



Chambre de commerce
du Montréal métropolitain

Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal

Downtown Montreal: A major Metropolitan Development Issue

Brief of the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal concerning the territorial boundaries of the Downtown Borough and its Governance

Commission spéciale du conseil sur la délimitation territoriale de
l'arrondissement Centre-ville

Ville de Montréal

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A brief description of the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal

The Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal boasts some 7,000 members. Its primary mission is to represent the interests of the Greater Montreal business community and to play an active and responsible role in promoting the economic development of the urban agglomeration. Bolstered by its three specialized service branches (Info entreprises, the Electronic Commerce Institute and World Trade Centre Montréal) serving merchants and businesses of all sizes across Quebec, the Board of Trade is the largest private organization in Quebec dedicated to economic development.

Introduction

The Downtown Borough and its Governance: A Metropolitan Issue

As requested by the special commission of the council on the territorial boundary of the Downtown borough, the Board of Trade is submitting a brief in response to the three factors under consultation, i.e., the territorial boundary of the Downtown borough, the form of the new consultative committee and the role it should play, and work organization and management within the Downtown borough.

This intervention is aimed specifically at complementing the previously submitted brief to the Commission sur le développement économique et le Centre des affaires in which the Board of Trade highlighted, among other things, the need to pay close attention to downtown development. The organization also praised the commission's recent initiatives, which are clearly in line with a philosophy that acknowledges the unique characteristics of the downtown area and that seek to provide the borough with the most appropriate form of governance. As one of the most important economic centres of the region, downtown Montreal, its development and management therefore constitute major issues for the entire metropolitan region.

For the Board of Trade, the commission's consultation is a necessary step in the process to implement the municipal reorganization plan adopted by City Council in September. Indeed, creating a new borough for downtown Montreal is an initiative that could well promote its advancement, especially if it leads to a method of governance and management suited to its unique characteristics.

1. What should the territorial boundaries of the Downtown borough be?

For the Board of Trade, the downtown area conjures up the image the city projects to the outside world. As such, the Board of Trade believes the territorial boundaries of the downtown borough should comprise the elements that make Montreal what it is and that underpin its economic, cultural and tourism influence. With this in mind and without specifically identifying the boundaries, the Board of Trade believes that the following elements should be included within the boundaries of the Downtown borough given that they reflect the specific characteristics of the heart of Montreal:

- The business district, to where close to 500,000 people commute every day for work, study or entertainment;
- The major institutions of higher learning and research, namely, McGill, Concordia, UQAM and the École de technologie supérieure, as well as the main teaching hospitals, i.e., the institutions located on the south side of Mount Royal;

- The most important cultural institutions, whether in terms of dissemination (the major museums, main festival sites (jazz, film, Francofolies and Just for Laughs) or production (the head offices of the major television networks: Société Radio-Canada, TVA and TQS);
- The main convergence points of the Montreal transport network, especially the bus terminal (Berri-UQAM metro) and Windsor and Central stations;
- Old Montreal (particularly the area around City Hall) and the Old Port, which are unquestionably part of Montreal's tourist draw.

The Board of Trade believes that another defining characteristic of downtown Montreal is that it is the location of choice for executing major urban development projects such as the Quartier International, which are expected to become an important part of Montreal's urban identity. In this vein, the Board of Trade thinks it is only logical for the boundaries of Downtown borough to encompass the territories covered by such major urban projects as the Quartier International, Quartier des spectacles and Société du Havre. Indeed, in the Board of Trade's opinion, these large-scale projects are essential to the vitality of the downtown area and stand a greater chance of being completed under a governance model that meets the specific needs of the downtown core.

2. What form should the consultative committee comprised of downtown Montreal's stakeholders take, and what role should it play?

As mentioned in the Board of Trade's Policy Statement, the downtown area is essential to metropolitan urban and economic development: "Downtown Montreal, as a choice location for business and culture and as the place that defines the City's international personality, merits special attention." In this context, the Board of Trade is in favour of creating a new Downtown borough whose authorities could take into account both local and metropolitan concerns. In this respect, the Board of Trade believes that enlisting the direct involvement of civil society in the governance of the downtown core by creating a consultative committee is an especially interesting idea. It goes without saying that as an organization dedicated to the economic development of the metropolitan region, the Board of Trade is particularly receptive to the creation of such a committee because even though many of its members are located in the downtown area, its metropolitan representativeness also makes it sensitive to the downtown area's overall economic and strategic aspect.

In connection with this desire to have a consultative committee that can take into account local and metropolitan issues surrounding the downtown area, the Board of Trade believes that, as part of its composition, this committee should have a representation of citizens' associations in the borough that as much as possible reflects its socio-economic characteristics. Moreover, the Board of Trade suggests that the Delegation Leaders' Forum of the Montreal Summit be involved in selecting the members of the consultative committee;

With respect to the matters the consultative committee should handle, the Board of Trade would especially like to see the committee act as a wellspring of ideas and as a support mechanism for the launch and completion of major core initiatives like the Quartier International, Quartier des spectacles and the redevelopment of the Havre de Montréal.

3. What work organization and management model should be used for the Downtown borough?

The Board of Trade would like to highlight various elements that should be taken into account in developing a management model for the Downtown borough. In this context, and with respect to the future methods of governance, the Board of Trade has identified two priorities for the Downtown borough: **delivery of neighbourhood services** and **the implementation of core projects to stimulate economic development**.

Delivery of neighbourhood services

For the Board of Trade, the delivery of quality neighbourhood services is essential to ensure that Montreal projects an international image befitting a major metropolis of the world. There is no question that this image is based on the downtown area where most tourists visit and where most of the major artistic, cultural and sports events are held. As well, given that downtown is bustling with activity day and night due to its residents, workers, tourists and other residents of the metropolitan area, its public spaces are highly sought after and used, indeed more so than any other location on the Island. For all these reasons, the downtown core is therefore one part of Montreal where neighbourhood and maintenance services must be a model of efficiency and flexibility.

In this context, maintenance and work schedules in the borough must be organized to ensure round-the-clock upkeep, with particular attention to the areas of downtown that make up its tourist and international identity.

Implementation of core projects to stimulate economic development

During the Montreal 2017 Symposium, organized by the Board of Trade in spring 2002, many panellists underscored the importance for major urban agglomerations of the world to rely on core projects to stimulate economic and urban development. For the Board of Trade, this is one approach that is particularly valid for downtown Montreal. In this regard, the organization and operation of the new borough should create an environment conducive to the emergence and support of major initiatives.

The creation of a borough council and a consultative committee representative of civil society could lay the groundwork for this environment. For the Board of Trade, it would be important for the borough governance to ensure coherence between the projects created in the downtown area and promote and inspire cohesion between those involved in their execution.

Lastly, the governance bodies as well as those mandated to provide neighbourhood services, must have access to the necessary financial resources. In this respect, the Board of Trade would like to stress the importance of developing quality projects, especially for downtown Montreal. Indeed, the city has a vibrant core that is unique in North America. The entire urban agglomeration cannot help but benefit from a dynamic downtown, and the Board of Trade believes that by giving the decision makers and the stakeholders involved in its development the most appropriate tools, the municipal reorganization and the governance of the downtown area will be a success.