values as well as a host of local factors affecting the cost of owning and maintaining property in Westmount.

The report ends with a discussion of the emerging issues and trends discovered through conducting the baseline study. Areas of concern include the growing elderly population and their needs for specialized services and amenities; accessibility to a transportation network that suits a variety of transportation modes in a safe and efficient manner; and lastly, the issue of affordability in the city. There is also discussion on the opportunity for the city to deepen its commitment to sustainable development as it continues to grow and evolve into the next century.
Context

Geographical

Westmount covers approximately 4.02 square kilometers of land on the southwestern slopes of Mont-Royal in the centre of the Island of Montreal. The city is currently surrounded by the city of Ville-Marie and borders the boroughs of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce to the west, Côte-des-Neiges to the north, Ville-Marie to the east and Sud-Ouest to the south. The edges of Westmount are delineated by Summit Park at the northern edge, downtown Montreal on the east, and the Ville-Marie Expressway, CN railroads, and Saint-Antoine Street along the southern edge. The combination of geographical features and built structures work in concert to define Westmount’s borders and distinguish the city from the neighbouring boroughs.

Topographic conditions, such as the Mont-Royal slopes in the upper part of Westmount and the Saint-Jacque falaise near the southern edge of the city limits, have affected the development of the area. Saint-Antoine Street is the lowest point in Westmount at 20 metres above sea level while the highest point is located in Summit Park at 200 metres. As stated in the Westmount Planning Programme the topography of the area, from south to north, includes:
- “a slope with a 25-metre gradient on which the train tracks and highway are entrenched;
- a plateau that extends from the train tracks to Sherbrooke Street at around 45 metres above sea level;
- the south flank of the mountain that follows an average slope of 12.5% but rises more abruptly when approaching the summit”.

Figure 2: Map of Westmount topography

Figure 3: Map of Westmount boundary

Figure 4: Map of Westmount and surrounding boroughs

Figure 5: Map of Westmount on island of Montreal
Greenspaces

Westmount is known for its tree-lined streets and numerous neighbourhood parks, which include various playgrounds and green spaces, as well as the naturalized Summit Park. According to the Sustainable Development Action Plan, “public green space totals about 45 hectares, more than 10% of the city”. The tree coverage in Westmount is substantial when compared to the surrounding boroughs. The public realm is largely covered in a tree canopy with over 10,000 trees distributed equally between the city’s parks and streets. The City encourages residents to plant additional trees in part by providing one free tree per household through the Special Tree Distribution program.

Neighbourhood Areas

Characteristics of the population and built form vary throughout Westmount (see Built Environment), with the most distinct differences occurring in three neighbourhood areas that follow the slope of the mountain. These areas are sometimes referred to as the Westmount Flats, Westmount Mid-level, and Upper Westmount. The Westmount Flats coincide with the plateau between Sherbrooke Street and the train tracks and is characterized by a denser and more-moderate income population. The few high-rises in Westmount are found in this area as well as small streets lined with rowhouses. The area north of Sherbrooke Street and south of The Boulevard is considered the Westmount Mid-level area and is characterized with larger lot sizes and single-family homes. Some duplexes are found closer to Sherbrooke Street, but up the slope the homes become larger and predominantly single-family. Upper Westmount is the name given to the area between The Boulevard and Summit Park. The streets follow the contours of the mountain, resulting in curvilinear pattern and diverse property characteristics. This is one of the most affluent residential areas in Canada.

Although Westmount identifies at least three different neighbourhood areas, the results from the baseline study revealed only two very distinct areas. In our analysis, it was found that Sherbrooke Street was most often the dividing line between the two areas. For the purposes of this baseline study, we adopted the terms “Upper Westmount” and “Lower Westmount” to define these areas as illustrated in Figure 7. These areas are defined by a variety of distinguishing characteristics, including topography, built form, real estate values, and demographic profiles, all of which are presented in this report.

Figure 6: Map of tree coverage in Westmount

Figure 7: Map of Lower and Upper Westmount
History

The territory now called Westmount has undergone considerable changes over the centuries. The early history, as identified by historian W. D. Lighthall, includes the Indian Period, French Period, and British Period. After the period of intense growth during the English period (1880s-1920s) events in Westmount’s evolution coincide with and were impacted by global events, economic trends and megaprojects. Each era has left its mark on the landscape and continues to impact the growth and development process of Westmount. The following section offers a brief historical overview covering the past 700 years of inhabitation of the Westmount area marked by major eras, events, and projects (see Figure 9).

Many areas in Westmount hold some archaeological significance due to the presence of a First Nation’s burial ground that predates the 1400s. The stone lined graves discovered in the late 1890s in Upper Westmount were taken as evidence of a Mohawk or Iroquois settlement in the area that possibly predated the Hochelaga or otherwise were early descendents of them. The Hochelaga Nation occupied the land when French explorers first arrived to the Island in the 1500s with Jacques Cartier. Early explorers documented that the First Nations people cultivated corn and wheat along the plateau area in Westmount. The arable land in the area attracted French farmers in the next century.

The first official establishment of the French on the territory was by the Sulpician Fathers. In 1684 they built the Seminary of St. Sulpice of the Fort Des Messieurs. Although the actual building is east of the current city limits, the land owned by the Sulpician Fathers extended far westward. As seignors of the land, the Sulpician Fathers divided the land into the long, narrow north-south strips and distributed the parcels to French farmers. This land subdivision is apparent in the current street grid in Westmount and is common across the Island of Montreal.

After the English conquest in 1763, prominent English and Scottish businessmen started developing the agricultural lands to serve as their country estates or summer homes. By the 1840s affluent families started making their primary homes in the territory of Westmount, thereby creating one of Montreal’s first suburban communities. Development spread first along the plateau and sprinkled up the mountainside. Today the building and population densities are concentrated on the plateau while large single-family homes on large lots cover the mountain slope.

The decades between 1875 and 1895 the territory, now defined as Westmount, went through many incarnations. It was a part of Notre-Dame-de-Grace, an English enclave, until it separated in 1879 and formed its own municipal boundaries as the Village of Cote-Saint-Antoine. Then in 1890 it became the Town of Cote-Saint-Antoine only to be renamed the City of Westmount five years later. Montreal’s elite Anglophone families flooded into Westmount during the late 1890s and early 1900s. This local migration was in part attributed to the rise in French migration into Montreal during that same period, which lessened the English influence over local government in the city centre. By creating the English enclave of Westmount, the Anglophone elite could continue to play an active role in local governance.

Public transit between the city centre and Westmount enabled accessibility for business and professional purposes and enabled rapid development of the area. The Montreal City Passenger Rail Company extended service into Westmount in 1872, which substantially improved accessibility between the city and downtown Montreal. Prior to the extended service, people had to walk to Saint-Henri to catch a horse car into the city centre. The population of Westmount in this period grew rapidly. In 1885 the population was approximately 1,000 people. By 1920 it had reached nearly 20,000 people; today’s population is just under 20,500 people.
Most of Westmount’s development occurred between the late 1880s and 1920s. The planning and development of the city coincided with the substantial industrial growth in Montreal. This contributed to the increase in wealth for people in the business and merchant classes, giving them the resources to move out of the city centre and build large estates with architectural integrity in the country. The architectural legacy of this era of intense growth is evident in the streetscapes today and serves as a cornerstone of local identity and pride for the city and its residents.

Westmount offered a unique lifestyle away from the industrializing city centre while still within close proximity to Montreal. The negative affects of industrialization on urban dwellers, namely congestion, air pollution, and unsanitary living conditions for the working poor, gave rise to the garden suburb movement in England. As a Protestant, Anglophone enclave, Westmount ascribed to the garden suburb ideals and integrated them into the planning and development of the city from the beginning. The city founders ensured the preservation of the garden suburb aesthetic through strict zoning regulations. For instance, terrace housing was prohibited in the upper half of Westmount; commercial and industrial uses along with high-density housing development were restricted to the plateau and down the Saint-Jacques falaise; and the mountain slope area was restricted to residential lots for single-family dwellings and estates. The distinction between the lower and upper areas of Westmount is clear to this day, as confirmed through this baseline study (see Community).

Development in Westmount slowed considerably between the 1930s and 1950s, paralleling the decreased economic activity of the time due to the Depression and World War II. However, post-World War II prosperity returned to Canada and Montreal and with it, more opportunity for more development. With Expo ‘67 and the 1976 Olympics serving as catalysts for growth, this era was marked by large infrastructure projects that effectively changed the face of Montreal and in particular, the southern section of Westmount (see City Planning).

Between the mid-1960s and late-1970s, large areas of Lower Westmount were totally transformed. The metro was built in time for Expo in 1967 with a station at Atwater Avenue and Saint-Catherine Street. Between 1964 and 1967, Westmount Square was developed at that same corner, creating the city’s first tower complex. It serves as a reminder to residents of undesirable urban form in the otherwise human-scale and heritage-focused city. The Ville-Marie Expressway was under construction during the same period, resulting in the razing of residences along Selby Street, which is now overshadowed by the elevated highway. In 1974 the City of Westmount developed public housing on land it had purchased from the Canadian Pacific Railroad Co. along Hillside Avenue. Residents from Selby Street who had been evicted to make way for the Ville-Marie Expressway were given priority for the new units. Buildings along Tupper Street, Dorchester Boulevard, and Gladstone Avenue were demolished during this time period as well. In the case of Tupper Street, the land remains undeveloped.

The era that resulted in major alterations to Westmount’s cityscape led the City to create some of the strictest zoning and building by-laws in North America (see City Planning). In 1985 the City of Westmount published its first version of the Guidelines for Building and Renovating in Westmount. The guidelines are recognized as a one-of-a-kind document and have since served as a model for other municipalities interested in heritage preservation and maintaining high standards for streetscapes and architectural aesthetics.

Quality architecture, pleasing streetscapes, and ample public space and parks are elemental values that the city founders set early in the planning and development of Westmount. Today, the city’s character and charm is attributed to the presence and preservation of the varying architectural styles and high quality of the public realm. The City continues to prioritize heritage preservation and providing community amenities.

The founding principles, eras and major events in Westmount’s history set the city on a particular path for growth and development and they maintain a strong influence today through its street patterns, zoning regulations, architectural guidelines and civic involvement. In addition, the current Westmount community reflects the affluent, Anglophone families that were instrumental in setting the groundwork for the city as known today.
Before the 1400s:
Present-day Westmount is the site of a native burial ground.

1400s:
The Hochelagans become the second known possessors of the site of Westmount.

1879:
Present-day Westmount separates from the village of NDG and becomes Village of Côte Saint-Antoine.

1890:
Village of Côte Saint-Antoine gains town charter and becomes Town of Côte Saint-Antoine.

1893:
Sherbrooke Street opens and becomes the town's principal thoroughfare.

1895:
Town of Côte Saint-Antoine is renamed as Westmount.

1896 - 1900:
Period of intense growth; population almost doubles reaching 8500 inhabitants in 1900.

1908:
Westmount Municipal Association is founded.

1935:
The Westmount Examiner begins publication.

1967:
Westmont Square and Alexis Nihon shopping center opens; Alexis Nihon office towers added in 1970 and 1986.

1972:
Ville-Marie Expresway is completed; some displaced Westmounters move into Hillside Housing in 1974.

1987:
Under Mayor Cutler, Westmount refuses to rename Westmount portion of Dorchester Boulevard after René Lévesque.

Jan 1st, 2002:
Westmount, along with 27 other municipalities amalgamate into one city - Montreal.

Jan 1st, 2006:
Westmount, along with 14 other municipalities demerge from City of Montreal.

June 20th, 2004:
Referendums held in 22 of the 27 previously independent municipalities; 15 boroughs vote to demerge.

2010:
MUHC Glen Campus design is made public; controversy ensues over Lansdowne entrance to hospital site.

1684:
Establishment by the Seminary of Saint Sulpice of the Fort Des Messieurs; just east of Westmount site.

1887:
Westmount Public Library opens - it is the first public library in Quebec.

1994 - 1995:
Westmount Library is renewed and expanded; reopens on November 9th 1995.

1997:
The Westmount Examiner begins publication.

1994 - 1995:
Westmount Library is renewed and expanded; reopens on November 9th 1995.

2010:
MUHC Glen Campus design is made public; controversy ensues over Lansdowne entrance to hospital site.

Figure 9: History timeline
Community

Community Profile

Overview

In brief, Westmount is a well-established municipality of 20,494 residents. The community is predominantly Anglophone and relatively affluent, compared to the rest of Montreal. According to 2006 data from Statistics Canada, the median age of the population is approximately 45 years, slightly higher than the median for the Island of Montreal, which is 39 years. The median income of Westmount residents who work full-time, year-round is $69,815, compared to the Island of Montreal as a whole, which is $37,163. Although many families call Westmount home, the growing elderly population is creating a new face and posing new logistical challenges for the city, as discussed in this section.

The CSSS de la Montagne published a document in 2006 that compares demographic data for all the boroughs and municipalities that it serves. The CSSS de la Montagne area is comprised of three regions: the CLSC de Côte-des-Neiges, the CLSC Métro and the CLSC de Parc-Extension. Westmount is served by the CLSC Métro as is part of downtown Montreal.

Much of the demographic data found in the document highlights the spatial patterns of vulnerable populations present in these communities. Thematic maps focusing on household income, the elderly, Allophone and newly arrived immigrant populations for the entire CSSS de la Montagne region give a broader context to help in understanding Westmount’s unique community profile.

Two Westmounts

In analyzing demographic data for Westmount and reviewing the report produced by CSSS de la Montagne, two distinct Westmount communities emerge. For further analysis, we identified the boundaries of Upper Westmount and Lower Westmount with Sherbrooke Street serving as the dividing line between them, as seen in Figure 7 on page 4.

Although Westmount as a whole is a very affluent community, 12% of the population (approximately 3000 individuals) belong to low-income households (see Figure 15), which are concentrated in Lower Westmount. These individuals are particularly vulnerable to the possibility of further gentrification in the city, especially if it occurs at a rapid pace, which may occur due to the MUHC development. The baseline study focuses on the differences between the two Westmounts, with special attention to Lower Westmount as it is less stable than Upper Westmount and therefore, more likely to change.

Household size

The distinction between Upper and Lower Westmount is very clear in the map of household size (see Figure 10). The fully or semi-detached single-family homes in Upper Westmount tend to have more bedrooms than the rowhouses and apartments in Lower Westmount. Figure 10 illustrates the average number of bedrooms per household. Lower Westmount has a housing stock that is quite heterogeneous, as such, the results from this map can be somewhat deceiving. Based on street observations, we know that the housing stock in Lower Westmount is largely composed of 3-4 bedroom rowhouses as well as 1-2 bedroom apartments. However, when averaged together, it falsely appears as though most of Lower Westmount is composed of 2-3 bedroom residences. Lower Westmount has a diverse housing stock that accommodates all household types. Upper Westmount, on the other hand, has a homogenous housing stock composed almost entirely of large single-family homes.
Figure 11: Median household income in Upper and Lower Westmount

Figure 12: Average household income in Upper and Lower Westmount
**Home Ownership**

The map shown in Figure 14 illustrates the proportion of homeownership in Upper Westmount compared to that in Lower Westmount. A few areas in Lower Westmount have home ownership rates below 25%, which corresponds with the presence of large apartment complexes.

**Household Income**

As identified earlier, Westmount is an affluent community, especially in comparison to the neighbouring boroughs. Figure 13 shows the median income of the population aged 15 years and older living in the CSSS de la Montagne region. The dark dots illustrate the presence of adults living on low-income. This portion of the population is concentrated in the Parc-Extension and Plamondon areas in addition to some smaller pockets located adjacent to downtown Montreal. In Lower Westmount, there is a small, but localized population of moderately low-income individuals.

There is a stark difference in median household income between Lower and Upper Westmount. The graph in Figure 11 shows the median household income for Lower and Upper Westmount between 1991 and 2006. In 2006 the median household income in Upper Westmount was almost three times that of Lower Westmount ($174,000 compared to 60,000). Furthermore, it is clear from a longitudinal analysis that Upper Westmount household income is growing faster than in Lower Westmount. Between 1991 and 2006 the median income in Upper Westmount increased by 56%, compared to an increase of only 20% in Lower Westmount. The 20% increase in median income in Lower Westmount over the 15-year period did not keep up with inflation, which tends to be roughly 2% per year. The disparity in income between Upper and Lower Westmount households is becoming larger over time.

The values for average household income are significantly higher than for median household income in Westmount. This is evident when comparing the median household income in Figure 11 with the average household income in Figure 12. In 2006 the average income in Upper Westmount was almost double the median income. A skewing of the income distribution in this way suggests that a small number of households are pulling up the average with significantly higher incomes when compared to the rest of the local population. This is evident because the average income in Lower Westmount increased significantly faster than the median income between 1990 and 2005. Outlier data points (in this case very high-earning households) have a large effect on the average of a distribution and little effect on the median. The socio-economic diversity, a unique characteristic of Lower Westmount, could be negatively affected by rapid gentrification, which based on indicators discussed in the Business and Economic Development section seems to be underway in the area.
Low-income

A segment of the Westmount population falls under the category of low-income households. Low income cut-offs (LICOs) are intended to convey the income level in which a family may be in strained circumstances because it has to spend a greater portion of its income on basics (food, clothing and shelter) than the average family of a similar size. The LICOs are calculated by Statistics Canada; they vary by the sizes of the family and community. Figure 15 shows the proportion of low-income households in Westmount. In total, 12% of Westmount households are low-income, compared to 32% in the City of Montreal. Several blocks in Lower Westmount, including the block comprising the Hillside social housing units have over 30% of households living on a low income.

LOW-INCOME ELDERLY

Westmount has a fairly large elderly population when compared to other municipalities and boroughs in the region and they are very concentrated in a portion of Lower Westmount. The low-income elderly population in the CSSS de la Montagne region is heavily concentrated in the Parc Extension and Plamondon areas. Although this population is small in Westmount when compared to the neighbourhood boroughs, it is concentrated within Lower Westmount. Figure 17 illustrates the spatial pattern through the CSSS de la Montagne region of elderly people living alone. The elderly living in Lower Westmount require many services, many of which exist in the vicinity and may in part contribute to the concentration of elderly residents in the area. However, it is expected the City will have a greater role in supporting some of these services and may need to assess planning and design initiatives in order to better accommodate the local aging population.
Age Demographics

The Westmount population is aging (see Figure 18 which compares the age cohorts in 1991 and 2006 for all of Westmount). In 1991 Westmount had a very large representation of people aged 40-50 years, in 2006 however the largest cohorts were of people aged 45-60 years. This trend was expected as the baby boom population aged 15 years between 1991 and 2006 and was not fully replaced by the following generation. Additionally, Westmount’s population of seniors increased dramatically between 1991 and 2006, especially those aged over 85. Much of this increase is due to the establishment of the Saint Margaret’s Nursing Home on Hillside Avenue in 1991.

Upper and Lower Westmount have very different age compositions (see Figure 19 comparing age cohorts in 2006). Lower Westmount has a large proportion of people aged 20-30, likely due to the presence of a number of colleges and universities in and around the area including Dawson College, Marianopolis College, Lasalle College and Concordia University. The ability of young people to continue living in Westmount may be threatened as rental costs in the city have been steadily increasing over the past ten years. In addition, Lower Westmount also has an extremely high proportion of elderly people due to the presence of a number of elderly residences, nursing homes and high-rise apartment buildings. The area accommodates a large number of seniors, students and families. This diversity in household type is largely due to the variety in the housing typology. Lower Westmount housing types include semi-detached homes, rowhouses, duplexes, triplexes, apartment buildings and condominiums.

The age cohort graph for Upper Westmount has an unusual shape, namely a narrow section corresponding to the population between 25 and 40 years. The Upper Westmount age cohort graph suggests that the area is quite homogenous; there are many families (composed of parents aged 40 to 60 years and their children aged 0 to 20 years) yet very few elderly people or young adults. This homogeneity in household type is partly due to the housing stock, which is composed almost entirely of large detached or semi-detached single-family homes. The population of Upper Westmount did not change much between 1991 and 2006, and there was virtually no change in the number of seniors living in the area.

The equilibrium in the age cohort profile of Upper Westmount could be due to a movement of seniors away from the area. The elderly are not very well served in Upper Westmount. For seniors with limited mobility the steep streets can prove challenging, especially in the winter months. Furthermore, as there are no amenities in Upper Westmount, seniors may find it difficult to access grocery stores, pharmacies, banks and doctor’s offices. As the baby boom population in Upper Westmount continues to age, a large portion of the population may need to leave the area in the coming decades to find more age-appropriate housing. Alternatively, considering the large proportion of families in Upper Westmount, it is also possible that people are choosing to move to smaller homes once their children are grown and move away.

![Figure 18: Age cohort for Westmount in 1991 and 2006](image1)

![Figure 19: Age cohort for Lower and Upper Westmount in 2006](image2)
In Lower Westmount, the number of people 80 years and older increased dramatically between 1991 and 2006, especially among females. The graph in Figure 20 compares the age cohorts in 1991 and 2006 for Lower Westmount. The graph illustrates the dramatic increase in the size of the elderly population as well as the aging of the baby boom population. Lower Westmount is well served by public transit and other services and amenities that cater to the older segment of the population.

**Education**

The graph in Figure 21 shows the percentage of Westmount residents, aged 25 to 64 years, who have not received a degree or diploma higher than a secondary education degree by census tract. As seen in Figure 22 the majority of residents have received a degree, diploma or certificate from a university. All census tracts, except for one in southeast portion of the city, have university education rates exceeding 70%.

There is a discernible difference between the university education rates in Upper Westmount compared to those in Lower Westmount. Whereas all four census tracts in Upper Westmount (353-356) have rates exceeding 80%, the three census tracts in Lower Westmount (350-352) have rates that range between 63% and 75%. More noticeably, a higher percentage of people in Lower Westmount have not completed high school (Figure 21).
Cultural diversity

Westmount is less culturally diverse than neighbouring burroughs. As can be seen in Figures 25 and 26 Westmount’s Allophone and newly arrived immigrant populations are not as numerous or as concentrated as those in the Parc-Extension or Plamondon areas. English is the main language spoken at home for 73% of the residents. Of the 34 dissemination areas in Westmount, only eight have populations where less than half of the residents speak English as their mother tongue.

The east and west corners of Lower Westmount have more clustering of visible minority populations. Figure 23 shows the proportion of Westmount residents who are of a visible minority. On the right, the concentrations of the most common visible minorities in Westmount (Chinese, Latin American and Arab) are represented. There is a large Arab population in southeast Westmount and a large Chinese population in the southwest corner of the city.

Overall, the proportion of residents who were born in Canada is higher in Upper Westmount than in Lower Westmount. Figure 24 illustrates the proportion of residents in Westmount who were born in Canada. The percentage of Canadian born residents is particularly low (under 50%) in southeast Westmount. It is the same area with a large Arab population. Westmount is principally an Anglophone community.

Both the Allophone and newly arrived immigrant populations in Westmount are concentrated in Lower Westmount with the newly arrived immigrant population especially localized. These populations contribute to the diversity of Lower Westmount.
Community Amenities

Non-Government Services

As highlighted in the Community Profile section, Westmount’s population is aging. Between 1991 and 2006 the number of individuals above the age of 85 increased by over 50%. Although the City organizes some activities and programs for the Westmount elderly, the increasing demand for elderly-oriented services is being met by non-municipal organizations. A number of institutions including a host of churches and synagogues, the Westmount YMCA, Contactivity Centre and Centre Greene all offer much needed services to Westmount residents, especially to the elderly, youth and families.

YMCA

The Westmount YMCA located on Sherbrooke Street serves the needs of youth, seniors and families, in partnership with social organizations and a network of volunteers. The five values of the YMCAs of Québec are participation and access; education and prevention; respect for others; volunteer work and philanthropy; and self-empowerment.

The youth activities include after-school programs and a summer day camp that accommodates special-needs children. The centre receives support from 100 volunteers and a number of donors. Roughly 6,000 people use its programs and services every year. Due to its location, the Westmount YMCA primarily serves Westmount residents but also serves individuals and families from Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, Saint-Henri, Little Burgundy and Pointe-Saint-Charles.

The facilities include a 25-metre lap pool; an exercise room with cardiovascular equipment, weight training circuit, and free weights; a stretching area; two multi-purpose studios; a gymnasium for team sports; classrooms; offices; and locker rooms.

CONTACTIVITY

The Contactivity Centre’s primary objective is to "empower seniors to take more control in their lives, so they can continue to live autonomously while being vitally connected to the community and to the greater Quebec society". The centre had 601 members in 2009 and served 1,254 individuals throughout the course of the year. The centre provides two categories of services the Home Support Program, which is offered to housebound seniors, and services catering to more autonomous seniors.

The Home Support Program (HSP) consists of three services: TeleCheck, Rent-a-Service and Volunteer Outreach. The Volunteer Outreach pairs a housebound senior with a more able-bodied volunteer who offers support with medical accompaniments and grocery shopping as well as provides friendly visits. According to the Contactivity Centre, the number of clients making use of HSP has increased steadily over the years, especially the friendly visitor requests which have increased four-fold over the past decade. The centre attributes this trend to two factors. Firstly, seniors want to stay in their homes longer than before because private homes are expensive and public facilities have long waiting lists. Secondly, people tend to be discharged from hospitals earlier than in the past, requiring some seniors to find temporary home care.

The services that cater to more autonomous seniors include various courses (chess, bridge, history) and fitness classes, lunch programs and outings. Since 1996 the number of yearly meals served has increased by 79% to 3,700. During the same period, the number of trip participants has increased by 145% to 750 and the course enrolment by 130% to 490. These numbers are expected to continue increasing well into the next decade.

Figure 27: Map of Westmount community amenities
RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

The 12 churches and synagogues in Westmount have retained their support base well enough to remain open as religious institutions. Other than the Marianopolis building that was previously a convent, all churches and synagogues continue to be used for religious purposes. Some churches in Westmount also house community organizations, such as The United Church on de Maisonneuve Street that also accommodates the Contactivity Centre.

CENTRE GREENE

Centre Greene is an independent, not-for-profit community organization. Their mission is to provide “quality recreational, social and cultural services to the community at large regardless of gender, age, race, ethnic group, ability or socio-economic status”.

The Greene Avenue Community Centre (or more commonly known as Centre Greene) was established in 1989 by members of the local community. The centre is located in a three-storey building, across from Staynor Park, that was constructed by the Westmount Rotary Club in the 1940s. The building has six activity rooms and a gymnasium. The City of Westmount purchased the building from the Rotary Club in 1993 and provides a low-rent, long-term lease to the Centre Greene. The centre depends on volunteer help and financial support from outside sources to maintain operations.

The centre provides two types of services to the community. Firstly, they provide space at reasonable rates to independent instructors or groups who organize a wide variety of activities, including dance, music, daycare and volleyball. Secondly, the Greene Centre’s staff organizes and provides community activities and events. These activities include a senior lunch program, ballroom dancing for people living with Parkinson’s disease, a caregiver’s tea, an after-school youth program and a summer camp.

Government Provided Services

The municipal amenities and services support Westmount’s sense of community. The community amenities and services include a number of parks and playgrounds, the arena and pool complex, the library, Victoria Hall, public security services and a number of recreation programs. Most of the amenities are concentrated in Lower Westmount (see Figure 28).

Westmount has taken a number of measures to ensure that the services it provides and facilities it maintains mainly benefit Westmount residents. Residents are entitled to purchase library cards and recreation passes for a nominal fee while non-residents must pay significantly more for library cards and can only purchase day-passes to use the recreation facilities.

SCHOOLS

There are a total of 15 educational institutions located in Westmount. These include two of the four main English language colleges on the Island of Montreal (Dawson College and Marianopolis College). Four private, English language, elementary and secondary schools (ECS, Selwyn House, The Study and Saint-Georges) are also within Westmount. These tuition for these schools is between $15,000 and $20,000 per year. Many of the students attending these schools are Westmount residents. Three French language schools, a Hebrew school and four English language public schools are also located in Westmount.
PARKS

Westmount has many parks and greenspaces. These includes three large municipal parks (Summit, Westmount and King George), six local parks and ten designated green spaces totaling roughly 40 hectares. Of the 10,000 City trees, half are located in municipal parks or green spaces.

The Westmount parks and playgrounds are well maintained and act as community hubs throughout the year. During the late spring, summer and early fall the parks are used for team sports organized by the Westmount Recreation Department, while in the winter, most parks are outfitted with outdoor rink surfaces. The Recreation department organizes two large community events that take place in Westmount Park, such as Family Day in June and Winter Carnival in early February. A number of seasonal activities also take place in Westmount Park. These activities include free concerts offered in the summer months near the lagoon as well as outdoor Shakespeare performances in the late summer.

THE WESTMOUNT LIBRARY AND VICTORIA HALL

Located on the northeast corner of Westmount Park, the Westmount Library is a landmark. It represents the City’s commitment to heritage preservation and quality community spaces. The Westmount Library first opened in 1899 and was the first public library in Quebec. Between 1994 and 1995 the library received a major overhaul. The original building was renewed while the children’s library (an expansion from 1951) was torn down and replaced by a new building that houses the reference library, the library’s book stacks, offices and the children’s library.

In recent years the Westmount library membership totals have been fairly consistent as seen in Figure 30. In January 2010 there were 7,800 total members. About 75% of all members are Westmount residents while 25% come from outside Westmount as seen in Figure 31. A large proportion of the non-Westmount resident members are students studying in Westmount. Memberships for the Westmount library are free for all Westmount residents, staff members, students and teachers, while non-residents, with the exception of Westmount students, must pay an annual fee of $119. There is a reduced rate of $50 for Montreal students and seniors as well as a $180 family rate.

When Westmount merged with the rest of Montreal in 2002, the library became open to all Montreal residents. In 2002 the library issued 8,232 new memberships (almost 7,000 were for non-Westmount residents), increasing the total number of members to 14,181 people. The higher membership totals continued until 2006 when Westmount demerged from Montreal, at which point non-Westmount resident fees were re-established.

Located adjacent to the Westmount Library, Victoria Hall is another iconic heritage building in the city. It is a multipurpose community building that accommodates large events, public information sessions as well as many classes and activities.

POOL AND ARENA COMPLEX

For over 50 years the Arena and Pool Complex, adjacent to Westmount Park, has served as a major community hub for Westmount families. It continues to be well-used by Westmount residents, receiving roughly 120,000 visitors per year.

The original exterior structure, built in 1958, had walls with large openings that allowed the arena cool naturally during the winter months. In 1963 the openings were glassed in, stabilizing the indoor temperature and allowing the arena operations to begin earlier in the fall and extend further into the spring. In 1963 the Westmount pool was opened immediately north of the arena.
The complex is slated to be replaced by a new facility featuring two full-sized rinks, a pool, a recreation office building and underground parking (see City Planning).

Recreation Programs

The Westmount Recreation Department runs a number of programs through the Westmount arena and pool complex, playing fields and Victoria Hall. Thirty-one youth programs and 32 adult programs were offered in 2009. The most popular youth programs include hockey, skating and soccer. Other youth programs offered include karate, ballet, baseball, various music and dance classes and summer camp. Adult programs include hockey, skating, ballet, dance and various fitness related programs.

Program registration occurs in the fall (for late fall, winter and early spring programs) and in the early spring (for late spring and early summer programs). Resident registration lasts for two weeks after which non-residents can register for the remaining spots at an additional cost. Non-resident adults pay 60% more for all adult programs, while non-resident children pay 75% more for all youth programs. The Westmount policy on program participation requires that all programs run with at least 80% of the participants coming from inside Westmount. According to recreation office, most programs run at almost 100% residency.

Most programs have a fairly consistent registration total from year to year. This includes the hockey, skating and fitness programs. The soccer program, on the other hand, has become significantly more popular over the last decade. According to the recreation office, the participation numbers have almost doubled over the past decade. Figure 29, shows that between 2004 and 2009 the number of participants in the soccer program increased from 800 to 1200. The baseball program has seen a decline in popularity over the same time. Its participation numbers have halved in the past five years.

Average Attendance and Trends

The arena and pool are both very popular destinations in Westmount (see Figures 32 and 33). Use of the pool and arena complex has increased over the past six years. In 2004 and 2005, the total number of visits to both facilities hovered around 110,000; whereas between 2007 and 2009, the number of visits had increased to about 120,000 visits per year. Figure 32 breaks up the total yearly attendance into three separate uses: pool, arena for skating and arena for hockey. While skating attendance has remained more or less constant (visible in blue), the number visits made to the arena for hockey purposes has a slight upward trend (visible in yellow). Lastly, the pool attendance has increased most dramatically over the past six years (visible in red), indicating its popularity among residents and non-residents alike.

The pool is open between early June and early September for an average of 91 days per year. On average (between 2004 and 2009) roughly 38,200 pool visits are made throughout the summer. This amounts to roughly 420 pool visits per day.

The arena is open from mid-September to mid-April and is open on average 210 days per season; amounting to roughly 370 visits per day. On average roughly 33,000 yearly visits were made to the arena for skating purposes and 45,100 visits were made for hockey, amounting to just over 78,000 total visits to the arena over the skating season.
User Costs of Facilities

Until the 2002 agglomeration (see Governance), only Westmount residents had access to the pool, rink and tennis court facilities. In order to use the facilities, Westmount residents were required to obtain a recreation pass. Passholders could bring guests for a nominal fee of $3 per day. Between 2002 and 2006 (after the agglomeration and prior to the demerger of Westmount), Westmount residents and non-residents alike had full access to all facilities.

After the demerger, Westmount no longer required non-residents to accompany a Westmount resident. Non-passholders (Westmount residents as well as nonresidents) can use the facilities provided they purchase a day pass, with the exception of the first two weeks and last two weeks of pool operations each summer. During those combined four weeks, non-residents must be accompanied by a Westmount resident. The rational is that the Westmount pool is opened before and after most other pools in the city of Montreal and there is concern there would be too much demand from non-residents. There is already significant demand from within Westmount. Approximately 6500 recreation passes were sold in 2009. Passes cost $50 for families and $25 for individuals.

Synthesis

There is a tremendous difference in the demographic patterns of Upper and Lower Westmount. The population of Upper Westmount is quite homogenous, comprised mostly of affluent, Anglophone families. This homogeneity is attributed to the type of housing stock in the area, which is predominantly large single-family homes on large land parcels. Alternatively, the population in Lower Westmount is quite diverse. It has a mix of household types including elderly couples and singles, young adults and families. There are also a few clusters of visible minority populations, such as, Arab, Chinese, and Latin households, in Lower Westmount. The local community is vulnerable to rising residential property values and rents, as presented later in the Business and Economic Development section. It is possible that the current gentrification process could be exacerbated by the presence of the MUHC Glen Campus adjacent to Lower Westmount as high-earning MUHC employees may choose to relocate near to the complex, thereby displacing lower-income households.

It is also important to note that Westmount’s population is aging. This trend is due in part to the increase in life expectancy as seen across Canada and other countries around the world, but there are other key factors that are more unique to Westmount. Most notably, the increasingly high property costs in Westmount may preclude young adults and young families from moving into Westmount. This is most apparent in Upper Westmount where real estate costs are substantially higher than in Lower Westmount or elsewhere in Montreal. The presence of elderly residences and nursing homes in Lower Westmount also contributes to the influx of people over 65 years old in the city.

Westmount offers high quality community amenities and services, with government and non-government agencies complementing each other. In taking an inventory of facilities and reviewing programs, it is evident that Westmount caters primarily to young families. This fits in line with the Westmount identity of being a family-focused city. If the demographic shift continues along its current trajectory, it is possible the City will need to modify its community amenities and services in upcoming years in order to best serve its residents. Tracking program participation in conjunction with monitoring population change will enable the City and community organizations to continue providing programs and services that support the health and wellbeing of Westmount residents.

The changes in the demographic composition of the city are occurring primarily in Lower Westmount, whereas Upper Westmount shows signs of relative stability. Lower Westmount’s relative diversity coupled with its vulnerability to gentrification is of interest. The demographic changes, in household income and age in particular, that have taken place in recent years, indicate that Westmount is evolving into a more homogenous community that would be composed primarily of wealthy, elderly people. This would have significant implications for Westmount in upcoming years in terms of its community amenities and services as well as for its social sustainability and sense of identity as a city.
Governance

Early Westmount residents established a governance structure to ensure accountability and efficiency in the management of the city. With citizen engagement at the core, the governance structure serves as the foundation of the city and dictates how the city functions as both a government and as a community. It consists of three main administrative bodies:

- City government;
- Westmount Municipal Association (citizens organization); and
- Planning Advisory Committee (hybrid organization of citizens, city staff, and council representatives).

Although these three agencies function autonomously, they overlap in many areas, most notably in regards to the city’s planning and development, which remains an important topic in Westmount.

A series of planning projects, both within the city limits and the outer periphery, have been putting pressure on the City to balance the needs and concerns of its local residents with the push for growth and development on the Island of Montreal. As such, planning issues are a focus for the current Council as indicative by its stated priorities between 2011 and 2013: taxes, infrastructure, traffic, and urban planning.

Local Government

Mayor and Council

Westmount is divided into eight electoral districts (see Figure 34). The City of Westmount council is comprised of eight city councillors, each representing one electoral district, plus the mayor. The council is the main governing and legislative body for the City of Westmount. Each elected official typically serves a four-year term in office. The Mayor and Councillors also sit on various standing committees and municipal organizations (see Table 1). Council meets regularly, at least once per month to discuss and vote on issues facing Westmount.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electoral District</th>
<th>Councillor</th>
<th>Commissioner</th>
<th>Committees</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Patrick Martin</td>
<td>Utilities and Public Works</td>
<td>Demolition Committee (Chairperson)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Timothy Price</td>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>Pension Plan Committee</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Victor M. Drury</td>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>Pension Plan Committee</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Kathleen Warner</td>
<td>Sports and Recreation</td>
<td>Demolition Committee</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Duncan</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Gary Ikeman</td>
<td>Public Security</td>
<td>Westmount Railway Advisory Panel</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Nicole Forbes</td>
<td>Cultural &amp; Community Services</td>
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<td>Cynthia Lulham</td>
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<td>30</td>
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<td>Public Library Committee</td>
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On November 1, 2009, Westmount residents elected a new council. Mayor Peter F. Trent replaced Karin Marks, who had served a total of eighteen years on City Council. She served eight years as mayor of Westmount and navigated the city through the merger and demerger process with the City of Montreal, which is discussed in further detail below. Mayor Peter F. Trent also has a long history with the Westmount City Council. He had served as mayor for ten years prior to the forced merger, from 1991-2001 and as a councillor from 1983-1991. Mayor Trent fought hard against the forced merger and helped set the groundwork for the subsequent demerger of suburban municipalities from the City of Montreal in 2006.

The current City Council is comprised of both new and old councillors. Mayor Peter Trent along with Councillors Patrick Martin and Victor Drury were acclaimed to their positions as they were unopposed by the October 2nd nomination deadline. Voter turnout was relatively low for the November 2009 election with only approximately 23% of eligible voters casting ballots. This is in part attributed to the fact that there was not a mayoral race and two electoral districts did not hold elections due to unopposed candidates.

**City Council Priorities for 2010-2013**

Over the next three years, Westmount City Council has identified four goals related to taxes, infrastructure, traffic, and urban planning. The council is committed to implementing these goals by following sustainable development principles.

1. **TAXES.**
   Freeze the City’s total 2011 tax revenue levied for local services. Support the mayor’s efforts to control Agglomeration spending. Freeze local expenditures for 2011 (not including borrowing costs), and work towards a similar freeze in 2012 and 2013. This spending freeze can be achieved mainly by reducing administrative costs – which have risen steeply since the merger – and by increasing administrative efficiency. There must be no reduction in the level of services provided to citizens.

2. **INFRASTRUCTURE.**
   Build the arena/pool project within budget. Conduct a detailed inventory of the condition of city infrastructure such as roads, sidewalks, parks, public buildings, and Hydro Westmount equipment. Establish minimum quality standards to be met and a schedule to bring the City’s entire public infrastructure up to those standards.

3. **TRAFFIC.**
   Establish a Master Traffic Plan that a) favours active transportation such as walking and cycling; and, b) aims to reduce the speed, volume, and noise of vehicular traffic, especially through traffic on local streets originating from outside City limits. Attempt to minimize the impact on Westmount of the traffic generated by the MUHC and the traffic and noise generated by the rebuilt Turcot Interchange. Reexamine parking rules, zones, and tariffs.

4. **URBAN PLANNING.**
   Streamline the building permits process while rendering it more open, consistent, and self-financing. Preserve the City’s unique architectural heritage, updating architectural guidelines where necessary. Study the implementation of the Parks Master Plan.

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Table 2: Top 10 sustainability priorities for city council in 20102
Council is also moving forward on actions outlined in the Sustainable Development Action Plan that was adopted in November 2009. The current council agreed to choose 10 out of the 200 actions recommended in the plan to begin the process of working toward implementation (see Table 2).

The City of Westmount, as comprised of the Mayor and Council, is facing many challenges both in terms of achieving its sustainability goals as well as mitigating the negative affects of mega-projects, such as the MUHC and Turcot Interchange, on the city and its residents. In addition, the City is still recalibrating after the forced amalgamation and subsequent demerger that took place on the Island of Montreal between 2002 and 2006. The process of which has had lasting consequences for the City in terms of municipal operations and budgets as well as overall housing affordability due to steep increases in property values, which is discussed in the Business and Economic Development section.

Amalgamation & Demerger

BACKGROUND

Until the amalgamation on January 1, 2002, the Island of Montreal was divided into 28 municipalities consisting of the City of Montreal proper and 27 independent municipalities. These 28 municipalities formed the Montreal Urban Community (MUC). Through amalgamation, the 27 independent municipalities were merged with the City of Montreal under the slogan: “Une île, une ville” or “One island, one city”. The merged City of Montreal was divided into 27 arrondissements or boroughs, each in charge of its local administration.

The merger was part of a larger provincial scheme launched by the Parti Québécois, resulting in the merging of many municipalities across Quebec in an effort to improve municipal efficiency. There had been Canadian precedents as Toronto had merged with its neighbouring municipalities in 1998 and Winnipeg formed its unicity in 1978. In the provincial elections of April 2003, the Liberal Party of Quebec defeated the Parti Québécois. One central promise during their campaign was that the Liberals would allow amalgamated municipalities to organize referendums in order to demerge.

On June 20, 2004, the referendums were held throughout Quebec. On the Island of Montreal, referendums were held in 22 of the 27 previously independent municipalities; 15 of them voted to demerge from the MUC. Those 15 previously independent municipalities regained municipal status on January 1, 2006, with Westmount being among them.

WESTMOUNT

Westmount’s city administration and many Westmount residents strongly opposed the plans for amalgamation; Westmount Mayor Peter Trent led an organized and costly campaign against it. In 2000 alone, Westmount budgeted $1.8 million, over 3% of its total budget, for an anti-amalgamation campaign. Trent resigned in 2001 just prior to amalgamation. Then as a non-elected official he led Westmount’s demerger campaign, partnering with several community organizations, including the Westmount Municipal Association and Défusion Westmount.

In the June 2004 referendum, Westmount residents voted 7,432 to 637 to demerge from Montreal. “In spite of the fact that the PQ merged us against our will, we got our city back!” Peter Trent stated in announcing the victory. Borough Mayor Karin Marks became the first mayor of the reconstituted Westmount on January 1, 2006. However, Westmount, along with all 15 reconstituted municipalities, did not regain all of its former autonomy.

A large portion of the collected municipal taxes go to the Agglomeration Council, which is an administrative body that oversees activities common to all municipalities on the Island of Montreal such as fire protection and public transit (see Table 3).

The city is still bouncing back from the upheaval of the municipal merger. The great lengths Westmount went

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Pre-Amalgamation (prior to Jan 1st 2002)</th>
<th>Post-Demergement (after Jan 1st 2006)</th>
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<td>Public Security</td>
<td>Westmount</td>
<td>Westmount</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fire Department</td>
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<td>Westmount</td>
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<td>Refuse and Recycling Collection</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local Water and Sewer System Maintenance</td>
<td>Montreal</td>
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<td>Westmount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks and Playground Operations</td>
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<td>Westmount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>Westmount</td>
<td>Westmount</td>
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</table>

Table 3: Westmount responsibilities pre-amalgamation and post-merger
to in organizing the campaign with other borough municipalities to demerge illustrated the civic spirit and collaborative capacity of Westmount residents and that the force they bare on local politics can have an impact beyond its city borders.

MUNICIPAL TAX INCREASE

Municipal taxes rose considerably between 2002 and 2006 while Westmount was part of the Montreal agglomeration. Although Westmount regained much of its autonomy in 2006 upon demerging, it is still required to contribute a large portion of its revenue to the agglomeration. In 2009 Westmount’s total revenue was $79,600,000. Approximately 52% of the revenue ($40,600,000) went to the agglomeration and another 1.2% ($925,000) to the Montreal Metropolitan Community (MMC). As a result of the contributions Westmount makes to the Agglomeration and MMC, it has been unable to lower the municipal taxes, since the city demerged.

Taking a closer look at Westmount’s balance sheets revealed a stark jump in the City’s tax base. In 2000 Westmount’s total revenue from the General Property Tax was $34,616,918, whereas in 2009 the revenue was $66,726,100. This amounts to a 92% increase in revenue from municipal taxes over a nine-year period. Although some of this revenue increase came from developments between 2000 and 2009, the vast majority is the result of an increase in property evaluations and an increase in the taxation mil rate (municipal tax $ per $1000 of property evaluation), that occurred while Westmount was part of Montreal.

To illustrate the impact of these increases, one typical townhouse in Lower Westmount had its municipal taxes increase from $2,780.55 in 2002 to $5,282.07 in 2006. That amounted to a $2,500 absolute increase, and a 90% relative increase in municipal taxes over four years. This has a significant impact on the cost of owning this home. However, since the demerger, taxes have remained more or less stable; in 2010 they came to $5,266.43 for this particular townhouse.

Although the property values in Westmount are high, families who have lived in the city for many years purchased their homes for considerably less than the current values. The increase in property value could be seen as a good investment for many Westmount homeowners, but it may have had negative effects on some households. Increased property values cause an increase in property taxes. Households on low- or fixed-incomes may have difficulty making the increased property tax payments. Property tax increased the most in Lower Westmount, which has a higher proportion of households living on low - or fixed-incomes, as is common for the elderly, retirees and people receiving social assistance. This may have caused a number of established Westmount households to move out of Westmount, thereby leading to a further gentrification of the area.

Civic Involvement

As exhibited during the demerger, Westmount residents are very active in civic affairs. As such, dissemination of information and overall transparency of the political process is of expressed importance. The City has made efforts to ensure its citizens are informed of current issues that are before Council. Regular meetings are recorded and posted on the City’s website along with the Minutes of the council meeting. Newspaper columns also cover the activities of Council on a regular basis. Citizens can also access the agenda and related documents for each council meeting one working day before the meeting from the City Clerk’s Office and the Westmount Public Library Reference Desk.

Westmount Municipal Association

The high level of civic involvement can be attributed to the Westmount Municipal Association, (WMA). Established in 1908, the WMA is an independent, non-partisan volunteer organization with a stated mandate of “promoting good, responsive, and respectful local government”4. It is a well-respected institution that plays an integral role in Westmount’s governance.

The Westmount Municipal Association serves as a liaison between residents and local government. As an organization it is constantly working to stay abreast of current local issues that may affect Westmount residents and ensuring residents are well-informed about such issues throughout the process. As stated on the WMA website, its ongoing activities include:

- Surveys of citizen opinions on various local issues
- Assistance to citizens and groups wishing to increase exposure of local issues among the general public
- Bringing relevant speakers and organizations to public meetings
- Sitting on city committees – traffic, municipal housing, public security
- Organizing pre-election meetings of local electoral candidates
- Serving as a consultative body of informed citizens for council to use as a sounding board.

The WMA provides the organizational structure for residents to become directly involved in civic affairs. This in turn may in part attribute to the strong sense of place and belonging that is so characteristic of Westmount as a community. Membership fees for 2009/2010 were $10 per person or $15 per family. The WMA also accepts donations, which together with the membership fees covers the budget for its operating expenses, including the cost of its activities, such as public forums, pre-election candidates meetings, and community surveys.
The WMA also works with local universities to conduct research projects through the Community-University Research Alliance (CURA).

The WMA works on day-to-day local issues and initiatives such as public safety, heritage preservation and street beautification within Westmount. However, over the past few years, larger projects have become a major focus for the WMA, some of which occur outside the municipality’s boundaries. The WMA has served in a consulting and advocacy capacity on a number of projects and issues in recent years. Other current issues include the safety of the Westmount Park bicycle path to other park users and maintenance of Summit Park (see table 4).

Ongoing involvement in the projects listed in Table 4 has demanded a heightened degree of agency and required coordination with other organizations and government bodies outside of Westmount, including neighbouring boroughs, the City of Montreal and the Province of Quebec. The WMA provides a unique resource for public engagement by enabling Westmounters’ shared concerns to be added to the dialogue and debate on these issues and by maintaining a constant presence to ensure government officials take their concerns into consideration.

### Synthesis

Westmount upholds strong ideals in terms of the aesthetic quality and functioning of the city. The City has gone to great lengths to ensure high standards are maintained, from designing a governance structure that integrates citizen oversight into the process to creating strict by-laws to protect the existing architectural heritage of the city. In many ways the original intent of the city founders to create a model city based on garden suburb aesthetics, civic pride, and principles of good governance continues to be honoured by Westmount residents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project/Issue</th>
<th>Concerns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turcot Interchange Reconstruction Project</td>
<td>The potential negative impact on Westmount from increased traffic and the construction process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arena/Pool Renewal</td>
<td>Transparency of design process, residents’ input on design recommendations, and overall budget expenditures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westmount Park Playing Fields</td>
<td>Cost of maintenance and requirements for different field uses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McGill University Hospital Complex at Glen Yards</td>
<td>Impact of increased traffic due to the complex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demerger from Montreal mega-city</td>
<td>Loss of autonomy as a small city, increase in property taxes while municipal budget decreased</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: WMA interests in projects
City Planning

Since its inception, Westmount set out to create a model city. As discussed in the History section, the urban renewal schemes of the 1960s that resulted in the large-scale development of Saint-Catherine Street served as a catalyst for creating the architectural heritage preservation legislation in Westmount. The strict regulations concerning land use, housing typologies, and floor area ratio have all contributed to the development of Westmount’s unique character as a garden suburb. Westmount was protective of its quality of life and as such it restricted certain uses that were deemed in conflict with the overall vision of the city. This included limiting worker housing and industrial uses to the most southern edge of the city.

The concern over protecting Westmount’s quality of life and unique character, both values espoused early on in its development, continue to be at the forefront of planning and civic issues today. Westmount’s charm depends, in part, on protecting the architectural heritage and maintaining the quality of the streetscapes that have become identifiable features for the city. As such, in recent decades the work of the Westmount Planning Department largely centres on architectural preservation. As stated in the current planning programme:

“Over the past 25 years, a series of by-law changes have focused increasingly on conservation. These include zoning revisions in 1975 and in the 80’s limiting the height of new construction, the adoption of a Subdivision By-law to prevent inappropriate subdivision of large properties, and the adoption of a Demolition By-law to control the demolition of existing buildings”.

In addition, mega-projects such as the MUHC superhospital and the redevelopment of the Turcot Interchange, are viewed as potential threats to Westmount residents’ quality of life. The City and the WMA have been actively involved in both projects through the consultation, design, and future development phases.

Planning Department

The Westmount Planning Department oversees all building development in the city. As one of the older suburban municipalities on the island, Westmount is considered relatively built-out with limited opportunity for densification and redevelopment aside from a couple underdeveloped sites to the south, on Tupper Street and Richeleu Street, which are highlighted below, in the summary of the Planning Programme.

The Guidelines for Renovating and Building in Westmount serves as the main reference document for City planning staff. The process of creating the guidelines involved documenting every building in Westmount, recordings details related to date of construction, ownership, and heritage value. Each building was also giving a class rating of I, II or III with Class I being of supreme importance in terms of preservation and Class III being neutral. In developing the guidelines, the planning department identified 39 distinct character areas in the small municipality as seen in Figure 35. Guidelines pertain to each character area as well as to the individual buildings. In concert with the Westmount Planning Programme, the guidelines inform City staff and the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) on how to manage development within the city limits.

Figure 35: Map of Westmount Character Areas
Planning Advisory Committee

History

The origins of the Planning Advisory Committee date back to 1916 when Westmount created an Architectural and Planning Commission. The mandate of the commission was to maintain the quality of the built environment and to manage new development through the supervision and regulation of buildings being erected, altered, converted or extended.

The commission was made up of three Westmount residents who were professionals practicing in architecture or urban planning, the director of the City’s urban planning department, and a city councilor. The Architectural and Planning Commission became the Planning Advisory Committee on January 1, 2002 when Westmount amalgamated with Montreal.

In 1995 the Programme to Preserve Westmount’s Distinct Character was adopted by City Council to formalize and strengthen Westmount’s system of design review. The programme included a comprehensive building analysis that ranked and categorized all Westmount buildings built prior to 1950, a document defining 39 character areas with unique characteristics and streetscapes, and a more complete set of building and improvement guidelines based on building rank and character area.

Building Permit Application Process

All applications for building permits are examined by the Board of Inspections which ensures compliance with the applicable by-laws, building codes and zoning regulations. Applications that are approved by the Board of Inspections are then passed on to the Planning Advisory Committee. The Committee may require changes or deny approval of a project for reasons of planning and aesthetics. Lastly, the recommendations of the Planning Advisory Committee are presented at the next Council meeting for approval. Though rarely done, Council may reverse a decision made by the Planning Advisory Committee.

Integration of Sustainability with Historical Preservation

The council has asked the Planning Department to revise the building and renovation guidelines to incorporate allowances for green technology and materials. Section 6.8 of the guidelines, entitled “Environmental Considerations” is to be made more comprehensive. The building and renovating guidelines are based on the architectural value of each building. Depending on the category a building falls under, the owner will be able to make various alterations and renovations that are deemed more sustainable.

There are many challenges to balancing heritage preservation with sustainability. Currently the guidelines do not reference the introduction of solar panels or rainwater collectors. As it stands, these additions are approved on a case-by-case basis and must be installed in such a way that they do not interfere with the streetscape. In addition, the Planning Department requires any replacement windows and doors that are visible from the street to be replicas of the originals. This dramatically adds to the cost of retrofitting a home and can make the replacement of old leaky windows and doors prohibitively expensive. Another challenge to enabling sustainable design is that the City of Westmount does not allow building owners to use plastic as a building material. This prohibits any use of recycled plastic materials, which is popular right now as a wood substitute for decking. As a compromise, the sustainability coordinator is recommending the City allow homeowners to use recycled plastic decking materials if the deck cannot be seen from the street.

Planning Programme

The City of Westmount inherited the current Westmount Planning Programme from the Island municipality of Montreal when it demerged in 2006. Montreal created the planning programme as a part of its Master Plan with Westmount being one chapter in the document. Although Westmount regained its powers to develop its own planning programme, it must keep the existing one for five years and can only amend it through by-laws. As the current planning program was adopted by Montreal in November 2004, it is expected that the City of Westmount will publish a revised version by 2012.

The values put forward in the planning programme have evolved from the values first espoused in the founding of the city in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The focus is still on maintaining, if not enhancing, the quality of the place for residents. Planning issues addressed in the planning programme include the:

- Quality of the residential neighbourhoods
- Protection and enhancement of Mount Royal and other parks and green spaces
- Community and institutional facilities
- Industrial and commercial areas
- Quality of the environment
- Transportation
- Heritage, architecture and urban form
- Protection of views and landscapes
- Quality of public spaces

As stated in the planning programme, the City’s objectives are “ecological integrity, economic efficiency and social equity among individuals and generations”5. These objectives are seen as supportive of Westmount’s overarching commitment to sustainable development.
Planning Program Development Areas

The Westmount Planning Programme gives a brief overview of the current state of the city and outlines planning and development priorities. The planning program lists two areas that have development potential: 1) the area south of the Ville-Marie Expressway and north of Richelieu Street (termed the Richelieu site) and 2) a triangular lot along Tupper Street (termed the Tupper area).

The Planning Department does not expect the Richelieu site to be developed anytime soon as it is immediately adjacent to the Ville-Marie Expressway, which will have major reconstruction work happening along it in upcoming years. According to the Planning Department, the Ministere des Transports du Quebec (MTQ) owns the abandoned industrial building on the Richelieu site and will most likely use the site during the reconstruction of the Expressway. The four-acre Tupper area is currently occupied by city-owned parking lots. According to the planning program, Westmount would favour a development on this site that would provide market-affordable housing for young families. However, development of the Tupper area is not a priority with the City at this time as Council is focused on overseeing major projects, such as the Westmount arena and pool, MUHC Glen Campus, and Turcot Interchange developments.

As Westmount is mostly built out, there are few other areas that hold opportunity for new developments. Although there is undeveloped and under-utilized lands in Lower Westmount, it has long been a challenging area for development.

Development in Lower Westmount

The southernmost area of Westmount, between Saint-Catherine Street and Saint-Antoine Street, has long been the focus of concern for the city. A number of large barriers, both in infrastructure and topography, pose major challenges for development. The Falaise Saint-Jacques cuts east-west through the area, creating a substantial barrier to the lower area marked by Saint-Antoine Street, and proves difficult to develop.

Although challenging for development, the area along the falaise provides space for industrial uses and large transportation infrastructure projects, which have proven to excentuate the barrier between the upper and lower areas. The railroad tracks and Ville-Marie Expressway run parallel to the falaise, both of which have large rights-of-ways and offer few places to cross, further inhibiting connection in both physical and social forms between the high and low areas of the city.

Efforts to bridge the gap between the high and low lands of the city were last approached in the 1960s, prior to the construction of the Ville-Marie Expressway. However, due to the proposed repair and reconstruction of the Ville-Marie Expressway and Turcot Interchange, the southernmost area of Westmount has become a topic of concern once again for City staff, residents, and local government. Below is a brief overview of planning efforts targeting the southernmost area, starting in the 1960s with the Bland Report and moving up to present day with the proposed land expropriation and new development along Selby Street.
**Renewal Scheme of 1960s**

In October of 1960, a report titled, *City of Westmount: A Report on the Planning of the Southern Area*, proposed a number of large-scale renewal schemes to the 90-acre area south of Saint-Catherine Street in Lower Westmount.

The *Report on the Planning of the Southern Area*, more commonly known as the *Bland Report* (after the first author of the document), proposed changes to the street pattern; most notably, the addition of a major east-west arterial, south of Saint-Catherine and north of the train tracks. The “Bland Report” also proposed the expropriation and re-subdivision of a number of blocks south of Saint-Catherine Street.

Although few of the *Bland Report*’s proposals came to fruition, it did form the basis for a number of zoning changes in Lower Westmount. These zoning changes permitted developers to undertake a few large projects in the city. For instance, in 1965 Westmount approved the development plans for Alexis Nihon Plaza and the Westmount Square Complexes. The construction of both projects was completed in 1967. They remain among some of the largest developments in the city. These projects also served as the impetus for Westmount’s heritage preservation and subdivision by-laws as a way to protect the city from similar development occurring again.

The construction of the Ville-Marie Expressway in the mid-1960s likely limited that ability for the City to implement many of the recommendations laid out in the *Bland Report* and further separated the lower area from the rest of the city. To this day the southern area identified in the report is under-utilized and disconnected from Westmount and the potential for redevelopment and renewal of the area continues to pose serious challenges for the city.
**Selby Street**

In 1965 the Province of Quebec proceeded with the decision to expropriate the properties in the Selby Street area to allow for the construction of the Ville-Marie Expressway. Westmount council negotiated with the Province to delay the eviction until June 30, 1967. In June 1966 Westmount opened a Relocation Office to advise and assist the 222 families that would be displaced by the expropriation measures.

Westmount spent a number of years planning for a housing development to accommodate some of the families of Selby Street. However, only in the spring of 1974, seven years after families were evicted from their homes, did Westmount complete the subsidized housing complexes on Hillside Avenue. Former Selby residents took residence in 25 out of the 64 apartment units.

Since the completion of the Ville-Marie Expressway in 1972, the raised highway covers the north side of Selby Street, as seen in Figure 42. There are two remaining triplexes on the south side of the street at the corner of Greene Avenue. Selby Street connects Greene Street to Rose de Lima Street, providing access to Saint-Henri from Westmount. According to the Westmount Planning Department, Selby Street and its two triplexes will be expropriated by Ministère des Transports du Québec (MTQ) in order to enable ongoing repair and maintenance to the Ville-Marie Expressway. The sewage and water pipes as well as electric lines under Selby Street will need to be moved when the street and adjacent properties are expropriated. The Westmount Public Works Department is negotiating a compensation agreement with the MTQ to cover infrastructure displacement costs. The expropriation by the MTQ and subsequent work on the Ville-Marie Expressway will impact the only new development in the southern area; Les Jardins Westmount.

Selby Street currently provides the only access to the parking facility for Les Jardins Westmount (condo development). The 80-year old industrial building is being converted into a 105-unit condominium. The developer claims that the project will have a low ecological footprint as the building is being readapted for residential use and will be outfitted with a geothermal energy generation system. Transferring Selby Street to the MTQ will require that the entrance to the development be changed.

Due to the large infrastructure and topographic barriers in the area, there is little opportunity for development in the southernmost area of Westmount. This will further be the case once the MTQ expropriates more property along the expressway in preparation for construction work. The lower area remains isolated, both physically and socially, from the upper area. As a result, the area south of the Ville-Marie Expressway is more contiguous with Saint-Henri than Westmount.
Current Projects and Concerns

A series of planning projects, both within Westmount and just outside the city boundary, is putting pressure on the City to be responsive to the needs and concerns of its residents while accommodating growth and development. As such the City is busy with negotiations and discussions with various stakeholders who are involved with the projects.

Below is a brief overview of some of the major projects of interest to Westmount during the summer of 2010.

Outside Westmount

MCGILL UNIVERSITY HEALTH CENTRE (MUHC)

The MUHC Glen Campus is a mega-hospital redevelopment project that brings together the Montreal Children’s Hospital, the Montreal Chest Institute and the Royal Victoria Hospital as well as a Research Institute and Comprehensive Cancer Centre all into one complex (see Figure 44). The site for the MUHC Glen Campus extends along the top of the Falaise Saint-Jacques, overlooking the Sud-Ouest borough and spans into both the NDG borough and the City of Westmount (see Figure 45). The project broke ground during the summer 2010 with an expected completion date of 2014.

Roughly a third of the MUHC Glen Campus land is in Westmount. A zoning by-law was amended by Westmount city council to accept the MUHC development on Westmount land, however the land is still zoned residential. The first phase of development does not include plans to build on the portion of the site located in Westmount, instead it is slated as open greenspace. When the MUHC wants to develop that parcel they will need to negotiate zoning amendments with the City of Westmount.

The planning and development process for the new MUHC Glen Campus included extensive public consultation. NDG and the Sud-Ouest borough as well as the City of Westmount have all been vocal about concerns regarding the impact the project will have on the quality of life for its residents. Concerns range from noise and dust during construction to anticipated increase in traffic volumes as well as the potential for rapid gentrification of the surrounding neighbourhoods.

According to the Westmount Planning Department, there have been no discussions over the last year between the City of Westmount and MUHC officials. However, controversy has emerged over the hospital’s emergency access road that was built in 2009 off of Glen Road. The City of Westmount is upset that MUHC officials and a few Montreal politicians have pushed to make the road a main entrance to the hospital in efforts to reduce project costs. Westmount states concerns over the impact that entrance will have on traffic congestion in the city as MUHC is expected to generate much more traffic in the area than currently exists.
TURCOT

Built in 1967 in anticipation for Expo ’67, the Turcot Interchange is a large elevated concrete interchange that connects highways 15, 20 and the Ville-Marie Expressway. However it needs to undergo extensive reconstruction. The MTQ proposed plans in 2007 to redesign the interchange so it may handle 10% more vehicular traffic flow (it currently handles approximately 280,000 vehicles per day). Westmount submitted a 12-page brief to the Bureau d’Audiences Publiques sur l’Environnement (BAPE) in June 2009, which highlighted their concern over the noise and dust the reconstruction process would generate and the impact that would have on the quality of life for its residents who near the Ville-Marie Expressway. Due partly to public resistance presented at the BAPE, the MTQ reconsidered the design for replacing the interchange and recently released the updated version on November 9, 2010.

The MTQ is conducting noise and traffic studies related to integrating the Turcot into the surrounding neighbourhoods and the MUHC Glen Campus. Residents of Lansdowne have spoken out about their concerns over the anticipated increase in traffic volume along their street due to the new MUHC Glen Campus. Westmount will be conducting its own vehicular traffic studies related to these projects through its Public Works Department, as authorized by Council in the spring of 2010. Despite the City’s commitment to encouraging active transportation modes, cycling and pedestrian studies will not be included in the traffic study.

SUMMIT PARK

There is interest to create a green corridor from Westmount Summit Park to Mount Royal Park, allowing land animals and birds to safely travel between the two parks (see Figure 47). As a number of Westmount’s streets connect to Côte-des-Neiges Road, the planning department is involved in these discussions. Westmount has been negotiating with the Arrondissement Historique et Naturel du Mont-Royal about the reconfiguration of Côte-des-Neiges Road. Although Westmount supports the concept of a green corridor between the two summits, the City wants to ensure the mitigation of any potential negative affects regarding circulation and accessibility to Westmount streets.
Inside Westmount

ARENA AND POOL

The redevelopment of the arena and pool complex is one of the largest infrastructure projects the City has undertaken. Due to the scale and cost of the project, it has been a contentious issue for the City and its residents. The current arena and pool, which were built in 1958 and 1963 respectively, will be replaced by a new arena and pool complex on the same site. The $37 million proposal includes two underground, full sized rinks on the north side of the site and an outdoor pool on the south end of the site with a recreation office in the middle of the complex. The most recent site design plan, completed by Lemay and Associates, is seen in Figure 48.

Two public town meetings have been held relating to the arena and pool proposal. In addition, an information leaflet and survey were mailed to all Westmount households. Approximately 32% of the surveys were mailed back to the city; 82% of the survey participants were in favour of the project. The main concerns voiced by survey participants related to the impact the project would have on the park as well as the cost of the project to Westmount taxpayers.

Westmount council set August 17, 2010 as the date for signing an open register to force a referendum for by-law 1397 to provide a loan in the amount of $37 million for the arena and pool reconstruction project. There were 114 residents who signed the register, well under the 500 needed to force a referendum. The project is moving forward; construction could begin in early 2011.

Funding for the project is coming from a number of sources. Federal and Provincial government grants will total $20 million and Westmount hopes to raise $2.5 million from private donors as well as another $2.5 million from local schools. The last $12 million would come from Westmount taxpayers.
GREENE STREET AND 5-SAISON

In an unexpected move, Council approved spot zoning for the 5-Saison development site. The Greene Avenue zone was approved in an early-summer session in 2010 and includes the building with the 5-Saisons grocery store. The spot zoning permits the developer to build up to a height of six stories, up from what was previously three stories. The owner of the building originally intended to terminate the lease for 5-Saisons and build a three-storey condominium. Westmount residents were upset at the prospect of losing the grocery store. The City intervened and negotiated with the owner to keep leasing to the grocery store by increasing the allowable building height.

WESTMOUNT BICYCLE PATH

The designated bi-directional bike path on de Maisonneuve Boulevard in Westmount has existed for more than 20 years. In 2008 it was integrated into the larger Montreal bike network. Since then the number of cyclists using the path has increased considerably, which coincides with a general increase in the number of commuter cyclists in Montreal as a whole. Due to some cyclist-pedestrian conflicts in Westmount Park, the suitability of a bicycle path in the park has become a topic of public debate. Westmount has installed new stop signs and bollards as measures to reduce the speed of cyclists travelling through the park. The City is considering various options, including the rerouting of the path along Saint-Catherine Street.

Synthesis

Change is occurring both from within and immediately outside of Westmount. Future large-scale developments such as the arena and pool complex, the MUHC Glen Campus, and the Turcot Interchange and Ville-Marie Expressway will likely quicken the speed at which change occurs in Lower Westmount. This change has the potential of threatening the identity and existing quality of life for Westmount residents. As such, Westmount residents and city officials have played a very active role in the planning process of large projects to ensure their concerns and values are taken into consideration whether the projects are located within the city limits or in close proximity to its borders.
Built Environment

Development in Westmount responds strongly to the topography of the territory. Concentration of both form and density follow the plateau across the city with the buildings becoming increasingly sparse as development moves up the steepening slope of the mountain. The falaise along with the Ville-Marie Expressway and railroad breaks up the urban fabric in Lower Westmount, resulting in pockets of development to the south that are completely disconnected from the rest of the city.

The highest building to land ratio is in the southeast section of Westmount, where the downtown fabric extends westward along Saint-Catherine Street. High-rise buildings with large building footprints are concentrated in this area of the city as is indicated by Figures 52, 54 and 55. A number of high-rise apartment buildings, such as Westmount Square and 4300 De Maisonneuve, corresponds to the higher population density as seen in Figure 53.

The built form of Westmount is generally low-rise residential, however the building types differ greatly throughout different neighbourhoods in the city. Rowhouses are more typical in Lower Westmount whereas townhouses and large single-family homes are more common in Upper Westmount. The population densities and household sizes in these areas coincide with the built form.

Barriers

The falaise along with the Ville-Marie Expressway and CP rail line creates a linear barrier effectively breaking up the urban fabric in Lower Westmount. A strip of housing units to the south of this barrier and north of Saint-Antoine Street is disconnected from the rest of Westmount. Though this area is part of Westmount, it much more closely resembles the building typology and household composition of Saint-Henri. The expressway spans 1.6 kilometers in Westmount and only three streets pass under it. Glen Road – which becomes de Courcelle in Saint-Henri – allows access under the expressway at the western side. Greene Street allows one-way vehicular access to the south roughly 1.3 kilometers east of Glen Road. Lastly Atwater, the major arterial on the eastern edge of Westmount, allows bidirectional access under the expressway and the rail line.
Vacant Land

The city of Westmount is almost entirely built out, leaving few opportunities for new development. Though infrequent, some infill development still occurs including a 42-unit condo project on the north side of Hillside Avenue that was recently accepted by Council. The majority of the vacant land in Westmount is found on three large parcels: the Richelieu site, the Tupper area and the MUHC site. The planning program identifies the Tupper area and Richelieu site as potential development sites. Both sites are discussed in further detail in the City Planning subsection of this document. The MUHC site, located west of Glen Road is owned by the MUHC. As has been mentioned previously in the document, the MUHC is building a large hospital complex on the Montreal portion of land it owns and may have future plans for the vacant, Westmount portion of land. As this land has been zoned for residential use, the MUHC will likely have to negotiate with a future Westmount council to find an appropriate use for the site in order to receive a zoning amendment.

Building Typology and Streetscapes

The different types of development in Westmount affect the streetscapes throughout the city. The combination of high-rise buildings, to mixed-use commercial districts, intimate residential laneways lined with rowhouses and townhomes to low-rise apartment buildings contributes to the city’s unique character and charm.

Westmount can be divided into seven different sectors: five residential areas (Types A-E) and two main commercial districts (Types A and B). This categorization is a much more general categorization of built form in Westmount compared to the 39 character areas that informs the Guidelines for Building and Renovating in Westmount. It is based on field observations, assessments of figure ground maps and analysis of population data for each area. This analysis is meant as an overview of the city to see how different building types affect the streetscapes and density of different areas in Westmount.

Parks

There are three large municipal parks in Westmount: Summit, King George and Westmount. Summit Park is the largest open space in Westmount. It is a heavily wooded area with a number of wide walking paths and is well-used by dog owners. King George Park and Westmount Park provide space for many different activities. Both parks include a children's playground, playing fields, tennis courts, a wading pool, a pond as well as unprogrammed open green space. There are also six local parks and ten designated green spaces dotted across Westmount. The open green spaces put together total over 40 hectares, making up 10% of Westmount's total area.

Figure 55: Map of areas by building typology in Westmount
Residential Type A

The Residential Type A section of the city covers most of the mountain slope in Upper Westmount. Large single-family homes on large properties are characteristic of this area. Most homes have two or more car garages. The curvilinear streets are lined with mature trees and mostly accommodate local traffic only. The steep slopes make traversing the area by bicycle and by foot a challenge, especially during winter months.

Residential Type B

The Residential Type B area is mainly comprised of single-family homes with some semi-detached homes on smaller lots than found in the Residential Type A section. The streets are laid in grid-like pattern rather than the curvilinear paths common along the steeper sloped parts of the mountain. Mature trees also line these streets. Traffic calming measures are in place, including seasonal concrete planters and speed bumps, along some north-south streets.
**Residential Type C**

Two- to three-storey rowhouses and semi-detached homes are common in Residential Type C. Housing also includes small apartment buildings and condos. The density of the built form in this area contributes to the increased population density as seen in Figure 53. The continuity and density of the buildings gives this area of Westmount a more urban feel compared to the characteristic suburban type development found in Residential Types A and B.

Large trees create a canopy over the relatively narrow streets in this area. It is easy to access public transit and the local commercial districts by foot. The area covers much of the plateau, where public transit service and other amenities are concentrated, contributing to its walkability, which further enhances the quality of life for residents.

**Residential Type D**

The streetscape in this area is unique in Westmount. Residential Type D is comprised of large apartment buildings and wide, busy streets, both of which are uncharacteristic of Westmount. Much of the development in this area is the result of ambitious development plans during the 1960s and early 1970s (see History and City Planning). Together the built features contribute to a coarse urban fabric, more often associated with downtown areas. The area essentially functions as an extension of downtown Montreal.

The high-density development in this area provides housing for single people and small families. Senior residences are especially prominent. Considering Westmount’s aging population and the high accessibility to public transit and other amenities, it is reasonable to expect the concentration of elderly people living in this area to increase over time (see Community).
Residential Type E

Residential Type E covers the area south of the falaise, beyond the Ville-Marie Expressway and railroad. It is the section of the city that has been cut off from the rest of Westmount due to the built and topographic barriers (see City Planning). The area is comprised of triplexes, rowhouses, and low-rise apartments with some buildings currently in poor condition. There are not many trees on either Saint-Antoine or Selby.

There is continuity in the urban fabric along Saint-Antoine Street, with the type of buildings fitting with the finer grain triplexes on the other side of the street. This is in contrast with the buildings on Selby Street, which are separate and are a mix of types from triplex apartments to a hydro facility to an abandoned and decrepit school. The Selby buildings face the empty lots beneath the Ville-Marie Expressway, further contributing to the abandoned feel of the place.

Commercial Areas

There are two distinct types of commercial areas in Westmount: Commercial Areas A and B. Commercial Area A is characterized by its neighbourhood-scale with low-rise, mixed-residential and commercial buildings packed closely together along the streets. Local shops, bakeries, and restaurants contribute to the small-town feel in these areas as do the volume of pedestrian traffic and narrower streets. Both Victoria and Sherbrooke streets fall under Commercial Area A. In contrast, Commercial Area B is comprised of high-rise office and commercial buildings along the main arterial of Saint-Catherine Street. The form of these buildings and the resulting streetscape are more characteristic of downtown than of the city of Westmount.
Synthesis

The type of housing stock in each area of the city is closely correlated to the topography of that area. The variety and concentration of buildings is highest in Lower Westmount, which features a dense mix of rowhouses, townhouses, duplexes, triplexes, condominiums, apartment buildings and office buildings. Whereas in Upper Westmount the built environment almost entirely consists of semi- or fully-detached single-family homes on relatively large lots. As a result, the population density in Lower Westmount is several times larger than in Upper Westmount. The stark difference in the built environment between Lower and Upper Westmount is mirrored by differences in household makeup as described in the Community section of this report.

The Ville-Marie Expressway and CP rail line that run along the falaise break up the urban fabric and effectively disconnect a strip of units along Saint Antoine Street from the rest of Lower Westmount. The population living along the Ville-Marie Expressway will be most affected by the replacement of the structure in the coming decade.

The Planning Advisory Committee, which reviews the designs to all major renovations done on Westmount dwellings, requires the replacement of all exterior features in heritage structures, including windows and doors, to closely resemble the originals both in style and in the materials used. As most of the original windows and doors in the city are highly ornate and made of materials that are scarce today, having replicas made can be very costly. Anecdotal evidence suggests that replacing an ornate set of double front doors can cost upwards of $20,000. These stringent regulations make some much-needed renovations that improve heating and cooling efficiency in old homes prohibitively expensive for many Westmount households. In the end, both housing affordability and environmental sustainability are unintentionally negatively affected by the heritage preservation legislation. The City appears to be considering various alternatives to its current regulations scheme that would balance heritage preservation with affordability and environmental sustainability. This is discussed in greater detail in the Discussion section of the report.

The heritage value of the built structures in Westmount is a tremendous asset for residents and visitors of the area. However, the old architecture of Westmount’s dwellings and the building and renovation regulations aimed at heritage preservation may impede Westmount’s goal towards environmental sustainability. As many of the dwellings in Westmount were built between 1890 and 1930, very few structures have exterior walls that are insulated to current standards. Additionally, many of the homes in Westmount, especially in the upper portion, are very large as they were built in a time when the average family size was considerably higher than it is today. Put together, these large and poorly insulated dwellings require a lot of energy for heating and cooling throughout the year.
Transportation

Local and Regional

Westmount is well serviced by both local and regional transportation infrastructure. Figure 69 shows the major local and regional transportation routes that serve Westmount. The Decarie Expressway provides the main north-south regional arterial with connection to Westmount via the Sherbrooke and Cote-Saint-Luc interchanges. The Ville-Marie Expressway serves Westmount through the exits at Atwater Avenue and Guy Street. For travelling eastbound from Westmount, the Ville-Marie Expressway can be accessed from Greene Avenue. Main local roads include Sherbrooke Street and Dorchester Boulevard, which also serve as local connectors to downtown Montreal, the Decarie Expressway, and the Notre-Dame-de-Grace borough. Public transit infrastructure to and through Westmount includes a number of local bus routes, a regional commuter rail service, and access to metro stations just outside its borders. A single bicycle route runs through the city. It follows de Maisonneuve Street, with a section through Westmount Park, thereby connecting the city to downtown and NDG.

Secondary arterials

Aside from the Decarie and Ville-Marie expressways, the main arterials run east-west through Westmount. Sherbrooke Street is the most prominent road through Westmount and serves as a main east-west route in the city. Sherbrooke is a wide, two-way street, with four travel lanes and parking on both sides of the street. Dorchester Boulevard and Saint-Catherine Street are the other major arterials running through Westmount, which also connect Westmount to downtown Montreal to the east and NDG borough and the Decarie Expressway to the west.

Speed and traffic volume along these arterials continues to be a concern for Westmount residents. Both issues have been taken up by the WMA at different times over the years. The potential impact the MUHC will have on traffic volumes along these two thoroughfares is of concern to Westmount residents and in part has prompted their involvement in CURA and the MUHC project in recent years. The City is in the process of conducting traffic studies of its major streets. Data on traffic congestion and speeds was not available at the time of conducting this baseline study. It is expected that the traffic report will be made available sometime in 2011.

Connectors

Connector streets also mostly accommodate east-west traffic with The Boulevard, Cote-Saint-Antoine, and Westmount Avenue all serving as the main east-west connectors across the city.

The north-south connectors are limited to the far west side of Westmount, including the short dog-leg of de Courcelle Street which serves as the main connection between Westmount and the Sud-Ouest borough. The other two north-south connectors, Grosvenor Street and Victoria Avenue, link Westmount to the Cote-des-Neiges borough to the north and Sherbrooke and Sainte-Catherine to the
south. Grosvenor is a one-way, northbound street and Victoria is a one-way, south-bound street. Together they provide the main north-south connection in Westmount.

**Local roads**

The local roads conform to the orthogonal grid pattern laid out by the preceding farmlands on the territory (see History). Many of the local streets are tree-lined and residential with street parking allowed. Traffic calming measures such as speed bumps and seasonal planters have been installed on some residential streets. Others have limited traffic flow to one-way only.

**Parking**

Limited parking space in Lower Westmount is a major concern for residents and City Council. Westmount’s proximity to downtown and the presence of Place Alexis Nihon and Dawson College on the eastern edge of the city results in high demand for parking as residents and non-residents compete for the limited on-street parking spaces. Available parking spaces are also scarce near Victoria Street where the high concentration of businesses creates high demand for parking.

The City has attempted to preserve spaces for residents through various restrictions. The use of many non-charged parking spaces in Westmount is restricted to two hours, however each Westmount household is entitled to one free car permit that allows car users to park for up to four hours in the two-hour parking zones. Additionally, many portions of the residential streets below Cote-Saint-Antoine require special parking passes during evening hours. There are very few public parking lots in Westmount with the exception of a couple of private lots near Greene Avenue and a larger municipally operated parking lot on Tupper Street, which handles some of the demand for weekday parking near the Atwater employment zone.

### Public Transit

Westmount is served fairly well by public transit. People living in Lower Westmount are better served by public transit to and from downtown Montreal than Upper Westmount residents as most services and infrastructure are concentrated along Sherbrooke Street and de Maisonneuve Boulevard. With Westmount’s aging population, improving accessibility to public transit is expected to become a priority for the City and its residents.

### Metro

Although there are no metro stations located within the Westmount municipal boundary, two are within close proximity for residents living in Lower Westmount. Atwater station is located just east at the intersection of de Maisonneuve Boulevard and Atwater Street and Vendome station is located southwest at the intersection of Vendome and de Maisonneuve (see Figure 71).

### Commuter rail

The commuter train operated by AMT indirectly serves Westmount. The closest rail station is just southwest of the city boundary at Vendome metro station. Three train routes that connect Montreal to the surrounding suburban municipalities stop at Vendome station during peak commuting hours. These include the Blaineville-Saint-Jerome, Vaudreuil-Hudson, and Candiac lines.

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**Figure 70: Map of bus routes**

**Figure 71: Map of Montreal metro system**
Bus

Eight bus routes run through Westmount. The map in Figure 70 shows the bus routes that service the city. Routes tend to follow secondary arterials and connector streets in Westmount. The three east-west routes travel along The Boulevard, Sherbrooke Street, and Saint-Catherine Street. The remaining five bus routes are concentrated along the western edge of the Westmount.

Bus #24 travels along Sherbrooke Street and is the main commuter route for those travelling between Westmount and downtown Montreal. The #24 bus is one of best routes in Westmount with bus frequency of approximately every 10 minutes during peak commuting hours and approximately every 20-30 minutes seven days a week from 6h to 1h.

Other transportation options

Communauto

Communauto is the longest running and one of the largest car-sharing operations in North America. Established in Montreal in 1995, it has experienced exponential growth both in terms of membership and the number of cars. According to Communauto, one of their vehicles replaces eight personally owned vehicles. It is seen as both an environmental and economical choice for people living in urban areas.

Westmount has three Communauto stations within its territory; all within the southern section of the city. Cars can be found at the following locations in Westmount: Westmount station, Victoria Hall, and a new station at Gladstone Avenue and Dorchester. Boulevard Compared to the surrounding boroughs, Westmount does not have many Communauto stations. This may be due to the low-to moderate-density of most of Westmount as well as the higher median income demographic, which would be more likely to own personal vehicles than people who fall within a lower income bracket.

Bicycling

Bicycling infrastructure in Westmount is limited. The only designated bicycle path in Westmount is along de Maisonneuve Boulevard. It is a two-way separated path that connects to an on-street bicycle lane in NDG that continues further to Montreal-Ouest. This bicycle path also connects with the two-way separated Claire-Morissette path through downtown Montreal, which stretches to Berri Street in the east.

A short segment of the de Maisonneuve bike path cuts through Westmount Park and has recently been a topic of contention in the city. Some residents fear that the bicycle path in the park is a hazard to other park users, namely to small children and the elderly. The current City Council has stated that promoting active transportation is a priority for the current session. Council’s proposed actions related to bicycling include:

- “Starting the preparation of an Active Transportation and Master Cycling Plan;
- Collaborating with the City of Montreal with a view to installing BIXI stations in Westmount;
- Evaluating the costs and benefits of keeping the de Maisonneuve bicycle path open year-round; and
- Adding more bicycle parking at key locations”4.
City council has taken steps in the direction set by the above proposed actions. In October 2010, the city council agreed to forego an estimated $75,000 in revenue generated by parking spaces along de Maisonneuve Boulevard during the winter months and instead voted to keep the bicycle path open year-round. It is considered a trial period and will be revisited before becoming a standard policy. The City has also recently developed a north-south bicycle path along Lansdowne Avenue and through the Glen Tunnel to connect Westmount to Saint-Henri. It is anticipated that the City of Montreal will develop a connecting route through Saint-Henri to the Lachine Canal, in effect contributing to the regional bicycle network.

BIXI

BIXI is the City of Montreal’s public bicycle system, operated by an arms length organization of the Stationnement de Montreal. It launched services in Spring 2009 with stations throughout the Ville-Marie and Plateau-Mont-Royal boroughs. As of December 2010, BIXI has not expanded into Westmount despite rapid expansion into other boroughs on the island as well as to cities in North America and Europe, including London, UK, Minneapolis and Boston in the United States and Melbourne, Australia.

The BIXI system depends on stations located close to each other. Although the NDG borough is pushing for BIXI to set up stations in its territory, it is not likely feasible until stations are in place in Westmount. Local cycling advocates are pushing City Council to bring BIXI to Westmount, however, little progress has been made on this front at the date of writing this report.

The City of Westmount is negotiating with BIXI to see if the public bike system will be a good fit for Westmount and if so, where stations will be located. Despite BIXI being a top sustainability priority for City Council, the mayor has expressed concern that the BIXI station and presumably, BIXI users will “compromise” Westmount’s roads. An added challenge to bringing BIXI to Westmount is that the company is a subsidiary of the City of Montreal. Whereas Montreal boroughs can have the public bicycle system at no charge, it was quoted to cost Westmount $609,000 to have 15 stations installed in the city. That cost has put negotiations at a stalemate for the moment because the Mayor and City Council find the cost too high.

Transportation Modal Share

Based on the results of the Origin-Destination Survey conducted by AMT every five years, Westmount residents choose to use cars over taking public transit, bicycling, or walking for their daily trips. Approximately 65% of trips in Westmount are by car, which is higher than for the rest of Montreal where approximately 60% of trips are by car. The percentage of trips by public transit is slightly greater for the Island of Montreal as a whole compared Westmount as is the case for walking/biking.

As shown in Table 5, the modal split did not change much between 1998 and 2003 for any of the potential transportation modes. The number of car trips decreased by approximately 1% in both Westmount and the Island of Montreal between 1998 and 2003. During the same period Westmount experienced a mere 1% increase in public transit use and 2% increase in trips made by foot and by bicycle. The Island of Montreal had a 2% increase in public transit trips and an approximately 1% decrease in walking and bicycling trips.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Car (Passenger/Driver)</td>
<td>65.5%</td>
<td>61.7%</td>
<td>64.5%</td>
<td>60.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Transit</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk/Bike</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Mode share in Westmount and the island of Montreal
Car Ownership

When compared to the rest of the Island of Montreal, Westmount residents on average own more cars per household. According to a Metropolitan Transit Agency survey from 2003, on average a Westmount household owned 1.06 cars whereas the average car ownership rate for the rest of the island was 0.93 cars per household. Car ownership in Westmount is less than that found in the greater metropolitan region, which had a rate of 1.21 cars per household in 2003.

Ongoing improvements to transportation mode alternatives, such as public transit, bicycles, car-sharing, and walking, may encourage residents to try transportation options other than the personal vehicle. Improvements such as an expanded and more frequent public transit service, streets reconfigured to better accommodate bicycles and pedestrians for mobility and safety, as well as an increased number of Communauto stations may prove effective in decreasing the car ownership rate in Westmount in the future.

Synthesis

On the whole, Westmount is adequately served by local and regional transportation infrastructure. The proximity of major arterials, expressways as well as metro and rail stations, just outside of Westmount’s borders, facilitates travel outside of the city. The bicycle path, Bixi stations, Communauto stations, and public transportation services all support trips within Westmount and to nearby destinations.

Despite Westmount’s central location and the proximity of metro and rail stations, bus routes and bicycle path, a higher proportion of trips in Westmount are done by car than for the rest of Montreal. This local factor adds to the congestion within Westmount. The higher rates of car use are likely influenced by the transportation choice of Upper Westmount residents who have poor access to public transit and may be less likely to walk or cycle due to the topography.

The transportation infrastructure within the city is mainly geared to serve residents, though its main arterials also function as thoroughfares. The traffic congestion generated by through-way trips is a topic of concern. In response, the City has adopted a number of measures to reduce through traffic on Westmount roads. Local traffic calming measures include implementing reduced speed limits and speed bumps and having many north-south streets unidirectional. The City and residents, through the WMA, have expressed concern that future projects, such as the arena and pool complex, the Turcot Interchange and Ville-Marie Expressway reconstruction, as well as the MUHC development could all significantly increase traffic congestion in Westmount.
Business and Economic Development

Two business districts are located in Lower Westmount. These business districts mostly accommodate high-end retail establishments that cater to a Westmount clientele. The districts also include plenty of office space, both on the upper floors of 2-3 storey buildings along local commercial streets as well as in several multi-storey office buildings.

In 2005 there were 12,884 jobs in Westmount, comprising 1.4% of the total jobs in the Montreal agglomerations, which totalled 920,300 jobs. Many of the jobs in Westmount are located in the two business districts previously mentioned. There are also 15 schools and 10 municipal buildings contribute to the employment totals.

The residential real estate market in Westmount has steadily increased since the late 1990s. In 2008 the median price for a single-family home in Westmount surpassed $1 million. It is assumed that the increase in price of Westmount homes has contributed to a steady decrease in the annual sales volume (the number of homes sold) as fewer households can afford to move into the area. Housing prices in Lower Westmount have soared over the past decade; the presence of the MUHC Glen Campus could speed up this trend. As real estate values increase in Lower Westmount, low- to moderate- or fixed-income households may be forced out of the area. This movement could erode the level of diversity in Lower Westmount and result in a more homogeneous population in the city overall.

Commercial Areas

There are two business districts in Westmount, one on the southeast side and the other on the southwest side. The southeast business district is composed of four commercial areas that include Greene Street, Westmount Square, Place Alexis Nihon and Saint-Catherine Street.

The southwest business district is composed of two similar commercial streets Victoria Avenue and Sherbrooke Street. A description of each commercial area is accompanied by Table 6, which offers a summary of these areas.

The Greene Street area is a healthy commercial Westmount hub that runs between Saint-Catherine Street and Sherbrooke Street. It has a diverse set of businesses including restaurants, a high-end grocer, banks, pharmacies, a post office and a large variety of shops. The businesses are densely clustered as many of the buildings accommodate merchants on two levels. Most of the businesses on Greene Street are extremely high-end and cater mostly to Westmount residents.

The Westmount Square commercial area can be accessed from Greene Street, Saint-Catherine Street, The Westmount Square residential towers and Place Alexis Nihon. It has a low diversity of businesses limited to a food court, a few restaurants, a bank and a number of high-end clothing shops. Westmount Square caters to an older demographic and as Greene, its high-end businesses mainly serve Westmount residents.

Place Alexis Nihon is an urban mall that can be accessed from de Maisonneuve Boulevard, Atwater Avenue, Saint-Catherine Street, the Atwater Metro Station, and Westmount Square. It has a number of densely clustered businesses on three floors. There is also a great diversity of businesses, including several anchor retailers (Zellers, Canadian Tire, IGA and Winners), two food courts, a bank, a pharmacy, and a large variety of stores. The stores in Place Alexis Nihon target a low- to moderate-income market and cater to a large variety of people from both within and outside of Westmount.

Saint-Catherine Street can be broken into two distinct commercial areas. West of Wood Street, there are a number of small businesses that are fairly dispersed.

There is a moderate diversity of businesses including several restaurants, hairdressers and antique stores. They are medium to high-end establishments that cater mostly to Westmount residents. East of Wood Street, the commercial area becomes more diverse with businesses densely packed together. They are more moderate to low-end businesses that cater to people living inside and outside of Westmount. There is a particularly high concentration of restaurants that mainly serve lunch as it is within close proximity to the Atwater employment area.

In Westmount’s southwest business district, Victoria Avenue and Sherbrooke Street have very similar characteristics. Both areas have a diverse set of businesses and are doing well with virtually no vacant spaces. The businesses are densely clustered in buildings that often accommodate stores or businesses on multiple levels. The market is high-end and caters mostly to Westmount residents.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commercial Area</th>
<th>Description of Area</th>
<th>Health of Commercial Area</th>
<th>Level of Dispersal</th>
<th>Diversification of Businesses</th>
<th>Market</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greene Street</td>
<td>Between Saint-Catherine and Sherbrooke</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>High Density</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Very High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westmount Square</td>
<td>Basement level of Westmount Square; bordered by Saint Catherine, de-Maisonneuve, Greene and Wood</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium Density</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Very High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place Alexis Nihon</td>
<td>Basement and first two floors of Place Alexis Nihon; bordered by Saint Catherine, de-Maisonneuve, Wood and Atwater</td>
<td>Medium/Strong</td>
<td>Very High Density</td>
<td>Very High</td>
<td>Low/Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint-Catherine Street (west of Wood)</td>
<td>Between Abbott and Wood</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low Density</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint-Catherine Street (east of Wood)</td>
<td>Between Wood and Atwater</td>
<td>Weak/Medium</td>
<td>High Density</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low/Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria Street</td>
<td>Between de Maisonneuve and Sherbrooke</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>High Density</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sherbrooke Street</td>
<td>Between Claremont and Grosvenor</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>High Density</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Commercial Areas in Westmount

Note: Data regarding the health of commercial area, level of dispersal, diversification of businesses and target market was gathered through field observations.
Westmount Properties

In terms of real estate, Westmount is comprised of high-value, largely residential, properties. Out of the 5,637 buildings in Westmount, 5,195 are residential, 121 are commercial retail, and 59 are office buildings. The breakdown of units are as follows: 9,710 residential and 1,439 non-residential. In 2010 the collective value of all property in Westmount was $6 billion, which is quite high given the residential nature and relatively small size of the city.

The high-valued real estate is seen as a positive attribute in some respects, especially for many Westmount homeowners who are able to afford the increased cost of owning and maintaining a property since the increases in property taxes and evaluation in recent years as it is expected they will benefit significantly from their investments whenever they choose to sell (see Governance). However, the high cost of real estate poses some challenges for others, namely people living on low- to moderate- or fixed-income and local business owners in Westmount. The current status of real estate in Westmount is presented below. This is overlayed with emerging trends related to shifts in Westmount’s demographic composition, especially within Lower Westmount.

Residential Real Estate

RESIDENTIAL SALES MARKET

The residential real estate market in Westmount has experienced a significant increase in the cost of homes in recent years. In 2008 the median sales price for single-family homes in Westmount surpassed $1 million, meaning that half of the homes sold went for more than $1 million. This amount represents an increase of more than 150% when compared to the median sales price for single-family homes in 1998. The red trend line in Figure 76 illustrates the increase in the median sale price of Westmount homes between 1998 and 2009; the blue trend line shows the decrease in sales volume (the number of home transactions) over the same period. The decrease in sales volume over the period of the increase in the median sale price points toward the possibility of a decrease in the number of people able to purchase a home in Westmount. However, it is important to note that this time period also coincided with a global economic downturn, which likely affected the sales volume.

The unique nature of the real estate market in Westmount becomes more apparent when compared to Montreal. Between 1998 and 2007, the average sales price for single-family homes in Westmount increased by 118% (represented by the red trend line of Figure 77), corresponding to an average annual increase of 9%. Meanwhile, the sales volume decreased by 23% (represented by the blue trend of Figure 77). During the same period, the average sales price of all residential units in Montreal increased by 102% (represented by the red trend line of Figure 78), corresponding to an 8% average annual increase. At the same time, the sales volume for all Montreal residential units increased by 74% (represented by the blue trend line of Figure 78).

Over the nine-year period, both the Montreal and Westmount real estate markets experienced similar relative increases in sales prices of residential units - roughly doubling in both cases. However, the trends in sales volume differed greatly between the two municipalities. Whereas Westmount’s sales volume for single-family homes decreased by almost 25% Montreal’s sales volume for residential units increased by nearly 75%. These trends are both represented by the blue longitudinal variations in Figures 77 and 78.

The decrease in sales volume in Westmount could be partly explained by the absolute increase in the average sales price of single-family homes, which rose by almost $600,000 between 1998 and 2007. Comparatively, the average residential unit in Montreal rose by only $125,000 over the same period. While the average Montreal
residence remained relatively affordable in 2005 at under $250,000, the average sales price for a Westmount single-family home rose to well over $1 million. As a result, property in Westmount has become prohibitively expensive for the majority of homebuyers on the Island of Montreal. For instance, a $450,000 home in 1998 (roughly the average price for a home in Westmount at the time) would have been affordable to more potential homebuyers than a similar home costing $1.1 million in 2007.

Note that in Figure 78 Montreal’s residential unit sales price trend is smoother than Westmount’s seen Figure 77, due to an averaging effect. There were many more unit sales in Montreal, which makes sharp changes in sale price less likely.

The increase in residential property values over the past decade is changing the demographic composition of the city, specifically within Lower Westmount. When a home is sold, it is likely that the buyer has significantly more income than the seller. Over time this process can dramatically change the demographics of an area as it inherently weeds out the lower and moderate-income households. The gentrification trend seen in Lower Westmount may be occurring at a faster rate due to the dramatic increase in municipal taxes following the amalgamation in 2002. Between 2000 and 2009, the property taxes collected by the municipality increased by 92%. It is expected that households with low- to moderate- or fixed-income would have found it difficult to cover the increase in municipal taxes. This may have prompted some people to sell their homes in that time period and it is likely that individuals making a significantly higher income bought them.
Housing affordability

A trend that carries much significance relates to the affordability of residential real estate in Westmount. While real estate costs have increased substantially in all of Westmount in recent years, median household income within Lower Westmount has plateaued. This indicates a new more affluent population may replace the existing population over the coming years. As Lower Westmount is the urban core and effectively serves as the heart of Westmount, rapid gentrification could mean undesirable change in the city.

The cost of buying a home in Lower Westmount has soared in recent years. A typical single-family rowhouse in Lower Westmount costs between $600,000 and $700,000 (the rowhouse at 8 Burton Street sold for $635,000 in June 2008). According to 2006 census, the median household income in Lower Westmount is $60,000 while it is $56,100 in Montreal. The definition of affordability set by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) states that a household should spend no more than 30% of its annual income on housing. Based on this definition of affordability, Westmount is financially unaffordable for the majority of families on the Island of Montreal. This poses a challenge for Westmount as it aims to be a family-oriented city, yet this trend in the disparity between cost of housing and median income levels leaves many households unable to enter into the Westmount housing market.

Figures 80 and 81 show the median and average household income for Lower and Upper Westmount. The yellow line on each graph represents an estimate of the household income required to finance and maintain one of the least expensive homes on the market in Westmount. The estimate uses an average of the 25 least expensive single-family homes sold in 1995, 2000, and 2005 respectively.

The income required to finance a typical home in Westmount has increased much faster than household income in the area; this was especially true within Lower Westmount. As illustrated in Figure 81, the average household income in Lower Westmount was roughly a third of the estimated income necessary to purchase a relatively inexpensive home in Westmount in 2005.

It was surprising to find that even many Upper Westmount households made insufficient income to finance a home in Westmount. For instance, Figure 80, shows that the median income for Upper Westmount households in 2005 is well below the estimate of the income needed to purchase and maintain an inexpensive single-family home in Westmount.

The estimate for the income required to purchase an inexpensive home in Westmount, represented by the yellow trendline, does not take into account that select households have very large savings and can purchase a home with a relatively small bank loan. The methodology used for this analysis assumed that the down payment for a home purchase was 25% of the purchase price. Households who have large savings from an inheritance, investments or the sale of a previous home would be more likely be able to put down significantly more than 25% as a down payment. For more information on the methodology used to derive this estimate, see the Appendix.

When comparing the median and average income graphs it is clear that in both Lower and Upper Westmount, the average household income is increasing faster than the median household income. This illustrates that even within the two distinct parts of Westmount, there is a polarization of household income. It suggests that new households moving into Westmount tend to have significantly higher income than the existing population.

If the city continues on this trajectory, there is risk that Lower Westmount may lose its present population diversity. Whereas Lower Westmount is home to people of many household types, including the elderly, families, students, and young professionals, it is possible that Westmount will not be financially accessible to many of these groups in the near future.
Saint-Antoine and Selby

Special attention should be given to the real estate market in Westmount’s least affluent area, the small strip of housing south of the Ville-Marie Expressway and east of Rose de Lima Street. The area is split between two dissemination areas with Greene Street as the dividing line. The housing in this area is composed almost entirely of duplexes and triplexes, with the exception of 3035 Saint-Antoine Street, a building housing 24 residential lofts. This area of Westmount contains 36 buildings and approximately 120 residential units, all of which were built in 1895 with the exception of 3035 Saint-Antoine Street, which was built in 1933. Each building in the area has a single owner (person or business entity), which suggests that most of the residential units are rentals. This is supported by Figure 84, which shows the proportion of renters in Westmount by blockface.

As this area of Westmount contains so few buildings and residential units, a longitudinal analysis of building sales would not yield useful information. In fact, there were no real estate transactions made over many of the years between 1998 and 2009. An alternative approach to establishing real estate values in the area involves analysing the Montreal assessment role. Half the buildings (20 duplexes/triplexes) were randomly selected. For 2010, the average evaluation for each building and residential unit was found to be $298,000 and $97,000 respectively.

Referring to Table 7 it is clear that the evaluation of buildings in the southernmost area of Westmount is much lower than for Westmount on the whole. The triplexes and duplexes in the Saint-Antoine and Selby area are valued at only 40% of those for Westmount. There are several factors that can help explain this stark contrast. Firstly, the proximity of the Ville-Marie Expressway has a strong, negative affect on the property values in this area as it acts as an unattractive physical barrier in addition to contributing to noise and air pollution. Secondly, these buildings are located on Saint-Antoine Street, a primary arterial that receives high traffic volumes; also a relatively undesirable location to live. Thirdly, these properties have not been maintained as well as typical Westmount properties, which could be partly due to the evaluation ceiling created by the first two factors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Number of Buildings</th>
<th>Number of Units</th>
<th>Average Building Evaluation</th>
<th>Average Unit Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selby Street and Saint Antoine area of Westmount</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>$298,000</td>
<td>$97,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westmount</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>741</td>
<td>$704,000</td>
<td>$322,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: 2010 average city evaluations of duplexes and triplexes in southernmost area of Westmount and Westmount as a whole
RESIDENTIAL RENTAL MARKET

As over 50% of Westmount residents live in rental housing, the residential rental market is an important component of local residential real estate for the city. The map in Figure 84 illustrates the stark contrast between Upper and Lower Westmount regarding the proportion of households that rent their dwelling. Several blocks in Lower Westmount have over 90% of the properties rented out (blocks are coloured deep red in the map). These blocks correspond to areas that are composed solely of large-scale apartment buildings.

Almost all of the rental units in Westmount are located south of Cote Saint-Antoine Street; there are no apartment buildings in Upper Westmount. Most of the larger apartment buildings are located along the major east-west arterials of Saint-Catherine Street, de Maisonneuve Boulevard and Sherbrooke Street.

Rental costs in Westmount is considerably higher than in Montreal. A number of factors contribute to the higher cost, including its close proximity to downtown, the accessibility to many amenities and the high quality of the rental units. There is a clear relationship between apartment size and monthly rent, as can be seen in Figure 85. The rental data was taken from a number of real estate listing sources. The rents seen in Figure 85 were calculated by taking the average of 10 randomly selected rental units for each apartment size. For apartments with 6 ½ rooms and 8 ½ + rooms the average rent was each generated from six samples while the average rent for 7 ½ room apartments was generated from three samples. This is due to a lack of available units at the time of sampling. In the case of the 8 ½ + rental properties, many of the units for rent were in fact single-family homes.

The map in Figure 86 shows the proportion of renters in Westmount who pay more than 30% of their revenue towards rent. These individuals are extremely vulnerable to increases in the cost of residential real estate. It should be noted that the map could easily be misinterpreted. An area in Upper Westmount appears to have a large fraction of residents paying a high proportion of their income on rent, however as there are very few renters in this area, the sample size is small and should not be considered significant. On the other hand, a number of areas in Lower Westmount, where a large proportion of residents rent their units, show that over half of renters pay more than 30% of their revenue towards rent. The population in this area is vulnerable to rent increases, which have likely occurred in recent years due to the increases in property evaluation and property taxes, as discussed earlier in the Governance section.
Commercial Real Estate

According to the City of Montreal assessment summary of commercial properties, the commercial real estate in Westmount is of high-value. The 25,872 square meters of retail space in Westmount is distributed among 121 buildings. The buildings have a combined evaluation of approximately $70 million. Fifty-one buildings hold 97,854 square meters of office space. The office buildings have a combined evaluation of $350.6 million.

The seven commercial areas, as defined and discussed earlier, can be grouped into two major commercial clusters, based on their built form, types of commerce, and market draw. One cluster is at the southeast edge of the city marked by Alexis Nihon and Westmount Square and the other further west, composed of commercial corridors along Greene Street, Victoria Avenue, and Sherbrooke Street. Whereas the Alexis Nihon and Westmount Square fit with the downtown area and draw from a regional market, the commercial corridors reflect the Westmount aesthetic and serve a local clientele.

According to anecdotal evidence, the commercial corridors have been undergoing changes in landownership and cost of leases in recent years. As commercial real estate data was difficult to access, a case study focusing on Victoria Avenue and Sherbrooke Street was conducted. One of the main findings was the increased presence of a single property owner: Cromwell Management Inc., which is a Toronto-based real estate company that has entered the Montreal market in recent years. In speaking with business owners along these corridors, it was learned that the management company was significantly increasing the commercial leases upon renewal. Most leases run for 5-year terms with options to renew, with a few exceptions: the banks sign 10-year terms and the SAQ recently signed a 15-year lease for their new location on Sherbrooke Street.

Commercial real estate data on the commercial corridors was gathered by contacting the Cromwell Management office on Victoria Street. The gross costs for renting a ground floor walk in space in the area is $60-$70 per square foot per year, which amounts to $5,000 to $6,000 per month for a 1000 square foot space. The gross costs for walk down and step up spaces are $45-50 per square foot per year. The vacancy rate along Sherbrooke Street and Victoria Avenue is extremely low. Over the summer of 2010, the few vacancies were due to renovations, which reflects the overall health of these commercial corridors as highlighted in the Commercial Areas subsection. It is possible the renovations will result in a substantial increase in the commercial lease for those spaces.

The findings on commercial real estate in Westmount are inconclusive and deserve further study. There is some evidence that commercial real estate prices may be increasing to a level that will make it difficult or impossible for local business owners to keep their business in Westmount. If it is found that the commercial leases are in fact increasing drastically and if that trajectory continues, it is likely that only larger, chain stores that draw from a regional market will be able to afford the increased cost of the commercial leases.

Figure 86: Map showing proportion of renters in Westmount who pay more than 30% of revenue on rent
SYNTHESIS

The analysis provided in this study shows that Westmount’s real estate prices are extremely elevated. Westmount dwellings have increased dramatically over the last 15 years, according to the residential real estate data presented in this chapter. Between 1998 and 2007, the average home sale price increased by almost $600,000. Furthermore, data collected on residential and commercial rental properties suggests that the current rents in the area are very high when compared to rents across Montreal. As real estate prices continue to increase, a number of negative consequences may impact the community.

Westmount appears to have become financially unaffordable for the vast majority of families on the Island of Montreal. This is certainly the case in Upper Westmount, and is quickly becoming a reality in Lower Westmount. The disparity between real estate prices and household income became evident through the analysis of the 25 least expensive homes sold in 2005, which was conducted for this study as a way to better understand the level of housing affordability in Westmount. The 25 least expensive homes (23 of which were located in Lower Westmount) averaged at $587,000. As explained in the affordability section of this chapter, a household income more than three times the average income of Lower Westmount households would be required to finance one the least expensive homes.

This mismatch between household income and the cost of housing may be a cause of concern for the Westmount community as it could result in a noticeable change in the population; one in which young families are displaced by older more affluent households. The increased real estate values increase the cost of living through increased property taxes and rent. Low-, moderate- and fixed-income households will be especially vulnerable to increases in the cost of housing.

Commercial real estate prices also appear to be increasing to a level that impacts the financial viability for local businesses to stay in Westmount. If the price of commercial leases continues to rise, it is possible that only chain stores that draw from a regional market will be able to afford space in Westmount. An influx of chain stores could threaten the local, small-town character of Westmount’s commercial streets, a quality that is highly valued by residents and the City. Another unintended consequence of the increased commercial real estate costs is that the chain stores, which draw from a regional market could further increase congestion and demand for parking in and near Westmount’s commercial districts, which the City has already identified as an issue.
Discussion

The baseline study reveals a few trends and issues emerging in Westmount during the summer of 2010 that point toward significant changes for the city in terms of demographic composition and neighbourhood character. It is possible that the MUHC Glen Campus development may further exacerbate some of the issues raised in this report.

Firstly, the city is divided into two distinct communities, each marked by its topography, built form, land uses, density, and most notably by its socio-economic characteristics. Whereas Upper Westmount is characterized by large homes and affluence, Lower Westmount is more diverse in terms of household income, ethnic background, age, and household type.

Secondly, the population in Westmount is aging. This coincides with the global aging population, but it is important to note as a large percentage of elderly residents will affect the future planning for development and services in the city. For instance, currently many of the community amenities serve families and youth. This may need to be modified to meet the growing needs of an aging community.

Thirdly, there is indication that Westmount is undergoing further gentrification, specifically in Lower Westmount. Analysis of real estate prices compared to median household income for Upper and Lower Westmount reveal that living in Westmount is becoming increasingly unaffordable, even for households with a higher annual income than is typical of Montreal as a whole.

The study also illustrates a growing gap between Upper and Lower Westmount in terms of median household income growth in recent years. Whereas median household income in Upper Westmount has grown at a fast rate, keeping in line for the most part with growth in real estate prices, median household income in Lower Westmount has experienced a slow increase that the real estate market has far surpassed.

The disparity between the average household income and the median household income along with the gap between median household income and real estate listing price, specifically in Lower Westmount, point toward rapid shift in home ownership to people with significantly more wealth than the previous owners. If this trend continues on its trajectory, it is likely that young families will not be able to afford to own a home in Westmount, resulting in a change in the overall demographic composition of the city. Westmount is becoming even more homogeneous and will likely be characterized as extremely affluent, predominantly elderly, population.

Emerging Issues and Trends

Affordability, Aging, and Accessibility and Mobility

AFFORDABILITY

The most remarkable trend relates to affordability in Westmount. While real estate costs have increased substantially in all of Westmount in recent years, median household income within Lower Westmount has plateaued. This indicates the real estate environment is ripe for gentrification in Lower Westmount. As Lower Westmount is the urban core and effectively serves as the heart of Westmount, rapid gentrification could result in undesirable change in the city that would affect both the demographic composition of the community and the character of the local commercial corridors.

If the city continues on this trajectory, there is risk that Lower Westmount may lose its present population diversity and the city overall will become increasingly unaffordable for the average household. Although Lower Westmount is currently home to people of many household types, including the elderly, families, students, young professionals, and some recent immigrants, it is possible that Westmount will not be financially accessible to many of these groups in the near future. The loss of these segments of the population will drastically alter the composition of the Westmount community with the reduction in the number of families likely being the most evident.

Small business owners in Westmount may be adversely affected by the increase in real estate expenses. According to anecdotal accounts, the commercial leases for businesses along Sherbrooke and some along Victoria have increased substantially over the past 5–10 years. There was expressed concern over the effect the lease expenses were having on the overhead costs of running a small local business in Westmount. As the City of Westmount works hard to protect the character of its commercial district and ensure that businesses cater to the local population by restricting regional chains, the affordability of commercial space in Westmount is an issue that merits further study.

AGING

As highlighted earlier, the Westmount population is aging. A greater percentage of people living in Westmount are over 65 years old. This trend is expected to continue in the coming years as the Baby Boomer generation moves further into its golden years and as people are expected to live longer than previous generations. Considering the strong civic engagement and sense of place many people feel for the city, it is expected that people will wish to stay in Westmount as they grow older.

The desire to “age in place” is a growing phenomenon across North America. “Aging in place” refers to the desire of an elderly person to stay in their home instead of moving to a nursing home. They typically receive home care from professionals or family members in their homes. It is...
expected that “aging in place” will become an important issue within Westmount in upcoming years. As covered in an article in the Montreal Gazette in September 2009, private home care companies in Montreal have a growing client base for their services. The Contactivity Centre in Westmount is already experiencing increased demand for its Home Support Program. It is expected that the need for special social services, such as home care will grow in direct relation to the growing elderly population.

Westmount’s elderly population is most concentrated in pockets within Lower Westmount, most notably along de Maisonneuve. This is partially attributed to the presence of senior living residences, nursing homes, and high-rise apartment buildings in the area. The proximity to transit, medical offices, and other services along with the existing housing stock that caters to smaller household sizes makes Lower Westmount a prime location for senior citizens. For all the reasons listed above, the area is also more susceptible to high real estate costs, which could become increasingly unaffordable to seniors who live on a fixed-income. The added costs of home care and medical expenses associated with aging, along with the desire to remain at home in Westmount rather than move to a more affordable area of Montreal, places the resident elderly population in the city in a vulnerable position.

ACCESSIBILITY AND MOBILITY

Considering the current concerns and anticipated changes in Westmount, it is expected that promoting active transportation options, mitigating traffic congestion, ensuring safety, and improving accessibility for Westmount residents will continue to top the City’s agenda in the years ahead. The growing elderly population complicates matters for the City as it may need to redesign streets to better accommodate people with limited mobility and possibly explore the option of improving public transit service and infrastructure for a less mobile population base. Such measures would also be in line with its sustainability mandate.

Despite its close proximity to downtown, Westmount has a relatively high car modal share, meaning Westmount residents chose to take a personal vehicle for the majority of their daily trips. Although other transportation modes are available in the city, they are not as convenient as taking an individual car. Services and infrastructure that support alternative modes of transportation are underdeveloped in Westmount. There is opportunity to capitalize on the growing popularity of bicycle commuting by supporting that mode choice through infrastructure improvement. Recently, some Westmount residents have raised concerns about the volume of bicycle traffic along the de Maisonneuve route, indicating that there may be support to expand the bicycle network within Westmount as a way to distribute bicycle traffic through various routes.

Traffic volume and speed as well as parking availability in the commercial areas are concerns for the city. Although catering primarily to Westmount residents, local businesses and services also have a regional draw, which adds to the traffic volume and increases the demand for parking in the city. Select arterials in Westmount also serve as thoroughfares, thereby adding to traffic congestion. With the development of the MUHC just southwest of Westmount, it is expected that traffic volume will increase in the city. The City is currently conducting traffic studies of its major arterials, which will help in the monitoring the impact of the mega-hospital on local traffic congestion post-construction.

Changing Neighbourhood Character

In reviewing the findings of baseline study in its entirety, it is evident that Westmount is on the cusp of change. The emerging issues and trends identified in this report point toward the possibility of significant transformations for the city in terms of its demographic composition and local economic development, specifically within Lower Westmount. If these trends continue on their trajectory, it is reasonable to expect a noticeable turnover in both the community and the local businesses over time. Projects such as the reconstruction of the Ville-Marie Expressway and Turcot Interchange along with the development of the MUHC have the potential of exacerbating these changes. It is likely that any rapid and dramatic changes that occur will be difficult for the City to manage and respond effectively. As a consequence, it is expected that the family-centred, local-oriented character of Westmount will change in response to the real estate market forces, which seem to be the source of most of the issues and trends that emerged through this study.

Westmount’s ability to respond to the nature of its local real estate market is limited. The fact that most of Westmount is built-out limits the City’s ability to encourage new development as a means of better balancing supply with demand for property in the city. In addition, the City’s strict heritage regulations inhibit the opportunity to build up and fill in the existing urban fabric through renovations and new developments. Current options for new development areas are limited to the Tupper and Richeleau sites as described in the City Planning section. Other options would require amendments to zoning and building heights to encourage new infill developments along the commercial corridors, which is highly unlikely given the City’s firm stance on heritage preservation.

The City may discover that in protecting its architectural character above all other concerns may cost Westmount the neighbourhood character and charm that is generated by the people and businesses that fill and animate the city. The scope and intensity of the issues facing Westmount today pose serious challenges. The best course of action will depend in part on what kind of city Westmount wants to become.
A Sustainable Westmount

The City of Westmount is taking a lead in promoting sustainability principles. The municipality already offers curbside pick up for green waste, including food waste that the city then composts and provides the finished product to residents at no additional charge. There are also efforts underway to encourage homeowners to incorporate sustainable design features into their homes with an emphasis on energy efficiency.

In 2009 City Council adopted the Sustainable Development Action Plan, which consists of 200 actions meant to guide the Westmount toward a more sustainable future. Goals and objectives in the plan focus on environmental aspects of sustainability. Chapters in the plan are organized as follows: Energy and Greenhouse Gas Reduction; The Three Waters: Water, Wastewater, and Precipitation; Nature and Biodiversity; Public Health; Wasted Resources; and Access and Transportation. The current council is choosing 10 actions per year to focus on working toward implementation.

Sustainable development principles typically aim for a balance between environmental, social, and economic concerns. Although the Sustainable Development Action Plan is a strong baseline document to guide future action, a few notable gaps in the content may impede the likelihood of long-term success. For instance, social, economic, and cultural considerations are missing from the list of proposed actions. Also, the document does not include a list of measurable indicators nor a plan for conducting baseline measurements or developing administrative structures and policies to ensure monitoring over time.

The City has the potential to be a model city of sustainability, especially if it begins tackling more complex issues such as:

- Address housing affordability
- Readapt streets to accommodate people with limited mobility and encourage residents to choose alternative transportation modes
- Review heritage regulations to address affordability issues and enable the integration of green technology

The City is already undertaking some of these more complicated tasks, such as mediating the conflict between promoting sustainable development and heritage preservation. Westmount can move forward on its commitment to sustainability through a number of pointed actions. The City could conduct further baseline studies and identify key indicators for sustainability, followed by developing policy that promotes actions by businesses, residents, and the City alike. It is possible to address the more complex socioeconomic issues facing the city that were revealed in this baseline study using sustainability as the framework.
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Appendix

Demographics

For the purpose of this baseline study, in order to present demographic spatial patterns in Westmount, the municipality has been spatially broken up in different ways depending on the type of demographic information under study. When analysing age and income data, two distinct segments emerge in Upper and Lower Westmount, which are separated by Sherbrooke Street. When studying the population’s education level, it is more appropriate to display spatial patterns by using a finer grain and breaking up Westmount into its seven census tracts. When analysing ethnic composition, country of birth, language of mother tongue, household size and home ownership, it is most useful to spatially display the data by differentiating between Westmount’s 34 dissemination areas. The composition of Westmount in terms by census tracts and dissemination areas are shown in Figures 87 and 88 respectively.

When studying age and income data in Westmount, a few longitudinal trends emerge. Age cohort trends are shown by comparing data between 1991 and 2006 while income trends are shown by presenting data from 1991, 1996, 2001 and 2006 respectively. When studying population density, ethnic composition, country of birth, language of mother tongue, household size and home ownership, longitudinal trends were not possible to determine due to data limitations. As a result, only data from 2006 is presented in this report.

Business and Economic Development

Real Estate

It should be noted that due to a lack of available data, the Westmount trends are based on single-family home sales, while in Montreal, trends are based on sales data of all residential units (including single-family homes as well as duplexes, triplexes and condos units). This difference in data could be one of the factors in the disparity in sales volume between the two municipalities. For example, if the market has tended to favour the sale of condo units over single-family homes, the Montreal unit sales would receive a boost compared to the Westmount single-family home sales. Even if the Westmount data had included all residential units and not only single-family homes, the comparison between Westmount and Montreal would still not be ideal due to the fact that Westmount’s housing breakdown (the proportion of single-family homes to walk-up condos to condo buildings) is not comparable to that of Montreal’s.

Affordability

Figures 80 and 81 show the median and average household income for Lower and Upper Westmount. In yellow on both graphs is an estimate of the household income required to finance a typical Westmount home. Several assumptions were made when deriving this estimate. Firstly, the median sales price of single-family homes was used to represent the “typical” Westmount home. Secondly, it was assumed that the home was financed with a 25% down-payment and a 75% loan. Thirdly, the loan was set at 25-years at an interest rate of 5%. Lastly, it was assumed that the weekly mortgage payments should represent no more than 30% of the household’s after-tax income.