



The English Speaking Catholic Council  

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Le conseil catholique d'expression anglaise

**THE ENGLISH SPEAKING CATHOLIC COUNCIL  
(ESCC)**

**STRATEGIC PLAN  
2011 - 2016**

## **CONTEXT**

The Quiet Revolution of the 1960s set in motion profound changes that challenged all sectors of Quebec society. By the late 1970s the English-speaking Catholic community sensed a growing need to construct more effective instruments to respond to the evolving social, political, economic, and cultural challenges of Quebec society and to foster the vocation of the laity in the Church and the world, as articulated by the Second Vatican Council.

In December 1981, the English Speaking Catholic Council (ESCC) was established as a lay council, to express a supportive and critical response to all of the challenges confronting the community. Today, the ESCC is respected as a credible and effective voice of the English-speaking Catholic laity articulating the needs and concerns of its constituency within the Archdiocese and the community of Greater Montreal and the Province of Quebec.

The new millennium offers unique opportunities to demonstrate the relevance of Catholic values in understanding and addressing current and emerging social, economic and political challenges within the English-speaking Catholic Community of Greater Montreal and Quebec society.

In 2010, the Board of Directors and the Advisory Committee of the English Speaking Catholic Council came together to renew the organization's five-year plan and the present document reflects the results of this effort.

## **STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS**

### ***Issue 1: The Evolving Role of the Laity***

Catholicism does not call on its members to abandon the world but in fact to help shape it for the common good. The laity has an important contribution to make in terms of translating Catholic ideals and values into well-researched, articulated and reasoned positions and actions. While there are different points of view on how to accomplish this, the Board of Directors and other stakeholders in the community will continue to engage in dialogue and reflect on developing positions and actions which demonstrate the relevance of Catholic values in helping to understand and address contemporary social, economic and political challenges which are of concern to the English-speaking Catholic Community of Greater Montreal.

## ***Issue 2: Understanding the Evolving Needs and Concerns of the English-speaking Catholic Community of Greater Montreal***

The English Speaking Catholic Council recognizes the socio-demographic, economic and attitudinal evolution of the English-speaking Catholic Community of Greater Montreal over the last fifty years. In order to continue to understand and respond to the current and emerging needs and concerns of this community, as well as to be able to mobilize its resources and coordinate its actions in pursuit of shared objectives, the English Speaking Catholic Council must consistently renew its knowledge of the composition, views, attitudes, assets and resources of the community.

## ***Issue 3: The Current Socio-political Climate in Quebec***

There is greater social, economic and political stability in Quebec at this time. This presents an opportunity for the English-speaking Catholic Community of Greater Montreal to continue to position itself as an essential and unique element of Quebec society and an important contributor to the province's thinking on issues of public importance. The English Speaking Catholic Council will continue to play an important convener, facilitator and advocacy role and help the community

come together and work together to define and promote its views on a variety of issues and concerns that are of specific interest to it.

#### ***Issue 4: Representation and Community Leadership Renewal***

The English-speaking Catholic Community is diverse in terms of demographic/cultural composition and differing views and perspectives. To continue to be representative of this community, the ESCC must reach out to all components of the community and involve them in its deliberations and actions. In addition, the different components of the community are a significant reservoir of community talent and potential leadership for the Council. This is particularly important in terms of engaging and renewing youth interest and participation in the Council and the affairs of the community.

#### ***Issue 5: Provincial Mandate***

The English Speaking Catholic Council needs to reach out to communities outside the Greater Montreal area and to establish effective mechanisms whereby all English-speaking Roman Catholics, regardless of where they reside, are given the

opportunity to have input and informed as to the positions taken on issues by the ESCC.<sup>1</sup>

### ***Issue 6: Internal Resources and Capacity***

The English Speaking Catholic Council is led and supported by a committed Board of Directors, Advisory Committee and a small staff contingent. The considerations outlined above suggest and the strategies in this plan confirm the important role that the Council can continue to play on behalf of the English-speaking Catholic Community in Greater Montreal. The implication of this plan is that the Council must find innovative and creative ways to enhance the organization's capacity, specifically in terms of its policy research and advocacy ability, its financial resources and the strength of its communications.

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<sup>1</sup> The ESCC serves the English-speaking Catholic Community of the Greater Montreal area. It can, when circumstances warrant (example: issues of specific provincial interest), attempt to represent the views of the English-speaking Catholic Community across the province.

## **GUIDING STATEMENTS**

### **VISION**

To act as a coordinating forum for the English-speaking Catholic Community of Greater Montreal and to be a knowledgeable, articulate and reasoned lay Catholic voice on matters affecting the vitality of the community specifically and the common good of Quebec and Canadian societies more generally.

### **MISSION**

To act as a catalyst, convener and facilitator of community life and collective action for the English-speaking Catholic Community of Greater Montreal (ESCC) and to develop and advocate positions on issues of public concern which affirm and promote Catholic ideals and values related to human dignity, social justice and the common good.

## **CRITICAL STRATEGIES**

### **Promote and Nurture Community Vitality**

- Foster network development and reinforcement activities among the parishes, institutions, lay associations and community groups within the English-speaking Catholic Community which enhance information and idea sharing, create multiple choices and opportunities for community involvement and participation and nurture mutual support, collaboration and community commitment.
  
- Engage actively the diversity of interests, institutions and cultures in the English-speaking Catholic Community of Greater Montreal in order a) to promote inclusiveness and a sense of shared Catholic community identity as well as b) to strengthen the openness of the English Speaking Catholic Council so as to consider a full range of ideas and strategies for advancing the community's interests.
  
- Enhance the leadership capacity of community members, institutions and groups and encourage a new generation of involvement and commitment within the English-speaking Catholic Community of Greater Montreal.





## **Support the English-speaking Community in Quebec**

- Participate actively in and contribute to networks, partnerships, community groups, strategies and initiatives which advance the interests of the English-speaking Community of Quebec.

## **Advocate on behalf of the English-speaking Catholic Community**

- Involve community leaders and members in identifying and addressing issues which could impact upon the vitality of the English-speaking Catholic Community of Greater Montreal specifically and Quebec society more generally.
- Identify and monitor public policies and issues which are of concern to the English-speaking Catholic Community of Greater Montreal.
- Analyze selected policies and issues in terms of their actual/potential social, economic and political implications for the English-speaking Catholic Community of Greater Montreal specifically and Quebec society more generally.

- Prepare positions that are inspired and shaped by Catholic ideals and values, the promotion of the vitality of the English-speaking Catholic Community of Greater Montreal and its commitment to the common good.
  
- Engage and mobilize leaders, institutions and community groups in support of the ESCC's positions and advocate the adoption of these positions by public decision-makers.
  
- Initiate dialogue with other linguistic, cultural and religious communities and participate in coalitions of interest to advance our common interests and positions of the English Speaking Catholic Council.

Adopted unanimously at the Annual General Meeting of the  
English Speaking Catholic Council, Montreal, September 15, 2010.

