



Family and Seniors POLICY



MORIN-HEIGHTS
1855



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A MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

My fellow citizens,

It is important for the growth of a community such as ours to take the time to reflect at length on the orientations that it wishes to take.

As part of any policy development exercise, it is vital to call decisions into question: are the actions that we are taking meeting the real needs of families and seniors? Having an accurate portrait of our community is essential to answer this question with confidence.

This document is the synthesis of a long reflection process concerning our role as elected officials and administrators and agents of this community.

This policy is followed by an action plan, that includes concrete measures aimed specifically at families, seniors, and by extension, to most citizens of Morin-Heights at one moment in their life. Speaking on behalf of the two advisory committees and myself, I wish to thank all those who generously gave their time and energy in the preparation of this document.

Michel Plante, Mayor of Morin-Heights

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENTS OF THE FAMILY AND SENIORS' COMMITTEES

It was with great pleasure that we accepted the positions of chair of the advisory committees for the Morin-Heights' Family and Seniors' Policy.

Taking over a year and a half to complete, this project has allowed us to gather important supportive information and to engage in productive exchanges that we feel will directly benefit the community.

We are grateful for the generosity and involvement of all our active committee members. We would especially like to thank the Recreation and Culture Department's director, Maryse Emond, and Natasha Caron, Research Assistant, for their involvement and support throughout the process.

We also wish to extend our thanks to the representatives of those community organisations who answered our call as well as all those who took an active role in the consultation process.

Gilles Coutu, President of the Family Committee (RQF)
Claude-Philippe Lemire, President of the Seniors Committee

INTRODUCTION

Adopting a family and seniors' policy arrives at a critical time for us. Morin-Heights has undergone important demographic changes since the late nineties, a phenomenon also taking place in other municipalities within the MRC des Pays-d'en-Haut to which it belongs. Being the level of government closest to its citizens, a municipality is at an advantage in that it can have a direct impact on the lives of its community.

Morin-Heights is an extraordinary place. Having so far maintained its unique identity and avoided mass development, Morin-Heights continues to offer a rural and bilingual setting, in harmony with nature. Families, seniors and everyone alike benefit from the many outdoor advantages and a vibrant community life. With this policy, the municipality confirms its commitment to maintaining these assets, continuing to improve the quality of life of its families and seniors, who are at the heart of its development, and to introducing newcomers to our way of life.

We feel that this family and seniors policy is an integral part of the social sphere of sustainable development, which aims at answering the needs of the present without compromising the ability to meet those of future generations.

THE MANDATE

The committees' mandate was to:

Provide guidelines for elected officials and administrators to meet the needs expressed by seniors, families and organisations, propose specific measures and actions benefiting these groups within the means and mandate of the municipality while addressing new challenges brought upon by important demographic changes.

THE PROCESS

It was in 2006 that the project to draft a municipal family and a seniors policy began. A grant request was submitted to Emploi-Québec, through the Soutien financier et technique Program, allowing Council to hire a resource person, and another request was sent to the Ministère de la Famille et des Aînés. Both were accepted in September of 2006. Following this, another request for funds was submitted to Heritage Canada's New Horizons for Seniors Program, to develop a seniors policy, which was also accepted in November 2006.

Councillor Gilles Coutu was appointed president of the Family Policy Committee and Councillor Claude-Philippe Lemire president of the Seniors Committee. This policy is the fruit of many reflections and the work of the members within these two committees. The draft family policy was presented at a public consultation held in February 2008.

Various community organisations of our region were consulted as well as citizens through a mailed survey, which received a high response rate. The data collected in the summer of 2007 proved very informative and helped to identify the needs and priorities of our families and seniors. It was interesting to note the similarity between the commentaries and priorities expressed by the various age groups. Although both processes began separately, it became clear that there was a need to fuse them together and to produce only one complete Policy.

The Family and Seniors Policy was adopted by council on April 30th, 2008.



DEFINITIONS

For purposes of delineating the scope of its policy and for carrying out the action plan, the following definitions have been established:

Family

A family is the cradle of all learning, the first place where individuals develop their emotions, personalities, and social skills. This policy defines a family as any parent-child relationship, whatever the nature of the ties between them. It can be a traditional, single-parent, blended, foster family, same-sex, etc. This definition includes grand-parents and any relationship where a designated person assumes a parenting role, hence supporting and overseeing the well-being of a child, and his or her development.

Within the mandate of this policy, the municipality prioritizes measures destined for families with children at home and senior citizens.

Senior

The definition of a senior as proposed by the committee is any individual 65 years or older, retired or not, who lives in Morin-Heights on a permanent or part-time basis.

COMMUNITY PORTRAIT

To carry out this project it was necessary to draw as accurate as possible a portrait of the community. The following are some of the statistics and findings which merited mention. The source of statistics is indicated in the text or referred to in the bibliography.

Population

Whereas between 2001 and 2006, the population across Quebec has increased on average by 4.3%, and by 18.5% across the MRC, the population of Morin-Heights has increased by 36% to attain 3 503 individuals; the second highest growth in the MRC. This increase is mostly due to an important migratory increase in the 55 to 64 years old age group.

Age Groups	2001	2006	% in 2006
Population	2 575	3 505	
0 to 4 years old	105	150	4%
5 to 14 years old	285	380	11%
15 to 19 years old	110	170	5%
20 to 24 years old	95	105	3%
25 to 44 years old	700	855	24%
45 to 54 years old	540	700	20%
55 to 64 years old	345	630	18%
65 to 74 years old	220	300	9%
75 to 84 years old	140	175	5%
85 years old and over	35	45	1%

The population density of Morin-Heights has increased from 45.7 to 62.1 capita per km² over the past five years and is now slightly above the MRC's average. According to the Institut de la statistique du Québec, the population of our MRC will continue to grow over the next 13 years, due mainly to people moving in from other regions. According to the MRC's Profil Socio-économique des Pays-d'en-Haut 2008, the main reason for this increase is they are all looking for a better quality of life and a natural environment.

The three principal groups coming in are:

- Young professionals coming to work in the area;
- Retired and semi-retired individuals moving in;
- Owners transforming second homes into permanent residences

Households

- 31% of households in Morin-Heights have at least one child.
- 5.5% of households are occupied by single-parent families in Morin-Heights, contrary to the tendency across Quebec, in Morin-Heights, this percentage is slightly inferior to the last census, and is half the MRC's percentage. Most of these households are run by a woman.
- 40% of households in Morin-Heights include married and common law couples without children
- 28% of households are made up of a person living alone;
- The average number of persons per household in Morin-Heights is 2.7.

Schooling

- 77% of the 15 to 19 years age group, and 53% of the 20 to 24 year age group attend school. Morin-Heights has a relatively low dropout rate compared to the rest of the MRC.
- Adults have a slightly higher education level in comparison with the rest of Quebec.

Age

- In Morin-Heights, for every one child under 14 years of age there is one senior over 64 years of age (1:1). In contrast, in the MRC the ratio is one child for every 1.5 seniors (1:1.5).
- In Morin-Heights, the average age is 46.5 years, whereas it is 41 for the rest of Quebec. The population of Morin-Heights is aging as elsewhere in the MRC.

Language

There is a decrease in English spoken at home, which leads one to believe that new arriving residents are mainly French speaking. The use of English is still above the regional average of 10% for the MRC in 2001.

Language spoken at home	1996	2001	2006
French	50.9%	57%	71%
English	46.8%	41.7%	26%





Work

- There is a greater number of part-time workers in our MRC than in the Laurentians and across Québec. This is due to the nature of the jobs available, which are usually seasonal and related to tourism;
- In the MRC, the majority of people work in the tertiary sector with 82% of positions related to professional services, commerce, business, hospitality and tourism, and in a smaller portion, health services and education.
- Although small, there is an increase in the active population that can work. Unemployment is relatively low at 7.2% in 2007.

Revenue & Housing

- The average income after tax in Morin-Heights in 2005 was 26 394\$ and 22 471\$ for the rest of Quebec. Our MRC has the 2nd highest per capita revenue; hence, is considered a well-off territory; as is our municipality.
- The number of construction permits for new homes has gone from 41 annually in 2001 to over 80 per year over the last 5 years.
- 75% of the population is now made up of permanent residents; 25% live here on a part-time basis.
- Housing costs in Morin-Heights are very high in relation to the rest of the region.
- In 2001, 24.5% of all dwellings were rented, whereas in 2006, this number has dropped to 10.7%.
- The MRC has the greater proportion of people caring for the elderly without salary, of which most are women.

Concerns

Although the average revenue per household appears high in the statistics, there are several indicators for the region that suggest this is not entirely true and the possibility of concern for the future: seasonal and part-time work, an aging population, people living alone, isolation, fixed income households and limited access to health services, low cost housing and senior residences.

The preservation and development of non-motorised outdoor activities, including cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, cycling and hiking, the conservation of our resources, natural green spaces, mountains, forests, and water are of critical importance to Morinheighters. The need to prevent over-development is also of great concern to them. Despite their increased numbers, it was noted that newly arrived residents are not very involved in the community; at the same time, our once strong volunteer base is at a vulnerable stage.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

Based on the portrait of the municipality, results from the survey and various consultations, the following six priorities have been identified for seniors and families:

1. Continue improving services and information
2. Conserve the natural environment and balance urban development
3. Encourage active living
4. Promote the cultural and heritage elements present in the municipality
5. Support community-oriented initiatives which meet key needs
6. Integrate arriving families and seniors and encourage community involvement

THE AREAS OF INTERVENTION

The following are the areas of intervention and the specific objectives that have been selected:

A. Administration & Services

- Take a leadership role in adopting sustainable development practices in all municipal spheres
- Integrate a reflex within the administration to consider the impact of decisions on families and seniors
- Improve access and distribution of information
- Consolidate partnerships to ensure actions and services complement each other

B. Security & Transportation

- Increase safety on our roads while taking into account the presence of various modes of transportation
- Promote active transportation: ecological alternatives to driving
- Increase the sense of security by maintaining the police and firefighters' involvement at the community level
- Improve and develop inter-municipal and adapted transportation

C. Recreation, Culture & Community Life

- Foster exchanges and discussions that serve the interests of families and seniors and promote networking.
- Develop infrastructures and improve municipal equipment adapted to the needs of seniors and families.
- Ensure access to a variety of affordable municipal and inter-municipal recreational & physical fitness activities and facilities.
- Develop the cultural and heritage aspects in the municipality
- Recognize organisations, groups, individuals and volunteers working for the benefit of families and the elderly

D. Health

- Promote the practice and benefits of good living habits
- Encourage the establishment of health services in the community

E. Housing & Town Planning

- Ensure that town planning meets the evolving needs of families and seniors
- Preserve the bucolic character of the village and the municipality's landscapes

F. Environment

- Promote and improve existing initiatives regarding the preservation of the environment, including protecting lakes, rivers, marshlands, forests, mountains, as well as the conservation of natural resources

CONCLUSION

This policy is a guide for members of council and administrators in their decision making. Not an end unto itself, the policy will be adjusted periodically to keep in pace with the needs of the population.

In light of important challenges ahead, the municipality is committed to carry out its policy through a three-year plan which will be managed by a committee responsible for ensuring follow through on actions. Local and regional groups as well as individuals are invited to continue playing an active role in the community and to consider the general objectives of this policy in their own initiatives.



MORIN-HEIGHTS' FAMILY AND SENIORS POLICY

*In harmony
with nature*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank the contributors involved in the development of this policy at every level, all the municipal employees and heads of departments, and especially the active members of the two committees.

The Family committee was composed of: Heidi Le Gallee, Shawna Dunbar, Francine Blondeau, Claude Côté, residents, and Catherine Maillé, intern, as well as Gilles Coutu, councillor and RQF, Robert Laliberté (CSSS), Claude-Philippe Lemire, councillor, Maryse Emond, Recreation & Culture Director and Natasha Caron, Research Assistant.

The Seniors committee was composed of: Lucille Green (Cosy Corner), Rita O'Donoghue councillor, Barbara Traill (Residence Morin Heights), Josée Bouffard and Robert Laliberté (CSSS), Gilberte Latour (Tral), René Gauthier (Entraide bénévole), Sandra Stock (Morin Heights Historical Association), Elizabeth Basralian (SQ), Gilles Blais, Robert Tremblay, Frances Beames, Neil Whittingstall and Kathie Whittaker (residents). Claude-Philippe Lemire, councillor, Maryse Emond, and Natasha Caron.

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Service
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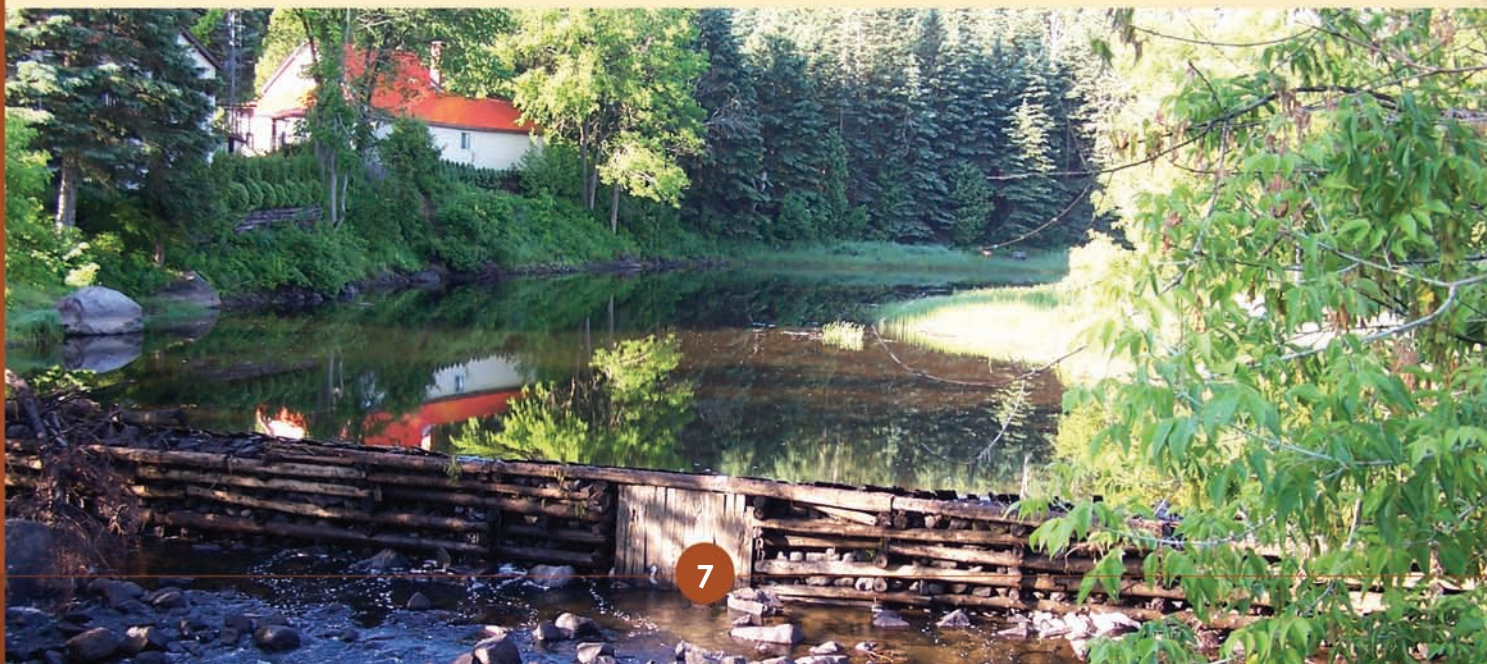


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ACTION PLAN

for the Family
and Seniors Policy
2008-2011



MORIN-HEIGHTS
1855



ACTION PLAN FOR THE MORIN-HEIGHTS FAMILY AND SENIORS POLICY



Security & Transportation	
Objectives	Actions
Increase safety on our roads while taking into account the presence of various modes of transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Continue the process of redesigning the intersection of Village Road and Route 364 with Transport Quebec- Address traffic control issues in the village- Create new cycling and hiking paths and link them with existing ones, starting with<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Prolonging the multifunctional path running along Village Road, across Route 364- Linking it with the Aerobic Corridor by redesigning the access behind Auberge Le Refuge, and creating a link from the Aerobic Corridor to safely access Basler Park
Promote active transportation: ecological alternatives to driving	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Preserve and develop the summer/fall hiking trail network- Add bicycle racks in public places starting with the Town hall and Bellevue Park- Support efforts to create a safe bicycle path to St. Sauveur, which would connect to the P'Tit Train du Nord Network (Route Verte)
Increase the sense of security by maintaining police and fire fighters' involvement at the community level	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Introduce new prevention programs- Revive the civic address campaign to increase visibility of civic numbers from the street
Improve and develop inter-municipal and adapted transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Develop and promote taxi-bus services in the MRC des Pays-d'en-Haut to improve access and efficiency in the East-West directions

Recreation, Culture & Community Life	
Objectives	Actions
Foster exchanges and discussions that serve the interests of families and seniors and promote networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Meet once a year with local community organisations to give them the opportunity to voice their concerns to the municipality- Promote the importance of continued education: invite speakers, offer workshops and various courses for all ages- Hold an annual welcome activity for new residents
Develop infrastructures and improve municipal equipment adapted to the needs of seniors and families	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Modernize municipal recreational and cultural infrastructures- Build a community center that will accommodate the day camp, cross-country ski centre and skating rink chalet, as well as a large multi-purpose space for various types of indoor activities and groups- Build up the Basler Park to include a multitude of outdoor activities that will suit both seniors and families- Renovate the soccer field at its existing location
Ensure access to a variety of municipal and inter-municipal recreational and physical fitness activities and facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Encourage the scheduling of courses at times suitable for families and seniors- Organize free events and activities for a mixed generation audience, maintain support for events already in place, and create new ones- Develop a variety of recreational services for seniors and families while recognizing the diversity of their means, interests, and needs- Create a policy for reimbursing a portion of the non-resident fees charged when registering children in arena-based programs- Review the conditions imposed for using school facilities, and maximize the use of municipal and school playgrounds- Satisfy the need for swimming within close proximity of the village- Increase public access to the Parc régional éclaté (Public Land on Range 5) by creating a public parking area adjacent to it

Recreation, Culture & Community Life	
Objectives	Actions
Develop the cultural and heritage aspects in the municipality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Improve library services by:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Promoting the library- Extending opening hours- Adding another computer terminal with Internet access- Create a cultural and heritage policy with an action plan
Recognise organisations, groups, individuals and volunteers working for the benefit of families and the elderly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Maintain and increase financial and administrative support for local initiatives aimed at families and seniors- Hold an activity every other year to recognize volunteers

Health	
Objectives	Actions
Promote the practice and benefits of good living habits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Apply recommendations made by Kino-Québec in the 0-5-30 Program designed for the Municipality of Morin-Heights<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Add information capsules in Info-Morin Heights and on the website- Include healthy food options and physical activities when possible during municipal events- Host the 2008 Seniors' Fitness Day
Encourage the establishment of health services in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Foster interest in starting a local health co-op by hosting the first information meetings

Housing & Town Planning	
Objectives	Actions
Ensure that town planning meets the evolving needs of families and seniors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Make promoters aware of specific housing type requirements- Encourage the implantation of affordable, suitable dwellings by fostering interest and supporting the creation of a non-profit organisation which would start a needed housing co-op- Inform the population about existing government programs regarding housing related subjects- Encourage low impact businesses to set up in the urban perimeter- Prepare a layout plan for a public municipal parking lot at the corner of Village Road and Baker Street
Preserve the bucolic character of the village and the municipality's landscapes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Enforce the Implantation and Integration Architectural Plan regulations as well as town planning by-laws regarding mountaintops, water front properties, and tree cutting.- Promote the beautification and revitalization of the Village core- Increase the quantity of protected green spaces in Morin-Heights by 5% (a 5-years objective)



ACTION PLAN FOR THE MORIN-HEIGHTS FAMILY AND SENIORS POLICY

Environment

Objectives

Promote and improve existing initiatives regarding the preservation of the environment, including protecting lakes, rivers, marshlands, forests, mountains as well as the conservation of natural resources

Actions

- Create an Environment policy and action plan
- Renew the Green Space and Trail Network Development Plan
- Create a landscaping and revitalizing plan for the banks of the Simon River in Lummis Park
- Maintain the municipal position against motorized activities within its territory
- Continue to expand Environment Day
- Hold periodical workshops on environmental issues
- Publish an environment guide outlining policies, regulations, programs, and including general information





INTRODUCTION

In this first three-year action plan, the Council outlines the priorities it will take to meet the six general objectives of the Family and Seniors Policy. A schedule of concrete actions has been established. This plan will solidify our strengths by keeping and preserving what has been established for future generations. It will also introduce new measures and projects for the short and medium term to contribute to the general improvement of the well being of the community while respecting the means and mandate of the municipality.

The Policy will be used as a reference to ensure cohesiveness between established objectives and the actions to be carried out. It relies on the collaboration between municipal services and local and regional partners, as well as the families and the seniors targeted by the policy and plan.

The plan will remain malleable as it will be updated and readjusted periodically to follow the evolution of the population and its needs. A follow-up committee, mandated by Council, will ensure the completion of the action plan as proposed or adapted to developing realities.

INVENTORY OF EXISTING MEASURES, ACTIONS AND SERVICES ALREADY BENEFITING FAMILIES AND SENIORS:

- Helpful and knowledgeable municipal employees
- The possibility of paying property taxes in 3 instalments
- Zoning by laws that allow complementary residential uses such as: home-based offices, small businesses, workshops, daycares, bachelor apartments, and senior residences.
- A First Responders Service and community involved fire department
- A municipal quarterly information bulletin
- Annual financial support offered to community organisations
- A municipal representation at various regional issue tables and committees
- A regional transit system
- A bilingual library free for children. One Child, One Book Program and Story Time
- A subsidized bilingual day camp with family fee structure and subsidies families
- Large scale community events: Canada Day, Environment Day, Halloween, and Loppet Viking
- Extensive cross-country skiing, and snow-shoeing network with free access for children, and discounts for students and seniors
- A multifunctional path along Village Road
- Basler Park, a 31 acre green space in the heart of the village
- Free access in summer to the Aerobic Corridor and P'tit train du Nord
- Use of the soccer field and school park through agreements with the English School Board
- A vibrant English elementary school
- A tradition of volunteering along with several dynamic community organisations in the area

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

The action plan was based on the following general objectives of the Family and Seniors Policy, the portrait of the municipality, results from the survey and several consultations:

1. Continue improving services and information
2. Conserve the natural environment and balance urban development
3. Encourage active living
4. Promote the cultural and heritage elements present in the municipality
5. Support community-oriented initiatives which meet key needs
6. Integrate arriving families and seniors and encourage community involvement

THE AREAS OF INTERVENTION

- The following are the areas of intervention for meeting objectives:
- Administration and Services
 - Security and Transportation
 - Recreation, Culture and Community Life
 - Health
 - Housing and Town Planning
 - Environment
- The actions will be initiated over a three-year period and do not appear in order of priority.

ACTION PLAN

Administration & Services	
Objectives	Actions
Take a leadership role in adopting sustainable development practices in all municipal spheres	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Invite the population to share their ideas and suggestions on sustainable development- Reduce the amount of printed material through the increased use of electronic means
Integrate a reflex within the administration to consider the impact of decisions on families and seniors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Form a Family and Seniors Policy's follow-up committee to monitor the implementation of the action plan- Create internal protocols to ensure a concerted approach between all municipal departments
Improve access and distribution of information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Bring high speed Internet to the all corners of the municipality- Redesign a more user-friendly Morinheights.com Web site, while maintaining a community portal and incorporating interactive elements in the short term- Include a summary of the policy in the Welcome kit for new residents and make them both available on-line- Maintain services in both English and French- Publish an annual directory listing local, regional, and municipal resources to increase public awareness of available services- Improve the waiting area at the Town hall by incorporating a children's play bench and comfortable seating- Install information displays at the following strategic locations:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Inside and outside the library, at the Town Hall, at Basler Park
Consolidate partnerships to ensure actions and services complement each other	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Ensure municipal representation on the MRC des Pays-d'en-Haut's Family Policy Committee- Maintain a representation at various regional issue tables and committees