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Resident Alexandre Matte-Deschênes voiced his concern for the worsening waste management in public places within the Parc-Extension borough. (Photo: Dylan Adams Lemaçon, Parc-Extension News)

Borough council



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Neighbourhood portrait

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Carney seeks alliances in Europe



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Profil: Jessica Blanchet

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Parc-Extension borough meeting addresses post-storm recovery, housing initiatives, and community celebrations

DYLAN ADAMS LEMAÇON

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The Parc-Extension borough council came together on the evening of March 11, 2025, at the Mairie d'arrondissement de Villeray–Saint-Michel–Parc-Extension for its monthly meeting. Chaired by Borough Mayor Laurence Lavigne Lalonde and attended by councillors Mary Deros, Josué Corvil, Martine Musau Muele, and Sylvain Ouellet, the session tackled critical issues ranging from post-storm recovery to accelerated real estate projects and vibrant community celebrations.

Reflecting on winter challenges and infrastructure upgrades

Mayor Lavigne Lalonde opened the meeting by recounting the recent 76-centimeter snowstorm that had significantly impacted the borough. "I want to thank the employees of our districts... incredible work," she remarked, commending the tireless efforts of municipal staff under extreme conditions. The mayor then shifted focus to a pivotal agenda item: leveraging law 31 to accelerate real estate projects. She announced that the council would soon adopt a motion to create new social and affordable housing in Saint-Michel, complemented by adjacent commercial real estate. "I'm very proud to say that a project like this will be developed in our municipality," she declared.

In addition, Mayor Lavigne Lalonde mentioned the upcoming reinstatement of parking regulations from last year's spring period to improve street cleaning since the snow has started to melt. She also introduced a motion to explore innovative methods for building and reinforcing basements in response to increasing flooding from heavy rains in recent years.

Celebrating diversity and cultural milestones

Councillor Mary Deros brought a festive spirit to the meeting by highlighting recent international celebrations. Reflecting on community involvement, she stated, "I took part in several community activities celebrating women, it was wonderful!" Deros expressed her satisfaction with the progress made in women's rights, adding, "Women's rights have come a long way, so I'm happy about that."



Councillor Mary Deros talks in excitement to the room as she points out that Greek Independence day is this month. (Photo: Dylan Adams Lemaçon, Parc-Extension News)

Emphasizing the rich cultural fabric of Parc-Extension, she also noted, "It's Greece's Independence Day on March 25," and encouraged residents to "Wear blue to participate in this celebration!" The counselor pointed out that the yearly Greek Independence day parade will take place later this month on Jean Talon street. This will be the borough's first outdoor event of the year. It is clear that this is an event that Mrs. Deros holds dear to her heart, her too being of Greek descent like so many of her fellow Parc-Extension residents.

Deros also reminded everyone that March 29 would mark the last day of Ramadan, followed by the celebration of International Zero Waste Day on March 30, underscoring the community's commitment to both cultural diversity and environmental sustainability.

Public concerns: traffic, trash, and snow removal

During the public question period, residents raised several concerns. Longtime attendee Mr. Fitzsimmons wondered whether the stop sign on his street could be enhanced with lights—a suggestion the mayor confirmed was already under review for several streets. Madame France Archambault expressed frustration over delays in snow removal on Rue Boyer, noting that her street had been neglected for weeks; councillors explained that smaller streets are lower priority compared to main thoroughfares.

Another resident, Alexandre Matte-Deschênes, voiced his concern about worsening trash management in Parc-Extension. "Do you guys have any idea why this is worsening and what can be done at a municipal or citizen level?" he asked. The mayor reassured the public that significant efforts have been undertaken over the past years, including adjustments in garbage pickup schedules and enhancements in composting programs. Councillor Mary Deros agreed, stating, "It's been problematic for a very long time," and added that the neighbourhood's continuous transition, marked by an influx of new residents, requires renewed community commitment. "Citizens must be conscious of this. It's the responsibility of us all, not only the city or the owners of a building," she emphasized.

Additional issues and council decisions

Additional questions focused on snow removal



Resident Mr. Fitzsimmons, a regular at the borough meetings, makes light of what is a rather good idea to improve the visibility of stop signs in his area. (Photo: Dylan Adams Lemaçon, Parc-Extension News)

in narrow alleys. Madame Olivia Barois noted that her alleyway between St. Hubert street and St. Andre street had not been serviced for nearly three weeks following the storm, sparking concerns among local residents. The mayor clarified that municipal snow removal does not cover alleys unless special conditions are met.

Looking ahead

As the meeting progressed, councillors reviewed and approved the remaining agenda items, including a proposal to prevent past issues with prolonged street cleaning interrup-

tions caused by equipment failures. It was also announced that Councillor Sylvain Ouellet will serve as the replacement mayor from March 12 to July 8, 2025.

Concluding the session, Mayor Lavigne Lalonde and her colleagues reaffirmed their commitment to addressing both immediate challenges and long-term improvements. The council's proactive measures—ranging from housing and infrastructure projects to celebrating cultural milestones—reflect a dedicated effort to enhance the quality of life in Parc-Extension while engaging residents in the process.



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OPINION & Editorial



THAT'S WHAT I'M THINKING

Robert Vairo

I Now Like Doug Ford, Danielle Smith, and Brad Marchand.

You would expect the leader of the largest province with 40% of the population to speak up for his province and Canada. You would also expect the Premier of the western province that feeds Canada socially and economically with some of the largest oil and gas reserves in the world, to fiercely defend Alberta and her country. Luckily, they do. They are both our leaders at the forefront of the fight for Canada. Both regularly hold news conferences at home and appear on countless U.S. talk shows to enlighten our neighbours with the truth about our Canadian contribution. They are often invited to meet with Trump's entourage. They have Trump's ear. One reader writes to me, "Those two should be given medals. They both don't quit"

How often has Ford appeared on North American screens? Even the left-wing Liberal supporter Toronto Star writes, "Luckily, there are no tariffs on Doug Ford's media appearances"

The Ontario premier said, "I will cut off their electricity if I have to, with a smile on my face." In reality, it's something many of us are thinking. (Are you paying attention Francois Legault?) Doug Ford tore up the 100-million-dollar Star Link contract, not that it will make much difference to the multi-billionaire Elon Musk. That's pocket change to him. But the point is, Ford doesn't want any dirty money belonging to someone who supports a president who wants to destroy our Canada. The caveat is that Ontarians, especially in the north, will have to find alternate internet providers. It's time for Bell, Telus and Rogers to step up.

Some will argue that our last PM Justin Trudeau and his wild-eyed fanatic environment minister Guilbeault have already sufficiently damaged and crippled Canada. They will say that this is the reason Canada is being pummeled. That it's because they weakened Canada so much that shark Trump is emboldened by the bloody economic carnage left

behind. This is not even to mention the unprotected border and our defenceless precious Arctic.

Stories abound of Madame Smith stoically standing for Canada, in Alberta and on the US airwaves. They are too numerous to mention. But let me at least list some of the current headlines on Madame Smith. "Danielle Smith stands as squarely for Canada as Doug Ford." Here's another "Alberta Premier Smith makes the rounds on US TV." Smith plays the good cop role, and much prefers diplomacy over a tariff war.

Smith also convinced their president to reduce tariffs on oil and gas from 25% to 10%. Unlike Ford's Ontario with electricity, she claims thousands of jobs will be lost in Alberta. I'm not sure what Francois Legault's reason is for not joining Canada in imposing tariffs to US buyers of electricity.

Like you, I never liked former Boston Bruins' Brad Marchand. He face-washed opponents, disgustingly licked players' cheeks, delivered bone-crushing checks, consistently chirped and trash talked players, and is a leader in NHL penalties. Then came the 4 Nations Face-Off tournament. Marchand was suddenly on our side. As much as Marchand is despised and even hated, he's one player every hockey fan wishes they had on their team. The Florida Panthers obviously think so after Boston unceremoniously dumped him.

He was mic'd in the Team Canada locker room and was as giddy as a 6-year-old; unable to control his excitement and enthusiasm sitting next to Syd and Connor McDavid. Any one of us would feel the same of course, but to hear the veteran Marchand euphorically say, "I might be the biggest fan here" was something. After he scored in that first game against Sweden, well, we just stood in the living room and applauded number 63 and have liked him since. Wishing Brad a quick recovery and success with his new team.

NOTES:

Shout out to Nova Scotia Premier Tim Houston. Responding to the Bloc Blanchet's refusal to allow a pipeline through Quebec to the east coast refinery, "Your eagerness to disparage opportunities for ALL Canadians is appalling. It is only small-minded thinking that causes Canada to be so dependent on foreign nations." Amen Premier Houston.

Overheard at the gym

"But Carney is so much more intelligent."
"Really? So is Elon Musk, a genius in fact. How do you like him these days?"

"But the banker understands numbers."
"PP understands how government works. He managed the economic and financial programs and policies under the previous Conservative government"

"Listen, Liberals have dominated Canadian politics 60% of the time. Things work out when they're in power"

"But it's no longer the same party. Carney's Liberal party has an agenda of defunding our country. At a time when we need to find other international markets for our resources, the banker is a climate zealot and wants to kill our natural resources, increase our reliance on the US, and lower our cost of living even more."

"I'm still voting for the banker. He's boring, more likeable and I trust him more than PP, besides, I've always voted Liberal"

"He's saying what we all want to hear, less spending, reduced civil servants. JT said the same thing in 2015. The consumer carbon tax is only being removed during this election campaign. Carney will add a carbon tax on industry which we will all pay in continued increased cost of groceries. No new infrastructures to protect Canada's sovereignty because your boy Carney will not allow banks to finance them, more woke culture, and 'gender neutral' men in your daughter's locker room."

"You stress me out. Have a good week"

"Still friends?"

"Still friends"

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Parc Extension Round Table releases 'Neighbourhood Profile'

Area has the highest life expectancy in Montreal, according to findings

MARTIN C. BARRY
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The Parc Extension Neighbourhood Profile – the first and most comprehensive report of its kind to be published on the area, according to its authors – presents an overview of some of the most pressing issues in Parc-Extension up to this past February.

Released last week by the Parc Extension Neighbourhood Round Table, the authors used data from Statistics Canada censuses between 1991 and 2021. As well, they used publicly available information, including reports and briefs from community organizations, to create a profile of the Parc Extension community.

Exhaustive research

The Neighbourhood Profile provides analytical insights on numerous topics, including demographics, economy and employment, housing, mobility, food security, and more.

The profile incorporates findings from a summer 2024 survey of local food security organizations, as well as data from a focus group conducted in November 2024 with undocumented residents living in Parc-Extension.

It considers the sociological neighbourhood of Parc-Extension, rather than the electoral district as defined by the Borough of

Villeray–Saint-Michel–Parc-Extension.

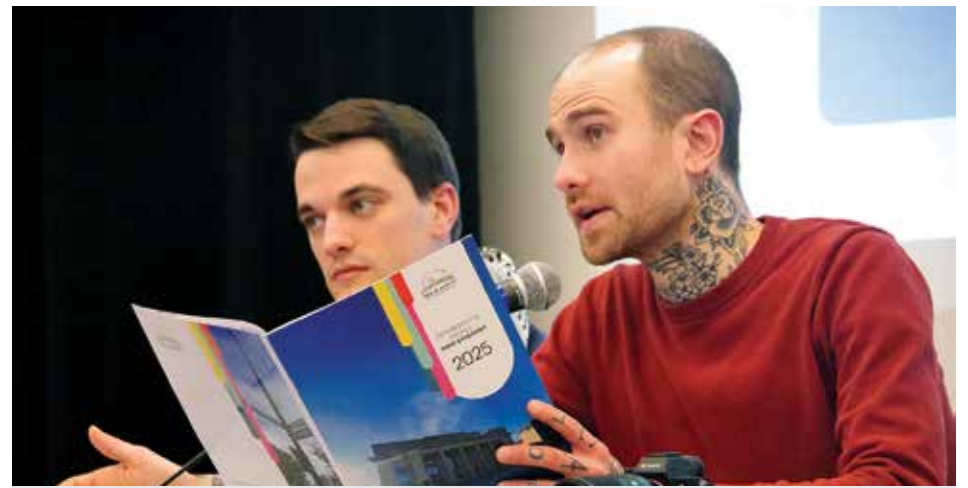
Among the many topics covered in the profile is road safety in Parc Extension. In 2021, PDQ 33 recorded 46 road collisions resulting in fatalities or injuries, three times fewer than the median of 126 for Montreal's thirty police precincts.

Good local road safety

The number of collisions decreased by 25 per cent between 2019 and 2021, compared to a 10 per cent average drop across Montreal (though this decline occurred in the context of reduced travel during the COVID-19 pandemic). Collisions involving pedestrians (28th out of 30 precincts) and cyclists (29th out of 30) remain infrequent.

On overall urban safety, an analysis of crime data reported by the local police station (PDQ 33) highlights a notable increase in certain categories of offenses between 2017 and 2021. Sexual assaults have risen significantly, though the highest peak occurred in 2019, with 33 cases reported.

Assaults and motor vehicle thefts have also shown marked increases, mirroring trends observed across Montreal. Additionally, 60 per cent of the crimes and offenses recorded in Parc Extension were committed by local residents,



From the left, Lucas Raimbault of the Table de Quartier de Parc Extension, and Emanuel Guay of the Regroupement des organismes du Montréal ethnique pour le logement, provided details from the Parc Extension Neighbourhood Profile during the report's official release on March 10. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Nouvelles Parc Extension News)

significantly higher than the Montreal median of 42 per cent.

An average crime rate

However, when these figures are compared to other Montreal police stations, Parc Extension ranks 15th out of 30 for its crime rate, placing it near the median in 2021. Statistics on the age of violence victims do not reveal any clear patterns. Nonetheless, seniors aged 65 and older are slightly more affected (7 per cent of all victims) than the Montreal average (5 per cent).

A possibly surprising finding was that data from the CIUSSS for the period 2016-2020 show that Parc-Extension has the highest life expectancy at birth on the entire island of Montreal. It stands at 90 years during this period (7.2 years longer than the Montreal average), and even reaches 93.8 years for women.

"These positive figures may seem surprising for a working-class neighbourhood like Parc-

Extension," the authors noted, although they explained that certain analytical keys can be used to understand this high life expectancy.

Parc Ex's 'healthy immigrants'

They say the residents of Parc-Extension are likely to experience the "Healthy Immigrant Effect," a well-documented phenomenon showing that recent immigrants tend to have better health than non-immigrants when they first arrive in Canada.

"This effect is linked to pre-existing lifestyle habits (especially dietary habits) and good physical health at the time of immigration," the authors claim. "It is also worth noting that immigrant populations in Parc Extension may have good dietary habits and consume less alcohol and tobacco."

The Parc Extension Neighbourhood Profile is available as a .pdf file digital download on the Table de Quartier de Parc Extension's web site: <https://www.parcex.org>.

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SPVM launches recruitment drive for diversity-focused police training program

DIMITRIS ILIAS

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The Service de police de la Ville de Montréal (SPVM) is actively seeking candidates for its AEC Diversité policière et profil social program, an initiative aimed at increasing diversity within law enforcement. The program is designed to attract individuals from diverse backgrounds and those with expertise in social sciences, offering them a unique pathway into policing.

This recruitment effort comes at a critical time for communities like Parc-Extension, where issues of representation, cultural sensitivity, and community policing have long been at the forefront of civic discussions. As one of Montreal's most diverse neighbourhoods, Parc-Extension is home to a significant immigrant population, many of whom have expressed concerns over trust in law enforcement and equitable policing.

A pathway to a more representative police force

The AEC Diversité policière et profil social program specifically targets two groups:

- Individuals from diverse backgrounds who hold a Diplôme d'études collégiales (DEC) or a bachelor's degree.
- Graduates in social sciences-related fields.

Selected candidates will undergo an intensive 30-week training program in police techniques, followed by a 15-week patrol officer training session at the École nationale de police du Québec (ENPQ). The SPVM highlights that officers who graduate from this program will have access to more than 150 career opportu-

ities within the police force.

This initiative aims to bridge the gap between law enforcement and Montreal's multicultural communities by integrating individuals who possess a deep understanding of cultural nuances, social issues, and the unique challenges faced by minority communities.

The impact on Parc-Extension

For neighbourhoods like Parc-Extension, where many residents speak languages other than French and English, and where cultural perceptions of policing vary widely, a program like this could be a game-changer. The presence of officers who understand the lived experiences of racialized and immigrant communities fosters trust and encourages more positive interactions between law enforcement and the public.

Local activists and community leaders have long advocated for a police force that better reflects the city's demographics. With Montreal's population becoming increasingly diverse, ensuring that law enforcement mirrors this diversity is key to fostering a sense of safety and inclusion. The SPVM's initiative is a step toward addressing longstanding concerns about racial profiling, discrimination, and systemic barriers in policing.

Addressing the challenges of diversity in policing

While recruitment programs like these are essential, experts stress that structural reforms must accompany diversity efforts to ensure lasting change. Having more diverse officers is not enough if institutional policies and training



do not evolve to address racial biases, cultural competence, and community-based policing strategies.

Additionally, ensuring that minority recruits feel fully integrated and supported within the SPVM is crucial. In the past, racialized officers in Montreal have spoken about facing discrimination within their own ranks. Effective mentorship, inclusive workplace policies, and ongoing diversity training will be necessary to sustain the progress made through this recruitment program.

Encouraging a new generation of officers

For young people in Parc-Extension who may have never considered a career in law enforcement, this program offers a new perspective. By valuing lived experience, cultural awareness, and social science expertise, the SPVM

is making an effort to modernize policing and foster a service that is more responsive to the needs of its citizens.

With over 150 specialized functions available to those who complete the training, the program presents a wide array of career paths beyond traditional patrol duties, including community relations, crisis intervention, cybercrime, and investigative work.

As applications open, the success of the AEC Diversité policière et profil social program will depend on the willingness of Montreal's diverse communities to engage with law enforcement in new ways. Programs like these, if implemented effectively, could pave the way for a police force that is truly representative of the city it serves.

For those interested in joining, now is the time to take the leap and become part of the future of policing in Montreal.

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Prime Minister Mark Carney vows to win trade war with Trump

(NEWSFIRST) - Mark Carney who won on March 9, the race to succeed Justin Trudeau as Canada's prime minister, vows to win the trade war with the US and President Donald Trump.

The former governor of the Canadian central bank and Bank of England beat three rivals in the Liberal Party's leadership contest in a landslide. Carney won on the first ballot on Sunday evening, taking 85.9% of the vote to beat his nearest rival, former Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland.

In much of his victory speech, Carney, 59, attacked Trump, who has imposed tariffs on Canada and said he wants to make the country the 51st US state.

His speech

Much of Carney's speech focused on what he called Trump's "unjustified tariffs" on Canada, America's largest trading partner.

Carney echoed that in his victory speech, saying Trump was "attacking Canadian workers, families, and businesses". "We can't let him succeed," he added, as the crowd booed loudly. He said his government would keep tariffs on US imports "until the Americans show us respect".

Canada's economy depends significantly on trade with the US and risks tipping into recession if the sweeping tariffs threatened by Trump are fully imposed. "I know these are dark days," Carney said. "Dark days brought on by a country we can no longer trust."

"We're getting over the shock, but let us never forget the lessons: we have to look after ourselves and we have to look out for each

other. We need to pull together in the tough days ahead." Carney also pledged to "secure our borders" - a key demand of Trump who has accused Canada of failing to control the flow of migrants and fentanyl going south.

The US president even got a mention in Carney's attacks on his main opponent, Conservative leader Poilievre.

"Pierre Poilievre's plan will leave us divided and ready to be conquered," said Carney.

"Because a person who worships at the altar of Donald Trump will kneel before him, not stand up to him."

"Americans should make no mistake," he said. "In trade, as in hockey, Canada will win."

Carney was sworn in last Friday March 14 along with his 23 ministers cabinet. He will lead the Liberals in the next general election, which could be called in the coming weeks.

It should be noted, Carney, now prime minister-designate, has never served in elected office.

He will lead a minority government in parliament, could either call a snap general election himself or opposition parties could force one with a no-confidence vote later this month.

The governing Liberals have seen a remarkable political turnaround since Trudeau's exit, as Canadians have been galvanised by Donald Trump's trade threats and support for annexing their country

At the beginning of the year, they trailed the Conservatives, led by Pierre Poilievre, by more than 20 points in election polls.

They have since narrowed the gap and some polls show them statistically tied with Poilievre's party.



Conservatives attack

The Conservatives have had to pivot politically since Trudeau's resignation, and are attacking Carney as not representing change but rather being "just like Justin".

They accuse the Liberals of a "sneaky" plan to win a fourth term by simply substituting their leader.

Poilievre's party has also accused Carney of lying about his role in moving investment firm Brookfield Asset Management's head office from Toronto to New York.

What are Carney's key policies?

The former central banker has run on a broadly centrist agenda, a shift from Trudeau, who moved the Liberals to the left.

A major promise is to push forward major

energy projects like pipelines, which have faced political roadblocks in recent years.

He has promised major investments in housing and clean energy projects, and to liberalise trade within Canada, where barriers remain between provinces, as well as diversifying the economy away from the US.

During the leadership race, Carney promised to cap the size of the federal government, which expanded 40% under Trudeau.

Carney visits Macron and Starmer and King Charles II

Canadian PM stresses importance of 'reliable allies' in Paris before travelling to London

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Canada is the “most European of the non-European countries”, Mark Carney has said during his first overseas trip as prime minister to France and the UK, where he is seeking stronger alliances to deal with Donald Trump’s attacks on his country’s sovereignty and economy.

Without mentioning the US president by name, Carney and the French president, Emmanuel Macron, made a joint appearance in Paris to show a united stance against what they said were economic and geopolitical crises – a reference to Trump’s trade war and “America first” diplomacy that has left longtime allies scrambling.

“Canada is a unique friend,” Macron said, adding that fair trade was more effective than tariffs. Carney spoke in French and English, and said it was important for Canada to strengthen ties with “reliable allies”.

“I want to ensure that France and the whole of Europe work enthusiastically with Canada, the most European of non-European countries, determined like you to maintain the most positive possible relations with the United States,” he said.

Carney and Macron embrace at the Élysée Palace on Monday.

A senior Canadian government official who briefed reporters on Carney’s plane said the purpose of the trip was to strengthen partnerships with Canada’s two founding countries. The official said Canada was a “good friend of the United States but we all know what is going on”.

Received by the King

Carney, who turned 60 on Sunday March 17, travelled later on Monday to London where he was received at Buckingham Palace by



King Charles, Canada’s head of state. After a 30-minute private conversation with the king, he was greeted warmly by Keir Starmer on the doorstep of 10 Downing Street.

The UK prime minister said: “The relationship between our two countries has always been strong. Two sovereign allies, so much in common – a shared history, shared values, shared king.”

Carney said the relationship between the two countries was “built on shared values” and that “we’re at a point in history where the world is being reordered”.

The trip to London is something of a homecoming for Carney as a former governor of the

Bank of England, the first non-citizen to be named to the role in its more than 300 years.

The former economist is deliberately making his first foreign trip to the capital cities of the two countries that shaped Canada’s early existence.

At his swearing-in ceremony on Friday, he noted the country was built on the bedrock of three peoples: Indigenous, French and British.

He said Canada was fundamentally different from the US and would “never, ever, in any way shape or form, be part of the United States”.

On his trip home from Europe, Carney will travel to the edge of Canada’s Arctic to “reaffirm Canada’s Arctic security and sover-

eighty” before returning to Ottawa, where he is expected to call an election within days.

Carney has said he is ready to meet Trump if he shows respect for Canadian sovereignty. He said he did not plan to visit Washington at the moment but hoped to have a phone call with the president soon.

Meanwhile, Carney’s government is reviewing the purchase of US-made F-35 fighter jets in light of Trump’s trade war.

The governing Liberal party had appeared poised for a historic election defeat this year until Trump declared economic war. Now the party and its new leader, Carney, could come out on top.



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21 mars 2025 / March 21, 2025 • Nouvelles Parc-Extension News • 9

Tariff uncertainty keeping home buyers on the sidelines

(NEWSFIRST) - Canadian home sales fell sharply from January to February, as home buyers remained on the sidelines in the first full month of the ongoing trade war with the United States.

Sales activity recorded over Canadian MLS[®] Systems dropped 9.8% month-over-month in February 2025, marking the lowest level for home sales since November 2023, and the largest month-over-month decline in activity since May 2022.

“The moment tariffs were first announced on January 20, a gap opened between home sales recorded this year and last. This trend continued to widen throughout February, leading to a significant, but hardly surprising, drop in monthly activity,” said Shaun Cathcart, CREA’s Senior Economist. “This is already being reflected in renewed price softness, particularly in Ontario’s Greater Golden Horseshoe region.”

Declines were broad-based, with sales falling



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in about three-quarters of all local markets and in almost all large markets. The trend was most pronounced in the Greater Toronto Area and surrounding Great Golden Horseshoe regions.

February Highlights:

- National home sales dropped 9.8% month-over-month.
- Actual (not seasonally adjusted) monthly activity came in 10.4% below February 2024.
- The number of newly listed properties fell back 12.7% month-over-month.
- The MLS[®] Home Price Index (HPI) declined 0.8% month-over-month and was down 1% on a year-over-year basis.
- The actual (not seasonally adjusted) national average sale price fell 3.3% on a year-over-year basis.

New listings plunged 12.7% month-over-month, returning all of the surprise surge recorded in January.

With sales and new listings both down by similar magnitudes in February, the national sales-to-new listings ratio edged up slightly to 49.9% compared to 48.3% in January. The long-term average for the national sales-to-new listings ratio is 55%, with readings between 45% and 65% generally consistent with balanced housing market conditions.

There were 146,250 properties listed for sale on all Canadian MLS[®] Systems at the end of February 2025, up 13.1% from a year earlier but still below the long-term average for that time of the year of around 174,000 listings.

“The uncertainty of the last few weeks seems to be causing some buyers to think twice about big financial decisions right now,” said James Mabey, CREA Chair. “For others, a softer pricing environment and now lower interest rates will be a buying opportunity. If you’re looking to buy or sell a property in 2025, contact a REALTOR[®] in your area today.”

There were 4.7 months of inventory on a national basis at the end of February 2025, up sharply from 4.1 months at the end of January. The long-term average is five months of inventory. Based on one standard deviation above and below that long-term average, a seller’s market would be below 3.6 months and a buyer’s market would be above 6.5 months.

The National Composite MLS[®] Home Price Index (HPI) declined by 0.8% from January to February 2025, marking the largest month-over-month decrease since December 2023.

The renewed softening in prices was most notable in Ontario’s Greater Golden Horseshoe region.

The non-seasonally adjusted National Composite MLS[®] HPI was down 1% compared to February 2024.

Enough is enough: Quebec cracks down on school violence — What it means for Parc-Ex

DIMITRIS ILIAS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter for Parc-Extension News
dimitri@newsfirst.ca

Quebec is taking a hard stance against school violence with the launch of its first-ever Violence and Bullying Prevention Week, aiming to instill respect and accountability in students across the province. This initiative is part of a broader government plan to combat rising aggression in schools, a problem that has hit diverse neighbourhoods like Parc-Extension particularly hard.



Quebec's \$30 million war on school violence

In response to mounting concerns, the Quebec government has committed \$30 million over five years to fight school violence and bullying. This funding is set to roll out across schools to implement concrete prevention strategies, enhance staff training, and create safer learning environments. The initiative also includes an official Reference Framework and Guide for Schools, providing educators with clear protocols to manage student behavioural issues.

The investment signals a shift from passive acknowledgment to active intervention, as government officials seek to address the root causes of school violence.

Why Parc-Extension schools are on the frontline

Parc-Extension, one of Montreal's most densely populated and culturally diverse

neighbourhoods, faces unique challenges in tackling school violence. With a high number of immigrant and refugee families, many students enter the school system dealing with economic hardships, cultural barriers, and past traumas. These factors can contribute to tensions that, when left unchecked, escalate into aggressive behaviour toward both peers and school staff.

A 2023 report on school violence in Quebec highlighted a worrying trend: incidents of aggression in schools are underreported and, in some cases, brushed aside to avoid administrative headaches. This reality is particularly concerning for Parc-Extension educators, who often deal with unpredictable classroom dynamics.

The fight for a safer classroom—what's next?

Quebec's latest initiative aims to change that narrative. By rolling out standardized intervention protocols, the province is ensuring that

schools, particularly those in high-tension areas like Parc-Extension, have the tools and resources to tackle violence head-on.

With these measures in place, school staff will no longer be left guessing on how to handle violent incidents, and parents will be made fully aware of disciplinary actions when necessary. The goal is not only punishment but prevention, with a strong emphasis on mental health support, de-escalation training, and student accountability.

Will it work?

As Quebec moves forward with its action plan, the real test will be in its execution. Will this initiative lead to lasting change, or will it be another well-intended policy lost in the shuffle of bureaucracy?

One thing is clear: for neighbourhoods like Parc-Extension, where teachers and students face these issues daily, change cannot come soon enough.

Call for a visual arts curator from the Latino-Canadian community

DIMITRIS ILIAS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter for Parc-Extension News
dimitri@newsfirst.ca

The Maisons de la culture Claude-Léveillée and Parc-Extension are inviting proposals from members of the Latino-Canadian community for the curation of two contemporary art exhibitions as part of the Festival LatinArte 2025. This initiative, which reflects a long-standing partnership between the festival and these cultural institutions, aims to support and showcase the creative work of Latino artists in Canada, providing them with a platform to share their artistic visions with the public.

For 17 years, the Maisons de la culture have collaborated with Festival LatinArte, reinforcing their commitment to cultural diversity and artistic innovation. This latest call seeks a curator who will be responsible for developing and organizing two exhibitions, each featuring up to three artists, in the dedicated gallery spaces of both cultural centers. While

distinct, the two exhibitions should establish a meaningful dialogue between them.

The selected curator will work closely with cultural agents to finalize the exhibitions by June 2025 in preparation for their presentation between September and November 2025. They will be responsible for writing all exhibition texts in French, including display labels, and ensuring the exhibitions reflect the artistic excellence and diversity of the Latino-Canadian community. The role also involves participation in the opening receptions of both exhibitions in September 2025.

A stipend of \$2,000 per exhibition will be provided to the selected curator. Additional support includes access to gallery furniture, professional installation technicians, transportation coverage for artworks within Quebec if needed, and remuneration for artists based on CAREFAC standards.

A selection committee composed of representatives from the Maisons de la culture, Festival LatinArte, and two community members from

the borough will evaluate applications based on artistic originality, curatorial experience, and openness to collaboration. Applicants must identify as Latino-American, hold Canadian citizenship or permanent residency, and preferably reside in Montreal to facilitate on-site coordination. Artists featured in the exhibitions must be based in Canada, with preference given

to those in Quebec.

Interested candidates are required to submit a project proposal, a curriculum vitae, and up to ten images or videos of previous curatorial work. The application deadline is March 31, 2025, at midnight, and submissions should be sent via email to mcclaudeleveillee@montreal.ca.



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L'art de la marionnette : un jeu d'émotions et de transmission

“Ce que j'aime, c'est que la marionnette permet une connexion directe avec le public, sans barrière.”

JEANNE SASCO

La Maison de la culture de Parc-Extension a eu l'opportunité de découvrir l'histoire fascinante de Flocon, un spectacle de marionnettes par Jessica Blanchet, le 16 février dernier.

Une aventurière et un manchot débarquent avec une grande caisse de bois. Sur une grande carte du Canada, les spectateurs les suivent dans leur périple au Nunavut. Puis sur leur chemin, une vieille femme inuit et dans son igloo, une peau de phoque où les images s'animent.

“FLOCON, c'est ma première création après mon DESS, et il continue de vivre sa route plus de dix ans après,” dit Blanchet. Créé en 2012 et présenté pour la première fois au Festival de marionnettes de Jonquière. Avec déjà plus de 60 représentations, ce spectacle représente un tremplin dans sa carrière. C'est celui-ci qui lui a donné l'opportunité de se rendre au Nunavut. “Voir les aurores boréales en vrai, après avoir monté un spectacle sur ce sujet, c'était un moment vraiment spécial,” dit Blanchet.

Formée en théâtre à l'origine, Blanchet découvre la marionnette lors d'un projet de création pendant une formation en théâtre. L'idée d'utiliser des marionnettes pour certains personnages s'est imposée et le processus de fabrication et de manipulation s'en est enchaîné. C'est alors un vrai coup de cœur pour l'esthétique et les possibilités qu'offre ce médium.

“Ce langage-là m'a beaucoup plu, l'esthétique m'a plu, les possibilités aussi avec la marionnette et ce que ça touche comme sensibilité.”

En 2009, elle décide de poursuivre sa route avec un diplôme du DESS en marionnettes contemporaines à l'UQAM. Jessica participe à la première cohorte de ce programme, qui a mis du temps à voir le jour. Mais après sa création grâce au travail d'une équipe de passionnés, le programme est toujours offert à l'UQAM, tous les deux ans. Jessica affine son expérience avec une formation aux stages de l'Association québécoise des marionnettistes, qui offrent des ateliers variés ouverts à tous.

“Ce sont des idées qui émergent des rencontres, des collaborations ou de simples intuitions,” explique Jessica. C'est l'instinct créatif qui prime: suivre des images ou des mises en scène qui viennent spontanément. Ainsi, elle s'engage à donner une approche intime à son travail. Cela passe notamment par la fabrication de ses propres marionnettes.

“Je porte tous les chapeaux : création, fabrication, diffusion, administration... Ça prend du temps, mais c'est aussi ce qui fait la richesse du métier.”

Elle travaille principalement pour elle-même sous l'entité Création Jessica Blanchet. Elle s'engage parfois à fabriquer des marionnettes pour d'autres compagnies. Dans ses techniques préférées on y trouve les marionnettes sacs, marotte, théâtre d'ombres, théâtre de papier, le théâtre d'objet.

“La marionnette, ce n'est pas juste pour les enfants. Il y a une vraie diversité dans ce qu'on peut raconter avec ce médium.”

Il existe un plaisir fondamental dans la marionnette, comme le souligne l'artiste : “C'est un médium qui permet de raconter plein de choses,



Spectacle FLOCON (Créations Jessica Blanchet). (Photo : Jean Briand)

avec une grande liberté.”

Cette liberté est ce qui l'a motivée à transmettre son savoir-faire aux jeunes et aux moins jeunes. Selon elle, “peu importe le groupe d'âge, la marionnette crée un effet généralisé sur les gens. Ça touche une sensibilité particulière.”

En offrant une immersion directe dans le travail de marionnettiste, Jessica propose à ses élèves une expérience sensorielle et personnelle, utilisant des matériaux professionnels; avec pour objectif: de leur faire vivre pleinement l'expérience de marionnettiste.

Cependant, le contexte culturel et politique complique le financement des arts. Selon Jessica, il y a un véritable manque de soutien gouvernemental pour les artistes en général. En parallèle, la hausse du coût de la vie exerce une pression supplémentaire sur les artistes, mettant en péril la viabilité des artistes dans leur travail.

Cette conviction alimente la détermination de Jessica à faire vivre ses projets. C'est grâce à cette passion pour la marionnette que FLOCON a pu partir en tournée cet hiver, comme chaque année, avec une représentation en Ontario. Face à la gestion de la diffusion de ses spectacles, il est difficile de déléguer cette tâche.

“La création d'un spectacle, c'est toujours un processus évolutif. On commence avec une idée et elle nous emmène ailleurs.”

Sa passion pour ce médium et les innombrables possibilités narratives qu'il offre se reflètent pleinement dans ses spectacles. Si vous désirez plonger dans son univers, c'est le samedi 5 avril 2025 à 15h à la Maison de la culture de Belloeil qu'elle présentera le spectacle FLOCON.

Le plaisir est au cœur de son travail, une source d'inspiration constante et si elle devait vous donner un conseil : “Juste y aller, foncer.”



Conception (en atelier). (Photo : Julie Gosselin)



DIRECT ANSWERS

FROM WAYNE & TAMARA

DOMINOES

Q I am the father of two children and a husband for 12 years. I love my son and daughter dearly, but my relationship with my wife has been suffering for years. In fact, it has evolved into more of a business relationship than a marriage.

There is no passion between us. Sex is rare and mutually sans emotion. I wouldn't call it miserable, but we argue every day and don't treat each other with the love we each deserve. I've been a committed and faithful husband even though my marriage has left many emotional needs unmet.

We are best friends with another couple who also have two young kids. Since the day I met her, I've suppressed an attraction which grew stronger as I got to know her wonderful personality. After years of secretly fighting off the mutual passion and frequent flirting right in front of our spouses, we both gave in.

She would describe her marriage exactly the same as I do. My relationship with my wife was rocky even before we got married, but I thought I loved her and figured we'd grow closer together as we aged and had kids. Now I know what love really feels like.

We agreed one day we'd probably end our marriages, if not for the kids. Knowing our vision may be clouded by the excitement of this long anticipated romance, we've agreed not to talk about taking action for one year. We can't stand to be apart. We've spent several nights and days together in hotels. In fact, we've had more sex together in three months than in our own marriages over 10 years!

The lying and deceit is hard to think about. We don't feel we're "that kind of people," but we'll do almost anything to be together. Strangely, neither of us feels much guilt about the cheating. In fact, we both avoid sex with our spouses due to reversed guilt feelings.

We engage in risky behavior and talk about the I-don't-care-if-we-get-caught feelings trickling through our minds. We know what could happen if we get caught. If this rela-

tionship continues to grow and we take action, we want it to be on the right terms and at the right time.

You hear from many people involved in affairs. When you read my words, what are your thoughts, opinions, and observations?

Evan

A Evan, we often hear stories like yours. They start with a snare. Before you were born the snare was set by people who claim there is a fix for every relationship. You thought a rocky relationship could be fixed with a wedding, and a rocky marriage could be fixed with a couple of kids.

Somehow that seemed logical to you at the time, though it's a little like trying to fix indebtedness by taking on more debt. But that echo in your head—every relationship can be fixed—allowed you to irrationally go forward. So if the fix to bad dating is marriage, and the fix to a bad marriage is children, then the fix to spare your children divorce is adultery.

Children are little animals who can sniff out anything. That is meant in the most positive way. They are masses of energy and life. They move on absolute base instinct. They aren't tricking themselves or performing skullduggery on themselves. They are like the doe in the woods. I smell humans. I smell unhappiness.

We are fooling ourselves if we think we are fooling our kids. You said yourself you are engaging in risky behavior which may be found out. If the children don't learn the details, the minimum they will learn is marriage is conflict. And if they learn the details, who knows what they will learn. And how will that affect their future?

It's just going farther down the rabbit hole, because there isn't a fix for a marriage which should not have occurred.

Wayne & Tamara

WAYNE & TAMARA MITCHELL are the authors of YOUR OTHER HALF (www.yourotherhalf.com)

Send letters to: Direct Answers, PO 964 Springfield, MO 65801-0964

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- **Corn (3)** (Mexico)
- **Green Cabbage** (Canada)
- **Pears (3)** (South Africa)
- **Lemons (2)** (Egypt)
- **Mango** (Peru)
- **Bananas (4-5)** (Costa Rica)
- **Kale** (Mexico/California)
- **Minis Cucumbers (6)** (Canada)
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HOROSCOPE

Week of March 23 to 29, 2025

The luckiest signs this week:
ARIES, TAURUS AND GEMINI

ARIES
You'll be invited to participate in various activities, each more original than the last. If you're single, your suitors could be particularly creative in their attempts to capture your attention and win your heart.

TAURUS
You'll dive into a project that will ignite your passion and enthusiasm. You thrive on tackling new challenges. When the going gets tough, lean on your family for unwavering support.

GEMINI
Seasonal fatigue, especially on dreary days, could weigh down your mood. This will make you want to research the possibility of going on a trip or spontaneous getaway to recharge your batteries.

CANCER
This week, you'll find the motivation to tackle all the tasks you've been putting off. Evaluate your friendships. Stick to calm environments and steer clear of large gatherings.

LEO
A promotion is on the horizon! You may be given big responsibilities right from the start. Perseverance will be the key to your success. On the emotional front, expect your partner to make a grand gesture.

VIRGO
Welcome the changes in your professional life with open arms. Although this may require you to learn better time management skills, you'll gain a deep sense of pride by facing the challenge head-on.

LIBRA
As lease renewal season approaches, now is the time to consider moving or even purchasing a property. This is your chance to turn a long-held dream into reality.

SCORPIO
Choose your words wisely this week, as they could be misinterpreted. If you feel restless, deep-clean your home or give it a fresh coat of paint, if only to clear your head.

SAGITTARIUS
Stores are already offering discounts on their spring collections. Step into the season with a new wardrobe. Don't think of it as an expense but as an investment in yourself. Embrace the opportunity to refresh your style.

CAPRICORN
This week, you'll feel an urge to conquer new challenges and embark on thrilling adventures. Your mind will be brimming with ingenious ideas. You'll come up with excellent initiatives in both your personal and professional life.

AQUARIUS
This week will get off to a rather chaotic start, and your mind seems to be elsewhere. However, the arrival of spring will inspire you to act. Break free from the monotony of everyday life by planning some outdoor activities.

PISCES
You may feel weighed down by fatigue this week. Treat yourself to some well-deserved pampering from your loved ones, especially your significant other. You deserve to be spoiled by the people who love you.

Coffee Break

CROSSWORDS

PUZZLE NO. 276

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12				13			14			
15			16				17			
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59				60			61			

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ACROSS

- Lady's shoe
- Suitable
- Rotate
- ___ Minor
- Crude
- Hue
- Octopus's arm
- Boats like Noah's
- Proclamation
- Spookiest
- Market
- Place of retreat
- Dryer setting
- Dessert pastry
- Not as many
- Broadcasts
- Summer color
- Where to buy pastrami
- Slicker
- Rodent
- Stereo component
- Cavity

DOWN

- Head
- Employed
- Government department
- Mend
- Circle part
- Wan
- Blazer material
- Discolored
- Skin hole
- Signs
- Cozy spot
- Above
- Ump's kin
- Hole
- Contains
- Olive ___
- Jug handle
- Wimp
- Nightmare street of film
- Mr. Van Winkle
- Section
- Catch
- Music of Ice Cube
- Brass instrument
- Make eggs, in a way
- Rodeo rope
- Cease to go
- Expectation
- Designated space
- Wind instrument
- Loam
- Initial wager
- Argument

Sudoku

PUZZLE NO. 969

		5			7			
				9	8			1
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		4		7		1		8
	1		3		9			
	9		7					
	6		2		3			
2					1		6	

HOW TO PLAY:

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9 only once.

Each 3x3 box is outlined with a darker line. You already have a few numbers to get you started. Remember: You must not repeat the numbers 1 through 9 in the same line, column, or 3x3 box.

Last Issue's Answers

CROSSWORDS

H	O	P		E	L	S	E		S	W	A	T	
I	R	E		R	E	I	N		H	O			
S	E	A	C	O	A	S	T		I	O	T	A	
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F	L	A	R	E		B	R	A					
O	U	R	S			R	E	N	E	W	A	L	
N	A	M	E		H	I	D		N	O	N	E	
D	U	S	T		P	A	N		D	O	T	E	
				R	Y	E		C	I	D	E	R	
S	C	H	O	O	L		F	A	N				
T	H	I	N			O	B	L	I	G	A	T	E
E	A	R	L			F	A	I	R		N	O	G
P	R	E	Y			T	Y	P	O		D	O	G

Sudoku

5	8	6	1	4	7	2	3	9
4	9	7	5	3	2	1	8	6
1	2	3	9	6	8	5	7	4
8	6	4	2	5	1	3	9	7
9	7	5	4	8	3	6	2	1
3	1	2	6	7	9	4	5	8
6	4	9	8	2	5	7	1	3
7	5	1	3	9	4	8	6	2
2	3	8	7	1	6	9	4	5



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