

Out of respect for taxpayers' ability to pay

## **The 15 suburban municipalities urgently call for a revision of the City's inflationary budget**

WESTMOUNT, January 12, 2018 – The 15 mayors of the suburban municipalities of the Montreal Island are urgently asking the Plante-Dorais administration to revise the inflationary budget that it submitted on Wednesday of this week. To everyone's surprise, the new budget brings in tax hikes that are, on average, twice as high as in previous years and nearly six times the inflation rate for some of the Island's municipalities!

"This increase is both unacceptable and unfair and must be rectified out of respect for taxpayers," stated these 15 mayors. Collectively, their municipalities represent 246,000 Montreal Island residents who pay on average 50% of their municipal taxes to the Agglomeration. These people did not vote for such draconian tax hikes," stated Beny Masella, President of the Association of Suburban Municipalities and Mayor of Montreal West.

While many Montrealers in the City's 19 boroughs palpably expressed their dissatisfaction over this 3.3% increase, taxpayers in the 15 suburban municipalities are feeling even more aggrieved because they will see hikes of up to 9.8% of their assessments.

These 15 suburban municipalities face average contribution increases equivalent to 5.3% of their Agglomeration budget assessments which equates to three times the 1.7% inflation rate projected for 2018. These 246,000 taxpayers are thus looking at tax increases ranging from \$30 to \$440 per residence.

"As mayors and public administrators, we have the duty each year to make judicious choices between expenditures and tax rates that reflect the ability of our citizens to pay. This is one of the obligations of elected officials. Ms. Plante is Mayor of Montreal but she is also the leader of the Agglomeration and, in this capacity, she must consider the impact of her decisions on all taxpayers, including those in our 15 municipalities who pay half their taxes to the Agglomeration," pointed out Georges Bourelle, Vice-President of the Agglomeration's Finances and Administration Commission and Mayor of Beaconsfield.

There is a recent precedent in the City of Montreal where its administration urgently revised its budget after it had been tabled, in order to lessen the impact on taxpayers' ability to pay and to fulfil its electoral promises.



“This is what we are seeking in this first Plante-Dorais budget and we are doing so on behalf of the quarter of a million people whom we represent on the Montreal Island. Budget growth must not exceed the inflation rate, which was one of the promises of the new administration. This is the spirit in which we all prepared our own local budgets, and it is in this spirit that we are asking for a revision of the Plante-Dorais budget,” said President Masella.

### **Working as partners**

The mayors of the 15 suburban municipalities are partners of the City of Montreal within the Agglomeration; they are familiar with the rigorous, demanding exercise involved in the preparation of a municipal budget and are offering to help Mayor Plante revise the budget in such a way as to ensure a balanced result.

“As always, we are acting as true partners, and it is our hope that Ms. Plante will fulfil her promise to treat us as partners in turn, in a spirit of respect for all taxpayers,” said Mr. Masella.

Thanks to a revision of the City of Montreal’s budget in 2006, it was possible to contain the budget and fulfil the promises made to taxpayers during the electoral campaign.

The Montreal Island suburban municipalities linked to the City of Montreal represent the sixth largest population in Quebec (246,000) and the second largest economic power. These municipalities include Baie-D’Urfé, Beaconsfield, Côte-Saint-Luc, Dollard-des-Ormeaux, Dorval, Hampstead, Kirkland, Dorval Island, Town of Mount Royal, Montreal East, Montreal West, Pointe-Claire, Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue, Senneville and Westmount.

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Source: Association of Suburban Municipalities of Montreal

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