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PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Significant progress on high-speed internet *Régions branchées* program – Good news for Argenteuil!

Lachute, June 4, 2020 – The MRC d'Argenteuil is one of 66 projects selected under the *Régions branchées* program, as announced by the Government of Québec on May 21, 2020. To the MRC's great satisfaction, about 1,500 additional homes, mainly located in the southern and eastern sectors of the territory, will be added to the 4,200 homes of the large-scale fibre optic project estimated at \$11.7 million, for which funding totalling \$9.3 million was announced jointly by the federal and provincial governments under their *Connect to Innovate* and *Québec branché* programs in November 2017. The amount of the provincial grant made public last May through the *Régions branchées* program remains to be confirmed, for work evaluated at \$4.7 million. Once these 5,700 connections are completed, 92% of Argenteuil's territory will be covered by high-speed internet.

Actively pursuing efforts to provide full coverage to the region

On May 28, the MRC d'Argenteuil applied to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) for funding under the *Broadband Fund*, for a new high-speed internet deployment project that is directly related to those it is currently carrying out. The project submitted to the CRTC would make it possible to finally provide high-speed internet access to the entire population of the MRC d'Argenteuil. The MRC's fibre optic network would cover areas that are underserved or partially served by current internet service providers. The network would connect more than 1,700 households and businesses.

This project amounts to nearly \$10.2 million and the MRC is seeking \$4.8 million in funding from the CRTC, or 50% of the eligible costs under the *Broadband Fund*. The Québec government, through its Ministry of Economy and Innovation, would assume the remaining eligible costs, as set out in a letter of commitment delivered to the MRC d'Argenteuil in March 2020. The CRTC is expected to announce its decision in early fall 2020, and the MRC d'Argenteuil remains very confident that it will receive a favourable response.

Coordination committee to facilitate access to high-speed internet

The MRC d'Argenteuil welcomes the establishment of a coordination committee bringing together Hydro-Québec, Bell Canada, Télébec, Telus and the Ministry of Economy and Innovation with the objective of accelerating the processing of requests for access to telecommunications support infrastructures for the deployment of high-speed internet. It should be noted that, since January 2019, the MRC d'Argenteuil has been lobbying various levels of government to make them aware of the many obstacles and constraints related to access to support structures. Most recently, on May 7, 2020, the MRC d'Argenteuil filed a memoir as part of the CRTC's Call for comments regarding potential barriers to the deployment of broadband-capable networks in underserved areas in Canada, in which it emphasized the importance of high speed internet as an essential service for economic, social and cultural development, education, health, public safety and dynamic land occupancy.

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Source: MRC d'Argenteuil

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