ACTIVITY REPORT
2015-2016
and Orientations for 2017

Presented to MRC Pontiac Council
October 18, 2016
Dear Elected Officials and Citizens of the Pontiac

As warden of MRC Pontiac Council, it is my pleasure to report on the financial situation of the MRC, preliminary indications for the year 2016 and provide general orientations for 2017.

2016 was a year when budget choices were made in reaction to the financial and organizational upheaval resulting from the new policies and orientations of the provincial government to which we had to adapt. Among the principal actions achieved or in progress for 2016, note:

» Completion of work to enlarge the MRC Pontiac offices at an approximate cost of $1.3M;
» Regional economic development, which has been at the heart of MRC Pontiac’s efforts, with aid investments of more than $1.25M in key sectors, including tourism, agriculture, culture, heritage and recreation;
» Investments of over $300 000 to restore watercourse crossings and maintain multi-use forest roads;
» Adoption of By-Law 227-2016, modifying the land use plan and allowing for development on destructured tracts, which has the potential to revitalise the agricultural sector;
» Management of public land leases and administration of the sustainable forest management program (PADF), as well as the coordination of the Outaouais Regional Integrated Resource Management Planning Table (TRGIRTO);
» Revision of the Residual Waste Management Plan and the Fire Safety Cover Plan;
» Transfer of the Tourist Information Office to the MRC building;
» Development of the Biomass Conversion Centre (CVB) project, which has attracted serious interest among a number of partners.

On the other hand, with the announcement of the long-awaited-for Proximity Governance Policy and crucial issues specific to the Pontiac, 2017 is set to be a year that looks to the future. The decisions we make in 2017, a number of which concern governance, will have a decisive impact on the people of the Pontiac. Among the major orientations for 2017, note:
» To complete phase III of renovations at the MRC building;
» To transfer the management of the CVB project to the community;
» To review our governance model and how we choose a warden: i.e. our decision-making and actions implementation process, and project accountability to citizens and our constituents;
» To further involve our citizens, particularly youth and women, in decisions related to economic development in the Pontiac;
» To revise, with the help of our partners, the strategic plan, Vision 2020; set performance goals and indicators; make provisions for an annual monitoring of the plan;
» To prepare a development plan with neighbouring MRCs, "Cap sur l'Ouest du Québec";
» To coordinate the reorganization of the five Pontiac OHMs (municipal housing offices);
» To develop and implement a communication policy;
» To carry out our action plans regarding residual waste management and the reduction of greenhouse gases;
» To undertake a study to find an efficient and realistic model for the consolidation of fire safety services;
» To finalize the cadastral renovation and continue to update our property assessment files;
» To improve high speed internet service in the MRC Pontiac;
» To develop evaluation tools in order to maintain the efficiency of our human resources.

More than two months remain before the end of 2016 and, in spite of all we have accomplished so far this year, there is a feeling that a lot remains to be done with regards to the goals contained in our strategic plan, Vision 2020, and the population of the Pontiac, which continues to decline, age and become poorer.

We have to recognize that we ask much of our elected officials and MRC employees and we don’t give them the tools necessary to do more, better. Among the solutions are, of course, our traditional demands to the Quebec government. However—and I will conclude on this point—there are also choices that we have as elected officials.

The visionaries, those who bring change to their communities, are, first and foremost, elected officials. We all accept this challenge with the best of intentions. However, probably because we get worn out or discouraged when faced with the size of the task, we too often take for granted that someone else will take care of a file or issue. We too often give in to negativity and rarely promote our successful efforts towards a better future.
I cannot emphasize this point enough: for the Pontiac, the status quo is no longer an option. The very survival of our communities depends on our understanding this.

A Regional County Municipality (MRC) is a local government that is very necessary these days, a regional body that is a driver of our development, above and beyond day-to-day local concerns. I invite not only our elected officials but also citizens and all community stakeholders to think about governance. How can we do more, better?

Let’s get even closer to our communities, talk more about our issues, our action plan, our results; invite our citizens, particularly youth and women, to participate in the recovery of the Pontiac, to be part of the solution.

Let’s invest in our people, in our communities, in the MRC’s human resources. Let’s remain united; dare to work together, look towards consolidating our services; cooperate with neighbouring regions for the development and enrichment of our respective communities.

We must reinvent and modernize our institution and face up to tomorrow’s challenges, which are already on our horizon. It is up to us to create the opportunities that will ensure the vitality and viability of the Pontiac for present and future generations. Let’s be innovative; let’s stand together, and be confident in our abilities.

Raymond Durocher
Warden - MRC Pontiac
and Mayor of Fort-Coulonge
Financial Report

According to the analysis prepared by our auditor firm, Janique Éthier, C.P.A. Inc., our 2015 financial statements show an accumulated surplus of $1,016,245 (including $388,582 for leases), of which $210,466 will be appropriated to the 2016 budget. Revenues for the year are $5,852,612 and expenditures are $5,727,361, creating a $125,252 surplus over the 2015 budget.

The remuneration of elected officials, before deduction and including benefits, is $34,803 for the warden, of which $3,000 is redistributed in charitable donations in the community, culture, and education sectors, $17,401 for the pro-warden, and $98,608 for the other Council members.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2015-2016

<table>
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<tr>
<th>REVENUES</th>
<th>Budget 2016</th>
<th>Financial Statement 2015</th>
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<td>1 Municipal Shares</td>
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<td>18 Total Revenue</td>
<td>$5,781,485</td>
<td>$5,852,613</td>
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<td>EXPENSES</td>
<td>Budget 2016</td>
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<td>4 SAAQ Office</td>
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<td>27 Capital Costs</td>
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<td>28 Total Expenditure</td>
<td><strong>$5,994,499</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5,727,361</strong></td>
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<td>29 Surplus (déficit)</td>
<td><strong>$ 0</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ 0</strong></td>
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SHARE DISTRIBUTION 2016

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Budget Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Share</th>
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<td>Legislative and Administration</td>
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<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>1,012,613</td>
<td>1,001,613</td>
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<td>Public Safety</td>
<td>156,937</td>
<td>146,984</td>
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<tr>
<td>Animal Control</td>
<td>80,733</td>
<td>80,733</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>86,690</td>
<td>86,690</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sports and Leisure</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Land Use Planning and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5,781,485</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,758,877</strong></td>
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LIST OF CONTRACTS

Following is the list of contracts involving expenditures of more than $25,000, and contracts of more than $2,000 entered into with a supplier when the sum of the expenditure during the financial period is more than $25,000. The complete list of contracts is available at the General Manager’s office and will soon be posted on our website at www.mrcpontiac.qc.ca.

- **Group Insurance – Manulife** | Insurance Contract | 2016
- **Forestry Development Consultant - Pierre Vézina** | Professional Services | 2016
- **Computing Services - Studio Vesprés** | Service Contract | 2016
- **SHQ Program Management – Louis Caron** | Service Contract | 2016
- **Consultant/Coordinator for GIRTO – Raymond Barrette** | Professional Services | 2016
- **Support Software for Cadastral Renewal - AZIMUT** | Service Contract | 2016
- **Contract- Waste Management- Tom Orr Cartage** | Service Contract | 2016
- **Property Assessment Services - Servitech** | Professional Services | 2016
- **Multi-use Road Maintenance – Art Fleming** | Service Contract | 2016
- **Multi-use Road Maintenance – Anne Guilbeault** | Service Contract | 2016
- **Bridge construction on multi-use road – Construction FGK inc.** | Service Contract | 2016
Activity Report

GOVERNANCE

The option of electing the warden by universal suffrage resurfaced at MRC Council in 2016. At council’s request, an in-house study was done of the 14 Quebec MRCs (approx. 20% of MRCs) that have adopted this approach. The results were conclusive. Only one of the MRCs stated they did not want to return to the previous model of governance.

The MRC will follow this matter closely from now until May 2017, the cut-off date for making a decision for the November 2017 elections.

Key Actions for Follow-up:

- Meet with stakeholders to exchange information;
- Consult with citizens electronically;
- Consult with wardens elected by universal suffrage in other regions;
- Analyze the results of consultations to help council make an informed decision.

ADMINISTRATION

Human Resources

The employees of the MRC are responsible for putting into action the decisions taken at Council. They formulate and implement development plans, deliver programs and develop and maintain the tools needed to arrive at the ultimate goals of economic, social and cultural growth, and the management and protection of our region.

Last year, the MRC experienced significant personnel changes, beginning with the resignation of the director general and the hiring of a new assistant director general. Overall, the MRC is currently understaffed; certain positions remain to be filled and a workload analysis will be undertaken in the coming months.

Planned Actions for 2017

- Fill vacant positions;
- Analyze workload and adjust or add resources as required;
- Develop evaluation tools to ensure optimal effectiveness and efficiency in all departments.
Communications

Since its introduction in July 2015, our new communications department has developed good relationships with local media. Providing journalists access to quality content in a timely manner has led to excellent local media coverage. In fact, we must acknowledge the indispensable role of our media partners in the municipal democratic process and their contribution to citizen participation in local government affairs.

In the course of the year we have also put in place direct means of communications with citizens:

- Improvements to the website mrcpontiac.qc.ca making it compatible with smart phones, more user-friendly and content rich (e.g. graphic matrix, TNO by-laws, etc.);
- News blog: timely press releases, media briefs and public notices as well as a place for citizens to make comments;
- Social media presence: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube...

Orientations For 2017

Communications isn’t the only sector in evolution. The mandates of MRCs evolve as well and those that have a mission of economic development are increasingly focused on the appeal and competitiveness of their region. "Territorial marketing" has therefore become a popular expression in MRCs, municipalities and cities in 2016, and communication departments play a primary role in the achievement of the MRC’s development goals.

Key Actions for 2017:

- Draft the MRC’s communications policy;
- Develop marketing-communications plans for key regional sectors (forestry, agriculture and tourism);
- Develop tools for internal and external communication;
- Develop relationships with regional and national media;
REGIONAL AND FOREST DEVELOPMENT

The MRC has fulfilled its role as administrator of the Sustainable Forest Management Program (PADF) and coordinator for the Outaouais Regional Integrated Resource Management Planning Table (TRGIRTO). The PADF has an annual budget of $672,000, and the MRC ensured the smooth functioning of the TRGIRTO and financing of growth generating projects for the Pontiac.

During the second year of the Ministry of Forests, Wildlife and Park's program for the restoration of watercourse crossings, the MRC Pontiac invested $153,778 in 12 restoration projects for a total value of $708,900. The MRC also reserved a budget of $150,000 for the regular maintenance of 375 km of multi-use forest roads.

Under the agreement for delegation of authority with the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources concerning land management and sand and gravel extraction on public lands, the MRC has made available 10 new cottage lots on public land at Croche Lake in Pontefract township. Lots will be awarded through a random draw held in collaboration with the ministry this fall.

Lastly, the MRC Pontiac adopted By-Law 214-2015 regarding forestry practices on private land. The new by-law, in force since January 2016, is intended to regulate tree cutting in order to protect forest cover and encourage sustainable forestry practices on private land.

Biomass Conversion Centre Project

The MRC Pontiac unveiled its development strategy for economic recovery in the Pontiac with regard to the project for a Biomass Conversion Centre. The MRC is confident that this innovative project will revitalize the forestry industry in the Pontiac by using pulpwood as well as other underutilized tree species. The MRC set up a monitoring committee to ensure the project's success.

Agricultural Development

The MRC Pontiac adopted By-Law 227-2016 modifying the Land Use And Development Plan concerning development of destructured tracts and the building of new residences on lots of 10 or more hectares. The by-law will allow new residences to be built in the permanent agricultural zone on vacant lots of at least ten hectares of farmland suitable for agriculture and agro-forestry. By adopting this by-law, the MRC hopes to contribute to the revitalisation of the agricultural sector by allowing easier access to land for the establishment of new farming businesses.

Property Assessment

The Geomatics Department has made the modernized Assessment Roll as well as graphic matrix for municipal and non-organized territory available on the MRC website. Citizens of the Pontiac are now able to consult the graphic matrix, presented on orthophotograph, at any time.
FIRE SAFETY AND EMERGENCY MEASURES

The Fire Safety Cover Plan is a fire risk-management and decision-making tool for elected officials. It is also a planning tool for those responsible for emergency services. The MRC’s Public and Civil Safety Department completed an update of the plan and implementation measures, in consultation with citizens and other community stakeholders.

The MRC has also established emergency measures for western Pontiac municipalities, in case of a nuclear accident at Chalk River.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Development Fund

The MRC Pontiac manages its portion of the provincial government's Territorial Development Fund (FDT). From this fund, the MRC has created two financial aid programs:

- **Support Program for Community Building Projects** (PSPS), aimed at community organizations, non-profits and municipalities in the MRC Pontiac for projects intended to improve the quality of life for citizens;
- **Business Support Program** (PSE), available to private businesses and the social economic sector for projects that foster growth and employment.

*Program impacts since December 2015:*

- Total Investment — $ 777,235
- Number of Projects — 35
- Total Generated Investment – $ 6,612,373
- Leveraging Effect — $ 9 for each dollar invested
- Number of jobs created or maintained — 70

For its part, the MRC reserved $440,895 of FDT funds for the following regional projects:

- Public and interurban transport;
- Tourism route;
- School of the Arts;
- A study on consolidation of fire safety services;
- Implementation of the Agricultural Zone Development Plan (PDZA).

In short, the MRC allocated $1,218,130, between December 2015 and September 20 2016, to private enterprises, social economy and community sectors and municipalities as part of the FDT. We sincerely thank our partner in business development, the SADC Pontiac, which offers frontline services to the companies benefiting from MRC funding as well as from the **Local Investment Fund** (FLI) and the **Local Solidarity Fund** (FLS).
OTHER 2016 INVESTMENTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Culture and Heritage:

- $14,368 invested in seven local cultural projects;
- Organization of the "20 Cultural Treasures of the Pontiac" contest;
- Distribution and promotion of the Heritage Guide for Municipalities;
- Installation of the permanent regional artwork exhibition in the new MRC building;
- Technical support for a range of community projects including the filming of the CBC show "Still Standing" in Fort-Coulonge and the historic mural in Campbell's Bay;
- Geo-referencing of heritage buildings identified in the inventory of historical buildings;
- Represented the MRC at Culture Outaouais and the Outaouais Cultural Foundation.

Sports and Recreation:

- $6,635 invested in the organization of sports and recreational activities;
- Organization of the Seniors' Tour, presenting traditional music shows at three seniors' residences;
- Organization of swimming lessons, recreational hockey, an outdoor movie presentation (Waltham) and three music workshops (day camps).

Tourism:

- Marketing: out of the $30,000 Tourism Marketing Plan budget, $15,000 has been spent on promotional materials and activities since January 1, 2016. The MRC had a display at three tourism trade shows and is in the process of redesigning the Tourism Pontiac website. Additional money will be spent on winter marketing campaigns and trade shows in the 2016-2017 season;
- Tourist Information Bureau: the transfer of the tourist information bureau from the SADC to the MRC, while requiring effort and adjustments, allowed for the hiring of two summer students. In spite of technical and personnel challenges, the office greeted 314 tourists during the summer of 2016.

Agriculture:

- Pontiac Hops Solidarity Cooperative (CSHP): obtained a pelletizer, nominated for a "Prix Découvertes Coopératives" 2016;
- MRC seat on the Outaouais Agrifood Table (Table Agroalimentaire de l’Outaouais - TAO): contribution of $2,500 for the marketing agent and $650 for the Outaouais Gourmet Way, which will be updated;
- Land Bank: $2,500 invested for membership in the provincial database. Five parcels of farmland have been registered. A twinning project is currently under discussion with a potential promoter;
- Contribution of $5,000 to the "Plateforme agricole de L'Ange-Gardien" and participation in the regional committee.
Social and Community Sectors:

- Seat on the Seniors' Table and close support for the organization's development;
- Seat on the Pontiac Social Development Table;
- Support for organizations making requests to the New Horizons for Seniors (PNHA) and Québec Amis des Aînés (QADA) programs.

Key Actions for 2017

- Provide coordination for the provincial government's reorganization plan for the five OHM residences in the Pontiac;
- Support municipalities in the fight against poverty. Since the abolition of the Fight Against Poverty Funds, fewer projects are being proposed though the need remains.

Regional Infrastructure:

- **PPJ:** budget of $50,000 compared to $150,000 over the last few years. Regular maintenance. Resurfacing required on some sections. Desire on the part of elected officials to promote the trail, which is part of Route verte. Projected budget of $60,000 for 2017.
- **Ottawa River Waterway:** Donation of the Cameron Farm dock at Rapides-des-Joachims. Awarding of contracts to operators. Maintenance of vehicles and trailers. Installation, removal and maintenance of docks. $30,000 budget.
- **Oiseau Rock:** road repair on the parking lot access road.
- **Castor Géant:** harmonisation agreement reached to minimize the impacts on the trail of the forestry activities planned by Lauzon Ltd. at Leslie Park.

FINANCIAL AID FOR HOME IMPROVEMENT

The MRC Pontiac is mandated by the Société d’habitation du Québec (SHQ) to administer programs for home maintenance and improvement. Two programs were available this year, RénoRégion, which provides financial assistance for low-income owner-occupants to carry out work required to correct major defects in their homes, and the Residential Adaptation Assistance Program (PAD), which offers homeowners financial assistance for eligible adaptation work to meet the needs of a disabled person.

In July 2016, the SHQ added $321,000 into the RénoRégion Program for 2016-2017. The amount of funding received from PAD depends on the number of applications. Since December 2015, we have processed 36 applications through these two programs for a total investment of $331 450.