

Position Paper for Municipal Elections in Montreal, Laval, South Shore & Surrounding Municipalities

Hellenic Congress of Quebec

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Introduction

As Montreal, Laval, South Shore and other Quebec municipalities approach their elections, the Hellenic Congress of Quebec would like to offer certain recommendations on key issues such as public safety, the protection of the environment and economic growth, the housing crisis, and community well-being. These proposals aim to improve the overall quality of life for residents of all ages so that our municipalities can continue to create vibrant, sustainable, and inclusive communities where citizens have access to opportunities for growth, well-being, and success.

1. Public Safety & Neighborhood Security

Public safety remains a top priority. Recent events underscore the challenge of crime and its impact on neighborhoods. Municipalities must invest in both immediate and long-term solutions.

- **Enhanced Police Presence & Proactive Policing:** A visible police presence in high-risk areas is vital to prevent crime, including organized crime and street-level offenses. More resources should be allocated to law enforcement for proactive crime reduction and community engagement.
 - **Fraud Prevention & Senior Protection:** As the senior population grows, so does their vulnerability to scams. Municipalities should prioritize educational programs and information sessions aimed at raising awareness about common fraud schemes. These sessions should provide practical tools to help seniors identify and protect themselves from fraud.
 - **Collaboration with Community Organizations:** Strong partnerships between local police and community organizations are essential for building trust and effective crime prevention. These collaborations will foster proactive engagement with residents.
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2. Environment & Urban Cleanliness

While our cities have made progress in environmental sustainability, the focus on sustainable development objectives should be enhanced to maintain vibrancy and quality of life.

- **Environmental Cleanliness & Maintenance:** A clean environment is essential for public health, well-being, and the overall quality of urban spaces. Continued improvements in waste management and cleanliness initiatives are necessary to maintain public spaces, parks, and high-traffic areas, ensuring a cleaner and more sustainable environment for all residents.
- **Accessible Infrastructure:** Investment in public transport, parking, and road maintenance is essential to reduce congestion and support local commerce. Effective urban planning will ensure that all areas are easily accessible to residents and visitors alike.
- **Sustainable Urban Development:** The growing demand for commercial spaces requires thoughtful urban planning that incorporates environmental considerations. Municipalities should offer incentives for responsible development practices that minimize environmental impact without overburdening developers with excessive regulations.

3. Business & the Economy

Supporting local businesses and attracting investment is crucial for economic prosperity. Policies should focus on facilitating business growth, entrepreneurship, and reducing barriers.

- **Support for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs):** Our business communities, particularly SMEs, face challenges like high property taxes and regulatory complexity. Reducing commercial property taxes and simplifying business permits will create a more favorable environment for entrepreneurs.
 - **Incentives for Business Investment:** Municipalities should offer incentives for businesses, especially in emerging sectors like technology and health, and on sectors impacted by trade uncertainty. Financial incentives, tax breaks, and fast-tracking development applications for projects that create local jobs will attract investment and ensure continued growth and facilitate trade diversification.
 - **Removing Regulatory Barriers:** Municipalities should focus on removing outdated regulations and restrictions that hinder business development. Streamlining approval processes will encourage investment and growth in high-demand and emerging sectors, as well as sectors impacted by current trade uncertainty.
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4. Development of Senior Residences & Living Facilities

With aging populations, our municipalities face a pressing need for affordable, accessible senior housing. This requires not only housing but also integrated services.

- **Incentives for Senior Housing Development:** To meet the growing demand for senior housing, municipalities should offer tax incentives and streamline approval processes for developers. These residences should be designed with accessibility and convenience to allow seniors to age in place.
 - **Integrated Senior Services:** Senior housing development must be paired with integrated services like healthcare, transportation, and social programs. A holistic approach ensures seniors have access to healthcare and public transportation, improving their quality of life.
 - **Services Reflecting Cultural Diversity:** The allocation of seniors' residences, as well as the organization and dispensation of services provided should reflect the cultural diversity of our cities to ensure harmonious integration into surroundings that closely resemble pre-placement living environments.
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5. Affordable Housing & Housing Crisis Response

The housing crisis is a major concern in our municipalities, with rising property prices and limited affordable housing. Both short- and long-term strategies are necessary.

- **Streamlining Housing Development Approvals:** To address the housing shortage, municipalities should streamline approval processes and reduce bureaucratic delays. Simplified zoning regulations will help increase the availability of affordable housing.
 - **Support for Affordable Housing Projects:** Municipalities should increase incentives for developers to build affordable housing. Working with both non-profit and private sectors will ensure affordable units in new developments, making housing accessible to all income levels.
 - **Collaboration with Provincial and Federal Governments:** Municipalities should collaborate with provincial and federal governments to secure funding for affordable housing projects. This partnership ensures that large-scale initiatives are financially viable and meet the growing demand.
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6. Family, Youth, and Active Living Infrastructure: Promoting Well-Being Through Accessible Sports and Recreational Opportunities

Access to sports and recreational facilities is key to fostering healthy, active communities. Infrastructure that supports families and youth, municipalities can promote physical well-being, social connection, and overall quality of life.

- **Accessible Recreation Facilities:** Municipalities should prioritize the development and maintenance of parks, sports complexes, and community centers that are easily accessible to families and youth. Ensuring these facilities are well-equipped and conveniently located will encourage active participation in sports and recreational activities, promoting a healthy lifestyle for all age groups.
- **Youth Programs and Sports Initiatives:** Expanding affordable sports programs and after-school activities for youth can help build community engagement, promote physical health, and offer positive outlets for young people. Local governments should invest in partnerships with community organizations to offer diverse programs that cater to a wide range of interests and skill levels.

Conclusion

Municipal candidates are encouraged to consider the key issues outlined in this document—public safety, the protection of the environment and economic growth, housing, senior care, and active living. Addressing these priorities will help foster safer, more prosperous, inclusive and sustainable communities that can meet the needs of all residents. The Hellenic Congress of Quebec looks forward to collaborating with municipal leaders to achieve these goals, ensuring our cities continue to grow and thrive in the years ahead.