

# **MONTRÉAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2003-2010**

**Summary**  
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TOURISME  
**Montréal**

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## THE NEW MONTRÉAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PLAN (2003-2010)

Tourisme Montréal has chosen to update its first tourism development plan halfway through the plan's mandate. Tourisme Montréal's previous tourism development plan (2000-2005), drawn up in 1999, provided an overview of the regional tourism offer and defined the direction that would be taken in terms of product development, accessibility, hospitality and regional organization. The plan also provided a basis for a number of projects carried out in recent years.

However, the development of Montréal's tourism product over the past three years as well as changes in the organization's administrative structure have given rise to a new direction. In fact, rapid changes in Montréal's tourism product, combined with a necessary update of Tourisme Montréal's marketing plan, have resulted in the need for an all new development plan foreseen for the 2003-2010 horizon.

### 1- Tourisme Montréal's roles in developing the tourism product

As a privileged partner of public authorities in tourism development, Tourisme Montréal already acts as an advisor to public authorities who are responsible for evaluating recreational tourism projects. Its role, therefore, is to orient and even influence tourism development by ensuring that projects are understood in terms of clearly defined priorities. This in turn facilitates the work of the promoters.

By making tourism development in Montréal a part of its mission in 1998, Tourisme Montréal expressed its wish to provide the city with a top-quality product that would allow it to build on the strength of its appeal and meet the expectations of tourists who are solicited through various sales and marketing techniques. The ultimate goal of Tourisme Montréal's development plan is to create a unified vision of the tourism product. Tourisme Montréal will work to create this vision and promises to be an outspoken advocate of it. After more than five years, Tourisme Montréal has clearly succeeded. Its tourism development plan is characterized by the following two major roles:

- ✓ Research, dissemination of information/advice and planning.
- ✓ Leadership and mobilization.

Tourisme Montréal's success in the following two areas illustrates why the organization has become a credible and respected player in tourism development:

- ✓ Its ability to coordinate a large number of participants, including first and foremost public authorities.
- ✓ The development of projects in terms of a realistic vision of tourism, designed and made public on a large scale and taken into account in the plans of public and private participants in tourism development.

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The two main objectives of Tourisme Montréal's tourism development plan are:

- ✓ To orient tourism development within the urban framework and encourage new investments in sectors that would benefit most from it.
- ✓ To ensure cooperation between the various participants in tourism development so that tourism is a reflection of the whole.

It is important to keep in mind that in the last three years close to one billion dollars have been invested in Montréal, most notably in the Quartier international and the expansion of the Palais des congrès. Investments over the next three years are expected to reach a total of several hundreds of millions of dollars.

## **2- Current and future projects**

Numerous top-quality, permanent attractions exist in Montréal. However, they are not large-scale attractions and, as a result, not powerful enough to attract a large number of potential international clients. Tourism development must benefit from significant investments in infrastructure—not necessarily touristic—that will result in a new image for Montréal.

Several projects have been carried out over the past few years in Montréal. The following is a list of projects that have been completed, projects that are currently underway and those that have been postponed:

### Projects completed in the past three years

#### *Business:*

- Expansion of the Palais des congrès.
- Completion of the first phase of the Quartier international in Montréal.
- Opening of the transborder finger at the Dorval International Airport.
- Renovations to Place Bonaventure and its exhibition hall.

#### *Leisure:*

- Reopening of the Lachine Canal to pleasure boating.
- Addition of Montréal to the Champ Car Series auto racing calendar.
- Approval of the Place des festivals project and creation of the Quartier des spectacles corporation.
- Acquisition of La Ronde by the American *Six Flags* (round of investments to renew the product).
- Two editions of the Mosaïcultures, the second in the summer of 2003.
- Establishment of the corporation leading to the creation of the Montréal Cultural Showcase.
- Creation of the Société du Havre de Montréal.

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Projects currently underway or postponed

*Currently underway:*

- Expansion of the stadium in Jarry Park.
- Adoption of a new city plan by the new city (2004).
- Opening of the international arrival lobby at the Dorval International Airport.

*Postponed:*

- Passenger Terminal at the Port of Montréal.
- Greater accessibility to the Dorval International Airport through a rapid link (highway or railroad).

*Remaining problems:*

- Insufficient advertising and signs.
- Insufficient upkeep of streets and public places.
- Large number of abandoned lots and buildings in the downtown area.

### **3- The competition**

Many average-sized cities similar to Montréal (Barcelona, Pittsburgh, Milwaukee and Boston) are currently investing in tourism development. As an example, the City of Toronto has several projects underway following a period of relative inactivity in the last decade. These projects include the expansion and modernization of the Royal Ontario Museum, the construction of the Opera House, the future home of the National Ballet of Canada, as well as the Waterfront mega-project, which includes the development of parks and cultural attractions and extensive urban planning. In addition, other cities in Canada are in the process of enhancing their events programming.

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## **4- Overview of Montréal's tourism product**

### **✓ Montréal's appeal**

A significant number of top-quality cultural and recreational venues have been set up in Montréal since the beginning of the 1990s. However, these venues are not large-scale attractions and are therefore not powerful enough to attract a large number of potential international clients.

Successive phases of development in Montréal over the past few years have nonetheless allowed the city to benefit from infrastructure comparable to that found in numerous large Canadian and American cities. Overall, however, Montréal's tourism product is not entirely unique compared to those offered by competing North American cities.

It is nonetheless important to note that Montréal has distinguished itself at the international level through the quality and reputation of its major events and its vibrant city life.

### **✓ The hotel industry**

The Montréal hotel industry has improved considerably in the last four years with the addition of a dozen new hotels in Old Montréal and the downtown area. With these additions, the industry offers a wide range of accommodations, particularly in Old Montréal where the recent development of boutique hotels has added to the diversity. Currently, 65% of hotels in Montréal are rated 4- or 5-star.

### **✓ The food service industry**

Dining in Montréal is known for its quality, diversity, accessibility and affordability. In addition, pleasure and ambiance are an intrinsic part of the Montréal dining experience, and the atmosphere is livelier than elsewhere in North America. The city has set itself apart in this domain as a result. However, Montréal does not benefit from a network that would allow the industry to be recognized and promoted as a leading attraction.

### **✓ Transportation**

Like many other major world cities, Montréal is wrestling with transportation issues. These include an overabundance of vehicles in the downtown area, ever-increasing pollution and inadequate financing of public transportation. Problems specific to the Montréal region are the following:

- ✓ Transportation between the Dorval International Airport and the downtown area remains inadequate.
- ✓ Public transport between the downtown area, Old Montréal and Jean-Drapeau Park is problematic, and does not allow visitors to move around the city easily. This can lead to a decrease in patronage in these areas at certain times of the year.
- ✓ Links between tourist zones located outside of the business district (downtown) are not convenient, and tourists often limit themselves to a restricted area as a result.

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## DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES FOR THE MONTRÉAL TOURISM PRODUCT

The primary goal of development strategies is to reinforce and enhance Montréal's distinctive character and appeal at all times of the year. Significant investments will be required to develop a unique, top-quality tourism product and the corresponding infrastructure.

### Principles of tourism development

The preceding 2000-2005 development plan listed a series of guiding principles that are necessary since developing the tourism product goes beyond mere investment to include other important interventions, most notably interaction between participants, the impact on the workforce, the management of companies, etc.

Four principles proposed in the 2000-2005 development plan are still applicable:

- ✓ **Preservation and reinforcement of Montréal's unique character.**
- ✓ **Long-term development with emphasis on preserving the urban context and the quality of life of Montrealers.**
- ✓ **Continued improvement in the quality of services and hospitality offered to clients.**
- ✓ **Promotion of the development of human resources.**

The new development strategy for the Montréal tourism product, which has already been proposed to public and private partners, is based on the following five principles:

#### 1. **Emphasis on the importance of the downtown area:**

Eighty percent of all tourist activity takes place in downtown Montréal. Efforts to recognize the special status of the Ville-Marie district and the downtown area must be maintained for this reason. The purpose of the Montréal tourism development plan is to create an enhanced, more attractive and diversified downtown. In order to do so, the number of vacant lots must be reduced considerably and public buildings in the area must be well maintained. Access to the downtown area must be revitalized and the full potential of Mount Royal and the Havre de Montréal must be developed.

From the point of view of tourism, priority must be given to urban planning and emphasis must be placed on coherence in the planning of projects, especially those with strong tourism potential that have already been mentioned (QIM, Havre de Montréal, Quartier des spectacles). These strategies, which are priorities for Tourisme Montréal, should be completed by the end of the decade.

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Other elements of Tourisme Montréal's plan can be completed in the short term, particularly with respect to management, maintenance and financing of the business core. Problems concerning development and aesthetics must therefore be dealt with, and recognition of the special status of the Ville-Marie district is one of the initiatives that has to be promoted. The following is a list of other actions that must be taken in the downtown area:

- ✓ Giving added value to downtown Montréal in order to set it apart from other North American cities.
- ✓ Maintaining cleanliness of public spaces.
- ✓ Harmonizing urban planning.
- ✓ Increasing the amount of public art.
- ✓ Improving and maintaining street furniture.
- ✓ Encouraging the cohabitation of urban functions.

**2. Active promotion of the development of culture and heritage:**

Culture and heritage are the foundations of tourism, and each has contributed to the reputation that Montréal enjoys at the international level. Projects related to these domains that are likely to be of interest to tourists must be developed. In this regard, Tourisme Montréal supports the priorities identified at the Montréal Summit with respect to culture and heritage. Three specific strategies involve tourism directly. First, heritage in Montréal must be preserved. Second, a number of venues must be expanded. They include the following:

- ✓ The Montréal Museum of Fine Arts.
- ✓ Pointe-à-Callière, Montréal Museum of Archaeology and History.

Finally, priority must be given to the creation and modernization of large cultural venues:

- ✓ Creation of the Montréal Cultural Showcase.
- ✓ Construction of a concert hall for the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal.
- ✓ Construction of the Complexe Spectrum.
- ✓ Development of the Parc des festivals.

**3. Consolidation of events programming in Montréal:**

Events in Montréal have grown considerably in the past ten years. Major events in the city are recognized internationally, and a number of new specialized or niche market events have appeared on the scene. In addition, several government partners are re-examining their strategies in terms of the support they provide to events in Montréal and Québec. Public authorities have also been solicited for increased financing. Mechanisms must be developed to ensure that events generating tourism spending in Montréal continue to grow in terms of size and recognition. In addition, events not held during the peak season must be promoted.

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Tourisme Montréal's approach stresses consolidation. This will be carried out in the following ways:

1. By promoting summer events with significant tourism potential. These can be divided into two categories:

- ✓ Large urban festivals that attract more than 200,000 visitors, that are of particular interest to tourists (who represent at least 15% of the visitors) and that are recognized internationally:
  - A) Recurring events:
    - Cultural
    - Sports
    - Entertainment
  - B) Large museum exhibitions of international calibre, for example the Monet exhibition at the Montréal Museum of Fine Arts.
- ✓ Specialized events that bear witness to Montréal's forward-looking attitude and that have given the city its trendy reputation:
  - Gays and lesbians
  - Avant-garde

2. By promoting primarily cultural tourism events not held during the summer season, which could eventually become new priorities. The following religious and standard holidays should be given priority in this case: Halloween, Easter, American Thanksgiving, the Christmas holiday season, school holidays and the Montréal High Lights Festival.

4. **Development of tourism support products:**

Numerous projects of various proportions could have a positive impact on tourism in Montréal and consolidate the Montréal tourism product. The projects are directly related to the tourism industry:

- Providing Montréal with a trade show centre of international calibre.
- Expanding and modernizing the Iberville Passenger Terminal.
- Improving rail and road access to the Dorval International Airport from the downtown area.
- Setting up a high-speed train service between Montréal and New York and Montréal and Toronto.
- Consolidating the scientific orientation of the Maisonneuve area by encouraging, among others, the relocation of the Planétarium to the area.

5. **Development of municipal infrastructure** (environment, heritage):

In this regard, Tourisme Montréal has targeted four areas:

- Development of the **Montréal bleu project**.
- Development of the **Montréal vert project**.
- Improvement of the **cycling paths**.
- Emphasis on **heritage**.

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## PRIORITY PROJECTS (2003-2010)

Among the projects that have been planned and those currently underway, Tourisme Montréal is promoting ten that it considers vital in its efforts to promote and increase tourism in Montréal. However, developing tourism in Montréal cannot simply reside in these ten (10) projects. Other key initiatives in this Plan must be supported. **Each of the projects is part of the greater goal to improve the intrinsic and aesthetic quality of Montréal and to ensure that the city is an attractive, clean and safe destination for tourists.**

These projects are, in order:

1. **Ensuring the viability of large tourism events in Montréal.**
2. **Improving the quality of urban planning and making use of empty spaces and parking lots in the downtown area** (overall improvement in the quality of urban planning, public art, architecture, squares, parks, etc.) using the Quartier international in Montréal as an example.
3. **Building a trade show centre of international calibre** in an expanded downtown.
4. **Improving rail and road access to the Dorval International Airport from the downtown area.**
5. **Developing the Havre de Montréal and the Quartier des spectacles (the OSM hall, Parc des festivals and Complexe Spectrum)**
6. **Expanding Pointe-à-Callière, Montréal Museum of Archaeology and History.**
7. **Expanding the Montréal Museum of Fine Arts.**
8. **Completing the Montréal Cultural Showcase.**
9. **Continuing efforts to find a new multifunctional vocation for the Port of Montréal's Passenger Terminal.**
10. **Relocating the Planétarium to the Maisonneuve area.**

Promoting a high-speed train service between Montréal and Toronto and Montréal and New York is also a priority for Tourisme Montréal, but these projects will be realized after 2010.