



Taking Action for Housing: Community Advocacy for Housing in the West Island

Founded in 2024 following significant community and citizen mobilization in the West Island of Montreal, the **Comité d'action des locataires de l'Ouest-de-l'Île (CALODI)** is an independent community organization whose mission is to promote accessibility to good quality housing and to improve the quality of life for tenants in the West Island. In coalition with the Table de quartier du Sud de l'Ouest-de-l'Île (TQSOI) et la Table de quartier du Nord de l'Ouest-de-l'Île ([TQNOI](#)), we are working towards major changes to the existing housing politics in the West Island.

In 2025, the CALODI published the [Portrait of West Island Tenants](#), a report that documented the experience of the West Island tenant, and the difficulties they might be facing with their living conditions. This report showed that there remain some significant gaps in housing policy in the West Island, most notably with affordability and sanitary conditions.

Considering the gravity of the housing crisis in the West Island, we believe this is an opportune and crucial time to make systemic changes to housing in the West Island. It is clear that there is not enough social or not-for-profit housing and that rents have been skyrocketing since 2020. For too long, the struggles of low-income and working class renters in the West Island have been ignored. The attitude of many of the local leaders in the West Island has been that “everything is fine here”, “we don’t have a housing crisis.” Whether it be growing inequality, rights violations, unjustified evictions, unsanitary living conditions, or discrimination, it is the most vulnerable among us who bear the greatest burden of this crisis, and for a region as wealthy as the West Island, it is imperative that this issue be addressed with the seriousness, rigour, and urgency it requires.

With this in mind, the present document is a set of actions for each West Island municipal election candidate to read, absorb, and to adopt into their platforms in anticipation of the upcoming November 2025 election. We are aware that housing is a shared responsibility between the federal, provincial and municipal governments. As such, we have developed a policy platform, which advocates for a series of concrete actions that our municipalities can take to address the housing crisis and ensure the dignity and well-being of all West Island residents.

This is a call to action.



First, we are calling on all West Island cities and boroughs to officially recognize the housing affordability crisis. West Island cities must urgently pass a resolution recognizing the housing affordability crisis in their respective cities. This will ensure that, in perpetuity, the urgency of housing affordability is recognized at the municipal level in the West Island.

For additional context, rental prices are creating a cost of living crisis in the West Island. For example, from 2023 to 2024 the average rent increased by \$352 per month in Pointe-Claire and by \$239 per month in Pierrefonds-Roxboro, per data obtained from the Canadian Housing & Mortgage Corporation (CMHC, 2024). A third of all West Island tenant households spend more than 30% of their income on paying rent. That's thousands of dollars per year that can no longer be spent in the local West Island economy, or on essentials like medications or food.

Thirty percent of West Island households are renters, with Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue (44.8%), Dorval (40.3%), Pierrefonds-Roxboro (32.1%) and Pointe-Claire (30.7%) having the highest proportion of renters.

Even in Pointe-Claire, where housing is being constructed at a rate higher than local and provincial averages, the increase in housing stock has failed to bring down the average cost of housing. Quite the contrary, rent is highest in Pointe-Claire and increasing at astonishing rates: in 2024, the average rent for a 1-bedroom apartment in Pointe-Claire increased by 26.7% and the average rent for a 2-bedroom apartment increased by 19.8%. This is a common theme across the West Island, where new builds are becoming more and more frequent. Let's be clear: letting the market alone dictate rental housing construction in the West Island will not be sufficient to bring back any measure of affordability.

Recognizing the housing crisis and taking steps to address it and make housing more affordable won't only help tenants. It's a net positive for the whole West Island community. It will help local business owners, who may find that low-income, working class, and middle class individuals and families have more money to spend in the local economy if they aren't spending over 50% of their income on rent.

Second, we are calling for more open communications and collaborations between the community organizations that work in housing and the cities and boroughs of the West Island.



At the present moment, it is very difficult for our organizations to get in touch with and meet the elected officials of our different municipalities, despite how crucial our services are to the wellbeing of residents during crisis events, like fires. Our organizations exist to help renters and West Island residents live in dignity, security and with the peace of mind that their rights are being respected. Accordingly, we need established and working protocols in place so that all actors involved are informed of their roles, their rights, and their responsibilities in the event of fires, floods, renovations, or other disruptive events. Tenants at risk of eviction, even when through no fault of their own, face serious health consequences, and we need to recognize the urgency of these events.

Since our organization began its work back in 2023, we have supported numerous tenants amidst tragedies in their lives that put their living conditions at risk. While we appreciate that some West Island municipalities have some hardworking community supports in place, like Dorval Community Aid, there exist no clear collaboration protocols with the cities for community groups. In the past, this has led to difficulties communicating with municipalities to find what resources are available for tenants, and who to communicate with to get access to those resources. In other boroughs and municipalities in Montreal, community groups play a vital role in emergency planning. Coordination between actors is paramount to the well-being of residents and ensuring that they have access to all the services they need during difficult times.

Third, we are calling for a commitment to developing diverse housing projects that respond to the spectrum of needs in the community, as well as financial and material support for both residents living in homelessness and the organizations helping those same residents. This means committing to emergency shelters for unhoused people, transitional housing, and not-for-profit housing and supporting organizations by easing zoning requirements for these types of projects.

A [2022 homelessness](#) census report from the city of Montreal showed that on the night of October 11th, 2022, the last date on which the census was conducted, approximately 10,000 people were in a situation of visible homelessness. What is even more concerning is that 108 people died while living through homelessness in 2024, a record amount ([La Presse, 2025](#)).

Closer to home, Ricochet Homes, the West Island's only emergency shelter, 722 individuals have visited from 2020 to 2024. From 2023 to 2024, a total of 171 people visited the Centre, 150 people stayed in their emergency shelter, and 15 people were housed as part of their Social reintegration program with accommodation (2024). Ricochet and the city of Dorval's recent collaboration to open a warming shelter in the city is a welcome addition and resource for



homeless individuals in the winter. However, it is obvious to residents and to community groups that homelessness in the West Island is increasing, without the equivalent investment in resources to address the issue.

In terms of a diversity of housing needs, the West Island only has social housing (*habitations à loyer modique - HLM*) specifically for seniors, with a waitlist of approximately 43 households and an average wait time ranging from two to five years. While we wholeheartedly support the continued development of social and affordable housing options for seniors, the West Island has a much more diverse set of housing needs than is currently available in its social and community housing stock. Given that there are currently 10,945 low-income households who are renting in the West Island, there is a severe shortage of social housing (DRSP, 2025). Just to meet the demand for social housing in the West Island based on the number of households on the waitlist as of 2024, the social housing stock would need to increase by 5%. In order to meet the demand for social housing in the West Island based on the number of low-income tenant households, the social housing stock would need to increase by over **1400%**.

We also ask West Island cities and boroughs to allow themselves to use the levers at their disposal to stimulate and facilitate the development of non-profit housing projects. This includes the possibility, offered by section 93 of Bill 31, to waive certain social acceptability requirements for projects that meet the needs of vulnerable populations or that are in line with municipal housing objectives. Concrete actions can be undertaken, such as the identification of municipal land and buildings and their strategic transfer for non-market housing purposes. The use of regulatory tools such as the adoption of incentive or differentiated zoning, waiving development fees for not for profit projects, as well as priority processing for non-profit housing projects, by reducing permit fees and accelerating their analysis.

Even without accounting for the enormous social and health impacts of unaffordable housing, the lack of a diverse stock of shelters, community housing, social housing, and other not-for-profit alternatives has a huge impact on economic activity in the West Island. Pulling from a 2025 study by l'[Observatoire québécois des inégalités](#), tenants have given \$4.2 billion in excess dollars above the affordability mark of 30% to their landlords in 2021. While the West Island is but a fraction of that amount, it is nevertheless precious dollars not being spent in the local economy amidst a half decade of inflation on essential goods.

Fourth, we are calling on West Island cities to implement emergency housing agreements with the *Office municipal d'habitation de Montréal* (OMHM) and the *Société d'habitation du Québec* (SHQ).



The OMHM's referral service offers emergency housing services and resources for low-income households who lose their housing due to an eviction or repossession, a disaster, or a sanitation problem. Services offered include housing search assistance, temporary accommodation, and permanent placement in social housing through a variety of programs.

Tenants in the West Island who are displaced due to a fire or sanitation evacuation are eligible for the referral service regardless of their city of residence, provided that they meet the eligibility criteria for social housing. However, tenants of demerged cities of the West Island who are displaced due to an eviction or repossession are not automatically covered by the referral service, since this service is funded by the city of Montreal. With an increasing number of eviction and repossession cases in the West Island in recent years, it is crucial that municipalities enter into these agreements with the OMHM and support tenants facing the loss of their homes.

Among the 27 households that received rehousing assistance following an eviction in 2024-2025, 8 were displaced following an eviction decision by the TAL, 4 were displaced following a repossession and 2 were displaced following a **re-eviction**.

Fifth, we are calling on all West Island cities and boroughs to implement clear, publicly available, and up-to-date sanitation by-laws and building codes.

These by-laws and building codes must be enforced through the hiring of, or bolstering of, inspection teams. Cities must be receptive to sanitation complaints brought to them by community organizations that work with vulnerable tenants, and must intervene in the event of landlord inaction. In the 2024 survey administered by the CALODI, 82% of respondents indicated that they had experienced a sanitation issue in their apartment in the past 5 years, the most problems reported being water infiltration, mould, and insect infestations.

Additional data from our tenant support service can also be helpful in understanding the prevalence of sanitation and safety issues among West Island tenant households. In 2024-25, we received 59 calls for which either the primary or secondary reason for calling was a sanitation issue. Making up 9.2% of our total calls for the year, this is the third most frequent issue that callers experienced.

Sanitation by-laws are a crucial tool to create standards that landlords and tenants alike must respect, for the safety of residents and the preservation of the property. Unfortunately, in the West Island, only the boroughs of Montreal (Île-Bizard-Sainte-Genève and Pierrefonds-Roxboro), Dorval, DDO, and Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue have these by-laws in place.



Moreover, even for the municipalities that do have the by-law, there is no uniform sanitation policy across the different municipalities, leading to confusion for both residents attempting to have their rights respected and community groups working to support those same residents.

What is needed is a coherent set of policies implemented across the West Island and modelled on the best practices in municipal sanitation by-laws, including proactive inspections, proper and adequate staffing, sufficient tools and equipment to measure specific problems like humidity and mould. The implementation of standardized forms to report issues is a key tool to combat this issue as well, as the paperwork burden on tenants can be difficult when dealing with these issues. Simple, easy to use [forms](#) like the one used in [Villeray-Saint-Michel-Parc-Extension](#) are a great example of a city or borough taking recommendations from community groups seriously and making the necessary, yet simple changes to improve the lives of residents.

The municipalities of the West Island cannot afford to allow landlords acting in bad faith to continue to let the housing stock of our cities deteriorate, especially when these kinds of tactics often lead to evictions and unjust rent increases.

Sixth, we call on the cities and boroughs of the West Island to think outside the box of their own borders when considering housing policies and to mutualize their resources and collaborate, together, on improving housing conditions. Municipalities that collaborate together can have a greater impact on the West Island community.

Housing policy does not happen in a vacuum. For example, if a non-market housing project for families gets built in Pointe-Claire, it will have cascading positive effects in the entire West Island. Alternatively, bad planning or a lack of cooperation can lead to certain municipalities having to absorb an increased number of rent-burdened residents, leaving less housing stock available for existing residents. We cannot continue to think of each West Island municipality as its own 'village'.

Some important and fruitful initiatives have been taken by actors like *PME Ouest-de-l'Île* to bring together West Island urbanists in discussion, however these talks also need to happen between decision makers.

As such, we cannot continue down the current path of cities working in isolation of one another on housing. Given the gravity of the affordability crisis, we call on leaders to study alternative, innovative financing models for non-market housing that seek to pool the wealth of resources available, rather than continue to work in isolation of one another. Additionally, municipalities



can share information, strategies, specific plots of land, or whatever other useful item to grow the amount of not-for-profit housing in the West Island.

With the wealth present in the West Island, cities can no longer afford to cite a lack of resources regarding this issue.

Seventh, we call on all West Island cities to engage in joint advocacy for housing, both at the level of the *Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal (CMM)*, at the provincial level with the Minister of Municipal Affairs & Housing, and at the federal level. As stated in the previous point, this is intended as a collaborative effort between West Island municipalities.

Whether it is open letters, inviting policymakers, or commissioning studies, residents of the West Island need to see visible, collaborative, and meaningful advocacy on the rental housing affordability crisis in the West Island. For example, [in 2023](#), the mayors of some of the largest cities in Québec came together to issue a joint statement calling for a province-wide rental registry, a tool that would allow tenants to defend themselves against unjust rent increases and for governments to better track the inflationary upward spiral that rents are currently in.

While it does not have to concern the specific policy above, this type of joint advocacy would demonstrate that municipalities are actively reflecting on solutions to the housing crisis, and coming together to address both their constituents and the decision makers from other levels of government. We understand that municipalities alone cannot fix housing and that, alone, the resources are not there. However, we believe that this reality needs to be communicated more actively and publicly.

As declared in the point above, we can no longer continue to work in isolation on this issue.

Eighth, we call on all West Island cities to ban short-term rentals amidst the ongoing housing crisis, and regulatory frameworks that put the needs of the community first.

As we know, AirBnB contributes to the housing crisis in multiple ways. First, AirBnB's take rental units off the market, thereby reducing the availability of already scarce affordable housing units. Second, landlords will often evict, harass, or restrict tenants rights in an attempt to transform a unit into an AirBnB. Unfortunately, this is often the case for tenants who have lived in the same unit for a long time, often seniors, whose rents are still affordable. We have seen many cases across the city of Montreal where bad faith repossessions or evictions devastate the lives of



tenants, in the name of profiting from a short-term rental. With vacancy rates already low across the West Island, we cannot afford to lose any more units.

In the West Island, with the upcoming REM put into service, there is a very real possibility that we see a spike in evictions around the new REM stations, with the intention of creating short-term rentals. Despite legislation restricting short-term rentals in Montreal, the problem of them has nevertheless persisted, with devastating effects like we witnessed in the Old Port fire in 2024. Some landlords have created extremely unsafe conditions for these units, with poor ventilation, windowless rooms, and serious fire hazards.

Ninth, We call on all West Island political leaders to have the political courage to defend housing projects that seek to help vulnerable or precarious residents. Moreover, political leaders need to be firm in their commitments and not allow small, but vocal groups of NIMBYs to derail non-market housing projects in the West Island.

Community organizations in the West Island like the TQSOI and the TQNOIM have been working to combat NIMBYism for years, producing many useful reports and creating tools for both citizens and municipalities to strategize and build support for social housing projects.

With the scarcity of housing projects in the West Island that are not-for-profit or intended as shelters and transitional housing, we cannot afford to let these crucial projects to fall through. Rather than allowing small groups of citizens to vocally oppose these projects, municipalities should work with community organizations to create public relations strategies, reduce public uncertainty, and build support for projects.

Finally, we call on West Island cities and boroughs to foster an environment where non-profit housing organizations, cooperatives, community organizations, and non-market housing builders, like *groupes de ressources techniques*, can flourish. This means dedicating staff to acting as a community housing liaison, to studying innovative housing policies like patient capital, zoning allowances for non-market projects, land transfers, and dedicating resources to building community capacity to develop projects.

It is difficult enough already for a non-profit organization to get housing projects off the ground. If they are not supported by the municipalities, this adds another layer of difficult to navigate bureaucracy, consuming time and resources. There are enormous opportunities right now in the non-market housing sector, with major actors operating all over the greater Montreal area. Our West Island leaders need to be forward-thinking on this issue and create an environment where non-market builders want to build.



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