



2021 ACTION PLAN

FOR UNIVERSAL ACCESSIBILITY



VILLE DE | CITY OF
WESTMOUNT



MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

It is my pleasure to share with you Westmount's 2021 Action Plan for Universal Accessibility, the City's strategy for reducing barriers to the full participation of persons with disabilities in social, professional and educational life.

Over the past year, the pandemic has shone a light on the vulnerability of certain groups in our midst, particularly the elderly population and persons with disabilities. This heightened awareness, added to the isolation we all experienced in the past months, has contributed much to the discussion about our most vulnerable neighbours and their needs.

In 2020, we also put into action a new Accessibility Advisory Committee, composed of Westmount residents, elected officials and administrative personnel. The committee's mandate was to meet with City department heads, learn about the work already being done, and make recommendations to Council for further action. The impressive experience of the committee members will undoubtedly bring improvements to the accessibility of Westmount's programmes, services and facilities.

I invite you to have a look at the 2020 report and the actions planned for 2021. I also welcome your knowledge and ideas to move our City forward in making sure every person in our community has the opportunity to contribute their talents.

INTRODUCTION

The City of Westmount fully supports the mission of the *Office des personnes handicapées du Québec (OPHQ)* to advance the principles and rules set forth in the *Act to secure handicapped persons in the exercise of their rights with a view to achieving social, school and workplace integration*.

The City is committed to collaborating with its residents, the OPHQ, and other public organizations to improve municipal services and programmes for persons with disabilities, and to reduce barriers to their participation in society. In accordance with subsection 61.1 of the Act, the City of Westmount hereby submits its 2021 Action Plan.

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REPORT FOR 2020

Like everywhere else, some projects and programmes planned for 2020 were put on hold or canceled due to the pandemic. The City plans to move ahead with and improve on any delayed projects as soon as conditions allow.

OBSTACLE	GOAL	RESPONSIBILITY	STATUS	COMMENTS
Uneven availability of adapted equipment in public playgrounds.	Install a minimum of one ADA-standard adapted swing, an inclusive play area and wheelchair-accessible play areas in every public playground; Install a new accessible play area in Prince Albert Park in 2020.	Public Works	The new playground Installation for Prince Albert Park was moved to spring 2021.	The installation was delayed a second time due to a lack of availability of materials and labour, as well as work conditions during the pandemic.
Relatively rare opportunity for the public to participate in the long-term planning process for the urban built environment	Encourage citizens of all backgrounds and abilities to have a say in the revision of Westmount's Urban Planning Master Plan and contribute to a shared vision of their future city (this is a multi-annual project).	Urban Planning and Communications	The planned public consultation meetings were canceled or made virtual due to the pandemic; Advertising and invitations were sent using various methods to encourage participation in virtual meetings, lectures, webinars and surveys.	The pandemic has encouraged the use of certain electronic communications tools, which has made participation easier for some citizens, particularly those with reduced mobility; on the other hand, some of the planned events and stages of the project have been delayed.
Lack of a formal process to ensure exchanges between community partners concerning universal accessibility and local needs.	Establish a working committee composed of residents, elected officials and City employees that is focused on accessibility in Westmount.	City Council and the Director General's Office	Planning carried out in autumn 2019; Recruitment and selection of committee members took place summer 2020; The first meeting of the Committee was held in October 2020.	Some delays were experienced due to the pandemic; All of the committee meetings take place by Zoom.
Room for improvement in municipal communications on the City's Action Plan on Accessibility and the services available to residents with disabilities.				

GOALS FOR 2021

This year, the City is encouraging a deeper reflection on accessibility needs in the community with the establishment of its new Accessibility Advisory Committee. The recommendations of the committee will be reflected in the 2022 action plan.

OBSTACLE	GOAL	RESPONSIBILITY	PROPOSED MESURES	TIMETABLE
Some local businesses remain difficult to access physically.	Educate merchants and encourage them to take action to make their premises easier to access.	Urban Planning; Communications	Make sure local businesses are aware of opportunities such as the the <i>Petits établissements accessibles</i> funding programme of the <i>Société d'habitation du Québec</i> .	2021
Some local merchants are not necessarily sensitive to the real needs of persons with disabilities.	Encourage merchants to improve their customer services to better accommodate persons with disabilities.	Urban Planning; Communications	Offer merchants educational tools, such as the training videos produced by the OPHQ.	2021
Uneven availability of adapted equipment in public playgrounds (multi-year project).	Continue to install accessible and specially-adapted play equipment in public parks.	Public Works	Planned for 2021: 1. Stayner Park (accessible splash pad) 2. Sommerville Tot Lot 3. Devon Park	Summer 2021
Attending events in person can be difficult for individuals with limited mobility.	Continue to offer live broadcasts of cultural events using social media, even post-pandemic, when events with large audiences are possible.	Library and Community Events	The Library is planning to continue offering live online events to the public.	2021 and beyond; the pandemic provided a unique opportunity for the Library to adapt its services and acquire the tools and the training to offer live broadcasts.
Municipal job postings do not necessarily reach persons with disabilities.	Develop the City's job advertising strategy to reach a wider public, and particularly persons with disabilities.	Human Resources	Find new avenues to advertise to this population segment, including special schools and organizations.	2021
Not all municipal employees are sensitized to the experiences of persons living with a disability.	Offer employees training opportunities and tools to help them better serve clients with various disabilities.	Human Resources; Communications	Find and distribute educational tools to staff, particularly the training videos created by the OPHQ, and a guide to respectful terminology related to disabilities.	2021

OBSTACLE	GOAL	RESPONSIBILITY	PROPOSED MEASURES	TIMELINE
Some individuals with visual incapacities have difficulty with orientation in public parks.	Look at wayfinding tools that can function with smartphones.	Communications	Research and test existing wayfinding applications and carry out trials with users.	2021-2022
Some individuals have difficulty navigating the City's website.	Review the website in the context of web accessibility standards.	Communications	Integrate more accessibility functions into the website; Carry out tests using accessible pdf files in collaboration with users of adapted software; include accessible files as often as possible on the website.	2021-2022
Municipal employees are not all sensitized to the experience of persons living with dementia, and persons with Autism Spectrum Disorder.	Make training available to City employees that are most likely to have close contact with seniors and with other vulnerable groups.	Public Safety	Add to the training profile of Public Safety officers: 1) VDT (Virtual Dementia Tour) accredited training 2) Giant Steps training for first responders (intervention strategies with persons on the Autism spectrum).	2021 or 2022; The planned VDT training - delayed due to the pandemic - is expected to resume soon; The Giant Steps training will depend on availability.
Part of the senior population does not have access to electronic communications. It is difficult to reach this segment of the population and therefore to understand its needs.	Use a more diverse array of outreach tools to get information to the right audience and to listen to its concerns.	Public Safety; Communications	Encourage registration in Westmount's services for vulnerable persons; Continue distributing printed info; Offer open house sessions in the parks (with Contactivity) to meet the public and inform them of the the services available.	Three sessions of park kiosks are planned for summer 2021.

PORTRAIT OF THE CITY

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Based on the annual population decree issued by the *Ministère des Affaires municipales, des Régions et de l'Occupation du territoire*, Westmount had 21,152 residents in December 2020. The Canadian Survey on Disability (2017) estimates that one in five Canadians aged 15 and over has one or more disability that limits them in their daily activities. Of those, more than 4 of every 10 persons has a severe or very severe disability. From this data, we can extrapolate that more than 4,500 Westmounters live with some kind of disability, without counting parents using a stroller or persons whose mobility is temporarily limited.

CITY OF WESTMOUNT DEPARTMENTS

1. City Council and Director General's Office

Recognizing social integration as a collective responsibility, the City is committed to encouraging participation in community life by adapting its services as much as possible and by constantly improving them. Members of City Council and the Director General's Office are attentive to requests from residents, particularly those that involve accessibility.

2. Urban Planning Department

The Urban Planning Department's responsibilities include the planning of public spaces and parks, the establishment and enforcement of construction and renovation guidelines, and the Residential Adaptation Assistance Program. The department produces the Access Westmount Guide, a list of accessible public and commercial buildings within its territory. Westmount council and administration work to find the right balance between enforcing guidelines to protect the City's architectural heritage and addressing public accessibility needs, particularly in the context of an aging population.

LEGAL CONTEXT: The Agglomération de Montréal's *Schéma d'aménagement et de développement* (regional land use and development plan), adopted in 2015, requires the integration of universal accessibility provisions into the by-laws of its member municipalities, including Westmount. In 2016, the City incorporated provisions into its urban planning by-laws, for example reducing the height difference between a public roadway and a building's ground floor, and providing safe and well-lit pathways between buildings and public roadways. The guidelines also require accessible parking spaces to be located near entrances.

3. Westmount Public Library and Community Events

The Library and Community Events personnel respond to client needs as they arise and provide individual assistance to visitors to enable their participation in activities and social integration overall. The Library and the Victoria Hall Community Centre, both heritage buildings, are nearly barrier-free and are adapted to meet universal accessibility standards.

4. Communications Division

The Communications Division is responsible for the City's website and publications. It takes into consideration the accessibility of its communication methods and seeks to reach all members of the community by using a range of communications tools. As a bilingual-status municipality, Westmount produces and disseminates information in both official languages.

5. Hydro Westmount

Hydro Westmount is responsible for the distribution of electricity and for the maintenance of the electrical network on its territory. This includes the installation and maintenance of street and traffic lights in all public areas. Representatives from Hydro Westmount also sit on the Transportation Advisory Committee.

6. Human Resources

Westmount is an equal opportunity employer committed to meeting the specific needs of the individuals that join its team. Candidates are welcome to apply online for positions and specify any particular needs they have.

7. Public Safety Department

Westmount's Public Safety Department offers support and assistance to all residents in safety matters. Residents with disabilities may request and receive additional support to access services and maintain contact. For example, Public Safety officers pay particular attention to the health needs of vulnerable groups (seniors, persons with reduced mobility, persons with a mental illness) during extreme heat or cold weather events, and may offer advice or help getting home. The department also initiated a programme to reduce the social isolation of local seniors. Public Safety officers work closely with the Montreal Police Service (SPVM), the Montreal Fire Department (SSIM) and the local CLSC.

8. Legal Services and City Clerk's Office

The City's Legal Services and City Clerk's Office is made up of three components: Legal Services, the City Clerk's Office, and the municipal archives. It is responsible for all of the City's legal affairs, its corporate secretariat, and the conservation of municipal documents. The Office works in close partnership with senior management and with elected officials to prepare council meetings and all related documents (minutes, municipal by-laws, council resolutions, public notices). It is also responsible for managing claims and access-to-information requests.

9. Sports & Recreation

The Sports and Recreation Department offers a variety of programs to residents of all ages. Its objective is to foster a sense of belonging within the community and promote Westmount as a healthy environment in which to live. Using a personalized approach, the Department's team adapts its sports and recreation activities to the needs of its clientele, including individuals with special needs. Where possible, it adapts equipment and activities to accommodate the specific physical and mental needs of individuals with disabilities and their companions.

10. Engineering Department

The Engineering Department is responsible for the design, planning, construction and maintenance of the City's infrastructure to ensure the comfort and safety of residents, businesses, and institutions. The accessibility of all public spaces, indoor and outdoor, is always part of engineering planning.

11. Public Works Department

The Public Works Department ensures the cleanliness and safety of the City's streets, sidewalks, and green spaces, and manages the urban forest and the municipal waste removal services. In addition, it works in close collaboration with the Engineering Department to maintain all of the City's buildings, as well as the water and sewer networks. Public Works is also responsible for the selection and installation of equipment in public spaces, most notably the furniture and other equipment used on streets, in parks and in playgrounds.

WESTMOUNT ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The mandate of the WAAC is to make recommendations to City Council in September 2021 to help each administrative department to further enhance programmes and reduce barriers for persons with disabilities, ensure equal access to services and encourage full participation for all in local civic life.

The term of the mandate is September 2020 to September 2021. The committee meets monthly with various department heads to discuss services and accessibility issues related to that department.

More information about the committee is available at [**westmount.org**](https://www.westmount.org)

OTHER RESOURCES

In addition to local municipal services, Westmount residents have access to a number of resources and services that contribute to their mobility and social integration.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

STM and exo

Public transit in Westmount is managed by the Société de transport de Montréal (STM) and exo (formerly the AMT - Agence métropolitaine de transport, which serves the Greater Montreal area). The City is well served: currently, eight bus lines go through its territory, and two metro stations are located nearby, including the Vendôme intermodal station.

The STM and exo have universal accessibility policies, which can be consulted on their respective websites. In addition, both offer adapted public transportation services, door-to-door, with reservation. Users must first be registered to access this service.

STM adapted transportation

stm.info / transport.adapte@stm.info / teletype-text telephone (TTY) : 514 280-5308

exo paratransit

exo.quebec/en/accessibility / 514 287-TRAM (8726)

Nearby Metro stations

ATWATER, Line 1 – Green (Angrignon/Honoré-Beaugrand)
3015 De Maisonneuve Blvd. W., Montréal
2322 Sainte-Catherine St. W., Montréal

VENDÔME, Line 2 – Orange (Côte-Vertu/Henri-Bourassa)
5160 De Maisonneuve Blvd. W., Montréal

Lignes d'autobus

DAY SERVICE	24 Sherbrooke	90 Saint-Jacques
	37 Jolicoeur	104 Cavendish
	63 Girouard	124 Victoria
	66 Boulevard	138 Notre-Dame-de-Grâce
NIGHT SERVICE	356 Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue	

Suburban trains

VENDÔME intermodal station	Montréal/Blainville-St-Jerôme line
	Montréal/Delton-Candiac line
	Montréal/Dorion-Rigaud line

RESOURCES IN THE COMMUNITY

Contactivity Centre

**4695 De Maisonneuve Blvd. W.
514 932-2326**

**contactivitycentre.org
Facebook.com/contactivitycentre**

The Contactivity Centre, a not-for-profit organisation founded in 1972, offers a friendly space for active seniors and a full range of activities and programmes – shared meals, classes (tai-chi, watercolours, fitness), excursions and more. Thanks to volunteers, the Centre also has a range of home assistance services, including help with errands, accompaniment to medical appointments, cab-sharing for seniors with limited mobility, as well as a daily phone check service for people living alone. Membership is \$20 per year.

Montréal Oral School for the Deaf

**4670 Ste-Catherine St. W.
514 488-4946**

info@montrealoralschool.com

The school assesses the basic needs and capacities of deaf and hard-of-hearing children registered in various school boards in the Montreal region. It also has support groups for hard-of-hearing children aged 6 to 11, hard-of-hearing teenagers aged 12 to 18, as well as their parents.

YMCA Residence

**4039, rue Tupper
514 932-5353**

The Residence offers accommodations and meals to a varied client base, including refugees, asylum seekers, homeless persons, as well as Aboriginal persons from Northern Quebec visiting Montreal to receive medical care. It offers orientation and awareness workshops to facilitate social integration.

YMCA de Westmount

**4585, rue Sherbrooke O.
514 931-8046**

The Westmount YMCA is a complete health and fitness centre. It also offers specialized fitness programs, including those for seniors and for people with arthritis, enabling a smooth reintroduction to physical fitness in a safe and comfortable environment.

Zone Jeunesse / YMCA de Westmount

**4675, rue Sainte-Catherine O.
514 989-5252**

The Youth Zone is a not-for-profit centre for youth aged 12 to 17. The Youth Zone is located at the Westmount Recreation Centre and is managed in partnership with Westmount YMCA. This community organization is committed to offering fun and engaging social, recreational, cultural, and educational activities in a safe environment. Its members also have access to a homework assistance program, music classes, and cooking workshops. They are invited to show up at any time to meet new friends, have a snack, or do their homework after school. Membership is free, although certain activities may involve fees.