

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ville de Gatineau, through the Commission consultative sur l'environnement et le développement durable (CCEDD), which was set up in the spring of 2006, opted to develop a municipal environmental policy. To this end, Gatineau decided to consult with its residents to determine their expectations in regard to such a policy. The municipal administration identified the following six major consultation tools:

- a scientific survey of 1,155 Gatineau residents;
- four exchange and discussion workshops (resident component);
- five exchange and discussion workshop for young people in schools (youth component);
- the municipal green line (voice mail box);
- e-mail: [villevette@gatineau.ca](mailto:villevette@gatineau.ca); and
- an internal consultation with municipal staff and members of the CCEDD (the results obtained through this last consultation have not been integrated into this report, but will instead be analyzed internally).

The first component of this consultation took place between October 15 and November 9, 2007. In addition to attending the different meetings, residents were encouraged to submit their suggestions by e-mail or voice mail between September 19 and November 9, 2007, although the CCEDD had started collecting messages on this topic since early 2007.

The exchange and discussion workshops (resident component) were designed around three major activities addressing the following topics:

- Activity A: discussion of the portrait of Gatineau's environmental initiatives covering the municipal achievements according to seven different themes, that is: water, air, soil, biodiversity, residual materials, power and quality of life (35 minutes).
- Activity B: identification of the main impediments to involvement in protecting the environments and the methods that would promote such involvement (25 minutes).
- Activity C: exchanges about the challenges related to the environment and priorities for intervention according to the seven different themes presented above (50 minutes).

The exchange and discussion workshops (youth component) unfolded along the same lines and included:

- an ice-breaking activity around environmental concerns (15 minutes);
- an activity to identify the environmental policy themes (10 minutes);
- activities related to the overview of the environmental initiatives (25 minutes);  
and
- activities related to the impediments and action priorities (15 minutes).

In total, 120 individuals took part in the exchange and discussion workshops (resident component) and 91 students took part in the youth component. Close to 100 e-mails were received by Gatineau on this topic.

The main observations from the scientific survey were as follows:

1. Residents consider themselves to be generally well informed about the practices, customs and behaviours needed to protect the environment.
2. Almost all Gatineau residents (98%) believe that they have a part to play as residents in protecting the environment for future generations.
3. The majority of residents do not yet employ environmentally-responsible practices.
4. In terms of the action priorities for Gatineau in connection with the environment, residents are more in favour of its managing water and public transportation than soil and biodiversity.
5. Close to three-quarters (73%) of Gatineau residents would support “green” alternatives in regard to materials used in residential construction or “green” real estate development, and 21% would like more information.
6. Close to half of the residents interviewed (47%) believe that Gatineau does not provide them with enough information about environmental protection.
7. Three-quarters (75%) of Gatineau residents are satisfied with Gatineau’s efforts in the area of environmental initiatives, including the protection of natural areas, tree planting and by-laws on watering.
8. According to close to half (47%) of Gatineau residents, the best way to encourage residents to change their behaviour in terms of protecting the environment is to increase awareness and information.

9. More than half (52%) of Gatineau residents would be willing to pay more money every year for more environmental protection initiatives by their city.

A detailed qualitative analysis of the statements made and the information provided by e-mail led to the identification of the following five major trends in terms of content for the environmental policy:

- I. Participants see the environmental issue as one of leadership and courage
- II. They favour a systemic approach.
- III. They have great concerns about urban development.
- IV. They also have great concerns about transportation.
- V. They attach a great deal of importance to environmental awareness.

In regard to the seven environmental themes addressed, participants identified three to five priority sub-themes, by theme, which capture 66% to 87% of the interest in environmental intervention. The sub-themes in question could be treated as targets, at least at the outset, for the environmental policy.

Participants in the youth component expressed concerns similar to those of the other participants. They are aware of the environmental issue, want to do their part, want to be listened to and ask that tools and means be provided to make a difference.

In light of all the information collected under this first phase of the consultation, recommendations have been prepared on the following aspects:

1. The main principles of Gatineau's environmental policy;
2. The challenges associated with Gatineau's growth;
3. Awareness, education and compliance with by-laws; and,
4. The prioritization of environmental intervention for each of the seven environmental themes.