



# ARGENTEUIL

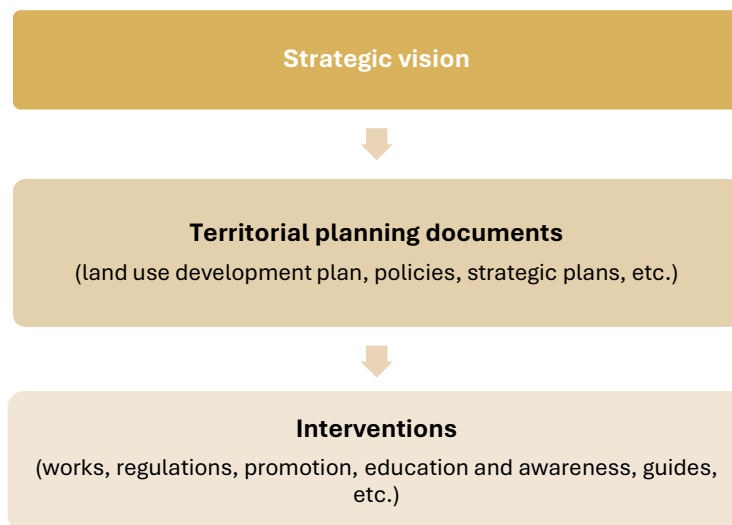
Un territoire à imaginer

**Draft Strategic Vision Statement for the  
MRC d'Argenteuil Territory 2025-2040**

## INTRODUCTION

In June 2022, the Quebec government adopted its first-ever national architecture and land use planning policy (Politique nationale d'architecture et d'aménagement du territoire or PNAAT). Among other things, this policy requires the MRC d'Argenteuil to revise its 2009 land use and development plan (Plan).

The revised Plan must include a strategic vision statement that provides an explicit representation of a desired future, both rational and intuitive, inclusive and forward-looking. This strategic vision defines the objectives for the land use planning and development of Argenteuil, while integrating an approach focused on the spheres of sustainable development, i.e. culture, environment, society and the economy. It guides the interventions and planning documents of which the future revised Plan will be a part.



To aid in formulating the strategic vision statement, an analysis of recent studies and existing reports dealing with topics related to the spheres of sustainable development was carried out by an external consultant. This was followed by a pre-consultation process with local stakeholders—including individual interviews, workshops, and an online survey—involving community partners, MRC council members, and MRC and local municipal employees.

## THE MRC D'ARGENTEUIL IN BRIEF

Established in 1983, the MRC d'Argenteuil is a local government whose mission is to promote the economic, social, and environmental prosperity of its territory. To achieve this, it plans, oversees, and supervises the land use and sustainable development of its territory in close collaboration with its constituent municipalities and in concert with community partners. Its goal is to improve the well-being of the population and of generations to come.

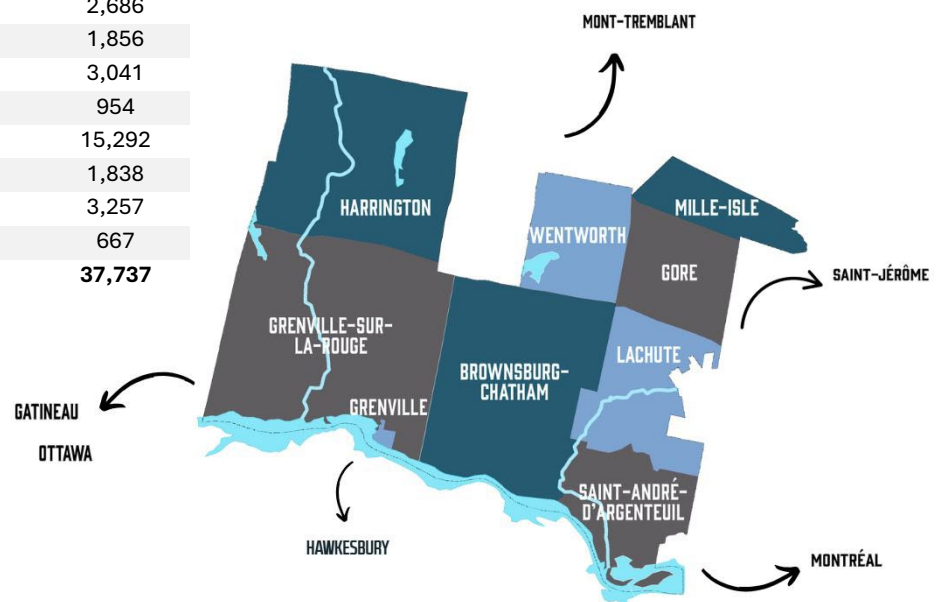
The MRC d'Argenteuil defines itself as an institution working primarily for the benefit of its local municipalities, while also acting as a “service cooperative”. In addition to fulfilling its governmental obligations, the MRC, in partnership with the community, plays a role as initiator and catalyst for projects aimed at the common good.

The values espoused by the MRC d'Argenteuil shape its identity and inform its reflections, decisions and actions. The nine values that guide the MRC's actions are as follows:

**PRIDE – RESPECT – EQUITY – INTEGRITY – ENGAGEMENT – SOLIDARITY**  
**RIGOUR – PROXIMITY – TRANSPARENCY**

The MRC d'Argenteuil has a current population of 37,737 permanent residents, plus nearly 15,000 seasonal vacationers. The population is spread over a territory of 1,339 km<sup>2</sup>. The MRC is made up of nine local municipalities.

Municipality	Population
Brownsburg-Chatham	8,146
Gore	2,686
Grenville	1,856
Grenville-sur-la-Rouge	3,041
Harrington	954
Lachute	15,292
Mille-Isles	1,838
Saint-André-d'Argenteuil	3,257
Wentworth	667
<b>MRC d'Argenteuil</b>	<b>37,737</b>



Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the MRC d'Argenteuil has experienced significant population growth, with an increase of 13.5% between 2020 and 2025. In fact, over the past three years, the MRC has ranked among the top three MRCs with the highest net migration in Québec. All signs point to continued population growth over the next decade. According to demographic forecasts by the Institut de la statistique du Québec, the number of residents in the MRC d'Argenteuil is expected to continue climbing, reaching 42,836 by 2040. Argenteuil's growing appeal is fueled by its favourable geographical location between Montréal and Ottawa/Gatineau, competitive property prices, the rollout of high-speed Internet, the planned completion of the four-lane Highway 50, and its extensive natural spaces. However, this new reality may have an impact on land use planning, the environment, transportation, employability, and citizen services.

## STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS (SWOT)

A SWOT analysis provides an overview of the territory by evaluating certain elements on a smaller scale. It aims to determine strengths and weaknesses and identify opportunities and threats that are present in the territory or that may arise in the future. This type of information can help define the specific characteristics of the MRC d'Argenteuil—what sets it apart from the rest of the Laurentians and even Québec—and how these can be leveraged to capitalize on opportunities, particularly in terms of planning and development.

### What makes the MRC d'Argenteuil unique?

#### STRENGTHS

- Highly attractive area for new residents
- Rich in natural attractions
- Well-developed community spirit
- Proactive approach to climate change adaptation
- Diverse territory including town centres, villages, vacation areas, commercial and industrial zones, etc.
- Strategic location on the Ottawa/Montréal axis
- Structured and moderate growth
- Presence of small businesses spread across several commercial areas
- Significant presence of vacationers
- High-speed Internet access throughout the territory

#### WEAKNESSES

- High levels of social and material deprivation
- Financial and technical impacts of actions to reduce vulnerability to climate change
- High anticipated rate of population aging
- Lack of a college or university campus
- High school dropout rate and low graduation rate
- Large territory, which poses certain challenges in terms of access to essential services
- Inadequate and insufficient housing for vulnerable populations
- Difficulty for newcomers to learn about and access community support services
- Limited public and adapted transportation throughout the territory
- Lack of strong ties (cohesion) between certain stakeholders working in Argenteuil

### What positive and negative changes could occur in the future?

#### OPPORTUNITIES

- Social mobilization to help implement initiatives
- Promotion of academic success
- Improvement of the territory's public health profile
- Enhancement of natural attractions for recreational tourism and vacationing
- Leveraging the influx of new residents to increase the pool of workers and volunteers
- Capitalizing on the popularity of the MRC's territory to plan its expansion
- Preservation of natural and heritage attractions
- Proximity to major regional industrial hubs

#### THREATS

- Pressure from urban development on natural habitats
- Negative impacts of climate change across the entire territory
- Privatization of access to natural attractions
- Uncontrolled population growth
- Competition with neighboring areas for economic development
- Significant transfer of certain government responsibilities to municipalities without additional funding or resources

## ISSUES SPECIFIC TO THE MRC D'ARGENTEUIL

The SWOT analysis identified several **issues** specific to the MRC d'Argenteuil that may affect its development in the spheres of sustainable development:

### 1. **Ability to adapt to climate change**

Adaptation to climate change is a priority issue in Argenteuil, especially in the current context, where future climate trends for the MRC between 2050 and 2080 (pessimistic scenario) predict an average temperature increase of 2.8 °C to 5.5 °C, a 20% increase in annual average precipitation, and a 250% increase in the number of days with winds exceeding 90 km/h. The territory is therefore vulnerable to major disruptions such as flooding, landslides, high winds, droughts, etc. Agriculture, forestry and recreational tourism are economic sectors that will be particularly affected by these changes.

### 2. **Enhancement of natural attractions**

Argenteuil abounds in natural attractions (forests, mountains, rivers, lakes, valleys) that make the region appealing. More than 76 % of the Argenteuil landscape is covered by forests, with 450 lakes larger than one hectare, approximately 3,000 km of identified waterways, and more than 11,800 wetlands of all types, in addition to three major rivers (the Rivière du Nord, the Rouge River and the Ottawa River). However, many of these attractions are difficult to access for the population and excursionists, which limits sports activities and access to nature. The challenge will be to enhance the territory's natural attractions and interconnect them in order to develop a unique recreational tourism offer with the potential to become an important economic asset for the MRC.

### 3. **Loss of sense of identity**

Over time, residents' sense of belonging to Argenteuil has fostered a strong social conscience and community spirit. However, the population boom of recent years has brought about certain changes, particularly in terms of demand for public services (shops, social and health services, education, childcare, etc.). These changes require a strengthening of the sense of identity, which can prove to be a real challenge.

### 4. **Material and social deprivation**

Argenteuil has a high rate of material and social deprivation, as evidenced by a lower median household income than the rest of the Laurentian region (under \$72,500 per year<sup>1</sup>), lower levels of education (25% of the population has no certificate, diploma or degree), limited access to skilled and quality jobs, greater social isolation, difficulty accessing affordable housing, and an increased predisposition to certain chronic diseases or disorders. One in three people live in financial, social, and material poverty, one of the highest rates in the Laurentian region. This social deprivation is accompanied by problems such as crime, violence, and a growing vulnerability among the elderly.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census.

## **5. Youth retention**

In 2020, more than half of young people who responded to a survey said they were considering leaving the Argenteuil region. Several factors contribute to a pessimistic view of Argenteuil, such as the lack of college or university institutions and poor prospects for skilled and quality employment in the region. Efforts must be made to stem this exodus, in particular by working to make the region more attractive in order to encourage young people and young families to return.

## **6. Aging population**

The high rate of population aging is a real challenge for Argenteuil. In 2021, households aged 65 and over accounted for 37% of all households in Argenteuil and, according to demographic projections, this figure is expected to rise to 44% by 2041. This phenomenon could lead to an increase in demand for public transportation and hospital and home care. It will have a greater impact on communities that are struggling to renew their population or are located far from major centers, particularly the townships of Harrington and Wentworth, where the proportion of people aged 65 and over is close to 40% and is expected to rise to over 60% by 2041.

## **7. Cohesion among partners and stakeholders in Argenteuil**

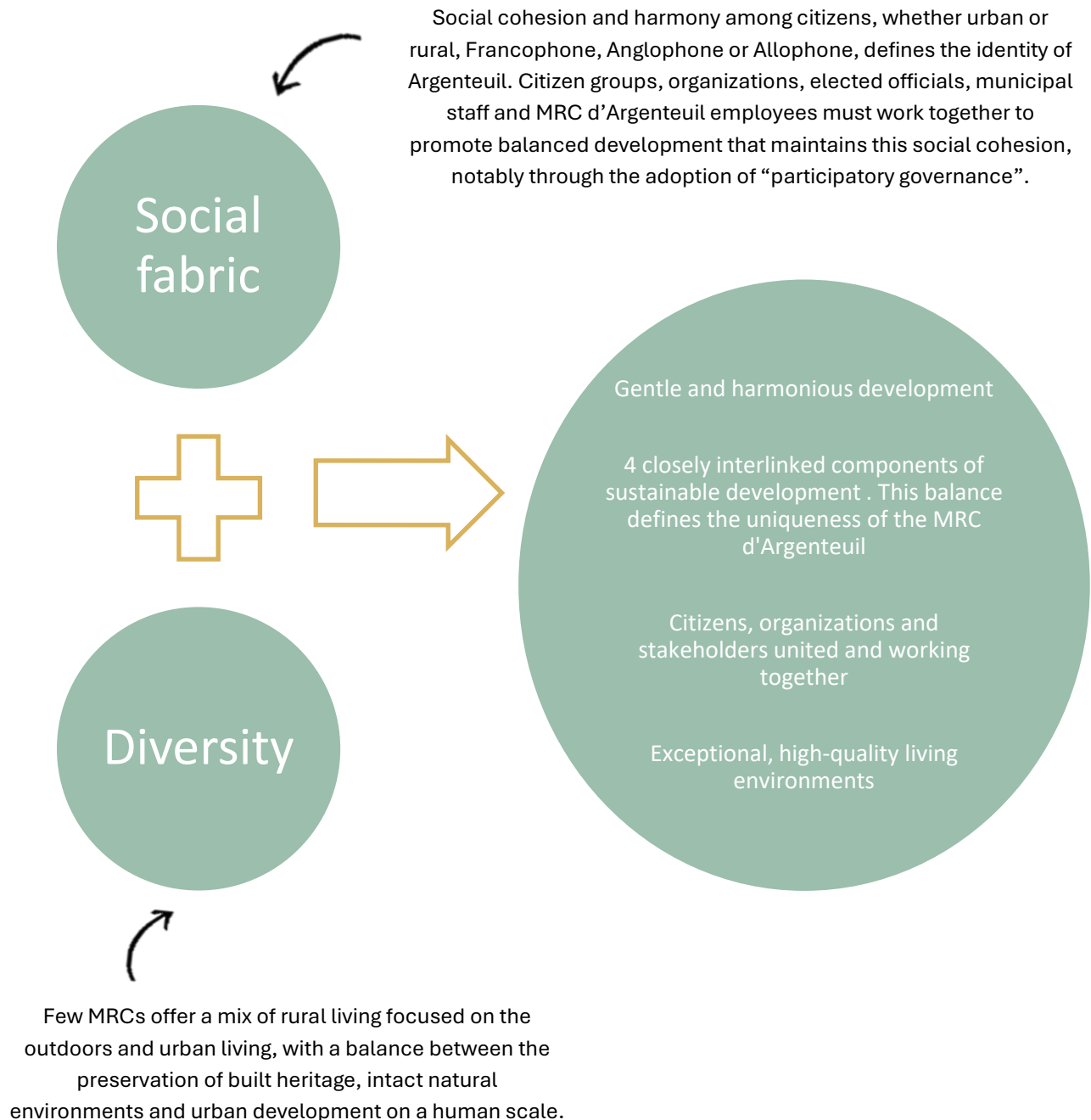
Many stakeholders are involved in the MRC's various initiatives within Argenteuil, particularly in the areas of the environment and sustainable development, the economy, culture, and social development. Cooperation and cohesion among all these regional partners are essential when important decisions must be made for the well-being of the community, which can present challenges.

## **8. Economic diversification**

Argenteuil faces competition for economic development from neighbouring areas (Hawkesbury, Mirabel, Saint-Sauveur, Saint-Jérôme). There appears to be a lack of commercial diversification, particularly in the entertainment, local product sales, and restaurant sectors. For example, there are currently very few local businesses that contribute to the local character and vitality of Argenteuil. Furthermore, a scarcity of available industrial land and buildings may limit the development of this sector of importance for the region, particularly in terms of employment. The development of a recreational tourism offer based on natural attractions and the promotion of the agri-food industry also remain areas for improvement.

## DRAFT STRATEGIC VISION STATEMENT FOR LAND USE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE MRC D'ARGENTEUIL TERRITORY

These issues give a particular slant to the strategic vision that represents a desired future for land use planning and development in the MRC d'Argenteuil over the next 15 years (2025-2040). Two fundamental elements were identified during the analysis processus, highlighting the uniqueness of the MRC d'Argenteuil.





In this context, the MRC d'Argenteuil Council proposes the following draft strategic vision statement, which will be submitted for public consultation:

In 2040, the MRC d'Argenteuil will be recognized as a model of sustainable development where harmony between communities, the environment, and innovation promotes an exceptional quality of life for all.

Driven by thoughtful, balanced and coherent growth, Argenteuil is developing by adapting to climate change while preserving its most precious resources, its unique identity and its rich diversity. Through strong human ties and deep-rooted solidarity, it offers its citizens a welcoming, safe, and inclusive living environment.

Inspired by its true and natural character and nourished by its rich cultural and historical heritage, the MRC d'Argenteuil embodies a sustainable, authentic and unifying vision for present and future generations.