

## Montreal West Survey Questions

(Background is given for about 35% of the questions in Sections 2 to 6.)

The demographic questions have been omitted here.

**SECTION 1 deals with ongoing concerns. SECTIONS 2 to 6 are issues raised at council meetings -- as reported in Carol Foster's column in The Informer, plus a few others.**

### SECTION 1: ONGOING CONCERNS

0 = not important; 1 = slightly important, minimal concern; 2 = moderately important, some significance; 3 = important, matters significantly to me; 4 = very important, my highest priority

There are in excess of a dozen older street-blocks in very poor condition; some are plagued by high lead-in-water values. Unfortunately, infrastructure renewal is conditional on availability of grants, our capacity for additional debt -- which is already set to increase significantly, and the impact on taxes.

1. How important is infrastructure renewal?
2. How important is it for the Town investigate the tax increases for renewal projects *without grants*?  
That is, what would be the additional tax increase?
3. How important is reducing the Town's high debt level?
4. How important is it that something be done, if possible, to the Town's high tax levels?
5. How important is traffic safety (e.g. speedbumps, crosswalks, Westminster crossing)?
6. Approximately 30% of Town residential water intake pipes are made of lead. How much importance should the Town give this issue?
7. How important is the children's library to the community?
8. How important is the adult library to the community?
9. How important is The Informer in keeping you aware of Town news & events?
10. How important is it that the Town deals with environmental issues ?
11. How important are seniors' programs to the community?
12. How important are the Town's recreational & cultural activities to the community?

**Clickable Notes:** (1), (2), ... and Examples: (E1), (E2), ... **will take you to the background of some questions.**

### SECTION 2: TRANSPARENCY

**The Town currently has the best transparency for financial data and council meeting videos & minutes on the Island; the following would make it even better:**

13. How important is it to post traffic safety and speed bump reports on the Town website?
14. How important is it to publish the map of lead-in-water test results, or the range of results on a
  - block-by-block basis? (3)

15. How important is it that the Town publishes the names of members on the various committees ? (e.g. Community Safety, Environmental Action, etc.) **(4)**
16. The Town submits an annual list to the government of streets due for complete renewal ranked according to priority. How important is it to publish the infrastructure priority list? **(1)**
17. How important is it for residents to know the weighting of criteria and amount of discretion that the Town has in prioritizing streets for renewal? **(2)**
18. The Town has discretion in prioritizing streets for renewal, how important is it that high lead in water concentrations be given a very high weighting? **(2)**

### **SECTION 3: TOWN COMMUNICATION/INTERACTION WITH RESIDENTS**

19. How important is regular online solicitation of *feedback, concerns and suggestions*?
20. How important are non-binding online *surveys of issues of concern to citizens*?
21. How important is it that the Town solicit resident input *before projects are finalized*. For example, the plans for the Westminster traffic pilot project later this summer.
22. How important is it for the Town to support & encourage residents' filing for compensation due to floods, pothole damage, snowblower damage etc.? **(9)**
23. How important are referendum questions on issues of concern every 4 years at elections (as done in the US)?

### **SECTION 4: PERMITS & APPROVALS**

24. How important is it that home maintenance & repairs for restoration to original condition not require permits/approval ? **(E1)** to **(E7)**
25. How important is it to eliminate permit/approval requirements for things such as eavestroughs & downspouts, garage doors, side/rear doors, etc? **(E6)**, **(E7)**, **(E10)**, **(E12)**
26. How important is it that the Town create a list of 20+ common home projects on the Town website and whether they require approval and/or permits?
27. How important is it that the Town "grandfathers" existing structures not visible from the street that are found to be in violation of bylaws. **(E8)**

### **SECTION 5: COUNCIL & COUNCIL MEETINGS**

28. How important is it to streamline council meetings and post more material online.
29. How important is it to post explanations of new & amended bylaws online in *plain language*?
30. How important are term limits for councillors & the mayor to ensure turnover?

- 31. How important is better pay for councillors and a little more for the mayor? (5)
- 32. How important is it that residents' emails and questions at council meetings receive prompt follow-up? (6)
- 33. Question period at council meetings is always prefaced by "this is not the place for debate". How important is it to have occasional opportunities to debate issues? (7)

#### **SECTION 6: MISCELLANEOUS**

- 34. How important is it that the hours that the Public Security Officers (PSOs) are available be indicated on the Town website along with the PSO's direct cell phone number so that they can be reached promptly in an emergency rather than through the call center ? (10)
- 35. How important is it to publish approximate locations of crimes like Westmount does in the weekly Westmount Independent newspaper? At least those known to PSOs if SPVM Station 9 data is not available. (11)
- 36. How important is it to extend the 15-day deadline for filing a claim against the Town? (12)
- 37. How important is it to start replacing portions of the tree canopy by culling the many diseased Norway maples? (13)
- 38. How important is it to create a new-residents page on the Town website describing the services available? (Perhaps organize social gatherings for "newbies". Meet-the-councillors/mayor nights.)
- 39. How concerned are you about parking in general? (Use the same scale as for importance.)
- 40. *Bedbrook, Fairfield, and Percival residents only.* How concerned are you about parking near the rec center?

**Montreal West Survey April/May 2025:**

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf8tpDj\\_Vf\\_8wtL7hXYPpfSy6g0WmyAIw2yLqbKhUHF5qckAQ/viewform?usp=header](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf8tpDj_Vf_8wtL7hXYPpfSy6g0WmyAIw2yLqbKhUHF5qckAQ/viewform?usp=header)

## NOTES

### *Publish the infrastructure priority list.*

(1): At the February 2023 council meeting (April 2023 Informer) a councillor agreed to publish the list only to reverse her decision at the June 2023 meeting – video (44:38). Here is the extract from page 17 of the April Informer where the February meeting as reported by Carol Foster: “Other topics discussed included a request for a continually updated list of streets scheduled for repair in priority order. Councillor Ulin agreed with this request and added that the list could be published in The Informer, accompanied by an explanation of how the streets are selected.”

**June 2023 council meeting video:** <https://www.youtube.com/live/xmuMCubQoMA>

### *Town discretion in prioritizing infrastructure renewal.*

(2): At the November 25, 2024 meeting (1:26:54) a councillor acknowledged that “**things like lead in the water** or cross connections or other things under the street **can also be factored in**. If two streets we’re looking at, and all things being equal, we could consider lead as being one of the factors to put that street higher on the priority list.” This suggests some discretion in how roads are assigned priority for renewal. Exactly what are the criteria for renewal, and how much discretion does council have?

**November 2024 meeting video:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qpfjyd1DjeU>

### *Publish the lead in water test results.*

(3): Montreal has an interactive map that allows anyone to search any property to check if there are lead service pipes. Demerged suburbs are not included. No lead concentrations are given.

Our Public Works department has a map showing concentrations of lead for houses that have been tested. At the very least, the range of concentrations on a block-by-block basis should be made available.

Try the City of Montreal interactive map using **4066 Boul Grand** in the following link, then click on the red teardrop marker, and you’ll see how they even indicate when tests were done. Check map [here](#). Or copy & paste:

[https://services.montreal.ca/presence-plomb/?utm\\_source=site-ville&utm\\_medium=web&utm\\_campaign=vdm-eau-plomb-dans-leau-2019-traf](https://services.montreal.ca/presence-plomb/?utm_source=site-ville&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=vdm-eau-plomb-dans-leau-2019-traf)

### *Publish committee memberships.*

(4): For most of us, it’s always a mystery as to who are on the various committees. Why the secrecy? Residents might find that their acquaintances or neighbours are in fact members of a committee they’d like to give feedback and suggestions.

## Return to Transparency section

### *Better pay for councillors, a little more for the mayor.*

(5): As noted in **Post 17c**, base salaries in **2023** for councillors were **\$13,647** and **\$34,114** for the mayor – or exactly 2.5 times higher. Councillors have a significant workload being responsible for up to 3 portfolios and sitting on at least one committee, and dealing with resident problems arising from their portfolios. The mayor sits on the Agglomeration council and the Union of Municipalities of Quebec (which meets infrequently) and is paid extra for each, I believe. Perhaps the mayor should only receive a maximum of twice a councillor’s salary? Councillors pay might reasonably be bumped to \$18,000.

***Improved follow-up on residents' queries.***

(6): A Percival resident remarked at the February 2025 council meeting (36:52) that the Town had not gotten back to her regarding a claim for the July 13, 2023 flood. Ditto for Brock South residents and their water main break that same day. At the June, 2024 council meeting (17:19), an Easton resident pointed out that Norway maples are designated an invasive species in Toronto and requested council do the same as they're degrading the Falaise on Easton. A councillor promised to look into it, but nothing has been done as of March 2025.

**February 2025 council meeting video:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZmCXFu\\_m44](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZmCXFu_m44)

***But where is the place for debate?***

(7): A candidate's platform during the 2013 election proposed "quarterly transparency meetings between councillors and citizens to answer questions/concerns including how our money is spent and to share ideas." This might be an interesting pilot project starting on a semi-annual basis. [Return to Council & Meetings](#)

***Support and encourage residents' filing compensation requests for floods, etc.***

(9): When residents experience a crisis such as a flood, the Town should actively encourage them to file a claim, or even to sue the Town, and then help steer their claim providing regular feedback. Even snowblower or pothole damage claims should be aided. Imagine yourself in similar circumstances. [Return to Section 3](#)

***Give the PSOs cell phone number.***

(10): Posts occasionally appear on the Town of MW Residents FB group by a resident who was unable in a moment of crisis to contact a PSO. Or not in a timely fashion having received the "run-around" at some generic call center. There can hardly be that many emergencies in the Town – two a day max? Why not provide the PSO's direct mobile phone number so they can be reached promptly in an emergency?

***Publish location of crimes.***

(11): Although Montreal West crime statistics are now combined with NDG, CSL, and I believe Hampstead – all served by station 9 – and hence are no longer separately available, our Public Security Officers are often aware of many incidents which should be publicized in The Informer giving the approximate location. The Westmount Independent has a regular crime section; for example, check page 3 of the March 18, 2025 issue: <https://westmountindependent.com/Wiv19.3c.pdf>

***Extend the deadline for filing a claim against the Town.***

(12): Residents currently have only 15 days to file a claim against the Town. Many people are unaware of this, or sometimes don't realize that damage has occurred until much later, as in the case of snowblower damage this past winter on shrubs and trees. On page A24 of the April 9, 2025 Suburban, it was reported that Hampstead was allowing residents to claim snowblower damage via a portal on its website until May 30. So, it's clearly not a provincial regulation.

[https://www.thesuburban.com/eedition/page-a24/page\\_1770a5f9-9b24-5479-bcce-007f707357aa.html](https://www.thesuburban.com/eedition/page-a24/page_1770a5f9-9b24-5479-bcce-007f707357aa.html)

***Invasive Norway maples***

(13): At the June 25, 2025 council meeting an Easton resident reported (17:19) that Norway maples have been destroying the ecosystem behind houses backing onto the cliff (Falaise) and asked that the Town declare them as an invasive species the way Toronto has done. She asked that homeowners be allowed to remove them and provided a link to the Toronto action. A councillor replied that she will research what other towns are doing; no follow-up has occurred as of April 22, 2025.

As a high percentage of trees on the Town's portion of homeowner lots are diseased Norway maples, culling should be done to maintain our tree canopy. [Return to Miscellaneous](#)

**June 2024 council meeting video:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZmCXFu\\_m44](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZmCXFu_m44)

## Examples of contentious bylaws

The first 5 cases were presented in **Post 1** on the [Montreal West Community Forum Facebook](#) page.

1. A post on the MW Residents FB page (sept 12, 2023) described how a resident was **restoring his basement after the catastrophic flood** of July 14, 2023. A “mountain of old drainpipes and contractor debris bags on [his] driveway” attracted the attention of a Town employee who told him he needed a permit.
2. A resident on the MW Residents FB page (Apr 13, 2021) questioned why he’ll need a permit to **restore his front steps and awing** to exactly the same look when he felt it should be considered a repair so he could avoid the permit process and costs.
3. A reply posted to case 2 described how a resident who had a **hole in his roof** leaking water during the spring rainy season couldn’t wait to get a permit. He had it fixed, and got a fine.
4. At the September 18, 2017 council meeting a resident reported that he’d been fined for making **chimney repairs** without a permit. Bylaw REPEALED.

In 2019 my neighbour was fined \$450 for replacing her **roof shingles** with exactly the same colour. She brought it to a council meeting where it was acknowledged that the “pendulum had swung too far in one direction” and that the bylaw would be changed. Yet she couldn’t recoup her \$450. Bylaw REPEALED. [\*\*Return to Permits & Approvals\*\*](#)

5. A resident posted on the MW Community Forum FB page that “**replacing her eavestrough** with same gutter, same everything required a permit. The Town also suggested (strongly worded) the contractor would need to apply for a parking permit. Less than a half-day’s work”.
6. A resident posted on MW Residents FB page (May 17, 2024): “Turns out we need a permit to have our **gutters replaced**. Photos and brochure required. And of course there will be a cost not to mention the delay. What could we possibly do that would not be appropriate? Knitted gutters? Playdough gutters?”
7. **Held responsible for previous owner’s lack of permit.** A new homeowner posted on the MW Residents Facebook page (Sept 14, 2020): “In filing for a permit for a new patio door, the Town noticed from the submitted photograph that our rear deck “looks very new”, and that no building permit was issued for it. We bought the house with it already in place, and it’s on the seller’s Certificate of Location well before we purchased. Now, I am being asked to contact the previous owners for the required documents in order to file for the permit for something that we didn’t commission. I’m perplexed, and honestly find this maddening. What can we do?”

The resident reached out to **Councillor Feeney who resolved the issue** “and added that the city will review their processes with prior owners in the future.” (Unclear what this means?)

8. **Semi-detached handrail woes.** A resident looking for a custom-made handrail reached out on the MW Residents FB page (June 13, 2024) “Does anyone know where we can find similar style railings? Seemingly from the 1920s. Must be similar style, the ones we proposed were rejected by the Town.” “They (Town) said that the ones I chose from Home Depot, wouldn’t match my neighbour.”
9. **Garage door blues: Two useful suggestions.** March 25, 2024 council meeting (video 35:46 -- link just below). A Banstead resident in possession of a colonial-style (with squares) garage door to be installed at his mother’s home on Bedbrook was required by PAC to change it to a panel-type for aesthetic reasons. (64.3% of 28 nearby homes on Fairfield Crescent have colonial doors, only 14.3% [\*\*Return to Permits & Approvals\*\*](#)



10. have panel doors.) He found the permit process to be exhausting, frustrating and adversarial, and PAC's decision subjective.

He asked the following: **1.** "Is the city open to **conducting a survey** that will specifically address our citizens' degree of satisfaction with the permits process, the PAC's performance, and the overall permit application experience. **2.** **Can we have a permit process that fosters collaboration** and doesn't give us the impression of weaponizing of the process against citizens?"

(Has anybody ever seen commercially available garage doors that are ugly.)

March council meeting video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PmAQ5boX3yE>

11. From the minutes of the April 25, 2016 Council meeting: A resident extract "said that he had to **repair a balcony and a door**, as their current state is **dangerous** for an elderly woman living at the ground floor of his property. He was told by the Town that this work required a permit going through the SPAIP process. He contended that it is worth less than \$5,000 and has to be done urgently for safety reasons. He noted that **this project did not imply to change the appearance** of that part of the building, but on the contrary to restore it to its original state. Mayor Masella said that the process can be shortened, since the PAC meets twice every month and the Council can hold a special sitting to deal with projects before the regular meeting. Councillor Tasker-Brown said she talked to the Building Inspector about this file. It may be that the value of the work is under \$5,000 but its nature would still make it subject to the SPAIP. To make sure this project will be actually dealt with, the Mayor advised the resident to verify that all the necessary documents are provided with his application.

### **Return to Permits section**

12. **Clarification & simplification of permits.** June 25, 2024 council meeting (video 34:49 – link just below) A resident asked "for clarification of what things actually require permits, and if there could be some simplification of permit requirements. For example, for someone who wishes to replace a door or window or roof and wishes to change the colour, are there some standard colours that are acceptable so that they wouldn't have to pay for a permit? There are people opting not to do work because they cannot absorb the additional expense and the delay. **It becomes onerous for those of us who are seniors on a fixed income.** Most people are reasonable and want to do something to improve the appearance and maintain the quality of their house. Could the Town consider simplifying the permit process and not require permits for so many little things?"

June Council meeting video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZmCXFu\\_m44](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZmCXFu_m44)

13. **Guillotined by windows.** In reply to a post on the MW Residents FB page (Jan 9, 2023) about why "slider-type" windows are no longer allowed, a resident noted: "I recently changed windows, they wanted the 'guillotine' look so that it is consistent with the age of the neighbourhood. My original request was refused (**replace what was there with exactly the same thing**) and when I pushed back, that's when they explained it absolutely has to have the guillotine look."
14. **DIY benefits.** An April 17, 2021 post on the MW Residents FB page asked: "Does anyone know if we need a permit for new **landscaping**?" A Strathearn N resident replied: "Only if you are taking down shrubs of a certain size. The details are on the Town's website. **We did our entire front yard last year and did not require a permit.**" Another resident added: "**if you use a pro landscaper they need a permit from MoWest.**" This seems true of interior renovations; if you do it yourself a price can't be allocated to it so a permit can't be issued, though I've no knowledge of such situations.

### **Return to Permits section**





15. **Beware: Heat pumps on the side of a house must be located > 50% of the length and camouflaged.** At the June 25, 2024 council meeting (video 27:57 – link below) a resident getting a new certificate of location was warned by her surveyor that her heat pump needed to be screened. She has plants there that would be killed and which would eventually camouflage the heat pump. Many homes are in the same predicament. She observed: “Looking at the side of my house I see the [Hydro] meter [which does not need camouflage], is that not [also] an eyesore?” A councillor replied that **“other places have the units completely exposed and they need to go.** We deal with one house at a time”.

Confirm details for the following:

16. Lisa & Rob’s deck and fence replacement & old “illegal” pergola.
17. Marie’s friend and the \$12,000 (?) door.
18. Ballantyne S. rear door of extension had to be moved 1 foot for “aesthetic” reasons.
19. Courtney drive: Town insists that previous owner who installed windows not approved in permit replace with approved windows. To the great inconvenience of the current owners.

**[Return to Permits section](#)**