

# Planning for the Future

## Consultation on the Sir George-Étienne Cartier national historic site



### An invitation to take part!

The Sir George-Étienne Cartier National Historic Site is planning its operations for upcoming years. To this end, we will be holding public consultations from June 6 to July 6 2018. I encourage you to take part in this process by sharing your thoughts and suggestions.

The purpose of this consultation is to give the partners, community stakeholders and general public an opportunity to get involved in the decision-making process related to managing this national historic site. The management plan is the official document that will guide management of the historic site for the next ten years (2018–2028). It provides orientation for protecting cultural and natural resources, visitor experiences and public education.

This national historic site belongs to you! Join the Parks Canada team in developing a common vision and in protecting this national historic site, while encouraging visitors to discover this unique place.

Nadine Blackburn  
Superintendent  
La Mauricie and Western Quebec Field Unit

### Parks Canada's Mandate

*On behalf of the people of Canada, we protect and present nationally significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage, and foster public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment in ways that ensure the ecological and commemorative integrity of these places for present and future generations.*

## Importance of the Sir George-Étienne Cartier National Historic Site

The national historic site, designated in 1964 by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, consists of two adjoining houses that were owned by George-Étienne Cartier in the mid-nineteenth century. The Cartier houses were commemorated because:

- *These two houses together served as the residence of a major Canadian political figure, Sir George-Étienne Cartier.*
- *Cartier was the Prime Minister of the Province of Canada from August 1858 to May 1862.*
- *Cartier was one of the principal Fathers of Confederation.*
- *Cartier was one of the most influential members of the first Canadian cabinet.*



The semi-detached houses, acquired by Parks Canada in 1973, were recognized by the Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office (FHBRO) in 2006 for their heritage and architectural value. The site is also part of the Historic District of Old Montréal, a provincial designation that confers additional protection.

The West House is distinguished by its authentic Victorian decor and abundant ethnological collection, which includes more than 1,000 objects linked to Cartier and his entourage. These objects immerse the visitor in the life of Montréal bourgeoisie in the 1860s, and convey the personality, private life, and political career of Sir George-Étienne Cartier. Interpretation exhibitions are held in the East House. Visitors can learn about the historical context of the Confederation and the importance of Cartier's political career.



## Planning context

The national historic site opened its doors to the public in 1983. To date, conservation and development efforts have been carried out based on two previous management plans, the most recent of which has been in effect since 2007. Most of the management measures set out in the 2007 management plan were implemented.

Open to the public from mid-June to the end of December, the site can be visited in self-guided (individual) or guided (group) tours. Visitors can discover the history of the national historic site and the reasons for its designation by exploring the exhibitions inside the houses. In December, a special activity called “A Victorian Christmas” gave the public the opportunity to experience the holiday season as lived by the Montréal bourgeoisie in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

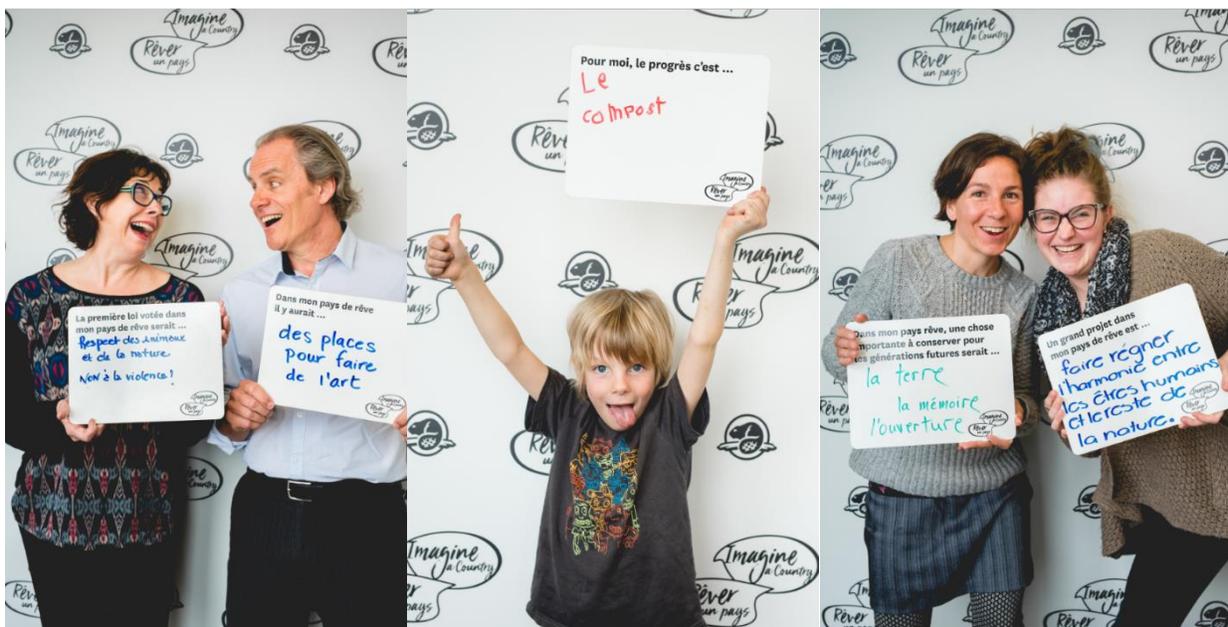
Since 2012, interpretative tools have been made available to adapt the visitor experience and encourage self-guided tours. The visitor circuit was changed, the interpretation panels were updated, and signage was improved. “Imagine a Country,” an interactive exhibition showcasing the creation of modern Canada and the Confederation, helped modernize the visitor experience and strengthen the public’s sense of attachment to the site.

The national historic site works in collaboration with several partners, including the principal associations and history museums of Montréal, the Commission scolaire de Montréal, and the Institute for Canadian Citizenship.

To plan the future of the Sir George-Étienne Cartier National Historic Site of Canada, the Parks Canada Agency considered the site’s condition, the issues and possibilities, and the global trends influencing the site. Relationships with principal stakeholders and their interests were also considered in this management plan.

Two main issues were raised during the management plan’s development:

- **The decrease in visitor numbers.** Between 2011 and 2013, the national historic site’s visitor numbers decreased by 67% (11,742 to 3,788) due to reduced opening hours, and again in 2015 following a decrease in school groups. However, since 2016, visitor numbers seem to be on the rise again, reaching 4,478 following changes to our opening hours and activities.
- **The geographic and thematic positioning of the national historic site.** The site is located at the end of Old Montréal, in a secluded area rarely visited by tourists. What’s more, the abundance of museums in Old Montréal creates strong competition; the area includes major institutions (Pointe-à-Callière, Montréal Archeology and History Complex; the Montreal Science Centre) as well as smaller, but thematically similar, museums (Centre d’histoire de Montréal, Château Ramezay, etc.). It is therefore difficult to draw attention to the site and attract visitors in this context.



## Vision

Located in the heart of Old Montréal, the Sir George-Étienne Cartier National Historic Site transports visitors to the Victorian era and allows them to experience the daily life of a bourgeois family in Montréal.

Visitors learn about the creation of modern Canada and the key political role played by Sir George-Étienne Cartier in the early days of Confederation. The site also gives visitors the opportunity to discover certain chapters of Indigenous history in Canada.

The site testifies to Canada's diverse cultural identity and represents an ideal space to connect with new Canadians, school groups, language learning groups, and tourists from abroad.

The good condition of the buildings and the richness of the collection objects on display enhance the visitor experience and evoke their appreciation.

Thanks to our regularly updated services tailored to visitor expectations, visitors are more loyal and increasing in number.

The site redoubles its opportunities for outreach thanks to its strong relationships with the education and museum communities and local tourism stakeholders. The site is well-loved by Montréalers, who appropriate the space for activities.



### **KEY STRATEGY NO. 1: A SITE THAT INSPIRES A SENSE OF ATTACHMENT AND CREATES A PERSONAL CONNECTION WITH THE PEOPLE AND IDEAS THAT SHAPED MODERN CANADA.**

The purpose of this strategy is to create a personal connection between the site's visitors and the people, ideas, and social issues that helped shape modern Canada, from the Confederation to today. It is based on two pillars:

- Travel back in time: Immerse visitors in the historical context of the Victorian era and the life of Sir George-Étienne Cartier through evocative cultural resources, an authentic visitor experience, and signature activities.
- Encourage reflection, understanding, and attachment: Help visitors understand and reflect on Canada's political history through interactive activities and exhibitions.

**Objective 1.1:** Visitors develop a strong sense of attachment to the national historic site and the political history of modern Canada and the Confederation of today.

- ✓ Target : Launch five new or updated activities by 2028.
- ✓ Target : By 2028, maintain visitors' sense of attachment to the site so it remains at or exceeds 85%.

**Objective 1.2:** The history of Indigenous communities, especially in connection with the Confederation, is presented to the public.

- ✓ Target : By 2020, establish a relationship with the Indigenous communities concerned, with the aim of working together to better communicate the significance of the site.
- ✓ Target : By 2025, present the site's Indigenous history, especially in connection with the Confederation, to the public in collaboration with these communities (if they show interest).

**Objective 1.3:** The cultural resources are well-maintained and help immerse visitors in the Victorian era and the daily life of Sir George-Étienne Cartier.

- ✓ Target : Maintain the "good" condition of the national historic site's cultural resources.

**Objective 1.4:** Many visitors return to the site annually, creating a "visit tradition."

- ✓ Target : Host an annual "signature" activity on site.
- ✓ Target : Increase the number of people returning to the site by 10% compared to reference year 2016.

## **KEY STRATEGY NO. 2: A SITE THAT IS WELL-POSITIONED IN THE HEART OF OLD MONTRÉAL'S TOURISM OFFER, ONLINE, ON SOCIAL MEDIA, AND WITH GROUP CLIENTS**

The purpose of this strategy is to improve the site's positioning to attract a greater number of visitors. It is based on three pillars:

- Enhance the attractiveness and relevance of the national historic site for returning visitors: new Canadians, school groups, and language learning groups.
- Improve the positioning of the site by integrating it with other tourist or museum attractions in the Old Port and increase its presence on social media to attract a greater number of individual visitors.
- Increase the importance of the historic site in the community by encouraging opportunities for Montréal residents to use the site in new and alternative ways.

**Objective 2.1:** The offer and operating schedule meet the needs of new Canadians, school groups, and language learning groups.

- ✓ Target : Every year, the national historic site will approach target partners (new Canadian integration organizations, school groups, and language learning groups) to promote the site and confirm that the content of the tours and the site's operating schedule meet their needs.

**Objective 2.2:** Integrate the national historic site with other tourism offers in Old Montréal, the Old Port, and other Parks Canada heritage sites.

- ✓ Target : One activity will be organized annually in collaboration with other tourist sites.
- ✓ Target : Two promotional activities or networking events will take place annually.

**Objective 2.3:** Increase the site's presence in Montréal by encouraging opportunities to use the site in new and alternative ways that are compatible with its heritage value.

- ✓ Target: Every year, the site will host an alternative activity in collaboration with the community.

**Objective 2.4:** The site uses digital and traditional media to strengthen its links with its target audience and enhance its visibility.

Target: Annually, the site follows trends and is present on the most promising digital and traditional platforms.

**Objective 2.5:** Increase visitor numbers.

- ✓ Target : By 2028, increase the number of people visiting the site by 10% compared to reference year 2016.

## Strategic Environmental Assessment summary

In compliance with the Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals (2010), a strategic environmental assessment (SEA) is carried out for all management plans introduced in Parliament. The SEA aims to incorporate environmental considerations into the development of policies, plans, and program proposals to support environmentally conscious decisions. The specific projects developed to implement the historic site's management plan strategies will be separately evaluated to establish if an impact assessment is necessary under the 2012 Canadian Environmental Assessment Act or any successor legislation.

The strategies set out in the proposed management plan will allow Canadians to gain a broader understanding and appreciation of the historic site, strengthen the site's ties with the community, by creating a personal connection between the site's visitors and the people, ideas, and social issues that helped shape modern Canada (from the Confederation to today). The site will have to be well integrated with other tourist or museum attractions in the Old Montreal, the Old Port, and other heritage places managed by Parks Canada. It will have to increase its presence on social media to attract a greater number of individual visitors. Finally, the national historic site will continue its efforts to maintain its heritage resources in good condition.

Implementing measures for attaining the objectives and targets set out in this proposed management plan should help to improve the site's positioning, thereby drawing in more visitors and making the historic site the principal place in Montréal to learn about the Confederation and the creation of modern Canada.

The strategies, objectives, and targets identified in the management plan are unlikely to have negative environmental effects. Impact assessments will evaluate the potential negative effects of the individually proposed projects on the site.

The Strategic Environmental Assessment concluded that the proposed management plan for the Sir George-Étienne Cartier National Historic Site would have several positive effects on the visitor experience and is not expected to create significant adverse environmental effects.

It is impossible to determine whether the proposed management plan will make a significant contribution to the achievement of the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy's goals, but it is unlikely that it will hinder their progress.

No significant negative environmental impacts are expected following the implementation of the management plan.



## What do you think?

This document summarizes and presents the site, its issues, a management approach, key strategies, objectives and measurable targets. Now, it's your turn to take part in the discussion. Here is your chance to add to the conversation and help us develop the Sir George-Étienne Cartier National Historic Site's management plan. Your knowledge of the area, combined with your experience of the historic site and the future you envision for it are important to us.

## How to participate?

There are two ways to share your opinion:

Send your comments by email to: [sebastien.bachmann@pc.gc.ca](mailto:sebastien.bachmann@pc.gc.ca)

Or

By mail to:

Public Consultation on the Sir George-Étienne Cartier National Historic Site  
Parks Canada Agency at Fort Chambly  
2 De Richelieu Street, Chambly, Quebec, Canada J3L 2B9

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or would like further information on the public consultation.

Visit the Parks Canada website:

<https://www.pc.gc.ca/fr/lhn-nhs/qc/etiennecartier/index>

You have until July 6 to share your opinions, comments or ideas with us, or to submit a memory.

## Thank you for your participation!

