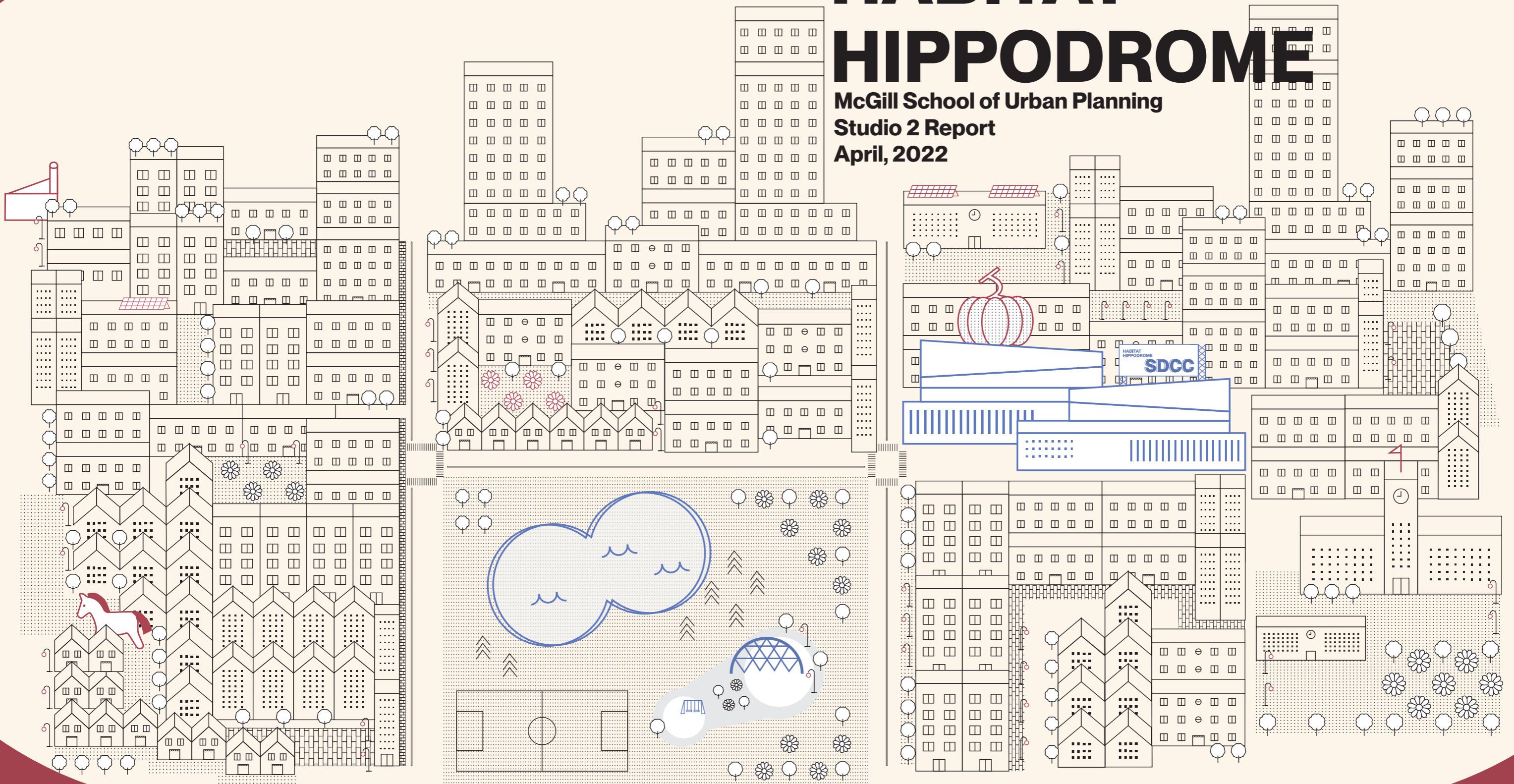


HABITAT HIPPODROME

McGill School of Urban Planning
Studio 2 Report
April, 2022



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Habitat Hippodrome is an aspirational plan to develop the Hippodrome site proposed by McGill Master of Urban Planning students that envisions a model community for democratized, inclusive, economically accessible, and ecological development in Montreal. By seizing the opportunity to collaborate with the City of Montreal, other levels of government, the local community, and the social economy, the plan includes interventions and strategies that would deliver long-lasting housing that is affordable and decommodified. The plan, which was produced between January and April 2022 as part of a counter-planning exercise, serves as inspiration and demonstrates possibilities for citizens and other stakeholders involved in transforming the Hippodrome site to meet community needs.

CONTEXT

In recent years, the housing crisis in Montreal has aggravated severely. Over a third of Montreal households, or over 180,000 households, are spending more than 30% of their income on housing. This is especially true in a neighborhood like Côte-des-Neiges, where there is a high proportion of low-income households. In addition to facing unaffordability, low-income households are also facing overcrowded and poorly maintained housing conditions. The Hippodrome is a well-located vacant 46 hectare site that represents an opportunity to partially fill these needs. Given Montreal's strength in the social economy realm, the presence of community groups and activists, the site and current context presents a unique, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, especially for different levels of government to step in and contribute to decommodified and affordable housing.

THE PLAN

A DEMOCRATIZED SYSTEM OF GOVERNANCE

We propose the establishment of a Community Land Trust where the land would be transferred from the City of Montreal to maintain the social purposes of the land. It would be characterized by the following key elements:

- A system of decision-making involving elected representatives from the Côte-des-Neiges community, from housing associations operating in the Hippodrome community, and from municipal government.
- A hired directorate including a Société de développement communautaire et commercial to program commercial and community spaces on the site with the objective of generating opportunities for building social cohesion and generating economic opportunity.
- A Community Backbone Committee that informs community development initiatives through ongoing public engagement.





A HUMAN SCALE COMMUNITY

The site will feature a mix of unit sizes and tenures with high-rise towers, mid-rise apartment buildings with courtyards, and three-storey plexes, in three distinct density zones, laid out taking into account specific design, circulation, green space, and social infrastructure considerations. A total number of 6,721 units will be included, ranging in size from one to four bedrooms.

A HOLISTIC MOBILITY PLAN

The plan provides a wide range of transport options for residents and visitors, addressing the site's current isolation. We aim to create a high-quality travel environment that favours a variety of transport options, ensures a more equitable access to mobility, and reduces car dependency, all the while acknowledging the important presence of the car in neighbouring areas. These imperatives structure the design of the proposed connections and internal street network. Key proposals include:

- Creating an active mobility corridor along rue des Jockeys to connect to Namur metro station.
- Redirecting traffic towards the northern border of the site, making the site a more car-free environment for all users.
- Creating an internal street layout that includes one complete street running through the site, serving as the main internal access point for car-related services, as well as a complementary network of many smaller streets acting as shared spaces for cyclists and pedestrians.



VIBRANT PUBLIC SPACES AND PARKS

Interior Spaces: This plan includes major physical space interventions and a variety of programmatic elements which will evolve with community demand. These include a community centre, schools, and a large flex space. Commercial and social economy spaces will be located throughout the site, to be leased or programmed by the Community Land Trust according to community needs.

Exterior Spaces: In addition to interior spaces, the plan proposes several typologies of exterior public spaces to promote rich community programming and healthy, sustainable lifestyles, including a large park, a public plaza, smaller decentralized park spaces, a biodiversity belt, and four green corridors. These are designed to provide the site with both an abundance and variety of public and green spaces.



BUILDING HABITAT HIPPODROME

We estimate that the development cost to build the proposed housing units on the site would be \$4.6 billion, not including the community and ecological amenities which are key to this plan. We also assume a donation of land from the City of Montreal and that the Community Land Trust would be exempt from property tax payments. Our strategy for financing includes generating equity from the sale of residential and commercial spaces on the site, revenue from affordable rents, and fundraising from community organizations and different levels of government.

To begin development, the Community Land Trust would be established in its initial phase, with a board of directors composed of city officials and community representatives from the Corporation de développement communautaire de Côte-des-Neiges. It would be tasked with assembling a development consortium composed of experts with credibility and experience in developing large sites.

In subsequent phases, as construction is underway and housing associations begin operating on the site, the Community Land Trust board would gradually include representation from residents of the Habitat Hippodrome community. The phasing plan that we propose would take 20 years from pre-construction to completion. Social amenities like parks or community spaces would be prioritized from the start of development.

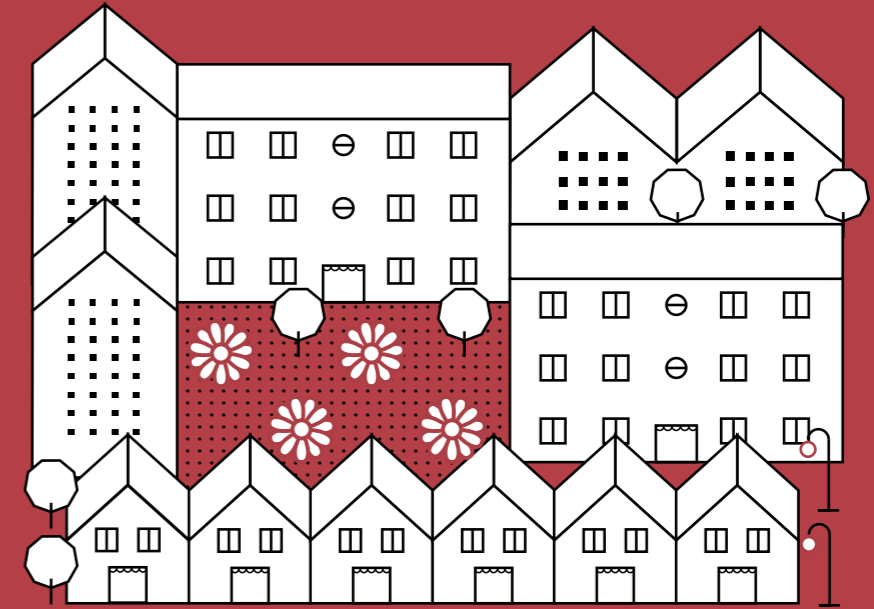
NEXT STEPS

Habitat Hippodrome is a vision for redeveloping the Hippodrome site from bottom-up. For it to become a reality, it would require leadership from the local community, which we hope will be inspired by this vision. A vision where permanent affordable housing is at the heart of a sustainable and adaptive community. In the next round of public consultations, we encourage citizens to push for innovative ideas that ensure the Hippodrome serves local needs such as those included in this plan. We also encourage civil servants and other stakeholders to empower citizens to do so. A project like this also requires significant commitments from the different levels of government, especially in the form of financing and modification of affordable housing programs.



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SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Problem Statement

The 46-hectare Hippodrome site is a highly contested parcel of land in western Montreal, located at the juncture of Côte-des-Neiges—Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, Côte Saint-Luc, and Hampstead. The site is located on the unceded territories of the Kanien'kehá:ka Nation. The CDN-NDG neighbourhood is also home to a high proportion of low-income, unhoused and immigrant populations which contributes to the area's cultural and economic diversity.

In 2017, the City of Montreal acquired the Hippodrome site in a transfer from its former owners, the province of Quebec, under the condition that it devise a plan for its development, with further subdivision and land transfer mandated to take place by 2023. The City of Montreal has launched a comprehensive consultation process through the Office de Consultation Publique de Montréal (OCPM), and currently intends to redevelop the site through private real estate development. Given the profound housing crisis affecting Montreal, Quebec, and Canada more broadly, and the site's importance as part of the Côte-des-Neiges--Notre-Dame-de-Grâce neighbourhood, we present the following document as an exercise in counter-planning which meets the ecological and social goals of the City of Montreal while delivering deeply affordable long-term housing solutions to the community.

Mandate

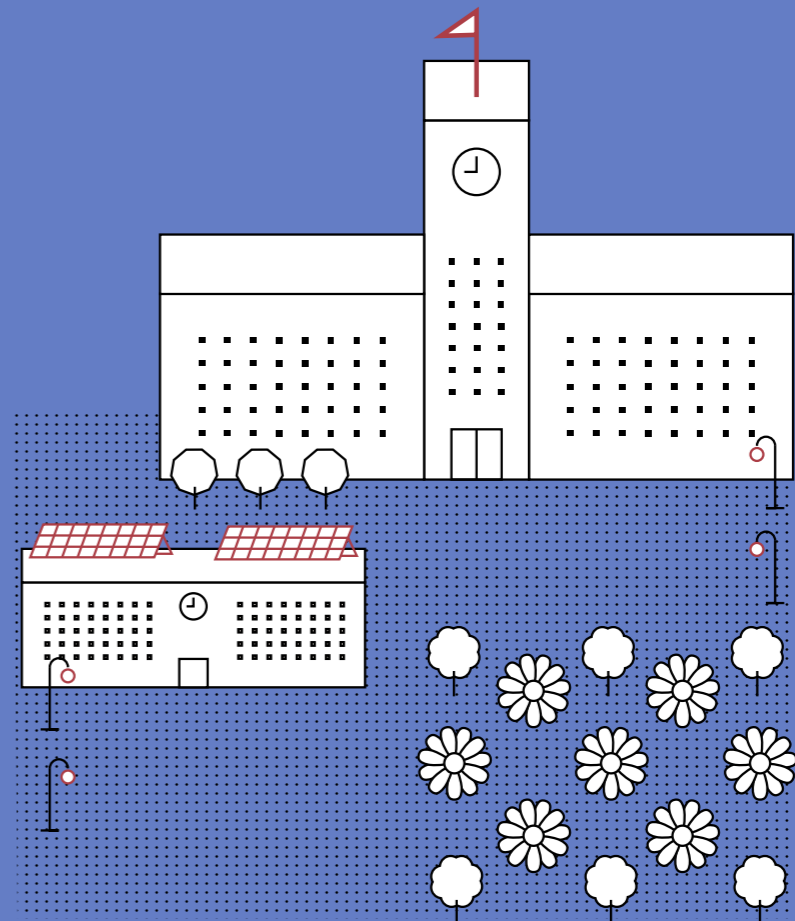
The mandate of this project is to create a comprehensive community plan for the Hippodrome site that can help address the widespread local and regional need for affordable housing and inspire further decommodified housing projects. Our understanding is that such a plan must emerge from existing community demand, respond to a variety of needs, and include plans for viable implementation. To this end, the report addresses the urgent need for permanent affordable housing in the site's neighbourhood and beyond, and suggests opportunities for innovative, democratic, ecologically conscious, and socially responsive community building. While the resulting plan is aspirational, the implementation strategy and feasibility analysis ground the report's ideas in existing political and financial realities. By identifying the opportunities and barriers of realizing a community plan at this scale, this proposal also situates itself as a pilot site for similar housing projects around the country.

Process

This report was produced by a team of 40 students at the McGill University School of Urban Planning as a graduate studio project. It is the culmination of work conducted by eight teams of students examining the Hippodrome site from different perspectives, including community demand, finance, governance, policy, built form, social infrastructure, circulation, and ecology and public space. Data was gathered through independent research, professional and academic mentorship, public consultation documents, census data, and course material. Each team's work has been integrated into a holistic community plan which we have termed Habitat Hippodrome.

It is important to note that no community consultation was conducted by students during this project. Though many values and ideas in the report draw from public participation documents, existing community plans, and guidance from housing and urban planning specialists, overall constraints of ethics and scope limited the ability of students to engage with community input, and in particular, Indigenous rights and claims to land. It will be essential that the groups steering future development on the Hippodrome site on unceded Indigenous territory involve the Kanien'kehá:ka Nation, as well as other proximate residents and stakeholders. This report is not intended as a directive document, and represents recommendations that should be considered an experimental counter-planning exercise. It is our hope that this work contributes to the rich variety of perspectives, discussions and ideas that have been inspired by the invaluable opportunity the Hippodrome site represents.





SECTION 2

HOUSING CONTEXT AND COMMUNITY NEEDS

Housing Context and Community Needs

The Right to Housing

Housing is essential to individual security, well-being, and happiness. Canada is a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which recognizes housing as a fundamental human right, and in 2019 the right to housing was formally recognized under Canadian law. However, many Quebecers are currently struggling to afford long-term housing, and many experts have argued that Canada continues to find itself in a housing crisis. Across the country, housing prices have consistently risen faster than incomes, and wait lists for social housing are getting longer.

A core cause of the current housing crisis is the financialization of housing. As a result, the monetary value of housing has become uncoupled from its primary use as a space of shelter, safety, and privacy. Instead, housing is increasingly used as a financial tool to generate wealth. The exchange value of real estate is therefore outpacing its use value, leaving poor and middle-class families unable to access the housing they need. While the financialization of housing has provided financial security and savings to many middle class Quebecers, the consequences of an under-regulated housing market are too great to ignore. Housing must be accessible to all, not simply to those who are able to purchase access to the real estate market.

Housing Need in Montreal

The story in Montreal is consistent with the national situation: from 2000 to 2015, housing prices in the city increased by 172% while incomes rose by only 47%. For rental units, which make up 44% of households, average rents have, since 2016, risen from \$720 to \$913 (See Figure 1). Even with Quebec's rent control laws, which are designed to protect prices on existing rental properties, rents are increasing across the city. This not only heightens precarity for already vulnerable low-income populations; even middle-class Montrealers are increasingly struggling to find affordable housing.

Over a third of Montreal households do not have access to affordable housing as defined by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation. In 2016, in the City of Montreal:

- 36.5% (or 180,000) households pay more than 30% of their income on housing
- 17.7% (or 87,000) households pay more than 50% of the income on housing
- 8.5% (or 40,000) households pay more than 80% of their income on housing.

Over the past several years, rising inflation and the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this crisis. Between 2020 and 2021, increasing unaffordability has driven 48,000 people out of the City of Montreal as they move to suburbs in search of more affordable housing. Coupled with future population growth in the Montreal region reaching 4.7 million inhabitants by 2031, it is likely that housing unaffordability will remain a prominent issue for decades to come.

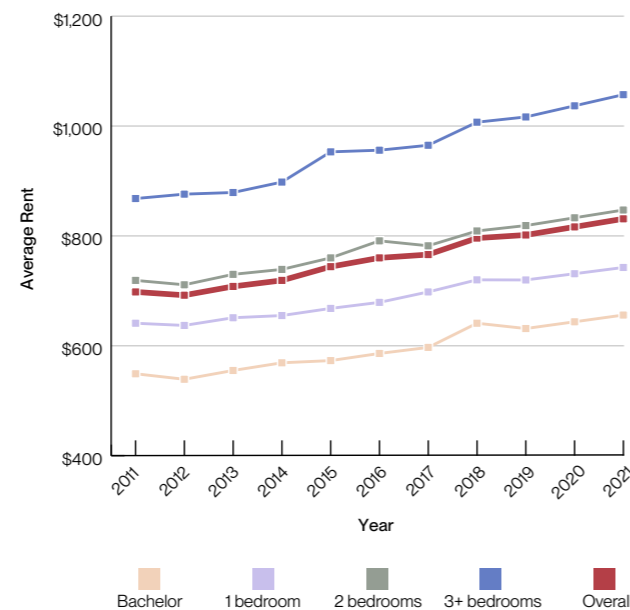


Figure 1: Accelerated increase in average rent over the last five years.

Public and Community Involvement

Quebec, and Montreal in particular, is characterized by a legacy of strong citizen advocacy in the name of affordable rental housing. The city's continued community mobilization and local partnerships have helped Montreal become a national leader in devising creative housing solutions to meet affordability needs. However, federal and provincial funding programs and policy strategies have often failed to leverage this local momentum or have restricted it entirely.

The Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) is the branch of the federal government responsible for providing housing solutions across Canada. The organisation was founded in 1946 on the premise of bringing homeownership within reach to Canadians, and it has adopted policies to promote homeownership by keeping interest rates low, providing mortgage insurance and securitization, and subsidizing down payments for first-time home buyers. While a successful wealth-building strategy for many Canadian families, these policies have resulted in the increasing financialization of housing and a growing gap between owners and renters. Today, homeownership has become inaccessible for many Canadians.

During the 1970s and 1980s, support for social and community housing was at its peak in Canada. The CMHC funded programs to invest in community-led housing projects and provided these funds to provincial housing authorities. In Quebec, the Société d'habitation du Québec (SHQ) funnelled these resources directly to grassroots citizen organizations, known as Groupes de ressources techniques (GRTs), and other non-profit groups to support grassroots housing solutions. The housing produced during this time represents the majority of social housing structures that exist in Montreal today.

When federal funding for affordable housing ended in the 1990s, the SHQ responded by creating the AccèsLogis and Programme supplément au loyer (PSL) policies to continue to address housing insecurity. AccèsLogis is a provincial subsidy program that funds the construction of social housing units for low- and moderate-income households, seniors experiencing loss of autonomy, and people with unique housing needs. The PSL provides direct financial support to individuals living in these units and other social housing residences to close the gap between the price of rent and their financial capacity. Despite a lack of federal financial support, these provincial programs have created and maintained over 30,000 social and affordable units in Quebec over the last 25 years.

Current Policy Tools

As the provincial government's agenda for housing solutions has shifted in recent years, the AccèsLogis program has seen steady cuts to its funding. In the 2019 and 2020 budgets, the provincial government did not allocate any funds to the construction of new rental units through AccèsLogis, marking the lowest investment to date in the history of the program. The current budget prioritizes funds for the new Programme habitation abordable Québec (PHAQ), which incentivizes the construction of rental units but has more lenient affordability requirements and is not mandated to produce social housing.

While the SHQ has reduced its funding of social housing, the CMHC has in recent years demonstrated a renewed interest in addressing rising housing unaffordability. Their \$70 billion National Housing Strategy (NHS), launched in 2017, represents the federal government's most substantial commitment to improving access to affordable housing since the agency withdrew its support at the turn of the century. While this new commitment to invest in diverse housing strategies is promising, the funding available through the NHS is insufficient to meet the current need for social and affordable housing in Canada.

The National Housing Co-Investment Fund (NHCF) and the Rental Construction Financing Initiative (RCFI) are two of the most highly funded programs in the CMHC's National Housing Strategy. These programs have been effective at incentivizing the development of rental housing, but are not affordable for

Percent of New 1-Bedroom and Bachelor Units that Meet Program Affordability Criteria

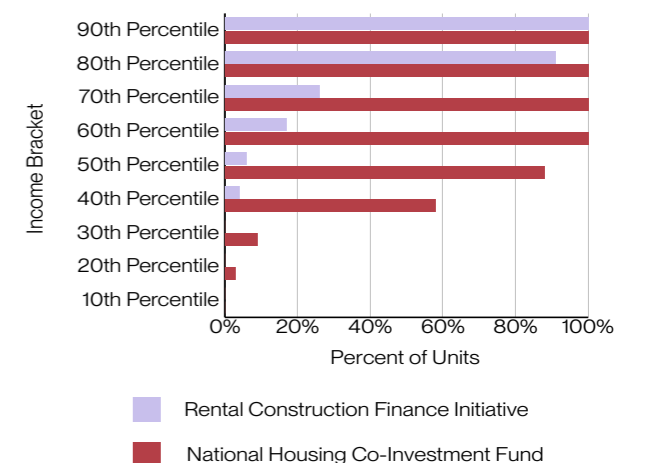


Figure 2: Percent of 1-bedroom or bachelor units produced through NHCF and RCFI that meet program affordability criteria

communities facing the greatest housing insecurity. Figure 2 displays the percent of 1-bedroom or bachelor units produced through these programs that households in each income bracket can afford without paying more than 30% of their income. It should also be noted that the RCFI has produced more than twice the amount of rental units compared to the NHCF.

The majority of National Housing Strategy funding is contingent on provincial and territorial governments co-investing in projects by contributing half of the funds. The decreased interest from the SHQ in supporting affordable housing means that housing organizations in Quebec will have a harder time accessing the benefits of these programs.

At the municipal level, although the City of Montreal has limited access to funding from higher levels of government, its proximity to the local context makes it a key ally in the potential development of social and affordable housing. In addition to administering the AccèsLogis program at the city level, the City of Montreal has introduced regulatory tools to guide the construction of affordable housing. The two main tools are: 1) the pre-emptive right by-law, which gives the City of Montreal right of first refusal for property sales within its jurisdiction; and 2) the Règlement pour une métropole mixte (RMM), which forces developers to include lower-than-market-rate units in new housing developments. These programs are helpful in the production of more rental and affordable housing, but are insufficient on their own.

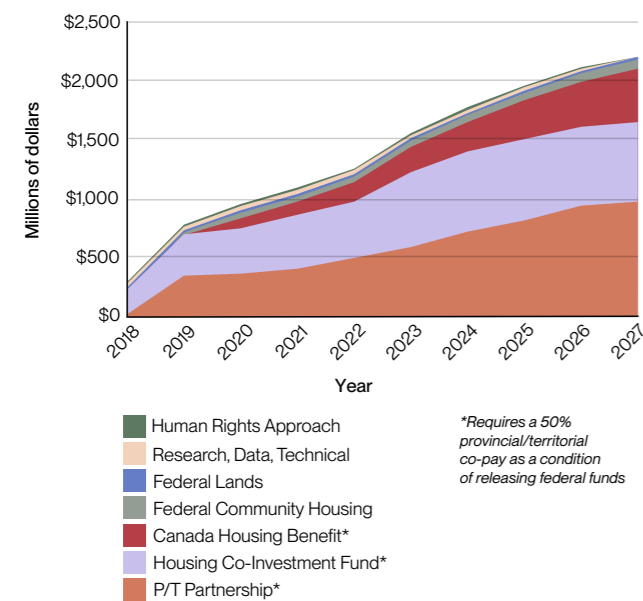


Figure 3: Proposed Federal Expenditures for Canada's NHIS, 2018-2027

With provincial disinvestment from the AccèsLogis program and the CMHC's focus on delivering market-rate housing, current programs are not projected to produce the level of affordability or quantity of units that are needed to meet housing demand in Montreal.

Without increased financial support to provide quality housing for all, many people will continue to experience housing insecurity. The overarching themes that have led to an insufficient policy response to Montreal housing needs are:

- The financialization of housing.** Government support for homeownership is directly responsible for a significant share of the rise in housing costs above incomes. The consistent flow of federal dollars into market-based ownership has steered investment activity into the business of transforming housing into real estate, which is a highly competitive market.
- Insufficient support for a variety of housing tenures.** While there are policies that support the rental sector, they do not incentivize the development of innovative housing tenure models such as rental cooperatives and limited equity housing that can meet the diversity of community needs.
- Policies lack focus on permanent affordability.** Current programs lack support to ensure that affordable units remain affordable in the long term. Public funding is used to incentivize or subsidize the creation of affordable rental units but these units may be converted to market-rate when agreements expire.
- Over-reliance on the private market.** Market-built housing is important, but the justifiable need to turn a profit limits the ability of private developers to produce deeply affordable units. Housing solutions created by the private market are therefore not affordable or too few in number to meet the needs of thousands of Montrealers.

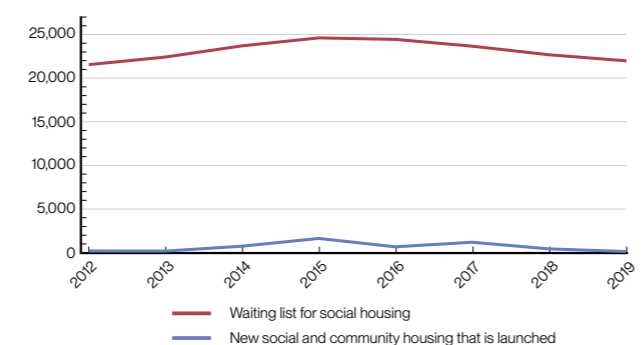


Figure 4: Unmet demand off social housing in the City of Montreal.

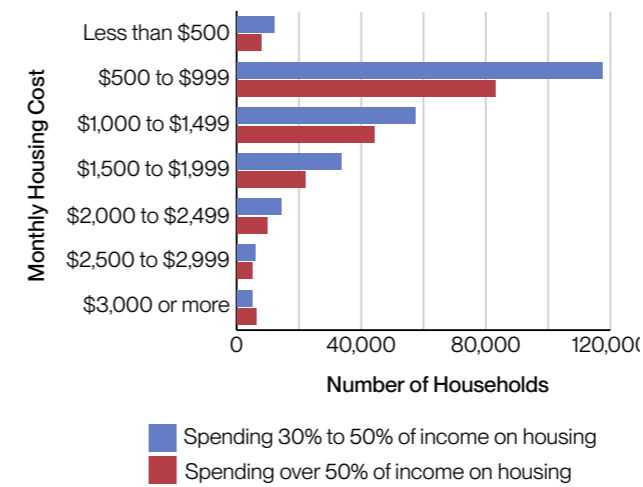


Figure 5: Housing cost to income ratio

The Hippodrome Site

In the context of urgent regional and local need, it is important that the Hippodrome site be designed with thoughtful consideration for its future residents and neighbouring areas.

According to public consultation documents, the surrounding community advocates for the site to be developed with the following features: a large amount of social housing, high accessibility and connectivity to the surrounding area, robust social infrastructure and sustainable and aesthetically pleasing green spaces. The following outlines some of the demands for each aspect within the community:

1. Demand for Social Housing

In public consultations on the Hippodrome site conducted by the OCPM, community groups expressed the need for housing on the site to escape real estate speculation. Residents requested at least 2,500 social housing units on the site. There was demand for the city to go beyond the 20% share of social housing set out in the city's Règlement pour une métropole mixte, with participants proposing that 35%-100% of the site be allocated to social housing. This demand was accompanied by concerns about other recent developments in the area such as Le Triangle lacking adequate social housing. For non-social housing on the site, there was considerable demand that most, if not all, units be affordable to middle-income households searching for long-term housing.

The 2015 report by the Corporation de développement communautaire de Côte-des-Neiges on the Hippodrome site determined that residents and community members are supportive of diversity both in terms of housing tenure and the demographics of future residents. Although residents conveyed

a preference for smaller buildings, such as the triplexes seen in the Plateau, they also expressed concern regarding the small size of many existing social housing units and wished to prioritize larger units in the design process.

In addition, consultation participants desired a mix of housing typologies and tenure types in order to accommodate families and to reflect the socioeconomic diversity of Côte-des-Neiges. As part of social housing units, groups such as l'Unité de travail pour l'implantation de logement étudiant (UTILE) recommended 800 units be reserved for student housing.

2. Improving Connections

During the OCPM public consultation process, circulation was one of the main concerns addressed by residents. The public consultation process drew attention to the fact that more residential units will increase congestion, ultimately leading to a poorer quality of life. Many people within the community found that there were limited opportunities to cross boulevard Décarie to access the Namur metro station. For pedestrians and cyclists, this phenomenon contributes to a sense of being "second-class citizens". Additionally, the area lacks both safe cycling infrastructure and frequent transit options. As a result, the community hopes the redeveloped Hippodrome site will be accompanied by increased connectivity and intermodality through projects such as the extension of boulevard Cavendish and pedestrian corridors connecting the site to the metro and nearby communities.

3. Social Infrastructure

Social infrastructure encompasses the network of physical and non-physical spaces, services, and institutions that create opportunities for community connection and a sense of safety and security. Historically, there has been a lack of support for social infrastructure projects in the borough of Côte-des-Neiges--Notre-Dame-de-Grâce. The borough has the lowest per-capita funding and operating budget in the city, at \$401 per resident, while other boroughs receive an average of \$548 per resident. This operating budget covers salaries, park maintenance, programming in community centres, and other services. Much of the borough's existing social infrastructure, including schools, community centres, and libraries, are concentrated along chemin de la Côte-des-Neiges, three kilometres away from the Hippodrome site.

Nearly all educational and health facilities that are located within a one kilometre radius from the site are privately owned or highly specialized. There is only one daycare centre located within one kilometre of the site, and no senior's residences within that range. Research carried out in Montreal has shown that, for youth aged 9 to 17, community centres act as



Figure 6: Location of the Hippodrome site

“sanctuaries”. Where walking distances are too great, low access to social infrastructure weighs on teenagers’ sense of belonging and on their cognitive and emotional development.

4. Sustainable Development Practices

The site is surrounded by highways and arterial roads, resulting in a high volume of vehicular traffic that leads to noise and air pollution. These conditions can also create more extreme heat conditions during warm months, known as the urban heat island effect, which can cause serious health risks for vulnerable populations. The Hippodrome site is also part of a larger ecologically significant area, linked to the former Saint-Pierre basin. As a result, there have been calls to integrate the Hippodrome into larger ecological and biodiversity corridors.

Building upon the results of the OCPM-led consultation, the City of Montreal currently plans to create a mixed-use ecoquartier that limits car use. There will be emphasis on large public park spaces, connections to and from the area, and a rich diversity of flora and fauna. While our team supports these principles, we believe the City and Province’s agreement to sell off the land as a source of revenue is a missed opportunity to build on the province of Quebec’s strong tradition of building mixed-use communities with diverse housing options.

Habitat Hippodrome

The Hippodrome site is one of the last large tracts of publicly held land in Montreal. We believe this site represents an excellent opportunity for both levels of government to collaborate and show their commitment to housing as a human right and to help create an accessible, ecologically-conscious community. To this end, we propose that the City of Montreal use the Hippodrome site to provide permanently affordable, decommodified housing, with collective governance, social infrastructure, and green spaces. This would take the form of a large-scale, 20-year community development project called Habitat Hippodrome.

The proposed project would build the foundation for a complete community that provides flexibility, autonomy, and economic opportunity for its residents, as well as connectivity to the rest of Montreal. Our plan follows the precedent set by the City of Montreal and includes provisions not simply for the 46 hectares of publicly-held land at the site, but for a wider 54.8 hectare area which includes lands held by Canadian Pacific Railway. As the 8.8 hectares of CPR-held land is to be used primarily for ecological purposes and does not include the construction of buildings, we anticipate fruitful cooperation with the landowner.

This proposal is supported by four main imperatives:

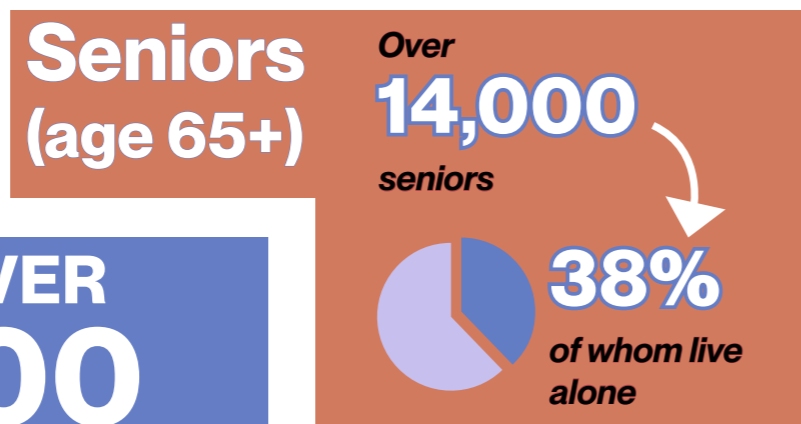
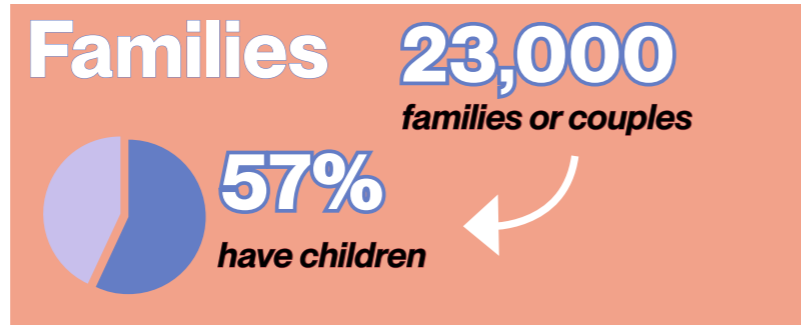
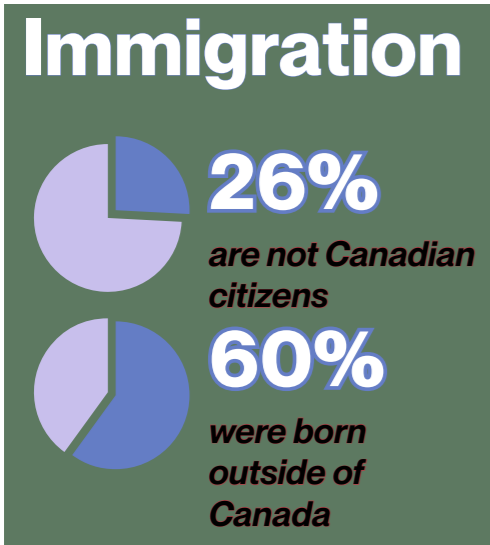
- **Imperative 1:** Pursuing decommodified housing at the Hippodrome site will help address the housing affordability crisis in Montreal. The site is public land capable of delivering thousands of units of housing. Ensuring that this housing is shielded from the volatility

of the market will meet the needs of the public without unduly burdening the private sector with a task it cannot fulfil on its own.

- **Imperative 2:** This proposal will both allow the federal government to fulfil its legal obligation to Canadians’ right to housing and help achieve the municipality’s goal of providing affordable housing in Montreal. The City of Montreal has declared its intention to provide affordable, accessible, and well-maintained housing for its residents. Using this site for permanently decommodified housing is a concrete step towards actualizing these goals.
- **Imperative 3:** Keeping the land public will have greater long-term financial benefits for the City of Montreal. While selling the land will result in immediate funding available for municipal coffers, maintaining public stewardship of the land will yield far greater financial benefits in the long run.
- **Imperative 4:** The provision of decommodified, collectively-governed housing will ensure both economic diversity and permanent affordability for residents. Thousands of families will receive a much-needed place to live and gain long-term housing security. The structure of this proposal will also ensure a healthy level of economic diversity in the Côte-des-Neiges neighbourhood.

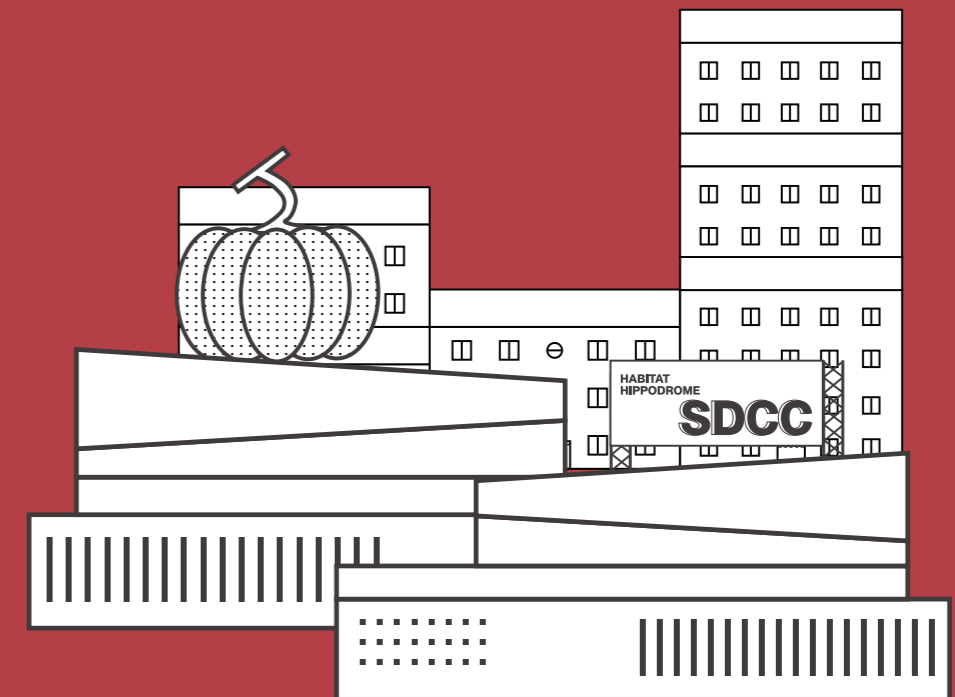
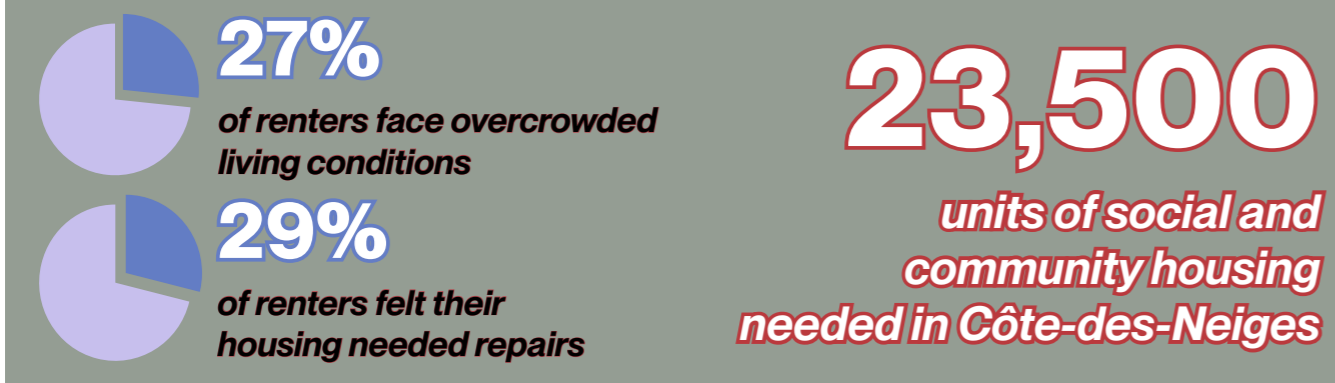
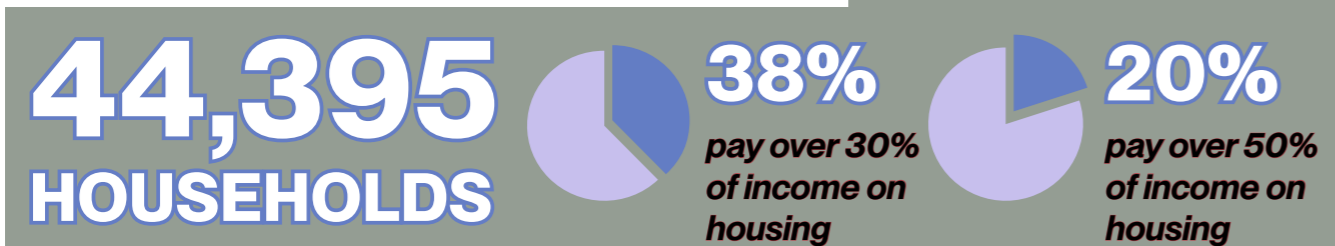
Habitat Hippodrome is a plan for a new urban community that responds to existing local needs while taking a visionary step towards a democratically-governed, robust social and economic neighbourhood. The following sections detail how such a community can be designed, implemented, and financed.

Building upon the results of the OCPM-led consultation, the City of Montreal currently plans to create a mixed-use ecoquartier that limits car use. There will be emphasis on large public park spaces, connections to and from the area, and a rich diversity of flora and fauna. While our team supports these principles, we believe the City and Province’s agreement to sell off the land as a source of revenue is a missed opportunity to build on the province of Quebec’s strong tradition of building mixed-use communities with diverse housing options.



HOME TO OVER
100,000
PEOPLE

Households



SECTION 3

THE HABITAT HIPPODROME PLAN

The Habitat Hippodrome Plan

Vision and Guiding Principles

The Habitat Hippodrome plan is guided by a set of cross-disciplinary design and governance principles that form the basis for a complete community. The plan should also be understood as a pilot project which will demonstrate the potential of affordable, democratic, and accessible community building.

The Habitat Hippodrome plan promotes principles of collective control of housing and grassroots governance. Whether in their own homes, their buildings, or in the broader neighbourhood, the organization of the site will empower communities to dynamically respond to challenges through collective action. This flexibility will also be evident in the built environment, as design guidelines focus on spaces and buildings that adapt to the needs of all residents who will call Habitat Hippodrome home over the coming decades.

Accessibility and activity are also underscored as key principles for the site. A more active and accessible community increases the potential for residents to create bonds both with one another and the broader Côte-des-Neiges neighbourhood. Through innovative interventions for human and non-human movement, water management, energy usage, and community-building programs focused on sustainable living, this plan will demonstrate the socially conscious development potential of publicly-held land.

Decision Making

Governance Structures

How can a site of a few thousand decommodified housing units be managed while involving residents in the decision-making process? How can housing be made affordable in perpetuity? What are the characteristics of an innovative, yet robust,

governance structure? To answer these questions, this plan proposes a two-tier governance and decision-making structure. This will be split between an upper tier responsible for decision-making across the site and a lower tier responsible for managing community life and housing at a smaller scale.

In the upper tier of governance and at the scale of the entire site, the incorporation of a community land trust (CLT) is proposed. It will be an organisation primarily responsible for holding the land in trust on behalf of the community to ensure its continued affordability. This organization will also be responsible for sub-leasing land, community development, upholding participatory democracy, generating and reinvesting revenues from profitable activities in the community, resolving conflict, and engaging organizations and citizen groups in Côte-des-Neiges and all levels of government.

In the lower tier, groups of housing associations will be established to provide structure for resident input regarding the management and operation of individual buildings on the site, and to undertake small-scale community programming. These associations will include housing co-operatives, non-profit housing, and social housing operators. The CLT will also operate market-rate rental housing. Lower-tier organizations will be responsible for following an agreement for property and community stewardship with the CLT, promoting a high quality of life for residents and fostering connections among residents and the broader Habitat Hippodrome and Côte-des-Neiges community.

decided by the general assembly, but will largely be composed of committees that are analogous to the hired departments of the CLT. Committees will include:

- **Finance:** which will work to set and adjust annual budgets for the CLT;
- **Buildings and land maintenance:** which will be responsible for responding to lower-tier input into the physical upkeep of the site and all buildings on it;
- **Community Backbone Committee (CBC):** which is an essential community development tool within the Habitat Hippodrome governance model and is detailed below.

The CLT board will be responsible for providing oversight on all CLT-level operations, approving or reviewing projects submitted by the CLT assembly, and sending them to the departments for implementation. It will also hold CLT employees accountable to community demands. Ten of the fifteen seats on the board will be occupied by selected delegates from the general assembly, providing two-thirds community representation on the board. Three seats will be held by representatives of community organizations from the Corporation de développement communautaire Côte-des-Neiges, a group of Côte-des-Neiges-based nonprofits, and two seats will be held by city or borough officials. This allows for exchanges at the highest level of decision

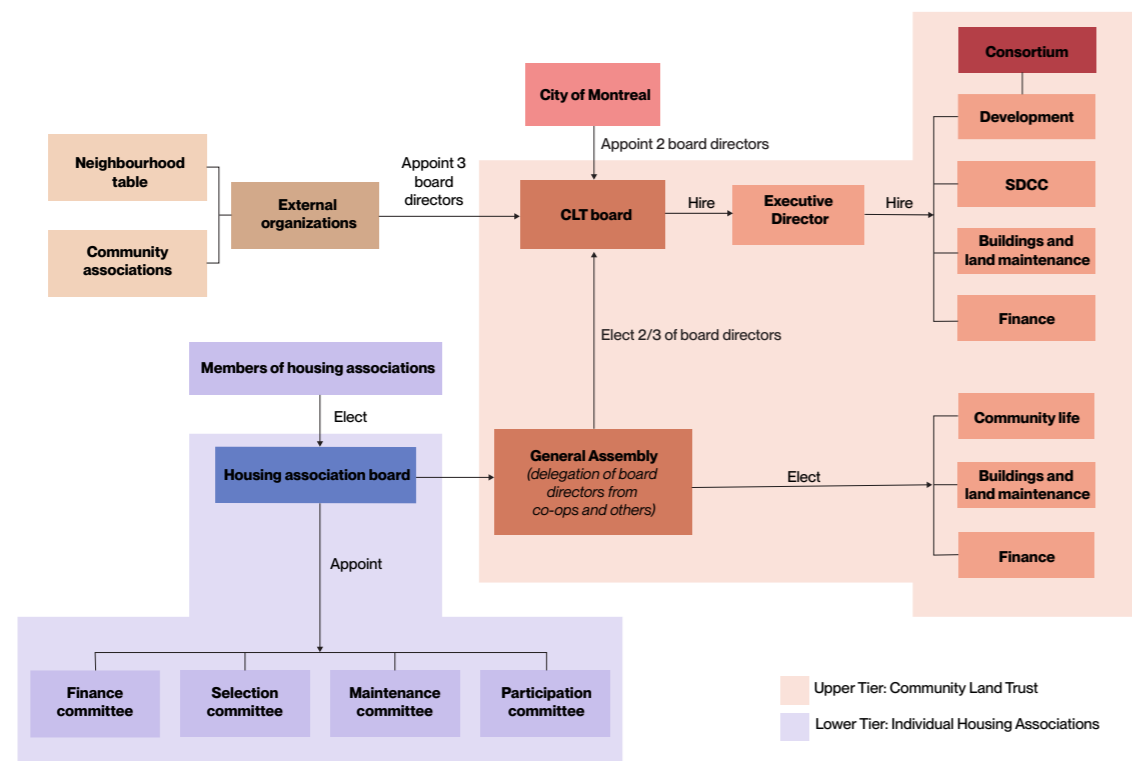


Fig 7: Governance Chart

Upper Tier

While decision-making structures embedded in housing associations will manage most day-to-day matters for residents, it is also important to develop similar structures, accountable to residents, to make decisions about the management of the CLT as a whole. These structures will make up the upper tier of governance, comprising the general assembly and its committees and the CLT board and its departments.

The general assembly will act as a legislative body for the site, proposing bylaws, budgeting measures, and modifications to CLT-owned public space. The assembly will be composed of appointed members of housing associations' boards (in the case of co-ops and nonprofit housing) and elected members (in the case of social housing and market rental housing), proportional to the number of residents in each housing association. For example, if rental co-op members make up 15% of the site's population, then 15% of general assembly seats will belong to rental co-op members. Residents of housing associations will be able to communicate their needs to their boards and general assembly members during regularly scheduled meetings so that representatives can uphold their interests in the general assembly. General assembly delegates will be sorted into committee assignments. The assortment of committees will ultimately be

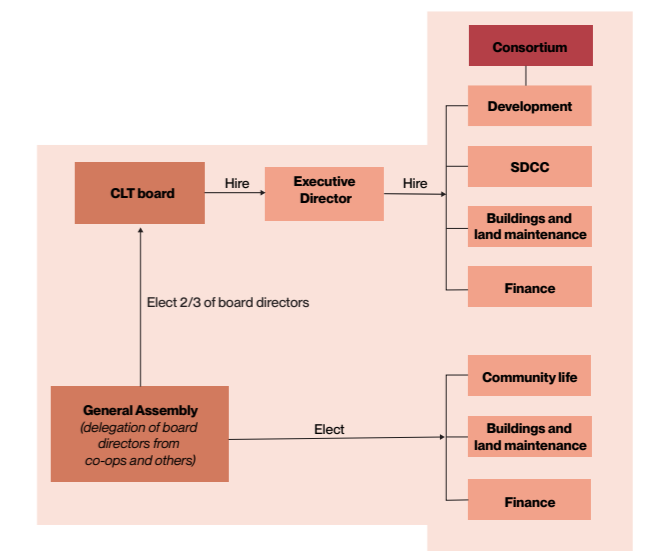


Figure 8: Upper Tier

Case Study: Community Backbone Committee

It is important that the system of democratic governance described above be supported through consistent community involvement in decision-making. This will be achieved through the creation of a Community Backbone Committee (CBC) which will facilitate public engagement work in the neighbourhood. This committee will operate alongside others at the level of the general assembly, and will organize workshops, design charrettes, and any other necessary community consultation activity. The mandate of the committee is based upon two principles: shifting power relations to avoid a paternalistic approach to decision-making and maintaining autonomy for community members and programs.

The CBC will work to provide a platform for residents to speak on local issues and connect residents and their projects with policy makers and civic leaders in the broader community. By doing so, it will help the community overcome the systemic barriers that members of decommodified housing face in civic participation and advocacy. As capacity is built among residents, they can identify gaps in services and programs, and offer potential solutions. Once needs have been identified and brought to the CBC, a conversation with the wider community can be initiated, with the CBC facilitating, to ensure that community members have the time and space to raise their own concerns. After community consultation, the CBC will synthesize findings and present concrete ideas to address issues at hand. They will then work alongside citizens and outside partners to design projects and strategies. Once a strategy has been determined, citizen groups will work with the CBC towards implementation. This process will be iterative, requiring continuous feedback from the community. Once implementation is complete, there will be continued monitoring of the project to ensure its long term viability.

making between the range of stakeholders involved in the community.

The CLT will hire teams of employees that are accountable to the board and are responsible for work in different departments. Providing expertise, they will implement projects proposed by the CLT assembly and approved by the CLT board. Departments will include:

- **Finance:** tasked with implementing budgeting proposals from the general assembly and approved by the CLT board. It will also be responsible for ensuring that the CLT remains in good standing financially;
- **Buildings and land maintenance:** responsible for planning and implementing maintenance processes through CLT employees or contractors;
- **Development:** responsible for managing construction and planning and guided by a development consortium. The consortium will be a group of social economy development enterprises selected through a competitive bidding process by the development department and executive director to act as a developer for the site;
- **Société de développement communautaire et commercial (SDCC):** responsible for managing commercial activities and community programming on the site;
- **The ombuds committee:** tasked with managing and resolving conflicts that occur in the CLT's sphere of responsibility. This will involve adjudicating disagreements between different housing associations or individual residents of different housing associations. Conflicts that cannot be resolved by lower tier resolution committees will be addressed by the ombuds committee.

The Lower Tier

Individual residents play an important role in Habitat Hippodrome's bottom-up democratic structure. As such, their involvement will be crucial to the functioning of the housing associations. At annual meetings, after receiving a report on their housing association's activities for the year, residents of a co-op, for example, will democratically elect their co-op board for the year and take part in the selection of volunteer committee members. They will also provide input on proposed bylaws and strategies to be carried out at each level.

The housing association boards elected or appointed at annual meetings will be tasked with managing the property, finances, and day-to-day operations of their association. Rental co-ops, limited equity cooperatives, and nonprofit housing will operate through such boards. On the other hand, market rental and social housing

will be managed through the CLT and Office municipal d'habitation de Montréal (OMHM), respectively.

To assist the boards in carrying out administrative work, committees will be formed. This will include permanent committees dedicated to finance, maintenance, participation, conflict resolution, and resident selection. Furthermore, ad-hoc committees will be formed to address temporary matters such as the organization of social events or the planning of a community garden. This structure will allow for a better distribution of the workload and will allow individual residents to play a more direct role in managing their housing and community.

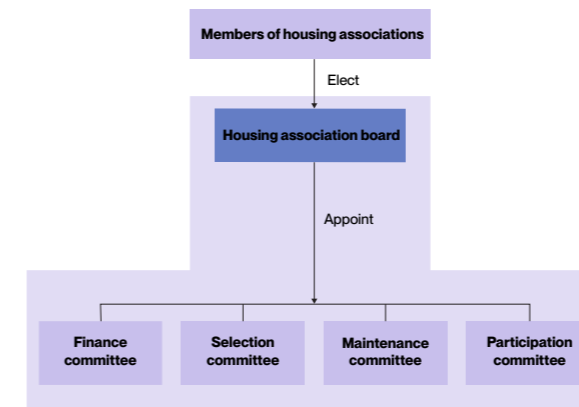


Figure 9: Lower Tier

Case study: Community framework models

The framework is influenced by several case studies which have been adapted to meet the specific needs of the Habitat Hippodrome project. The East Scarborough Storefront in Greater Toronto acts as an anchor organization that connects residents to networks of local services, rather than providing programming directly. They champion a hyper-local and place-based approach to community-led development and public investment in the neighbourhood. Rising Places in Chicago is an organization primarily focused on creating spaces and programs for children and families. Community voices and designs are at the heart of every initiative, and there is an emphasis on community-led discussions, rather than traditional consultation methods.

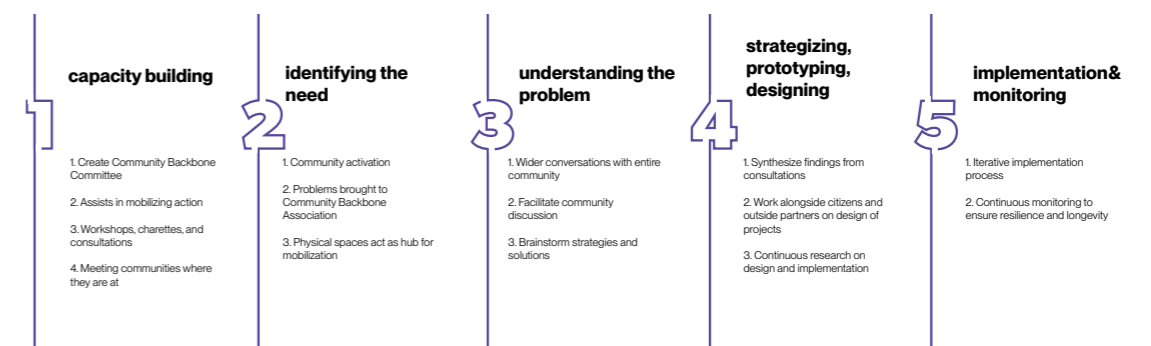


Figure 10: Social Infrastructure Framework

Design of the Site



Figure 11: Site Layout

Site Layout

The placement of buildings and their relationship with one another on the Habitat Hippodrome was devised in consultation with other design aspects, such as circulation, green space design, and social infrastructure. In order to meet the demand for housing in Côte-des-Neiges-Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, a benchmark of 6,000 units was set for the Hippodrome site. A total number of 6,721 units is included in this proposal, ranging in size from one to four bedrooms.

The breakdown of these unit sizes was informed by research on community demand and is as follows:

- 1 bedroom: 15% or roughly 900 units
- 2 bedrooms: 20% or roughly 1,200 units
- 3 bedrooms: 45% or roughly 2,700 units
- 4 bedrooms: 20% or roughly 1,200 units

To ensure a range of choice for present and future residents, the site will feature a mix of unit sizes and tenures with high-rise

towers, mid-rise apartment buildings with courtyards, and three-storey plexes. To optimize access to future high-frequency transit options on rue Jean-Talon Ouest, higher density housing will be concentrated at the north and west ends of the site. Toward the southern and eastern ends of the site, density gradually declines in order to complement the surrounding low-density residential communities. The result is a density gradient which delineates three distinct density zones.

The lowest density zone (Zone 1) is composed predominantly of three- to six-storey buildings. This zone is concentrated at the southern and southeastern sections of the site, flanking the freight rail corridor and single-family communities in Hampstead. The medium density zone (Zone 2) consists of mid rise apartment buildings up to nine storeys in height. This zone will house the two largest community spaces and acts as the main public area of the site. The highest density zone (Zone 3) consists of high-rises that are consistent with recent residential development projects in Côte-des-Neiges-Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, such as Le Triangle. This zone will also house a significant proportion of the site's social economy and commercial spaces, primarily along the rue Jean-Talon Ouest axis.



Figure 12: Density Map

Shadow Study

Considerations of sunlight and sky views for future Habitat Hippodrome residents informed the block configuration and siting of high density developments. The angle of the density gradient and massing techniques such as building step backs and towers-on-podiums are employed to ensure maximum sun and skylight exposure to the residential units. Displayed here is a shadow study conducted in density Zones 2 and 3 at the vernal equinox (March 21), summer solstice (June 21), and winter solstice (December 21) at 10:00am, 2:00pm, and 5:00pm Eastern Standard Time. The shadow study visually represents the extent and coverage of shadows over the streets and other buildings in Habitat Hippodrome.

Urban Design Guidelines

The Habitat Hippodrome plan features a set of residential design guidelines to ensure that all development actors align with the broader vision for the site. This framework will direct development to achieve a vibrant built environment and optimal living conditions for residents. The following are a general description of the key objectives of the Hippodrome Residential Design Guidelines. A more detailed outline of the [design guideline index](#) can be found in the Appendix.

The key objectives of the Hippodrome Residential Design Guidelines are to:

- Promote excellence in urban design and architectural work
- Allow for innovation and creativity while respecting the surrounding urban and environmental context
- Ensure a high quality of life for residents
- Adapt to community needs both now and in the future
- Maintain appropriate scale, density and morphology throughout the site
- Provide space for a variety of land uses and flexibility to transition between uses
- Place universal accessibility at the forefront of the design process
- Incorporate green and blue infrastructure as integral elements of the plan
- Produce a cohesive and harmonious internal urban form



Figure 13: Shadow Study

Connectivity and Mobility

The Habitat Hippodrome offers numerous opportunities for improved connectivity with neighbouring areas, as well as mobility within the site itself. The site is highly accessible by car via the adjacent Décarie Expressway. However, the Expressway also represents a major physical barrier that contributes to the site's disconnection from the rest of the city. Rue Jean-Talon Ouest runs along the northwest edge of the site, separating the area from a concentrated industrial zone in the Town of Mount-Royal to the north. Also bounding the site are avenue Clanranald along the northeast, a rail corridor to the southeast, and a Canadian Pacific Railway yard to the southwest. The City of Hampstead and City of Côte-Saint Luc residential enclaves are located opposite the train tracks. The site is served by Namur metro station on the STM's Orange Line and infrequent bus options.

Based on community need, our plan provides a wide range of transport options for residents and visitors to Habitat Hippodrome and addresses the site's isolation from nearby communities. We aim to create a high-quality travel environment that favours sustainable travel modes and reduces car dependency while acknowledging the necessity of car usage for many residents. These imperatives structure the design of our proposed external connections with surrounding neighbourhoods and internal street network. They also inform our interventions for public transit, cycling infrastructure, and car traffic.



Figure 14: External Connections

External Connections

External access to the site will be facilitated through the following proposed connections:

- Creating an active mobility corridor along rue des Jockeys to connect to Namur metro station
- Using rue Jean-Talon Ouest as an arterial street for all modes on the north border of the site, connecting the East and West ends of the site
- Converting rue Devonshire to a complete street to be used as an active transportation corridor crossing Highway 40
- Creating an active mobility connection along Clanranald Street on the Southeast to provide a direct bike connection to the south of the city and downtown
- Creating a new connection with Côte-Saint-Luc at the southwest for pedestrians and cyclists

Internal Street Network

Our proposed layout concentrates car traffic on two main routes: 1) on rue Jean-Talon Ouest along the north edge of the site, which serves as the main arterial for through traffic; and 2) a new complete street running through the site, which serves as the main internal access point for any needed car-related services. A complementary network of smaller streets acting as shared spaces will allow car access only if needed, providing cyclists and pedestrians direct access to all areas within the site.

Our proposed internal network envisions five different street typologies:

Complete street: Acting as the site's main street, the complete street will accommodate many different transportation modes with bus priority lanes, protected bike lanes and wide sidewalks. There will also be space set aside for infrastructure elements such as bike parking, bioswales, car-share parking and accessible parking for people with disabilities. The street is designed to access most blocks of Habitat Hippodrome while discouraging through traffic.

Arterial street: Rue Jean-Talon Ouest will be extended to the west of the site. In tandem with the current plans for the extension of boulevard Cavendish, it will serve as the only through street on the site. As this street is located on the northern periphery of the site, it is expected to create limited nuisance for the residents.

Shared streets: Inspired by the woonerf concept outlined below, this street typology will permit vehicular traffic but have low speed limits of 15 to 20 km/h. This will allow pedestrians and cyclists to traverse safely while sharing the space with cars.

Access Alleys: The most common street type in the neighbourhood, access alleys are distributed throughout the site to ensure all buildings are accessible by motor vehicles if needed. As they are intended to be used primarily by pedestrians and cyclists, vehicular traffic will be restricted to emergency and freight access. The plan envisions these streets as being pleasant spaces with green elements.

Pedestrian alleys: No cars will be allowed in these streets as access alleys will be used for deliveries and emergencies. As there will be no vehicular traffic on these streets, they present an excellent opportunity for greening following a similar physical form as access alleys.

Case Study: Woonerf concept

Developed in the late 1960s in the city of Delft, Netherlands, a Woonerf is a street shared by pedestrians, cyclists, and motor vehicles with pedestrians having priority over cars. The street is designed as a combined pedestrian and motorized traffic space, forcing cars to slow down and travel with caution. The main goal of a woonerf is to improve the quality of life residents by designing streets for people, not just for traffic.




Figure 16: Woonerf Concept



Accommodating Car Travel

- **Vehicular Parking:** The plan envisions a total of 3000 spaces based on current municipal residential parking projections. All private car parking, including visitor and residential parking, will be located in underground garages.
- **Car Share:** The only on-street parking on the site will be found on the complete street and designated exclusively for shared cars to reduce the need for car ownership among residents. The plan includes approximately 150 parking spaces for car-sharing; this capacity can be adapted as needed.

Accommodating Cyclist Travel

Bicycle parking
Envisioned as more convenient than car parking, bicycle parking will consist of over 9,000 spaces distributed as follows:

- **On-Street Bicycle Racks:** Distributed among the internal street network according to building density and intended for short-term users, providing at least one spot per 20 residential units
- **Residential Bicycle Parking:** Located in secure bike rooms within each residential building and intended for residents, providing at least one spot per residential unit
- **Bike Parking Garage:** Located on the present-day surface parking lot between rue des Jockeys and rue Jean-Talon Ouest and intended for metro commuters, providing a total of 2,000 spots

Bicycle sharing

To expand Bixi coverage to Habitat Hippodrome, we propose the installation of eight new stations located no more than 300 metres away from one another and providing at least 20 docks per station, for a minimum of 160 total docks provided for the site.

Accommodating Public Transit

Bus Rapid Transit along Cavendish-Jean-Talon: A high-frequency bus line running the length of rue Jean-Talon will help increase inter-suburban travel options, with the possibility to connect with a future Blue line extension and the Canora REM station.

A Revamped 115 Bus Route: The realignment of the 115 STM bus route will utilize the central shared street of the site, with a short spur down Clanranald Street to the proposed Exo station. As this street is never further than two blocks away from any one residence, this alignment will allow the greatest accessibility.

Addition of an Exo Commuter Rail Station: A new Exo station at the intersection of Clanranald Ave and the railroad will provide good connectivity to nearby commercial spaces, is proximate to the highest density on the site, and is a less than 10-minute walk to the metro

Shuttle Service for Hippodrome Residents: a local shuttle designed specifically for intra-site connectivity and Namur connections would further benefit those with mobility issues, providing very high frequency and consistent connection.



Public Space

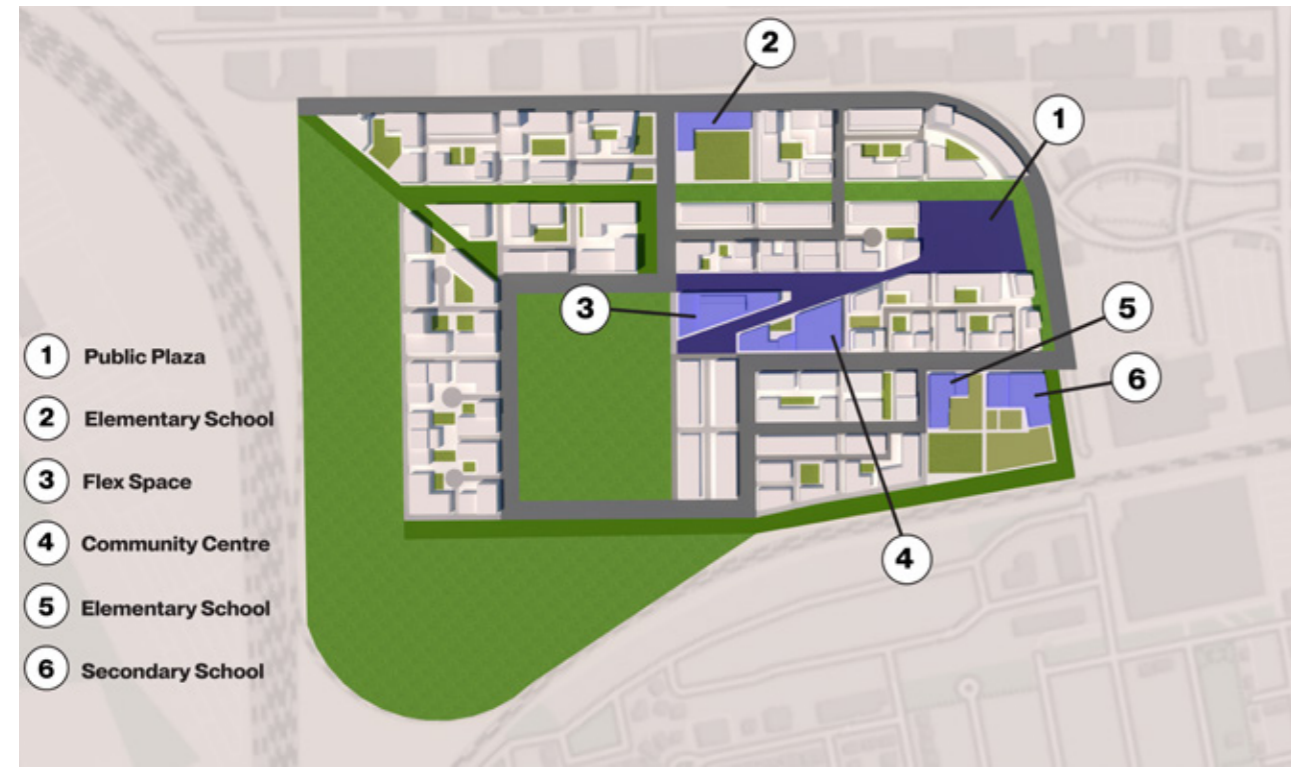


Figure 18: Public Space Master Plan

Interior Public Spaces

In addition to providing equitable access to the site, public spaces and programs can act as meeting hubs that will increase opportunities for participation in community life. Interior spaces and the programs that use them are key to creating a sense of community and animating the site. This plan includes four major physical space interventions and a variety of programmatic elements which will evolve with community demand.

Community Centre

This centrally located building will house a collection of key facilities for social activity and community programming. A library, offering traditional lending services alongside innovative resources and spaces for collaborative and remote work, will act as the main meeting, learning, and working space of the community centre. The library will also serve as an intercultural centre by offering a selection of books and cultural programs in a variety of languages. A balance between structured and unstructured spaces will allow for activities catering to a wide range of ages, skill levels, and interests. Offices and classrooms will also be provided for use by community support services that

require a fixed location to perform their activities. To aid in goals of climate resilience, space in the community centre will also be allocated as spaces of refuge during extreme heat or cold events, while other community spaces can be used for climate education and workshop initiatives.



Figure 19: Community Centre

Case Study: Flex space

The Habitat Hippodrome's flex space is influenced by two case studies in France: Les Ateliers des Capucins in Brest and the Darwin Project in Bordeaux. The former is a transformed industrial building, and the latter a pair of preserved heritage buildings. Both venues place a strong emphasis on variety and inclusivity and host a variety of programs that animate their neighbourhoods and provide opportunities for connection and collaboration.

Flex Space

The Flex Space is a building adjacent to the community centre that will consist of a large open concourse that can be transformed depending on the needs of the event or user, alongside co-working, office, and personal storage space. The CLT can earn revenue from the Flex Space by renting it out for commercial and private activities such as pop-up markets, concerts, art exhibits, parties, and religious ceremonies. When the space is not otherwise reserved, it will be filled with furniture and tables for general public use, providing a neutral third-space for residents.



Figure 20(a): Flex Space Example 1



Figure 20(b): Flex Space Example 2



Figure 20(c): Flex Space Example 3



Figure 20(d): Flex Space Example 4

Schools

Given the large number of nearby families, a total of three new schools - two primary and one secondary - are proposed to accommodate 1,500 to 2,000 school-aged children. The primary schools will solely serve children who reside in the Hippodrome neighbourhood, while the secondary school will serve a mix of onsite residents and students living in nearby catchment areas. While vehicular access will be maintained for essential services, the presence of green corridors adjacent to schools will encourage active transportation for commuting students. Mutualization efforts will ensure that school facilities such as gymnasiums, auditoriums, cafeterias, and sports fields, can be used for other purposes outside of school hours if needed. These facilities will be managed in partnership with the city and the CLT to maximize availability for other user groups.

Case Study: The Social Economy and Community Development

The social economy model proposed is inspired by Toronto's residential apartment commercial zoning pilot. This program aims to provide convenient and walkable access to shops and services to residents of tower communities. Through this program, residents of participating developments have access to commercial kitchens for hosting food workshops, office space for community place-based work, and bike shop space for learning maintenance skills and participating in group sessions.



Figure 21: School View



Figure 22: Commercial View

Commercial and Social Economy Spaces

As most of the social infrastructure is centralized on the eastern half of the site, preserving space for commercial and social economy activity on the ground floor of high-rise buildings will allow for the creation of lively spaces throughout the development. Traditional commercial uses such as retail, cafes, restaurants, pharmacies, grocery stores, and banks will be concentrated along central corridors and the public plaza for convenient access. Social economy uses will be dispersed through the neighbourhood. These spaces can act as hyper-local community hubs and allow easy access to social enterprise activities and place-based resources. They will be made available to both established non-profits and to community members aiming to set up their own programs. These dynamic and responsive social economy spaces can be used for a variety of community support services including language classes, legal aid, employment services, healthcare, senior centres, childcare, and other services that may be desired by the community.

Exterior Public Spaces

In addition to interior spaces, the plan proposes several typologies of exterior public spaces to promote rich community programming and healthy, sustainable lifestyles. The Habitat Hippodrome hosts one large park, one public plaza, a biodiversity belt, and four green corridors. Residents of the Hippodrome

neighbourhood will enjoy approximately 21 hectares of green space, for a ratio of about 31 square metres per dwelling.

Hippodrome Park

At 5 hectares, the Hippodrome Park will serve as the district's most prominent green space. The park will be divided into three sections, each of which provides opportunities for a particular set of activities. The park's northern third, with winding pathways and abundant seating options surrounding a pond, is conducive to leisure, contemplation, and picnicking. The central section will consist of more woody areas and an active transportation corridor which greatly reduces the walking distance for residents in the southwest sector of the neighbourhood to the community centre and Namur Station. The southern third, with its amphitheatre, soccer field, accessible playground for children, and free play area, will be best suited for recreational activity.

The park's design optimizes accessibility by using at-grade paths, minimizing fencing, and providing wheelchair-accessible structures in the playground. In place of fencing, topography will be used to delimit the park's functional areas, with gentle slopes surrounding the pond and a grassy mound embedded with stone seating located next to the soccer field. This mound, made from recycled excavated material, will eliminate the need for metal bleachers for sports games and artistic performances, while the reverse of the slope will make for excellent wintertime sledding.

Two public restrooms with water fountains will be located on either



Figure 23: Ecological Master Plan

side of the park. Wayfinding will be facilitated via the placement of maps and animal sculptures throughout the site. These animal sculptures, created by local artists, are identifiable features and can double as a "find-them-all" game for children.

With its abundant vegetative cover, the park will also play an important role in neighbourhood-wide efforts to mitigate urban heat island effects, manage stormwater, and provide ecological connectivity for native species. The park also provides environmental education opportunities for visitors through the use of informative panels explaining the value and utility of ecosystem services and native flora.

Owing to its multifaceted design, the Hippodrome Park can play host to a range of activities. The sports field can be a site for soccer games, football games, concerts, and more. The free play area, meanwhile, can accommodate yoga sessions and frisbee games, and the multi-purpose paths that criss-cross the park will be ideal for roller-blading, biking, jogging and cross-country skiing.

Public Plaza

Bustling and dynamic, the public plaza will animate public life at the eastern edge of the neighbourhood. As a crossroads where pedestrians and cyclists converge to reach the metro station, the public plaza will act as both a gateway to the community and the nexus of its economic development. It will welcome visitors with lively storefronts and unique event programming and invite users to linger with friends and family at its striking water feature and



Figure 24: Summer Activities

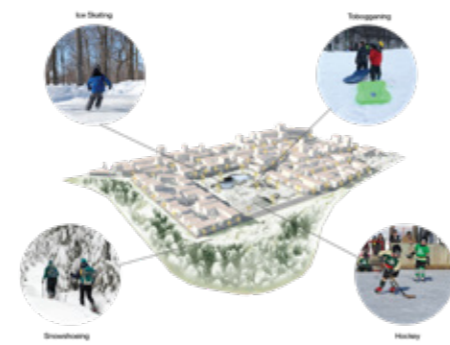


Figure 25: Winter Activities



Figure 26: Public Plaza

weekly attractions. User experience will be enhanced through the placement of signage to community landmarks and a calendar that advertises upcoming events. Events taking place in the plaza can be relocated to flex spaces during inclement weather, in the wintertime, or when they extend past 11:00pm.

Permanent fixtures in the public plaza will be minimal and unobtrusive, leaving plenty of open space for programming. This will be supported by on-site storage spaces for temporary fixtures such as tents, tables, seating, and outdoor games. The generous size of the plaza will also allow some design elements to be left to public participation and added iteratively in the coming years.

While acknowledging the dominance of hardscaped surfaces in the plaza, the northern and eastern edge will leave ample room for trees, garden planters, benches and picnic tables, providing a seamless transition to the adjacent green corridors described below. In the summertime, restaurant terrasses will be shaded with awnings and the plaza's water features will provide heat relief for children and adults alike.

Decentralized Park Spaces

Courtyards, street curbs and schoolyards make up much of the residual public and semi-public exterior space. Each of these spaces presents unique opportunities for cultivating both urban agriculture and recreational initiatives while building up the vegetative cover throughout the site. Decision-making structures such as the CLT and SDCC will determine how each space will be used and how benefits will be shared among community members.

Ecological Interventions

Biodiversity Belt

The Biodiversity Belt prioritizes nature and the provision of ecosystem services over human presence. It acts as a carbon sink, a mitigator of urban heat islands, and minimizes noise and air pollution from the active rail infrastructure which borders the site to the south and west. The Belt can be divided into two portions. The western portion, about 100 metres wide, is almost exclusively forested; the southern portion, is up to 200 metres wide and has wetlands in addition to forest habitats.

The forested sector, about eight hectares in area, will use native tree, shrub and flower species to create a morphologically complex environment which provides habitats for a wide range of native bird, mammal, insect and reptile species. This will be achieved through assisted natural regeneration and the use of artificial habitat props like insect hotels and wooden bird houses. For human access, the forested area will be traversed by a single walking trail covered in wood chips.

The wetland component, about three hectares in area, will be located on a naturally-occurring trough in the southwest of the site. Much of this area is currently covered by an invasive species, the common reed, which must first be eradicated. Once the wetland becomes a hydrologically stable and morphologically complex ecosystem, it will serve as a habitat for amphibians such as frogs, toads, and salamanders alongside waterfowl such as geese and ducks.

At the metropolitan scale, the biodiversity corridor serves as a conduit between the existing north-south Ville-Saint-Laurent



Figure 27: North Green Corridor

Habitat Hippodrome

biodiversity corridor and the east-west Darlington biodiversity corridor. In conjunction with the green corridors explored in the following section, the biodiversity corridor creates a full green belt around the whole of the Hippodrome neighbourhood.

Green Corridors

The green corridors aim to facilitate mobility for pedestrians, cyclists and, in wintertime, cross-country skiers, while providing a space for spatially-decentralized community programs such as urban agriculture. The corridors also provide a shield from noise and visual incongruity as well as enhancing privacy. This is reflected in the fact that all three schoolyards face a green corridor and the adjacent parking lot to the east of the site is also lined with a green corridor.

Northern Corridor

At 25 metres wide and 800 metres long, the northern corridor will be dotted with accessible picnic tables and will connect the densest parts of the neighbourhood to the public plaza and Namur Station. On its northern edge, it features planters used for pollinator gardens and urban agriculture. Wet swales are also incorporated to improve stormwater management.

Eastern Corridor

One of the eastern corridor's most visible functions is to separate the neighbourhood, and in particular the secondary school, from the large surface parking lot to the east of the site. It also provides a strategic active transportation link beyond the neighbourhood, connecting cyclists to downtown via avenue Clanranald, and providing the residents of Hampstead and Côte-des-Neiges with access to the neighbourhood's secondary school and public plaza.

Southern Corridor

This section is a narrow extension of the biodiversity corridor and features hedges and dense trees to reduce noise from the railroad. Pollinator grasslands with carefully chosen plants provide nourishment to native pollinators throughout the spring, summer, and fall seasons.

Western Corridor

This corridor also extends from the biodiversity corridor. It connects with rue Jean-Talon Ouest and the future boulevard Cavendish extension to the northwest.

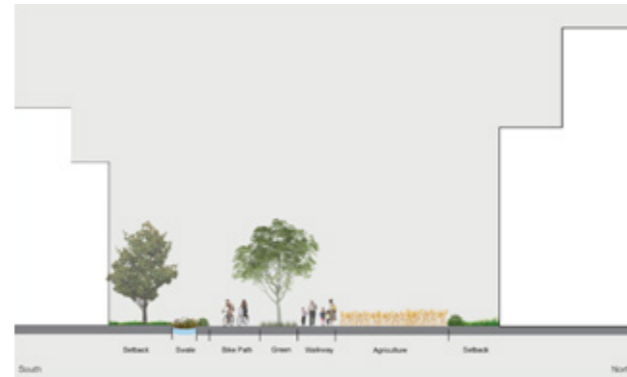
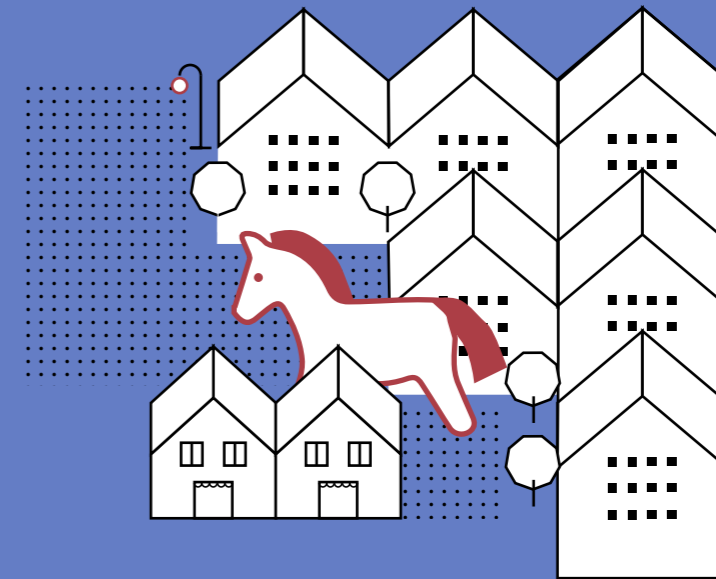


Figure 28: North Green Corridor



Figure 29: South Green Corridor



SECTION 4 IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation

The implementation of Habitat Hippodrome will require a detailed phasing strategy which addresses community development, construction, and continuity of governance. Of equal importance is the ongoing financial feasibility of the project as needs evolve over time. This section makes a case for innovative methods of public financing to achieve the goal of large-scale, long-term, affordable and decommodified housing on the site.

Development and Governance Phasing

The Community Land Trust is an essential governance tool to manage the phasing of Habitat Hippodrome. It will help the site and its residents adjust effectively to fluctuating populations, changing housing stock among housing associations, and the construction of new buildings over time. It will also guide the growth of the site by working with GRTs and other organizations with non-profit development experience.

Phasing can be broken down into three distinct stages over 20 years: pre-construction and planning (Years 0-3); construction (Years 4-15); and completion (Years 15-20 and onward). The growth and increasing complexity of governance, development, and finance at Habitat Hippodrome are closely linked to create a responsive phasing strategy, ultimately resulting in an empowered community that can stabilize the site socially and financially over the long term.

The **pre-construction and planning phase** will be fully managed by the CLT via a board drawn from city officials and community representatives from the Corporation de développement communautaire de Côte-des-Neiges. This board will be tasked with hiring an executive director, who will spearhead the hiring of employees for the CLT's departments of Finance, Development, and Building and Land Maintenance, as well as those of the SDCC. The development process in this phase will be guided primarily by the CLT's Development department, which takes the form of a consortium of social economy experts. This consortium will be crucial in the early phases of Habitat Hippodrome.

To assemble this consortium, the initial CLT board - composed of community representatives and city officials along with the executive director - will initiate a competitive bidding process among different social economy development groups. Criteria for selection include credibility and experience in developing large sites. The size and composition of the development consortium will change with the needs of Habitat Hippodrome, as the consortium will likely be consulted less often as construction nears completion. However, we envision that many relationships will be ongoing and will support the CLT board with expert guidance to ensure the site's longevity and success.

The **construction phase** is characterized by the construction of buildings for housing associations. With the guidance of the development consortium, construction of all types of housing models and commercial space will commence in Year 3. We expect the first units will be occupied late in Year 4. Construction of equity units will be finished first over the next ten years, with an estimated completion date in Year 12. Market-rate rental units will be built for another three years, until the end of Year 15. Subsidized and affordable housing units, as well as commercial and parking spaces are expected to be completed over the full construction span of 20 years.

As physical structures are built, groundwork will also be laid for democratic site governance. When buildings are handed over to housing associations for operation and co-ops are formed, they will elect their respective boards and the first nominations and elections to the general assembly will take place. At the same time, assembly members will begin to select additional CLT board members from among their number, gradually replacing city officials and community representatives until residents comprise two-thirds of the board.

The **completion phase** marks the initiation of regular site governance, conforming to the model established in this Section 3 above. The final CLT board will be composed of ten residents, three community representatives, and two city officials. The general assembly will be filled, with all housing associations proportionally represented. All housing associations will be operating with their own established governance procedures and internal committees.

Other Phasing Considerations

Multiple stakeholders are needed to build such an ambitious project. The financial model presented in this proposal highlights challenges associated with providing decommodified housing and illustrates the necessity of collaboration with different levels of government. As examples such as Griffintown, the former Montreal Children's Hospital, and Le Triangle demonstrate, it is important to proactively plan for space which meets local needs, including schools, green spaces and community centres. Though this report's feasibility analysis is limited to housing costs, it will be essential for social amenities to be prioritized from the start of development at Habitat Hippodrome. The pre-construction and planning phase should therefore include initial site preparation. This includes landscape engineering to allow for stormwater runoff and the elimination of invasive species found on site. Next, the site's road network will be laid out. In the construction phase, higher density housing and community spaces such as schools, the community centre, the public plaza, and green spaces will be built. This would be followed by the construction of mid-rise and low-rise housing complexes.

Beginning with the construction of the most disruptive and intensive high-density buildings minimizes inconvenience to residents of this twenty-year project. Focusing on the highest density zone first also helps to attract visitors to the commercial

spaces that exist there, allowing for greater cash flow in the project's early stages. As the construction of buildings nears completion, outdoor landscaping will be finalized. This phasing envisions the site being developed from North to South, as illustrated in figure 30. In practice, exact phasing will be decided by the CLT board and the development consortium, allowing for the site to adapt based on community needs and interests.

Financial Analysis

The challenges of financing and maintaining affordable housing that contribute to the current housing crisis also impact the viability of Habitat Hippodrome. The following financial analysis only presents a breakdown of costs for constructing housing on the site. As such, it does not include the costs of building and maintaining greenspace, roads, schools, community centres, water features, most of which are borne by municipal budgets. A more comprehensive analysis will be required to consider all potential revenues and expenses of a fully-realized site. Though there is a strong case for profitability in the long-term from commercial spaces and rental revenues, the scope of this feasibility study is meant to highlight the funding challenges that such a project may face. Nevertheless, the ongoing demand for affordable



Figure 30: Density Zone Map

housing makes this project an opportunity for innovative financing strategies.

Assumptions

This section will briefly cover the assumptions, sources and methodology used to produce the financial analysis. Specific numbers were either derived from guidebooks, similar cases, or from industry expert advice. In nearly all cases, some inflation was assumed, ranging from 1% to 5% depending on the input. It is important to note that it is extremely difficult to predict this figure with great confidence over a 35-year time frame. As such, rates were assigned based on educated hypotheses.

1. Property Tax Exemption

To reduce the prospect of increasing the tax burden at Habitat Hippodrome owing to rising property values, we recommend the CLT be exempt from property tax payment. While Montreal does not currently exempt any properties from property taxes, there are many precedents across Canada where such taxes are waived for social housing and other community-oriented land use. The Ontario Assessment Act exempts land and property owned by philanthropic organizations, municipalities, charitable organizations, and senior and child care centres from property taxes. In the City of Regina affordable and social housing are also exempt from property taxes for a certain period of time. Thus, our financial analysis assumes that Quebec and the City of Montreal follow suit and allow a waiver of property taxes. We believe such a proposition is politically feasible for a project which aims to address such a substantial proportion of the city's affordable housing need. Property taxes have therefore been deducted from the CLTs annual operational expenses.

2. Land Donation

The Habitat Hippodrome site is currently vacant. As most federal and provincial housing policies are conditional upon municipal contributions, it is expected that the city would donate the land for this project, thereby absolving the CLT of the financial burden of purchasing land. An argument can be made to the City that this project will ease budgetary pressures in the long term by reducing the need to spend millions purchasing and renovating old buildings to meet affordable housing needs. This donation, coupled with the fact that decontamination work has already been undertaken by the Ministry of Environment, will improve the financial feasibility of the project.

3. Reserve Fund

Once operations are underway at the Habitat Hippodrome, a reserve fund builds to a sizable amount worth millions of dollars. It is therefore assumed that the CLT, as a way of increasing revenues, will earn a standard bank interest of 2% on the reserve fund annually.

Feasibility

The Habitat Hippodrome aims to remain permanently affordable rather than perpetuate profitability. The three main components in this feasibility analysis are cost, revenue, and subsidy. Capital cost and operating cost constitute the cost component. Revenue will be mainly drawn from residential and commercial monthly rents. The subsidy stream covers resources from the public and the third sector.

The diagram below illustrates capital cost payments, revenue returns, and subsidies taking place at different stages of the development and operation of Habitat Hippodrome. The planned construction phase is set to take 20 years. Running parallel are revenue and expenses, as both will begin after resident occupancy in Year 4. The revenue model includes a 2% vacancy allowance and annual rent increases at 2.5%. The following components are included in expenses: the reserve fund, loan repayment (both principal and interest) insurance, management and operating fees, and taxes. In the subsidy component, resources from government and social investors are considered. Subsidy types include capital subsidy in the pre-construction and construction period and rent supplement programs in the long-term operating stage.

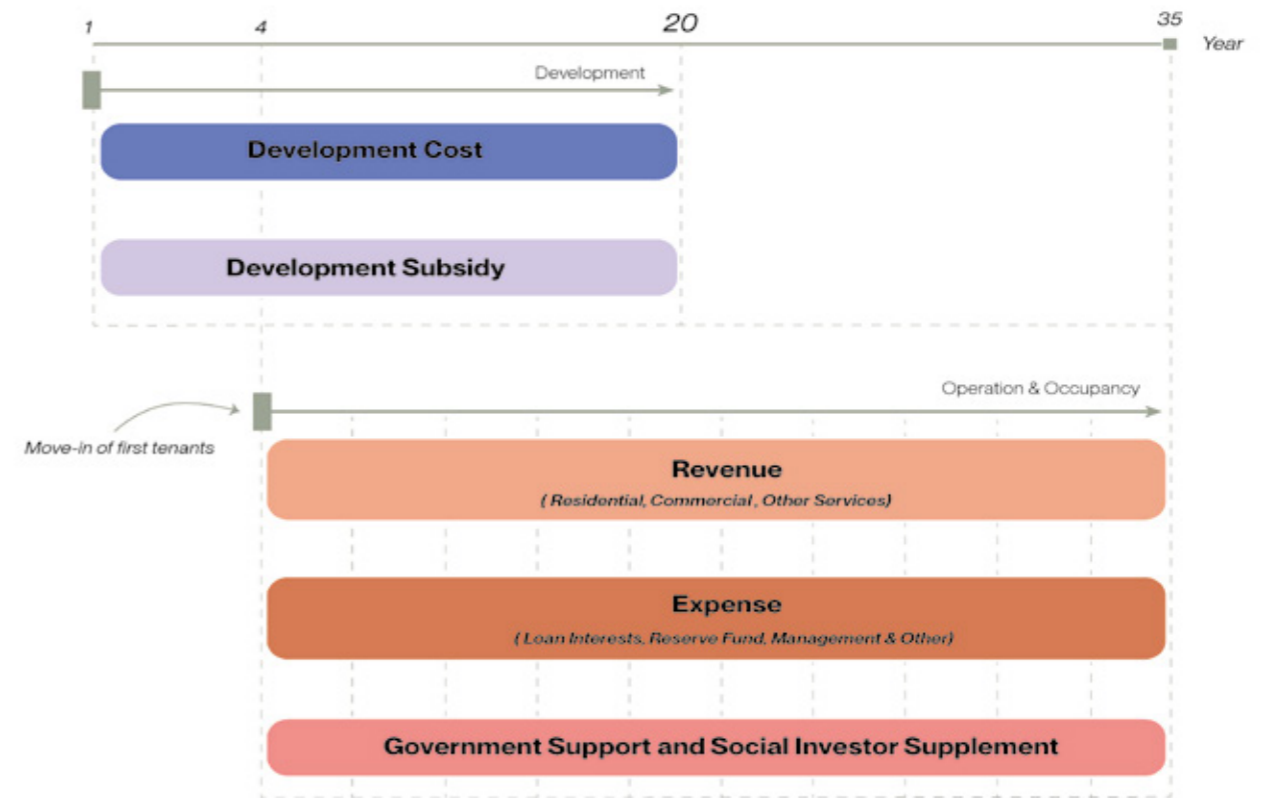


Figure 31: Feasibility GANNT Chart

Development Costs

The development costs calculated in this plan include residential construction costs and related considerations. Total hard and soft costs are estimated at \$3.9 billion. Including interest payments on the various loans required — \$736M — development costs are estimated to \$4.6 billion over a total of 20 years. Construction costs are as follows:

- Gross floor area of residential units for buildings of 6 storeys or less;
- Gross floor area of residential units for buildings of 7 storeys or more;
- Gross floor area of mixed-use spaces (commercial and community) located on the ground floor of residential buildings;

- Soft costs: estimated at 25% of the subtotal, these costs include permits, administrative fees, professional fees and taxes. This is a rough estimate and will depend on the construction approach;
- Contingency fund: estimated at 5% of the subtotal; this fund will be used in case of emergency during construction;

Estimates are based on a cost per square foot sourced from the 2022 Altus Canadian Cost Guide for the Greater Montreal Area. The highest cost for the region was used, plus a 5% markup to reflect likely increases in construction costs in the coming years. Due to challenges in identifying a reliable average cost per square foot for ground floor commercial space in mixed-use buildings, the price of office buildings was used.

Type	Total SQFT	Cost/SQFT	Altus 2022 (high)
Residential (< 7-storey)	5,511,843	\$273/sqft	\$273/sqft
Residential (7+ storey)	1,930,217	\$289/sqft	\$289/sqft
Ground-floor (Mixed)	1,139,338	\$263/sqft	\$263/sqft

Figure 32: Gross Floor Area and Construction Cost by Type

	Quantity (sqft)	Cost per unit	Cost
Building			
Residential (< 7-storey)	5,511,843	\$273/sqft	1,924,723,059
Residential (7+ storey)	1,930,217	\$289/sqft	713,530,681
Ground-floor (Mixed)	1,139,338	\$263/sqft	301,699,143
Underground Parking			\$79,916,058
Subtotal			3,019,868,940
Soft costs		25%	754,967,235
Contingency fund		5%	150,993,447
Total Building costs (A)			3,925,829,622
Finance			
Federal Loans (Co-I, AHIF, RCFI)		-%	449,100,000
Private Loan @ 5%		5%	74,051,739
Social Loan Programs @ 2%		2%	\$51,500,000
Private loan MLI		1%	\$162,139,072
Total Interest (B)			736,790,811
Total Development costs (A + B)			4,662,620,433

Figure 33: Breakdown of Development Costs

Revenues and Expenses

As the project completes its construction phases and commences tenancy and operations, revenue is generated through rents, sales, and subsidies. The CLT will also have ongoing expenses in the form of debt and interest repayment, taxes, a reserve fund for major renovations, annual maintenance charges, and property insurance.

With construction commencing in Year 3, building insurance costs must be borne by the CLT for buildings completed that year. As of Year 4, revenue will be generated through the sale of equity ownership units and rental income for residential, commercial and parking spaces. Revenue from rental income will vary depending on the size of units. Market-rate rent is estimated at \$1,292 for a 1-bedroom unit, rising to \$2,126 for a 4-bedroom unit. 10% of this revenue will be set aside as a reserve fund for major renovations which will occur after 25 years.

The sale of equity units will continue until Year 13, after which a drop in revenue will be observed. Between Years 8 and 17, as the bulk of development loans are repaid, the CLT's expenses will exceed that of its revenue. As of Year 18, however, a substantial portion of debt repayment will be complete and revenues will begin to exceed expenses.

Construction of all residential, commercial and parking components will be completed by the end of Year 20. At that time, the gap between revenue and expenses will begin to widen, with revenue far exceeding expenses. It is assumed that this profit will be used to repay the municipality for any operational assistance or loans that may have been provided. This will continue until Year 28, when the CLT is expected to have completed all debt repayments. Between Years 28 and 35 the CLT will have considerable capital at its disposal which may then be reinvested in other social housing endeavours within the city. As of Year 35, it is estimated that revenues will be as high as \$346 million, with \$66 million in expenses.

Unit type	Equity value	Maintenance fee/m
1-bedroom	\$390,000	\$300.00
2-bedroom	\$509,000	\$300.00
3-bedroom	\$630,000	\$300.00
4-bedroom	\$719,000	\$300.00

Figure 34: Equity Value of Ownership Units

	Unit type	Monthly rent (Year 1)
Paid by resident in PSL subsidized*	1-bedroom	\$465.00
	2-bedroom	\$585.00
	3-bedroom	\$665.00
	4-bedroom	\$765.00
Affordable	1-bedroom	\$1,162.00
	2-bedroom	\$1,463.00
	3-bedroom	\$1,663.00
	4-bedroom	\$1,913.00
Market-Rate	1-bedroom	\$1,292.00
	2-bedroom	\$1,626.00
	3-bedroom	\$1,848.00
	4-bedroom	\$2,126.00

Figure 35: Monthly Rents of Housing Models

Financing

The Habitat Hippodrome project uses funding from a variety of sources in order to maximize the number of units that can be constructed. The proposed development is a mix of market-rate units, affordable units, rent-gear-to-income units, and affordable homeownership units. As such, each will be eligible for different funding opportunities from all levels of government. For non-market-rate units, proposed rents are lower than the current average for Côte-des-Neiges. As the federal government’s National Housing Strategy prioritizes the creation of affordable rental units, an abundance of resources are readily available for subsidized and affordable rental housing at Habitat Hippodrome. It will be relatively more challenging to secure funding for market-rate rentals and co-ownership units; these funding gaps will be discussed in this section.

Construction loans will be acquired from financial institutions, such as the Bank of Montreal, that have expressed interest in projects that increase access to housing and promote economic development. This financial analysis accounts for high bank interest rates in comparison to assessments completed by the CMHC. Since the co-ownership model will generate funds as units are sold off, the 15% profit made from unit sales will go toward the reserve fund and to fulfil other expenses such as debt repayment.

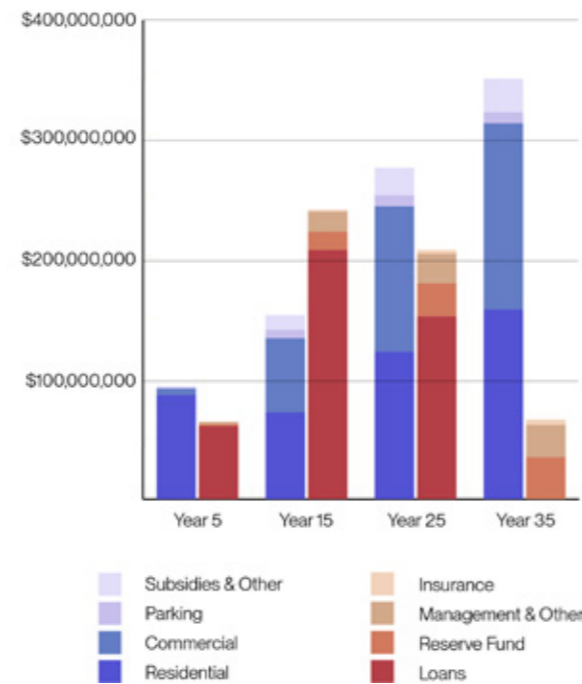


Figure 36: Annual Revenue and Expenses

Funding Options	Tenure Model			
	Rentals Subsidized	Rentals Affordable	Rentals Market-rate	COOP Co-Ownership
Rent Supplement Program (PSL)	✓	✓		
PHAQ - Programme d'habitation abordable Québec	✓	✓		✓
Seed Funding	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rental Construction Financing Initiative	✓	✓	✓	✓
National Co-Investment Fund (New Construction)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Affordable Housing Innovation Fund	✓	✓	✓	

Figure 37: Funding Options by Tenure Model and Affordability

Funding from the CMHC will contribute to about 20% of the total capital cost. Funding from co-investment would be provided in the form of a repayable loan and a forgivable loan that is rewarded for Higher Performance in Affordability, Accessibility and Energy Efficiency. In addition, CMHC’s unique Mortgage Loan Insurance program will allow the project to acquire mortgage loans from private lenders at lowered interest rates. The project is also eligible for funding from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and in particular, the Green Municipal Fund which aids in the construction of energy-efficient new builds that emit lower greenhouse gas emissions.

At the provincial level, the Habitat Hippodrome would pursue contributions from the Programme d'habitation abordable Québec (PHAQ), which is a program that provides funding for rent-gear-to-income and affordable housing. It is speculated that in the coming years, the PHAQ program will receive a larger budget for real estate development as AccèsLogis is phased out and replaced. In order to position the project to receive support from funders who require a 25+ year affordability requirement, Habitat Hippodrome will make rent increases after initial occupancy only in accordance with municipal rent increase guidelines.

In order to fill the remaining funding gap, the project will look to grants from community organizations such as the Fondation Chagnon, the Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec (FTQ), and the Caisse Desjardins des travailleuses et travailleurs unis. An allowance will be made for the potential future presence of student union-led affordable housing initiatives—similar to UQAM’s UTILE – which can pool funds to invest in social purpose real estate.

The introduction of a low-interest, high-social-impact real estate investment trust (REIT) community bonds can also help to fill funding gaps. This strategy targets institutions such as the Canadian Pension Fund, the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec and other funders who invest in the community without claiming ownership of individual units or buildings. A successful precedent for this type of strategy is Toronto’s Centre for Social Innovation (CSI) which is backed by the City of Toronto and has been able to secure a preferential interest rate from its lender. The Government of Canada’s guarantee of community bonds will also provide reliable financing for the development of Habitat Hippodrome.

Funding Source	Type	Total over 20 years	Notes
Municipal Funding	Grant	\$103,500,000	Assume max \$5M per building for 30% of our buildings
PHAQ	Grant	\$567,739,535	Assume a max of 3 007,45\$/sqm for a total of 629259.046 sq m residential space
SEED Contribution	Grant	\$2,070,000	Assume \$100k for 30% of our buildings
Co-I Forgivable Loan	Grant	\$17,550,000	3% of Co-I loan according to CMHC Viability Assessment Calculator
Co-I Repayable Loan	Loan	\$538,200,000	Assume around \$26M for 30% of our buildings, 92% of Co-I loan according to CMHC Viability Assessment Calculator
CMHC AHIF	Loan	\$150,000,000	Assume Fund is renewed for over 20yrs
CMHC RCFI	Loan	\$260,000,000	Assume min 50% of buildings are eligible for 95-100% LTC
FCM GMF	Grant	\$4,140,000	Assume 200,000\$ for 30% of buildings
Community Impact Fund (REIT)	Loan	\$100,000,000	at 2% interest for 25 yrs
Grant from Social Investors	Grant	\$10,000,000	
Student Union Contribution	Loan	\$4,500,000	
Equity: Unit Sales	Equity	\$789,851,920	From Co-Ownership Units
Private Loan	Loan	\$493,678,260	at 5% interest
MLI insured Private Loan	Loan	\$1,621,390,719	
Total Sources		\$4,662,620,434	

Figure 38: Financing Breakdown

The Funding Gap

The Habitat Hippodrome is a financially ambitious project that requires investment from all levels of government during its 20-year development plan. In order for the plan to be realised, public actors must acknowledge the urgency of housing needs locally and nationally, and work with the groups steering development to prioritise deeply affordable and decommodified housing. Though this financial analysis encompasses only the feasibility of housing on the site, it is clear that financing of the entire project will require innovative new funding sources, such as those proposed here. The bold targets of the Habitat Hippodrome reflect the social, economic, and political gaps between what is currently available to the community and what is required to meet the housing needs of that community.

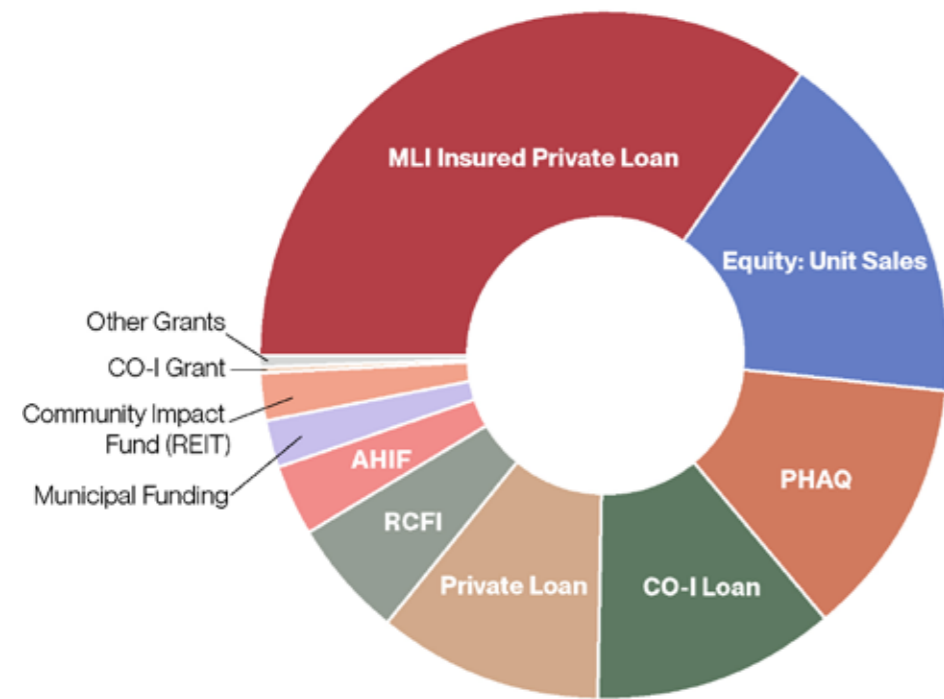
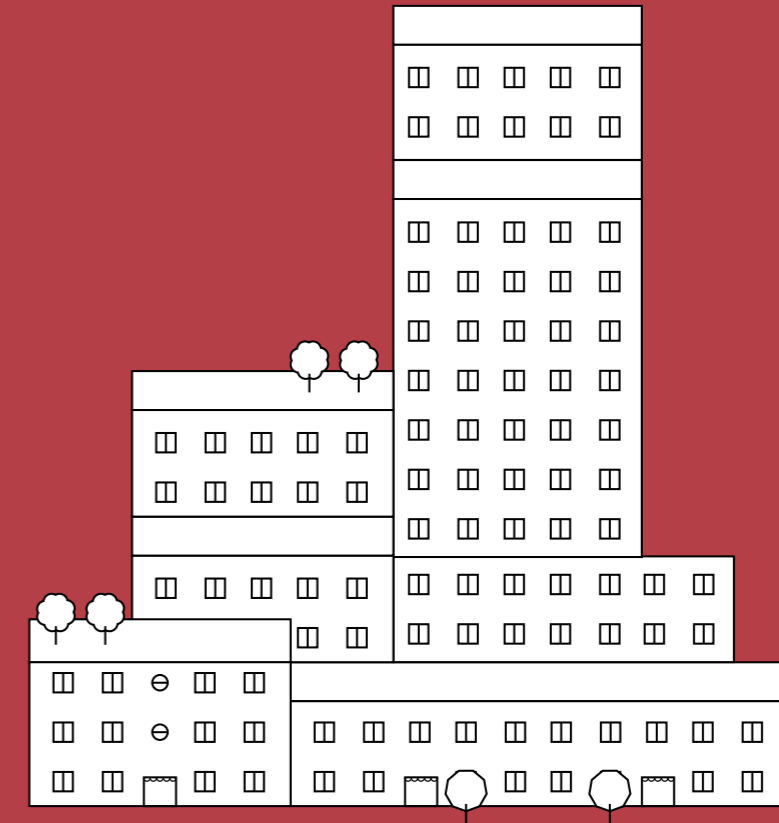


Figure 39: Funding Sources



SECTION 5 CONCLUSION

Conclusion

The publicly-held Hippodrome site represents an enormous opportunity in taking concrete steps to address the ongoing housing crisis. To this end, we propose that the City of Montreal use the Hippodrome site to provide permanently affordable decommodified housing while meeting its ecological and social goals. Our proposal, Habitat Hippodrome, will allow governments to fulfil their legal obligations surrounding the right to housing and pioneer a new model of ecologically-conscious, socially-responsive community building.

With a focus on ongoing and emergent community needs, the Habitat Hippodrome plan provides a variety of organizational strategies and on-site interventions to create a holistic community plan. It incorporates cooperative and representative governance structures to ensure permanent

affordability and local investment. These structures will empower communities to respond to challenges through collective action. Innovative interventions are envisioned for water management, energy usage, and community-building programs. These projects are designed to create a neighbourhood geared towards ecological sustainability and resident connectivity. The plan is flexible and adaptive, with suggestions for phasing over time which allows for the emergence of homes, goods, and services to suit the needs of the diverse and changing residents.

This plan for Habitat Hippodrome is one of many bold visions for the highly contested Hippodrome site, and will serve as a model and guide for building affordable, democratic, and accessible communities in Montreal and across Canada.



Acknowledgements

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Appendix

The Guideline Index

A

Adaptability and Flexibility

Residential buildings should be designed for adaptability to specific mobility and accessibility needs in the future.

Architectural Character

The architectural character of all buildings on the site should embrace innovation and creativity in design, while respecting the aesthetic qualities of Montreal's urban fabric.

At-Grade Uses

At-grade spaces in buildings should be designed for flexibility to accommodate changing uses, such as transitions between community, residential or commercial uses.

B

Balconies

The inclusion of balconies in residential unit design is encouraged and can range from Juliette balconies, semi-recessed and recessed balconies, as well as cantilevered balconies.

Below-Grade Uses

Below-grade spaces should not be used for residential units. Underground parking in Density Zone 2 and 3, and community or commercial spaces are the recommended permitted below-grade uses.

C

Courtyards and Interior Shared Space

Building configurations within blocks should allow for a courtyard with the potential for flexibility in uses.

F

Front Façades and Articulation

Front façades should be designed with consideration of a comfortable pedestrian experience and with visually appealing materials.

M

Maximum Allowable Storeys

Maximum allowable storeys vary by Density Zone, from 6 storeys in Zone 1, to 9 storeys in Zone 2, and to 25 storeys in Zone 3.

Maximum Tower Floor Plate Area

Towers atop podiums will have a maximum surface area floor plate of 750 square metres.

Minimum Allowable Storeys

Minimum allowable storeys across the site is 3 storeys.

Minimum Ground Floor Height for Mixed-Use Buildings

In all mixed-use buildings across the site, the minimum ground floor height is 4.5 metres floor-to-floor.

P

Points of Access and Accessibility

The Hippodrome site should be barrier-free and inclusive of all residents and visitors using different transportation modes including designated car access to protect car-free spaces.

Appendix

The Guideline Index

R

Roofs

Where possible, buildings should be designed to allow for outdoor amenities or infrastructure such as open air gardens and greenhouses located on rooftops.

S

Separation Distances

Distance between high-rise buildings should be a minimum of 30 metres. Mid-rise buildings should be configured within blocks with a minimum separation of 12 metres between buildings.

Setbacks

Across the site, a minimum setback of 2 metres in front of residential buildings should be applied.

Street Wall

Street wall height should not exceed the width of the right of way at the building frontage.

Sustainable Practices

Buildings on the site should be designed using ecological approaches and sustainable materials, and with the capacity to accommodate changes.

T

Transitions between Density Zones

Buildings across the site should reflect the surrounding form and massing, and provide an appropriate transition in scale between higher and lower density areas.

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Studio 2 Project, Winter 2022

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