



Westmount vote 2017:
Christina Smith

Description

Westmount mayoral candidates present their platform

WestmountMag.ca extended an invitation to all three mayoral candidates to provide an article about themselves and their platform, and all graciously accepted. Here we present the first, by **Christina Smith**.

The articles are unedited and presented in their original format.

Westmount is an incredibly great place to live, with a very strong sense of community. My family and I are extremely proud to be part of it and I am grateful to have the opportunity to give back. I am proud of the record of achievement of this current Council, and of my contributions to it. We have eliminated the city's debt, frozen taxes and continued to deliver affordable and efficient city services. Do we have much more work to do? Absolutely.

My goal is to continue to build on this very solid foundation, as I have done so since having been chosen by my colleagues on Council as interim Mayor. Under my leadership we have made real and significant changes to how services are delivered. I have rejuvenated our professional leadership in the City. I have added more members to our Engineering team to better deliver our infrastructure. I have also put additional resources in Urban Planning, a department where we owe it to our citizens to simplify and streamline the permit process.

I have career experience in both the Public and Private sector. I worked on Parliament Hill as an Advisor to Minister Stephane Dion and was part of the team that worked tirelessly on the Clarity Act to ensure that, if there were ever to be another referendum, rules would be clear. This was and continues to be a very important piece of legislation in protecting not only Quebecers, but all Canadians. I also worked as the head of Public Affairs and Industry Affairs for Coca-Cola bringing together industry and government to improve sustainability, labour negotiations and corporate responsibility. I have always worked hard. I am honest and I have the ability to bring people together to find common goals and solutions.

We have much work ahead and it is time for a new generation to take on that task. Our infrastructure spending has almost doubled in the past year and I will keep that pace. For the first time ever, 100% of the projects that we planned for will be completed. We even added \$1 million in additional sidewalk repair. The reorganization of our engineering group and adding new employees has ensured that high quality projects will be delivered on



time and on budget. I will ensure that residents are informed throughout the projects that affect them. We will invest in our roads. Our sidewalks will be fixed and our parks will be renewed.

My objective is to create an active healthy community for all, especially children and seniors, so more young families will be attracted to our community and retirees will want to stay. This will take effort on our part. It means providing safe cycling routes so people can actively get to work, play, and do it safely. If we make these commitments, less cars will be on the road. It means better, wider sidewalks and it means parks that have something for all citizens.

In the first week of my nomination as interim Mayor I met with the YMCA to discuss the needs for an indoor pool that offers more availability to residents and our hope to enter into a partnership for a new indoor pool in Westmount. We have begun the process of a needs assessment and I hope the next Council will continue this work.

The urban renewal of the South East is long overdue. This will be a project that impacts the whole City but the residents who live in the area must and will be a part of the discussion. Ste. Catherine St. is an important part of our commercial sector that needs to be revitalized and the connection with Dorchester needs to be improved.

Everyone I speak to is concerned about traffic and the safety of their street. The Turcot has had a huge impact on how people get downtown and unfortunately that route is often on the side streets of Westmount. We need to look, not only at traffic counts and data, but at the impact on the residents and how it affects their lives. Let's be more efficient about how we get traffic through the city and slow the cars on the residential streets. This means the continuation of the synchronization of the traffic lights, the work has begun but we have much left to do.

I hope that I have the privilege of continuing to serve this great city after November 5, I know we have much work to do and much to improve but I am confident with the engagement of our citizens and harnessing their ideas and good will we can be a city where everyone has a role to play. I am a problem solver and a team player who is capable of bringing people together. One advantage I have is that I am immersed in this community and I have a deep understanding of Westmount, of our strengths and of our challenges. However you cast your ballot on November 5, just make sure that you do vote. This is, after all, your city.

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Image: courtesy of Christina Smith

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