

# Policy



Familles et Aînés  
Families and Seniors

**Sutton 2012**





A complete version of the report is available online at [www.sutton.ca](http://www.sutton.ca).

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## CREDITS

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# IMPORTANCE OF A FAMILY AND SENIORS POLICY

The citizens of Sutton believe that it is important to have a concrete and positive impact on their community. Inspired by this conviction, the Town of Sutton launched the process of developing a family policy for the Town.

Citizen participation and consultation are the main forces driving the adoption of any family policy, under Québec's *Ministère de la Famille et des aînés* (MFA).

Since May 2011, together with you, our fellow citizens, the Committee for the Family and Seniors policy has identified the needs and priorities of local families and seniors through a series of public consultations and other events.

Here, then, is the action plan for Sutton's Family and Seniors Policy. It describes the core priorities that came out of discussions with different members of this wonderful community. This document belongs to all of us. It is up to us, now, to ensure that these needs become concrete actions.

Your role, as citizens, parents, grandparents, young and old, and your involvement in our community are at the heart of the process. We thank you for your participation: your collaboration is vital.

Be prepared: we'll certainly be calling upon you again!

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# DEFINITION OF "FAMILY"

Our definition of the family is shaped by Sutton's strong inclusive community spirit. The varying definitions presented by its residents can be summed up as follows: "different generations (children, relatives, friends) who live together, sharing values and traditions and providing safe and caring guidance and exchange. It is the solid core of our town and our community."

## SUTTON'S COMMUNITY: STATISTICS

### Evolution of the population

1991	1996	2001	2006	2011
3,084	3,318	3,524	3,805	3,906

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 1991 - 2011.

### The average age in Sutton in 2011: above average!

Sutton	MRC Brome-Missisquoi	Province of Quebec
54.8	46.5	41.4

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2011.

### Registration at Sutton's elementary school

2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
263	248	240	222	215	213

Source: Principal's office, Sutton School.

# COMMUNICATION

## General observation:

Sutton is a bilingual community, whose sources of information are rich and varied.

Residents of Sutton would like the information to be more centralized and accessible.

## Proposed actions

### Goal:

- Work efficiently to reach seniors and families, allowing citizens to find the information they need more easily.

### Actions:

- Develop and put into place a communications strategy;
- Install community billboards;
- Create a “Friend of Sutton’s Family and Seniors Policy” *label* for businesses, restaurants and other local attractions;
- Support and promote high-speed Internet access across the territory of Sutton.

### Goal:

- Provide residents with information about the different services available to them.
- Improve the welcome extended to new families and seniors.

### Action:

- Enhance the package given to new arrivals in town, making it available to all.



# ENVIRONMENT

## General observation:

Sutton's natural landscape and setting are an important factor for the families and seniors who choose to live here. Residents of Sutton wish to continue to preserve this environment while benefiting from it.

## Proposed actions

**Walking and cycling are excellent ways to appreciate our natural surroundings.**

### Goal:

- Support the population's interest in active forms of transportation (walking and cycling).

### Actions:

- Enhance the existing network of foot and bike paths;
- Develop an urban plan that would make the mountain sector more easily accessible from the Town;
- Install structures and rest stops near our walking and bike paths, in parks and other town infrastructures.

**Sutton is a village surrounded by nature. Its residents wish to emphasize and develop this aspect.**

### Goal:

- Regulate and promote green spaces and adopt practices that limit our ecological footprint.
- Support measures to regulate sound and visual pollution.

### Actions:

- Elaborate a development plan for park space;
- Setup and promote a composting program;
- Participate in Earth Day activities;
- Create more green space in the Town centre and along the edges of the bike path;
- Consider ways to reduce noise in the Town centre.

**Sutton has a strong interest in "recreo-tourism", and its agricultural sector in particular would benefit from a movement to promote local products, and the development of an economy of proximity.**

### Goal:

- Highlight families and seniors who are local producers.
- Foster personal connections between citizens and local farmers and artisans who work with local agricultural products.

### Action:

- Maintain and improve the Sutton Saturday Market. Support the implementation of a public market for local agricultural products (avoiding direct competition with other local or regional markets).

# HOUSING

## General observation:

Sutton attracts a number of new families and seniors. Its task is to keep them, by making access to home ownership and rental property affordable.

This is essential, at a time when the phenomenon of gentrification has resulted in skyrocketing property values and a decrease in long-term rental options. One factor is the increase in short-term rentals and the conversion of multi-family dwellings into single-family homes and commercial property. For 35% of Sutton's population, housing represents 30% of the household budget, and for those who live in the Town centre, it is as much as 40% of the budget. Since 2011, a range of projects for seniors exists (non-profit and rent-controlled housing, e.g. Villas des Monts), but nothing for families. There is a lack of affordable social housing for this sector of the population.

## Proposed actions

### Goal:

- Improve the availability of affordable social housing.
- Encourage the construction of multigenerational housing.
- Diversify the architectural make-up of the region to increase the blending and density of the population.
- Promote access to property for families and seniors.

### Actions:

- Lend support to organizations whose mission is the promotion of accessible, affordable housing;
- Dedicate a portion of the "transfer duties" to the creation of affordable social housing;
- Lend support to the construction of affordable housing;
- Foster "inclusive zoning," i.e. for the construction of "in-law suites", multiplexes, etc.;
- Examine the possibility of changes to property taxes, to aid longtime homeowners and attract young families.



# SAFETY

## General observation:

The different groups that make up the population of Sutton agree: the issue of safety is vital.

## Proposed actions

### The safety of pedestrians and cyclists

The density of Sutton's town centre (residences and businesses) makes the safety of pedestrians and cyclists an important issue.

There are difficulties that persist when it comes to "sharing the road" between drivers, motorcycle riders, sport and utility cyclists, and pedestrians.

Various aspects of the Town's infrastructure for pedestrians (crosswalks, sidewalks, paths) need to be repaired or redone to ensure public safety.

#### Goal:

- Foster safe, active means of transportation throughout Sutton's territory.

#### Actions:

- Study the possibility of improving the existing bike path, improving its connectivity while optimizing security;
- Examine snow removal schedules and routes, keeping in mind questions about the safety of families and seniors;
- Identify and modify pedestrian corridors that currently need improvement;
- Install safe crosswalks, especially in school zones;
- Schedule and plan for the improvement of the Town's sidewalks.

# SAFETY (...)

## Proposed actions

### Traffic

Residents of Sutton are concerned with speeding, unsafe traffic that creates friction between drivers, pedestrians and cyclists.

A number of streets in Sutton are used to avoid the main artery.

There is a lack of police presence in Sutton.

We cannot forget that three main streets in Sutton (highways 139, 215 and Maple Street) fall under provincial jurisdiction.

### Goal:

- Develop a plan that includes “traffic calming” measures throughout the region of Sutton.

### Actions:

- Create a consultation committee including the Quebec *Ministère des Transports* and various representatives from the Town;
- Ensure better patrolling of the school zone;
- Increase the presence of Quebec provincial police (SQ) in Sutton.

### Public safety and prevention

The quality of life in Sutton is excellent. Its residents feel safe.

### Goal:

- Implement a variety of activities for the promotion of public safety.

### Actions:

- Participate in Fire Prevention Week (October);
- Continue proactive police patrol on Halloween;
- Include activities for safety and prevention at Town events.



# HEALTH, SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

## General observation (seniors):

The population is aging. Seniors make up more and more of the population pyramid, and this trend will continue. In 2011, in Sutton, 26% of the population was 65 and older. For the whole province of Quebec, this percentage was 15.9%.

According to the data from 2011, 28% of those in Sutton aged 65 and up were living alone.

## General observation (families):

According to the data from 2011, there were 1,050 families in Sutton (couples with or without children at home). The total number of single-parent families was 135, and 67% of these families were led by single mothers.

## Proposed actions

### Families

Many local resources for new parents, teenagers and families as well as persons with reduced mobility are centralized in Cowansville.

#### Goal:

- Promote the development of a network of partners whose mission is to provide aid to families in difficulty.
- Foster the dissemination and communication of information about health, social and community services for families.

#### Actions:

- Play an active role in the communication of information about health, social and community services for families (youth clinics, breastfeeding areas, etc.);
- Ask the CSSS to make services available to local families.

### Families and seniors

The Town of Sutton covers a vast territory of over 240 km<sup>2</sup>. Families and seniors who live in outlying areas run the risk of being even more isolated. The lack of public transportation accentuates this problem. It has been well-established that access to transportation is a determining social factor in health.

#### Goal:

- Promote and encourage the development of public transportation, making access to health, social and community services easier.

#### Action:

- Participate in the development of alternative modes of transportation, such as collective and adapted transport in Brome-Missisquoi.

# HEALTH, SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICES (...)

## Proposed actions

### Seniors

Seniors are more vulnerable to health problems (factors include aging, grief, loneliness and isolation, and loss of autonomy). Some seniors may lack information about public and community services, and have difficulty accessing measures that could help their state of health (e.g. physical exercise, socialization, use of community services such as pools, libraries, etc.).

#### Goal:

- Foster the dissemination of information about health, social and community services available to seniors.
- Encourage seniors to stay in their own homes as long as possible.
- Foster the development of a network of partner organizations that can help and accompany seniors in difficulty.
- Promote policies and practices that emphasize prevention of illness.

#### Actions:

- Ensure the dissemination of information regarding public and community services available to seniors;
- Promote community services that facilitate seniors' home care in the Sutton region (*La Coopérative de soutien à domicile du pays des Vergers*, Programme PAIR, First Responders, *Jardin d'échange universel*, CAB, FADOQ, etc.);
- Promote the Neighborhood Watch program;
- Collaborate with different partners in developing a global evaluation and intervention protocol for seniors in difficulty or victims of abuse;
- Ask the CSSS to make services available to local seniors;
- Underline the experiences and competencies of our seniors;
- Provide seniors with socio-cultural activities, and encourage physical activity (with the creation of a multi-generational community centre (*Maison des grands-parents*) or by lending support to an organization interested in this field.



# LEISURE AND COMMUNITY LIFE

## General observation:

The citizens of Sutton and many members of the community have expressed the need for a space where different generations can come together for a host of activities.

Certain municipal infrastructures are outdated and not up to code. New buildings would be necessary to respond to the population's new and different needs.

The Town's teenagers in particular could be better served by the Town's leisure program.

## Proposed actions

### Goal:

- Diversify the activities offered by the Town in order to reach specific clientele.

### Actions:

- Elaborate an orientation plan for the development of municipal park space, including infrastructure for sports and recreation;
- Improve the resources devoted to programming and event organization;
- Build an activity program for teens;
- Promote the development of cultural projects by and for seniors;
- Include in the Town's recreational programming a choice of activities that will help seniors remain active and autonomous;
- Maintain a list of public indoor pools and enter into an agreement for their use;
- Maintain and promote free access to libraries and recreational infrastructure;
- Create a fund to support leisure and community living organizations.

### Goal:

- Review the organization and use of municipal spaces.
- Provide spaces where people can come together.

### Actions:

- Provide the day camp with a permanent space (eight weeks of the year);
- Provide local community groups with a better choice of location;
- Manage a community centre;
- Provide support for the creation of a *Maison de la famille et des grands-parents* (a space where families and grandparents can come together).