



As a Scout leader for the Armenian community scout group (teenage boys), I helped design a team game called “Montreal on My Mind”. Each week, the four teams would get together around a map of Montreal and try to plan their next steps to acquire different neighborhoods. At the end of the year, the team that had acquired the largest neighborhood won.

OUR OBJECTIVES

We wanted to present a game that would require thinking in the long term rather than the short term. We also wanted to play a game that wasn't as physical as our usual sport games or team games.

We also wanted to present a game that would change dynamically each week to bring in an element of surprise, fun twists and randomness (but we were careful to not render decision making obsolete) .

GAME OBJECTIVES

The teams would need to purchase or sell neighborhoods in order to control the biggest neighborhood with the most budget.

MAP AND NEIGHBORHOODS

One of the most important items in the game was a regular foldable city map. The alphanumeric grid that is present was used to divide up the islands of Montreal, Laval and Ile-Bizard. Each sector of the grid had advantages or disadvantages depending on the presence of highways, shopping centers, school, hospitals, etc.

Sectors that were entirely covered by water, as well as the South Shore, were not part of the game.

PLAYERS

Four teams of 10 players each. Each team would have a budget that was always kept secret from the other teams.

GAME PROGRESSION

Every Friday night, the Scout group would meet up for a 2 hour meeting. During each meeting, 30 minutes were reserved for this game. It lasted 3 months (therefore 12 sessions), before it ended.

Each team was given a sum of money as well as a starting point on the map corresponding to different neighborhoods. Each team would come up one by one and consult the map. They were each allowed to up to three moves a week: buy a neighboring sector, sell one of their sectors or do nothing. If they chose to make a transaction with one of the other teams, that team would also come up and they would negotiate all together in front of the map.

Example 1: A team would come up and buy three adjacent sectors. Since each one of those purchases is considered a move, the team cannot do anything else and their turn for that week ends.

A sector that was sold became neutral and any team that had bordering sectors could purchase it. Selling a sector would give the team money, with which they could buy other sectors. Some sectors also generate money for the team, while others might take away money.

Oftentimes, at specific moments in the game, one of the organizers would announce a breaking news story that just occurred in one or many sectors (to imitate real life news). These stories were arbitrarily defined and timed by the organizers to add surprise element to the game.

Example 2 : Highway 15 is in bad condition, therefore any sector that has a segment of highway 15 in it would have to invest money in it to fix the highway. This would decrease the revenue generated by those sectors.

Example 3: A fire breaks out in sector D-9, the team that controls it, will have to pay for the fire damage it caused.

The game continues until the end of the 12 weeks. The team with the largest neighborhood would win the game.

IN RETROSPECT...

Overall, the game surpassed our expectations. We were afraid that a lot of players would not be interested. However by keeping the rules simple and the game sessions to 30min, we hoped to keep the players interested.

Unfortunately, some players lost interest towards the end, as some team members became self-appointed leaders and would try to take matters in their hands only.

The “Breaking News” system was also well received, since teams would never know what to expect and it would create interesting circumstances.