

URBAN PLANNING DEPARTMENT

2019-2024 STRATEGIC PLAN



VILLE DE | CITY OF
WESTMOUNT

FEBRUARY 2019

About this document:

This strategic plan is a bridge document between the report made by the École nationale d'administration publique (ÉNAP) and the subsequent action plan developed by the City's urban planning department.

The present English version is translated from the original French version.



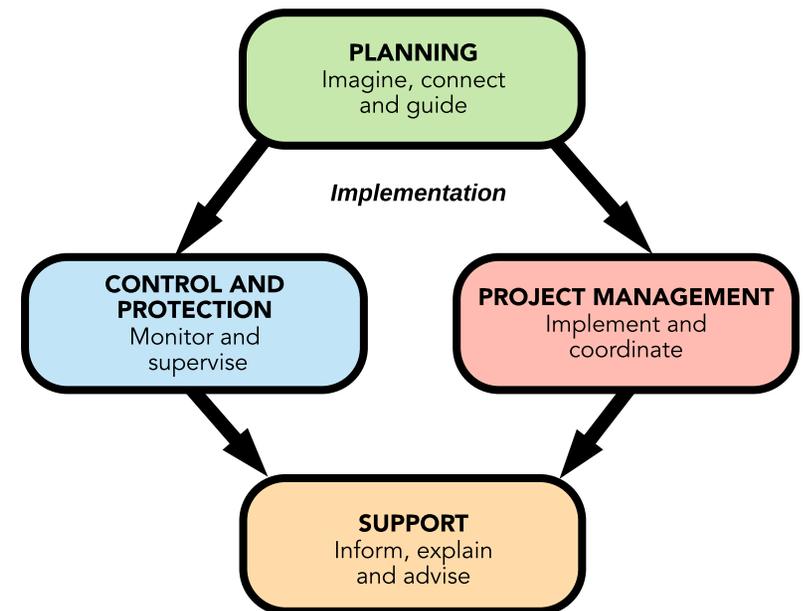
1. Context and diagnosis - Where are we now?

After several years of managing a very large volume of permit applications and following the comments on the delays and complexity of the permit process, expressed by citizens during the 2017 election campaign, the Municipal Council asked the administration to analyze the activities of the department in order to identify problems and possible solutions to better meet the needs of the community. The Urban Planning Department mandated the Direction des services aux organisations de l'École nationale d'administration publique (ENAP) to conduct a detailed analysis of the permit process.

The ENAP report reveals the gap between the situation in Westmount and the situation of an optimal urban planning department where the 4 missions generally attributed to urban planning would be in balance.

The 4 missions of an Urban Planning Department

1. **Planning** : allows to establish the spatial and physical organization for the City while presenting a holistic planning vision by meeting current needs and anticipating those of the future. Planning is most successful when a planning programme is adopted and kept up-to-date: a decision-making and management tool that confirms the social contract between the community in order to guide the activities of a planning department.
2. **Control and protection** : is expressed through urban planning by-laws, authorizations (permits and certificates), and inspections. These activities enable the community to ensure that the social contract on land-use planning concluded between all stakeholders is respected.
3. **Support** : provides citizens, developers and professionals with guidance to plan and carry out development and construction projects in compliance with regulatory frameworks and planning objectives.
4. **Project management** : represents the active role and the projects through which the City intends to implement its action plan. This mission is carried out in collaboration with all municipal departments. These activities may include pilot projects, awareness campaigns, the monitoring of grant programmes, real estate interventions or the implementation of public projects.



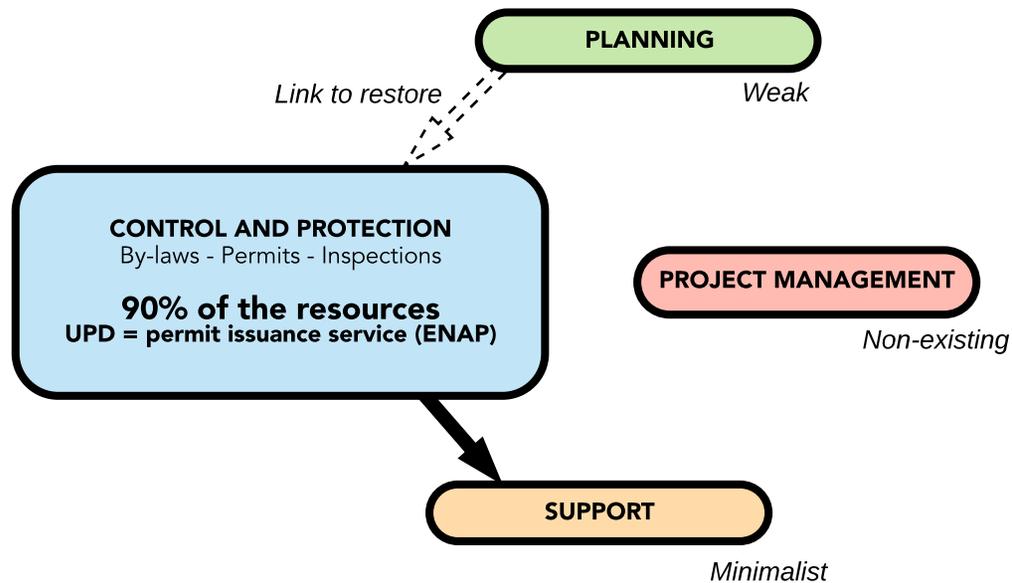
The 4 missions of an Urban Planning Department



In addition to the ENAP's findings, it is also important to note that the urban planning department's (UPD) actions and activities are based on a planning and regulatory framework dating from 1995 and 2001 respectively. An update is therefore recommendable.

The report submitted by the ENAP reveals that permits, certificates and inspections take up almost all of the department's resources. As a result, citizen support, urban planning, staff management and training, the integration of new approaches and technologies and strategic planning are sacrificed in the interests of short-term considerations. The Westmount Urban Planning Department Today is solely a permit issuance service.

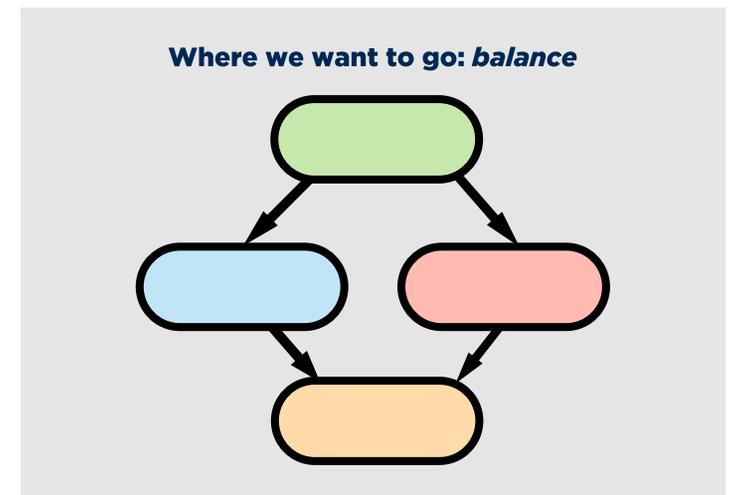
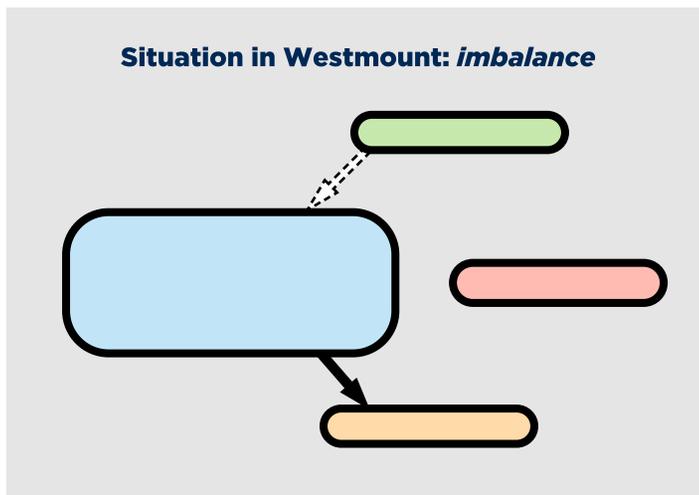
Situation in Westmount: *imbalance*





2. Vision - Where do we want to go?

The general vision for the Urban Planning Department is to restructure its activities and efforts in order to better balance its missions.



For each of the 4 missions, we propose the following visions:

MISSION	VISION
Planning	Imagine, connect and guide: Restore and maintain the social contract up-to-date. Adopt a shared planning vision for the future.
Control + protection	Simplify, reduce and clarify: Define and communicate clear processes and rules that are consistent with planning objectives.
Support	Inform, explain and advise : Provide quality service and help citizens, developers and professionals as early as possible.
Project management	Implement and coordinate : Develop an integrated and coherent approach with municipal departments to implement the planning vision.



3. Action Plan - How will we get there?

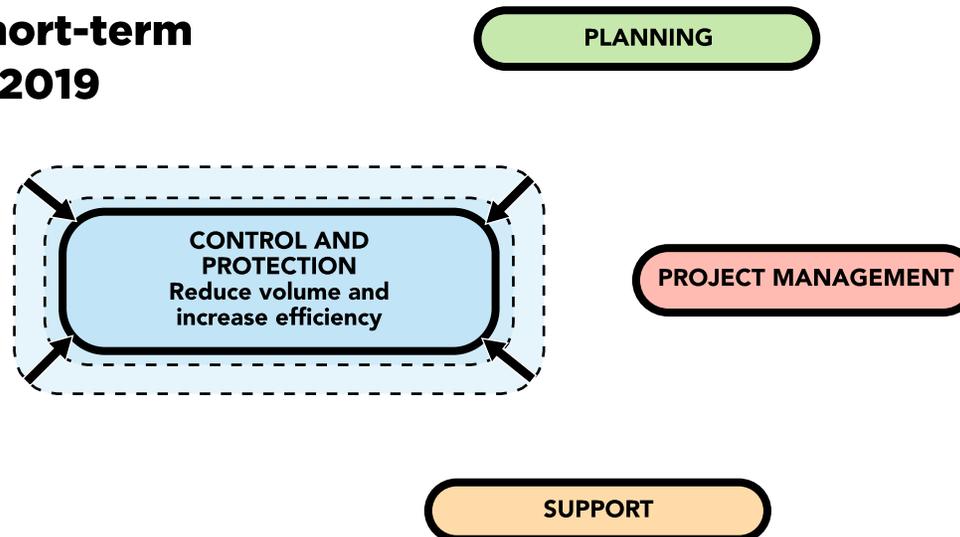
The proposed plan comprises short, medium and long-term actions, based on the recommendations of the ENAP report (see report and executive summary). It is important to note that some recommendations have not been retained, others have been adjusted to fit into a coherent and realistic overall plan.

The administration has prioritized the interventions according to the following strategy:

1) Short-term - Simplify regulations and reduce process

A simplification of current regulations will enable a more efficient permit process. Low impact projects could be exempted from a design review and permits for minor interventions could be issued at the time of the application.

1) Short-term 2019

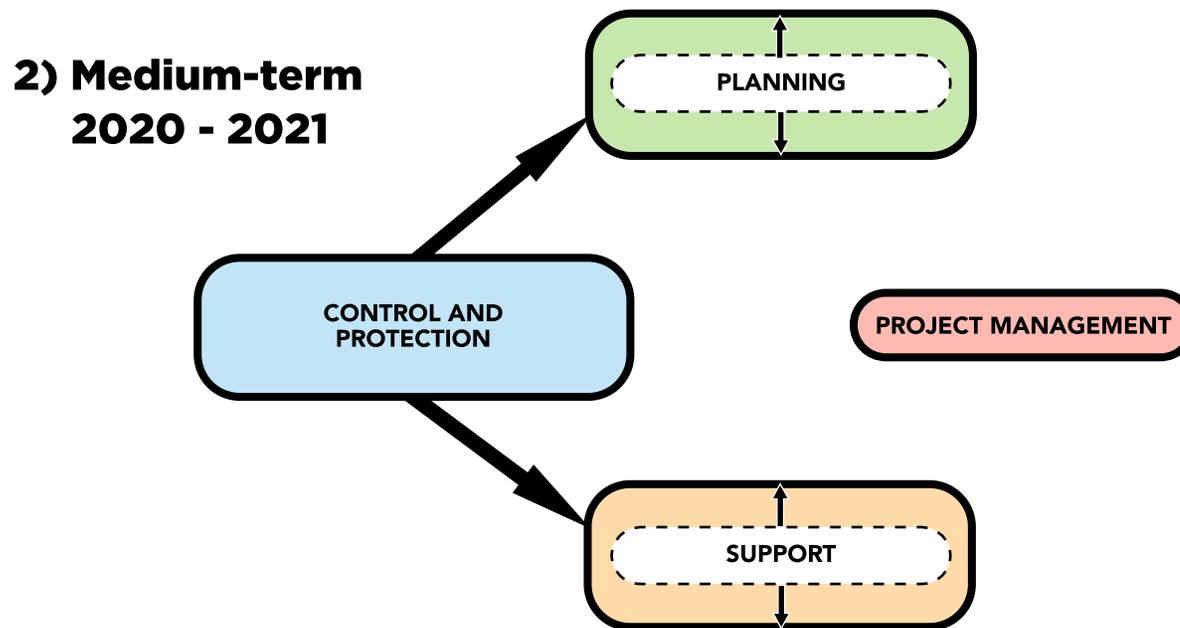




3. Action Plan - How will we get there?

2) Medium term - Transfer and add resources for planning and support

Secondly, the focus should be on planning and support. The success of this approach is based on prerequisites. In order to initiate a planning exercise with the community, the City should ideally have defined a strategic vision to guide the planning process. In order to improve the community's support in carrying out their personal projects, the department requires appropriate meeting spaces and material resources.



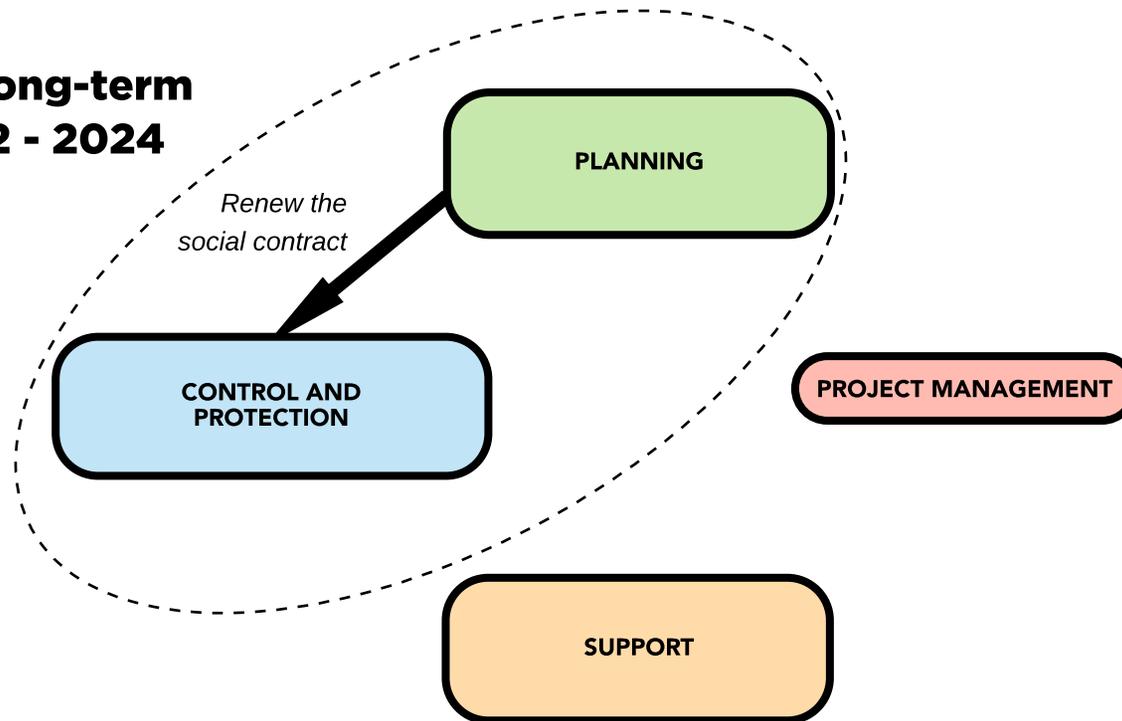


3. Action Plan - How will we get there?

3A) Long-term - Adopt a planning programme and replace by-laws

In the long-term, with a planning process initiated and the objectives of the planning programme defined, the City will be able to undertake a global overhaul of its regulatory corpus in compliance with the planning objectives.

3A) Long-term 2022 - 2024



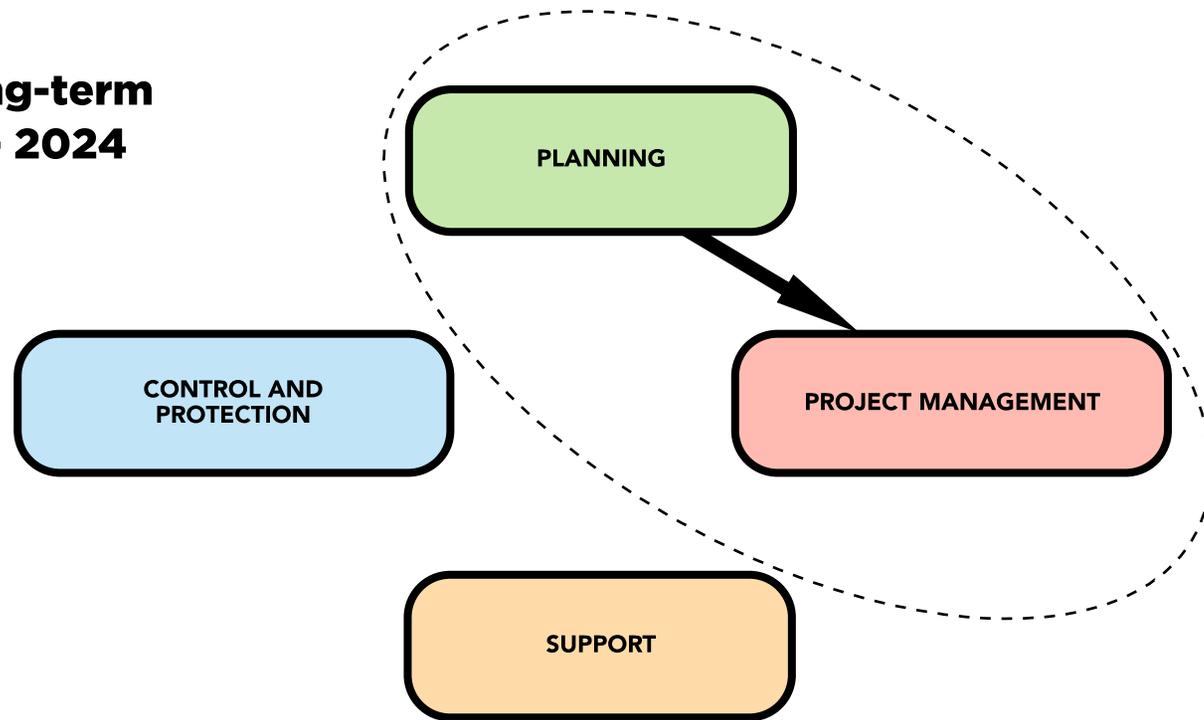


3. Action Plan - How will we get there?

3B) Long term – Develop a project management component

By following this approach, the City of Westmount's Urban Planning Department will be able to rebalance its activities and improve its performance. Ultimately, the Department will be able to develop the project management component to cover all aspects of its mission.

3B) Long-term 2022 - 2024





Summary of the short-term actions - 2019

ACTION	MISSION
Rethink the physical setup dedicated to citizen services	SUPPORT
Repair and optimize telephone call systems	
Carry out a first series of by-law amendments: simplify, reduce and clarify	CONTROL AND PROTECTION
Reduce the number of files and applications submitted to the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC)	
Amend the regulations and procedures in order to issue certain permits directly at the time of application	
Optimize computer tools	
Review the roles of the Board of inspections, PAC and City Council in the permit processes	
Adjust the processing times of permit applications according to the complexity of files	
Carry out a second series of by-law amendments: simplify, reduce and clarify	
Review the PAC expertise (completed)	PLANNING
Initiate a consultation process to establish a diagnosis on the physical and spatial environment	
Identify planning challenges	



Summary of the medium-term actions - 2020 and 2021

ACTION	MISSION
Assess human resources following process review	SUPPORT
Strengthen and promote citizen services	
Identify a convenient and comprehensive format for the new by-laws	CONTROL AND PROTECTION
Strengthen the department's capacity to enforce regulations	
Improve complaint management to better meet citizens' demands	
Complete a draft of the new planning programme	PLANNING
Conduct public consultations on the orientations and objectives of the new planning programme	



Summary of the long-term actions - 2022 to 2024

ACTION	MISSION
Disseminate the new by-laws and create simplified communication tools	SUPPORT
Establish and promote a technical service to assist citizens in heritage conservation and restoration	
Set up an online permit system	CONTROL AND PROTECTION
Implement a monitoring process for the consistent application of the new by-laws	
Adoption of the new planning programme and by-laws	PLANNING
Develop integrated processes with all administrative departments	PROJECT MANAGEMENT