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Introduction

In response to uncertainty and slow mobilization of international and national-level policies, cities are exploring new and radically different approaches to address their increasing vulnerability to climate change. We are in an era of urban leadership pushing for carbon neutrality. Beginning in 2016, municipal governments and other jurisdictions around the world began declaring climate emergencies. There are now over 1925 jurisdictions that have joined this movement. This has led to a wave of cities adopting 2020-2030 climate action plans. In December 2020, C40 presented their analysis of 54 cities' plans and argued that they were "on track to keep global heating to 1.5°C". If implemented successfully, these plans should also "protect residents, create jobs, address inequalities" (C40, 2020). However, the literature suggests that climate-related inequalities and inequities, and climate justice in cities are still not being actively addressed, as we will see below.

There has been a growing interest within urban studies and environmental politics literature on emerging urban leadership on climate change and sustainability in recent years, in both the French and English-speaking literature (Emelianoff 2013, Bulkeley et al. 2014, Holden 2017). This leadership marks a turn in the representation of cities which, as Holden (2017) has eloquently put it, turned from ecological black holes to stars, even supernovas, of sustainable development.

Urban scholars are highlighting the implications of urban sustainability policies for social and environmental justice. The focus on sustainability and carbon control has been interpreted as part of urban development strategies, and a way to distinguish oneself in a competitive environment (White et al. 2010, Jonas et al. 2011). Many have remarked that social justice has been the third and least developed dimension of urban sustainability, with priority given to economic development and ecological innovations, including in the first generations of urban eco-districts (Haase et al. 2017). Work on eco-gentrification and "renovictions" (Bouzarovski et al. 2018, Manta et Maroko 2018) has heightened the sense of urgency around the detrimental consequences that 'ecological' urban development can have. Several researchers have been particularly worried about the reproduction and exacerbation of inequalities induced by climate policies in cities (Anguelovski et al. 2016, Shi et al 2016, Long and Rice 2020).

In Quebec, scholarly work on urban sustainability policies have focused on urban planning challenges such as the difficulties of implementation, public participation, and conflicts (Morin and Paulhiac 2017, Combe et al. 2012, Scanu et al. 2020). There has also been an interest in the role and involvement of community groups and grassroots initiatives in urban greening (Cournoyer-Gendron 2014, Chabot 2016, Cloutier et al. 2018). At the same time, geographers have highlighted environmental and health inequities in mobility, traffic safety, and greening, relative to socio-economic status, age, and mode of transport (for example Lachapelle and Cloutier 2017, Apparicio et al. 2016). Regarding urban climate action and pathways for ecological transition, it is only recently that scholars have started to put issues of inequality at the centre of their research. Examples include studies of eco-housing (Lessard 2020), energy transitions (Hourcade and Van Neste 2019), transit oriented development (Tremblay-Racicot, in

progress), and climate change adaptation and resilience (Van Neste et al. 2021, Da Cunha and Thomas 2017).

In British Columbia, debates about the social consequences of sustainable urban policies have been discussed in the public sphere, as well as in scholarly work, for a longer period (Holden 2012). It is particularly a hot issue in the face of housing unaffordability, where research on neighbourhood densification initiatives in the City of Vancouver found instances of gentrification in traditional working-class neighbourhoods (Quastel, et al., 2012), as well as NIMBY resistance to densification in wealthier neighbourhoods (McKendry, 2016).

We are interested in investigating this gap between sustainability initiatives and social consequences by exploring how equity is included in climate action plans. In this chapter, we compare the City of Vancouver and the City of Montréal's approach to equity and justice in their climate action plans. These cities are identified as climate leaders with ambitious climate change plans. They both have science-based targets consistent with the Paris Agreement, they are both early signatories of climate emergency declarations, and they both have committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2050 (C40, 2020). Concrete targets for carbon neutrality in Montreal are set within the building sector, while in Vancouver these reduction targets also include transportation and carbon sequestration. Yet, both cities are experiencing an increase in income inequality (CPA, 2017), and studies show that recent immigrants, Indigenous households, and visible minorities are more likely to suffer from climate injustices like energy poverty (CUSP, 2019).

We compare the cities by looking at how equity is defined and incorporated into the plans, then we analyze how equity has been considered across the plan, as well as in specific actions. We are particularly interested in how equity-related actions and outcomes are measured and monitored. Our comparison also includes the similarities and differences, and strengths and weaknesses of the two approaches. Our aim is not only to study these two cities, but also to inform the development and implementation of just urban climate policy in Canada. The research for this chapter was in the form of document analysis of the two climate action plans, as well as analysis of documents related to the broader policy context and history of climate policies in Vancouver and Montréal. This chapter is also informed by ongoing research conducted by both the Vancouver-based and Montréal-based researchers in their respective cities on climate related actions and policies.

Climate equity framing

Around the world, the field of urban planning is facing increasing calls to ensure equitable practices at all stages of planning. For example, the United Nations New Urban Agenda (2016) asserts that integrating equity into land development is a matter of social justice. National planning organizations around the world are challenged to implement sustainable development goals that include gender equity and reducing inequality. Researchers and policymakers are being called to co-create solutions to the linked challenges of unsustainable and inequitable development by partnering with local communities in equitable decision-making processes (Rice & Hancock, 2016; Shi et al., 2016). Social inclusion, respect, care, and justice are at the heart of the ethical city, yet are insufficiently emphasized in current urban climate change initiatives (Barrett, et al., 2016; Ranganathan & Bratman, 2021). As climate change planning and building community resilience become more and more necessary, organizations and municipalities across Canada and around the world will need concrete guidance on how to equitably engage in climate change planning at multiple scales.

Climate justice is primarily focused on assisting those most affected by the impacts of climate change (Lyster, 2015). It acknowledges that climate change impacts, vulnerability, and responsibility are not equally distributed, and that climate change has the capacity to compound existing vulnerabilities (Steele, et al., 2012; Barnett, 2006). Taking this perspective, we have investigated the extent to which the cities of Vancouver and Montréal identify those most affected by climate change within the design of their climate action policies. We found that both cities are not explicit about what equity means in their climate plans, nor are they explicit about equity related objectives, measurements or indicators,

and implementation. An equitable climate action plan should identify those most affected by climate hazards, as well as recognize pre-existing vulnerabilities that are worsened by climate change. Ranganathan and Bratmand (2021) refer to this as intersectional precarity, which highlights how climate impacts interact with other factors of deprivation and discrimination, such as violence, racial and gender discrimination, housing struggles, food insecurity etc. (Ranganathan and Bratman, 2021). An equity lens on climate action also needs to consider the equity consequences of climate policies, on top of pre-existing socio-spatial inequalities and past traumas related to state action (Anguelovski et al. 2016).

Climate change planning “requires an awareness of both spatial diversities in adaptive capacities and trade-offs in resilience between different scales” (Chelleri et al., 2015, p. 193). However, few studies have evaluated how emerging plans impact marginalized peoples (Shi et al., 2016), and marginalized peoples are not often engaged with or included meaningfully in climate change planning processes (Anguelovski et al., 2016; Hughes, 2015; Schrock et al., 2015). A ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach is thus unlikely to accurately involve the multiple perspectives of diverse stakeholders and meet their various needs. Bulkeley et al. (2013) call for more research that explores how climate justice is articulated in particular places. Equitable approaches to climate change planning must reflect the scale and context within which they operate.

When planning for climate change, it is important that we examine the pre-existing governance models and conditions (Coaffee et al., 2018). Responding to climate change requires cities to have the capacities required to mobilize change in both governance arrangements and the day-to-day practices of those involved in implementation, particularly considering power relations embedded within them (Coaffee et al., 2018). Anguelovski et al. (2016) argue that for climate change planning to go beyond business-as-usual, transformative change requires that justice must be placed front and centre of implementation. We need to move beyond diagnosing injustices, to finding ways to integrate justice and equity into urban climate action (Hughes & Hoffmann, 2020) and recognize the current contradictions of the “climate-friendly city” (Rice et al., 2020). Robust and inclusive planning and decision making is a fundamentally important part of planning for healthy climate resilient communities. If issues of equity are not central in these plans, practitioners cannot correct existing inequities and may in fact perpetuate them.

Cities

Vancouver

British Columbia (BC) and its municipalities are recognized as climate change leaders within Canada due to innovative legislative frameworks and programs that stimulate mitigation and adaptation measures to address climate change (Dale, et al., 2018). In addition, the City of Vancouver is globally recognized for its ambitious sustainability goals (Affolderbach & Schulz, 2017). The City of Vancouver’s goal is to reduce carbon pollution by 50% by 2030. Currently 54% of carbon emissions come from natural gas use in buildings and 39% for gas and diesel in vehicles, the remaining 6% is from electricity and waste (City of Vancouver, 2020a). While the City has a strong environmental focus, equity is not strongly integrated within climate change policies, or planning more broadly. According to a CBC News analysis, only two of the 21 municipalities in Metro Vancouver (Vancouver and New Westminster) specifically apply equity or antiracism policies in their operations (McElroy, 2020). This is particularly important when accounting for the facts that Vancouver is located on the unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and sə́lilwətaʔł (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations; more than 50% of the population identifies as a visible minority (City of Vancouver, 2020b); and the city is recognized as being amongst the 10 least affordable major housing markets in the long-standing Demographia survey on the topic (Cox & Pavletich, 2020).

The City of Vancouver is regulated under the Vancouver Charter. The Charter contains the rules that govern how the city operates and provides the City with the authority to pass certain bylaws, buy and

sell property, collect certain taxes, approve expenditures, take on debt, give grants, and hire and discharge employees. The City is also part of Metro Vancouver, a regional government political body and corporate entity composed of 24 local authorities across the region. Vancouver is governed by a city council, which is made up of the mayor and 10 councilors, all of whom are elected at large for a four-year term. Like in Montréal, Vancouver's government is notable because its councilors are not affiliated with provincial or federal parties; instead there are local political parties and independent candidates. The current council was elected in 2018 and is composed of four parties and one independent member. While the council unanimously supported the declaration of a climate emergency, there were some objections to the Climate Emergency Action Plan. For example, there was opposition for actions related to transport pricing, minimum parking requirements, and parking restrictions. When Council was asked to approve the continuation of the Climate and Equity Working Group and to direct staff to work with the Climate and Equity Working Group to develop a Climate Justice Charter with to ensure equity is integrated and supported through the City's climate actions, two opposed, one abstained from the vote, and one was absent for the vote due to a conflict of interest (Smith, 2020).

Montréal

Quebec has been recognized locally as a climate leader due to its cap-and-trade carbon policy, and its energy source – hydroelectricity. However, recently its progress in responding to climate change challenges has slowed. Montréal benefits from relatively clean hydroelectricity for heating, and has a relatively low carbon impact compared to other Canadian cities (Fercovic & Gulati, 2016). In spite of this leadership, the province of Quebec, including Montréal and its wider metropolitan area, struggles to lower GHG emissions from the transportation sector and increase public transport use (Ville de Montréal 2018a; CMM, 2021). Since 2017, climate action has become a major political agenda in Montréal with the election of Valérie Plante as mayor and leader of the political party Projet Montréal. Under Projet Montréal, social and environmental issues are being increasingly incorporated into urban policy throughout the City. The combination of social justice and environmental issues is important within the context of climate change in Montréal, where almost 40 percent of the population identifies as a visible minority, and about 1/5 of Montréalers live in poverty^[1]. Climate policy in Tiohtià:ke/Montréal should also recognize the fact that the city is located on the unceded land of the Kanien'kehá:ka Nation and is known as a place of living and gathering for many First Nations communities.

Montréal is also a charter city and has additional powers compared to other municipalities in the province. However, Montréal's powers are not as extensive as those of Vancouver (Kitchen, 2016). The City is part of the Montréal Metropolitan Community, a city-regional entity coordinating different regional planning efforts across 82 municipalities. Since 2017, the administrative structure of Montréal has changed under the leadership of Projet Montréal, particularly regarding the environment and sustainability. For example, the Office for Ecological Transition and Resilience was created, replacing the Office for Sustainable Development, and the urban planning and transport services departments have been combined to improve the synergies between urbanism and sustainable mobility. Projet Montréal has a majority in the municipal council, and there was no objection to the adoption of the climate plan by the council, although there was criticism of some of the measures by opposition parties in the media, notably the zero emission zone in downtown Montréal (Goudreault, 2020). Challenges remain in the sharing of responsibilities with Montréal's 19 boroughs. Many powers and responsibilities in urban planning (zoning bylaws) and local services are decentralized at the local level.

The Plans

Vancouver's Climate Emergency Action Plan

In 2010, Vancouver City Council launched the Greenest City 2020 Action Plan (GCAP), a strategy to make Vancouver the greenest city in the world by 2020 (City of Vancouver, 2012). The GCAP consisted of ten goals and included ambitious targets such as doubling the number of green jobs from 2010 to 2020, reducing community based GHG emissions by 33% from 2007 levels, making over 50% of trips by foot, bicycle, and public transit, and reducing solid waste going to the landfill or incinerator by 50% from 2008 levels. However, GCAP raised important tensions and oppositions, especially relative to the impacts of the densification and green building measures on housing affordability (Afforderbach & Schulz, 2017; Quastel, et al., 2012). The City made strides to reduce its GHG emissions (9% reduction in 2019 from baseline) under GCAP (City of Vancouver, 2020d), however, the City will have to significantly accelerate their actions to reduce carbon emissions if they want to meet new climate targets set out in the Climate Emergency Action Plan.

In January 2019, the City of Vancouver joined hundreds of cities around the world in declaring a climate emergency. To increase their efforts to tackle climate change locally, Vancouver City Council approved the Climate Emergency Response report in April 2019. The report recommended that Council adopt a series of city-wide climate targets with the end goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050. The City of Vancouver set bold new climate action goals with the release of its 2020-2030 Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP), which was approved by Council in November 2020 (City of Vancouver, 2020a). CEAP outlines six “Big Moves” the City will pursue to achieve its climate goals: changing how Vancouverites move (Big Moves 1-3), build and renovate (Big Moves 4-5), and capture carbon (Big Move 6) (City of Vancouver, 2020a). The City aims to equitably implement the plan and includes equity indicators in its Climate Emergency Indicator Framework.

From February to April 2020, the City invited residents to provide input to shape CEAP through a series of public engagements. The City’s engagement objectives were to collect input on the proposed action plan, ask area-specific questions, mobilize action, and increase the understanding of cause and impacts of climate change locally. In a survey conducted by the City in preparation for the public engagement strategy, they found that 92% of people are deeply concerned about climate change, but only 7% knew that natural gas was the biggest local source of carbon pollution. It was clear that they needed to inform the public as part of their engagement strategy. Alongside the general public engagement, the City developed the Climate Equity Working Group to ensure a diversity of voices and perspectives was included. The Group includes organizations and individuals from a mix of perspectives including new immigrants, people with disabilities, people with low income, and urban Indigenous people. The aim of the Group is to advise City staff on climate-related policies, programs, and engagement from a climate justice perspective.

Integration of equity

CEAP has a strong goal of being an ‘equitable plan.’ This is defined through four key elements for equity, including “minimize burdens for those already struggling, higher expectations on those who can afford it, identifying and resourcing work needed to go deeper, and accountability via equity milestones” (City of Vancouver, 2020e). These four elements have set the basis for equity throughout the plan, while more specific considerations are included in more equity-related actions taken by the City. The City primarily uses the terminology “disproportionately impacted groups,” when referencing equity seeking groups. The City defines these groups as “communities [facing] intersecting and systemic challenges that magnify climate threats, including racial discrimination, poverty, disability, housing insecurity, linguistic isolation, poor air quality and more... Who we consider as “disproportionately impacted” can change based on the specific public policy being considered” (City of Vancouver, 2020a, p.14). As part of the City’s equity indicators, they will begin to collect disaggregated data including information on gender, age, Indigeneity, race, language, immigration, physical ability, education, income, families/dependents, geography, and home ownership, (p.57) which

will help further tailor their equity actions and better define ‘disproportionately impacted groups’, based on intersectional vulnerabilities within communities.

Equity is referenced over 200 times within CEAP, however, no explicit definition of equity is provided. Instead, the reader gets a sense for how equity is being used by the City through different examples, and the use of terms such as the aforementioned ‘disproportionately impacted groups’, or mention of uneven distribution of climate change burdens and contributions. For example, CEAP begins by stating that “those who contributed least to causing it will experience the worst impacts” (City of Vancouver 2020c, p.2). The City also claims that they are constantly thinking about “who benefits?” and “who might stand to lose?” when planning their policies in the CEAP (City of Vancouver 2020a, p.57). This recognition of uneven contributions leads to their explicit recognition of climate justice, wherein they aim to address historic discrimination within the City.

Equity considerations

Given Vancouver’s unique political, cultural, and social makeup, the consideration of equity is not only crucial to climate action, but also requires complex implementation. CEAP outlines three primary equity actions. First, is the development of the Climate Justice Charter, which will include equity indicators, targeted economic benefits, and equitable budget planning. Second, the City aims to engage with disproportionately impacted people including low-income and ethnic minorities. Third, revisions of current sustainability programs will include equity throughout this work, not just in CEAP directly (City of Vancouver, 2020a).

Importantly, the Climate Justice Charter will provide guidance for addressing anti-Blackness, and anti-Indigenous racism in planning, as well as identifying institutional racism and creating robust applications of equity for all impacted communities (City of Vancouver, 2020a). The development of the Climate Justice Charter is relying on the Climate Equity Working Group. The initial group consisted of seventeen members with lived or working experience with disproportionately impacted groups. Invitations were specifically sent to the local Nations for participation. The first iteration of this group met monthly to discuss what climate action and climate justice should look like. At the time of writing there is a call for a new cohort, and the Climate Justice Charter is still under development.

CEAP states that a more equitable Vancouver would include low-cost transportation, equal opportunity to live in zero emissions buildings, fair distribution of costs to reduce emissions, and opportunities to participate in a zero-carbon economy (City of Vancouver, 2020a). To address low-cost transportation, the City is “advocating to Translink to reduce transit fares during off-peak times, which would provide a more significant benefit to lower-income residents,” (City of Vancouver, 2020a, p.33). Fair distribution of costs is currently being addressed through the transport pricing action in Big Move 2, and the residential parking permit carbon surcharge in Big Move 3. Both actions seek to implement an equitable pricing strategy. At the moment, the carbon surcharge will apply only to high cost, new fossil fuel vehicles, and pricing will be altered based on affordability of EVs in the future. This initiative targets those who can presumably afford the extra cost, while using this new fee to fund public transportation, walking, and cycling infrastructure.

Big Moves 4 and 5 are dedicated to emissions from buildings and materials, and while aiming to increase access to low carbon buildings, the City has recognized that low carbon retrofits will increase displacement of residents in market and non-market rental housing. The City’s response is to exclude these buildings from pollution limits until a strategy is in place to mitigate displacement. CEAP also aims to increase availability of green jobs and training for the zero-carbon economy but has no specific equity considerations for this action yet.

Vancouver intends to be a leader in reconciliation at the municipal scale within Canada. This effort is present in CEAP through recognition of the City’s location on unceded Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish), sə́lílwətaʔl (Tsleil-Waututh), and xʷməθkʷəy̓ əm (Musqueam) territory. Appendix N, which is dedicated to feedback from the Climate Equity Working Group, has identified anti-Indigenous racism as something that needs to be directly addressed through CEAP and the subsequent Climate Justice

Charter. The Working Group recommended areas the City can improve on to address racism, anti-Blackness, and anti-Indigenous racism. They are: acknowledgment and consideration of displacement and historical wrongs; the need for meaningful engagement and relationship building; the importance of diverse and community-representative staff; and to prioritize funding for this work. Another action for this goal is supporting local [Host First](#) Nations with their own climate plans where possible.

Montréal's Climate Plan 2020-2030

The City of Montréal has been engaged in climate change action for several years, with a GHG emission reduction target stated in 2005, as part of the Sustainable Development Plan. This led to a climate change mitigation plan in 2013 and climate change adaptation plan in 2015. Issues related to climate and equity were also part of the broader Sustainability Plan 2016-2020, with the key challenges for being identified as: low carbon targets, equity, and building on the City's previous exemplary work on sustainability (Ville de Montréal 2016, p.9). The City also adopted a resilience policy in 2018 (Resilient Montréal). Since 2018, Montréal increased its climate ambitions by signing the One Planet Charter (Ville de Montréal 2018c), declaring a climate emergency, and signing an agreement to work with C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, the Trottier Foundation, and the David Suzuki Foundation to develop a plan to respond to the climate and environmental emergency.

Following the agreement, a climate committee of around 20 people was created to develop the climate plan. The committee was in direct contact with the mayor, and it was co-chaired by the David Suzuki Foundation and the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec. Committee members included other foundations or NGOs working on environment, and CIUSS (Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux de l'Est-de-l'Île-de-Montréal), a centre that provides health and social services and coordinates regional research mandates in Montréal (City of Montréal, 2019). The committee was supported by five sub-committees working on specific topics: transport, building, adaptation and resilience, mobilization, and industry. Unlike Vancouver, there was no subcommittee responsible for equity or justice. The plan resulting from this process was expected to be released for March 2020 but was delayed due to COVID-19, and was published in December 2020. While there was an emphasis on working with external partners to develop the plan with these committees, there has not been any specific open public consultation.

The Climate Plan is part of the City's 10-year strategic plan "Montréal 2030", which presents itself as a 'recovery' plan with a long-term vision, amidst the pandemic. The objective of the Climate Plan is to achieve, by 2030, a reduction of at least 55% of GHG emissions below the 1990 level, allowing Montréal to become carbon neutral by 2050. It contains 46 actions for mitigation and adaptation to climate change, including 16 key actions, grouped into 5 intervention areas: 1) mobilization of the Montréal community; 2) mobility, urban design and development; 3) buildings; 4) exemplary nature of the City; and 5) governance.

Integration of equity in plan & equity definition

The aim of the Climate Plan is to create an inclusive, carbon-neutral, and resilient city. A key theme throughout the plan is that "no Montréaler is left behind" in the ecological transition (Ville de Montréal 2020, p.31). The Climate Plan defines social equity in the glossary as "offering all citizens, regardless of their economic resources or personal characteristics, just and fair living conditions to meet their basic needs (food, clothing, housing, education, etc.)". It also identifies groups vulnerable to climate change; these include "seniors, children, the homeless, people whose situation is precarious and those living in poverty". The Climate Plan aims to devote particular attention to these groups. As part of the plan's mobilization efforts, it will "create programs that take into consideration intercultural and intergenerational differences, the gender spectrum and varying levels of engagement that characterize the Montréal community" (idem, p.45). The City also mentions it will work with partners to help workers redirect their expertise and training for a just transition.

In contrast to Vancouver, Montréal's plan does not acknowledge its location on unceded Indigenous territories. Indigenous populations are not mentioned at all, and recognition of current and historical

impacts of discrimination and colonization is absent. This is in spite of the fact that the City announced in 2018 its intention to become a “metropolis of reconciliation”, (Ville de Montréal 2018b, see chapter 6 in this volume), and that it launched a five-year Indigenous reconciliation strategy in November 2020, which mentions some of the issues addressed in the Climate Plan. This includes the objective to “promote the protection of natural spaces and environments according to the 7th Generation Principle” (Ville de Montréal, 2020). Neither racism nor anti-racist actions are mentioned in the plan either. However, in separate policy action, the City formally recognized the existence of systemic racism in June 2020, and a Commissioner on racism and systemic discrimination was appointed in 2021 to work on these issues in Montréal.

Equity considerations

By 2030, the Climate Plan imagines a “Montréal at the dawn of the ecological transition” where “Montréal considers its most vulnerable citizens in all its urban planning efforts, thereby reducing social, economic and environmental inequalities in the territory” (Ville de Montréal 2020, p.39). While the term equity is only used nine times in the plan, and there are no direct references to climate justice, concerns for equity are visible in the plan’s use of neighborhood solidarity and community resilience (or community(ies) is used 104 times, with 39 mentions referring to the idea of local organizations and social capital participating to neighborhood solidarity and resilience. Montréal’s approach to equity within the Climate Plan is influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the city, with the previous resilience policy having already made connections between climate change and other potential shocks to Montréal.

Resilience hubs and the development of social capital constitute two key actions tied to social equity in the Climate Plan. These actions are grounded in the concepts of communities, social cohesion, and neighbourhood solidarity, with some state support. The resilience hubs are defined as “centralized resource and training facilities serving the community in support of citizens’ capacity to act, social cohesion and sense of belonging in neighbourhoods [...] to help these communities become more self-determining, socially connected” (idem, p.117). The City wants to support the development of social capital and reduce isolation, as they believe social capital to be “an indicator of community resilience to climate, environmental and public health issues” (idem, p.57). This action is dependent upon working with other departments, like public health and social planning. It is the only social action in the plan with a clear implementation and monitoring strategy. Specifically, the City will produce a detailed report every five years on the strength of social ties and social capital in the different districts throughout the city. How actions for resilient communities and the development of social capital will specifically help discriminated and marginalized populations is not discussed, however.

Cost and affordability are identified as important equity-related considerations of other actions. This includes the cost and affordability of housing, retrofits, mobility, and more implicitly, of resilient communities. The Climate Plan states that bylaws would be used to accelerate energy efficiency and resiliency for renovations and new construction. However, it recognizes that there may be cost implications to this action. Resources could be made available to owners of multi-unit residential buildings to help ensure additional costs are not offloaded onto tenants, and to “reduce the burden of this transition on low-income households” (idem, p.77). The Climate Plan also recommends that the financial support from the City for social and community housing be adapted with criteria to favor resilience to climate hazards and energy efficiency. Montréal is home to over half a million rental units, and the City wants to “intensify its efforts to maintain this housing stock while keeping it affordable for the population” (idem, p.84). Housing affordability is understood to be an important aspect of ensuring social equity in the face of climate change.

Mobility is identified as another equity-related sector within the Climate Plan. The City wants to develop collective and active transport *in all districts* of Montréal. To achieve this, the City will work with partners to “enhance the offering of sustainable mobility services in some sectors of the city that are poorly served and often underprivileged” (idem, p.62). One such example is the extension of the

Blue metro line in the east end of Montréal (which has been in the planning stages for decades). The Climate Plan also acknowledges the importance of universal access to sustainable transport choices. One solution includes working with partners towards “implementing social pricing of regional public transport”. While the City does not have sole control over this, the Climate Plan states that money in the City’s budget has already been reserved “to reduce by 50 per cent the public transit fare for seniors in Montréal and to offer free transit for children under the age of 12” (idem, p.62). Universal access also means making public transport accessible for people with disabilities (Van Neste and Bherer, 2014). The electrification of transport, and lower GHG emissions from the transport sector are also important parts of the Climate Plan’s mobility actions. Yet, equity-related impacts or outcomes have not been included.

Equity and equity-related considerations are present throughout the Climate Plan, but no specific targets or timelines are provided for each action or equity issue. It does include next steps, including the implementation of measures, and future plans or programs. One example is the joint urban planning and mobility master plan, which will be a cornerstone for the City’s mitigation and adaptation efforts. The Ecodistrict Charter, part of the master plan, aims to innovate in key domains across the city, including mobility, energy, greening, circular economy, and social inclusion by improving and pooling together local services and equipment to support “forms of citizen self-organization” (idem, p.48). The Climate Plan also mentions that the master plan will develop a more detailed identification of climate vulnerabilities across the city and link them to urban planning legislation. Increasing urban greenery throughout the city, with an emphasis on planting 500,000 trees in areas vulnerable to heat waves, has also been identified as a priority.

Discussion

There has been a growing concern for social equity in climate action planning in North America (Schrock et al., 2015). Vancouver and Montréal have both acknowledged the need to enhance social equity in their most recent climate plans. However, the two cities fail to explicitly define social equity as it pertains to climate action. This raises questions of transparency, and possibly also of accountability because an authorities cannot be held accountable on progress toward a goal or target that is not specifically defined. Montréal provides a definition of social equity in the Climate Plan’s glossary, but the definition is not directly applied to climate change or climate action. Vancouver’s CEAP does not provide a clear definition of social equity anywhere in the document. However, it alludes to who might be most affected by climate change impacts.

Both plans also lack concrete equity related actions that would directly benefit identified vulnerable or equity-deserving populations. Shi et al. (2016) argue that at the very least climate change planning should avoid actions or elements that exacerbate existing inequities. Vancouver’s equitable implementation of CEAP aims to do this by identifying differences between socioeconomic groups, and how some individuals may be impacted by actions more than others. For instance, some price-related actions are specifically targeted at wealthier citizens, where new gas or diesel powered cars will be charged higher fees for parking, but those with older vehicles will not. Such direct and precise measures are not included in Montréal’s Climate Plan. However, we also need to dig deeper and actively address root causes of inequities (Anguelovski et al., 2016; Hughes & Hoffmann, 2020).

Climate change and equity planning are dynamic and iterative activities. These plans should be understood as living documents. However, the plans must also have a certain depth and authority . Both cities’ plans rely quite heavily on future plans, projects, or indicators for their equity-related actions and outcomes. These ‘coming soon’ items are a big part of enhancing both cities' ability to actively address inequities related to climate change. The lack of concrete measures may be due in part to missing policy elements. Examples include Vancouver’s Climate Justice Charter, which will include equity indicators and provide a stronger equity framework for CEAP. Montréal is counting on future vulnerability analyses, as well as on the development of local resilience hubs in neighborhoods to develop social capital and local support. Only time will tell whether we ought to be critical of action

that rests on future “elusive promises”, keeping in mind that planning constantly produces new plans and tends to be inherently optimistic about implementation of broad objectives (Abram & Weszkalnys, 2013). These uncertainties are tied to the fragmented political contexts in both cities, in addition to possible changes in political leadership in the future. While Montréal City Council unanimously passed the Climate Plan, and currently Project Montréal has a majority, fragmentation is experienced in coordinating efforts with the 19 boroughs of the city. In Vancouver, the fragmentation is within the City Council, which is made up of a handful of different political parties and independents, as well as within Metro Vancouver, which has 23 members.

The cities’ approaches to equity in climate policy can partly be explained by their local culture and recent history of sustainability planning. This is consistent with literature on this topic that has found that different cultures of planning and modes of governance are important factors in how equity is framed within climate action, and impacts the processes chosen for implementation of these actions (Bulkeley et al., 2013; Coaffee, et al., 2018; Hughes and Hoffman, 2020). Vancouver’s main equity considerations revolve around addressing discrimination and wealth gaps while reaching a zero-emissions goal. Montréal’s plan mentions affordability but focuses particularly on a horizontal approach to community resilience and neighbourhood solidarity. This difference can partly be explained by Montréal’s plan having both mitigation and adaptation goals, while Vancouver’s plan is primarily focused on mitigation (Vancouver has a separate adaptation strategy). It also resonates with Vancouver’s previous debates about the impacts of the Greenest City Action plan on equity and affordability in the city (Quastel et al., 2012). These debates are explicitly linked to the need and development of the Climate Equity Working Group and the Climate Justice Charter. In Montréal, previous sustainability policies have not raised such intense debates. However, this does not justify or explain the absence of the inclusion of Indigenous communities and racialized groups in Montréal’s climate measures. Systemic racism has been a notable topic of intense debates following tragic events in Quebec in 2020. Montréal’s community approach can be understood as a response to the dense web of neighborhood community organizations that have been part of social, health, and environmental urban policy interventions in the city for decades (Germain, et al., 2004), and which are now celebrated in the Montréal resilience policy and recovery from the pandemic.

The focus of this chapter has been on approaches to equity in Vancouver and Montréal’s climate action plans. However, we would be remiss not to discuss the importance of procedural justice and engagement processes that existed in the development of the plans, as well as the implementation of the actions. Both cities have struggled with engagement efforts that accurately represent the cities’ populations or have failed to actively include minority or vulnerable communities. This is an unfortunate, but recurring theme in urban climate action, engagement processes that frequently exclude social justice advocacy groups, or do not allow for collaborative policy making (Shi et al., 2016). Vancouver’s main strategy to engage with marginalized communities in this area has been through the Climate Equity Working Group. While the City sought to include a diverse range of voices, it was noted in the first iteration of the group that local First Nations, LGBTQ+, and seniors were not well represented. Vancouver also aimed to reduce barriers to engagement during the development of CEAP through dialogue kits and surveys that relied on community members to lead climate conversations and collect data. Some dialogues and materials were conducted in Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Spanish, and Punjabi. In the case of Montréal, there was no public participation on the plan, but philanthropic actors participated in the development of its direction and content. There is no evidence of direct involvement of marginalized populations or of social justice groups in the creation of the Climate Plan. However, some of the actions in the plan are linked to issues for which social justice groups have been mobilizing for several years in Montréal, such as housing and public transport affordability. Structural issues of cumulative disadvantage, racism, and how these intersect with poverty and climate-related issues have, however, not been addressed.

Conclusion

This chapter investigated the equity content of Vancouver and Montréal's 2020-2030 climate plans. While both cities are presenting themselves as climate leaders and both address components related to equity within their plans, they both fall short of putting forward concrete and immediate actions dedicated to this issue. Promises of measures to ensure affordability of housing and public transport are present in both plans but rely on other public actors and details which remain to be worked out. Montréal can learn from Vancouver's work to connect its climate plan with its reconciliation strategy with Indigenous communities, as well as Vancouver's explicit identification of disproportionately impacted populations and actions related to income inequality. In turn, Montréal can teach Vancouver about a more transversal (including both mitigation and adaptation strategies) climate agenda that includes partnerships with civic actors, the valorization of social capital and local community organizations, and building strong connections to the policies within citywide planning process now underway, to enhance quality of life.

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^[1] 18 % of the population is considered low income when using the market basket measure with 2016 Statistics Canada data, which certain groups consider to underrepresent poverty in large cities. In Montréal, Centraide uses the number 21.3% that live in poverty. http://ville.Montréal.qc.ca/portal/page?_pageid=6897,67885721&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL