



COMMUNAUTÉ HELLÉNIQUE DU GRAND MONTRÉAL
ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΚΟΙΝΟΤΗΣ ΜΕΓΙΣΤΟΝ ΜΟΝΤΡΕΑΛ

THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE HCGM 2024-2029

Transparent, Honorable & Proud



December 2023

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PREFACE

Good governance practices, transparent, effective, efficient, collaborative, strong management, evolutionary, sustainable, service centered and people oriented...these are the hallmarks of a well-run non-profit community organization; these are our goals for the Hellenic Community of Greater Montreal. In order to move forward and to realize this, the HCGM mobilized its resources to develop a new Strategic Plan for its short, medium and long-term future.

The development of such a plan normally takes several months but considering the current state of the HCGM, management, even with limited resources, acted swiftly to prepare a Plan within a few weeks to present to its Board of Directors (BOD).

A significant amount of time was allocated to produce this Strategic Plan for the HCGM. The process of developing such a plan is quite elaborate and management could have assigned an external agency to do so, but in the end, a local plan was developed, which was more feasible and cost-effective.

This is not an end all Strategic Plan for the HCGM, nor one that addresses every issue and every problematic situation within the organization. This is a general Strategic Plan for the entire Community. After consultation and analysis, a few key elements are presented in this Plan. Every department, every school and every HCGM service needs to follow-up with its own more specific Strategic Plan going forward.

Recommendations are presented in this Plan for the Board of Directors (BOD) of the HCGM. These proposals are presented under six main sections: 1) Administration (Governance, Bylaws and Guidelines), 2) Restructuring Physical Assets, 3) Reorganizing and Strengthening Human Resources, 4) Maximizing Programs and Services, 5) Self-Sustainability, and 6) Record-keeping and Archives for the HCGM and Hellenes of Quebec.

Management strongly believes, suggests, and encourages the BOD to carefully review and support the HCGMs Strategic Plan for 2024-2029 and consider the evolutionary proposals and options that will help secure a strong, viable and bright future of impeccable community service.

WHAT IS A STRATEGIC PLAN?

A strategic plan is a road map that an organization creates to achieve its vision for the medium and long term. It goes beyond simple planning, since it forces the organization to review its internal and external contexts, to make projections into the future and to identify strategies allowing it to achieve its mission and vision. This is the starting point for a result-based management cycle. The organization makes every effort to accomplish its mission and values.

The strategic plan is a document containing the general objectives developed by the leaders of the organization, all the actions and strategies that will facilitate the acquisition, use and allocation of resources. It also directs managers to achieve goals. Its primary purpose is to make strategic choices by channeling decisions based on the foreseeable consequences without eliminating the risk. It is a way to motivate members of the organization. It ensures the consistency of strategic choices in a global and qualitative approach.

A strategic plan (or master plan or blueprint) is a written document that specifies, for a given period:

- The main objectives of an organization
- The main types of actions and means it employs to achieve these goals.

One of the objectives is the creation of a process to progress from a simple strategy to a concrete plan. The plan is normally broken down into sectoral plans for various projects and organizational units having a crucial role in the implementation of the strategy.

To write a strategic plan, an organizational overview must be presented, with a mission and vision statement. The organization's internal and external situation must be analyzed, and key growth goals must be developed. Performance metrics must be explained, and the plan summarized.

The strategic plan process:

1. Write a brief description of the organization

Write one or two paragraphs that describe what the organization does. Explain the products or services provided, identify the main target groups, and explain current strategic advantage.

2. Write about the organization's mission and vision

Define the organization's mission and vision in one or two paragraphs. Include a statement that explains the organization's values; these are the values that help guide employees' actions and decisions.

3. **Analyze the organization**

Analyze the organization's position in the market. Examine strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, both internally and externally. Spend a considerable time considering opportunities that can help determine goals. Including a list of issues that are currently standing in the way of opportunities.

4. **Determine growth goals**

Based on your identified opportunities, develop growth goals. Set goals that are helpful in growing and improving the organization. Break down the goals into specific steps to make them more achievable for everyone on the team.

5. **Define performance metrics**

List the metrics that are going to be used to track performance towards each goal. Explain the frequency of measuring performance, and set a general deadline for completion.

6. **Write the executive summary**

Review all written sections, and present one or two summary paragraphs. The executive summary should cover the most important opportunities, goals and challenges to give readers an idea of what to expect.

To implement a strategic plan, review the plan, create a vision for implementing the plan, select a team to assist with the implementation, and schedule regular meetings. Upper management should be involved and consulted where appropriate during the implementation process.

Evaluate the strategic plan, highlighting areas that are excessive in costs, unrealistic or challenging. Keep this in mind throughout the implementation process, and come up with alternative plans in case the original fails. Ensure that all aspects of the strategic plan are understood.

Next, create a vision stipulating the exact steps to take to implement the plan. This includes listing step-by-step actions, goals to be reached, and items to be completed. Have a clear end result and explain to everyone involved the reason for and importance of the end result. Choose a team of dedicated and experienced members to help with the implementation of the strategic plan.

Lastly, hold regular meetings to discuss the strategic plan's progress. Discuss whether the implementation is behind schedule, ahead of schedule or on schedule, and come up with new strategies for improvement where necessary. Changes to be made must be discussed with all members of the team, and a reward system established to motivate team members throughout the process.

For community organizations a strategic plan asks:

1. **Where is your community now?**
2. **Where do you want your community to be?**
3. **How does your community get there?**
4. **How does your community measure progress and know you've gotten to your destination?**



THE STRATEGIC PLAN THOUGHT PROCESS FOR THE HCGM

1. What is the HCGM's mission?
2. What are the HCGM's objectives to accomplish its mission?
3. Does the HCGM meet its mandate through its objectives?
4. If not, why not?
5. What needs to be corrected?
6. Where does the HCGM want to be in 5 years?
7. How does the HCGM get there (proposals)?
8. What will be the Action Plan?
9. How will the results be evaluated?
10. What changes will be made to the Strategic Plan to fully accomplish it?

REASONS AND SCOPE FOR A STRATEGIC PLAN

Building a stronger, united and viable HCGM was vital to Management when it undertook this mandate. There are several key areas Management felt it was important to focus on when it decided to embark on the Strategic Plan process which include but not limited to the following:

- A) With outdated HCGM Bylaws, no formal Governance Program and no Guidelines in place for most of the departments, churches and services, it seemed like a critical starting point for ensuring proper administration and for establishing proper policies and procedures for the entire organization.
- B) The Community's underutilized aging infrastructure that is in serious need of repair, upgrade or replacement needs to be examined and completely restructured in a viable manner to better meet the needs of the current generation and the requirements of its Members.
- C) As a people centered organization, the HCGM's greatest asset is its employees and volunteers which must be properly qualified, trained, nurtured, and strengthened and have visionary attitudes, be able to collaborate and must have the capacity and capability to focus on the HCGM mission in all its complexities and facets.
- D) Maximizing participation in activities and ecclesiastical sacraments, increasing enrolment in schools, ensuring youth, and leadership, social and elderly services is critical for the HCGM and its existence and must seriously be addressed, developed and marketed to its Members and society as a whole.
- E) The status quo for conducting business of the last 50 years or so is no longer feasible nor sustainable by the HCGM and new approaches need to be developed and marketed to the Members to ensure a healthy and viable Community where individuals and corporations will feel re-assured in supporting and investing in and committing to.
- F) As the largest and most recognized regroupment of Greeks in Quebec, representing now at least five generations and dating back to the first immigrants in the 1800s, the HCHM has an obligation to establish and maintain good record-keeping of all its activities and for all its services and programs, while also leading the way in creating and maintaining an archive system of not only its own history but also the history of Hellenes in this province, if not across country, which will hopefully culminate in the not too distant future in our own Museum of the History of Greeks in Montreal, Quebec and Canada.

As a respected and renowned organization that created so much with so little, the HCGM needs to return to basics, address and develop all of these areas, encourage its services, schools and churches to do same, re-establishing trust within and at large along the way and become the cutting edge and model community people centered institution we are certainly capable to do for generations to come.

DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY OF THE HCGM

The Hellenic Community of Greater Montreal was founded in 1906 and it was incorporated in 1907 as the Hellenic Canadian Community of the Island of Montreal. Platon, the first Greek school in North America was founded in 1909. In 1910 it was organized as a regular day school. The Community's first church, Evangelismos, was also inaugurated within the same year. In 1925 the Community purchased the Holy Trinity Church in downtown Montreal and the Greek population moved into the surrounding area.

In 1926 the Anglo-Greek School Socrates was established and the two schools merged in 1931. This was followed by the migration of Greeks to Park Avenue and the Park Extension area. The Community responded by building and purchasing three more churches: St. George Cathedral in (1959), Koimisis (1968) and Evangelismos (1975). In 1970 a school building was purchased in the City of St-Laurent, which was named Campus Socrates I, while another campus was operating in the hall of St. George.

In 1970 the afternoon school (Platon) was created in various locations. This was followed with the creation of Aristotelis Saturday School. In 1971 the Greek Orthodox Community of Laval (GOCL) was established to better serve the needs of the rapidly growing Greek population in that region. That year marked a milestone for Socrates Anglo-Greek School when it was renamed École primaire Socrates with the main language of instruction switching from English to French. In 1972 the Community's Social Services Department was established (now known as Services Sociaux Hellénique du Québec), as well as the Home Economics School and two Seniors Social Clubs.

The Greek Library of Montreal was founded in 1974 in the hall of Evangelismos Church (now housed in the Montreal Hellenic Community Center). The Hellenic Cultural Institute was established in 1978 and its programs included traditional dancing, theater, music, literature, fine arts and media arts. Another milestone was achieved in 1978 when École primaire Socrates became recognized by the Quebec Government as a School of Public Interest, joining the French school boards in the regions it was offering educational services and most importantly the School received full government funding for tuition and bus transport service.

In 1980 the Quebec National Assembly passed Bill 231, whereby the Community, heretofore operating under the Church, became a civil association. The name of the Community changed to Hellenic Community of Montreal (HCM). In 1982 the Montreal Hellenic Community Center was completed, where Campus Socrates II became established. That same year, the GOCL created École Démosthène, another French, English and Greek trilingual school. In 1983, the Center of Greek Studies was founded offering Greek language courses to adults and people of non-Greek origin.

In 1984 the Foyer Hellénique Seniors Residence was built next to the Montreal Hellenic Community Center. That same year the HCM purchased the former Roxboro Elementary School in the West Island and it became Campus Socrates III. In 1985, Campus Socrates IV was created in Saint-Hubert, to meet the needs of the ever-changing demographics of the Greek population, following the construction of the South Shore Hellenic Community Center, that included St. Jean the Baptist Church. A union was formed with the Greek Community of the South Shore in 1986. Afternoon school Omeros united with Platon and Aristotelis.

With the continual shift in demographics, and a large portion of the Greek population moving to the Laval region, the HCM responded in 1993 by establishing and inaugurating Campus Socrates V in the heart of Chomedey. In 2002, to address the overwhelming enrolment, a second campus was created in Laval and became officially known as the Socrates V Annex. The campus in Saint Laurent is currently used for daycare services.

In 2008 the Ministry of Education ended École primaire Socrates and École Démosthène's association with the school boards. MEQ also reduced funding by about 50 percent, and both schools were now recognized as full-fledged private academic institutions. In 2009, HCM celebrated 100 Years of Greek Education, a true milestone, of which only an exclusive handful of schools in Québec are proud to claim. This significant achievement has gone a long way in reinforcing the caliber of education and stamina that Socrates School has endured from generation to generation.

In 2010, the two main Greek organizations, the Hellenic Community of Montreal and the Greek Orthodox Community of Laval merged and became known as the Hellenic Community of Greater Montreal (HCGM). In the process, the two schools, Socrates and Démosthène were also united, becoming École primaire Socrates et Démosthène. The Community also acquired Holy Cross Church and St. Nicholas Church, both in Laval. St. Nicholas afternoon school joined Platon-Omeros and Aristotelis to complete the HCGM's Supplementary Education system.

In 2014, the day school was officially renamed "École Socrates-Démosthène". In 2015, the Ministry of Education granted Socrates-Démosthène a permit to offer non government funded high school educational services at Campus Socrates II. That same year MEQ reduced bus transport funding by 66 percent. In 2016, the HCGM began offering high school educational services at Campus Socrates II. In 2020, École Socrates-Démosthène obtained a permit from MEQ to offer non government funded preschool services to 4-year-olds at all campuses.

In 2020, École Socrates-Démosthène received the highest honor by the Quebec Government's Ministry of Education when the School was awarded a permit for the maximum allowable number of years at the time. This was a first time Socrates-Démosthène was ever recognized with this bestowment in its history. The Ministry, after extensive analysis and inspections, concluded that the School compiled completely with the prescribed educational programs and was fully conforming in the three key areas of finance, human resources and equipment and materials. This was a major accomplishment, achieved with the entire Community worked together towards this goal.

The HCGM stands as a stalwart institution, deeply rooted in history and dedicated to serving the vibrant Greek population across Montreal, Laval, the North Shore and the South Shore regions. Its enduring presence of over a century embodies a commitment to representing and supporting the proud Quebec citizens of Hellenic origin who have settled and continue to thrive in this diverse metropolis. At the heart of its mission, the HCGM offers an array of essential services tailored to the Greek community:

Education: Providing a foundation of learning through educational initiatives that foster cultural understanding and academic growth.

Ecclesiastic: Nurturing spiritual well-being and preserving religious traditions through the provision of religious services, community gatherings, and cultural events.

Cultural Enrichment: Celebrating and promoting Hellenic heritage through diverse cultural programs, festivals, and artistic expressions that unite and inspire.

Social Services: Extending a helping hand through various social welfare programs, support networks, and initiatives aimed at enhancing the quality of life within the community.

Athletics and Youth: Fostering a sense of camaraderie and healthy living through sports, fitness and recreation activities, competitions, and summer camp programs.

Volunteering: Encouraging active participation and community engagement by fostering a culture of volunteerism and service.

Member Services: Catering to the diverse needs of its members by offering a range of specialized services and support networks.

The HCGM's overarching goal transcends service provision; it aspires to continually unite, empower, and enrich the lives of its members. By fostering a sense of togetherness, addressing evolving needs, and forging strong connections within and beyond its community, the HCGM stands as a beacon of solidarity. Embracing the legacy of its forebears, the HCGM is resolute in preserving the rich Hellenic heritage for future generations.

Through dedication and unwavering commitment, it ensures that the spirit, traditions, and values of the Greek community endure as an integral part of the cultural mosaic that shapes Greater Montreal. In essence, the Hellenic Community of Greater Montreal stands as a testament to resilience, unity, and a commitment to honoring and perpetuating a cherished heritage – a legacy cherished by those who built it and safeguarded for those who will inherit it.

MISSION AND VISION STATEMENT

The Hellenic Community of Greater Montreal (HCGM) is steadfast in its commitment to not only preserving but advancing the culture and heritage of the Greek population in the Greater Montreal region. With a specific focus on:

Preservation and Promotion of the Greek Language: Recognizing the importance of language as a cornerstone of cultural identity, the HCGM is dedicated to preserving and promoting the Greek language. Through educational programs, language courses, and cultural initiatives, the organization strives to ensure the continuity and appreciation of this linguistic heritage.

Charitable, Welfare, and Educational Organizations: A key facet of the HCGM's mission is the establishment and support of charitable, welfare, and educational organizations tailored to benefit the Greek-origin population. These entities serve to provide essential support, resources, and opportunities to community members in need while fostering a nurturing environment for educational pursuits.

Preservation of Greek Orthodox Faith and Tradition: Central to the HCGM's mission is the preservation and perpetuation of the Greek Orthodox faith and tradition. Aligned with the authority of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople and guided by the doctrines and faith proclaimed by the Greek Orthodox Church, the HCGM endeavors to uphold and propagate religious practices and traditions. This commitment is fortified by adherence to the ecclesiastical authority and religious precepts prescribed by the said Patriarchate.

Through these dedicated efforts, the HCGM ensures the vitality and continuity of the Greek cultural legacy within the Greater Montreal region. By promoting language, supporting the community's well-being, and safeguarding religious traditions, the organization serves as a guardian of the multifaceted aspects that define and unite the Greek-origin population, enriching the cultural tapestry of Greater Montreal.

Mission

The HCGM's mission is to ensure the progress of the culture of the population of Greek origin in the Region of Greater Montreal, and especially:

- to preserve and promote the Greek language;
- to set up charitable, welfare, and educational organizations for the benefit of the population of Greek origin;
- to preserve and perpetuate the Greek Orthodox faith and tradition implemented by the authority of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople according to the doctrine and the faith proclaimed and applied by the Greek Orthodox Church and as directed by the ecclesiastical authority and the religious precepts prescribed by the said Patriarchate.

Vision

The HCGM has been serving the Greek population of the greater Montreal area (Montreal, Laval, North Shore and South Shore regions), since 1906. For over 100 years, the HCGM has continuously been representing proud Quebec citizens of Hellenic Origin, who have settled and continue to settle in the greater Montreal area.

The HCGM provides the population of Greek origin with a variety of services:

- Education
- Ecclesiastic
- Cultural
- Social Services
- Sport
- Volunteer
- Member Services
- And much more.

The goal is to constantly enrich and unify the members of our community, by bringing them together, responding to their needs as well as, strengthening our bond with other cultural communities in the Greater Montreal area. Our forefathers built their dream; we are preserving our heritage for generations to come!

ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION

Amidst the current challenges, it's evident that the financial situation poses a significant hurdle for the HCGM. Aging infrastructure, declining enrolment, out-dated programs and activities, inefficiency, difficulty addressing the needs of youth and elderly, loss of transparency and respect for the organization are amongst numerous other obstacles the Community is facing. However, it's in moments of adversity that innovation and problem-solving thrive. We're embracing this as an opportunity to showcase our ingenuity and resilience.

Our primary goal is to navigate this financial landscape by building trust and amplifying our fundraising efforts, hosting a myriad of engaging events, and leveraging the full potential of the HCGM's assets through restructuring proposals. With strategic utilization and optimization, we aim to maximize the impact of every resource at our disposal.

They say it's always clearer after the storm, and we firmly believe in the promise of brighter days ahead. Despite the hardships, we're moving forward with unwavering determination, knowing that our collective efforts will lead us to a more prosperous future.

Our social media engagement has skyrocketed, surpassing last year's metrics with a remarkable more than a 100% increase in all metrics. This surge signifies a growing interest and connection within our Community, reflecting an amplified sense of unity and involvement of the Greek community at large.

Along with our traditional programs and festivities, exciting new ventures lie on the horizon – the long-awaited Laval Educational Cultural Community Center, a centennial 'Celebrating 100 Years of Greek Media in Montreal', the eagerly anticipated opening of the Montreal Greek Archives Library to the public and so much more. These events promise to further enrich our cultural tapestry and strengthen our bonds.

Moreover, we're actively investing from paper to a digital transformation, envisioning a seamless experience for our members. The digitalization of HCGM and École Socrates-Démosthène operations will revolutionize processes, streamlining admissions to schools, facilitating donations, and simplifying membership procedures. This modernization aims to enhance accessibility and efficiency, ensuring a more connected and empowered community.

In the face of numerous adversaries and other challenges, our approach remains steadfast: adapt, innovate, and persevere. With a robust strategy, exciting milestones on the horizon, and a commitment to embracing technology, we are poised to emerge stronger and more resilient than ever before. Once again, the key will be in building trust and working together.

OBJECTIVES

The strategic planning process aims to make recommendations to the BOD of the HCGM regarding future directions and goals that should be considered to transform the HCGM into a transparent, effective and viable organization while respecting its mission and values.

Management officials that developed this new strategic plan consulted and reviewed the opinions of staff and volunteers, as well as experts in the field and the Community and reflected on possible opportunities to enhance the current product, attract new members, and retain families while preserving and promoting Hellenism in Quebec.

Increasing enrolment in schools, raising participation in services, maximizing the use of facilities, enhancing programs and activities, becoming more efficient and feasible, are all part of this process. Preparing the groundwork and assuring success for future generations of Hellenes was fundamental.

Through an evolutionary rather than revolutionary approach, open-mindedness and some out-of-the-box thinking it is possible for the HCGM to take its mission and all it has to offer to heights previously unimaginable. It's all a question of everyone working together towards these goals.

All this must start with an update of the HCGM Bylaws, a restructuring of the physical assets and human resources and a revision of the programs and services. Sustainable measures such as increased efficiency and revenues, a better control of expenditures, increased involvement, enrollment and participation will help secure the Community's future. Maximized development of every department and service is a must, Building trust is essential. Working in harmony is a prerequisite.

Building a stronger, united and successful HCGM is crucial for several reasons. Firstly, a cohesive community fosters a sense of belonging and support, creating a social safety net that enhances membership/individual well-being. When people feel connected and supported, mental health improves and the overall quality of life increases. Secondly, a united community is better equipped to address challenges and solve problems collectively.

Whether it's tackling local issues, promoting economic development, or responding to crisis, a collaborative community approach leads to more effective and sustainable solutions. Additionally, a strong community attracts enrollment, participation, involvement, support, investment and opportunities, as businesses and individuals are drawn to places with a positive environment. Finally, a sense of unity and success instills pride among community members, inspiring future generations and creating a positive cycle of growth and progress.

TIMELINE AND TIME FRAME

The Strategic Plan process and timeline are outlined below:

- For the last several months requests were made to the Management of the HCGM to begin work on a Strategic Plan for the HCGM and its future
- Specifically on a short, medium and long-term five-year plan
- These requests were answered
- In October of 2023, new Management for the HCGM was nominated
- Since mid-October Management prioritized the development of a Strategic Plan for the HCGM
- Management conducted consultations of staff and volunteers
- During this period much research was conducted to review the strategic planning purpose and process
- Management decided to develop a five-year Strategic Plan for the HCGM's future
- The results were compiled in November and December of 2023
- The Strategic Plan was reviewed and fine-tuned in December
- It was presented to the HCGM BOD at the end of December.

The Strategic Plan time frame is outlined below:

- The Strategic Plan of the HCGM is a five-year short, medium and long-term plan
- Over the course of the five years from 2024-29, the results of the changes will be evaluated to see if the programmed objectives have been met
- It is possible that further adjustments might be required that will be developed and implemented
- Evaluation will be ongoing over the five years.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the following pages are the recommendations stemming from research, meetings and consultations held regarding the Strategic Plan for the HCGM. The Strategic Plan's development is based on extensive knowledge of the HCGM, its members and their requirements.

The goal of initiating a new strategic plan was to renew and improve current services offered by the HCGM, in keeping with its larger mission and vision as stipulated by the Bylaws. Concurrently, the request to renew and improve current services is legally binding considering the HCGM mandate and mission.

All recommendations are proposed with the desire to keep the viability, quality, character and the competitive aspect of the HCGM and its various schools, services and churches. As mentioned, these are general recommendations for the HCGM. Every Community school, department and service will be encouraged to develop its own specific strategic plan going forward.

1. Administration

Governance:

- The proper administration of its affairs is the backbone for solid governance for the HCGM
- This includes the following: human resources, material resources and financial resources
- Through effective management the Community can begin to rebuild its reputation and trust
- Creating a governance strategy is key for success
- This governance strategy must include a risk management policy
- A committee needs to be set-up to create this policy.

Bylaws:

- The current HCGM Bylaws are well written and for the most part simple to understand
- They are also outdated and there are numerous grey articles and zones
- As they stand, the Bylaws do not accurately reflect the current reality surrounding the HCGM at numerous levels
- There are administration policies and procedures that are no longer viable for the HCGM
- After extensive review, Management has prepared a series of recommendations, additions and modifications to update the HCGM Bylaws
- These changes can be presented to the Advisory Board, the Executive Committee and the BOD for review and approval
- Once the final version for these updated HCGM Bylaws is determined they can be presented at a General Assembly to be adopted.

General Policy Guidelines and Procedures:

- There are currently no general policy guidelines and procedures for the HCGM
- This permits individuals and groups to act as they see fit with limited or no control measures in place by the HCGM
- A new General Policy Guidelines and Procedures document has been created.
- Once reviewed and approved by the BOD it will be applied
- Consequently, this will help harmonize operations and efficiency.

2. Restructuring Physical Resources

The heart of any restructuring with the HCGM begins with its physical assets. The Community properties are aging, in need of repair (many drastically) and upgrade, are underutilized, cost the HCGM a considerable amount to maintain even at a sub-standard level and help contribute to the Community's financial woes.

A restructuring plan for the HCGM's physical assets has been developed and is available for the BOD to review after it is presented to them. This is an aggressive plan that can best be accomplished in phases. It will ensure a better arrangement of services for members, a greater utilization of facilities and a more profitable bottom line for the HCGM.

Priority is the reorganization of the three school buildings in Laval into one. This new school would be complemented with a new Carbon-zero community-cultural center, all on the site of Holy Cross Church. The preliminary plans have been prepared and negotiations with several groups interested in acquiring the HCGM's old school buildings in Laval have been initiated.

Furthermore, the HCGM has applied for a \$10 million grant under Infrastructure Canada for the building of the Green community center. We are awaiting confirmation that this project will be accepted. We are also examining the possibility of an exchange option, where we offer our three school buildings to a contractor and in return they build us a new school building. All of these efforts can be discussed and presented in greater detail to the BOD.

3. Reorganizing and Strengthening Human Resources

The HCGM's greatest asset is its human resources, be they staff or volunteers. If it wasn't for their dedication and commitment over the years, the Community would not have evolved to where it is today. To maximize the effectiveness of our human resources, they need good leadership, they must be motivated and inspired, they need to be listened to, they need ongoing professional development, they need to feel that they are an integral part of the Community's mission, they need to believe that their involvement can make a difference and they need to be given the opportunity to contribute their talents for the greater good.

To this end the HCGM needs to further invest in its human resources, be they staff or volunteers. Certainly after the physical assets are restructured, the human resources will also have to be re-organized in order to be more efficient and effective. New positions will need to be considered, like professional grant writers and professional fund-raisers, both of which can be remunerated on a commission basis.

Providing incentives for employees can bring in new revenues:

- Reevaluate and implement a commission structure – ensure that the commission structure is fair and equitable for all employees and address any disparities and make necessary adjustments
- Employee training – Provide training for all employees on how to identify and pursue potential sponsorships and revenue-generating opportunities
- Encourage cross-collaboration – Foster collaboration among different departments to identify and pursue revenue-generating opportunities that may span multiple areas of the Community.

Hire professional grant writers:

- Hire a skilled grant writer – Find and hire an experienced grant writer who has a track record of securing grants for non-profit organizations; this person can work on a commission basis
- Assess the grant opportunities – The grant writer must be able to identify potential grant opportunities from government agencies, foundations and corporations that align with the Community's mission and programs
- Set clear goals and priorities – Work with the grant writer to establish goals and priorities for grant funding.

4. Maximizing Programs and Services

The HCGM already offers a vast array of programs, festivals, and celebrations through all of its departments, schools and services. These are all geared to specific target groups, age groups, and / or the general public. The participation in any of these activities is enriching and seen as positive by the HCGM members and general public.

Going forward we are proposing a series of new programs to further engage the members and public and to enhance the HCGM service offer. These programs can include:

- Community Workshops and seminars - Host education workshops or seminars on topics relevant to the community, cultural, educational, or social; this not only adds value but also attracts new members
- Mentorship Programs - Establish mentorship programs connecting experienced members with newcomers, this fosters a sense of belonging and helps integrate new members into the Community
- Youth Engagement Programs - Develop programs specifically designed for younger people, including educational activities, cultural events and sports; this ensures a dynamic and growing HCGM
- Collaborative Events - Partner with local businesses, schools, or other cultural communities for joint events, programs and projects; this not only broadens our reach but also strengthens our inter and intra community ties
- Interactive Communication Channels - Set-up forums, discussion groups, or an HCGM app where members can actively participate, share ideas and stay informed about upcoming events
- Cultural Exchanges - Organize cultural exchange programs with other communities; this not only enriches our Community's cultural experience but also attracts interest from the outside
- Community Outreach Teams - form teams dedicated to reaching out to different segments of the community; personalized outreach can make individuals feel more connected and valued.

This is a sample of new and extended areas of programming going forward for the HCGM. There are really no limits to what we could provide as long as it is all well coordinated and managed.

5. Self-Sustainability

The key to the HCGM's survival going forward is self-sustainability, something that the Community has had difficulty attaining lately and this has become a major preoccupation for the BOD, staff, Members, auditors, the Ministry of Education, our supporters and the general public. Financial freedom for the HCGM goes hand-in-hand with good management practices and can lead the Community to heights only imaginable before.

The first step to achieving this is by restructuring our inefficient physical assets. By rearranging our real-estate we can make the HCGM more efficient, more accessible, and more importantly more profitable. Currently the HCGM has almost no revenue generating property. The Community offers many educational, cultural, ecclesiastic, social and all sorts of services and programs but most of them do not generate enough income to cover their own existence, mainly because of inefficiency.

The renting of all unused HCGM facilities, after hours, on weekends and during the summer to local municipalities and other groups is another major source of revenue :

- Identify underutilized spaces - Conduct an inventory of all available spaces and facilities, including banquet halls, meeting rooms, gyms, etc.
- Market and promote rental spaces – Develop a market strategy to promote these spaces to the local community, businesses and planners; Create a user-friendly website with booking information, pricing and availability
- Establish competitive pricing – Research the local market to set competitive pricing for rental space
- Partner with local event planners – Build relationships with local event planners and organizations to encourage them to choose HCGM spaces for their events
- Offer packages and incentives – Create packages that include catering, audiovisual equipment and other services to attract more customers, consider discounts for long-term contracts or frequent renters
- Leverage social media and online advertising – Utilize social media and online advertising to reach a broader audience.

By providing new and better facilities in a more strategic manner, favoring greater enrollment and participation without additional financial burden to the HCGM, is the magic formula to ensure the Community's sustainable financial future.

6. Record-keeping and Archives Through the HLM

The Hellenic Library of Montreal (HLM) is a non-profit and non-political organization that aims to maintain a collection of books and other documents for the intellectual and cultural development of the Greek community, as well as to collect and preserve archival material related to Greek Canadians. The HLM has more than 100 years of history, but it is in urgent need of modernization. The following is an overview of the Library's past, current state, and future goals.

History

The HLM was created in the 1950s by young Greek immigrants who exchanged Greek books with each other so as to keep their connection with Greece and the Greek language alive. The Library was incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1974. The Library's collection was first housed in the basement of Holy Trinity Church in downtown Montreal, and later in the basement of Evangelismos Church in Park Extension. Since 1982, it has been housed at the HCGM Community Centre.

Current state

The Library material comprises roughly 15,000 to 20,000 books of Greek-Canadian interest collected almost exclusively by donations. It also includes rich archival material from the Greek community, newspapers, pamphlets, photographs, etc. This material could be of use to anyone who wants to read Greek literature, history, etc., and to researchers interested in the collective memory - experiences, social struggles, genealogy, etc. - of Greek immigrants. However, the Library collection needs extensive sorting.

Modernization

Before the Library becomes accessible to the public, it must be modernized: all material must be classified, cataloged electronically, and stored accordingly. Also, part of the archives must be digitized so that the originals are not destroyed. The effort to modernize the Library has been undertaken by a group of McGill University students under the guidance of Prof. Anastassios Anastassiadis. This group has already put in order 80% to 90% of the books. Upon completion of the arrangement of the books, cataloging in a database accessible via the Internet will begin. The arrangement and digitization of the archival material should then follow. The entire project is coordinated by the Library's Board of Directors formed in 2022.

Future objectives

The immediate target for the Library is to advance its modernization in 2024 to such an extent that in 2025 it will open to the public. The HLM estimates that only the cost of modernization will be at \$25,000 per year for the next two years. The cost of running the Library with a librarian from 2026 will be even higher. For the modernization project, the Library launched a fundraising campaign in August 2023. By creating its own resources, the Library hopes to also seek grants from government and non-governmental organizations. The ultimate goal is to make the Hellenic Library of Montreal a major cultural hub for the Greek-Canadian community of Montreal, Quebec and all of Canada.

CONCLUSION

Without a doubt, the Hellenic Community of Greater Montreal has the potential to accomplish and undertake anything and everything to achieve its mission in preserving and promoting Hellenism, through all its facets, in Montreal, Quebec and Canada. While offering a plethora of services, reorganizing and re-building to meet the financial need for viability and sustainability is mandatory. Through restructuring of facilities and infrastructure, which will lead to the reform of human resources, extending to the development of new and better services, programs and activities for its Members and society at large, maximizing participation and revenues will ensure an effective and viable HCGM going forward.

To ensure the sustained growth and relevance of the Hellenic Community of Greater Montreal, a comprehensive marketing action plan will play a pivotal role in achieving its mission. The first step involves communicating the restructuring efforts and financial needs transparently to the community at large, emphasizing the importance of viability and sustainability. This can be achieved through targeted marketing campaigns, utilizing various channels such as social media, newsletters, and community events to keep members informed and engaged. Highlighting the positive impact of these changes on the quality of services, programs, and activities will foster support and participation.

Furthermore, the marketing action plan should focus on showcasing the innovative strides the HCGM is taking to adapt to the evolving Greek population and integrate into Quebec and Canadian society. Emphasizing the preservation and promotion of Hellenism while embracing change will resonate with both existing and potential members. Collaborative efforts with local businesses, cultural organizations, and educational institutions can be leveraged to create partnerships and sponsorships, expanding the reach and influence of the HCGM. By strategically positioning itself as a dynamic and forward-thinking community, the HCGM can rekindle high esteem and garner widespread support, ensuring a bright and long future in the multicultural landscape of Quebec and Canada.

The team that has assembled this Strategic Plan for the HCGM has unanimously come to the conclusion that in order to keep the Community relevant, the HCGM must adapt and evolve for the ever-changing Greek population and its demographics, as it integrates into Québec and the larger Canadian Society, while maintaining and promoting the HCGM's rich heritage. We urge the Board of Directors to review this proposed Strategic Plan, to meet with us to explain further and in greater detail the Plan's various aspects and work with us in developing the foundation for achieving the various objectives. The Community has a bright and long future and it will lead by innovation, with dedication and with open minds and hearts. These efforts can help bring back the high esteem deserved by the Hellenic Community of Greater Montreal.