



# **CITIZENS' ADISORY COMMITTEES – FINAL REPORT**

**NOVEMBER 2011**



**VILLE DE DEUX-MONTAGNES**

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## **Introduction**

In early 2010, Ville de Deux-Montagnes (City) administrators decided to organize a Citizens' Summit to make citizens aware of the City's financial position, allow them to reflect on the problems raised and, finally, offer them an opportunity to participate fully in public management.

The Ville de Deux-Montagnes Citizens' Summit was held on June 1-2, 2010. Community members proposed a series of measures and potential solutions based on the eight themes that were explored in this far-reaching consultation.

Although certain priorities were clearly presented by citizens during the Summit, many suggestions required further analysis before being implemented.

As a result, in October 2010, the City set up Citizens' Advisory Committees mandated to study the measures and potential solutions developed during the Citizens' Summit. Their work has enabled municipal officials to adopt a vision for strategic development, create a short-, medium- and long-term integrated action plan and, ultimately, inform citizens and encourage them to support the creation of these new tools and means.

This report is divided into three parts. Part 1 contextualizes the Citizens' Summit, providing a detailed description of the City's financial position, the Summit methodology and the action guidelines defined by citizens during the exercise.

Part 2 briefly describes the Citizens' Advisory Committees—their missions, goals, creation, procedures and operation.

Part 3 presents each of the seven Citizens' Advisory Committees in detail—their specific mandates, the subjects they studied and the recommendations made by their members.

## **Part 1 – Citizens' Summit contextualized**

### **1.1 The City's financial position**

Ville de Deux-Montagnes celebrated its 90th anniversary in 2011. Founded on August 18, 1921, it was, for many years, a resort area, popular for its rustic character and, above all, its beautiful, long beaches. The Municipality experienced its development boom in the 1960s and most of its infrastructures (sewage and waterworks system, drinking-water plant) date from this period.

The City was built on the “bedroom community” model, giving precedence to residential development. In the 1990s, the idea of creating an industrial park was dropped in favour of a real estate development project for first-time home buyers. This decision almost doubled Deux-Montagnes' population—from 10,000 in 1990 to more than 17,000 at the turn of the century.

These choices shaped Ville de Deux-Montagnes. Even today, the City has no factories, no industry and very few businesses, a fact that directly affects its revenue sources. In 2009, only 10% of municipal tax revenues came from businesses despite the higher corporate taxation rate.

A full 90% of the City's tax receipts are generated by the residential sector. Because real estate development peaked in the 2000s, it is unrealistic to expect new revenue sources from this sector. However, the Municipality's expenses continue to rise, creating an unbalanced budget. Moreover, residential taxation rates were frozen from 1990 to 2005, a political decision that was popular at the time but that has had significant repercussions.

### Revenue breakdown by taxation rate, 2009

Property tax revenues		2009 taxation rate	% revenue generated
Residential	95.31%	\$0.94/\$100	90% of the bill
Commercial	3.93%	\$2.40/\$100	10% of the bill
Industrial	0%	0\$	

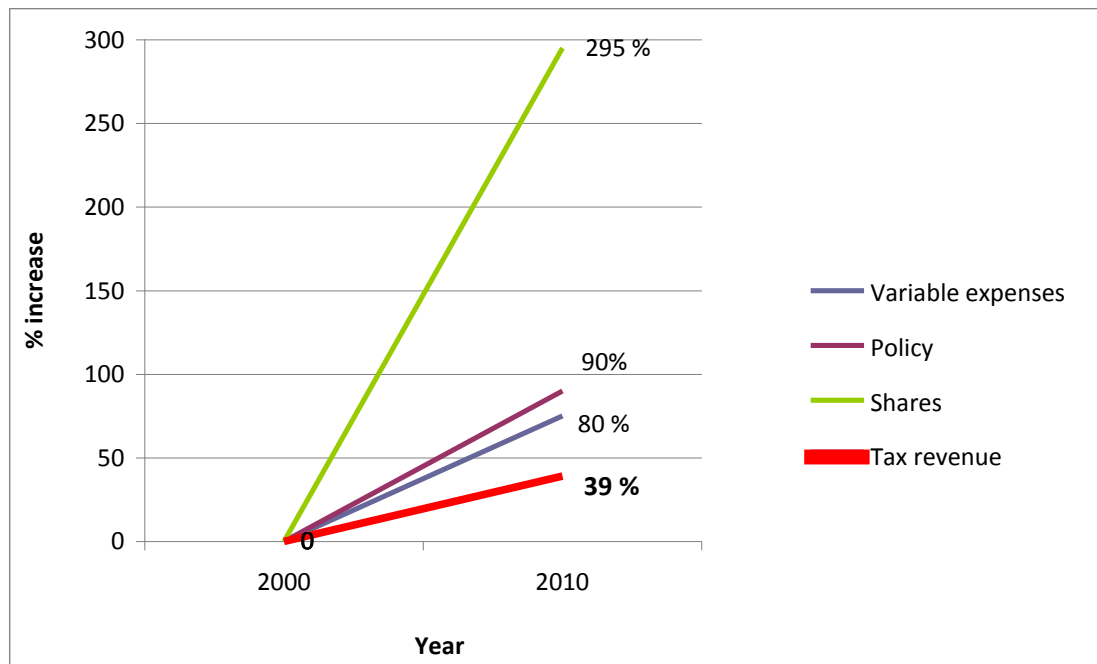
Source: Profil financier 2009 du MAMROT

Author: Julie Boivin

Where expenses are concerned, infrastructure upgrading will require major investments bordering on \$30 million by 2014. As the 20th century drew to a close, the City's population growth required a wide range of services and infrastructures to meet citizens' needs. Since nothing lasts forever, we have already had to invest large amounts in public building and underground infrastructure repair and road network, equipment and municipal vehicle maintenance.

The municipal administration must also contend with a steady increase in the City's variable expenses (electricity, fuel, insurance costs, etc.). The same is true for municipal shares, which have increased drastically, exerting ever-growing pressure on municipal finances.

### % increase in expenditures and tax revenues over the last 10 years



Source: Ville de Deux-Montagnes

Author: Julie Boivin

In 2011, Mayor Marc Lauzon commissioned a 5-year strategic financial plan<sup>1</sup> from the accounting firm *Raymond, Chabot, Grant, Thornton* (RCGT). The investment predictions, based on the City's 3-year capital asset program and requirements, are approximately \$45 million for 2011-2016. Half of this amount will be financed by loan repayments and the rest through subsidies. The total long-term net debt will rise from \$36 million in 2011 to \$40.4 million in 2016.

According to RCGT's budget forecast, rising operating costs will have to be offset by annual average spending growth of 3.4% for 2011-2016. This will cover indexation and service level increases, including material for Public Works, Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal, Agence métropolitaine de transport and Conseil intermunicipal de transport shares, and expenses linked to energy, fuel and police services.

The growth in average annual revenue is expected to be 3.34% for 2011-2016. This includes tax revenues, tariffing revenues, services to municipal organizations, transfers and other revenues.

If the City maintains the status quo without developing new revenues, RCGT deems that it will have to increase citizens' tax burden by 3.67% on average. This scenario has major monetary consequences for property-owning citizens, as shown in the following table:

#### Results – Financial health

<b>Taxation</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2011-2016 average</b>
<b>Residential</b>	0.96%	7.24%	3.72%	3.34%	3.21%	3.67%
<b>Monetary impact</b>	\$24.20	\$184.60	\$101.80	\$94.60	\$94.00	
<b>6-dwelling units</b>	1.65%	6.15%	3.61%	3.27%	3.15%	3.56%
<b>Commercial</b>	1.05%	7.08%	3.77%	3.39%	3.26%	3.69%

*Source: City of Deux-Montagnes 2011-2016 strategic financial plan, Report – June 15, 2011, Raymond, Chabot, Grant, Thornton, p.6*

The current scenario shows a 3.67% rise, on average, in the tax burden borne by Deux-Montagnes' citizens. The 2013 increase is higher due to the decline in revenues under agreements with Sainte-Marthe-sur-le-Lac, the anticipated increase of the train shares for the Agence Métropolitaine de Transport and the additional costs linked to a risk coverage plan.

More specifically, the owner of a house worth \$200,000 currently pays about \$3,000 in property taxes. With a 3.67% increase in the tax burden, the same owner would have to pay \$4,500 in about ten years.

<sup>1</sup> Ville de Deux-Montagnes 2011-2016 strategic financial plan, Report – June 15, 2011, Raymond, Chabot, Grant, Thornton.

RCGT's financial plan includes two more scenarios, which evaluate and detail the amount of wealth to be created to control the tax burden for 2012-2016 (based on the Consumer Price Index).

In the first of these scenarios, adding \$186.5 million in new real estate wealth (\$179 million for residential and \$7.5 million for commercial) would allow the City to limit the increase in the tax burden to 1.58%-1.68%, depending on the building category.

In the second scenario, the Municipality would need to create less wealth if it required a higher commercial contribution. Adding new real estate wealth of \$99 million for the residential sector and \$33 million for the commercial sector—for a total of \$132 million—would allow the increase in the tax burden to be limited to 1.59%-1.68%, depending on the building category.

Regardless of the scenario, it is clear that the City has no choice but to create new revenue sources if it wants to respect its citizens' capacity to pay, while maintaining their quality of life. Without new wealth, the tax burden will become heavier every year and the Municipality will have to cut services to its citizens to make ends meet.

Aware of its unique financial situation, Ville de Deux-Montagnes has made many decisions in the past 5 years. It has started selling land, restructured municipal services and introduced the user-pays principle. It has also deferred most maintenance and spending capital expenses.

However, it is clear that the City cannot simply maintain the status quo. Doing so would significantly increase citizens' tax bill, generating a medium- and long-term competitive imbalance with neighbouring cities and seriously undermining citizens' finances.

To avoid this sorry fate, the City decided to hold a Citizens' Summit to inform citizens, make them aware of future challenges and directly involve them in finding possible solutions. The consultation's goal was to make citizens accountable by allowing them to understand public management overall and involving them in the decision-making process so that it reflects their needs and values.

## **1.2 Citizens' Summit methodology**

To understand the conclusions emerging from the Citizens' Summit, it is important to know the consultation methodology used. Data was collected during the Summit's two days—June 1, 2010 for the French session and June 2, 2010 for the English session. The Summit was held at the Olympia, 611, 20<sup>e</sup> Avenue in Deux-Montagnes.

Both evenings, the General Manager opened with the customary speeches and a detailed presentation of the City's financial situation. Following this, the elected officials and 600 citizens went to work, choosing to steer their municipality towards a promising future.

For those who could not take part in the sessions, the City made a form (paper and electronic version) available several weeks before the Citizens' Summit to enable them to share their comments and concerns.

Citizens who attended the June sessions were invited to participate in one of eight discussion workshops. Each workshop addressed a theme related to issues or problems in the Municipality. Trained leaders were in charge of ensuring that the workshops ran smoothly and secretaries were on hand to take notes. The workshops lasted a little over an hour. Afterwards, citizens were invited to return to the main room for a plenary session at which each workshop leader presented a summary of the main points discussed, priorities and observations raised during his/her workshop.

The themes discussed were:

1. Community assistance
2. Oka Road, commercial, residential, industrial development and renovation
3. Library, art and culture
4. Public safety: police and fire brigade
5. Sports and recreation
6. Large infrastructure projects, snow removal and garbage collection
7. The environment, cleanliness, public services and governance
8. Finances: revenues, expenditures and debts

Participants were able to discuss, debate and develop lines of thought, observations and potential solutions allowing them to better envisage their city's future.

### **1.3 Citizen-defined action guidelines**

By collating the information on the completed forms, the comments received via the City's website, workshop leaders' notes and the discussions held during the two plenary sessions, the following four elements, deemed priorities, emerged:

1. Give precedence to investing in infrastructures and facilities in Ville de Deux-Montagnes.
2. Optimize revenues and review Deux-Montagnes management methods.
3. Create new wealth for Deux-Montagnes by boosting its economic development.
4. Ensure ongoing quality of life in Deux-Montagnes.

These action guidelines were defined by and for the citizens. They reflect the priorities that require further analysis, so that these guidelines can become concrete measures.

The Citizens' Summit enabled citizens to understand the Municipality's situation—namely, that of a “bedroom community”. Citizens wish to preserve their quality of life and are aware that to do so they will have to shoulder a higher tax burden. However, this burden must reflect their capacity to pay, a fact that considerably complicates things.

In short, the process showed that it is necessary to develop new avenues for the City's short-, medium- and long-term well-being and growth. The Municipality's future definitely depends on creating new wealth and new revenue sources.

## **Part 2 Citizens' Advisory Committees**

## **2.1 Mission and overall goals**

The Citizens' Summit enabled citizens to define action guidelines they deemed priorities. However, deliberations must continue to define concrete measures that can be implemented.

The following Citizens' Advisory Committees were created during the Citizens' Summit:

- Olympia and Manoir Grand-Moulin Committee,
- Infrastructure Committee
- Public Safety, Civic Spirit and Embellishment Committee
- Culture Committee
- Community Development Committee
- Sports and Recreation Committee
- Economic Development Committee

These committees were composed of citizen volunteers who discussed and analyzed specific subjects and formulated recommendations for City Council, while bearing in mind the challenges inherent in the City's financial position.

Although each committee had its own mandate, the following premise was the basis of all their work:

“The search for solutions and possible actions proposed will have to be studied and chosen based on their positive impact on medium- and long-term economic and financial viability for Ville de Deux-Montagnes.”

Ultimately, the committees' mission was to suggest to elected municipal officials the best practices to implement to foster the creation of new wealth and new revenues guaranteeing the City's economic and financial health.

One of the committees' two overall goals was to allow the Municipality to adopt a vision for strategic development, stating the steps the City intends to take to achieve the future desired. Since it is essential that this vision reflect the community's wishes, it is perfectly logical and valid to use the goals and priorities emerging from committees' work to develop the City's strategic vision.

The committees' second overall goal was to enable the City to develop a short-, medium- and long-term integrated action plan. During its work, each Citizens' Advisory Committee covered a main theme, which, in turn, covered a series of subjects. Members' discussions and debates led to specific recommendations, which constitute the raw material for developing an integrated action plan.

The process undertaken by the Citizens' Advisory Committees is an excellent means for translating citizens' real wishes. The resulting recommendations allow the City's elected officials and managers to adopt the tools needed to make Deux-Montagnes a financially healthy City that reflects its citizens' intrinsic desires and values.

## **2.2 Creating the Citizens' Advisory Committees**



During the Citizens' Summit sessions held in June 2010, citizens could use a form to identify and show their various areas of interests should the City wish to pursue discussions or know their opinion. This form was also available online on the City's website. The answers were used to recruit committee members. The list of committee members is found in Appendix 1.

A first meeting was held on October 28, 2010. More than fifty citizens interested in taking part in a committee to pursue discussions raised during the June consultation sessions attended.

On November 11, 2010, during a City Council meeting, it was resolved to create Citizens' Advisory Committees and hire a Special Projects Coordinator, Valérie Sauvé, to help the committees in their work.

In parallel, the City hired an outside contractor, the June 2010 Citizens' Summit coordinator, Julie Boivin, to head the Economic Development Committee.

### **2.3 Meeting procedure**

The Special Projects Coordinator's main job was to guide the work of the Citizens' Advisory Committees. She was mandated to summon the members to meetings, prepare the agenda, conduct research, collect the material required for the subjects discussed and liaise between the committees, municipal services, elected officials and general management. All communications surrounding the Citizens' Advisory Committees were her responsibility. Assigning a full-time resource to the committees promoted smooth operations and respected committee mandates and objectives.

The first committee meetings attended by the Special Projects Coordinator were in December. At that time, she announced that meetings would be held monthly on a given date. For example, the Culture Committee would meet every third Wednesday of the month. This measure allowed committee members to know all meeting dates beforehand. Members meet once or twice a month, for about two hours, from December to October, with a summer break in July and August. When needed, subcommittees were created to delve deeper into specific subjects.

The subjects that members would eventually study in working meetings were defined in the December meeting. Committee members fleshed out the list of subjects based on discussions held during the Citizens' Summit.

At the first meeting in December, the City representative explained that each committee was to elect a chair from among its members to represent the committee vis-à-vis the media, be the spokesperson for mid-mandate and end-of-mandate summaries, liaise with the Coordinator and make sure that meetings ran respectfully and courteously. Those wishing to hold in this position indicated their interest. An election by acclamation was held in each committee.

From the outset, citizens were invited to share their experience and expertise. Throughout the process, they were encouraged to give their opinion and express their viewpoint constructively. They did so in an exemplary fashion.

Every month, the notice announcing the next meeting was sent by e-mail several days before. In the working sessions, the Coordinator presented the agenda and results of her research and

then invited members to discuss. At the end of each meeting, recommendations were formulated.

Minutes were taken for each working meeting. Written up by the Coordinator, they summarized the discussions held at the last working meeting and the resulting recommendations. The document was presented to the members and submitted for their approval. This way, the recommendations evolved over time based on the discussions and information supplied.

The Advisory Committees' work was useful, pleasant and very productive. Committee members showed a commitment and attachment to their City that warrants mention and praise. The far-reaching professionalism characterizing each meeting made this consultation exercise a genuine success.

### **Part 3 Citizens' Advisory Committees' work**

Part 3 is subdivided into seven chapters, reporting on the seven committees' work. Each chapter contains the committee's specific mandate, the subjects studied and the final recommendations formulated by the members.

#### **Chapter 1 Olympia and Manoir Grand-Moulin Committee**

First off, it is important to point out that this Committee had a twofold mission. It had to study the profitability of the Deux-Montagnes Sports and Cultural Complex Corporation, more commonly known as the Olympia, and the profitability of the Manoir Grand-Moulin Corporation.

For consistency, Committee members chose to focus their first working meetings on the Olympia and then turned to the Manoir Grand-Moulin. This chapter is also presented this way.

##### **3.1.1 Olympia Committee - mandate**

The Olympia Committee was mandated to pursue deliberations on the Deux-Montagnes Sports and Cultural Complex Corporation's failure to turn a profit and to propose possible solutions to eliminate its deficit while maintaining services in which the public showed an interest.

Composed of seven members, three of whom were accounting experts, and supported by the Special Projects Coordinator and Director of Recreation and Community Services, the Olympia Committee held five working meetings. The Corporation's Chairman of the Board, René Fortin, and the municipal counsellor for the Olympia district, Tom Whitton, also took part in all meetings.

##### **3.1.2 Olympia Committee – subjects studied**

With the collaboration of Olympia staff, the Coordinator gave Committee members the following documents:

- Deux-Montagnes Sports and Cultural Complex Corporation's financial statements for fiscal 2008, 2009 and 2010
- Olympia's Danièle Sauvageau Skating Rink rental timetable

- Ice-time rental breakdown and costs
- Subsidies awarded by the City for ice sports (hockey and ringette)
- Revenue and expenditure details for recent years' show seasons

Numerous studies were conducted to enable comparison with other arenas, in neighbouring cities and in cities with a similar population.

These studies enabled Olympia Committee members to understand arena use in the summer, other arenas' ice-time pricing and the City's subsidy allocation procedure for various ice sports.

Document analysis, expert opinions and members' views were the basis for drawing up recommendations on specific subjects, such as the Olympia's vocation, ice-time pricing, Corporation management and operation, Grand Théâtre Olympia shows and the arena's summertime activities.

### **3.1.3 Olympia Committee - recommendations**

After a lengthy profitability analysis of the Deux-Montagnes Sports and Cultural Complex Corporation's different activities, members drafted twelve recommendations designed to improve the organization's financial position.

#### **The Olympia's vocation**

- Unanimously, Olympia Citizen Advisory Committee members recommend to City Council that the Olympia be dedicated to sports and recreation.

#### **Ice-time pricing**

- To better break down ice rental costs between Deux-Montagnes resident and non-resident users and to remain competitive in the current market, the majority of Olympia Committee members told City Council they were in favour of the ice-time pricing proposal for the 2011-2012 season presented by the Deux-Montagnes Sports and Cultural Complex Corporation's Board of Directors. The table containing this pricing is in Appendix 2.

#### **Corporation management and operation**

- Unanimously, Olympia Committee members recommend that City Council analyze the relevance, usefulness and financial impact of having a corporation operate the Olympic arena.
- Although Committee members recognize the efforts and improvements made in recent years, they unanimously advocate that City Council ask the Deux-Montagnes Sports and Cultural Complex Corporation to reassess its operations (human, material and financial resources) management method to ensure that it continues to be optimal.

#### **Grand Théâtre Olympia shows**

- Given that the gross profit margin associated with holding shows in the Olympia Grand Théâtre is now in the black, that it helps pay the Corporation's overhead and that the shows' profitability ratio increases every year, the Olympia Citizens' Advisory Committee recommends continuing to hold shows in the Grand Théâtre Olympia and reassessing this operation's profitability annually.
- The majority of the Olympia Citizens' Advisory Committee members recommend that City Council work with Deux-Montagnes Sports and Cultural Complex Corporation staff to encourage implementing a sponsorship program associated with the shows.
- The majority of the Olympia Citizens' Advisory Committee members suggest that City Council encourage the Deux-Montagnes Sports and Cultural Complex Corporation to approach the City's businesses and restaurants asking them to offer discounts or buy advertising in the Grand Théâtre Olympia's promotional tools.
- The majority of the Olympia Citizens' Advisory Committee members propose that City Council recommend that the Deux-Montagnes Sports and Cultural Complex Corporation create flyers promoting the City's artists/merchants. Each flyer should contain information on the show in question, business cards and discounts offered by Deux-Montagnes' merchants.

### **Olympia summer activities**

Since Committee members did not want to dismiss sources of revenue generated by activities other than shows, they agreed to propose the following recommendations:

- The Olympia Citizens' Advisory Committee recommends that City Council mandate experts to assess the energy costs of keeping ice on the Danièle Sauvageau Skating Rink in the summer.
- All Olympia Citizens' Advisory Committee members suggest that City Council ask the Corporation to analyze revenues and expenses associated with offering ball hockey or any other project likely to optimize revenues during the summer.
- All Olympia Citizens' Advisory Committee members recommend that City Council ask the Deux-Montagnes Sports and Cultural Complex Corporation to evaluate the feasibility of implementing a pilot project for renting out the skating rink's concrete surface for sports such as ball hockey during the summer.
- All Olympia Citizens' Advisory Committee members recommend that City Council ask the Corporation to analyze the possibility and profitability of running shows for shorter periods (performances closer together) so as to allow it to rent the concrete surface for longer periods of time.

To conclude, the Olympia Citizens' Advisory Committee members pointed out that their work and analyses showed the efforts made by Corporation staff to improve finances. Unfortunately, they are insufficient. Therefore, Olympia Committee members suggested new possible solutions. Special attention was given to ensuring that the recommendations issued reflect

current market conditions and have the potential for significantly increasing the Corporation's profitability.

#### **3.1.4 Manoir Grand-Moulin Committee - mandate**

Grand-Moulin Committee members were mandated to analyze the City's financial involvement in Manoir Grand-Moulin – Phase 1, define guidelines to ensure operations' self-financing, repayment of City advances, maintenance and/or improvement of accessibility for the community's older citizens.

Manoir Grand-Moulin – Phase 1, the building studied by the Committee, was built in the 1970s, no longer complies with Société d'habitation du Québec requirements and currently requires extensive renovation work. Ville de Deux-Montagnes pays about \$200,000 to help the Manoir Grand-Moulin Corporation. Unfortunately, Phase 1 has posted a deficit since 2005. However, it houses 37 families comprising residents over age 65.

Composed of six members—including two Manoir Grand-Moulin residents, two accredited management accountants and the Manager of the Manoir Grand-Moulin Corporation, Denis Séguin—the Committee held its first working meeting in June 2011. Members began by visiting Manoir facilities, so as to clearly understand the site's geography and the amount of work required.

#### **3.1.5 Manoir Grand-Moulin Committee – subjects studied**

To successfully meet the challenge that the Committee's mandate represented, it was important that the Committee know the subject well. To do so, the Coordinator presented several documents during the working sessions along with a summary of Manoir Grand-Moulin highlights, the Corporation's 2007 to 2010 financial statements, the expert/visual observations report of TLA Architectes (2008) and the summary assessment by BSA Groupe Conseil (2008).

These documents enabled members to study the following subjects:

- Socioeconomic consequences of renovating only part of Phase 1
- Socioeconomic consequences of renovating the whole building
- Socioeconomic consequences of demolishing the building
- Possibility of building a new structure adjacent to Phase 2
- Current restaurant service (relevance, receipts vs. expenses, staff, popularity etc.)

#### **3.1.6 Manoir Grand-Moulin Committee - recommendations**

After talks and discussions, the Committee made the following observations and recommendations:

Given the conclusions of past assessments of the Manoir Grand-Moulin - Phase 1 building, located at 2 rue Croissant Grand-Moulin, Deux-Montagnes;

Given the costs of the modifications needed for the building to comply with Société d'Habitation du Québec standards and requirements;

Given the building's age and current value, the risks associated with going over budget and the lack of guarantees inherent in renovation projects;

Given that the Corporation's operations are mainly in the red;

- The Manoir Grand-Moulin Committee recommends that City Council not put money into repairing or renovating the Manoir Grand-Moulin - Phase 1 building, apart from what is necessary for daily building maintenance and emergency situations.
- The Manoir Grand-Moulin Committee recommends that City Council mandate experts to evaluate the number of units necessary, their specific features and the cost of rent required to attain the profitability threshold. The study should also identify the conditions to be met to make the restaurant service profitable.
- The Manoir Grand-Moulin Committee recommends that City Council give precedence to a construction project that limits impacts on current Phase 1 residents, maintaining and guaranteeing their quality of life.
- The Grand-Moulin Manoir Committee recommends having the sector where Grand-Moulin buildings are currently located analyzed by professionals (architects, engineers, etc.) able to propose construction projects allowing relocation of the current Phase 1 building's tenants but generating wealth for the City. The Committee believes the opportunity must be taken to densify the sector, thus generating interesting tax revenues for the Municipality.
- The Grand-Moulin Manoir Committee recommends that City Council mandate experts to conduct a market study to determine the Deux-Montagnes area population's housing requirements and expectations and the number of additional units the market can absorb.
- The Grand-Moulin Manoir Committee suggests that City Council promote a construction project that is eligible for government subsidies, such as the Accès-Logis program.
- The Grand-Moulin Committee recommends that City Council ensure that the construction project(s) chosen respects and enhances the natural beauty of the sector's shorelines and banks.

Committee members are confident that these recommendations, if followed, will allow the City and Corporation to regain profitability while respecting the quality of life of the 37 families currently dwelling in Grand-Moulin Manoir – Phase 1.

## **Chapter 2 Infrastructure Committee**

### **3.2.1 Infrastructure Committee - mandate**

The Citizens' Advisory Committee on Infrastructures was mandated to make recommendations to City Council for defining investment priorities for public infrastructures and devising a sequence for incurring the related expenditures.

Comprising five members, including the City's former Director of Public Works, the Committee enjoyed the constant assistance of the Technical Services and Urban Planning Director in accomplishing its work (spread over three meetings).

### **3.2.2 Infrastructure Committee – subjects studied**

Committee members studied and analyzed a great many documents during their meetings. To begin with, they learned about the problem of wastewater discharge into Lac des Deux-Montagnes, federal gasoline excise tax revenues and the Quebec government's contribution (TECQ) program. In the same vein, the City's Public Works Department presented its 2011-2015 sewer and drinking water pipe replacement action plan. Then, Committee members tackled the 2011-2013 municipal infrastructure and building maintenance and repair plan. This involved assessing, with the help of public works personnel, all investments required to provide citizens with high-quality, safe, user-friendly infrastructures.

The Citizen's Advisory Committee on Infrastructures also looked at the City's practices in matters of procurement, maintenance and use of Public Works machinery and equipment. Committee members assessed the possibility of having municipal employees perform activities like waste collection (household waste, recycling, green waste), street sweeping and preventive sewer system cleaning, rather than outsourcing them to outside contractors.

### **3.2.3 Infrastructure Committee - recommendations**

#### **Municipal infrastructures**

- 2011-2013 building maintenance and repair

Committee members analyzed a chart showing all maintenance and repair expenses for the following infrastructures: Canadian Legion building, municipal garage, train station, library, fire hall, police station, water treatment plant, municipal court, city hall, Petite école Jaune, various pumping stations, sewer and waterworks systems, underground infrastructures, roads, sidewalks, curbs and municipal lighting systems, snow dump, storm sewer regulation station, the Olympia, parks, park facilities and the municipal swimming pool. The summary table is found in Appendix 3.

With the help of the City's Technical Services and Urban Planning Director, the Committee decided which expenditures are a priority and which can be postponed to 2012 or 2013.

For the Petite École Jaune, Committee members considered it important to rebuild ramps for the handicapped and rework the main entrance balcony. They made the following recommendation:

- The Citizens' Advisory Committee on Infrastructures recommends selling the Petite école jaune land and building at the best price possible.

- Given that the sums to be invested to ensure the safety, maintenance and quality of Deux-Montagnes' public fixed assets (municipal buildings, train station, water treatment plant, pumping stations, sewer and waterworks systems, roads, sidewalks and parks) are over \$7 million in 2011, \$9.75 million in 2012 and over \$10 million in 2013, members of the Citizen's Advisory Committee for Infrastructures recommend that City Council seek financial assistance under programs offered by the provincial and federal governments for all municipal infrastructure work, in order to lighten the tax burden of Deux-Montagnes citizens.

**Subject: Waste collection**

- The Citizen's Advisory Committee on Infrastructures recommends that City Council create a working group mandated to study the best practices employed in cities similar to Deux-Montagnes for household waste, recycling material and green waste collection and transportation. The working group's mission would be to assess, as accurately as possible, all costs linked to waste (household waste, recycling and green waste) collection and transportation by municipal employees.
- The Citizen's Advisory Committee on Infrastructures proposes that City Council have waste collection performed by municipal employees if the annual cost of this operation is at least 10% lower than the annual amount charged by the lowest outside bidder.
- The Citizen's Advisory Committee on Infrastructures suggests that City Council reduce the number of times a year household waste is collected from 52 to 42—once every two weeks from November 15 to March 31.

**Subject: Machinery and equipment**

- The Citizen's Advisory Committee on Infrastructures recommends that City Council analyze the possibility of purchasing equipment and machinery in partnership with neighbouring cities and, if the proposition is profitable, productive and efficient for all parties, to sign an agreement defining equipment payment, use, maintenance and storage.
- Given that performing annual preventive maintenance of sewer and storm sewer systems to ensure unrestricted water flow is deemed a priority, the Citizen's Advisory Committee on Infrastructures recommends that City Council slate approximately \$300,000 to purchase a sewer scrubbing vehicle in 2012 and plan to hiring the personnel required to operate this new equipment.

To conclude, Committee members analyzed each expense linked to maintenance and repair of the City's different infrastructures as well as certain options generating savings. Together, they defined expenditures they deemed priorities and expenditures that could be postponed. However, they maintain that is essential for the City to obtain government financial assistance so that infrastructure-related work does not increase Deux-Montagnes taxpayers' burden.



## **Chapter 3 Public Safety, Civic Spirit and Embellishment Committee**

### **3.3.1 Public Safety, Civic Spirit and Embellishment Committee**

This Committee was mandated to define objectives and actions to be taken in matters pertaining to road safety, road signals, accessibility, sanitation, graffiti, embellishment of public and private spaces and protection of our collective assets in order to maintain Deux-Montagnes' quality of life.

Comprising seven members, four of whom had or have a career in forces of law and order, the Public Safety, Civic Spirit and Embellishment Committee held eight working meetings.

### **3.3.2 Public Safety, Civic Spirit and Embellishment Committee – subjects studied**

To carry out its work, the Committee read and analyzed the following documents:

- 2009 annual report of the Deux-Montagnes regional police force
- 2011 action plan of the Deux-Montagnes regional police force
- Copy of article 69 and following of the *Police Act* (municipal police forces - level 2)
- Number and details of violation tickets and fines issued in Deux-Montagnes in 2010
- Municipal by-law on quality of life
- Municipal by-law on building occupation and maintenance

The Committee also had the opportunity of attending a presentation by the police force, a presentation by Traffic Innovation on how to slow traffic down and a presentation by Monitrox on different types of security and surveillance systems.

The Coordinator and certain members also researched topics to fuel discussions in the working sessions. The Committee read, analyzed and discussed documents on traffic calming and control, Highway Safety Code and graffiti awareness campaigns.

The subjects the Committee dealt with are:

- Means of repression - road safety
- Roadway speed and means of calming traffic
- Highway safety compliance awareness campaigns
- Graffiti on public and private buildings
- Means of ensuring safety and regulatory compliance in public areas
- Negligence and uncleanliness
- Boat launching ramps
- Road blocks

### 3.3.3 Public Safety, Civic Spirit and Embellishment Committee - recommendations

#### Highway safety and slowing down traffic

- The Public Safety, Civic Spirit and Embellishment Committee recommends that Ville de Deux-Montagnes use the means at its disposal to make citizens (motorists, cyclists, pedestrians) aware of the importance of respecting the speed limits in place and the Highway Safety Code in City streets.
- The Public Safety, Civic Spirit and Embellishment Committee recommends adding to the form *Registration form for requests to install speed bumps*, a place where owners of the 25 residences located close to the speed bump can indicate their agreement or disagreement with its installation.
- Given that many studies show that installing speed bumps on a residential street usually promotes speeding after passing the obstacle and given that the addition of speed bumps can also divert traffic to streets not designed for large traffic flows, the majority of Public Safety, Civic Spirit and Embellishment Committee members suggest that City Council try to limit installing speed bumps in school zones and streets bordering on the City's parks and green spaces.
- The Public Safety, Civic Spirit and Embellishment Committee recommends promoting extension #860 on the police station phone line, on the City's website and in L'Express and indicating the follow-up procedure in place when a complaint is lodged.

#### Roadway fundraising

- The Public Safety, Civic Spirit and Embellishment Committee recommends that roadway fundraising be reserved mainly for charitable organizations accredited by the City of Deux-Montagnes.
- Given the increase in fundraising among citizens by numerous organizations in our territory and the related risks for both fundraisers and motorists at road blocks, the Public Safety, Civic Spirit and Embellishment Committee suggests reducing the maximum number of roadway fundraising campaigns (currently eight a year).

#### Graffiti

- The Public Safety, Civic Spirit and Embellishment Committee recommends installing a wall for graffitiists. Ideally located near the Maison des jeunes, the wall should be easy to access and lit at all times.
- The Public Safety, Civic Spirit and Embellishment Committee recommends that the City's Public Works Department, the Maison des jeunes and Deux-Montagnes regional police force socio-community sector agents consult on the graffiti problem periodically and routinely find out about cleaning performed.

- The Public Safety, Civic Spirit and Embellishment Committee suggests that Ville de Deux-Montagnes and/or the Deux-Montagnes regional police force analyze the possibility of implementing a graffiti prevention program with local merchants selling spray-paint. The program could consist in creating a register containing contact information of buyers of such products.
- The Public Safety, Civic Spirit and Embellishment Committee recommends that the graffiti cleaning bills be sent to the individuals arrested by the police or their parents/guardians in the case of minors.
- The Public Safety, Civic Spirit and Embellishment Committee recommends that City Council clean new graffiti as soon as possible.
- The Public Safety, Civic Spirit and Embellishment Committee advocates that City Council participate in creating a roundtable of various partners (Ville de Deux-Montagnes, Saint-Eustache and Sainte-Marthe-sur-le-Lac, Deux-Montagnes regional police force, Saint-Eustache police force, private companies, youth centres) on the graffiti problem.

#### **Building uncleanliness and maintenance**

- The Public Safety, Civic Spirit and Embellishment Committee recommends that City Council ensure that the Municipality obeys all by-laws in effect in its territory. The Committee suggests ensuring exemplary upkeep of all Municipal property.

#### **Enforcing municipal by-laws**

- The Public Safety, Civic Spirit and Embellishment Committee recommends that the sections of By-law 1392 “Quality of life” be strictly enforced where graffiti is concerned.
- The Public Safety, Civic Spirit and Embellishment Committee advocates an increase in fine amounts for infringements of By-law 1392 “Quality of life”.
- The Public Safety, Civic Spirit and Embellishment Committee recommends that City Council create and activate a squad in charge of surveillance and municipal by-law enforcement (watering, leashed dogs, abandoned vehicles, uncleanliness, cyclists, etc.) This squad could be composed of police technology students, hired from May to September.

#### **Safety and protection of public and private spaces**

- Given that vandalism and graffiti most often occur in dark, isolated spots, Public Safety, Civic Spirit and Embellishment Committee members recommend that City Council ensure adequate lighting in the evening and at night in public areas considered problematic by the City’s police force and Public Works Department.
- To offer Deux-Montagnes citizens a safe environment and good quality of life, Public Safety, Civic Spirit and Embellishment Committee members suggest that City Council analyze the implementation of surveillance systems for the following sites: filtration

plant, manmade multisport field and Polyvalent-Deux-Montagnes (PDM). The Seigneurie-des-Milles-Iles school board will obviously be involved for the PDM site.

### **Boat launching ramps**

A Deux-Montagnes citizen asked the Committee if he could make a presentation on the municipal by-laws in effect in cities where boat launching ramps are found. This request was accepted and the presentation enabled the Committee to make the following recommendations:

- The Public Safety, Civic Spirit and Embellishment Committee recommends that City Council study the possibility of creating parking spots reserved for people who use the launching ramps in order to generate revenue from the sale of parking permits.
- Given that boat launching ramps are in public places where there is constant activity, the Public Safety, Civic Spirit and Embellishment Committee recommends that City Council install an adequate number of trash cans and empty them regularly to preserve the quality of these sites.

The Public Safety, Civic Spirit and Embellishment Committee members observed that many problematic situations could be eliminated if municipal by-laws were enforced more strictly. However, they were aware that such enforcement requires resources that are often occupied elsewhere. Nevertheless, they wanted to point out that strict enforcement of by-laws would allow the Municipality to generate revenues from the fines issued.

## **Chapter 4 Culture Committee**

### **3.4.1 Culture Committee - mandate**

The Citizens' Advisory Committee on Culture was mandated to analyze, evaluate and propose more cultural activities.

Comprising six members all from the cultural sector, the Committee held six working meetings and exchanged many e-mails in the course of its work.

### **3.4.2 Culture Committee – subjects studied**

With the collaboration of the public library's manager and Recreational Services and Community Services staff, City representative supplied the following documents to Committee members: the list of cultural associations accredited by the City, the list of infrastructures used for cultural activities, the list of cultural activities offered in the past two years and the amount of financial assistance awarded by the City for cultural activities.

Based on these documents, the following subjects were discussed:

- Relevance of current cultural activities offered
- Means to rouse residents' and visitors' interest and participation
- Infrastructures devoted to culture

- Ways to promote local artists
- Importance of identifying and grouping regional artists
- Graffiti problem

### **3.4.3 Culture Committee - recommendations**

Culture Committee members made the following recommendations:

#### **Artists' directory**

- The Citizens' Advisory Committee on Culture unanimously agrees that City Council should invite artists living in Deux-Montagnes, through L'Express or the City's website, to complete a detailed form, containing all relevant information on their work, discipline and contact information.
- The Citizens' Advisory Committee on Culture unanimously recommends that City Council produce a Ville de Deux-Montagnes artists' directory.

#### **PDM auditorium**

The Citizens' Advisory Committee on Culture considers the Polyvalente Deux-Montagnes auditorium an important cultural venue for Ville de Deux-Montagnes. Located in the school, this infrastructure should be used primarily for educational and community purposes. It is a perfect place for exposing young people to art, introducing them to different artistic trades, developing on-the-job training, creating jobs and encouraging participation in cultural events. However, the auditorium's architecture and equipment are obsolete and barely functional, a fact that undermines the facility's pulling power. Consequently, the following recommendation was made:

- The Citizens' Advisory Committee on Culture unanimously recommends that City Council, in conjunction with the Seigneurie-des-Mille-Iles school board, invest in renovating and modernizing the auditorium and its equipment so that at least the room and equipment are safe for users and spectators.

#### **Petite école jaune, Deux-Montagnes Cultural Association and public library**

- Given that the Petite école jaune building does not comply with National Building Code standards, that almost \$400,000 would have to be invested for renovations and given the City's financial situation, the Citizens' Advisory Committee on Culture recommends that City Council analyze the financial repercussions of selling the Petite école jaune.
- Given the significant, ongoing efforts of the new Deux-Montagnes Cultural Association (ACDM) team, the Citizens' Advisory Committee on Culture unanimously recommends that City Council work with the ACDM to prepare applications for financial assistance for the building's maintenance, repair and renovation.

- Should the City choose to sell the Petite école jaune, the Citizens' Advisory Committee on Culture unanimously recommends that City Council relocate ACDM activities to similar premises.
- Although the Citizens' Advisory Committee on Culture is well aware of the City's reality and financial constraints, it unanimously recommends longer public library business hours.

### **Creation of an intergenerational culture project**

Committee participants all shared the feeling that it is important to build bridges between generations. Because culture is an appropriate medium for doing so, the Committee made the following recommendation:

- The Citizens' Advisory Committee on Culture unanimously suggests that City Council work with cultural associations to implement a cross-generational project (young people, adults, seniors) in the context of a shared reading activity.

### **A City venue dedicated to culture**

- The Citizens' Advisory Committee on Culture unanimously recommends that City Council consider establishing a venue dedicated to culture and the arts in any renewal or integrated development project.

### **Setting up a meeting of cultural organizations**

- The Citizens' Advisory Committee on Culture recommends that the City organize a meeting of all Deux-Montagnes local cultural organizations and artists.

### **Promotion of cultural projects**

- The Citizens' Advisory Committee on Culture unanimously recommends that a team be created to meet with the City's merchants to develop partnerships (discounts, advertising, sponsorships, etc.) promoting both the merchant and the City's cultural activities.

### **Graffiti problems**

- The Citizens' Advisory Committee on Culture unanimously recommends installing a wall for graffitiists near the Maison des Jeunes or any other area deemed suitable. The wall should be easily accessible and lit at all times.
- The Citizens' Advisory Committee on Culture unanimously recommends that City Council work with Maison des Jeunes and Lake of Two Mountains High School staff, that efforts be made to reach and communicate with graffitiists to make them aware of the impacts and consequences of their graffiti and be directly involved in implementing adequate solutions.

Citizens' Advisory Committee on Culture members are convinced that Deux-Montagnes' identity as a community is linked to the arts and culture. Although the members greatly appreciated the various consultation exercises held recently, they believe it is time for decisions to be made. They hope that the above-mentioned recommendations will enable City administrators to take action for the community's well-being.

## **Chapter 5 Community Development Committee**

### **3.5.1 Community Development Committee - mandate**

The Community Development Committee was mandated to define the aims and actions to take to establish a coherent community service package. Members also had to evaluate the budget breakdown for community organizations and suggest improvements, if applicable.

The six Committee members, mainly from the area's community sector, discussed various subjects in their six working meetings.

### **3.5.2 Community Development Committee - subjects studied**

The Committee analyzed and discussed various subjects. Much thought was given to the ideal relationship between the Municipality and community organizations. The members carefully studied the City's policy for accrediting organizations and its different financial assistance programs so as to suggest improvements reflecting the current situation.

To carry out their work, members read and analyzed various documents, including the list of accredited community associations, the list of activities/service offered, details of City subsidies granted to various organisms and Deux-Montagnes' socio-demographic statistics. A community organizer from the Deux-Montagnes Health and Social Services Center (HSSC) presented the services the HSSC offers various clientele and the services offered to community organizations.

### **3.5.3 Community Development Committee – observations and recommendations**

In addition to drafting fifteen recommendations directly related to the Community Development Committee's mandate, members defined "community organization" and "community development" and made the observations presented below.

#### **Definition of "community organization"**

A "community organization" is an independent group of citizens, from the same community, which addresses a social problem to find periodic, gradual solutions in partnership with public and/or private resources. Meeting individual and collective needs, a "community organization" is an agent of social change, given that its goal is to improve citizen's quality of life and collective well-being.

#### **Definition of "community development"**

"Community development" is a form of collective action structured over a given area, which, through the democratic participation of the citizens and social players composing it, targets collective stakes and problems linked to living conditions and quality of life.

### **Community Development Committee - observations**

The Committee would like to bring several observations to the municipal administration's attention:

- The Committee deemed it important that Ville de Deux-Montagnes define its own vision of community development by promoting new governance for partnerships and co-construction.
- Community development must change collective health and social service problems into collective solutions in a spirit of cooperation and partnership.
- Projects agreed on by public and private community players (citizens and organizations) must be the focal point of these actions.

### **Deux-Montagnes community development must take the following into account:**

- Deux-Montagnes community development and economic development are interdependent.
- Community development reflects social values such as democracy, solidarity, social justice, organizations' autonomy, respect for people and institutions.
- Community development requires citizens to take part in identifying the community's needs and in mobilizing resources.

Based on the observations developed and shared by all Committee members, the latter agreed to formulate the following recommendations.

### **Community Development Committee - recommendations**

- The Community Development Committee recommends that City Council adopt a community development policy.
- The Community Development Committee recommends that the Chair of the Community Development Committee or a community organization representative sit on the committee in charge of drafting the City's community policy.
- The Community Development Committee would like a community development roundtable to be set up and that, as a partner, Ville de Deux-Montagnes appoint a member to take part in it.
- The Community Development Committee suggests that the City's Public Works Department, Maison des Jeunes, and socio-community section officers of the Deux-Montagnes regional police force reach a provisional consensus on the graffiti problem so as to find solutions that are satisfactory for everyone.

Committee members would like the community policy to reflect the following action guidelines:



### **Consensus-building**

The committee deems consensus-building to be necessary for good community development. This means implementing a collective coordinating process based on structured, sustainable relations between social players and independent parties who agree to share information, discuss problems or specific stakes (by problem or territory) in order to arrive at common objectives and actions that may or may not unite them in partnerships. This is also why the Committee suggests that community organizations supported financially by government funding should participate in or at least attend a meeting of the Community Development Coordinating Committee.

### **Partnership**

The Committee also suggests that partnership be the key to community development of any kind. More formal than consensus-building, partnership involves contractual involvement in sharing responsibilities, pooling resources and dividing up jobs based on a negotiated agreement. Inherent in a partnership agreement is an obligation to get results.

The Committee would also like the different levels of government (municipal, provincial and federal) to remain important community development partners by offering financial, material and human resources assistance programs, while maintaining and respecting beneficiary organizations' autonomy.

### **Organization accreditation policy – Committee recommendations**

Committee members analyzed the differences between the accreditation policy and financial assistance programs dating from 1995 and the documents used by the municipal administration in 2010.

The Committee's decisions for recommendations for the new Ville de Deux-Montagnes community organization accreditation policy are:

- The accreditation policy must contain an introduction and a chapter on the policy's goals and objectives.
- The terms chosen by the Committee to define organization action sectors are:
  - Sports and recreation
  - Community
  - Culture
- To be eligible for accreditation, the organization must supply the following documents:
  - Letters patent
  - Board of Directors' resolution
  - Definition of organization's mission
  - Definition of organization's activities and previous year's activity report
  - Financial statements
  - Date of annual assembly
  - List of members (clients) and origin
  - List of Board of Directors members

- The Committee recommends that organizations be asked if they are accredited in other Cities and, if so, in which ones.

All of this information should be on the accreditation application form. Organization accreditation by Ville de Deux-Montagnes requires a certain percentage of the members or clients to be City residents. The Committee recommends the following:

- That, for an organization to be accredited by Ville de Deux-Montagnes, no less than 50% of its members be Deux-Montagnes residents. Further, 70% or more of the clientele targeted must be Deux-Montagnes residents.

Organizations seeking recognition as regional organizations must show that they serve the Deux-Montagnes territory.

**Policy for awarding financial assistance - Committee recommendations:**

- The Committee recommends recognizing the following four (4) assistance programs:

Administrative services: registration, photocopier and fax machine access, free use of playing fields, municipal offices and academic premises.

Professional services: assignment of a Recreational Services employee to offer advice and references, support corporations and liaise with the City's different services.

Publicity/Promotion: City website, recreational activities flyer, events calendar, City bulletin boards.

Financial support: operating subsidy, operations assistance, donations and sponsorship distributed according to pre-defined criteria.

- The following criteria should be taken into consideration in awarding financial assistance:
  - Clientele served and its needs
  - Previous year's activity report
  - Application/project objectives
  - Organization's revenues
  - Self-financing efforts
  - Other revenue sources
  - Project duration
  - Remuneration
- The Community Development Committee recommends that a committee be created to analyze organizations' financial assistance applications. Committee members would include the Director of Recreational and Community Services or his staff and residents working in the community, sports and cultural organizations. However, final

recommendations to City Council would be made by the Director of Recreational and Community Services.

- Committee members recommend adding the following to the policy: “organizations must have duly completed the form by the deadline, supplied a Board of Directors’ resolution stating its agreement that an application be made and comply with all program conditions”.
- The Committee also recommends including a chapter allowing the City to cancel use of premises if the organization does not comply with the regulations in effect.

### **Creation of a graffiti roundtable**

- The Community Development Committee recommends that City Council be involved in creating a roundtable on the graffiti problem. Grouping various partners (Ville de Deux-Montagnes, Saint-Eustache and Sainte-Marthe-sur-le-Lac, Deux-Montagnes regional police force, Saint-Eustache police force, educational community, HSSC Lac-Deux-Montagnes, private-sector companies, youth centres)

Community Development Committee members hope that these recommendations enable City Council to make decisions corresponding to community organizations’ real needs while respecting their mission and autonomy. It is important that Ville de Deux-Montagnes be aware that community organizations are agents of social change since they seek to improve citizens’ quality of life and overall well-being.

## **Chapter 6 Sports and Recreation Committee**

### **3.6.1 Sports and Recreation Committee - mandate**

Comprising six members well-versed in the area’s sports activities, the Sports and Recreation Committee was mandated to define the aims and actions to take to establish a coherent sports and recreation service package.

### **3.6.2 Sports and Recreation Committee – subjects studied**

To properly carry out the Committee’s mandate, members analyzed the relevance of the current municipal sports and recreation activities offered, sport activity pricing here and elsewhere, the user-pays principle (resident or non-resident) and City funding for different sports. The policy for accrediting organizations and the various financial assistance programs created for them were also submitted to the Committee.

Members analyzed the following documents and studies:

- List of sports and recreational associations
- List of playing fields
- List of activities and rates proposed (Ville de Deux-Montagnes, Saint-Eustache, Saint-Joseph-sur-le-Lac, Sainte-Marthe-sur-le-Lac)
- Amount spent by City per athlete, by sport (Ville de Deux-Montagnes, Saint-Eustache, Saint-Joseph-sur-le-Lac, Sainte-Marthe-sur-le-Lac)

### 3.6.3 Sports and Recreation Committee - recommendations

The following recommendations resulted from the Sports and Recreation Committee's work:

#### Intermunicipal agreements

- The Sports and Recreation Committee recommends that City Council continue discussions and talks with neighbouring municipalities in order to reach recreation-related agreements.
- Sports and Recreation Committee members unanimously recommend that City Council try to sign a memorandum of agreement with neighbouring cities for the benefits of Deux-Montagnes' young gymnasts.

#### Organization accreditation policy

- Draft an introduction and define the current policy's goals and objectives.
- Redefine organizations' activity sectors using the following terms:
  - Sports and recreation
  - Community
  - Culture
  - Events
- Add, to the eligibility criteria indicated in the text of the policy and on the application form, that the organization must supply the following documents:
  - Letters patent
  - Board of Directors' resolution
  - Definition of organization's activities
  - Financial statements
  - Date of annual assembly
  - List of members (clients) and origin
  - List of Board of Directors members and origin
  - Number of volunteers
- Change the required percentage of resident members to *at least 50%*.
- Add the obligation to hold civil liability insurance which covers all of the organization's activities.
- Rework the accreditation application form based on these recommendations.

With regard to the requirements related to accrediting regional organizations, Committee members did not agree and reached no clear recommendation. However the possibility of making a distinction for community organizations was raised.

## Financial assistance programs

- Eliminate the financial assistance programs developed in 1995 and 2010 (volunteer training, light equipment procurement, special projects/events, donations) and rename them according to the following classifications:
  - Administrative support (photocopies, fax, loan of premises, etc.)
  - Professional support (Recreational Services employee)
  - Promotional support (City bulletin boards, websites and newsletter)
  - Financial support (operations/activities support and program reserved for high-performance athletes).
  
- Specify that Recreational Services and City Council should consider the following when supporting organizations:
  - Organization's financial status
    - o Financial balance
    - o Accumulated surplus or deficit
    - o Administrative costs
  - Self-financing efforts / fundraising activities
  - Other donations obtained
  - Percentage of revenue from donations
  - Remuneration
  - Percentage of remuneration vs. expenses
  - Importance of volunteer work
  - Membership fees
  - The subsidy helps balance the organization's budget
  
- Introduce the following weighting criteria to determine subsidy awarding to sports and recreational organizations:
  - Give precedence to children under age 18
  - Offer an elite program
  - Encourage training of volunteer coaches
  - Clientele served
  - Program duration
  - Number of participants
  
- Add the obligation to have duly completed the form by the deadline, supplied a Board of Directors' resolution stating its agreement that an application be made and comply with all financial assistance program conditions.
  
- The Committee also recommends including a chapter allowing the City to cancel use of premises if the organization does not comply with the regulations in effect.
  
- Maintain the financial assistance program for high-performance athletes as envisaged in 1995. Promote it on the City's website.

- Rework the financial assistance application form based on these recommendations.

### **Ice sports**

- The Sports and Recreation Committee recommends that a \$450 subsidy per registered player be maintained for the Lac-des-Deux-Montagnes Minor Hockey Association and that the subsidy per ringette player registered with the Deux-Montagnes Ringette Association be increased to \$450.
- The Sports and Recreation Committee recommends that the minor hockey and ringette associations encourage their members to raise funds to reduce the registration fees parents must pay.

### **City financial assistance for young athletes**

- Sports and Recreation Committee members unanimously suggest that City Council offer local City sports organizations \$25 per resident player on condition that these organizations reduce registration fees by the same amount.
- The Sports and Recreation Committee recommends that City Council reimburse \$25 to parents whose children live in Deux-Montagnes on presentation of a receipt obtained for payment of regional sports organizations' registration fees.

### **Playing fields management system**

- The Sports and Recreation Committee recommends that City Council analyze the advantages and disadvantages of purchasing and implementing a system to manage playing fields and recreational activities and introducing a citizen's card.

Sports and Recreation Committee members hope that their work enables City Council to improve the policy for accrediting organizations and financial assistance programs. Committee members also hope that their recommendations enable City leaders to improve the sports and recreational activities offered as well as their management.

## **Chapter 7 Economic Development Committee**

### **3.7.1 Economic Development Committee - mandate**

The Economic Development Committee was mandated to evaluate and propose innovative measures for creating wealth and/or savings in Deux-Montagnes, in commercial, residential and recreational tourism terms.

The 14-member committee met ten times in the past year. It was supported by a Coordinator, Julie Boivin, Geographer-Consultant, whose services were used to orchestrate Committee activities. The following four subcommittees were formed to pursue certain subjects and complete the recommendations: "Deux-Montagnes station" subcommittee, "Downtown plaza" subcommittee, "tax funds" subcommittee, "finance" subcommittee. Finally, to give the group

more indepth knowledge, the Committee enjoyed the support of Pierre Goyer, of the urbanization firm Plania, for a few meetings.

### **3.7.2 Economic Development Committee – subjects studied**

As indicated in the Committee’s mandate, members focussed primarily on creating wealth, based on three distinct areas: residential, commercial and recreational tourism.

For each subject studied, the committee had four main concerns:

1. **Creating wealth:** The Committee’s main goal was to find various options for increasing the Municipality’s real estate wealth.
2. **Respecting the environment:** The Committee focussed on environment-friendly practices. Committee members took time to study each project so as to promote alternative environmental methods and ensure that all the options were analyzed.
3. **Ensuring citizens’ quality of life:** Once again, for each project studied, Committee members focussed on maintaining citizens’ quality of life. The population’s well-being was a key concern.
4. **Using assets:** The Committee concentrated on Deux-Montagnes’ assets, that is, proximity to water (Lac des Deux-Montagnes and Rivière des Mille-Îles) and the presence of two train stations.

Several documents helped fuel discussions. Some were studied by the members and others were analyzed mainly by the Coordinator to prepare the following recommendations:

- Ville de Deux-Montagnes city plan
- Ville de Deux-Montagnes 2011-2016 strategic financial plan, prepared by RCGT (2011)
- Ville de Deux-Montagnes Citizen’s Summit report, prepared by Julie Boivin (2010)
- Numerous documents produced by the Ministère des Affaires Municipales, des Régions et de l’Occupation du Territoire, including Deux-Montagnes’ financial profile
- Commercial revitalization of the city downtown, prepared by Gauthier, Biancamano et Bolduc (2007)

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### 3.7.3 Economic Development Committee - recommendations

Economic Development Committee members, as a group, defined a specific protocol for presenting recommendations. All are described in the same manner: geographic location, project description, annual economic impacts, possible obstacles, recommendation and draft resolution.

#### **Residential recommendation #1 – “Deux-Montagnes station” project**

##### Geographic location

The area identified for development is the area near the Deux-Montagnes train stations.

##### Project description

The Economic Development Committee proposes creating a development project targeting public transportation located near the Deux-Montagnes stations.

In recent years, development projects combining community and public transportation partnerships have been created the world over: Paris, Tokyo, London, Rome, etc.



Many different factors incite governments to develop these projects. Among other things, they promote:

- Public transportation as a solution reducing traffic congestion
- Developing a pleasant living environment with less pollution since there are less cars
- Walking to places, which is good for residents' health
- Urban concentration rather than urban sprawl

Development of this type takes the following into account to guarantee the project's success in Deux-Montagnes:

- Develop a design that gives pedestrians precedence
- Ensure multiple functions near the station (offices, business, restaurants, administration, etc.)
- Ensure high-density, good-quality development a few minutes' walk from the station
- Include the possibility of developing alternative means of transportation for residents and visitors who arrive by train (bus, bicycle, etc.) as well as creating pedestrian and bicycle paths nearby
- Develop a parking lot a few minutes' walk from the station.

This project benefits the entire community and constitutes a significant source of revenue for the Municipality.

The advantages are:

- Increase in patronage of shops and businesses
- Considerable increase in population
- Significant increase in revenue from property taxes without a significant impact on residential land (limits urban sprawl)
- Reduction in automobile use and the resulting dispersion of greenhouse gases.

For Deux-Montagnes, the proposed project consists of:

- 200 condominium units
- 100 residential rental units
- 5,000 sq. ft. occupied by services/offices
- 10,000 sq. ft. occupied by shops.

Three project development options were presented. In order of importance, they are:

### **Option 1**

The first Deux-Montagnes station project development option proposed involves building on land already owned by the Municipality (land housing the Olympia, police station, municipal garage and Public Works and Urban Planning buildings). These buildings would be sold to private investors, who would develop the project. Municipal services could be relocated to one building, thereby generating additional savings (only one building to maintain). Finally, concerning Olympia, the Committee suggested eventually demolishing it because it requires major investments (replacing Freon cooling system and roof). Its medium- and long-term profitability is not viable due to this work.

## **Option 2**

The second Deux-Montagnes station project development option is on AMT land located near the station. Although this option is interesting, it represents more obstacles, one of which is the higher building cost due to the need for underground parking lots.

## **Option 3**

The third Deux-Montagnes station project development option proposed is on land located near Grand-Moulin station. This option requires many expropriations, which would inconvenience the population, represent legal costs for the Municipality and cause significant delays in project completion. However, municipal land regrouping, limited to the avenues adjacent to the station, could create uniform high-density redevelopment of a limited height. Further, Option 3 can be seen as an independent project revitalizing the city downtown or a second phase in development Option 1 or 2.

### Annual economic impacts

Total project value is estimated at \$64.4 million for property tax returns of \$700,000.

### Possible obstacles

- Elimination of small woodland in the west sector (outside of protected zone)
- Number of storeys to be built (to ensure view of lake and river)
- Financial, regulatory, political, organizational, structural and legal barriers
- Possible increase in use of arteries leading to Grand-Moulin station.

### Recommendation

It is recommended that City Council develop the “Deux-Montagnes station” project.

### Draft resolution

It is hereby resolved by majority vote that a favourable opinion be given to City Council on this project.

## **Residential recommendation #2 – “Shoreline and downtown” project**

### Geographic location

The area identified is between Chemin d’Oka, 8th Avenue, Lachapelle St. and the banks of Rivière des Mille-îles. The Municipality already owns part of the land.

### Project description

The Economic Development Committee proposes implementing the “Shoreline and downtown” project, a multi-purpose development including a real estate zone, commercial area and community area, which should become a major tourist attraction for the City.

Since it is an integrated project, construction must be divided into phases. Project requirements and expectations should be defined in advance in order to achieve the desired end-project.

The Committee suggests:

- Establishing an integrated development plan
  - Anticipate the need to decontaminate certain lands
  - Anticipate expropriation of counter-productive businesses, if need be

- Issue reserve notices on land in question and include maximum amounts to be paid for non-occupants to avoid speculation
- Creating a municipal investment fund or finding an institutional sponsor
  - Allow building owners in the target area to invest in the project by including an increase in the value of their residence
- Developing four-storey buildings on Chemin d’Oka
  - Promote commercial use of ground floor and residential/administrative use of upper floors
- Developing two or three towers of 8-12 floors at the project center. It is important to maximize view of the water in residential development
- Developing Rivière des Mille-Îles banks and planning construction of a small marina for residents and boating visitors
  - Acquire the two or three houses near the Canadian Legion building to develop the area’s major economic and tourism potential
- Envisaging a public area in the project’s centre where people can meet, have a sense of belonging, and feel safe and at home
  - On the edge of the public area, priority should be given to leaving room for community institutions, such as a culture center, performance venue, repertory film theatre, etc.
  - Plan for pedestrian path accessing the shoreline on one side and Chemin d’Oka on the other.

Annual economic impacts

The project requires major investments estimated at \$54 million. The property tax revenues generated are evaluated at \$600,000. However this amount must be adjusted according to the land occupation proportions (residential vs. commercial).

Possible obstacles

- Expropriation of certain owners
- Replotting
- Certain citizens’ resistance to change.

Recommendation

It is recommended that City Council develop the “shoreline and downtown” project, as defined, so as to increase density in the above-mentioned sector.

Draft resolution

It is hereby resolved by majority vote that a favourable opinion be given to City Council on this project.

**Residential recommendation #3 – “Downtown plaza” project**

Geographic location

The area identified for Plaza project development is the land between the IGA and St. Agapit church, from Chemin d’Oka to La Chapelle St.

Project description

A plaza between the IGA and St. Agapit church leading into a commercial/residential building, with parking beneath the plaza.

- The commercial component of the plaza would face Chemin d’Oka
- The residential component would face La Chapelle St.

Tentatively, the project would contain:

- 27,000 sq. ft. of commercial and/or office space
- 15 one and two-bedroom condominiums of approximately 800 sq. ft. per unit
- 16 two and three-bedroom two-storey condominiums at roof level (3rd floor) of approximately 620 sq. ft. per floor or a total of 1,240 sq. ft. per unit
- Elevator access.

#### ESTIMATE

A rough estimate of building costs:

- \$2 million for plaza structure
- \$9 million for commercial/ residential building
- Including land purchase and infrastructure costs.

It is expected that, with reasonable lease rates for commercial space and reasonable sale prices for condominium units, the project will pay for itself as a private enterprise project without need for subsidies or other costs to the City. Further study, of course, will be needed to assess its cost feasibility.

The project as presented would be a nucleus for development and would need to be expanded in order to take advantage of its full potential.

Discussions have been held with the following property owners, for their information and to determine their reaction to both to the project as is and to the prospect of future expansion in both directions along La Chapelle St.

- Sobeys, owners of the IGA, and the franchisee
- The owner of the IGA building and property
- The owner of the garderie
- The owners of the two single-family houses on La Chapelle St.
- A church warden from the St. Agapit parish.

The reaction of the St-Agapit parish was positive, that of the other owners varied from negative to neutral.

A real-estate professional consulted was of the opinion that the location was desirable, both for condominiums and commercial space.

A more extensive study would be required to examine design more closely and to estimate costs in a more detailed fashion.

Before calling in promoters or consultants, we should take advantage of existing expertise within our community in addition of free government and university resources.

Once we have defined, through consensus, our community goals and have completed our own feasibility study to determine such things as building costs and projected revenues, we could start identifying potential partnerships for implementing different phases of the overall project.

This would include:

- Advancing the drawings to the point where they can be appreciated in terms of aesthetics and for which cost estimates can be defined and where perspective drawings will show the appearance with the local context of buildings, etc. This will require architectural and engineering input.
- Of special importance would be to design as green a building as possible not only because it is an ecologically sound but also because there may be better opportunities to find subsidies.
- When it comes to public relations, we should conduct surveys using local students as much as possible, to determine the level of public interest in the project, and, more specifically, to assess the interest in buying or leasing commercial or residential space.
- Seek advice and opinions from real-estate experts concerning realistic expectations of condominium sales and prices, and on leasing rates, in order to put together a balance sheet.
- When it comes to project organization and management, a number of management options would need to be considered. Possible solutions could include :
  - a) Having the city oversee the project management aspect of the project;
  - b) Giving contracts to a general contractor;
  - c) A variations of both these solutions.

These choices can have a big impact on overall costs.

#### **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:**

- Explore the possibility of inviting local subcontractors and engineering personnel in forming a consortium with the City of Deux-Montagnes.
- A citizen committee to look into ways of raising money through citizen initiatives.
- The overriding principle would be to ensure that the City maintains full control over the project in terms of design, execution and management.
- Any mandate for further study of the Plaza project should keep in mind that development in the area East of 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue should be in harmony with it. This would include identifying a possible site for a hotel and developing the concept, already extensively studied, of a visual corridor and pedestrian way from the general vicinity of 8<sup>th</sup>/Oka to the river just North of the Legion.

#### Annual economic impacts

Given multiple land occupation, total project investments are estimated at \$11 million. Property tax revenues are evaluated at \$500,000 annually.

#### Possible obstacles

- Reaching an agreement with partners (St. Agapit parish and the IGA)
- Possible increase in traffic on main roads leading to Grand-Moulin station

- Risks associated with an underground parking lot (safety)

#### Recommendation

It is recommended that City Council develop the “Downtown plaza” project.

#### Draft resolution

It is hereby resolved by majority vote that a favourable opinion be given to City Council on this project.

### **Residential recommendation #4 – High-density development behind Promenades Deux-Montagnes**

#### Geographic location

This recommendation concerns properties covering a total of 124,052 sq. ft. and valued at \$217,000 located behind Promenades Deux-Montagnes.

#### Project description

To increase urban density, the Economic Development Committee suggests developing a residential zone of 48 houses/condominiums. It also suggests creating privileged access to Promenades Deux-Montagnes through a closed walkway or tunnel. This access would benefit Promenades Deux-Montagnes’ development and revitalization.

#### Annual economic impacts

Calculating an average selling price of \$150,000 per unit, the total project value is \$7.2million, thereby creating tax revenues of \$71,496.

#### Possible obstacles

Use and hook-up of infrastructures by Sainte-Marthe-sur-le-Lac.

#### Recommendation

It is recommended that City Council develop a residential zone on land located behind Promenades Deux-Montagnes.

Should project development not be possible, the Committee suggests analyzing the possibility of exchanging the land located behind Promenades Deux-Montagnes with the City of Sainte-Marthe-sur-le-Lac for the land currently occupied by the Benedictine nuns.

#### Draft resolution

It is hereby resolved by majority vote that a favourable opinion be given to City Council on this project.

### **Residential recommendation #5 – Introducing a tax credit in residential and commercial zones**

#### Geographic location

Applicable throughout Deux-Montagnes.

### **PROJECT A Renovation tax credits**

### Project description

Implementing a property tax credit program is a major financial incentive for home owners. To increase the value of Deux-Montagnes real estate, the Economic Development Committee suggests that the Municipality grant a property tax credit on the value-added following renovation of a residential or commercial building. This credit would be applied to expansion, transformation, repairs, improvement and landscaping (pool, sidewalk, garden landscaping, etc.) and to renovation projects of an environmental nature (installing an earth energy system, high-performance windows, use of green energy, etc.).

#### **Option 1**

To be eligible for financial assistance, certain criteria must be met:

- Applicants must own a residence, condominium, residential building (1 to 4 storeys), business or multipurpose building (residential portion and commercial portion).
- Renovations must justify a property value increase of at least \$30,000.
- All permits required for the work must be obtained.
- Permit(s) must be obtained to carry out the work between January 1, 2012 and December 31, 2015.

The tax credit starts the year after the work has been completed and ends three years later. It applies only to the value-added and is spread over the three years following the work in keeping with the following conditions:

Year 1: 100% credit of the value-added

Year 2: 50% credit of the value-added

Year 3: 25% credit of the value-added

#### **Option 2**

To be eligible for financial assistance, certain criteria must be met:

- Applicants must own a residence, condominium, residential building (1 to 4 storeys), business or multipurpose building (residential portion and commercial portion).
- Renovations must justify a property value increase of at least \$30,000.
- All the permits required for the work must be obtained.
- Permit(s) must be obtained to carry out the work between January 1, 2012 and December 31, 2016.

The tax credits start the year after the work has been completed. For example, if the work was done in 2012, the tax credit applies from 2013 for a five-year period in keeping with pre-defined percentages. For work performed in 2014, the tax credit applies from 2015 on for three years according to the percentages established.

The tax credit applies only to the value-added and is spread out in keeping with the program year:

2013: 100% credit of value-added

2014: 100% credit of value-added

2015: 50% credit of value-added

2016: 50% credit of value-added

2017: 25% credit of value-added

If a project meets the program criteria, the tax credit is granted automatically (registration is not necessary).

#### Annual economic impacts

Residential: For 25 projects (minimum value of \$30,000), the economic impacts after three years are an additional \$7,500 on the residences' initial value.

Commercial: For 5 projects (minimum value of \$30,000), the economic impacts after three years are an additional \$4,500 on the buildings' initial value of.

### **PROJECT B Demolition-reconstruction tax credits**

#### Project description

The Economic Development Committee proposes that the Municipality grant financial assistance in the form of a property tax credit when a residential or commercial building is demolished and then rebuilt.

To be eligible for this financial assistance, certain criteria must be met:

- Own a residence that is more than 50 years old with a property value of under \$150,000  
OR own a business in the territory
- The demolition and reconstruction must occur within one year.

The new building's property tax would be applied as follows: once the new building has been completed, its assessment would determine the property tax amount. The first year, the credit would be 100%, meaning that the owner would continue paying the old building's property tax amount. For example, a residence valued at \$125,000 (building property tax of \$1,242) is demolished and replaced by a residence valued at \$300,000 (building property tax of \$2,982). The first year, the owner pays \$1,242 (savings of \$1,740) since he/she gets a credit on the value-added and so on for the following years.

Year 1: 100% credit of the value-added

Year 2: 50% credit of the value-added

Year 3: 25% credit of the value-added

If a project meets the program criteria, the tax credit is granted automatically (registration is not necessary).

#### Annual economic impacts

If five houses initially valued at \$150,000 are demolished and rebuilt to attain a value of \$250,000 each, the economic impact after three years can be considered more than \$5,000 per house.

### **PROJECT C Tax credits for upgrading buildings to current standards**

#### Project description



The Economic Development Committee proposes that Ville de Deux-Montagnes grant financial assistance in the form of a property tax credit when a residential or commercial building is required to comply with National Building Code, public safety or municipal standards.

Applicants must own a residence or business in the territory, to be eligible for this financial assistance.

After the required work has been completed, the municipal assessment would determine the value-added and the tax credit would be applied on that value.

Year 1: 100% credit of the value-added

Year 2: 50% credit of the value-added

Year 3: 25% credit of the value-added

If the upgrade costs more than \$30,000, the corresponding tax credit is added to the renovation tax credit.

If a project meets the program criteria, the tax credit is granted automatically (registration is not necessary).

#### Annual economic impacts

Five upgrading projects evaluated at \$50,000 each generate an added economic impact of \$2,500 on the initial residence's value.

#### Annual economic impacts (all projects)

\$20,000 per year.

#### Possible obstacles

Project management by the Municipality due to a lack of human resources.

#### Recommendation

It is recommended that City Council develop a residential renovation tax credit program.

#### Draft resolution

It is hereby unanimously resolved that a favourable opinion be given to City Council on this project.

### **Residential recommendation #6 – Zoning and renovation by-law overhaul**

#### Geographic location

Applicable throughout Deux-Montagnes.

#### Project description

The Economic Development Committee noted that zoning and renovation by-laws need overhauling, especially if the municipal administration takes the Committee's recommendations into account. In the context of this overhaul, the Committee suggests:

- Promoting all projects of an environmental nature. To do so, a clause could be included on all permit application forms asking citizens whether environmental methods will be

integrated into their project. Municipal officials could also inform citizens of alternative, more environment-friendly renovation, construction, demolition etc. methods.

- Creating an environment fund. For each environment-friendly project, “X” dollars, taken from the amount paid for the permit, would go to an environment fund to be used to finance various green projects in the Municipality.
- Adapting zoning (density) by-laws to allow community revitalization as required by projects selected.
- Promoting renovation and increase in residential values by making certain by-laws more flexible, e.g. those targeting building improvement by adding a “bachelor” or an additional storey.
- Introducing more stringent by-laws for upgrading buildings to standards before renovating. Before issuing renovation permits, buildings that do not comply with current by-laws should be required to adapt. This clause should be automatic when properties are sold. It would increase residential values and ensure homogeneity through the Municipality’s residential areas. Further, it has been proven that depreciation of a municipal sector causes ghettoization. Thus, it is important to act quickly.
- Facilitating communication with those in charge of renovating (Urban Planning Services and Communications Services) by introducing a simpler method to encourage citizens to renovate their residences.
- Introducing a regular inspection process to ensure compliance with municipal by-laws.

#### Annual economic impacts

Economic impacts at this level are indirect, since the aim of overhauling by-laws is to ensure quality real estate in the Municipality, increase residential values and encourage citizens to renovate.

#### Possible obstacles

- Certain citizens’ resistance to revitalization of their sector
- Obligation for owners to modify everything that does not comply with current standards instead of changing just one element
- Less well-to-do citizens will not necessarily have the means or capacity to have major work done on their homes
- Drop in value of certain homes when they are put up for sale since work becomes compulsory.

#### Recommendation

It is recommended that City Council revise residential zoning and renovation by-laws.

#### Draft resolution

It is hereby unanimously resolved that a favourable opinion be given to City Council on this project.

#### **Residential recommendation #7 – Development of a vegetation barrier**

#### Geographic location

In the station district, along Highway 640.

#### Project description

Erection of a vegetation barrier along Highway 640 to reduce noise.

#### Possible obstacles

- High cost
- Few financial spinoffs for citizens.

#### Recommendation

It is recommended that City Council wait five years before considering erecting a vegetation barrier along Highway 640.

#### Draft resolution

It is hereby unanimously resolved that a favourable opinion not be given to City Council on this project.

### **Commercial recommendation #1 - Commercial development on Chemin d'Oka**

#### Geographic location

Chemin d'Oka

#### Project description

The Committee proposes favouring Chemin d'Oka for developing and setting up various businesses in Deux-Montagnes. Given the daily use, local history and citizens' attachment to the thoroughfare, it is relevant to deem that citizens are ready to frequent the City centre again, that is, the main business street. Further, the fact that Grand-Moulin station is nearby is a considerable asset.

The Committee suggests physically revitalizing the sector, inventorying businesses and highlighting their strengths and weaknesses in order to guide the area's commercial development.

The Committee suggests that the Municipality apply stricter by-laws governing building maintenance on Chemin d'Oka.

It suggests that the Municipality review urban planning architectural implementation and integration plan 003 (PIIA) to restrict the type of businesses likely to set up on Chemin d'Oka. The Committee also suggests developing a PIIA to regulate storefronts to create a uniform urban fabric.

The Committee suggests prioritizing development on land already owned by the Municipality between 8th Avenue and the Canadian Legion building.

#### Annual economic impacts

In 2010, Deux-Montagnes' standardized commercial assessment was \$47,574,000. The Committee estimates that this rate could increase to \$52,500,000, which is the equivalent of ten new businesses on Chemin d'Oka and represents additional tax revenues of \$150,000 annually.

#### Possible obstacles

- Increase in patronage

- Increase in number of residences in the sector to attract new businesses on Chemin d’Oka.

#### Recommendation

It is recommended that City Council continue developing Chemin d’Oka to maximize commercial activities.

#### Draft resolution

It is hereby unanimously resolved that a favourable opinion be given to City Council on this project.

### **Commercial recommendation #2 – A permanent public market**

#### Geographic location

Downtown Deux-Montagnes.

#### Project description

The Economic Development Committee suggests developing a permanent public market in the City that offers citizens access to local products. This market could become a unique environment in the region and even attract an out-of-town clientele.

“An extension of farm production/processing activities and recognized as a community service, the public market favours direct exchanges between citizens and a larger group of farmers and agrifood artisan food processors, who play a predominant role. The organization maintains official links with the Municipality. The market operates for a period that is decisive for its members, which ensure its sustainability.”<sup>2</sup>

The permanent market should be open every day of the week and offer a range of fresh local and regional products. Permanent businesses could be found there, covering basic market needs (greengrocers, cheese makers, butchers, fishmongers, sausage makers, bakers and pastry shops). These producers have their permanent business at the market and all the space they need to process their products on-site. Further, seasonal producers could rent a site outside, under a tent, for a given period, according to the availability of certain products (maple products in March, berries from June to August, apples in September, etc.). The Deux-Montagnes market could be modelled on the Saint-Hyacinthe or Maisonneuve markets.

#### Annual economic impacts

Based on a \$2 million investment by the developer, property tax revenues of \$60,000 are plausible.

#### Possible obstacles

- Difficulty establishing partnership with local producers
- Competition with existing grocery stores.

#### Recommendation

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<sup>2</sup> Association des Marchés Publics du Québec, <http://www.ampq.ca/pages/association.html>, page consulted on September 5, 2011.

It is recommended that City Council favour establishing a permanent public market in downtown Deux-Montagnes.

Draft resolution

It is hereby unanimously resolved that a favourable opinion be given to City Council on this project.

**Commercial recommendation #3 – Creating an inn downtown**

Geographic location

Downtown Deux-Montagnes.

Project description

To offer visitors travelling through the region a warm, welcoming environment, the Committee suggests creating an inn in downtown Deux-Montagnes for use by clients from outside the area, tourists and boating enthusiasts.

An accommodation establishment downtown could prove to be a major economic lever thereby fostering local development.

Annual economic impacts

Based on an \$800,000 investment by the developer, annual property tax revenue is estimated at \$25,000.

Possible obstacles

- Difficult of attracting an investor
- Lack of established clientele
- Lack of communications tools for advertising the accommodation establishment.

Recommendation

It is recommended that City Council promote creation of an accommodation establishment in downtown Deux-Montagnes.

Draft resolution

It is hereby unanimously resolved that a favourable opinion be given to City Council on this project.

**Commercial recommendation #4 – Review by-laws governing unreported commercial use**

Geographic location

Applicable throughout Deux-Montagnes.

Project description

The Committee proposes applying the non-residential building tax rate to all commercial uses, including those in private residences. This by-law applies to all commercial use where clients are received in private homes.

The Committee suggests requiring all owners operating a business in their home to advertise their services on their property.

#### Annual economic impacts

It is difficult to estimate this measure's impact on annual taxes collected by the Municipality. In relation to average residential values in Deux-Montagnes and given that the majority of businesses in residences use approximately one quarter of the total surface area, an additional \$1,000 per property operating a business can be expected on average.

For some 50 residences used for commercial purposes, a \$50,000 increase in annual tax can be envisaged.

#### Possible obstacle

Lack of municipal financial and human resources.

#### Recommendation

It is recommended that City Council introduce a by-law governing unreported commercial use in residential sectors.

#### Draft resolution

It is hereby resolved by majority vote that a favourable opinion be given to City Council on this project.

### **Commercial recommendation #5 – AMT Project**

#### Geographic location

Applicable throughout Deux-Montagnes.

#### Project description

The Committee proposes working with the AMT to allow Deux-Montagnes citizens to use train services free of charge to travel locally between Grand-Moulin and Deux-Montagnes stations.

This would give residents living in the Gare and Coteau districts preferred access to Old Deux-Montagnes and the Oka Road commercial sector. Residents of the Grand-Moulin and Lac districts could access the Olympia, Boul. des Promenades shops, etc.

Project development must involve the least possible cost to the Municipality.

#### Annual economic impacts

Economic impacts at this level are indirect since the AMT project would not generate additional revenues for the Municipality. However, it would increase activity in commercial areas and encourage public transportation, which is beneficial for the environment.

#### Possible obstacles

- Setting up a partnership with the AMT
- Difficulty of developing a communications plan to advertise the project due to the lack of municipal financial and human resources.

#### Recommendation

It is recommended that City Council create a partnership with the AMT so that Deux-Montagnes residents can use the train free of charge between the two stations in the territory.

#### Draft resolution

It is hereby unanimously resolved that a favourable opinion be given to City Council on this project.

### **Commercial recommendation #6 – Business start-up assistance and support**

#### Geographic location

Applicable throughout Deux-Montagnes.

#### Project description

The Economic Development Committee suggests preparing a package for businesses describing the different support services available to them (local development centre, chamber of commerce, mentoring, etc.). It also suggests developing a “buy-local” policy to spotlight merchants and give them maximum visibility. The Committee maintains that we must continue to promote new businesses in the municipal newsletter L’Express. Finally, the Committee recommends requesting the regional chamber of commerce’ support for recruiting businesses.

#### Annual economic impacts

Economic impacts at this level are indirect since business start-up assistance and support would not generate additional revenues for the Municipality. However, it would enable merchants to do business more easily and longer in the territory.

#### Possible obstacles

Lack of municipal financial and human resources.

#### Recommendation

It is recommended that City Council develop a start-up assistance and support package for local businesses.

#### Draft resolution

It is hereby unanimously resolved that a favourable opinion be given to City Council on this project.

### **Commercial recommendation #7 – Architectural implementation and integration plan (PIIA) for commercial signs**

#### Geographic location

Applicable throughout Deux-Montagnes.

#### Project description

The Committee proposes that the Municipality standardize commercial signs by establishing a new PIIA for its territory. The lack of by-laws in this area means that signs are mixed, with the resulting lack of esthetics. This lack of uniformity has a negative effect on the urban fabric’s overall appearance.

“Signs are a key element when a municipality wants to improve living conditions and enhance the cityscape. Signs, of all types, are foremost in citizens’ visual environment, be it urban or rural, in everyday locations or striking landscapes. Signs’ omnipresence can change a landscape, obstruct a boulevard, destroy a city center and tarnish a municipality’s positive image. The effects of by-laws, on the other hand, can be quick and evident.”<sup>3</sup>

#### Annual economic impacts

Economic impacts at this level are indirect since a PIIA by-law would not generate additional revenues for the Municipality. However, it would improve the local visual landscape.

#### Possible obstacle

- Lack of municipal financial and human resources.

#### Recommendation

It is recommended that City Council introduce a new PIIA on commercial signs.

#### Draft resolution

It is hereby unanimously resolved that a favourable opinion be given to City Council on this project.

### **Commercial recommendation #8 – Enhance the City’s distinctive image**

#### Geographic location

Applicable throughout Deux-Montagnes.

#### Project description

The Committee suggests enhancing the City’s distinctive image to distinguish Deux-Montagnes from the region’s other municipalities.

By highlighting the area’s uniqueness, a communications plan can be developed to “sell” the Municipality to tourists and visitors so that both the business community and residents benefit. A distinctive image is advantageous for housing development projects.

#### Annual economic impacts

Economic impacts at this level are indirect, since development of a distinctive image would not generate additional revenues for the Municipality. However, it would increase tourism and, as a result, affect local business profits.

#### Possible obstacles

- Groups of professionals and commercial organizations might feel that the City’s visual image competes with other local images
- Lack of municipal financial and human resources.

#### Recommendation

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<sup>3</sup> Guide *La prise de décision en urbanisme, Outils de réglementation : Affichage*, Ministère des Affaires municipales, Régions et Occupation du territoire (MAMROT), Québec, December 2010.  
<http://www.mamrot.gouv.qc.ca/amenagement-du-territoire/guide-la-prise-de-decision-en-urbanisme/reglementation/affichage/>, page consulted on May 27, 2011.



It is recommended that City Council increase Ville de Deux-Montagnes' distinctive image and develop a vision around it.

#### Project resolution

It is hereby unanimously resolved that a favourable opinion be given to City Council on this project.

### **Recreational tourism recommendation #1 – Develop recreational tourism on Lac des Deux-Montagnes and Rivière des Mille-Îles**

#### Geographic location

Applicable to both water bodies located in the Municipality—Lac des Deux-Montagnes and Rivière des Mille-Îles.

#### Project description

The Committee proposes using the water bodies for shoreline tourism development. It suggests analyzing options such as:

- Developing a small marina (behind filtration plant and/or near Canadian Legion building) for pleasure craft, dingies, pedal-boats, etc.
- Promoting access to public riverbanks
- Advertising the water, its protection, importance and possibilities and making use of the latter
- Making a walkway on stilts between Moir Park and the Canadian Legion building.

The Committee proposes using the extremities of avenues leading to Lac des Deux-Montagnes to set up a restful shoreline sector by setting up lookouts.

#### Annual economic impacts

Economic impacts at this level are indirect. The presence of water has always been an economic level for those who know how to use it. The impact of shoreline development would be positive for business turnover due to the increase in tourist numbers and property values near aquatic facilities. Citizens would enjoy preferred shoreline access, thereby positively affecting their quality of life year-round. Finally, access to water bodies could soon become a key incentive attracting new residents.

#### Possible obstacles

- Creation of a partnership with the boating industry and organizations
- Lack of municipal financial and human resources
- Obtaining Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs permission.

#### Recommendation

It is recommended that City Council develop recreational tourism on Lac des Deux-Montagnes and Rivière des Mille-Îles.

#### Draft resolution

It is hereby unanimously resolved that a favourable opinion be given to City Council on this project.

### **Recreational tourism recommendation #2 – Develop recreation tourism linked to sports events**

#### Geographic location

Applicable throughout Deux-Montagnes.

#### Project description

The Committee proposes taking advantage of different sports events organized in Deux-Montagnes to promote the Municipality. The major events taking place here, such as soccer, hockey, ringette and softball tournaments, and cycling and running competitions are ideal opportunities to spotlight the Municipality, showing off its assets to the many tourists present. Further, the Committee proposes that the City mascot appear at all events.

The Committee suggests developing new sports events in Deux-Montagnes, such as a triathlon, in conjunction with Recreational Services and Community Services.

#### Annual economic impacts

Economic impacts at this level are indirect since sports events show off the Municipality to tourists and encourage them to return here. In the long run, it is mainly businesses that benefit from greater tourist numbers in Deux-Montagnes.

#### Possible obstacles

- Creation of a partnership with organizations
- Lack of municipal financial and human resources.

#### Recommendation

It is recommended that City Council develop recreational tourism linked to sports events.

#### Draft resolution

It is hereby unanimously resolved that a favourable opinion be given to City Council on this project.

### **Recreational tourism recommendation #3 – Develop recreational tourism by organizing seasonal events**

#### Geographic location

Applicable throughout Deux-Montagnes.

#### Project description

The Committee proposes organizing seasonal events to highlight the Municipality's different facets and attract different tourist groups. For example, one event per season could be organized on a specific recurring theme—flowers in spring, the lake in summer, an *Oktoberfest* in autumn and a race on the lake in winter.

#### Annual economic impacts

Economic impacts at this level are indirect since seasonal events show off the Municipality to tourists and encourage them to return here. In the long run, it is mainly businesses that benefit from greater tourist numbers in Deux-Montagnes.

#### Possible obstacles

- Creation of a partnership with industry and/or organizations
- Lack of municipal financial and human resources.

#### Recommendation

It is recommended that City Council develop recreational tourism by organizing seasonal events.

#### Draft resolution

It is hereby unanimously resolved that a favourable opinion be given to City Council on this project.

Economic Development Committee members hope that the results of their work will enable City leaders to make constructive decisions.

For the Committee, it is perfectly clear that the status quo is not an option. Wealth must be created and this inevitably means increasing the area's density. However, it must be done in an organized, structured manner. It is important to implement mechanisms for managing change and explain to citizens what impacts the projects would have on their daily lives and finances.

The Committee's recommendations, which were drawn up in good faith, are intended as potential solutions resulting in positive change for the City's finances, thereby fuelling Deux-Montagnes' economic vitality.

### **Conclusion**

Creating the Citizens' Advisory Committees proved an excellent means for pursuing the deliberations begun at the Citizens' Summit of June 2010. Committee members studied and analyzed an impressive number of subjects and made almost one hundred recommendations to City Council.

It is hoped that the committees' work helps City leaders adopt a strategic development vision and develop an integrated short, medium and long-term action plan. Creation of these new tools can be based on citizens' expectations and wishes since they will be supported by the thoughts and observations of the Citizens' Advisory Committees. This way, it will be universally clear that the actions proposed solve the different problems raised, including the best-known, which is definitely the City's financial situation.

This process confirmed the urgency of developing new revenues to ensure the people of Deux-Montagnes of the quality of life they are entitled to expect. To do this, the revitalization of certain City sectors and projects increasing density are necessary. Generating new revenues, they will curb tax hikes and eventually bring the tax burden to a more acceptable level that more closely corresponds to the increase in the cost of living.

The Citizens Advisory Committees reiterate that the City possesses definite assets to be highlighted in each development project and sphere of activity. Its geographic location, characterized by access to highways 640, 13 and 15 and two suburban train stations providing access to the Municipality, constitutes a major advantage for families seeking a city to live in. The proximity of Lac des Deux-Montagnes and Rivière des Mille-Îles and the presence of many parks and green spaces lend charm and a peaceful quality of life to the City.

Committee members maintain that the municipal administration can and must also rely on its citizens. Dynamic and committed, they are determined to protect their assets while showing openness to change and renewal.

To conclude, the members point out that they greatly appreciated being consulted and involved in the decision-making process. This is why they suggest setting up a committee composed of citizens, elected officials, and service directors mandated to follow up on the recommendations made. They also suggest that the City hold an annual citizens forum where projects and orientations are presented and discussed in workshops and plenary sessions.

Consulting the citizens is definitely a prerequisite for success.

“One must listen a great deal and speak little to govern well.”

Armand Jean du Plessis de Richelieu, French clergyman and statesman (1585-1642)

## APPENDIX 1

### List of Citizen Advisory Committee members

#### **Olympia and Manoir Grand-Moulin Committee**

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*10 members*

*President : Patrick Roberge*

Pierre-Jean Dion  
René Fortin (Olympia Committee)  
Évangéline Frigault  
Martin Hensen (Manoir Grand-Moulin Committee)  
Guy Labelle (Olympia Committee)  
Bernard Laboissière (Manoir Grand-Moulin Committee)  
Patrick Roberge  
Denis Séguin (Manoir Grand-Moulin Committee)

*Autres :*

Tom Whitton, City councillor  
Martin Piché, Manager, Recreational and Community Services (Olympia Committee)

#### **Infrastructure Committee**

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*5 members*

*President : Gilles Dumoulin*

Michel Beauchemin  
Yvon Béliveau  
Gilles Dumoulin  
Jamshid Ghavami

*Autre :*

Martin Angers, Manager, Urban Planning and Technical Services

#### **Public Safety, Civic Spirit and Embellishment Committee**

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*7 members*

*President : Michel Beauchemin*

Gilles Beauchemin  
Michel Beauchemin  
Jean-François Cadieux  
Paul Giroux  
Andrew Green  
Manuel Messias  
Michel Roussin

**Sports and Recreation Committee**

*7 members*

*President : Louis-Pascal Lévesque*

Sophie Beaumont  
Dave Byers  
Troy Ewenson  
Bob Fordham  
Louis-Pascal Lévesque

*Autres :*

Tom Whitton, City councillor

Martin Piché, Manager, Recreational and Community Services (Olympia Committee)

**Culture Committee**

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*7 members*

*President : Martin Lavigne*

Marie-Andrée Côté  
Darlene Gargul  
Martin Lavigne  
Perry Mandanici  
Nicole Ménard  
Steve Menard  
Sylvie Nadon

**Community Development Committee**

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*6 members*

*President : Réjean Nadon*

Dave Byers  
Catherine Doe  
Martin Hensen  
Louis-Pascal Lévesque  
Réjean Nadon  
André Ouellet

## **Economic Development Committee**

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*13 members*

*President : Louis Cyr*

Roger Béland  
Jim Colmer  
Louis Cyr  
Pierre-Jean Dion  
Catherine Doe  
Paul Goyetche  
Benoit Lebel  
Charles MacDonald  
Steve Menard  
Gina Parenteau  
Patrick Roberge  
Jacques Roussil  
Marie Ryder

*Autre :*

Guillaume Bouvrette, City councillor

## APPENDIX 2

### Ice-time pricing, 2011-2012 season, Danièle Sauvageau Skating Rink (adopted by Olympia Committee)

	DIMANCHE	LUNDI	MARDI	MERCREDI	JEUDI	VENDREDI	SAMEDI					
6h00 à 7h00	<b>150 \$</b>						<b>150 \$</b>					
7h00 à 8h00	<b>250 \$</b>						<b>250 \$</b>					
8h00 à 9h00												
9h00 à 10h00												
10h00 à 11h00												
11h00 à 12h00								<b>125 \$</b>	<b>125 \$</b>	<b>125 \$</b>	<b>125 \$</b>	<b>125 \$</b>
12h00 à 13h00												
13h00 à 14h00												
14h00 à 15h00												
15h00 à 16h00												
16h00 à 17h00								<b>175 \$</b>	<b>175 \$</b>	<b>175 \$</b>	<b>175 \$</b>	<b>175 \$</b>
17h00 à 18h00	<b>250 \$</b>						<b>250 \$</b>					
18h00 à 19h00												
19h00 à 20h00								<b>250 \$</b>	<b>250 \$</b>	<b>250 \$</b>	<b>250 \$</b>	<b>250 \$</b>
20h00 à 21h00												
21h00 à 22h00												
22h00 à 23h00	<b>190 \$</b>	<b>190 \$</b>	<b>190 \$</b>	<b>190 \$</b>	<b>190 \$</b>							
23h00 à 24h00	<b>175 \$</b>						<b>175 \$</b>					
24h00 à 2h00								<b>130 \$</b>	<b>130 \$</b>	<b>130 \$</b>	<b>130 \$</b>	<b>130 \$</b>
1h00 à 2h00												



### APPENDIX 3

#### Summary of 2011-2013 building maintenance and repair work (adopted by Infrastructure Committee)

	2011	2012	2013
<b>1.0 BÂTIMENTS</b>	<b>554 350 \$</b>	<b>3 531 850 \$</b>	<b>310 000 \$</b>
1.1 Légion canadienne	34 800 \$	24 000 \$	0 \$
1.2 Garage municipal	43 050 \$	25 350 \$	100 000 \$
1.3 Gare	19 400 \$	13 000 \$	0 \$
1.4 Bibliothèque	80 900 \$	164 500 \$	0 \$
1.5 Incendies	4 700 \$	3 000 \$	0 \$
1.6 Police	1 000 \$	0 \$	13 000 \$
1.7 Usine de filtration	62 700 \$	1 200 000 \$	0 \$
1.8 Cour municipale - archives	163 000 \$	4 000 \$	0 \$
1.9 Hôtel de Ville	118 300 \$	0 \$	0 \$
1.10 Petite école jaune	8 500 \$	0 \$	0 \$
1.11 Station de pompage 3e avenue	2 500 \$	41 000 \$	1 000 \$
1.11 Station de pompage 11e avenue	2 500 \$	41 000 \$	1 000 \$
1.11 Station de pompage - Beaudoin	3 000 \$	41 500 \$	1 500 \$
1.11 Station de pompage Edmond-Lefebvre			
1.11 Station de pompage Grand-Moulin	3 000 \$	41 500 \$	1 500 \$
1.11 Station de pompage Larry-Cool	3 500 \$	1 852 000 \$	2 000 \$
1.11 Petits postes de pompage	1 000 \$	40 000 \$	0 \$
1.12 tous les bâtiments	0 \$	0 \$	190 000 \$
<b>2.0 INFRASTRUCTURES</b>	<b>6 032 000 \$</b>	<b>5 490 000 \$</b>	<b>8 750 000 \$</b>
2.1 Réseau d'égouts et d'aqueduc	5 270 000 \$	5 300 000 \$	4 070 000 \$
2.2 Réhabilitation de trottoirs et bordures	30 000 \$	30 000 \$	30 000 \$
2.3 Mise aux normes du dépôt de neiges usées	282 000 \$	0 \$	0 \$

<b>2.4 Régularisation du drainage pluvial sur Cool et 28e avenue</b>			
	450 000 \$	0 \$	0 \$
<b>2.5 Lampadaires 9e et secteur olympia circle et 28e Avenue</b>			
	0 \$	0 \$	150 000 \$
<b>2.6 Plan directeur de gestion des chaussées</b>			
	0 \$	80 000 \$	0 \$
<b>2.7 Oka Road</b>			
	0 \$	0 \$	2 250 000 \$
<b>2.8 Plan directeur de gestion des chaussées</b>			
		80 000 \$	
	0 \$	80 000 \$	0 \$
<b>2.9 Boulevard des Promenades</b>			
	0 \$		2 250 000 \$
<b>3.0 VÉHICULES ET ÉQUIPEMENTS</b>			
	385 000 \$	390 000 \$	200 000 \$
<b>4.0 LOISIRS</b>			
	77 300 \$	338 900 \$	1 165 000 \$
<b>4.1 Olympia</b>			
	0 \$	88 000 \$	1 000 000 \$
<b>4.2 Chalet du parc Olympia</b>			
	67 900 \$	44 500 \$	0 \$
<b>4.3 Piscine - filtration</b>			
	2 600 \$	0 \$	0 \$
<b>4.4 Parc Central</b>			
	4 200 \$	41 400 \$	0 \$
<b>4.5 Parcs de quartiers</b>			
	2 600 \$	165 000 \$	165 000 \$
<b>TOTAUX</b>	<b>7 048 650 \$</b>	<b>9 750 750 \$</b>	<b>10 426 000 \$</b>