

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On April 22, 2008—Earth Day—Gatineau released its draft environmental policy, the product of an extensive effort involving hundreds of professionals, organizations and residents. The environmental policy contained four main orientations under different themes, and proposed more than 175 methods for Gatineau and its residents to achieve such environmental objectives.

The first phase of public consultations in the fall of 2007 provided the opportunity to identify the major trends in terms of residents' expectations of Gatineau and the draft environmental policy.

At that point, Gatineau wanted to once again involve its residents in the process of fine-tuning the draft policy. Therefore, a second phase of public consultations consisting of two information evenings and a public hearing took place in May 2008. At the information evenings on May 5 and 6, residents and local partners were invited to prepare briefs for the public hearing on May 28. As a result, 33 briefs and written comments related to the draft environmental policy were submitted.

The analysis of the information compiled during the second phase of public consultations revealed that in general, the concerns expressed by the participants at these consultations were covered in the draft environmental policy. The environmental concerns that participants identified as being the most pressing are addressed in the orientations, themes and objectives of the draft policy. Participants also presented different ways to achieve the objectives. Some of these can be assimilated into those already proposed in the draft policy, while others represent new suggestions for developing the action plan.

Participants mentioned the importance of Gatineau's role in the project's success. Residents have high expectations and are counting on it to guide them towards a model of sustainable development based on a systemic approach. It would appear that a methodical approach should be used to implement the environmental policy, that it is essential that ongoing efforts be made to increase awareness among residents and to educate them, and that these efforts will be more successful if they are adapted to the different clients. In order to implement and ensure compliance with certain sustainable initiatives, participants suggested expanding the use of by-laws and applying them more rigorously.

In addition to raising certain points related to the policy's implementation, participants in the second phase of the public consultations clearly identified the priority areas, which can be grouped as follows:

- planning development throughout the territory;
- developing the bicycle network;
- preserving biodiversity;
- protecting woodlands and trees in urban areas;
- preserving the water resource;
- controlling noise; and
- building ecological buildings.

In general, the briefs submitted by residents and partners identified comments and suggestions related to the four main orientations in the draft policy, these being Gatineau's leadership role, its sustainable development, awareness and education as vectors of change and by-laws as control tools, and on the seven themes, that is to say the water resource, air quality, the soil resource, biodiversity, the environmental footprint and energy consumption, quality of life and the management of residual materials.

The draft environmental policy is a tool that is under development, and that reflects the efforts made to date in responding to residents' expectations in terms of quality of life and environmental protection.

The comments and suggestions made by participants will now enable Gatineau to identify the priorities and adapt the methods needed to implement an environmental policy that corresponds to the vision of its residents.