



TABLE RONDE DE MONTRÉAL SUR LA  
**TRANSITION DU PATRIMOINE RELIGIEUX**

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MONTREAL ROUND TABLE ON THE  
**TRANSITION OF RELIGIOUS PROPERTY**

# Final Report 2023





**FONDATION DES CENTRES TRINITÉ**  
TRINITY CENTRES FOUNDATION

**TRANSFORMING  
RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS  
FOR COMMUNITY IMPACT**

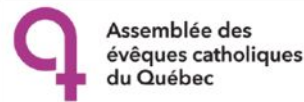
Helping congregations build community centres,  
housing and more

# To facilitate discussion and action

between key players in the sustainable transformation of religious properties in Montréal



The Anglican Church of Canada







A dark, blue-tinted photograph of a city skyline. In the foreground, there is a large, ornate brick church with a prominent arched window. The background shows a dense urban landscape with numerous skyscrapers and buildings under a cloudy sky. A white rectangular box is overlaid on the center of the image, containing text.

# Work completed

Literature review

Quantitative data

Case studies

Qualitative research - Interviews

# Literature review



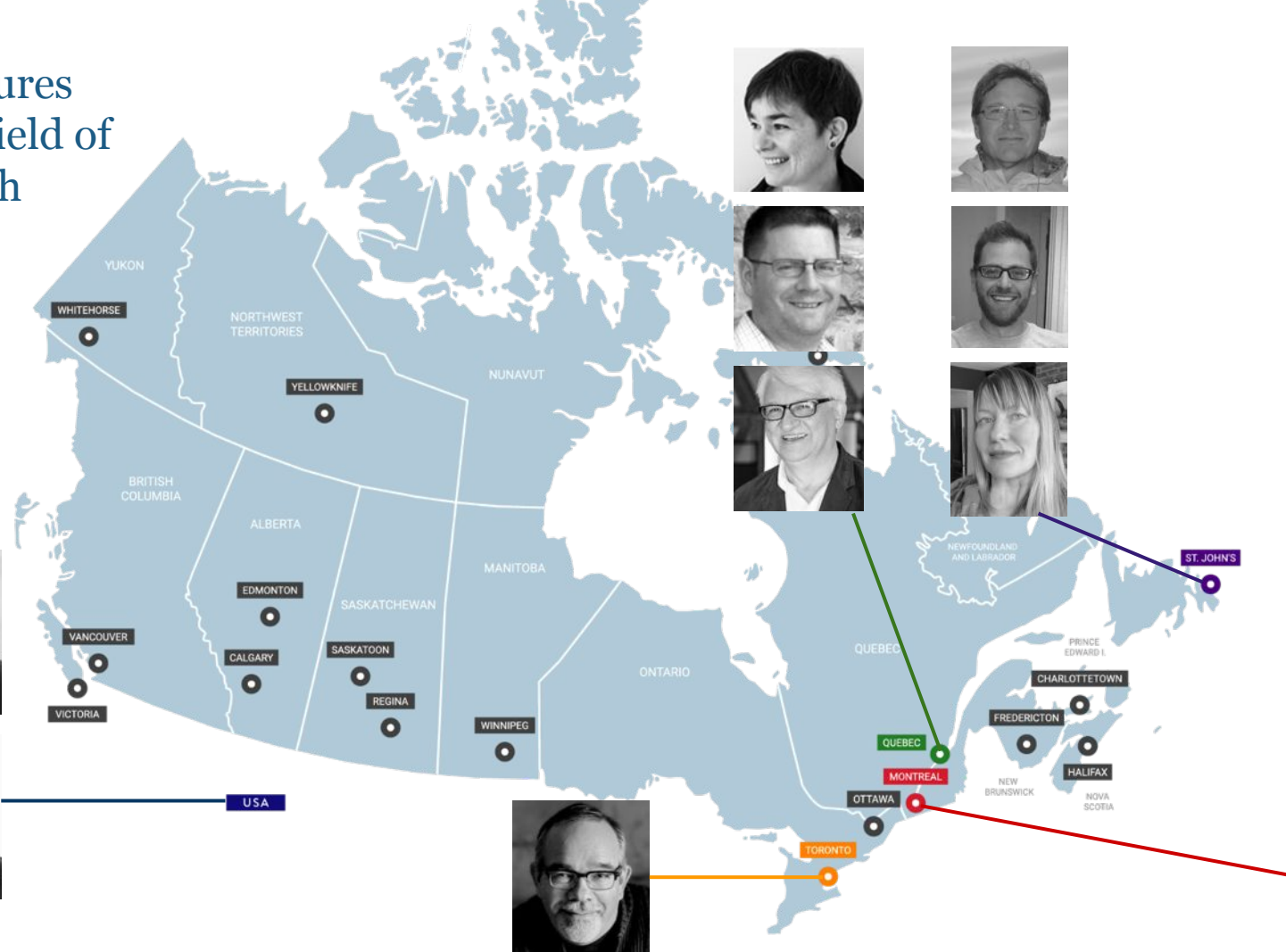
Status :

Safeguarding churches  
by converting **buildings**





# The figures in the field of research





**1996**

2,500 interventions by the  
Fondation du Patrimoine  
Religieux du Québec

**2003-04**

Inventory of places of  
worship in Quebec by  
the CPRQ in 2003

**2005**

Creation of a research  
chair dedicated to  
religious heritage at  
Université de Laval

**2009**

Research program on the  
conversion of churches in  
Quebec at the Urban  
Heritage Research Chair at  
UQAM

**1970**

Luc Noppen's work on  
*religious architecture*

**1997**

International  
conference: **The  
conservation of  
churches in city  
centres**

**2004**

International  
conference :  
*Quebec's religious  
heritage. From cult  
object to cultural  
object*

**2006**

Secor report on  
surplus QC properties

**2023**

Montréal Round Table  
on the transition of  
religious property



Juliette Passilly is a young researcher at the Canada Research Chair on Urban Heritage and at the H ritage-UMR 9022 laboratory as part of her joint doctorate under the supervision of Lucie. K. Morisset and C cile Doustaly and co-supervised by V ronique Dassi .

Canada Research Chair in Urban Heritage



UQ M

Between 20 and 30% of Canadian churches are "in danger of closing" in the next 10 years (900 churches)

Michael Wood Daly, Halo Canada





In Quebec, 2,751 places of worship  
identified as such between 2003 and  
2014, including 400 closed

Quebec Religious Heritage Council



In Montreal, 138 churches  
converted before 2003

Lyne Bernier



# The 5 research themes

- **Project costs** (particularly high due to large surface areas, insurance costs)
- **Time taken** to implement and complete projects (vacancy accelerates the deterioration of buildings)
- **Heritage** (conservation vs. hindrance/complexity)
- **Religious symbols** and objects
- **Polarity** of the various public authorities (multiplication of contacts and administrative burdens)



# Secor Report 2006



## MISE EN PLACE D'UNE STRUCTURE DE GESTION FINANCIERE ET IMMOBILIERE POUR LES PROPRIETES EXCEDENTAIRES DU PATRIMOINE RELIGIEUX BATI AU QUEBEC

### De la firme SECOR Conseil :

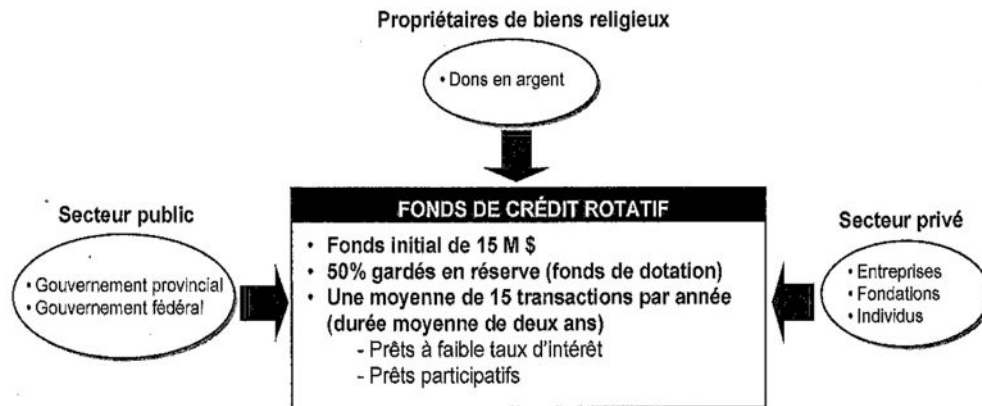
- Carole Desjar
- Daniel Desj
- Marcel Côté
- Marie-Paula Digirol

Avec la collaboration de Phily O'Brien.

### De comité de suivi :

- Sous la supervision de :
  - Serge Filion : Direction de l'aménagement et de l'architecture, Commission de la capitale nationale du Québec
  - Nathalie Prud'homme : Direction de l'aménagement et de l'architecture, Commission de la capitale nationale du Québec
- Chargés de projet :
  - Marie-Josée Deschênes : Direction de l'aménagement et de l'architecture, Commission de la capitale nationale du Québec
  - Robert Caron : Service de l'aménagement du territoire, Ville de Québec
  - René Desrosiers : Développement économique, Ville de Québec
  - Isabelle Dumas : Direction de développement urbain, Ville de Montréal
  - Robert Gagné : Direction générale des politiques et de l'expertise, Ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec
  - Jocelyn Groulx : Fondation du patrimoine religieux du Québec
  - Robert J. Kofford : Fondation du patrimoine religieux du Québec
  - Pierre Labrecq : Direction de la Capitale-Nationale, Ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec
  - Fernand Lévesque : Direction générale des politiques et de l'expertise, Ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec
  - Brigitte Paradis : Direction du patrimoine, Ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec
  - Céline Topp : Direction de développement urbain, Ville de Montréal
  - Germain Tremblay : Assemblée des évêques catholiques du Québec
- Avec la collaboration de :
  - Aïda Anagnostou : Conférence religieuse canadienne
  - Hervé Bélanger : Direction de l'aménagement et de l'architecture, Commission de la capitale nationale du Québec

### 4. Objectifs de la société et offre de services...







# Quantitative data



# A few definitions



## Religious property

Any type of religious property, including a place of worship, a monastery and/or any other property listed by the CRA as belonging to a religious organisation.

## Places of worship

Regular place of worship for any religious organisation (Muslim, Jewish, Christian-Catholic, Christian-Protestant, Christian-Orthodox).

## Churches

Regular Christian place of worship (Christian-Catholic, Christian-Protestant, Christian-Orthodox)

# Quantitative research



## In Canada :

- 4,300 churches closed between 2009 and 2018, i.e. 17% of the country's churches
- between 20 and 30% of churches in Canada are "in danger of closing" in the next 10 years (900 churches)

## In Quebec :

- Quebec, 80 churches and chapels disused between (1995 and 2005).
- between 2003 and 2014, 2,751 places of worship identified, including 400 closed.
- In Quebec, a quarter of all places of worship were demolished, closed or recycled between 2003 and 2022.
- Since 2013, 285 buildings have changed use and 40 have been demolished.

## In Montreal :

*Since the 20th century :*

- 240 churches have been sold, 70 of which have now been demolished; in addition, 35 chapels have been identified as now being put to a new use.
- *60% of closed churches are given over to new traditions*
- CPRQ inventory in 2003; includes 471 pre-1975 buildings
- 138 churches converted in Montreal before 2003

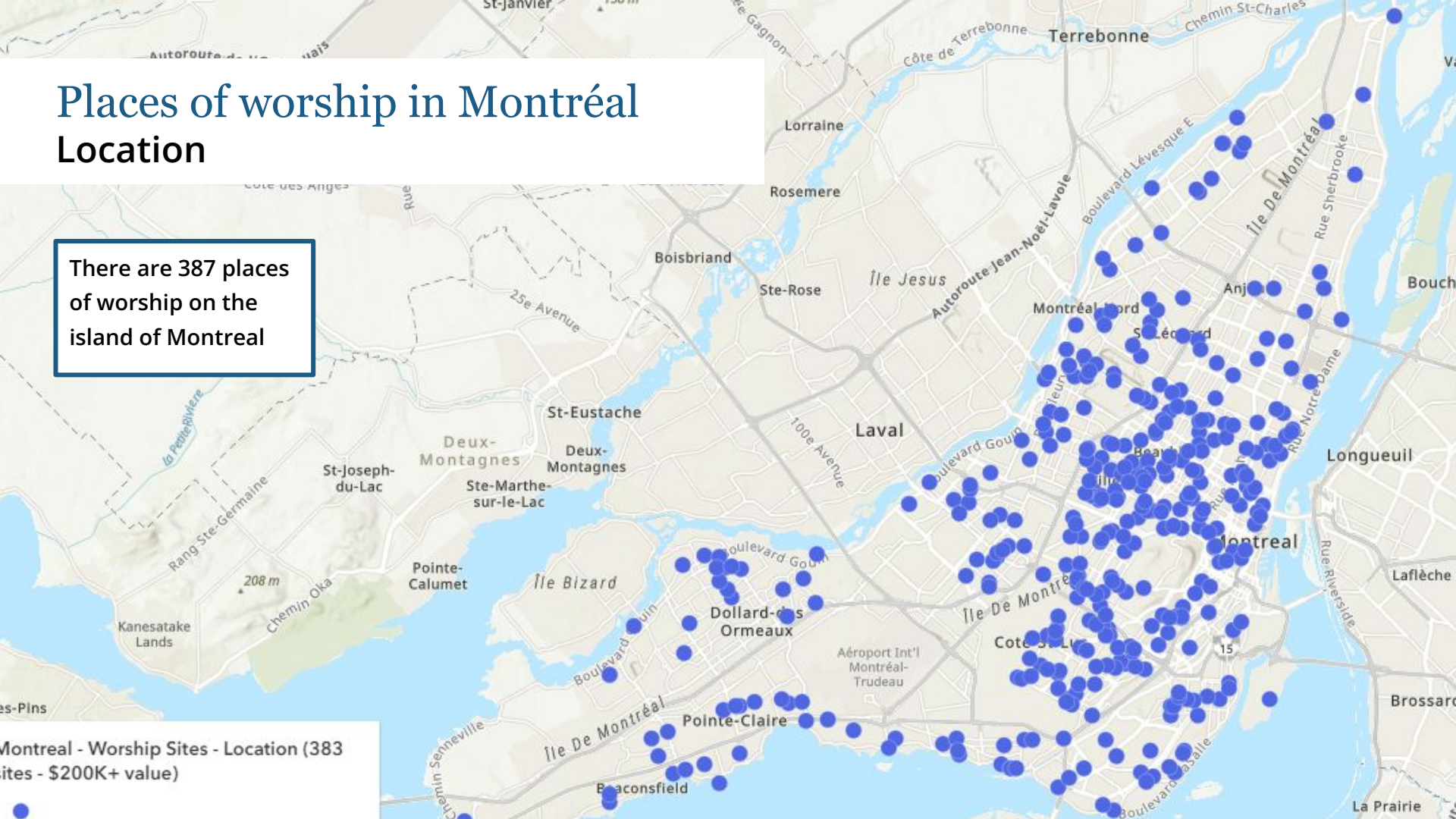


# Places of worship in Montréal

## Location

There are 387 places of worship on the island of Montreal

Montreal - Worship Sites - Location (383 sites - \$200K+ value)

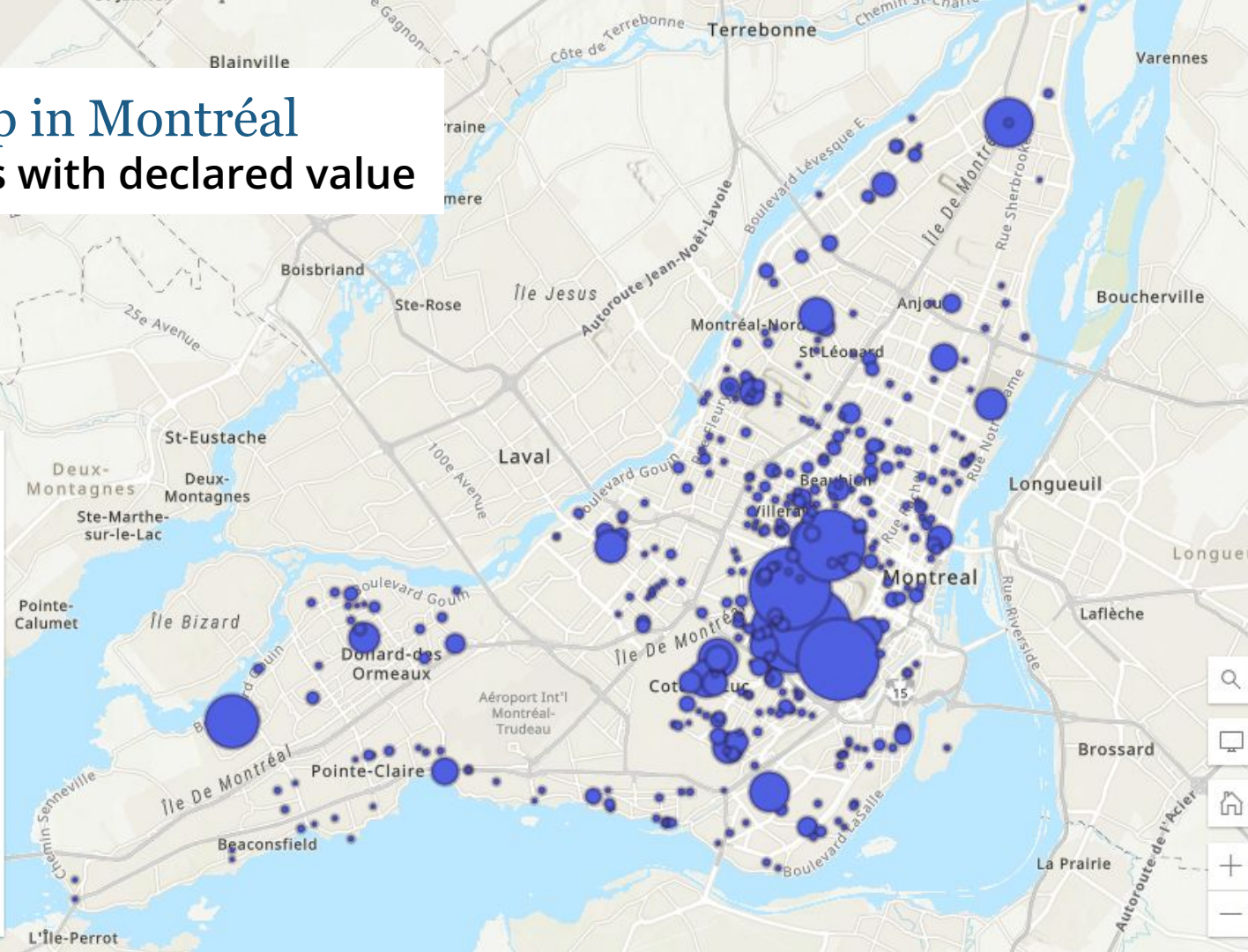
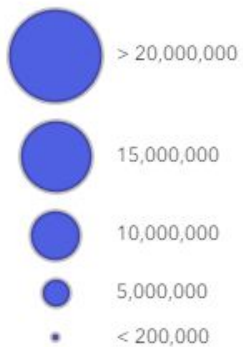


# Places of worship in Montréal

## Land and buildings with declared value

### Montréal \_ Worship Sites \_ Declared Value of Land and Buildings

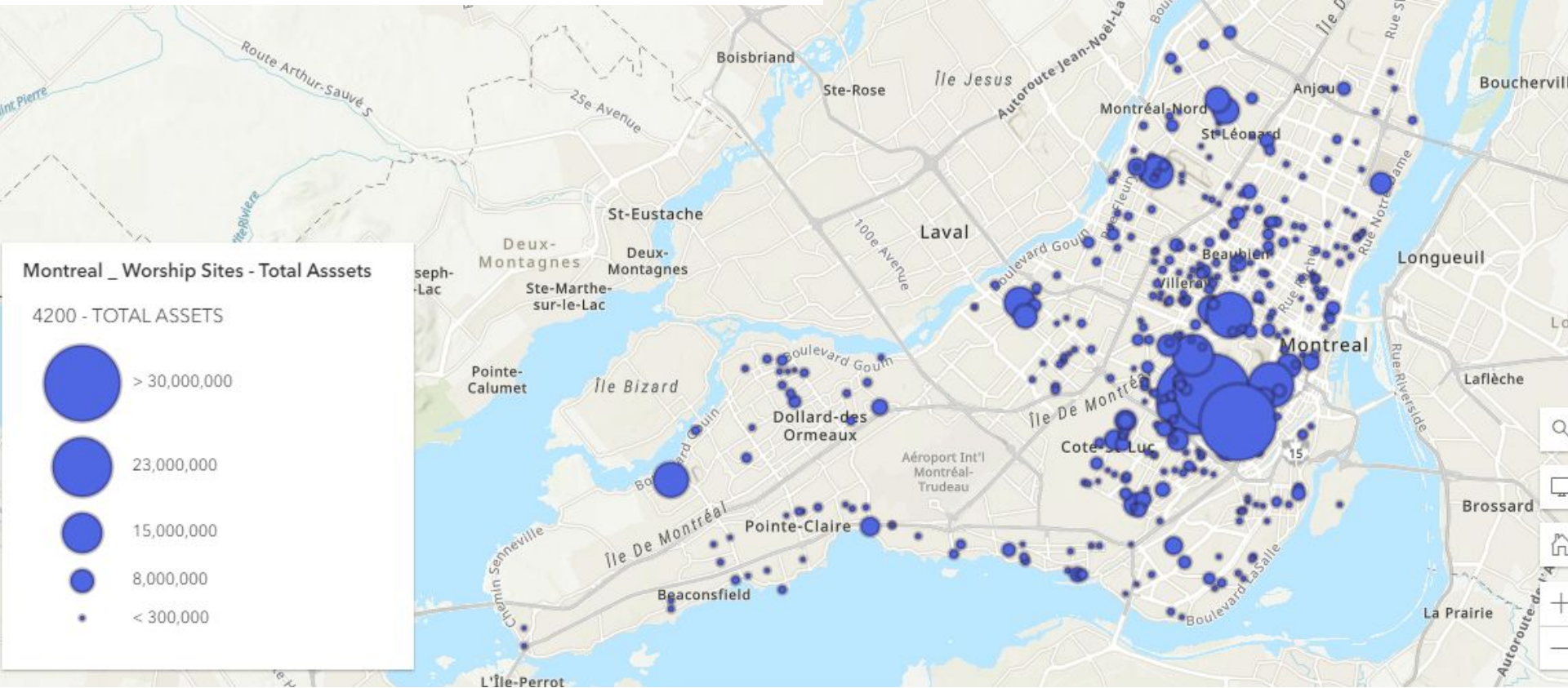
4155 - Declared Value of Land and Buildings





# Places of worship in Montréal

## Total assets

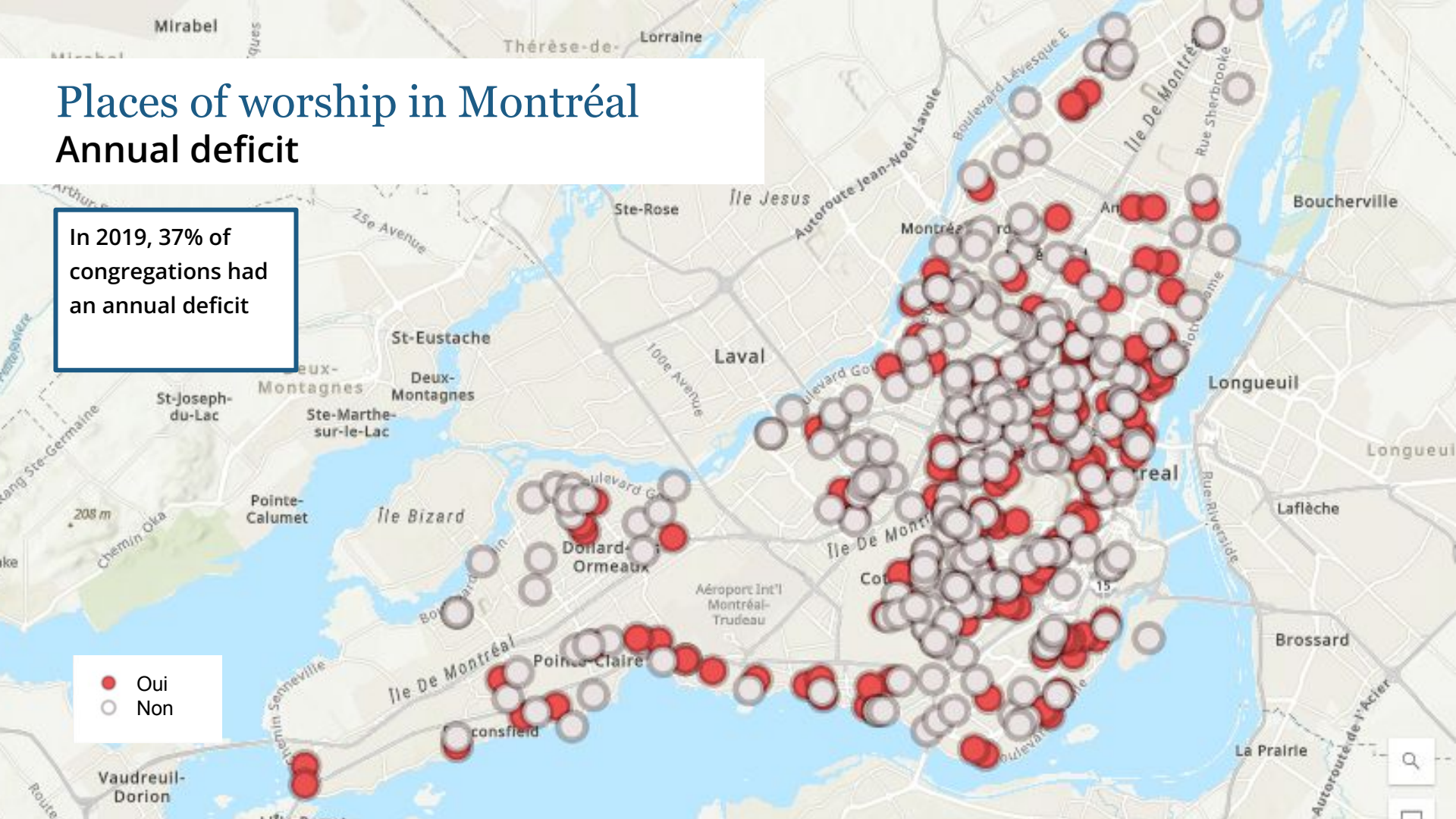


# Places of worship in Montréal

## Annual deficit

In 2019, 37% of congregations had an annual deficit

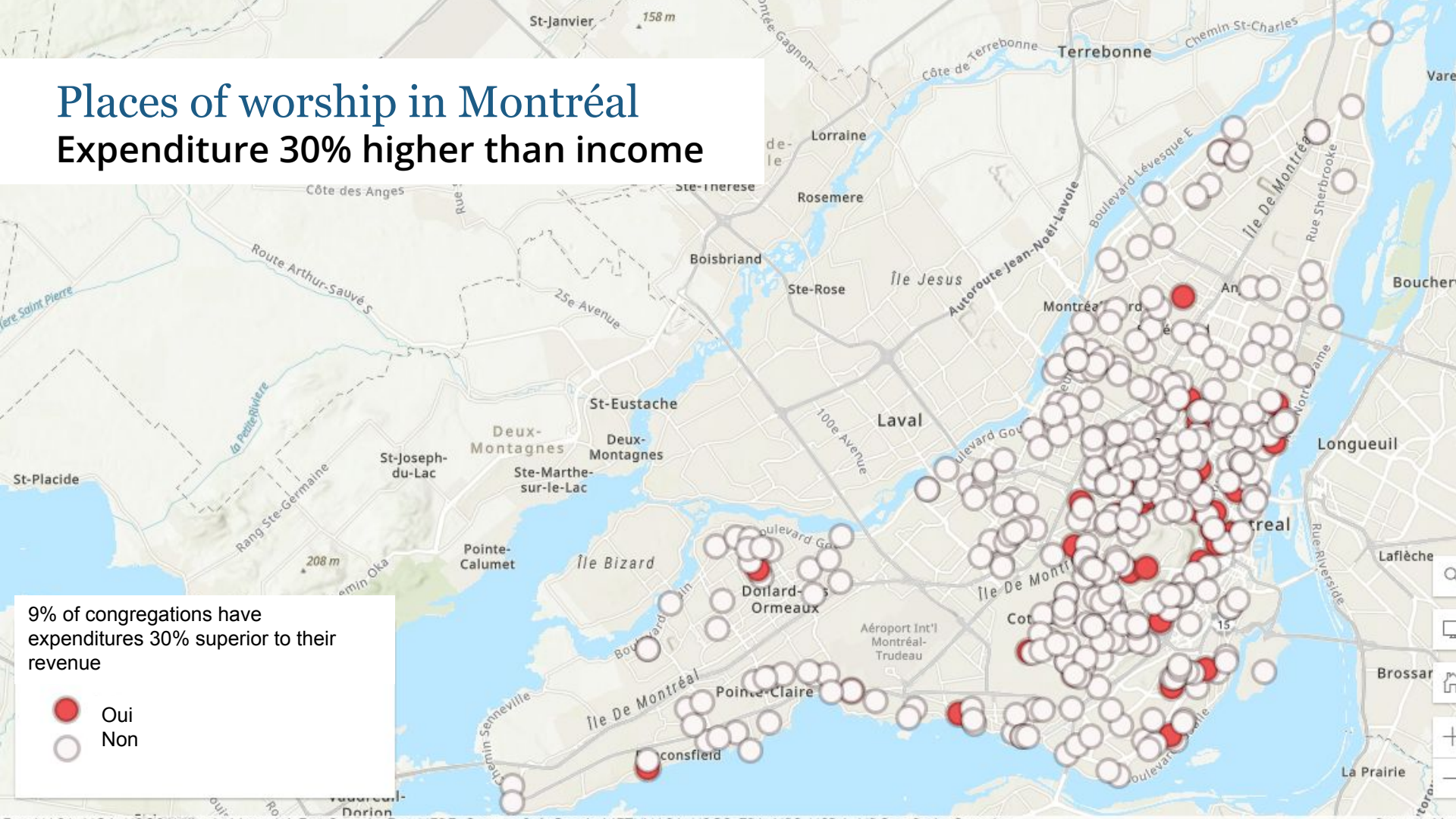
- Oui
- Non





# Places of worship in Montréal

## Expenditure 30% higher than income

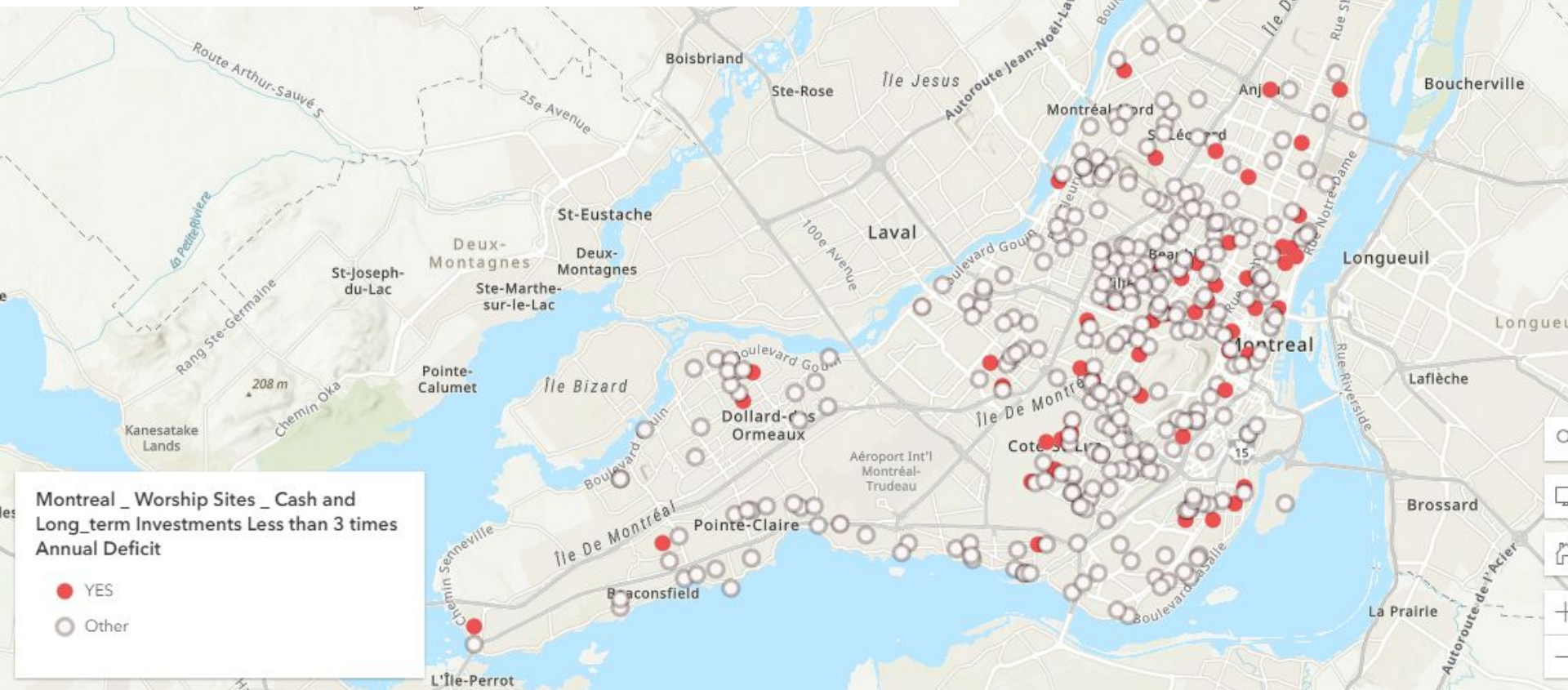


9% of congregations have expenditures 30% superior to their revenue

- Oui
- Non

# Places of worship in Montréal

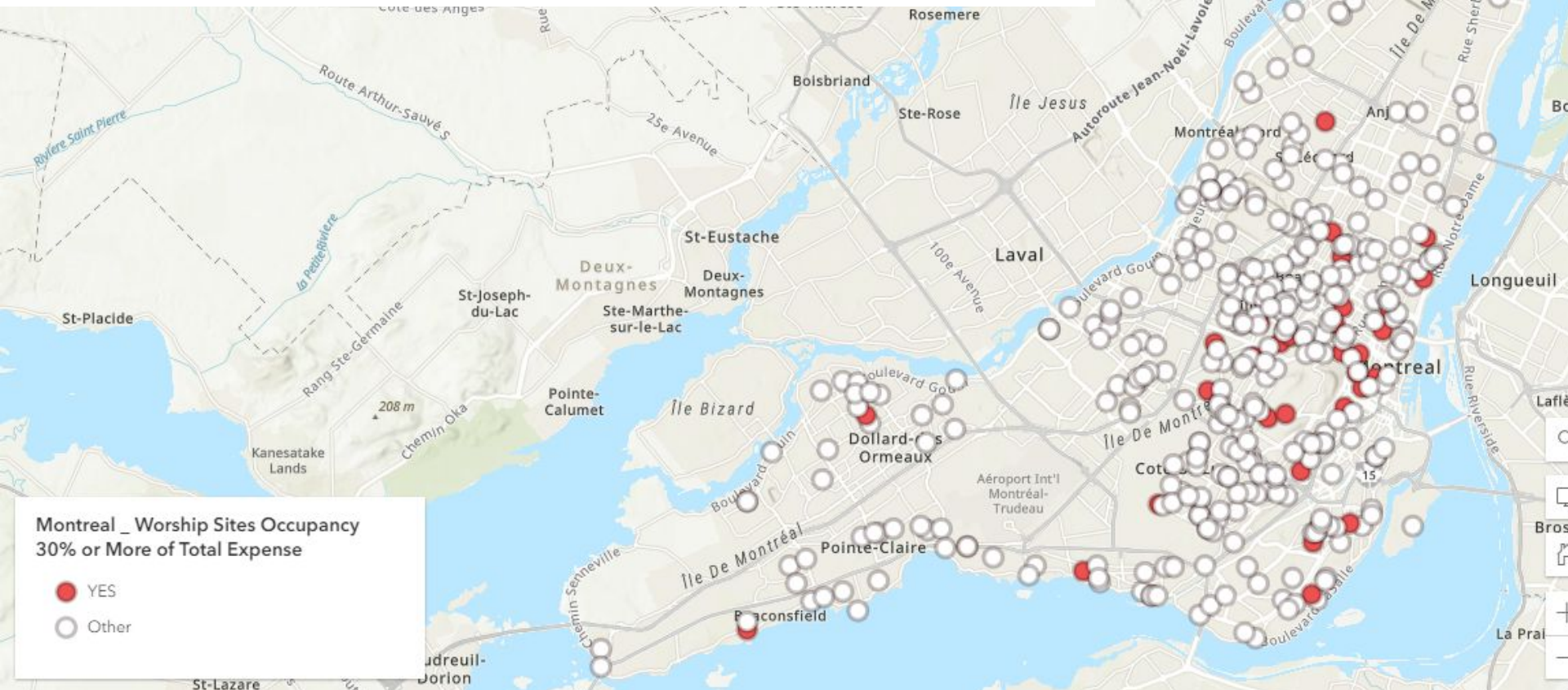
## Loss-making investments less than 3 years old





# Places of worship in Montréal

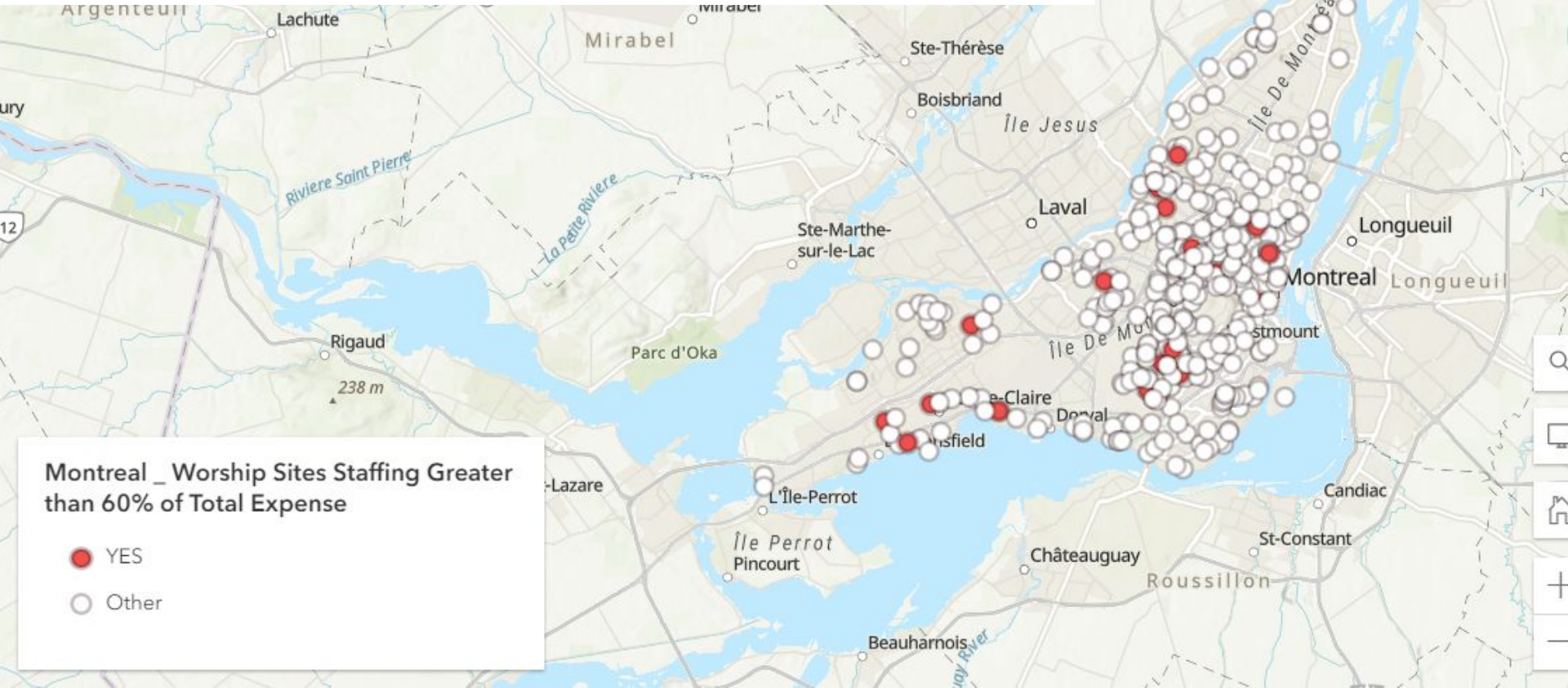
## Occupancy costs 30% or more of total expenditure





# Places of worship in Montréal

Personnel costs 60% or more of total expenditure



# Places of worship in Montréal

## Risk of closure

### Level of Risk

- Low – 286 – 74%
- Medium – 61 – 16%
- High – 40 – 10%





# Places of worship in Montréal

## Potential for community needs



Portrait of religious sites representing a real potential for community needs



Q. What is the total cost of basic renovations for all of Montreal's heritage churches?



R. That's why we need to continue the work of this round table.



# Case studies



# Saint-Esprit

## Context

Case  
Study



- A parish of three churches, including a magnificent heritage church in the heart of Old Rosemont that is already a major centre for community services and continues to function as a church. It faces millions of dollars in structural repairs, growing debt and an operating budget deficit that threaten its existence.
- A second church in the parish (Ste-Bibiane) will be sold to raise the capital needed to repair the main church and attract new users of the building to finance its activities.



# Saint-Esprit

## Project challenges and opportunities

Case  
Study



- Preservation of heritage features at the expense of economic viability
- The parish wishes to retain ownership of the premises, which complicates the financial arrangements.
- Preserving the church forecourt for public events and integrating it into the pedestrian square being developed by the borough on rue Masson
- The financial package is based on the liquidation of assets

# Saint-Esprit

Case  
Study



## Report

With regard to the sale of Ste-Bibiane, we would recommend that the FCT be engaged to help find a buyer for the building, and to assist that buyer in his project for the building. It could be a for-profit developer who demolishes the church in favour of a residential project, in which case we could support his application for a zoning change. It could also be a buyer who has a social or cultural objective for the building, in which case we will help them develop their project.

With regard to improving operations at St-Esprit, we will be recommending that the CTF be engaged to determine which of the operational scenarios is most suitable, and to develop a plan around that scenario.

# Saint-Clément

Case  
Study



- A large deconsecrated church in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve
- Hochelab, a citizens' group, is seeking to acquire the church and transform it into a community centre
- The cost of acquiring, repairing and upgrading the church could run into tens of millions of dollars.

# Saint-Clément

## Project challenges and opportunities

Case  
Study



- The need for the parish to receive added value from the building in order to renovate another neighbouring church.
- Comparative costing of similar projects to facilitate financial planning
- Relies on the intensive involvement of its volunteers
- High energy costs
- Immediate financial needs for heating and emergency work (flooding and water ingress)
- Partial funding obtained to produce the health booklet

# Saint-Clément

Case  
Study



TCF's assistance consisted of :

- Several virtual, telephone and face-to-face meetings with the Hochelab team to support them in their thinking, approaches and business decisions.
- Liaise between Hochelab and the archdiocese, including with brokers via Julie Favreau-Lavoie.
- Drafting a funding application to the Greater Montreal Community Real Estate Initiative.
- Two visits to the site to assess its condition and potential uses, and to meet the various stakeholders.
- Participation in the two ideation workshops for the implementation and financing of the project's development stages.
- A preliminary proforma analysis of different development and revenue generation scenarios.

# Foyer du monde

Case  
Study



- An organisation based in a former monastery, which provides support and accommodation for asylum seekers, is looking to double its accommodation capacity
- Acquire a second property (probably a former monastery, convent or presbytery) to double its accommodation capacity to at least 60 people.
- Although a number of properties of this type are available, the cost of acquiring and renovating them is high, as are the complex zoning and building code issues involved in changing their use.



# Foyer du monde

## Project challenges and opportunities

Case  
Study



- Model to be developed for the transition of monasteries and presbyteries
- Changes to zoning and standards, tax situation
- Cooperation between different levels of government
- Secularisation of the organisation in progress
- Connecting with societal issues: Newcomers to Mtl STAT



# Qualitative research - Interviews



# Qualitative research - Interviews

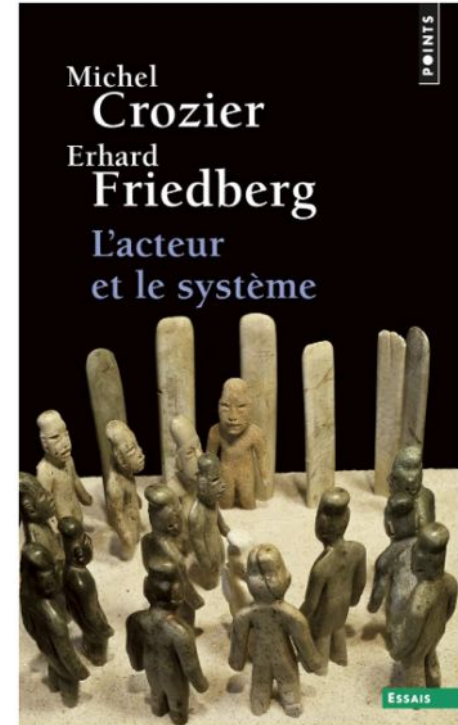


**Objectives:** Understand the different points of view of the participants and identify possible collaborations.

February-March: confidential interviews (application of the Chatham House Rule).

Questions to identify participants' goals, issues, resources and constraints.

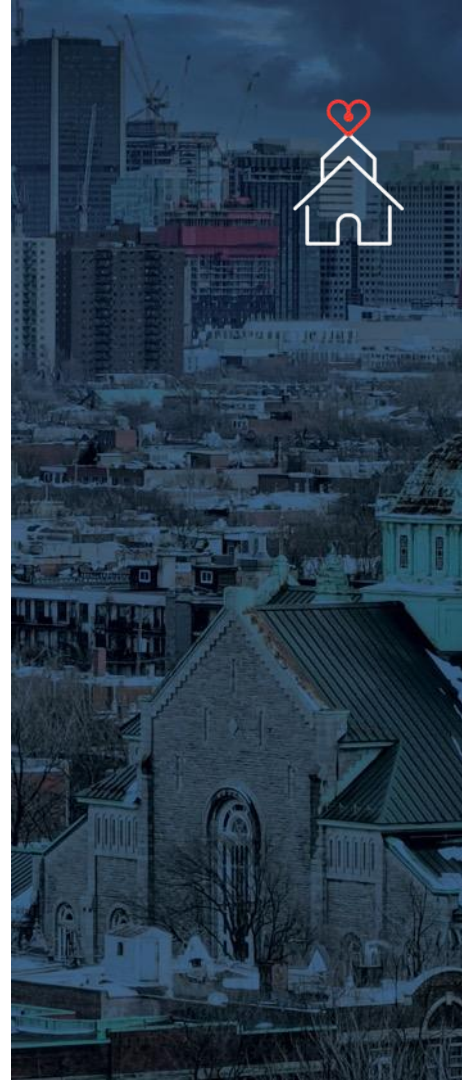
The conceptual framework used to design the interview framework and analyse the responses = Crozier and Friedberg's strategic analysis.



# Notes on the state of the sector

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- Institutions
- Models
- Roles
- Morale
- Oxygen



A dark, blue-tinted photograph of a city skyline, likely New York City, featuring numerous skyscrapers and a large, ornate building in the foreground. A large white rectangle is centered over the image, containing the text "Study results" in a dark blue, serif font.

# Study results

# Building sites



Data



Cohabitation



Green space



Governance



Finance



# Finance



Definition	Question to be validated	Next steps
<p>Providing government or private funding for redevelopment projects</p>	<p>How can government programmes be harmonised?</p> <p>What role can private finance play in Montreal, Quebec and Canada?</p> <p>Which stages of the redevelopment are easier or harder to finance and why?</p> <p>What types of holding structure are easier to finance and why?</p> <p>How can we meet the property tax challenge in a context of transition?</p>	<p>Suggest ways of improving and harmonising existing government programmes</p> <p>Monitor international models for the private financing of religious heritage</p> <p>Identify, define and deploy the investment funds needed for redevelopment projects</p>



# Governance



Definition	Question to be validated	Next steps
<p>Management and ownership of real estate properties</p> <p>How project sponsors manage their finances</p>	<p>What best practice can be taught in terms of financial resilience and governance?</p> <p>What external services and expertise are needed?</p> <p>What types of holding are conducive to requalification?</p>	<p>Promote or set up training courses to enable project sponsors to receive training</p> <p>Putting external experts in touch with project leaders</p> <p>Identify and disseminate standard holding structures to facilitate redevelopment projects (governance, financing and cohabitation)</p>





# Cohabitation



Definition	Question to be validated	Next steps
<p>Living together</p> <p>Ensuring that religious and secular people can live together in the same multi-use building</p>	<p>What models should be proposed to ensure harmonious cohabitation?</p>	<p>Bringing religious and lay communities together</p> <p>Breaking the taboo on religion and continuing the discussion</p> <p>Learn more about international models for living together in religious buildings</p>



Definition	Question to be validated	Next steps
<p>Element used as a basis for reasoning, as a starting point for research</p>	<p>How can we find out more about the religious property heritage of Montreal and Quebec?</p> <p>How can access to data be improved?</p>	<p>Promoting data accessibility</p> <p>Producing and disseminating research</p> <p>Drawing on best practice in research and work carried out elsewhere in Canada</p>



# Data



## Portrait des sites religieux qui présentent un potentiel pour des besoins communautaires

### 1 ► Très-Saint-Sacrement

Arrondissement Lachine, Église catholique

Le sous-sol de l'église a hébergé une halte chaleur en 2022, mais le projet n'a pas été reconduit en 2023. Le site présente un potentiel de requalification.

### 2 ► Resurrection of Our Lord, ou renommée St. John Paul II

Arrondissement Lachine, Église catholique

Le sous-sol de l'église a hébergé une halte chaleur en 2022, mais le projet n'a pas été reconduit en 2023. Le site présente un potentiel de requalification intéressant notamment pour des activités publiques ou communautaires.

### 3 ► Congrégation des Sœurs de Sainte-Anne

Arrondissement Lachine, Maison mère d'une congrégation catholique

Le site accueille actuellement un projet de requalification qui est en cours.

### 4 ► Sainte-Cécile

Arrondissement Villeray, Église catholique

Il y a actuellement quatre organismes hébergés dans cette église, et la congrégation avait annoncé la mise en vente de l'église, ce qui aurait entraîné l'éviction des groupes. À la suite d'une mobilisation, la congrégation a accepté de repousser la fermeture et la mise en vente de 1 an.

#### Revue de presse :

☞ Philippe-Antoine Saulnier, *Le 15-18, Première chaîne RDC, 25 octobre 2022*

☞ Erika Morris, *CBC News, October 29th 2022*

INFORMATIONS TIRÉES D'UN ÉCHANGE AVEC LES MEMBRES DE LA COALITION MONTRÉLAISE DES TABLES DE QUARTIER – ASSEMBLÉE GÉNÉRALE DU 4 AVRIL 2023

GESSICA GROPP, CHARGÉE DE PROJET POUR DES LOCAUX COMMUNAUTAIRES ADÉQUATS : gessica@cmtq.org



### 5 ► Saint-Grégoire-le-Grand

Arrondissement Villeray, Église catholique

La paroisse est disposée à accueillir des groupes communautaires, mais la question des assurances est compliquée, car le bâtiment n'est pas assurable. Il y a beaucoup de rénovation à faire et les fenêtres n'ouvrent pas. On y tient parfois des activités citoyennes, mais c'est limité en raison de l'état des lieux.

### 6 ► Saint-Stanislas-de-Kostka

Arrondissement Plateau-Mont-Royal, Église et presbytères catholiques

L'organisme héberge l'organisme La Maison d'Aurore et les Amis du Plateau-Mont-Royal, dans le sous-sol. Il y a aussi le presbytère où il y a d'autres occupants, pas seulement du communautaire. La personne qui gère les espaces (Monsieur Dénommé) assure les organismes qu'ils ont leur place, mais on ne connaît pas ce qui peut arriver si l'église ferme. L'entretien est tout de même fait, mais il y a certains problèmes structurels évalués à 20M\$, dont le toit et les pierres extérieures. Le bâtiment est classé.

### 7 ► Saint-Gabriel

Arrondissement Le Sud-Ouest, Église et presbytère catholiques

Les 2 bâtiments sont à vendre depuis quelques mois. L'arrondissement a fait une analyse sommaire et a choisi de ne pas poursuivre les démarches pour les acheter. Un CPE pourrait être intéressé par le presbytère. La Table de quartier Action-Gardien propose d'utiliser l'église pour une maison de la culture. Actuellement, il n'y a pas de besoins saillants pour des locaux communautaires dans le quartier. On a exploré certaines avenues, comme la possibilité de scinder le lot en deux (un lot pour le presbytère et l'autre pour l'église). Les rumeurs dans le quartier disent que le site est à vendre pour 10M\$.

### 8 ► Chapelle de l'ancien hôpital de la Miséricorde

Arrondissement Ville-Marie, Église catholique

Le site de l'ancien hôpital appartient au ministère de la Santé et des Services Sociaux, car il a servi de CHSLD Jacques-Viger jusqu'en 2012. Alors que le bâtiment est désaffecté depuis 10 ans, le gouvernement du Québec prépare sa mise en vente. C'est une perspective qui inquiète les organismes du quartier qui craignent que cela ne mette en péril la construction de logements sociaux. La Chapelle pourrait accueillir des usages communautaires, car elle n'est pas propice au logement.

#### Revue de presse :

☞ Olivier Bachand, *12 décembre 2022, Radio-Canada*

### 9 ► Congrégation Notre-Dame

Arrondissement Ville-Marie, Couvent ou séminaire catholique

### 10 ► Grand séminaire de Montréal

Arrondissement Ville-Marie, Séminaire des Sulpiciens

Pour ce grand ensemble, la proposition portée par la Table Peter McGill consiste à développer pour réaliser des espaces verts, des équipements de sports et loisirs extérieurs, un école primaire publique ainsi que des locaux pour les organismes.

### 11 ► Notre-Dame-des-Sept-Douleurs

Arrondissement Verdun, Presbytère catholique

Le presbytère est actuellement en vente. La Fabrique a reçu 2 offres d'achat. Un des deux projets pourrait comprendre une partie dédiée à héberger des organismes, mais avec un coût de location supérieur à 20\$ du pied carré, ce qui rend le coût hors de portée pour des organismes. Après certains allers-retours, l'arrondissement a refusé d'acheter le site.

### 12 ► Saint-Édouard

Arrondissement Rosemont-la-Petite-Patrie, Église catholique

Il y a actuellement des organismes hébergés dans cette église. On ne connaît pas les possibilités de fermeture.

### 13 ► Saint-Arsène

Arrondissement Rosemont-la-Petite-Patrie, Église catholique

### 14 ► Saint-Paul

Arrondissement Le Sud-Ouest, Église catholique

Il y a actuellement un organisme hébergé et on sait que le diocèse souhaite la vendre prochainement. Le bâtiment est en piteux état.



# Green space and sustainable development



Definition	Question to be validated	Next steps
<p>Any public or semi-public green amenity space in an urban or suburban environment</p> <p>Ensuring redevelopment that respects future generations</p>	<p>How can religious heritage transition projects be included in a sustainable development perspective?</p> <p>How can the energy consumption of such buildings be managed efficiently?</p> <p>How can we preserve green spaces and historical heritage without making economic viability impossible?</p>	<p>Meet the experts in sustainable development</p> <p>Draw up an overview of best practice in the short, medium and long term</p>

A dark, blue-tinted photograph of a city skyline, likely New York City, featuring numerous skyscrapers and a large, ornate building in the foreground. A large white rectangle is centered over the image, containing the text "Next steps" in a dark blue, serif font.

# Next steps



## Next steps

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- Dissemination of results to networks and partners
- Implementation of the 5 solution projects
- Identification of participants
- Validation of mandate and priorities
- Planning deliverables and deadlines
- Consolidating financing
- Next event: November 2023





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