

Plan d'action montréalais en itinérance

Background

Homelessness is a complex phenomenon and a major social issue. To be able to reduce or prevent it, it is imperative that various services be made available and accessible, including food and financial assistance, emergency shelter, support and referral, mental health and addiction treatment and follow-up as well as social housing with community support. In this sense, efforts have been made in recent years by the Ville de Montréal (the City) to adopt and implement various policies and action plans to address homelessness.

In June 2017, the City adopted¹ its first *Politique de développement social* « Montréal de tous les possibles » (the Policy), which focuses on people in vulnerable situations and at risk of social, economic and cultural exclusion. One of this policy's orientations concerns the fight against poverty, including homelessness, in neighbourhoods. As a result of the Policy, the 3rd *Plan d'action montréalais en itinérance (PAMI) 2018–2020* was adopted in March 2018. The goal of the PAMI is to promote the maintenance and development of the full services needed to improve living conditions and prevent homelessness.²

Purpose of the Audit

To ensure that the management associated with the implementation of the *Plan d'action montréalais en itinérance* is effective and achieves the expected benefits.

Results

There is no doubt that the City's efforts with respect to homelessness are commendable. However, given the measurement tools proposed in the PAMI, the lack of comparative data on met and unmet needs as well as the limited number of impact indicators identified in the PAMI for which we could have measured progress and indicators used in the reporting process, it is not possible to assess the extent to which the expected benefits were achieved.

Furthermore, our analysis could not confirm that the PAMI was implemented using an impartial and fair project selection process as well as structured and documented monitoring mechanisms.

¹ Resolution CG17 0279 of the agglomeration council. It should be noted that the fight against poverty is an agglomeration power.

² This is the latest plan approved at the time of our audit.

Main Findings

Indicators of Success and Impact of Actions to Combat Homelessness

- The needs that must be addressed to reduce homelessness are not explicitly presented in the indicators of success or elsewhere in the PAMI. An assessment of the ambition of the targets and the extent to which their achievement addresses the problem of homelessness as seen in the field is therefore not possible.
- It is not possible, using the indicators of success, to adequately demonstrate progress or setbacks with respect to what was initially observed or measure desired changes.

Impartiality of the Process Used to Select Projects for Financial Support

- It was not possible to demonstrate the impartiality and fairness of the process established to assess and select projects for support due to the lack of documented guidelines and analysis.

Mechanisms to Monitor the Implementation of the *Plan d'action montréalais en itinérance*

- No minutes were kept of the meetings of the follow-up committee.³ We are therefore not able to corroborate the monitoring that was done and the extent to which it controlled the situation.
- The Service de la diversité et de l'inclusion sociale, as the designated department responsible for monitoring the implementation and follow-up of the PAMI, did not develop structured and documented mechanisms to validate the actions carried out by the business units.
- There is no evidence that the final activity reports of the organizations that are financially supported were analyzed and approved.

Accountability

- The "Highlights" are the only pieces of information that are communicated annually to the authorities.
- The results presented do not always allow for an easy, or even accurate, assessment of whether or not the targets of the PAMI were met, let alone an assessment of the impact on homelessness.

In addition to these results, we made various recommendations to the business units, which are presented in the following pages. The business units concerned have had the opportunity to agree to these recommendations.

³ An internal administrative body responsible for monitoring the implementation of the PAMI, composed of representatives from participating City business units and boroughs.