



Cloverdale Exegesis: Looking for Community

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Cloverdale Exegesis: Looking for Community

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1.0

Introduction



1.1 Background

Cloverdale is the largest housing co-operative in Canada. Located in the east of the borough of Pierrefonds, Cloverdale sits at the crossroads of the city of Montreal and the demerged municipalities of the West Island. For more than 20 years, Montreal Youth Unlimited (MYU) has “prayerfully and practically reached out to the kids of this very needy community to help them with their material needs and encourage them to enter into a personal relationship with Jesus.” After more than 10 years since the latest community assessment, MYU approached Christian Direction Inc. (CDI) to conduct an updated report on Cloverdale to inform and evaluate their outreach in this community and help transform Cloverdale with the love of Christ. This community assessment follows three previous reports conducted by MYU in 2007, 2010, and 2012 to assess the needs in Cloverdale and inform current and future programming in this community.

An important part of this assessment is understanding how the Cloverdale community has changed, or has not changed, over time. The previous reports conducted by MYU found that Cloverdale had a population of 3000 individuals, was the poorest area on the West Island with a median income of \$12,000, had a large population of immigrants, a high number of single parent families, a diverse and young population, a need for mentorship of young men, and was significantly lacking in community assets and amenities. This report will determine how these realities have, or have not, changed since the last update in 2012.

1.2 Methodology

This report uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative data for its assessment of the Cloverdale community. Drawing from data in the 2021 census, the present study was required to accept a level of incongruence between the actual boundaries of the community in question, and the most accurate available delineations offered by official sources. Regarding qualitative responses, we conducted 1 focus group and 5 individual interviews. With only 9 respondents consisting of 5 residents and 4 community stakeholders, this is fewer than in previous reports. Although 5 respondents did participate in individual interviews, providing an opportunity to explore their perspectives on the community in greater depth, it may still be advisable to solicit further responses from the community to verify the conclusions of the current report. In spite of these qualifications, this author

presents the following report without reservations due to the consistency of the qualitative data supplied by the participants as well as its corroboration with the quantitative analysis and previous community assessments.

1.3 Focus Group and Interview Questions

RESIDENTS

- Who are you, where do you live, how long have you lived there?
- What are your experiences of living in the Cloverdale community?
- What do you enjoy the most about your community?
- What are your hopes and dreams for your community? What do you need for these changes to be realized?
- What are the greatest limitations to seeing these dreams fulfilled?
- What opportunities do you see for Churches to engage in community development?
- Have you seen your community change because of the pandemic? How so? For better or worse?

COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

- Who are you, where do you work, and what is your role in the community?
- What are your experiences of working in the West Island community?
- What are the greatest strengths of the community you serve?
- What would you like to see changed in the community you serve?
- What does the community need for these aspirations to be realized?
- Are there needs you are unable to address due to lack of time, resources, or money?
- What opportunities do you see for Churches to engage in community development?
- Have you seen the community you serve change because of the pandemic? How so? For better or worse?



Demographic Portrait

2.0

2.1 Population

The Cloverdale Co-op has roughly 4000 residents, with the area of study accounting for a total of 3714 total respondents.* This represents a growth of nearly 24% since the previous community assessment in 2012. The larger Census tract of A-Ma-Baie south of Gouin has seen a population increase of 7.4% from 2016 to 2021, making it one of the fastest growing areas in the West Island of Montreal.

The population in Cloverdale appears to be divided between those who consider it a temporary stop and those who have made it their permanent home. Long term residents are often deeply committed to their community and want to see it flourish, but some of these “lifers” feel anxiety over their shrinking numbers and that the influx of new arrivals is threatening the fabric of the coop.

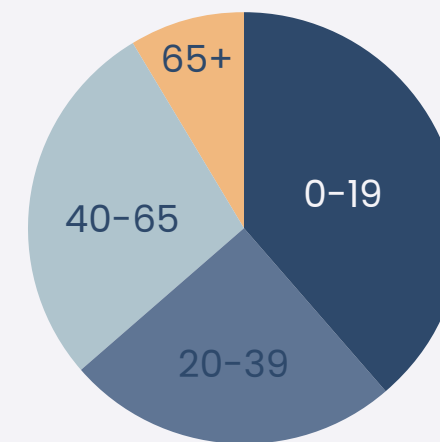
“Everyone knew each other, but not anymore. There are a lot more newcomers than before. The older generation who created the positive community dynamic have almost all left.” - Resident

Long term residents are often deeply committed to their community and want to see it flourish, but some of these “lifers” feel anxiety over their shrinking numbers and that the influx of new arrivals is threatening the fabric of the coop.

Some temporary residents are looking to move on to what a ‘better’ living situation for themselves or their family. For some.. this diminishes their participation and engagement within the community. This can manifest in the sentiment “I want to leave in a few years, why take care of this place?” This contributes to a general lack of ownership and participation in the community highlighted by many of our respondents. Different stakeholders mentioned an apathy among residents which they see causing the decay of the physical and social characteristics of the neighbourhood.

2.2 Age

Cloverdale has a much younger population than the rest of the Island of Montreal with over 37% of its population aged 19 and under. Cloverdale also has a very small proportion of seniors relative to its population. The bulk of the population are either working age adults (approximately 1,900 individuals) or children (approximately 1,400 individuals).



Age

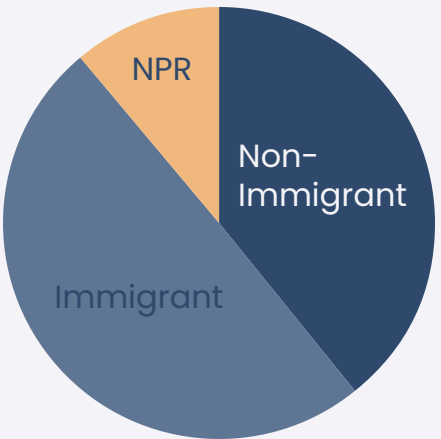
0-19 (37.8%)
20-39 (24.2%)
40-65 (27.0%)
65+ (8.3%)

Many of our respondents noted how they see a lack of services available for the 12-18 demographic as well as young adults in the community. As many of them noted, this age group lacks the same guidance and mentorship available to previous generations in Cloverdale, with many dropping out of school, disconnecting and retreating online, or pursuing “easy money” through a life of crime or involvement in gangs.

Many of our respondents noted how they see a lack of services available for the 12-18 demographic as well as young adults in the community.

2.3 Immigration and Country of Origin

Cloverdale, unlike most of the West Island of Montreal, has a much higher population of immigrants (nearly 50%) and non-permanent residents (over 10%) compared with its non-immigrant population (over 39%). Additionally, more than 13% of these new arrivals came to Canada after 2016. The majority of immigrants in Cloverdale are from Sub-Saharan Africa at over 24% of the population. The next largest places of origin for immigrants are Haiti with 4.4%, the Middle East and North Africa at 4.1% and Asia at 3.8%. These diverse origins have created an ethnic mosaic in Cloverdale consisting of 49.0% people of African descent, 23.0% of European descent, 16.4% Caribbean, 11.5% of Middle Eastern or North African descent and 9.7% of East Asian descent.



Immigration Status

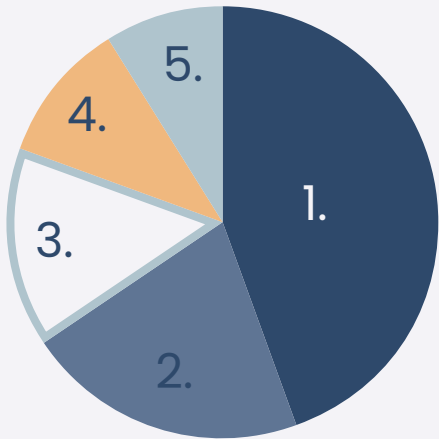
Non-Immigrant (39.4%)
Immigrant (49.8%)
Non-Permanent Resident (10.9%)
Origin: Africa 24.3%, Haiti 4.4%, Middle East/
North Africa (4.1%), East Asia (3.8%)

13.6%

Number of immigrants in
Cloverdale who arrived
between 2016–2021

Ethnic Origin

1. African (49.0%)
2. White/European (23.0%)
3. Caribbean (16.4%)
4. Middle Eastern/North African (11.5%)
5. East Asian (9.7%)



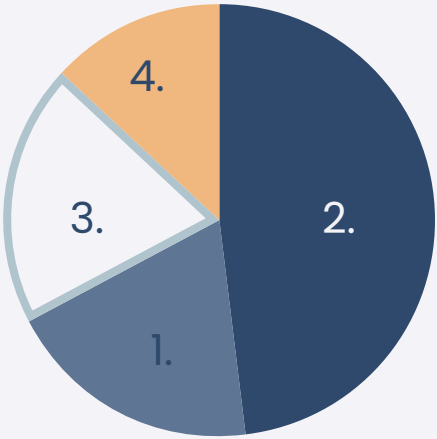
One local pastor noted with admiration how many of the immigrants in Cloverdale demonstrated courage, determination, and resilience as they worked so hard to build a new life for them and their families in Canada. Many of these new arrivals face significant challenges such as lack of education, inability to speak the language, or difficulty finding work. Additionally, a repeated theme among respondents was the difficulty for new immigrants to integrate into the Canadian context, with many spending little time with local Canadians or being introduced to their host culture. While residents appreciated the beauty of Cloverdale’s diversity, the number of different groups in the community has been challenging for community cohesion. Many respondents noted how unity between the different groups in the neighbourhood remains elusive, creating a state of tension in the neighbourhood. One community worker told us that “all the ethnic groups stick to themselves.. It’s not really a melting pot.

While residents appreciated the beauty of Cloverdale’s diversity, the number of different groups in the community has been challenging for community cohesion.

Some people have spent 5 years here and never spent time with someone [Quebecois].
– Resident

2.4 Language

Cloverdale is a dominantly French speaking community with 48.3% of the population speaking French at home. However, its linguistic make-up is similar to that of Montreal with Anglophones and Allophones each accounting for roughly 19% of Cloverdale’s population. Arabic, Creole, Somali, and Congolese represent the largest non-official language communities spoken in the community.



- 1. **English (19.4%)**
- 2. **French (48.3%)**
- 3. **Other (19.8%)**
Arabic 4.8%, Creole 2.8%, Somali 1.8%, Congolese 1.6%, Mandarin 1.2%
- 4. **Multiple (13.0%)**
English + French 3.2%, English + Non-Official 2.4%, French + Non-Official 4.7%, English + French + Non-Official 2.2%

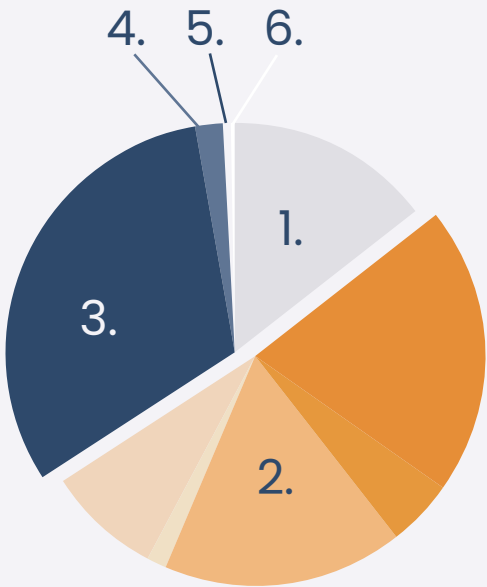
Language has created many challenges for new arrivals in Cloverdale, with many speaking only one official language or neither. This presents difficulties for students trying to learn in a new language, but especially for parents trying to help their children succeed at school or communicate with the school about their child’s education.

There are a certain number of parents who don’t speak the language, so there needs to be a bridge with the schools.
– Resident

2.5 Religion

The Cloverdale population identifies as even more religious than the West Island of Montreal, which is itself a region with higher levels of religious affiliation than Montreal or the rest of Canada. The largest single religious group in Cloverdale are Muslims at over 30%, followed by Catholics, Non-Affiliated Christians,* “Other Christians,**” Protestants, Hindus, and Orthodox Christians. Secular Perspectives represent the third largest group of responses at 14%. The notable dominance of both Evangelical Christians and “Other Christian” faith traditions is of particular interest and requires further examination to obtain a clearer picture of the community’s religious character.

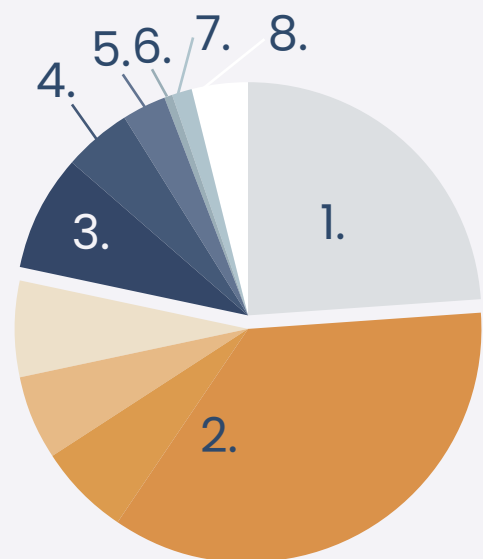
*This roughly corresponds to those who would otherwise identify as “Evangelical Christians”
**This can consist both of smaller Christian denominations and those outside of traditional Trinitarian Christianity



Religion in Cloverdale

- 1. **Secular (14.5%)**
- 2. **Christian (51.2%)**
Catholic (20.3%), Protestant (4.7%), Christian Non-Affiliated (16.7%), Orthodox (1.5%), Other Christian Related (8.0%)
- 3. **Muslim (31.4%)**
- 4. **Hindu (1.8%)**
- 5. **Buddhist (0.5%)**
- 6. **Other (0.2%)**





Religion in the West Island

1. **Secular (23.8%)**
2. **Christian (54.1%)**
Catholic (35.4%), Protestant (6.2%), Christian Non-Affiliated (6.0%), Orthodox (6.5%)
3. **Muslim (8.1%)**
4. **Jewish (4.5%)**
5. **Hindu (3.2%)**
6. **Buddhist (0.6%)**
7. **Sikh (1.2%)**
8. **Other (3.8%)**

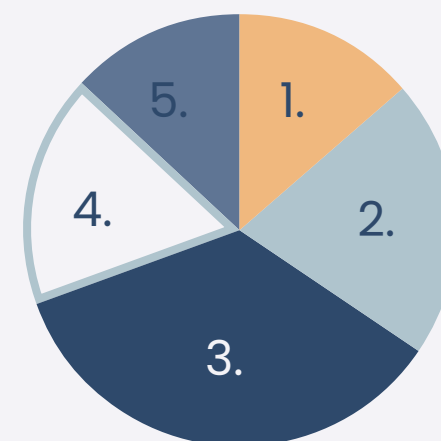
While one resident insisted that religion was not a point of division in the community, this was contested by the perspective of a local pastor who saw a sense of rivalry or competition between religious groups in Cloverdale. Both emphasized the need for people to bridge the divide of religious differences to engage with those of different confessions in the community.



2.6 Education

The level of education in the Cloverdale area is quite low, with 13.6% of those 25 and over having no High School diploma. This is much higher than the West Island, Montreal, or Canadian averages. Those who just hold a high school diploma or have only attained some post-secondary education also represent larger percentages of Cloverdale's population than in Montreal and far fewer people in Cloverdale have attained a Bachelor's degree as well. Interestingly, however, Cloverdale has a respectable proportion of residents with a Graduate degree compared to the 11.6% Canadian average. This may be due to the level of education new immigrants have completed in their home countries.

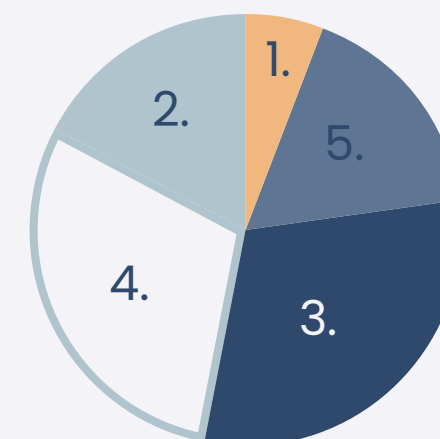
Education in Cloverdale 25 and over



1. **No Diploma (13.6%)**
2. **High School Diploma (21.0%)**
3. **Some Post-Secondary (34.9%)**
4. **Undergraduate Degree (17.4%)**
5. **Graduate Studies (13.0%)**

Education in the West Island 25 and over

1. **No Diploma (5.9%)**
2. **High School Diploma (16.9%)**
3. **Some Post-Secondary (30.2%)**
4. **Undergraduate Degree (29.6%)**
5. **Graduate Studies (16.9%)**



“
There’s not enough support. Mostly young guys are quitting high school because they fail one course and then they decide to drop out.
– Resident

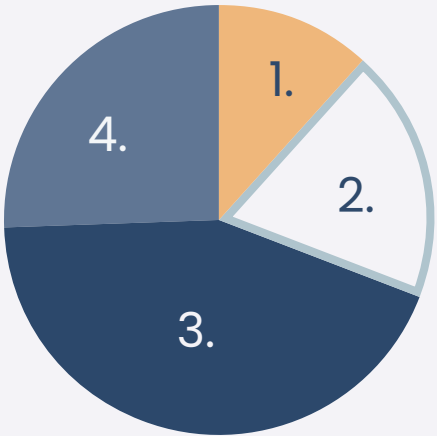
There is a significant sense of frustration among our stakeholders with the local school system servicing the Cloverdale area. Many noted how the school failed to communicate and engage well with parents in their community, this being compounded by the language barriers and technical illiteracy among parents. More centrally, however, many did not feel they were being heard or understood by the schools. This was highlighted by the lack of cultural representation of immigrant communities among educators at the schools, adding to a felt lack of positive role models for immigrant youth or a sense of being understood by teachers for students and their parents. This lack of support from the education system has fueled the high drop-out rate, especially among young boys, which is plaguing the community. Finally, this conflict has been compounded by the introduction of gender and sexuality into the school curriculum, causing consternation among some parents.

“
Parents don’t have technology or use technology to communicate with the schools and some don’t speak the language.
– Teacher

“
I was shocked when I went to [one of the local schools]... and found I was the only black person [on staff]. I couldn’t understand why in a school where 99% of the students are immigrants the majority of teachers are white.
– Teacher

2.7 Income

Income in Cloverdale

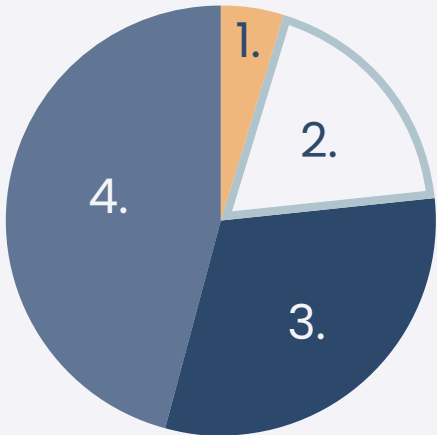


- 1. **LICO* (11.7%)** Low income cut off
- 2. **Under 50k (19.3%)**
- 3. **50k-100k (43.4%)**
- 4. **100k+ (25.5%)**

Cloverdale Median Income \$33,600 (Before tax)

Income in the West Island

- 1. **LICO (4.9%)** Low income cut off
- 2. **Under 50k (18.3%)**
- 3. **50k-100k (30.9%)**
- 4. **100k+ (45.3%)**





I can understand the parent who lets their kid deal drugs out of their house because they need to pay for groceries – that's poverty.

– Local Police Officer

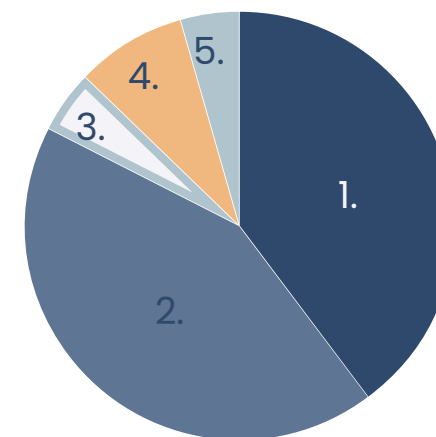
Cloverdale is a low income housing co-op. As a result a significant proportion of the population is low income or living under the poverty line. Over 30% of Cloverdale's households are earning under \$50K a year and over 11% of households are living under the poverty line. This is significantly less than surrounding municipality of Pierrefonds-Roxboro, but is comparable to Montreal's average income levels. The median income for individuals in Cloverdale is \$33,600 annually before tax. This is a significant improvement from the first report in 2007, when the median income was only \$12,000. At that time it was considered the poorest area in the West Island, but this is no longer the case as Cloverdale is now on par with poverty levels in other low-income areas of the region like Sainte-Genevieve, Dorval-Lachine and Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue.

But unlike poorer areas in Montreal, Cloverdale's need is hidden by the relative affluence of the surrounding communities. This wealth-washing prevents people from accessing services available to other sectors with comparable levels of poverty. One parent told us that since Pierrefonds-Roxboro possessed fewer poor households than Saint Laurent, she had to pay for lunches for her 10 children while other schools in Montreal offered lunches for free. In addition, the rising cost of living has, according to residents and local police, led to the rise in criminality in the community as many turn to sources of "easy-money" to meet their needs.

2.8 Family Status

Cloverdale has a large number of families, more than we see in areas with similar levels of income such as Montreal. The number of marriages and families with children is closer to the levels seen in the more affluent parts of the West Island. However Cloverdale differs in its high levels of single-parent families compared with the rest of Montreal, perhaps owing to a large number of parents working in their country of origin while their family settles in Canada. There are also slightly higher divorce rates in Cloverdale. The community also has a very high number of singles, most likely because of its high youth population, and far fewer Common Law relationships on average than Montreal or Canada.

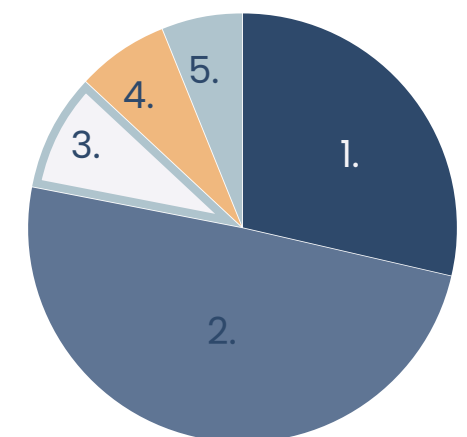
Relationship Status in Cloverdale



1. **Singles (39.6%)**
2. **Married (42.3%)**
3. **Common Law (4.7%)**
4. **Divorced (8.3%)**
5. **Widowed (4.3%)**

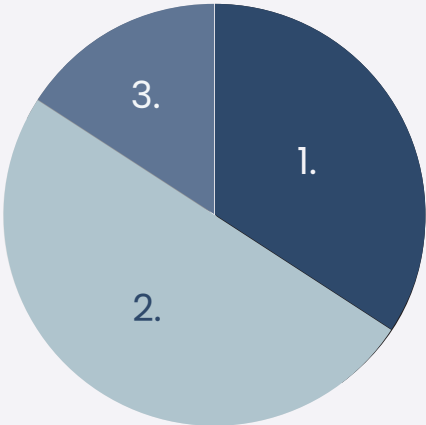
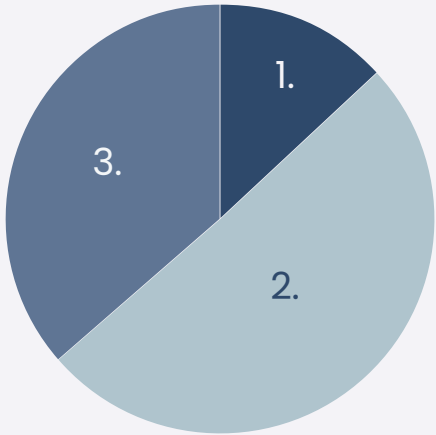
Relationship Status in the West Island

1. **Singles (28.7%)**
2. **Married (49.4%)**
3. **Common Law (8.9%)**
4. **Divorced (6.9%)**
5. **Widowed (6.7%)**



Family Status in Cloverdale

- 1. Families without children (13.3%)
- 2. Families with Children (50.2%)
- 3. Single Parent Families (36.2%)



Family Status in the West Island

- 1. Families without children (34.2%)
- 2. Families with Children (50.2%)
- 3. Single Parent Families (15.6%)

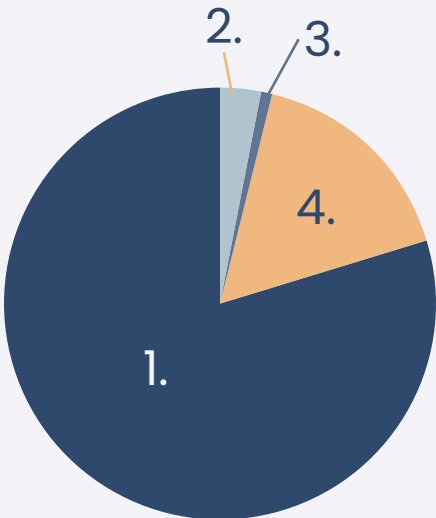
Most of our respondents mentioned that large families with good values are one of the main assets for the Cloverdale community. Many noted how independent children in the community are and how a familial spirit has helped develop a village-mindset for raising children as it would be in their home countries. This is seen as both a strength and a setback for the community, as many parents struggle to adjust to the Canadian style of family rearing. As the more adaptive children integrate into the host culture, many of the parents are left without a roadmap for how to parent their children in this unfamiliar new world. This has created serious deficiencies in the family dynamics and parenting in the community, deficiencies partly met by the services of youth centres like La Corde.

One of the strengths of Cloverdale are its great big families with good values... The kids are also very independent and active... And the Community is tight knit and mutually supportive.

- Resident

2.9 Housing

As a housing coop, residents share high density living spaces. This means that over 79% of Cloverdale’s housing are apartments with fewer than five storeys. Row houses make up the second largest type of housing in the community at 16.4%. Cloverdale has a total of 866 homes divided into 58 different buildings. This is much more than the average number of 22 homes in other nearby housing coops reflecting Cloverdale’s unique status as the largest housing cooperative in Canada.*



Housing Types

- 1. Single-detached house (3.2%)
- 2. Semi-detached house (0.8%)
- 3. Row house (16.4%)
- 4. Apartment (79.4%)
in a building that has fewer than five storeys

Cloverdale’s housing and shared spaces are seen as largely deficient by most residents and community workers in terms of their maintenance and upkeep. Most noted their dissatisfaction with the frequency of garbage left in the parks, walkways, and staircases of the coop. Many pointed to the apathy and lack of ownership among residents which created the conditions for the mess. Others laid some of the blame on the Co-op while others pointed to the city for its lack of investment in the A-Ma-Baie area at large. But all agreed that more community cohesion, investment, and pride of place is necessary to address the deficiencies in the Co-op’s infrastructure.

*<https://fhcq.coop/fr/voir-grand-cloverdale>

2.10 Community Services and Churches

Cloverdale is a community dense with community and faith organizations. There are several churches, a mosque, many youth programs and community centres each offering a myriad of services to the local community. Some stakeholders even said they think Cloverdale is highly resourced and attention ought to be given to lesser known areas of the West Island. However, all of the residents we spoke to had nothing but praise for the organizations working in and supporting their community. Almost all identified La Corde as a critical strength for the community in its service to youth, alongside Carrefour 6-12, the Multi-Ressource, and On Rock Community Services. The diversity of services available to residents actually seemed a strength to most as they were able to choose from a host of different programs that were available at different times depending on what was convenient for them. Local pastors are also spoken of very highly within the community and are treated with respect when they visit Cloverdale. One Quebecois pastor noted how refreshing this openness was to his presence as a church leader. Some residents noted how certain leaders at La Corde played a crucial role in shaping their lives as youth for the better, emphasizing that only more, not less, involvement in their community is what they wanted to see from these workers.



However, many of the community organizations in the Cloverdale area expressed some frustration about the lack of communication, collaboration, and cooperation between their different services, indicating that more services does not always equal better outcomes. Many of the community sector explained how unhappy they were with the lack of connection between them. Yet many of these organizations still remained compartmentalized despite their dissatisfaction with the status quo, indicating a general lack of initiative to breach the existing gaps. Some in the community sector also expressed a certain concern that an apathy on the part of those receiving services is keeping many from benefiting fully from what is available to them.

Churches had similar things to say, pointing to the proliferation of new church plants in the community, diffusing the Christian community and contributing to a lack of focus and collaboration between local believers. One pastor summarized his concern, saying that “too many little groups could slow the advance of the gospel.” In relation to the many community organizations he saw providing services in Cloverdale, the same Pastor noted how “churches sometimes want to reinvent the wheel, but we don’t know how to be brokers of information.” His comment highlights the greater need to disseminate information about resources to congregants rather than attempting to start new programs independently. This also highlights the need for the church to cooperate with other groups, as there is also a sense

of competition underlying some inter-organizational relationships. With different community organizations offering similar services to the same group, such as meal plans offered by the Public school and a community group, religious services offered by different churches or mosques, summer camps offered by various youth centres, etc., some stakeholders noted how it is easy to fall into a mindset of rivalry or scarcity regarding resources. This is compounded by other hindrances, such as feelings of personal disillusionment with the church admitted by some community workers, contributing to a lack of inspiration to cooperate with ecclesial structures.

“With different community organizations offering similar services to the same group... some stakeholders noted how it is easy to fall into a mindset of rivalry or scarcity regarding resources.”

In spite of the challenges community organizations and faith groups face in their collaboration and communication, the response from the residents of Cloverdale to the presence of these groups in their community appears to be largely positive and welcoming. They are united in their desire to see greater support for the community they hold dear. This indicates great potential for further collaboration, and spiritual growth within the community.

Getting Lost in Canada: Spiritual Challenges

Meeting the spiritual needs of new arrivals in the Cloverdale area has also presented challenges to local churches. One pastor noted how many immigrants come from faith backgrounds of dynamic and active churches in their home country. However this dynamic faith can be quickly overshadowed by the search for money and employment in their new environment once they move to Canada. Once committed-Christians who immigrate and attempt to adjust to the demands of the Canadian working schedule often find their discipleship hindered or fall away from faith altogether, leaving their friends to wonder “how?” This is compounded by the transitory nature of the Cloverdale community, presenting difficulties for community building and local leadership development within the Church.



3.0

**MAPPING THE
HURT, HEART,
AND HOPE OF
CLOVERDALE**

3.1 Heart: What gives Cloverdale Strength?

CLOVERDALE'S RESIDENTS

It was mentioned that many of the residents of Cloverdale had arrived in Canada having faced enormous challenges, exhibiting great courage and determination in starting their new life in Canada. Once they arrived they had to face the challenges of integrating into a new culture, learning the language, and finding education or work or both. It was also noted how many of these new immigrants are imbuing new life into otherwise shrinking Quebec churches. The strength and faith of these hard working new arrivals demonstrate how Cloverdale's biggest resource is its people.

It's very supportive and community minded.

– Resident

Cloverdale's Family

What was repeated time and again among our respondents was that Cloverdale drew its strength from both its large families with strong values, but also its familial community-culture. The community is tight knit and benefits from a core of highly invested and committed residents who are passionate about their community. It was also mentioned that the independence and communal child-rearing gave this community a uniquely supportive and lively atmosphere.

This is a beautiful community with big beautiful families.

– Resident

The Constellation of Services

The constellation of services available to the community was repeatedly emphasized as a key strength for Cloverdale. These organizations have provided the community with much needed resources and programs that would be otherwise out of reach for Cloverdale's low-income families. Additionally, La Corde was highlighted multiple times for the mentorship and guidance it provided to a generation of young people in the community. Multiple respondents noted the benefits of the breakfast program at La Corde for the community as well.

People speak of being a La Corde kid as if it saved me.

– Resident

These organizations gave my kids the opportunity to do things I never could.

– Resident

3.2 Hurt: What is holding Cloverdale back?

Lack of Connection

A theme that kept coming up in Cloverdale was the lack of, and desire for, connection. There was an expressed desire to see better communication and cooperation between different community organizations operating in Cloverdale.

Many also emphasized the need for better communication and understanding between the local schools and the parents of Cloverdale. This went hand-in-hand with the issue of integration of new immigrants, who some described as isolated from the host culture, finding it difficult to connect into their new environment.

There are really poor links between the community and the schools. – Resident

Some people have spent 5 years here and never spent time with someone [Quebecois]. – Resident

Additionally, many highlighted their hope to see more training to build connections between parents and kids, and connecting kids to mentors in order to strengthen families in the community.

Many also spoke about the lack of unity among different ethnic groups, who they viewed as being too insular, as a particular barrier to community building.

All the ethnic groups stick to themselves.. It's not really a melting pot. – Community Worker

And finally, the challenge of overcoming the disconnection afforded by technology and social media was understood by many to be a primary issue inhibiting community and exacerbating issues of alienation, gang-life, criminality, and hyper-sexualization among youth, especially after the pandemic.

This [phone] is the worst weapon in the world. – Local Police Officer

You can see the wannabe gangsters online. – Resident

Generally, many people feel that there has been less engagement in community events, poorer connection with their neighbours, and more people keeping to themselves in recent years.

Everyone knew each other, but not anymore. There are a lot more newcomers than before. The older generation who created the positive community dynamic have almost all left. – Resident

Lack of Integration

The problem of disconnection has seemingly increased a sense of disaffection with institutions meant to serve the community. Many of our respondents spoke of feeling misunderstood by the schools and their teachers who they felt often overlooked their challenges as a community.

There isn't enough representation, especially for kids who are new immigrants, of teachers they can connect with who have shared experiences.

- Teacher

There was also dissatisfaction among one community sector worker with what he saw as the systemic neglect of the entire A-Ma-Baie area by local and city government in the form of underinvestment.

Some residents also went so far as to say "the system doesn't like [Africans and Arabs]," emphasizing a sense of marginalization in the community.

Lack of Ownership and Investment

Among many of our interviewees, many mentioned their disappointment with the condition of the community. They pointed to garbage on the street, decay of local playgrounds, and waste filling the stairs and hallways of apartments or overflowing in bins.

There is garbage left everywhere and the parks aren't maintained or safe.

Some mentioned the neglect and underinvestment of the coop or the city, but most noted the lack of ownership among residents to care for their spaces. The attitude was summarized by the statement relayed by one pastor "I want to leave in a few years, why take care of this place?"

It appears as though the lack of ownership or rootedness in the community is contributing to the overall poor condition of the coop.

Lack of Information and Awareness

Another problem that was mentioned was the lack of awareness of services available to the community. This was blamed on poor communication between organizations and with residents, but also the barriers to communication created by language or technical illiteracy.

Some mentioned how the most effective way of reaching people with information required actually walking through the coop and knocking on doors.

Some community workers also expressed their frustration that they provided services that no one attended, emphasizing a disconnect between what is available and what the community actually engages in.

There is an apathy [in Cloverdale].

- Community Worker

3.3 Hope: What does Cloverdale need?

Need for Community

Cloverdale's residents share a passion for their community which was often expressed in mourning what once was and dreaming of what could be in their community. Many expressed a desire to see the neighbourhood transformed into one that is familial, better connected, safer, and well maintained by everyone. Our respondents highlighted a need for more community events which were community led to encourage engagement and increase connection.

Some also mentioned the need for more unity between different ethnic or religious groups and between immigrants and locals to help integrate new arrivals and build healthy community in this diverse neighbourhood.

What many alluded to was a desire to restore a familiar sense of community that they feel Cloverdale once had.

The system doesn't like us .. but if we united for good we would be stronger.

– Resident, speaking for African and Arab residents

Need for Training and Integration of Immigrants, Parents, and Families

One of the most repeated needs voiced by residents and community workers was the integration of immigrants. This includes connecting new arrivals to locals and helping them engage in their new culture, but it extends further than this.

One theme that emerged among interviewees was that, while they thought children tended to integrate well into a new environment, immigrant parents often have difficulty adjusting to their new culture as they struggled to work and raise kids in a new setting. This resulted in difficulty working, strained family dynamics, and the inability to help their kids succeed in school.

A major need emerged to train parents for parenting in Canada, providing technical literacy skills to interface with work and school, and offering language lessons or translation to help them integrate and connect with the host culture. Specifically, programming that would help build connection and healthy dynamics between parents and their children was seen as an especially pressing need for many of our respondents.

Parents don't have technology or use technology to communicate with the schools and some don't speak the language.

– Teacher

Need for Mentorship of Teens and Young Adults

One of the most repeatedly identified needs among our respondents was the lack of services available to 12-18 year olds and young adults. Many of these residents had fond memories of the mentorship provided to them or their kids at La Corde when they were that age, and are seeing the lapse in services having a negative impact on a vulnerable segment of the community.

Many highlighted how one of the things the youth in Cloverdale desperately need is mentorship and positive role models who can inspire them and show them that "they are not destined for failure." This is connected to difficulties with the school system, where the majority of authority figures don't share the cultural background of their Cloverdale students. This feeds into the sense that there are few if any mentors for youth in the community who have shared their experiences.

Young people need to know they are not destined for failure, but can succeed.

– Resident

Our respondents variously expressed their deep concern at the rising level of disengagement of youth and young adults and the increase in criminality they were witnessing in the community. Young boys who flunked out of school were turning to "easy-money" as it was termed through fraud, street-gangs, or even child prostitution.

Young men are getting into trouble with street gangs.

– Resident

Smart kids are getting involved in these gangs.

– Local Police

Another challenge was expressed by one parent who noted that while there are services for teens, once they turn 18, “all the doors are closed.” This arbitrary cut-off prevents young people from accessing the community and leadership they need to develop and mature.

Overall, there was widespread agreement that Cloverdale needs more services for youth and young adults and to strengthen those services which do exist.



3.4 Calls to Action

Our respondents didn't just tell us about the strengths and struggles in their community, they offered what they saw as solutions to challenges they were seeing. Generally, calls to action that were proposed by our respondents fall into three main categories:

Hospitality

- Welcoming and loving of the stranger and sojourner.
- Provide opportunities to connect Quebecers to new arrivals in Cloverdale;
- Help foster unity between different religious, ethnic communities;
- Provide language, technical literacy training to new arrivals;
- Provide workshops and training for parents and families to teach Canadian parenting and build connection between parents and children;
- Coordinate with other organizations and schools to advocate for the needs of new immigrants in Cloverdale.

Discipleship

- Helping others follow and imitate Christ.
- Train leaders to fill the gap left by earlier mentors in the community;
- Provide mentors and leadership for teens and young adults;
- Provide programs (ie: sports programs, family camps, and kid camps) to disciple youth and families together;
- Connect new arrivals with mentors who have become established in Canada.

Being Incarnational

- Being present in and with the community.
- Pastors, leaders, and youth workers need to be present in the community building trust and connections with the people (community chaplains);
- Host community events to foster connection and community in Cloverdale;
- Raise awareness of needs in Cloverdale and other low-income areas in the West Island;
- Connect with other organizations and churches to share information and collaborate.



Conclusion

4.0

Lying at the intersection of the West Island and Montreal, with such a diverse and growing population, the co-op of Cloverdale is unique in the sense that it is a demographic meeting place for the emerging population of the city. The faces of contemporary Montreal - French, English, Middle Eastern, African, Haitian - all make their home here. In addition, Cloverdale is an impoverished community surrounded by some of the wealthiest areas on the Island. This peculiar mosaic of rich and poor, French and English, Canadian and immigrant, raises a profound question for this community, one that resonates for the whole city of Montreal: how do we all live together? This is the same question that faced the earliest churches in Antioch, Galatia, and Rome - where the rich and the poor, the Jew and the Gentile were in fellowship together, no longer separated by hostility through Christ. The great cry of the heart that emerged among people we spoke to in Cloverdale is the longing for this kind of community. This is not only a desire but a human need. The three calls to action outlined above - hospitality, discipleship, incarnation - are not only responses to this need, they are spiritual disciplines and principles for Christian community. The Church has the opportunity to share this community to those hungry for it, people especially near to God's heart: the poor, the afflicted, the stranger and the sojourner. Would we deny them? It would not be exaggeration to say that the future of the Church of Montreal lies at the crossroads of cultures, where we find our place shoulder to shoulder with those with whom Christ has reconciled us: the foreigner and the Canadian, the black and the white, the French and the English, the rich and the poor. Is it not here, in the ruin of the walls of our hostility that Christ is building His Church? Is it not here that He would heal the wounds of Montreal? Is it not here that he prays "that they may all be one"? (John 17:21) It seems clear that the opportunity is ripe to build kingdom community in Cloverdale. The question is - who will go?

5.0

Appendix

