



Chambre de commerce  
du Montréal métropolitain  
Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal

December 3, 2003

Mr. François Ouimet  
President of the Commission de l'aménagement du territoire  
Commissions Secretariat  
Pamphile-Le May Building  
1035 des Parlementaires Street, 3rd Floor  
Quebec City, Quebec  
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**Subject: Hearing of the Commission de l'aménagement du territoire  
on Bill 33**

Dear Sir:

On behalf of its some 7,000 members, the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal studied Bill 33 amending the Charter of the City of Montreal with interest.

For the Board of Trade, the Charter is an essential tool for the governance and economic development of the City of Montreal. Consequently, the Board of Trade would like to share its thoughts with the members of the Commission de l'aménagement du territoire on the amendment proposals to the City Charter contained in Bill 33.

This concern for the metropolitan economy was also at the heart of the representations made by the Board of Trade during the consultations conducted by this same commission on Bill 9 concerning the territorial reorganization of certain municipalities. In its brief, the Board of Trade mentioned, among other things, the importance of giving Montreal the necessary tools to ensure its full economic development given that Montreal's collective wealth, compared with the other major urban centres in North America, leaves much to be desired.<sup>1</sup> On that occasion, the Board of Trade identified a series of principles it felt should guide the territorial organization of the metropolitan region. These principles were grouped into three major elements: creativity and innovation in development, cohesion among the players, and coherence in the actions taken. We believe these principles are relevant to our comments on Bill 33.

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that the metropolitan region of Montreal ranked 26 out of 26 major urban centres with more than 2 million residents in terms of per capita GDP.

### **Creativity: create and have the means to innovate**

The Board of Trade believes that in order to maximize the impact of economic development initiatives, the economic development resources and jurisdictions should be consolidated within the urban centre. In fact, this principle was part of the Board of Trade's recommendation in its brief on Bill 9, in which it stated that economic development should be under "metropolitan jurisdiction."

Indeed, the Board of Trade believes that economic development should be considered a "collective property" of an urban area and that repercussions of an investment or the growth of a business are never confined to the boundaries of a sector or a borough: generally these repercussions are felt throughout the urban centre or region. As such, the decisions and support initiatives regarding economic development should be made by taking the collective interest of the urban centre and the region into account rather than only the interest of a given sector or borough.

Generally speaking, the Board of Trade believes that the organizational model proposed by Bill 33 is adequate in terms of giving the City the authority to undertake economic development initiatives. More specifically, the Board of Trade is favourable to Section 23 of the Bill, which by amending Section 91 of the Charter, places economic development and promotion within the City's jurisdiction.

For the Board of Trade, the management of strategic jurisdictions offers a distinct advantage. Indeed, it clearly establishes the fact that healthy competition in terms of economic development and attracting investment must be waged on an international scale – between cities such as Montreal, Barcelona, Boston, Chicago, Lyons, Milan and other major urban centres – rather than at the local level, between boroughs.

### **Cohesion: obtaining the means to work together**

To stimulate cohesion among Greater Montreal's different players and their mobilization behind the common project for metropolitan success, it is essential that everyone be asked to contribute their fair share to finance equipment and activities that serve the metropolitan region. In return, it goes without saying that comparable public services must be rendered to all the citizens and companies in the metropolitan area. Applying this principle of fairness is important to creating a sense of belonging, and as the Board of Trade underscored throughout its brief on Bill 9, creating a true sense of belonging in the new City of Montreal is a key ingredient for its success. As such, the Board of Trade firmly believes in the need to ensure a form of municipal cost and revenue sharing across the Island of Montreal.

Overall, the proposed reorganization model, combined with the existing cost and revenue sharing mechanisms, should allow the City of Montreal to fulfill these requirements. In this regard, one of the avenues that the Board of Trade considers particularly interesting is the introduction of a mechanism for sharing revenues generated by new development projects between the borough where the project is taking place and the City (Section 22 of the Bill). This mechanism appears promising because it offers the advantage of encouraging local economic development efforts

within the boroughs while ensuring that a part of the benefits are shared by all the City's citizens.

**Coherence: ensure constructive and complementary actions**

As the Board of Trade stated in its brief on Bill 9, the principle of subsidiarity is complementary to the principle of metropolitan organization and the efficient planning and management of economic development. Indeed, to minimize the temptation for a metropolitan body to overcentralize responsibilities and considerably increase its operating burden, a territorial reorganization of the metropolitan region must give preference to the delivery of services to citizens by the body closest to them that is able to do so. It is appropriate that the local bodies have the degree of administrative autonomy allowing them to live up to the public's expectations. In return, needless to say, local elected representatives must be fully accountable for their decisions to the voters who entrusted them with the management of their sector.

On this basis, the Board of Trade very favourably views the decentralized administration of neighbourhood services contemplated in Bill 33 and the election of borough mayors. The Board of Trade is also in favour of the mechanisms provided for in the Bill to give the boroughs the necessary powers and resources to offer citizens, merchants and companies quality neighbourhood services adapted to their local reality.

In terms of coherence, the Board of Trade does have some concerns about the possible negative effects and counter-productive nature of one of the provisions in the Bill, namely Section 28, which involves adding Section 130.3 to the Charter, pertaining to the process of amending the urban plan. According to the Bill, it could henceforth become possible for a borough to amend the urban plan without having recourse to the services of the Office de consultation publique de Montréal, as is currently the case. For the Board of Trade, it is paramount that granting this power to the boroughs does not run counter to the objectives behind the creation of an urban plan, namely, the development of a master plan that sets out the long-term urban functions for the entire territory. For example, in the case where changes to the plan affect more than one borough, the Board of Trade would like clarification on how coordination will be ensured between the adjacent boroughs.

**Conclusion**

The Board of Trade is generally favourable to the reorganization project contained in Bill 33 tabled by the Government. Among the positive elements, the Board of Trade would like to underscore the attention accorded to eliminating duplicate functions, guaranteeing that the City's strategic issues will be assumed by the City Council, and ensuring that neighbourhood services are delivered by the administrative level closest to the public, that is, the borough.

The Board of Trade is also aware of the fact that the Bill allowing for the administrative reorganization of the City of Montreal has been tabled even as the impending adoption of Bill 9 will launch a process that could result in a certain number of demergers. Thus, while the Board of Trade has welcomed the amendments to Bill 9,

which make economic development a metropolitan jurisdiction, it is still convinced that it is in the best interest of Montrealers to continue working together within a single city. The Board of Trade hopes that this Bill, by giving legal weight to the reorganization proposed by the City of Montreal, will encourage real support for the new City of Montreal, as the Board of Trade hoped it would when it appeared before the Commission de l'aménagement du territoire on September 11, 2003.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Labonté', written in a cursive style.

Benoit Labonté  
President

c.c. Marc Painchaud, Secretary of the Commission de l'aménagement du territoire