



PRESENTATION OF PROJECT TRANQUILITY

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Executive Summary

What is Project Tranquility?

This project focuses on increasing the tranquility and safety of our streets and providing residents with a high-quality living environment.

We know that careless driving among some motorists is on the rise in Quebec. Racing, illegal passing, speeding and other dangerous actions are road behaviours that can lead to dramatic consequences and create innocent victims.

Unacceptable are terrible events such as the one on 31 October 2007, in Île Perrot, in which little Bianca Leduc, age three, lost her life due to a street race in a residential neighbourhood, is unacceptable. This event was one too many, and we have to continue and multiply our actions to prevent others from happening.

To avoid such tragedies, the Sherbrooke Police Service created and implemented Project Tranquility in 2006. Our actions are grouped into three facets:

1. Monitoring resident complaints to the Sherbrooke Police Service about careless driving by sending written notices to those vehicle owners at fault.

For each occurrence of careless driving that residents report to us, in which the vehicle is identifiable (make, colour, plate number), the vehicle owner at fault receives a written notice. Therefore, the more residents inform us, the more notices are sent out and the more drivers are made aware that they are being monitored (See written notice in Appendix 1).

2. Systematically punishing drivers who commit violations on the road and disturb the peace of residents

Officers are redoubling their vigilance and thoroughness for the 12 violations targeted in the project. Therefore, more tickets are being issued to punish drivers at fault.
(See the list of violations in Appendix 2).

3. Requiring more severe penalties for repeat offenders

A driver registry was created to track drivers who commit one or more of the targeted violations more than three times. In such cases, these drivers are considered repeat offenders. For their next violation, the police can ask the judge for a stiffer penalty.

Pull together!

By mobilizing the public to stop tolerating driving offences and by encouraging them to inform the Sherbrooke Police Service when they witness careless driving, we want to give every single person a sense of responsibility for road safety.

Situation and Objectives

Throughout 2007, we were able to observe that police officers and elected municipal officials were unanimous in their support of the project. Furthermore, resident and media comments about Project Tranquility have brought credibility and strength to it.

When the government of Quebec named 2007 “Road Safety Year,” we put a lot of energy into finding new partners, coming up with new activities to promote road safety and inviting residents to participate in the project.

Achievements

- Support from the City of Sherbrooke public safety committee and elected municipal officials
- Partnership with the City of Sherbrooke communications division
- Partnership with the Société de l’assurance automobile du Québec (SAAQ)
- Discussions with several municipal police services and the Sûreté du Québec about possible partnerships and exporting of the project
- Preparation of an agreement with Bertrand Godin, race car driver and car columnist, to become the project spokesperson
- New slogan: *Project Tranquility: Parce que la route ...c’est pas une piste de course!*
[Because the road isn’t a racetrack!]
- New promotional leaflet

Length of Operation

- The first facet of Project Tranquility is still ongoing. Throughout 2007, we continued to follow through on resident complaints and issue written notices to vehicle owners at fault (See 2007 statistics, Appendix 3).
- The second and third facets were put into operation on 1 May 2007, asking patrol officers to be thorough with regard to target violations and to prepare overall violation reports for repeat offenders. A press conference took place on April 17 to publicize the project, as was done in 2006.
- The project will continue from now on.

Development and Achievements

Development

- Development of work tools:
 - Improvement of data processing systems (computerized)

Creation of a new procedure for managing follow-up on resident complaints: in this procedure, a new form was created to facilitate the gathering of information and following up on complaints.
 - Creation and modification of various documents (logo, leaflet, procedure guide and PowerPoint presentation)
- Administrative tasks accomplished
 - Updating municipal court data
 - Supplying data from call cards (resident complaints)
 - Sending written notices following complaints

Achievements

To help us fine-tune our 2007 objectives, a survey was distributed to all Sherbrooke Police Service patrol officers and emergency call distribution personnel in March. It allowed us to get everyone's ideas and opinions and demonstrate their interest in the project.

In the 2006 report, development objectives were established. There was a vision for 2007 and one for the longer term. Furthermore, a regional and provincial extension of the project was considered for the future. All objectives have been reached, and project development also picked up speed. Here we discuss those objectives and related progress:

Vision for 2007

- Including resource people from different environments on the committee, such as elected municipal officials and public safety committee members

Progress:

- On 16 January 2007, we presented the project to the City of Sherbrooke public safety committee. We received the immediate support of all members.

- After obtaining public safety committee support, we were invited to present the project to the city council during a public meeting on 17 April 2007. All officials and the media present supported the project.
- It is important to note that this project is intended to fit with 2007-2010 City of Sherbrooke strategic plan objectives.
- Respecting the application period of 1 May to 30 September 2007

Progress:

- Project Tranquility (facets 2 and 3) were put into operation on 1 May 2007, as anticipated. However, during the survey, 70% of respondents asked that the project be continued throughout the year, so it will be operational at all times, including facet 1, resident complaints.
- Conducting a large promotional campaign with the goal of prevention (billboards, radio, television etc.).

Progress:

- Presence at Sherbrooke's Continental Ice Challenge on 24 and 25 February 2007, with a project promotion booth
- After presenting the project at the public city council meeting, the media gave wide coverage to the project. Here is an overview:
 - 18 April 2007: article by René-Charles Quirion, *La Tribune*
 - 18 April 2007: live radio interview with Diane Martin, Radio-Canada
 - 18 April 2007: radio interview with Marie-Ève Chevrette, CHLT
 - Spring 2007 : TV report, Stéphanie Tremblay, Radio Canada
 - 26 October 2007: article by Cynthia Dubé, *Journal de Sherbrooke*
 - 30 October 2007: radio interview with Jean-Pierre Quirion, CHLT
 - 2 November 2007: TV interview with François Paradis, *TVA en direct*
After this interview, several police services and one municipality showed interest in Project Tranquility (see regional and provincial extensions).
- A new promotional leaflet was designed in 2007: various groups have already distributed nearly 2,000 copies:
 - Neighbourhood watch committee

An explanatory letter was provided to neighbourhood watch committee members to inform and guide them.

- Safety patrol (supervised by Sherbrooke Fire Department)
 - TVA Sherbrooke
 - Training Centre, June 24
 - Sherbrooke Police Service headquarters reception area
- All written notices sent in response to resident complaints were accompanied with a leaflet explaining the project.
- Working with partners such as the City of Sherbrooke, the SAAQ, the Insurance Bureau of Canada (IBC), etc.

Progress:

- Partnership established with the City of Sherbrooke Communications Division for developing the promotional leaflet (See leaflet in Appendix 4); 5,000 copies of that leaflet were produced in the first printing.
 - During the road safety awareness day on 5 October 2007, at the École nationale de police du Québec [Quebec police school], we met with several SAAQ resource people, spoke with them about Project Tranquility and were well received. The possibility of a partnership was even discussed.
 - Discussions with Bertrand Godin, well-known Quebec race car driver and car columnist, with the goal of reaching a spokesperson agreement with him: Mr. Godin said he was very interested, and this will have to solidified in early 2008.
- Seeking financial partners to help us develop the project

Progress:

- After some discussions with Danielle Loiselle of the SAAQ, a written request for financial support was prepared on 12 November 2007. We received a verbal affirmative response, and the SAAQ will be one of our promotional development partners in early 2008. Notepads, leaflets, posters, etc. are some of the promotional items that can be produced.
- Application to the City of Sherbrooke innovation support program on 29 October 2007: this program is a City initiative that supports its employees' innovative ideas for higher-quality service. We have had a positive response, and some money will be granted for developing management software.

Longer-Term Vision

- Making legislative modifications to the *Highway Safety Code* to increase consequences on repeat offenders:
 - The Minister of Transport, Julie Boulet, tabled a new bill on road safety in 2007. Quebec adopted it on 19 December 2007. Two measures included in the bill are:
 - More serious penalties for offenders on the road
 - Prohibition of advertising messages that promote speeding
- Obtaining new work tools such as the Quebec Police Information Centre (CPIC):
 - With the innovation support program subsidy, an external firm will design professional software to manage the repeat offender registry, which will make it easier to update and ensure thorough monitoring.
- Extending the project to the regional and provincial levels:
 - After the interview on the François Paradis *TVA en direct.com* show, one municipality and several police services showed an interest in having their own Project Tranquility. Exporting the project is being considered for 2008.

Regional and Provincial Extension

As mentioned in the executive summary, it is unacceptable to have terrible events such as the one on 31 October 2007 in Île Perrot, in which little Bianca Leduc, age three, lost her life due to a car race in a residential neighbourhood. It is a social issue that everyone is compelled to answer.

That is why Officer Éric Gagnon participated in a live interview on TVA. After the show, the following people contacted our service for more information on the project:

- André D'Aragon, Pincourt municipal councillor: we exchanged e-mails. Mr. D'Aragon said that municipalities neighbouring his, including Île Perrot, are interested in conducting a project similar to Project Tranquility. The Sûreté du Québec in that area was notified. Therefore, it will be important to establish contact with them as soon as possible.
- François Rioux of the Châteauguay Police Service: we discussed the project by phone and e-mail. That police service is very interested in participating. Mr. Rioux discussed it with Officer Kane of the Longueuil police, and they are also interested.
- Sergeant Isabelle Bertrand of the Sherbrooke Sûreté du Québec was in contact with us at the request of one of her colleagues. They are interested in meeting with us to learn more about the project and applying it. I told Sergeant Bertrand about the possibility of a meeting with several other services that could take place this year. She said she was interested and that she would discuss it with her superiors in Montréal.
- Officer Steven Gilbert of the Sûreté du Québec of Rimouski-Gaspésie-Bas-du-fleuve left a message on my voicemail on 10 January 2008. We subsequently talked about the project, and he is interested in it.

- Benoît Desautels of the Granby Police Service: we briefly discussed the project in person, and he is interested in learning more.

A provincial distribution plan is starting to come together.

- It is anticipated that the project will be presented to the SAAQ/COPS road safety improvement task force in 2008. The members of the task force will publicize Project Tranquility and ensure that other organizations in the province learn about it.
- In April 2008, a one-hour workshop on the project will be offered during the *Intersection* seminar in Longueuil. It will be a unique opportunity to publicize Project Tranquility directly with other police services, compile a list of those interested and then provide a training day.

There is no better time than now to extend Project Tranquility province-wide. Taken from the 2006 report, here are other motivations justifying quick action:

- The Sherbrooke Police Service has a vision of being an innovative leader in Quebec. By 2010, the Sherbrooke Police Service will be dispensing the best service possible to the area it serves. Furthermore, due to its accessibility and ways of conducting business, it will become a reference on Quebec public safety issues.
- Vision, 2006-2008 Development Plan
- On December 12, 2005, the Quebec Road Safety Task Force was launched. Among its members are the Association des directeurs de Police du Québec (A.D.P.Q.) [Association of Quebec police chiefs] and the École nationale de police du Québec. The goal of the group is to improve road safety by studying prospective solutions proposed by residents and the various environments involved. It will be great to present Project Tranquility there because the project directly addresses one of their main subjects, driving offences among youth.
- Today, the media often discuss the issue of young drivers, the speeding and careless actions of some causing a good number of accidents causing injury and death. Furthermore, there is public pressure to make legislative modifications addressing this type of driver. The government of Quebec is currently working to reinforce the *Highway Safety Code* to improve road safety, and that could give real impetus to Project Tranquility.

If more organizations join the Quebec Road Safety Task Force, as the S.A.A.Q. and the Union of Quebec Municipalities have done, the input of ideas, skills and financial and logistical means can also be greatly increased, thereby allowing Project Tranquility to evolve on a provincial level.

Conclusion

As we did in 2006, we notice excellent overall involvement from patrol officers and receive many positive comments from them.

The support of the Chief of Police, his staff and City of Sherbrooke management have allowed Project Tranquility to develop as anticipated and then some. The media coverage on the provincial scene when the tragic event occurred in Île Perrot publicized the project almost everywhere in the province. That terrible event was a huge motivation for applying the project to other police services in Quebec in 2008.

We also note a great satisfaction from elderly residents, parents of young families and even young drivers about implementing such a project. That appreciation is also noticeable statistically due to the significantly increased number of complaints.

The results show that prevention among the young will be an important element in decreasing offences behind the wheel and improving road safety. The 17-25 year old age group commits the most violations and has the greatest number of repeat offenders.

The drop in tickets may lead us to believe there is a change of mentality about driving, but it is too early to establish a direct connection between that drop and the implementation of Project Tranquility. Nonetheless, it is certain that any prevention done with those who have received written notices and continued promotion of the project can not help but generate positive effects.

Finally, we can assert that Project Tranquility has already started to produce some success after only 18 months of operation. Its credibility is now well-established, and its use at the provincial level will certainly make a major contribution toward reaching its primary objective, the tranquility and safety of our roads.