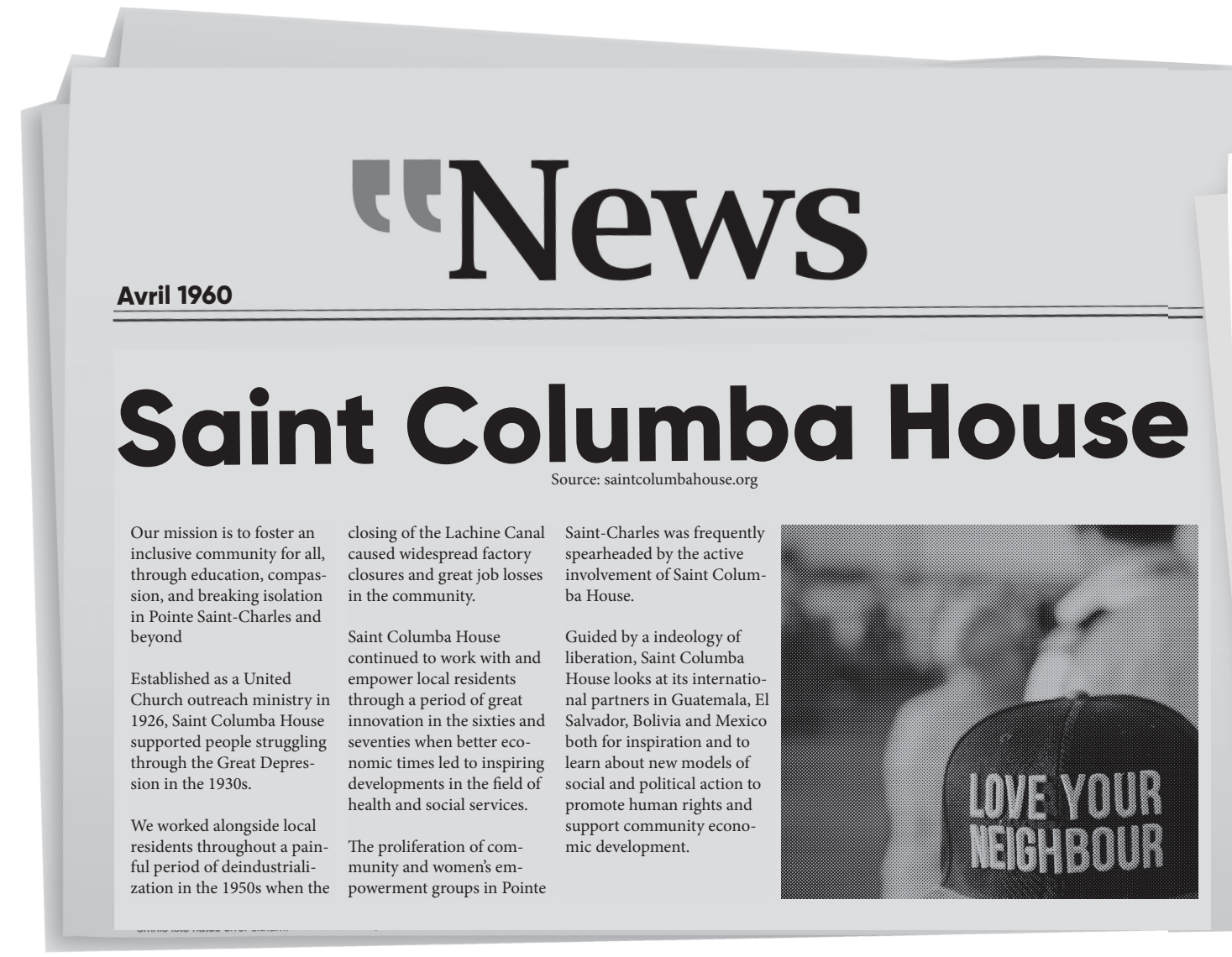
A NEIGHBOURHOOD HISTORY

(WHAT THE PAPERS MIGHT HAVE SAID...)



"News

Avril 1960

Saint Columba House

Source: saintcolumbahouse.org

Our mission is to foster an inclusive community for all, through education, compassion, and breaking isolation in Pointe Saint-Charles and beyond

Established as a United Church outreach ministry in 1926, Saint Columba House supported people struggling through the Great Depression in the 1930s.

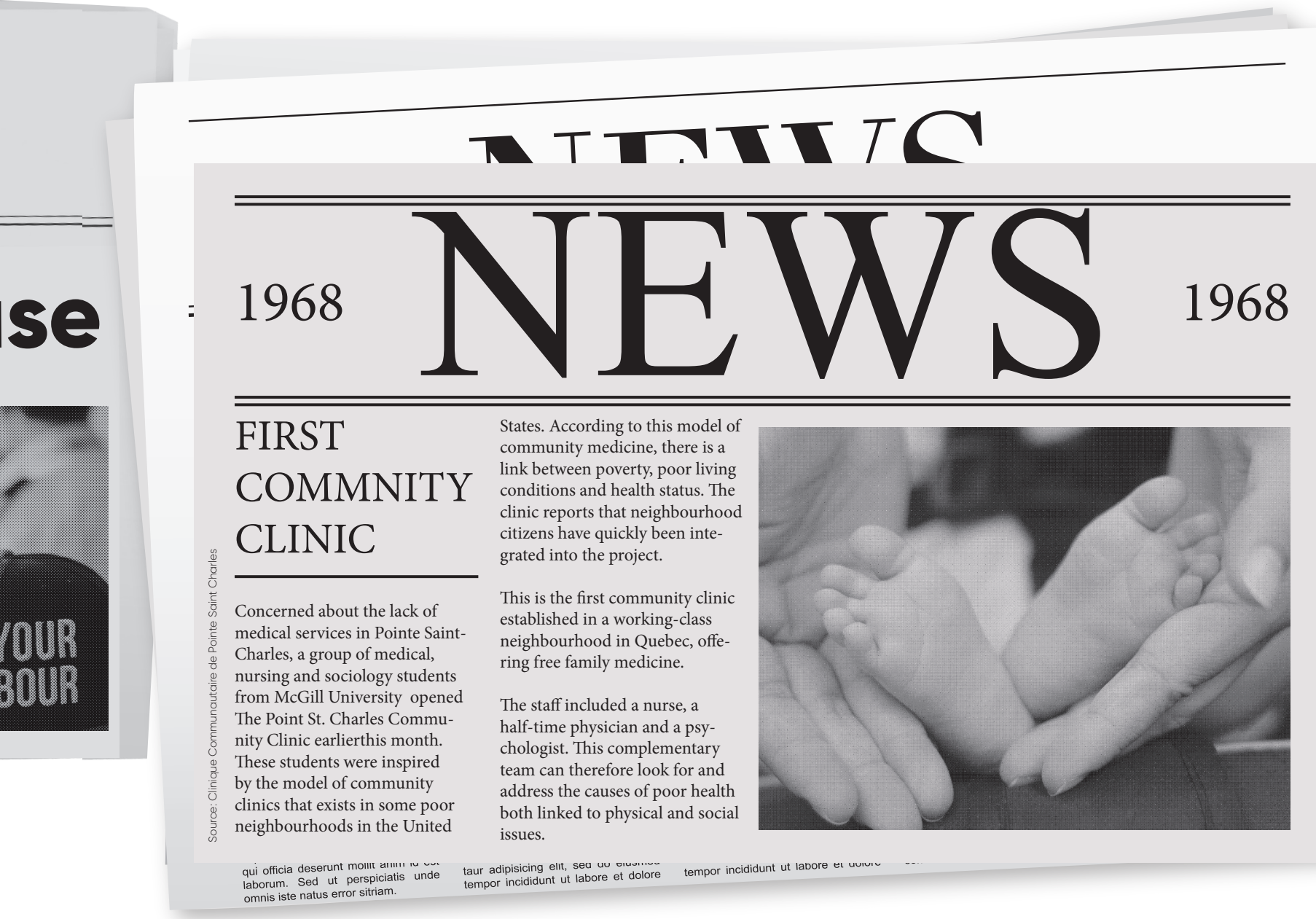
We worked alongside local residents throughout a painful period of deindustrialization in the 1950s when the closing of the Lachine Canal caused widespread factory closures and great job losses in the community.

Saint Columba House continued to work with and empower local residents through a period of great innovation in the sixties and seventies when better economic times led to inspiring developments in the field of health and social services.

The proliferation of community and women's empowerment groups in Pointe Saint-Charles was frequently spearheaded by the active involvement of Saint Columba House.

Guided by a indeology of liberation, Saint Columba House looks at its international partners in Guatemala, El Salvador, Bolivia and Mexico both for inspiration and to learn about new models of social and political action to promote human rights and support community economic development.

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR



1968 NEWS 1968

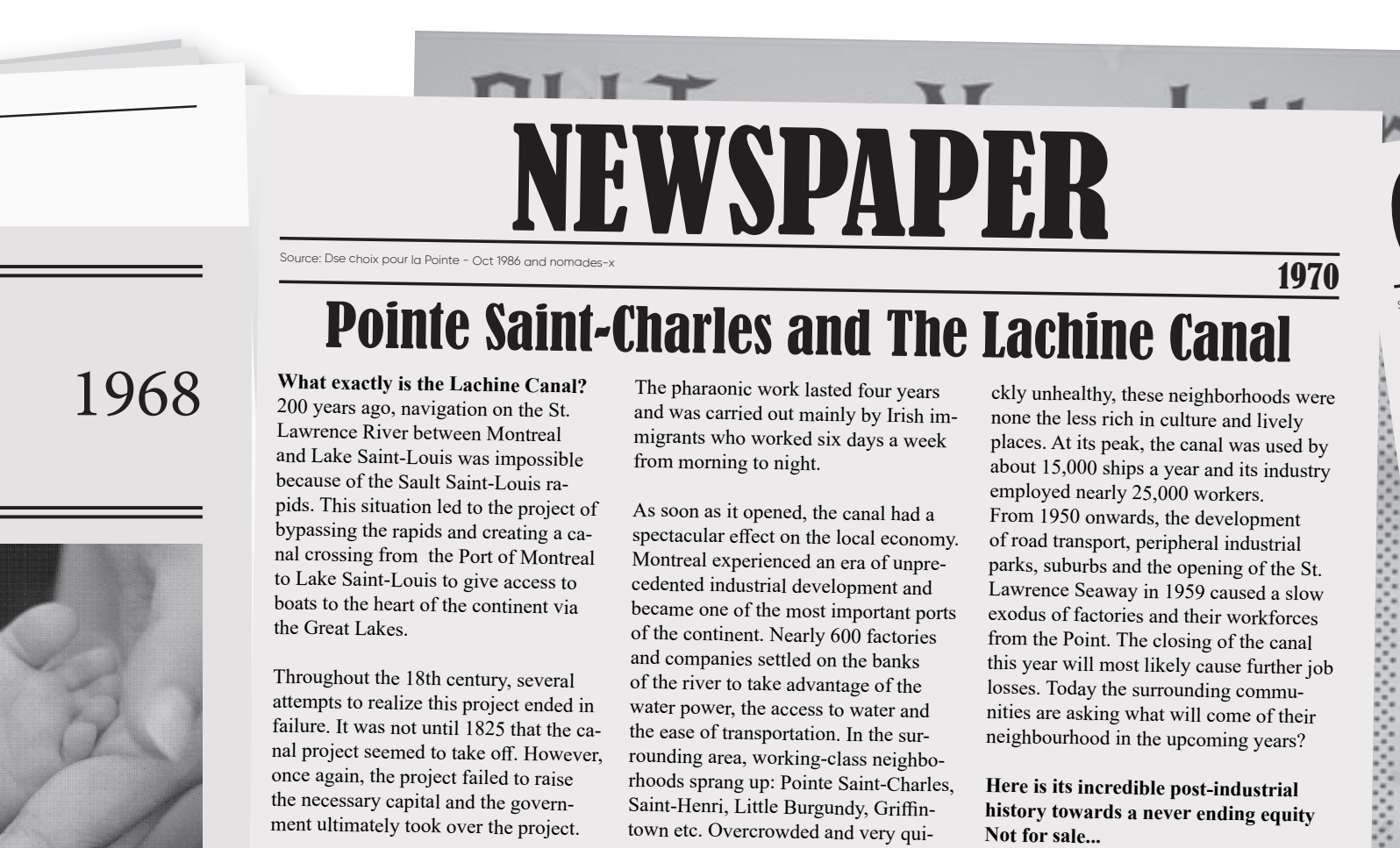
FIRST COMMNITY CLINIC

Source: Clinique Communautaire de Pointe Saint Charles

Concerned about the lack of medical services in Pointe Saint-Charles, a group of medical, nursing and sociology students from McGill University opened The Point St. Charles Community Clinic earlierthis month. These students were inspired by the model of community clinics that exists in some poor neighbourhoods in the United States. According to this model of community medicine, there is a link between poverty, poor living conditions and health status. The clinic reports that neighbourhood citizens have quickly been integrated into the project.

This is the first community clinic established in a working-class neighbourhood in Quebec, offering free family medicine.

The staff included a nurse, a half-time physician and a psychologist. This complementary team can therefore look for and address the causes of poor health both linked to physical and social issues.



NEWSPAPER

Source: Dse choix pour la Pointe - Oct 1986 and nomades-x

1970

Pointe Saint-Charles and The Lachine Canal

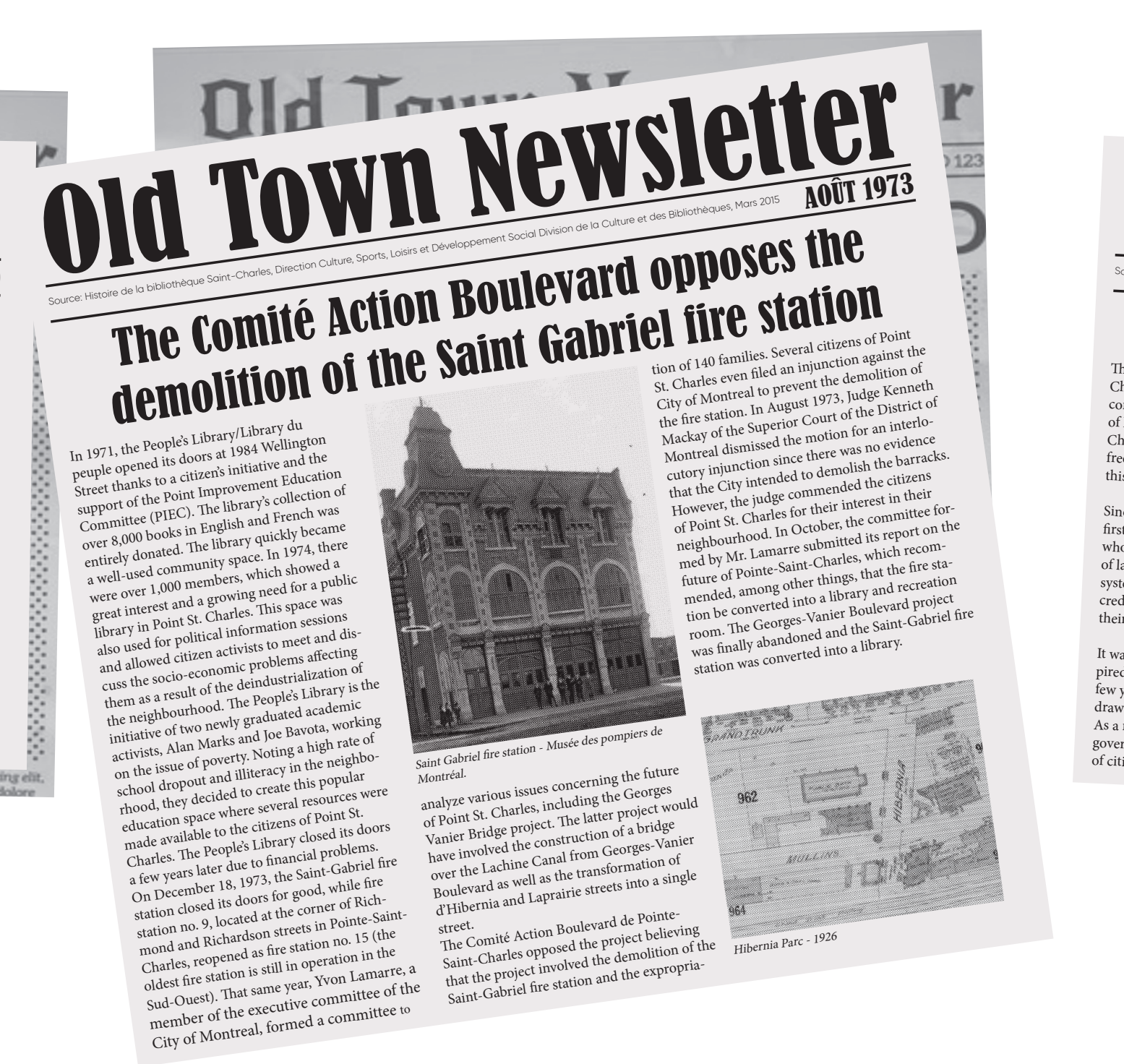
What exactly is the Lachine Canal? 200 years ago, navigation on the St. Lawrence River between Montreal and Lake Saint-Louis was impossible because of the Sault Saint-Louis rapids. This situation led to the project of bypassing the rapids and creating a canal crossing from the Port of Montreal to Lake Saint-Louis to give access to boats to the heart of the continent via the Great Lakes.

Throughout the 18th century, several attempts to realize this project ended in failure. It was not until 1825 that the canal project seemed to take off. However, once again, the project failed to raise the necessary capital and the government ultimately took over the project.

The pharaonic work lasted four years and was carried out mainly by Irish immigrants who worked six days a week from morning to night.

As soon as it opened, the canal had a spectacular effect on the local economy. Montreal experienced an era of unprecedented industrial development and became one of the most important ports of the continent. Nearly 600 factories and companies settled on the banks of the river to take advantage of the water power, the access to water and the ease of transportation. In the surrounding area, working-class neighborhoods sprang up: Pointe Saint-Charles, Saint-Henri, Little Burgundy, Griffintown etc. Overcrowded and very quickly unhealthy, these neighborhoods were none the less rich in culture and lively places. At its peak, the canal was used by about 15,000 ships a year and its industry employed nearly 25,000 workers.
From 1950 onwards, the development of road transport, peripheral industrial parks, suburbs and the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1959 caused a slow exodus of factories and their workforces from the Point. The closing of the canal this year will most likely cause further job losses. Today the surrounding communities are asking what will come of their neighbourhood in the upcoming years?

Here is its incredible post-industrial history towards a never ending equity Not for sale...



Old Town Newsletter

AOÛT 1973

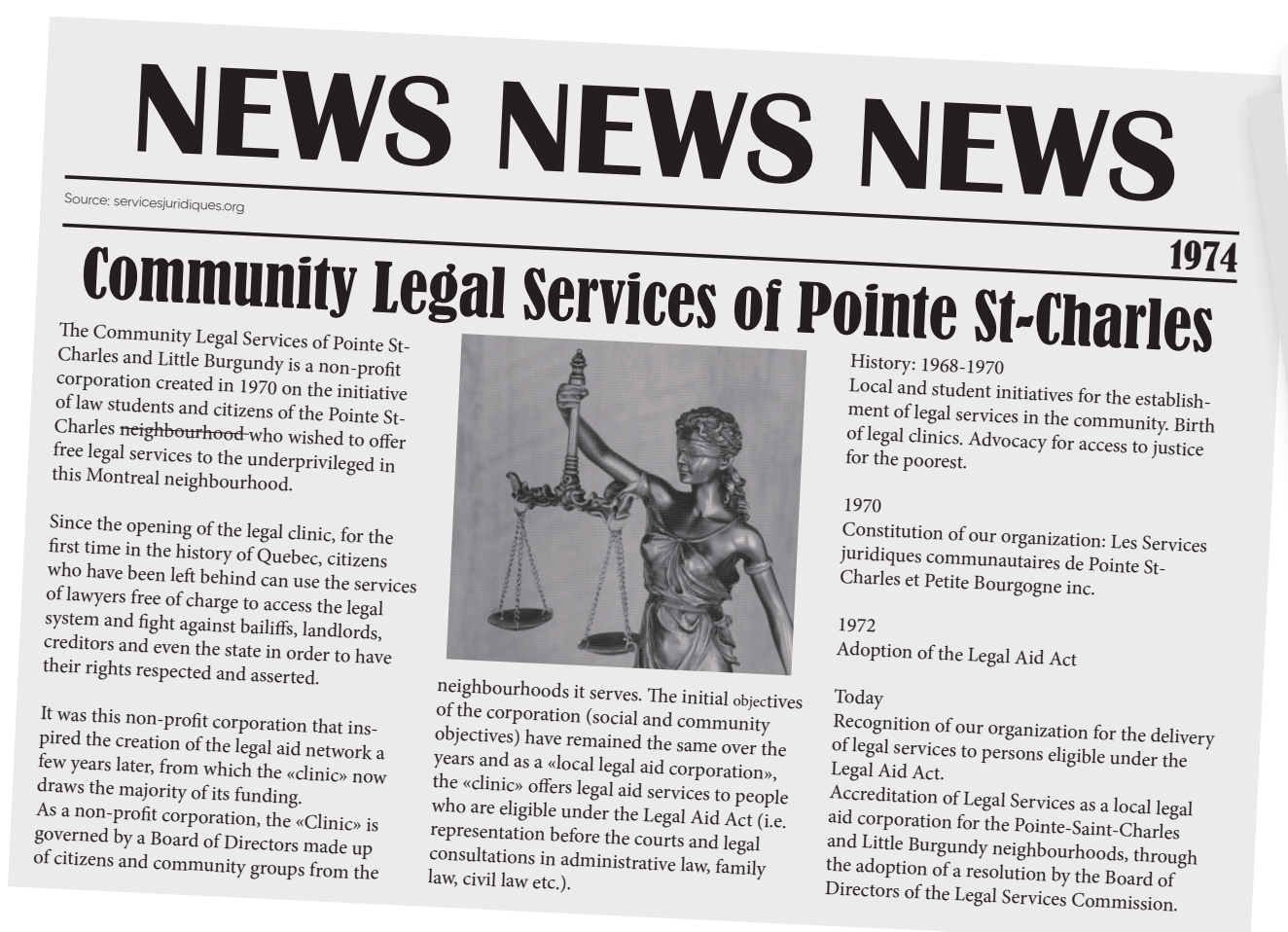
Source: Histoire de la bibliothèque Saint-Charles, Direction Culture, Sports, Loisirs et Développement Social Division de la Culture et des Bibliothèques, Mars 2015

The Comité Action Boulevard opposes the demolition of the Saint Gabriel fire station

In 1971, the People's Library/Library du peuple opened its doors at 1984 Wellington Street thanks to a citizen's initiative and the support of the Point Improvement Education Committee (PIEC). The library's collection of over 8,000 books in English and French was entirely donated. The library quickly became a well-used community space. In 1974, there were over 1,000 members, which showed a great interest and a growing need for a public library in Point St. Charles. This space was also used for political information sessions and allowed citizen activists to meet and discuss the socio-economic problems affecting them as a result of the deindustrialization of the neighbourhood. The People's Library is the initiative of two newly graduated academic activists, Alan Marks and Joe Bavota, working on the issue of poverty. Noting a high rate of school dropout and illiteracy in the neighborhood, they decided to create this popular education space where several resources were made available to the citizens of Point St. Charles. The People's Library closed its doors a few years later due to financial problems. On December 18, 1973, the Saint-Gabriel fire station closed its doors for good, while fire station no. 9, located at the corner of Richmond and Richardson streets in Pointe-Saint-Charles, reopened as fire station no. 15 (the oldest fire station is still in operation in the Sud-Ouest). That same year, Yvon Lamarre, a member of the executive committee of the City of Montreal, formed a committee to analyze various issues concerning the future of Point St. Charles, including the Georges Vanier Bridge project. The latter project would have involved the construction of a bridge over the Lachine Canal from Georges-Vanier Boulevard as well as the transformation of d'Hibernia and Laprairie streets into a single street.
The Comité Action Boulevard de Pointe-Saint-Charles opposed the project believing that the project involved the demolition of the Saint-Gabriel fire station and the expropriation of 140 families. Several citizens of Point St. Charles even filed an injunction against the City of Montreal to prevent the demolition of the fire station. In August 1973, Judge Kenneth Mackay of the Superior Court of the District of Montreal dismissed the motion for an interlocutory injunction since there was no evidence that the City intended to demolish the barracks. However, the judge commended the citizens of Point St. Charles for their interest in their neighbourhood. In October, the committee formed by Mr. Lamarre submitted its report on the future of Pointe-Saint-Charles, which recommended, among other things, that the fire station be converted into a library and recreation room. The Georges-Vanier Boulevard project was finally abandoned and the Saint-Gabriel fire station was converted into a library.

Saint Gabriel fire station - Musée des pompiers de Montréal.

Hibernia Parc - 1926



NEWS NEWS NEWS

Source: servicesjuridiques.org

1974

Community Legal Services of Pointe St-Charles

The Community Legal Services of Pointe St-Charles and Little Burgundy is a non-profit corporation created in 1970 on the initiative of law students and citizens of the Pointe St-Charles ~~neighbourhood~~ who wished to offer free legal services to the underprivileged in this Montreal neighbourhood.

Since the opening of the legal clinic, for the first time in the history of Quebec, citizens who have been left behind can use the services of lawyers free of charge to access the legal system and fight against bailiffs, landlords, creditors and even the state in order to have their rights respected and asserted.

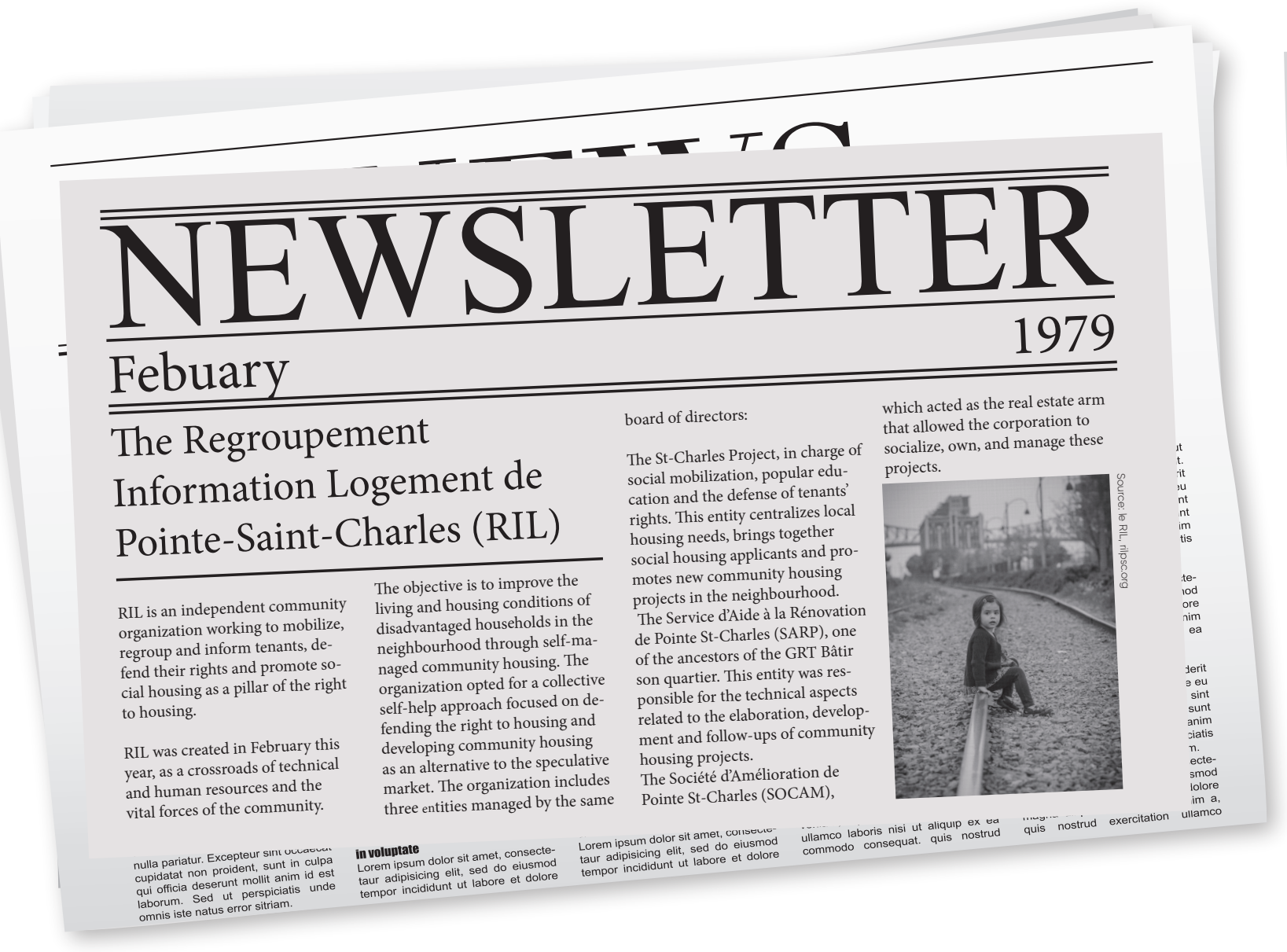
It was this non-profit corporation that inspired the creation of the legal aid network a few years later, from which the «clinic» now draws the majority of its funding.
As a non-profit corporation, the «Clinic» is governed by a Board of Directors made up of citizens and community groups from the neighbourhoods it serves. The initial objectives of the corporation (social and community objectives) have remained the same over the years and as a «local legal aid corporation», the «clinic» offers legal aid services to people who are eligible under the Legal Aid Act (i.e. representation before the courts and legal consultations in administrative law, family law, civil law etc.).

History: 1968-1970
Local and student initiatives for the establishment of legal services in the community. Birth of legal clinics. Advocacy for access to justice for the poorest.

1970
Constitution of our organization: Les Services juridiques communautaires de Pointe St-Charles et Petite Bourgogne inc.

1972
Adoption of the Legal Aid Act

Today
Recognition of our organization for the delivery of legal services to persons eligible under the Legal Aid Act.
Accreditation of Legal Services as a local legal aid corporation for the Pointe-Saint-Charles and Little Burgundy neighbourhoods, through the adoption of a resolution by the Board of Directors of the Legal Services Commission.



NEWSLETTER

Febuary 1979

The Regroupement Information Logement de Pointe-Saint-Charles (RIL)

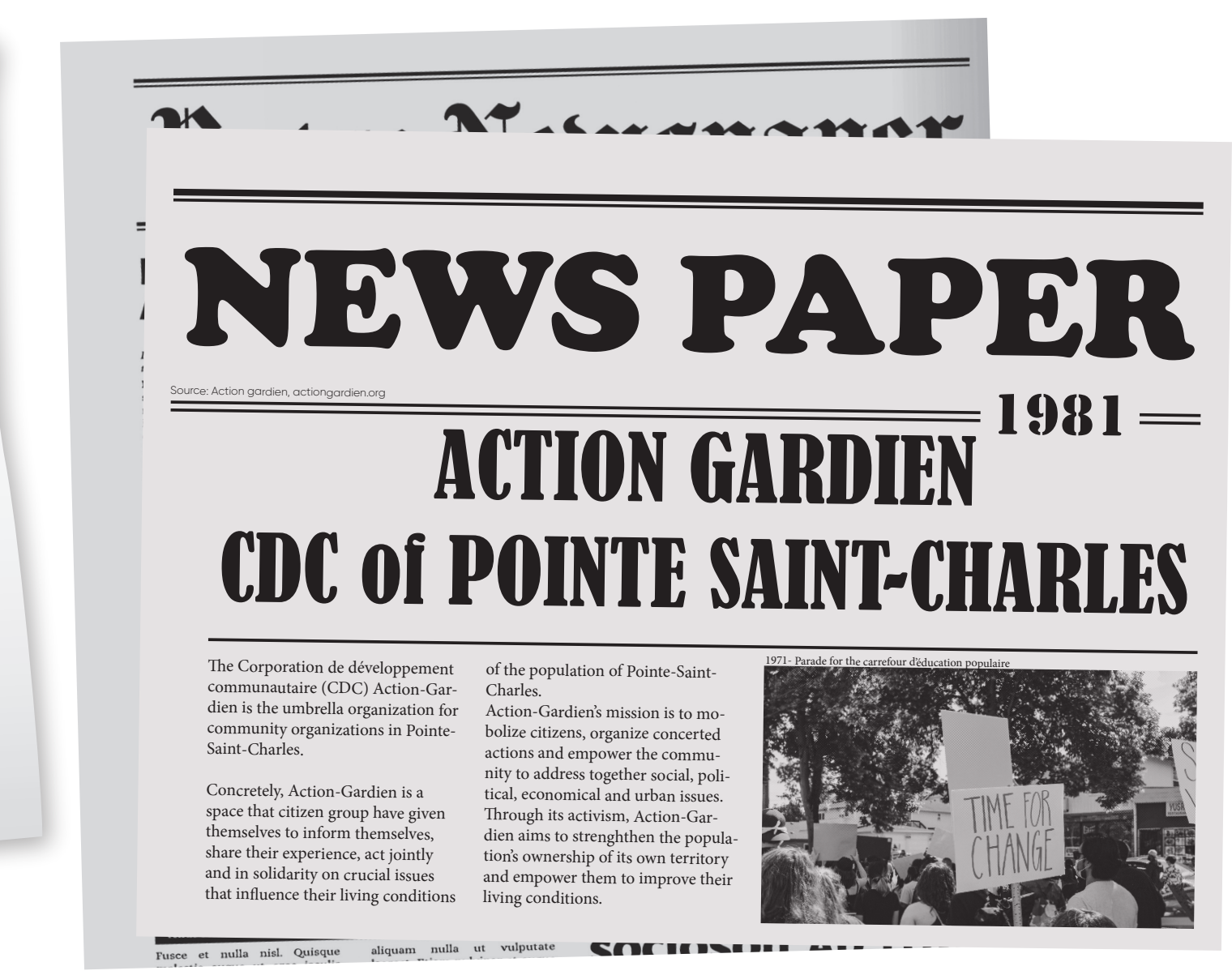
RIL is an independent community organization working to mobilize, regroup and inform tenants, defend their rights and promote social housing as a pillar of the right to housing.

RIL was created in February this year, as a crossroads of technical and human resources and the vital forces of the community.

The objective is to improve the living and housing conditions of disadvantaged households in the neighbourhood through self-managed community housing. The organization opted for a collective self-help approach focused on defending the right to housing and developing community housing as an alternative to the speculative market. The organization includes three entities managed by the same board of directors:

The St-Charles Project, in charge of social mobilization, popular education and the defense of tenants' rights. This entity centralizes local housing needs, brings together social housing applicants and promotes new community housing projects in the neighbourhood.
The Service d'Aide à la Rénovation de Pointe St-Charles (SARP), one of the ancestors of the GRT Bâtir son quartier. This entity was responsible for the technical aspects related to the elaboration, development and follow-ups of community housing projects.
The Société d'Amélioration de Pointe St-Charles (SOCAM), which acted as the real estate arm that allowed the corporation to socialize, own, and manage these projects.

Source: le RIL, rilpsc.org



NEWS PAPER

Source: Action gardien, actiongardien.org

1981

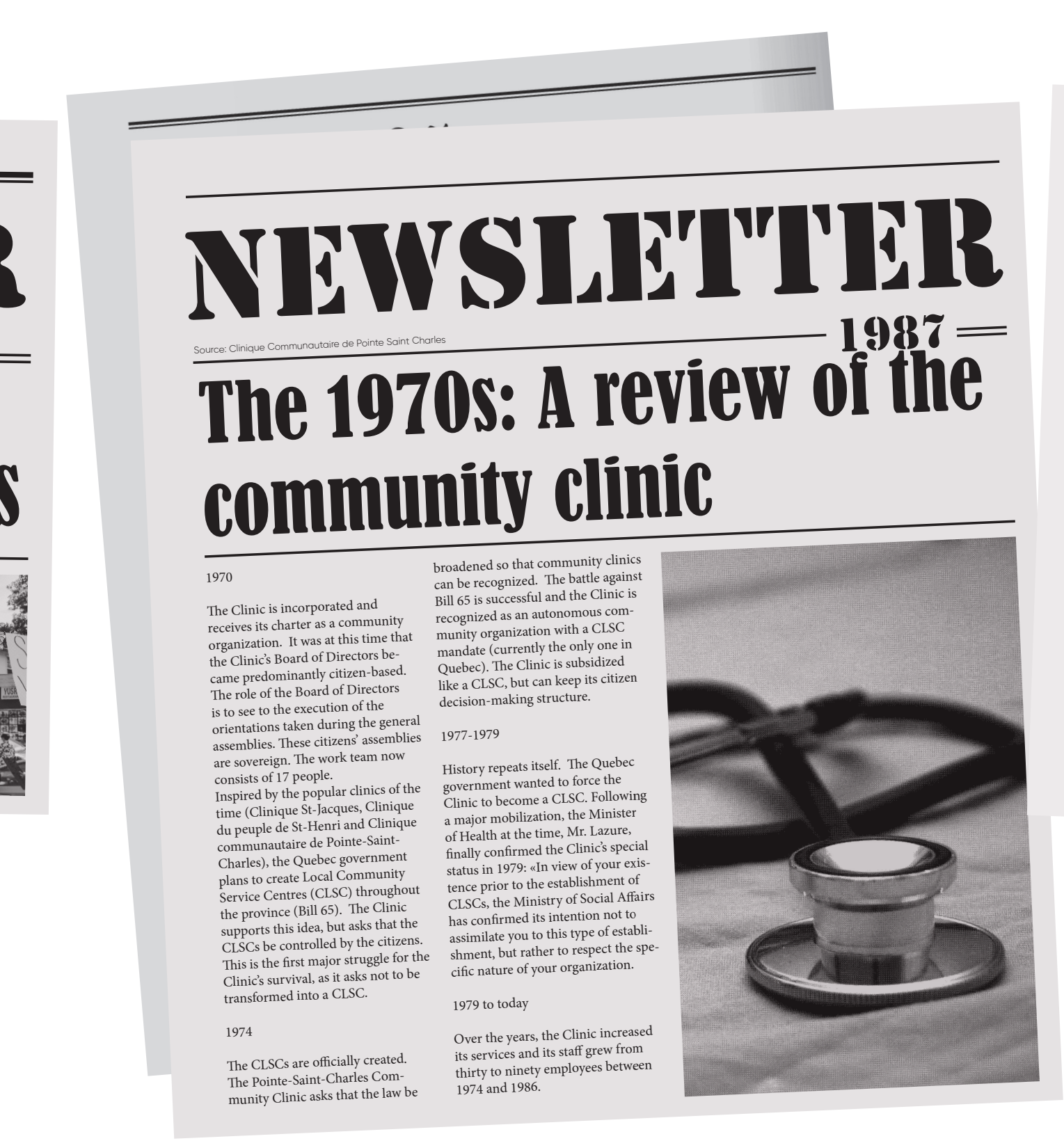
ACTION GARDIEN CDC of POINTE SAINT-CHARLES

The Corporation de développement communautaire (CDC) Action-Gardien is the umbrella organization for community organizations in Pointe-Saint-Charles.

Concretely, Action-Gardien is a space that citizen group have given themselves to inform themselves, share their experience, act jointly and in solidarity on crucial issues that influence their living conditions of the population of Pointe-Saint-Charles.
Action-Gardien's mission is to mobolize citizens, organize concerted actions and empower the community to address together social, political, economical and urban issues. Through its activism, Action-Gardien aims to strenghthen the population's ownership of its own territory and empower them to improve their living conditions.

1971- Parade for the carrefour d'éducation populaire

TIME FOR CHANGE



NEWSLETTER

1987

Source: Clinique Communautaire de Pointe Saint Charles

The 1970s: A review of the community clinic

1970

The Clinic is incorporated and receives its charter as a community organization. It was at this time that the Clinic's Board of Directors became predominantly citizen-based. The role of the Board of Directors is to see to the execution of the orientations taken during the general assemblies. These citizens' assemblies are sovereign. The work team now consists of 17 people.
Inspired by the popular clinics of the time (Clinique St-Jacques, Clinique du peuple de St-Henri and Clinique communautaire de Pointe-Saint-Charles), the Quebec government plans to create Local Community Service Centres (CLSC) throughout the province (Bill 65). The Clinic supports this idea, but asks that the CLSCs be controlled by the citizens. This is the first major struggle for the Clinic's survival, as it asks not to be transformed into a CLSC.

1974

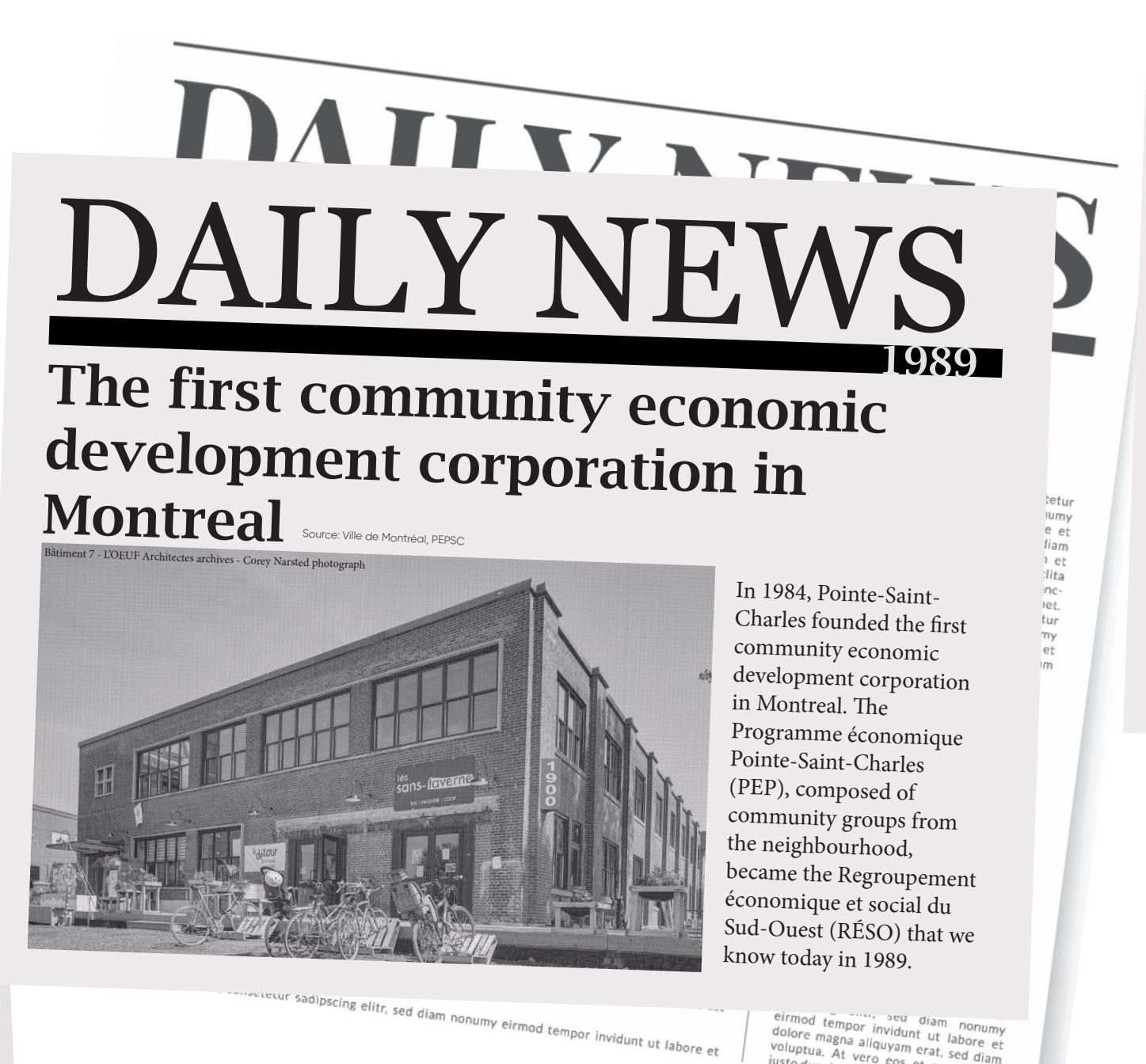
The CLSCs are officially created. The Pointe-Saint-Charles Community Clinic asks that the law be broadened so that community clinics can be recognized. The battle against Bill 65 is successful and the Clinic is recognized as an autonomous community organization with a CLSC mandate (currently the only one in Quebec). The Clinic is subsidized like a CLSC, but can keep its citizen decision-making structure.

1977-1979

History repeats itself. The Quebec government wanted to force the Clinic to become a CLSC. Following a major mobilization, the Minister of Health at the time, Mr. Lazure, finally confirmed the Clinic's special status in 1979: «In view of your existence prior to the establishment of CLSCs, the Ministry of Social Affairs has confirmed its intention not to assimilate you to this type of establishment, but rather to respect the specific nature of your organization.

1979 to today

Over the years, the Clinic increased its services and its staff grew from thirty to ninety employees between 1974 and 1986.



DAILY NEWS

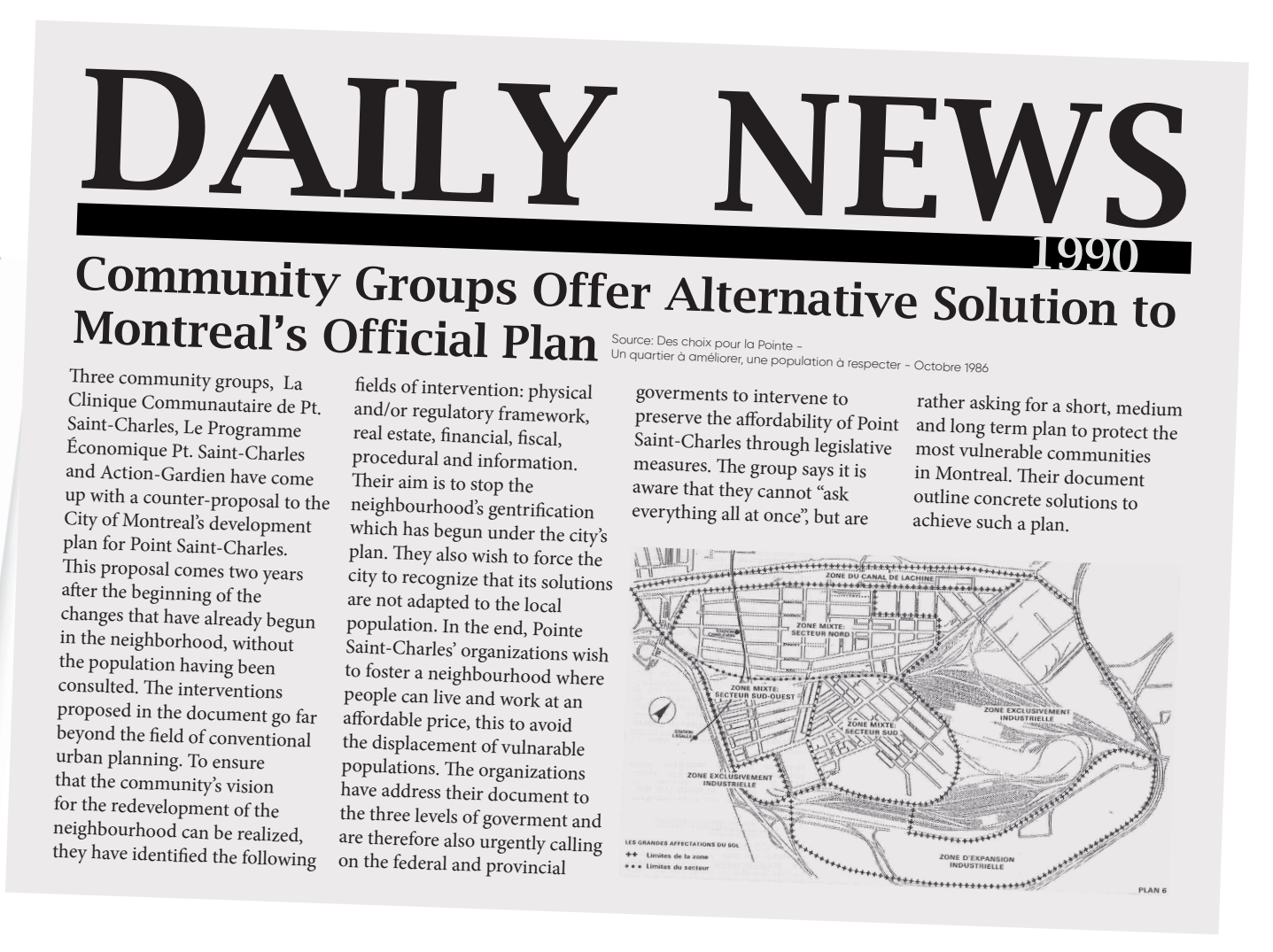
1989

The first community economic development corporation in Montreal

Source: Ville de Montréal, PEPSC

Bâtiment 7 - L'OEUF Architectes archives - Corey Narsted photograph

In 1984, Pointe-Saint-Charles founded the first community economic development corporation in Montreal. The Programme économique Pointe-Saint-Charles (PEP), composed of community groups from the neighbourhood, became the Regroupement économique et social du Sud-Ouest (RÉSO) that we know today in 1989.



DAILY NEWS

1990

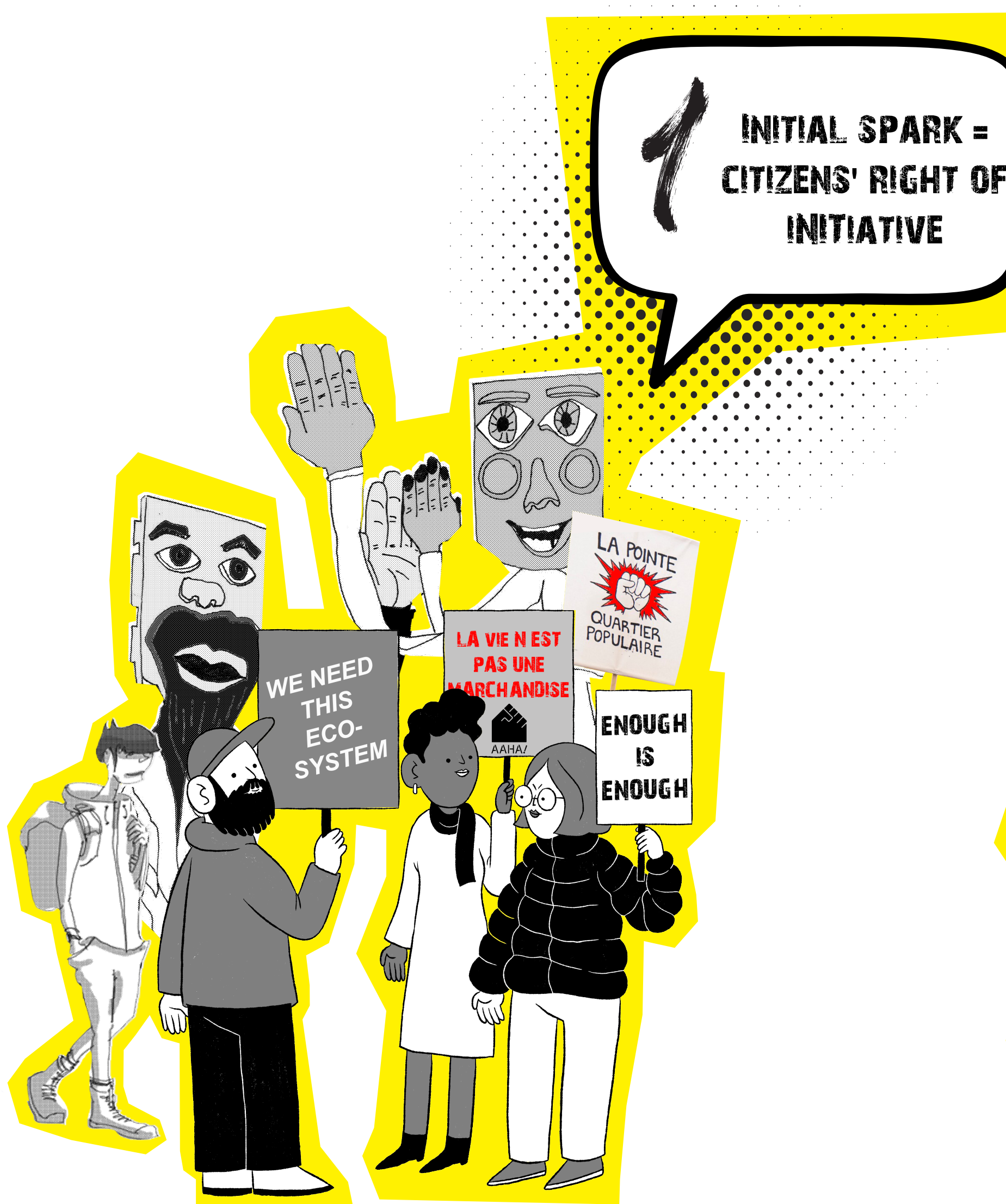
Community Groups Offer Alternative Solution to Montreal's Official Plan

Source: Des choix pour la Pointe – Un quartier à améliorer, une population à respecter - Octobre 1986

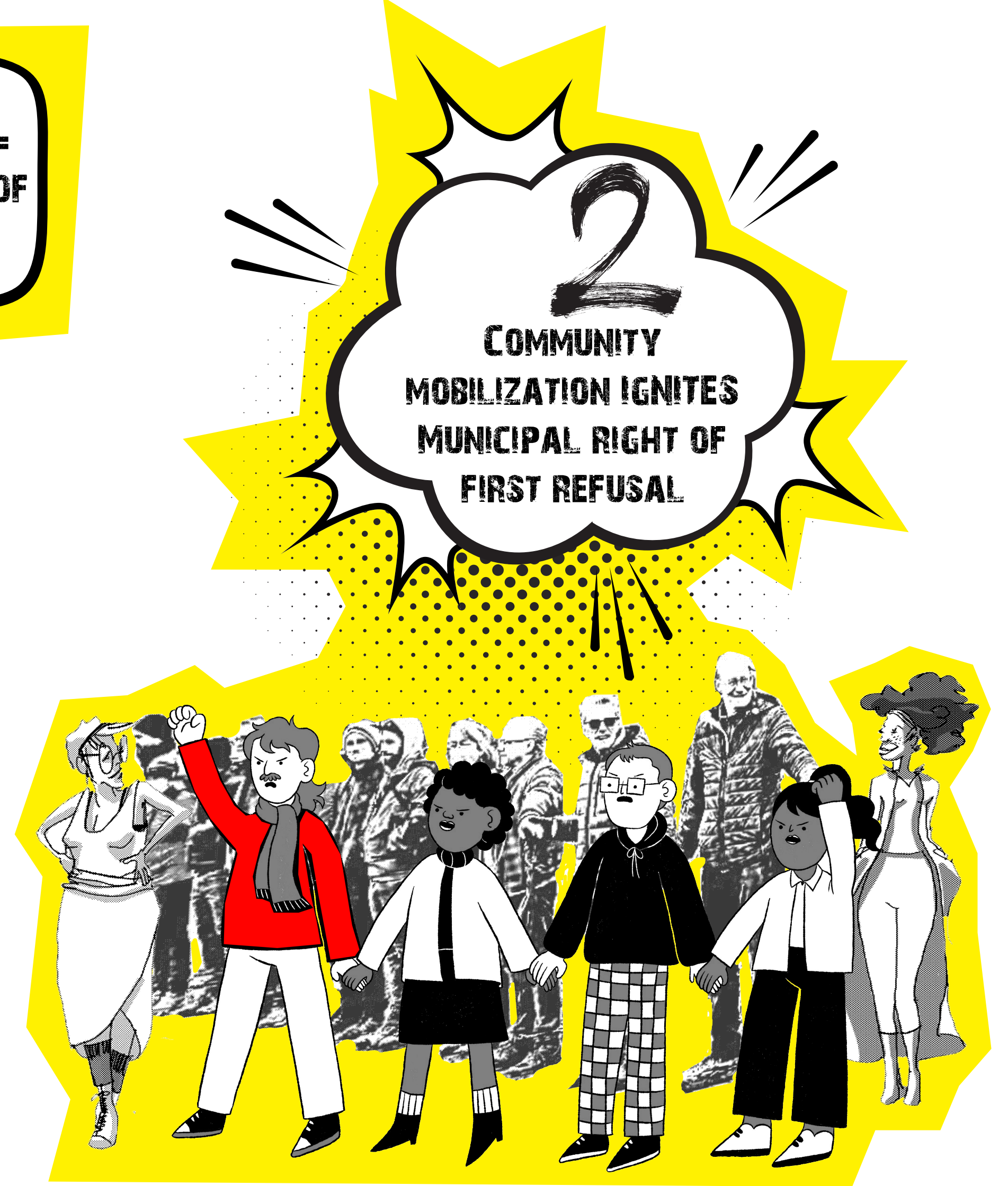
Three community groups, La Clinique Communautaire de Pt. Saint-Charles, Le Programme Économique Pt. Saint-Charles and Action-Gardien have come up with a counter-proposal to the City of Montreal's development plan for Point Saint-Charles.
This proposal comes two years after the beginning of the changes that have already begun in the neighborhood, without the population having been consulted. The interventions proposed in the document go far beyond the field of conventional urban planning. To ensure that the community's vision for the redevelopment of the neighbourhood can be realized, they have identified the following fields of intervention: physical and/or regulatory framework, real estate, financial, fiscal, procedural and information.
Their aim is to stop the neighbourhood's gentrification which has begun under the city's plan. They also wish to force the city to recognize that its solutions are not adapted to the local population. In the end, Pointe Saint-Charles' organizations wish to foster a neighbourhood where people can live and work at an affordable price, this to avoid the displacement of vulnarable populations. The organizations have address their document to the three levels of goverment and are therefore also urgently calling on the federal and provincial goverments to intervene to preserve the affordability of Point Saint-Charles through legislative measures. The group says it is aware that they cannot "ask everything all at once", but are rather asking for a short, medium and long term plan to protect the most vulnerable communities in Montreal. Their document outline concrete solutions to achieve such a plan.

ZONE DU CANAL DE LACHINE
ZONE MIXTE: SECTEUR NORD
ZONE MIXTE: SECTEUR SUD-OUEST
ZONE MIXTE: SECTEUR SUD
ZONE EXCLUSIVEMENT INDUSTRIELLE
ZONE EXCLUSIVEMENT INDUSTRIELLE
ZONE D'EXPANSION INDUSTRIELLE
STATION LASALLE
LES GRANDES AFFECTATIONS DU SOL
Limites de la zone
Limites du secteur
PLAN 6

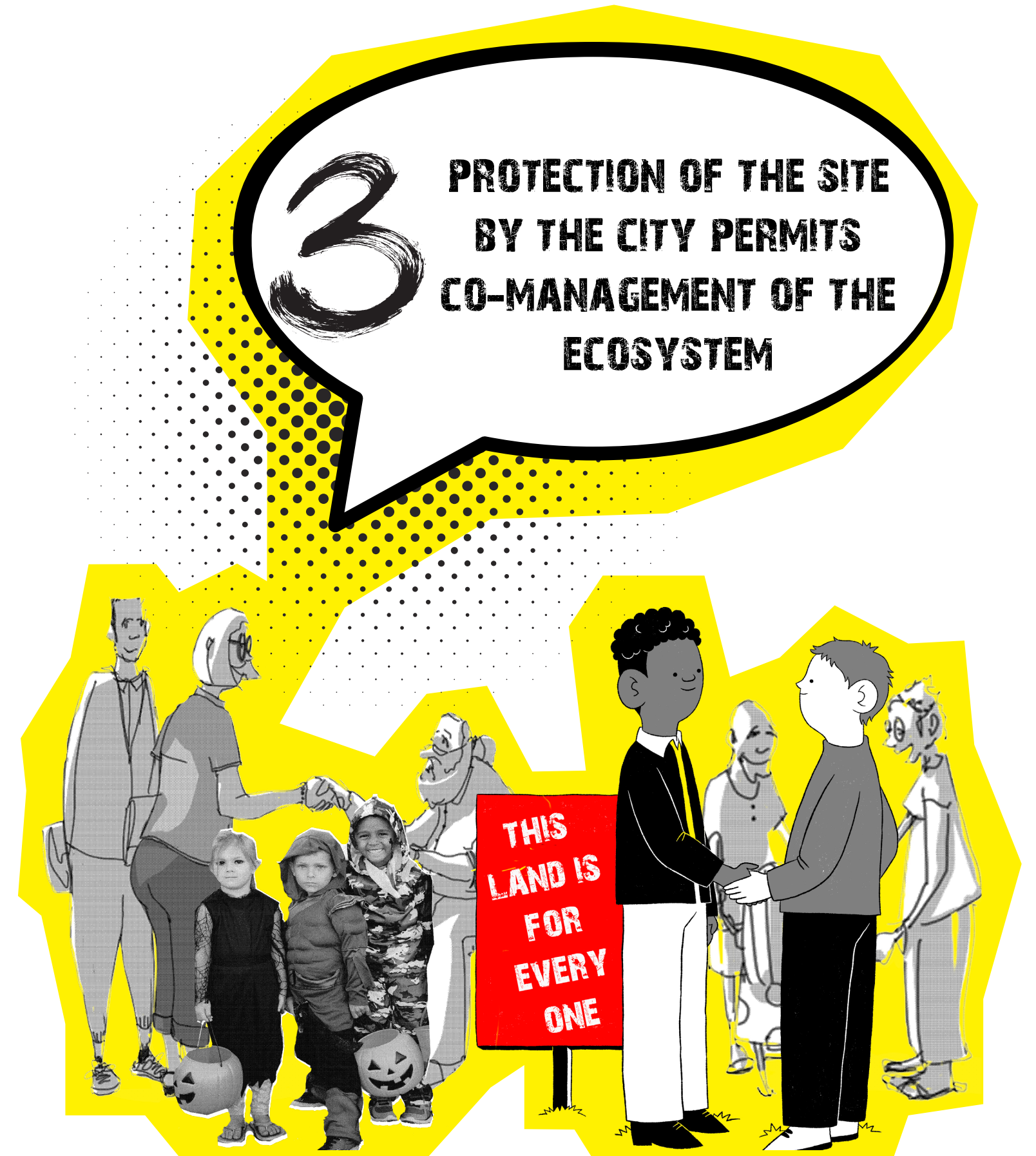
TYPICAL GOVERNANCE TIMELINE



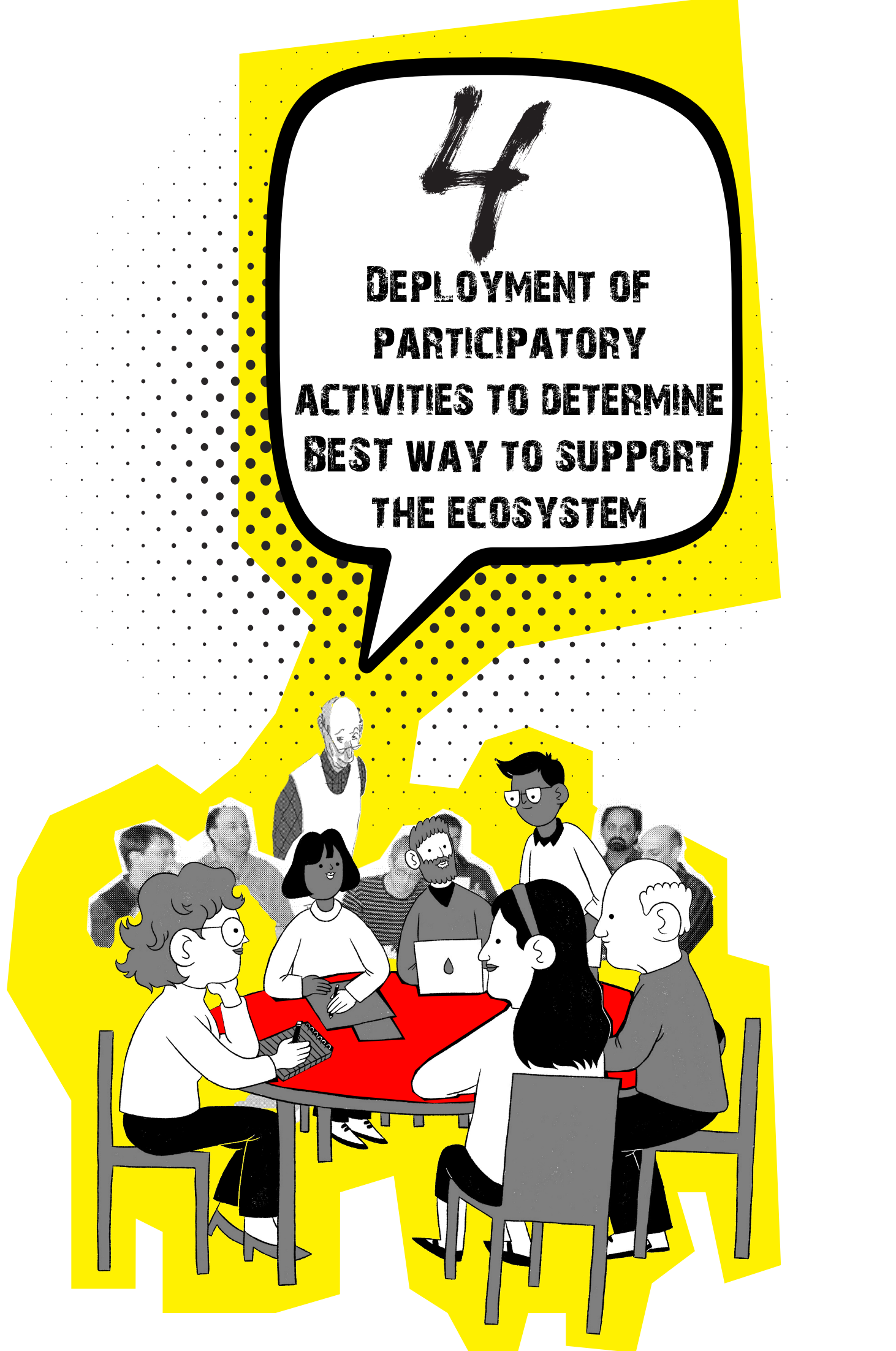
1
INITIAL SPARK = CITIZENS' RIGHT OF INITIATIVE
WE NEED THIS ECO-SYSTEM
LA VIE N'EST PAS UNE MARCHANDISE
AAHA!
LA POINTE QUARTIER POPULAIRE
ENOUGH IS ENOUGH



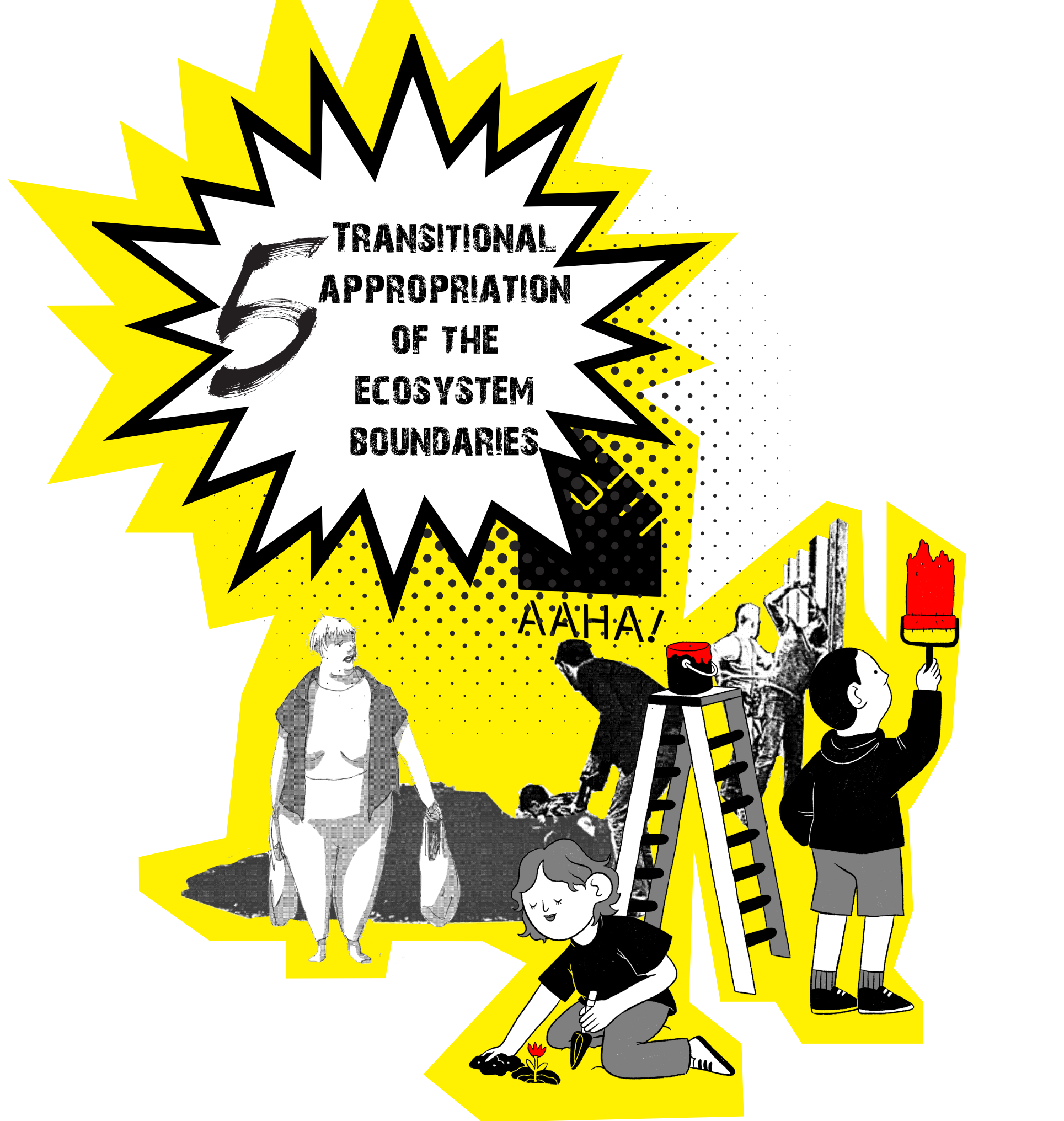
2
COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION IGNITES MUNICIPAL RIGHT OF FIRST REFUSAL

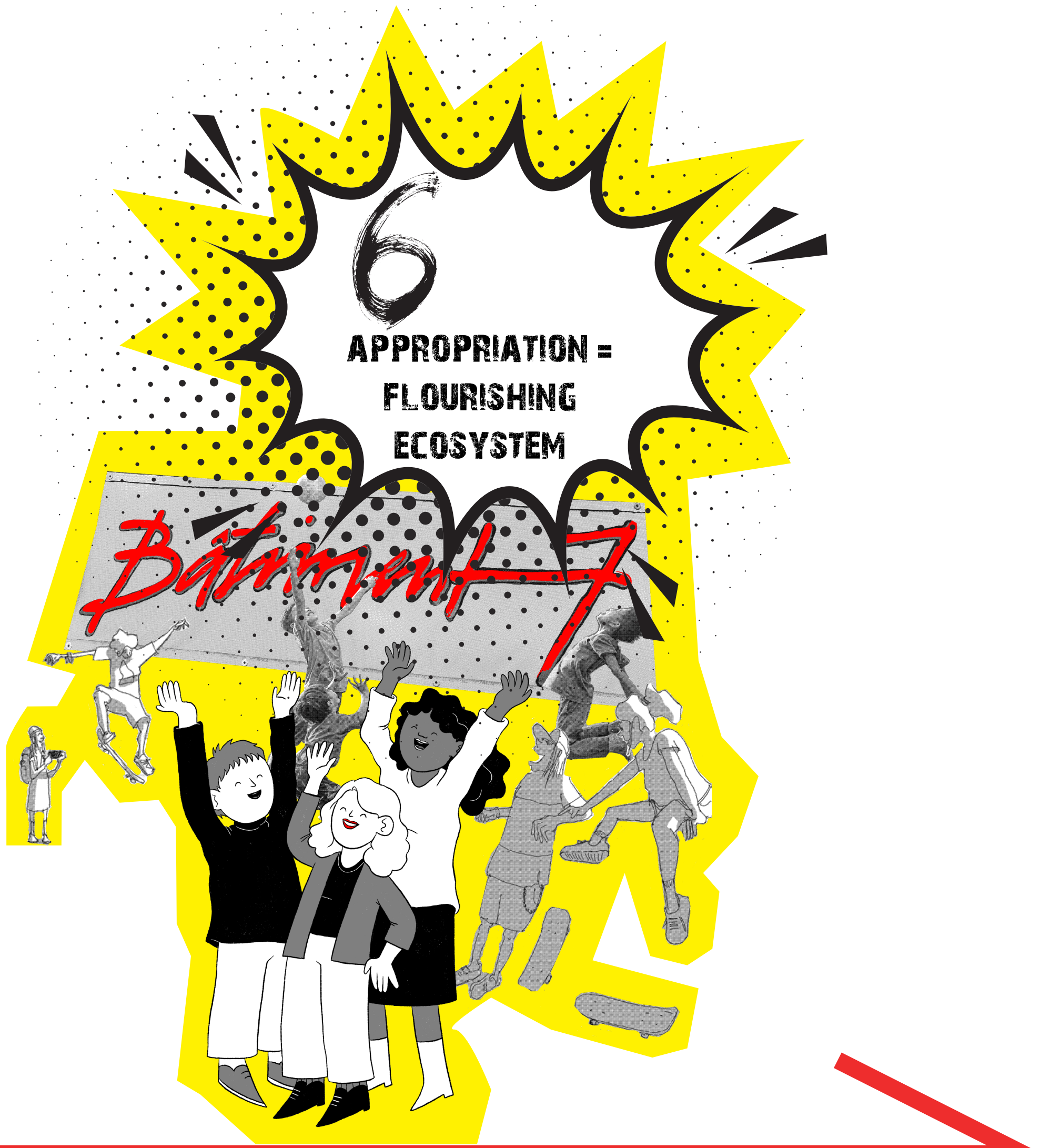


3
PROTECTION OF THE SITE BY THE CITY PERMITS CO-MANAGEMENT OF THE ECOSYSTEM
THIS LAND IS FOR EVERY ONE



4
DEPLOYMENT OF PARTICIPATORY ACTIVITIES TO DETERMINE BEST WAY TO SUPPORT THE ECOSYSTEM



5
TRANSITIONAL APPROPRIATION OF THE ECOSYSTEM BOUNDARIES
AAHA!