

# Searching for Evidence of Winning Conditions in Support of Grassroots Projects...

**Aimed at Sustainable  
Active Transportation  
in a Low Income Neighborhood**

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# Rationale

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- Although it is recognized that built environments are constructed by urban planners, engineers, and other municipal workers, less work has focused on the role of **community groups, civil society, and grassroots projects**
- **Community groups** exert pressure on elected officials & municipal policy-makers to change built environments

# Rationale

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- We know very little about...
  - The number & focus of grassroots projects run by community groups
  - The convergence & divergence of these grassroots projects with actions of urban planners and engineers

# Objectives

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- In an effort to better understand the role of **grassroots projects** in transforming built environments...

We studied

- the **implementation process** surrounding grassroots projects aimed at sustainable active transportation in a low income neighborhood
- &
- the extent of **intersectoral collaborations** and linkages with other actions going on in the neighborhood

# Part of An Overarching Project

**PHASE 1 :**  
Inventory  
of  
grassroots  
projects  
supporting  
sustainable  
mobility in  
Montréal

**PHASE 3 :**  
Evaluation of  
sustainable mobility  
at the street and  
intersection levels

Case Studies  
(2 selected  
neighborhoods)

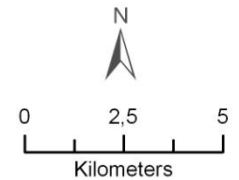
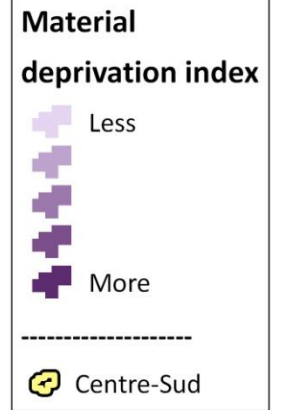
**PHASE 2 :**  
Process of  
Implementation of  
Grassroots Projects

Meeting with  
Experts

Knowledge  
Transfer and  
Exchange

# 'Centre-Sud' Neighborhood

- ✓ Population : 30 400 of 1.8 million Montrealers
- ✓ 36% living under the low income cut-off
- ✓ 52% single-parent families

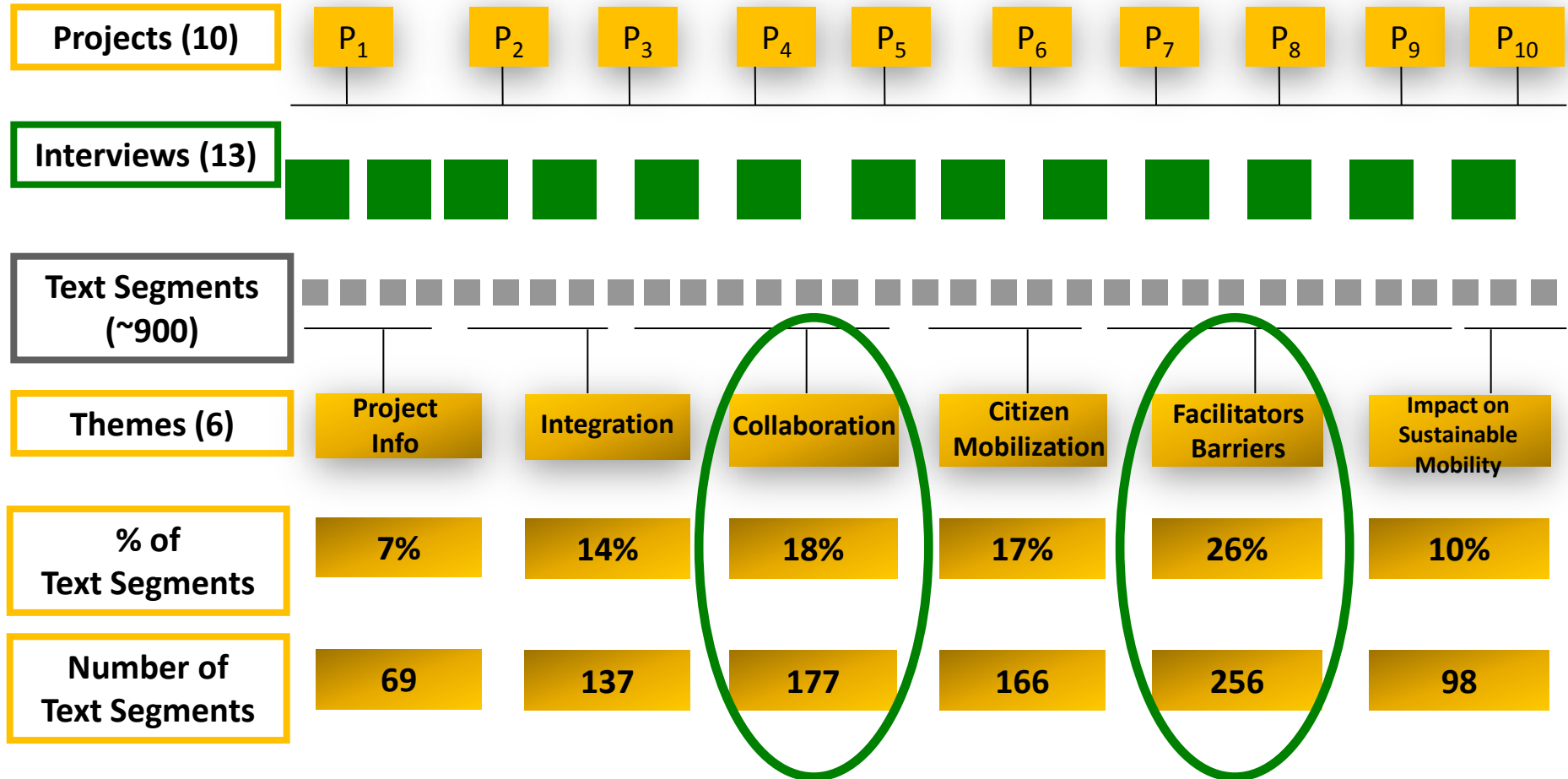


Projection :  
NAD83 MTM zone 8  
Sources :  
Direction de santé publique de  
l'Agence de la santé et des  
services sociaux de Montréal  
Production :  
S. Goudreau (2012)

# 10 Grassroots Projects in the « Centre-Sud » Neighborhood

- Creating **Frontenac Market**
- Making **Alleyways Green**
- Starting a **Citizen Action Committee for Parks**
- Getting **Parks Alive**
- Starting a **Greening and citizen mobilization project**
- Development of a **Greening plan**
- Developing **Community Gardens**
- **Let's make our environment safe**
- Reclaiming **Our parks, our alleyways**
- Implementing **Active transportation to school interventions**

# Results





# Facilitators

## Within Grassroots Projects

### –Organizations:

- Expertise of the Community Group
- Mastery of Mobilization Tools
- Availability of Data (Diagnostic & plans)
- Commitment

### –Social Interactions:

- Collaboration with other actors
- Flexibility

# Facilitators

## Within Grassroots Projects

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*« One of our partners offered **financial support**, but also provided **expertise** to help us develop our network of contacts ourselves ... this has allowed us to go one step further [...] ».*

*A Representative of a Community Group*

# Barriers

## Within Grassroots Projects

### –Organizations:

- Financial Resources
- Turnover of Personnel
- Amount of Resources and Time Required
- Different Cultures across Organizations
- Communication of information

### –Social Interactions:

- Definition of Roles
- Flow of Information

# Barriers

## Within Grassroots Projects

*« ...it's not [...] by making fruits and vegetables very accessible that we will be able to [generate] revenues that will allow for the sustainability of the new market. Thus we euh...**that's the main obstacle, succeeding in making it survive when we no longer have funds coming in** ».*

*A Representative of a Community Group*

# Facilitators

## Outside of Grassroots Projects

### –Political:

- Openness to Participative Governance
- Convergence of plans across community groups, the city, and the borough

### –Social and Cultural:

- Awareness of Sustainable Development

### –Mobilization among Actors

### –One-time Opportunities

# Facilitators

## Outside of Grassroots Projects

« ... from the moment that there was **a will on the part of the School Board and its highest administrators** to make this project work, right then and there, you have a success factor. [...] In addition, the fact that at the level of the **public security committee there was already a preoccupation with safety**, that too was important ».

*A Community Group Partner*

# Barriers

## Outside of Grassroots Projects

### – Built Environment :

- Substantial Road Infrastructure in the Neighborhood
- Intervention Sites not always compatible with AT

### – Technological :

- Feasibility of Measures

### – Social Context :

- Weak Mobilization of Actors
- Social Acceptability

### – Legal & Policy Context :

- Different Jurisdictions and Priorities

# Barriers

## Outside of Grassroots Projects

***«... there are some students that must cross the access ramp to the Jacques-Cartier bridge [...] I can't see myself asking the borough administration to narrow the access ramp because this would slow down traffic.[..] So, is it the school that is located in the wrong place or the bridge that is located in the wrong place ? »***

*A Community Group Representative*



# Intersectoral Collaborations and Linkages with Other Actions

- Collaborations almost always involve partnerships with other community organizations (7/10)
- Partnerships with organizations in other sectors developed only when issues imperatively required it such as:
  - Collaborations with police for projects aimed at increasing safety
  - Linkages with schools for active transportation to school interventions
- Even though projects were aimed at built environments, most linkages with city workers were in the office of social development rather than urban planning (only 4 projects)
- Linkages of grassroots projects with city policies occurred mainly through the financing of projects rather than their implementation.

# Winning Conditions?

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- The success of grassroots projects depends on a delicate balance between facilitators and barriers which tips in favor of facilitators
- Results show that collaborations develop **intra-** rather than **intersectorally**
- The way forward:
  - Greater **intersectoral** linkages with urban planning, transportation, and policy-makers
  - Sustained **financial support** to allow continuity of action initiated by community groups

# Financial & In-Kind Support



COALITIONS LINKING ACTION  
& SCIENCE FOR PREVENTION

An initiative of:

CANADIAN PARTNERSHIP  
AGAINST CANCER



PARTENARIAT CANADIEN  
CONTRE LE CANCER

Bâtir un  **CANADA** EN SANTÉ

Agence de la santé  
et des services sociaux  
de Montréal

Québec 



CHAIRE en  
SANTÉ PUBLIQUE APPLIQUÉE  
IRSC / CRPO

voisinage, habitudes de vie  
et poids santé

  
**CHUM**  
CENTRE DE RECHERCHE

# Methods

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- 13 Semi-structured interviews (45 - 90 minutes)
- Respondents
  - Community Group Representatives (n=7)
  - Municipal Officials (n=4)
  - Health Department (n=1)
  - School Board (n=1)