

News release
For immediate release

**A new study confirms the need for a Trade Centre
at the Bassin Peel Entertainment Complex**

(Montréal, November 21, 2005) – A new study conducted by Tourisme Montreal confirms the need to build a new trade centre close to downtown Montreal. According to the study, with the expansion of its Convention Centre in the last few years, Montreal has managed to become one of the major business destinations in North America. However, Montreal is positioned near the bottom of destinations for major trade fairs and expositions. In fact, with only 20,000 square feet, the Convention Centre is too small to host this kind of event. Furthermore, its availability is limited and it cannot confirm events more than a year in advance.

For comparison, it is interesting to note that Toronto currently has 1.1 million square feet at the National Trade Centre alone, not to mention the Toronto Congress Centre and the Mississauga International Centre, each of which provides 500,000 square feet, as well as the Toronto Metro Convention Centre, which can host expositions of up to 460,000 square feet.

With so little adequate space available, Montreal has lost a number of trade fairs to Toronto in the past several years, and it could lose more if it does not build an exhibition centre up to North American standards. Moreover, 13% of respondents stated that they had stopped holding trade shows and expositions in Montreal three years ago. The survey concluded that it is essential to build a new exhibition centre in Montreal to accommodate the normal expansion of its existing trade shows and avoid losing them due to insufficient space, as well as to attract new trade fairs by providing the necessary space and financial incentives.

The study points out an additional market potential of more than 59 million square foot days (the equivalent of 40 new trade fairs or shows) by 2013, provided that Montreal builds a centre with a capacity on the order of 550,000 square feet of exhibition space that meets North American standards. Building this kind of centre would bring Montreal recurring increases in economic activity of close to 78 million dollars a year in the form of the centre's operating expenses and tourist spending generated by additional visitors. Montreal would then become a veritable trade fair destination rather than become increasingly marginalized over the years due to lack of space. The whole metropolitan area would enjoy substantial economic spinoffs.

In order for the trade centre to reach this potential, a number of conditions must be met. The four points that are mentioned most frequently by trade fair organizers that could set Montreal apart from the competition in other cities in North America are: its French and European character (24%), the quality of its restaurants (14%), the quality of Montreal's night life and the fact that it is a very vibrant city (11%), and its culture and history (11%). In other words, what appeals to exhibition organizers is the city's history and "joie de vivre." This is why it is important to build a Trade Centre close to the downtown area. These same elements have made Montreal one of the most attractive destinations in North America for congresses.

In the opinion of Tourisme Montreal and the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montréal, which have created a Coalition to support the Bassin Peel Entertainment Complex, this study once again confirms the need to go ahead with the project proposed by Loto-Quebec and the Cirque du Soleil as a lever of economic, tourist, and cultural development in Montreal.

“A preliminary study done in 2003, long before the Bassin Peel Entertainment Complex project was proposed, concluded that it was necessary for Montreal to have a major trade show and exposition centre,” noted Tourisme Montreal President and CEO Charles Lapointe. “The new study, which is an update of the older one, reached the same conclusions, except that this time it can be put in the context of a real project that responds directly to the expressed needs. We believe that with a new trade centre worthy of the name, Montreal would have all the ingredients to move ahead of cities like San Antonio, Nashville, and Dallas, and to compete with cities like Toronto, Chicago, New York and Atlanta.”

“Neither Place Bonaventure, nor the Convention Centre nor the Olympic Stadium meet industry standards,” added Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal President and Chief Executive Officer Isabelle Hudon. “These facilities simply do not have what it takes to adequately meet the needs expressed by the trade show organizers market. By offering to acquire and to decontaminate the land needed to build a trade centre, Loto-Quebec is laying the groundwork so that a trade centre worthy of the name can finally be built in Montreal. By giving it the green light, the government will make it possible to build a synergetic, structuring project that will bring out the best in us, and in everything Montreal has to offer the world.”

Survey Methodology

The Tourisme Montreal study polled about 98 trade show promoters in Quebec, Canada and internationally who hold shows in Montreal or would be interested in doing so. Out of these, a series of 72 interviews were conducted, including 18 interviews of members of APEQ, 27 interviews of Quebec “non-members” and 27 interview with promoters outside Quebec and outside Canada.

About Tourisme Montréal

Tourisme Montréal is a private, non-profit organization made up of 850 members from the Montréal tourism industry. Its mission is to provide leadership in a concerted promotional effort to position Montréal as a destination on the pleasure and business travel markets, and to steer development of Montréal's tourism products in response to a constantly changing market.

About the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montréal

The Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montréal has some 7,000 members. Its mission is to represent the interests of the business community of Greater Montréal and to offer an integrated suite of specialized services to individuals, merchants, and businesses of all sizes in order to support them in realizing their full potential in terms of innovation, productivity, and competitiveness. The Board of Trade is the largest private economic development organization in Québec.

About the Bassin Peel Entertainment Complex Support Coalition

Formed in October 2005, the Coalition currently includes the following members:

- Tourisme Montréal
- The Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montréal
- Aéroports de Montréal
- Air Canada
- Hotel Association of Greater Montréal
- Québec Hoteliers Association
- Crescent Street Merchants Association
- Chambre de commerce et d'industrie du Sud-Ouest de Montréal
- Chambre de commerce gaie du Québec
- Destination Centre-Ville
- La Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec
- Major Montréal events :
 - Équipe Spectra (Festival international du jazz de Montréal, Francolies, Festival international de films de Montréal, Montréal Highlights, The Grand Masquerade)
 - Just for Laughs Group
 - Tennis Canada (Rogers Cup)
- Regroupement des hôteliers du Vieux-Montréal
- Société de développement commercial du Vieux-Montréal
- Société des attractions touristiques du Québec (SATQ)
- Société du Havre de Montréal
- Société du Vieux-Port de Montréal.
- Transat A.T. inc.

- 30 -

Note : A PDF copy of this document is available on request

Source : **Tourisme Montréal**
Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montréal
Information : **Tourisme Montréal**
M. Pierre Bellerose, pbellerose@tourisme-montreal.org
(514) 844-2404
Morin Relations Publiques
M. Patrice Attanasio, patrice@morinrp.com
Mme Véronique Arsenault, veronique@morinrp.com
(514) 289-8688