



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

Montreal's heritage: rooted in the signature of the metropolis

A brief presented to the
l'Office de consultation publique de Montréal

As part of the consultation process on Montreal's Heritage policy

By the
Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal

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A presentation of the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal

The Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal has some 7,000 members. Its mission is to represent the interests of metropolitan Montreal's business community and to offer individuals, merchants, and businesses of all sizes an integrated range of specialized services to help them achieve their full potential in terms of innovation, productivity, and competitiveness. The Board of Trade is the largest private organization in Quebec devoted to economic development.

Introduction

With its 183 years of history, the Board of Trade is particularly sensitive to the importance of protecting and enhancing heritage when developing a metropolis. This is particularly important for the metropolis of Montreal since, throughout its territory, it has numerous heritage elements developed during its rich history. The Board of Trade is thus very interested in presenting in this document a few of its reflections on the City of Montreal's draft heritage policy.

At a time when cities face stiff competition from other metropolises around the world, the quality of life offered to residents is vital to maintaining an environment favourable to the development of businesses. This quality of life is a major asset for attracting and retaining talented people looking for the best place to settle and find a stimulating job. The wealth of Montreal's heritage contributes greatly to the quality of life of Montrealers and the economic competitiveness of the metropolis. Our heritage also contributes to the image projected by the metropolis on the international stage.

It is with this in mind that the Board of Trade wishes to present its views to the Office de consultation publique de Montréal (OCPM) on the City of Montreal's draft heritage policy and, in particular, the sustainable development of heritage in the metropolitan area. It will first discuss the position occupied by heritage in the development of the metropolis and the role the City of Montreal should play in protecting and developing heritage. It will then identify certain initiatives the City would do well to "prioritize" to provide the metropolis with the tools needed to implement programs promoting the protection and development of Montreal's heritage.

The excellent of the past and a legacy to be proud of

First of all, the Board of Trade wishes to commend the City of Montreal on its initiative to create a heritage policy – an initiative that places Montreal at the forefront of other Canadian metropolises. Few metropolises currently have such tools, and the Board of Trade believes the formulation of this policy goes beyond the mere protection of historic buildings. Montreal's rich heritage – shaped by distinct historic, architectural, and multi-ethnic influences – should be seen as a metropolitan asset to be promoted. The Board of Trade believes it is first and foremost the City of Montreal that is responsible for setting an example for protecting our heritage. Moreover, the Board of Trade believes it is equally important to protect and enhance the heritage left to us by the past and to protect and enhance our contemporary heritage so we may bequeath it proudly to future generations. The City of Montreal's responsibility in this area consists of three major elements.

First of all, the Board of Trade believes the City should play a leadership role in conserving and developing our heritage. This role should be based on the improvement of infrastructures belonging to the City and the coherence of actions taken by corporate services and boroughs within the territory. In its draft policy, the City mentions the importance of "developing heritage through growth-generating urban projects"(p. 64). For the Board of Trade, such a commitment

should be considered a top priority. As for these “growth-generating projects,” although they include many players from various sectors, the Board of Trade believes the City should play a strategic role as initiator. The development of Montreal’s “Quartier international” – a project initiated by the City in the 1980’s and relaunched by the Caisse de dépôt in 1994 – is an interesting example of a case where a downtown area was revitalized and many heritage buildings were renovated and improved. This project is also an interesting example of a case where the enhancement of certain heritage elements contributed to urban development and in no way impeded it.

In its recent brief on Montreal’s proposed cultural development policy, the Board of Trade noted that the development of the arts and entertainment district is one of those growth-generating projects and that the City would benefit from immediately launching certain planned initiatives. In its brief, the Board of Trade added that the redevelopment of certain parts of this central district would ensure the visibility and vitality of its cultural component. For the Board of Trade, it is through such projects with growth-generating effects that organizations on the edges of the district will be encouraged to participate and invest.

In addition, in the opinion of the Board of Trade, the heritage policy can not be advanced without taking into account development initiatives such as the economic development plans produced by both the City of Montreal and the Montreal Metropolitan Community (MMC), the sustainable development plan, the City of Montreal’s cultural policy, and, above all, its urban development plan. These six documents all have metropolitan-wide importance and, to varying degrees, establish development priorities for the metropolis and the brand image the metropolis is defining for itself through the MMC. In keeping with the above-mentioned rationale for the promotion of growth-generating projects, there is no doubt the City must play a major role in ensuring the coherence of the actions taken by the many players working for the development of Montreal, particularly with regard to urban development and heritage protection initiatives.

Secondly, as a key player in the development of the metropolis, the City must ensure the involvement of the various levels of government in projects to protect and develop our heritage. Whether financial or logistical, support from upper government levels generates spin-offs that promote private investment in the redevelopment and improvement of certain districts. In the metropolitan area, the development of the Lachine Canal is certainly one of the most growth-generating projects undertaken in recent years. In fact, the private investments made on the fringes of this government-instituted project largely contributed to the urban redevelopment of neighbouring districts.

Thirdly, the Board of Trade believes that, through the Conseil du patrimoine (CPM), the City should act as arbitrator and facilitator, enabling it to set boundaries when problems of jurisdiction or consensus arise within the City’s corporate services or with the boroughs. This arbitration could also come into play during negotiations with the federal or provincial governments as well as with the MMC during the implementation of multiparty projects.

The Board of Trade believes that the efficient implementation of future projects to protect and develop heritage will essentially depend on the use of creative and innovative ideas. The development of the Société du Havre de Montréal and the Old Port of Montreal Corporation and the development of the downtown core and Mont-Royal are all projects with a metropolitan impact, involving many players from various sectors and deserving particular attention from the City of Montreal. Creativity will be required not only in financing these projects but also in encouraging local players to participate and take ownership of them.

Commentaire : This organization has his own official English name
Supprimé : Société du Vieux-Port de Montréal

Creative ways to ensure the sustainable protection and development of heritage

The policy discusses several commitments to ensuring the protection and development of heritage. At this stage in the formulation process, the Board of Trade believes it is important to precisely identify the means of fulfilling these commitments. The heritage policy cannot be successfully implemented unless there is a process in place to monitor the achievements of corporate services and players in this field. The City mentions this on page 59 of its policy, where it highlights the importance of "methods to assess the positive spin-offs of steps taken in relation to heritage" as well as on page 77, where it discusses the implementation of a "system to organize heritage-related actions." These initiatives involve a large number of players, including the CPM, the City's ad hoc architecture and urban planning committee, urban planning advisory committees in the boroughs, and various authorities from higher government levels. The Board of Trade is very favourable to the "annual progress report" to be tabled by the Conseil's standing committee on developing the territory and heritage. The Board of Trade hopes that the City will encourage the involvement of as many players as possible in this effort so that all players working for the development of Montreal will take ownership of this policy, designed to protect and develop the heritage of all Montrealers.

The Board of Trade believes that, in association with the federal and provincial governments, the City should provide assistance to institutions and enterprises encouraging them to highlight the heritage characteristics of the buildings where they are housed. For the Board of Trade, such measures truly encourage enterprises to carry out the necessary work according to high quality standards rather than simply make improvements that do not highlight those characteristics (p. 59). For the Board of Trade, it is through high-quality growth-generating projects that companies are encouraged to invest and participate in projects. The international district is an excellent example of a case where public investments have generated major private urban and heritage development projects.

The "municipal fund" mentioned on page 49 of the draft policy could be a major incentive for promoting projects and providing financial support to companies wishing to enhance their heritage elements. The Board of Trade supports the City in the initiative discussed on page 37 aiming to "stimulate the emergence of creative solutions in the face of complex or sometimes opposing issues." In such a context, many partnerships with private enterprises would certainly promote the redevelopment of certain districts of the metropolis where investment is required to renovate and restore buildings. For the Board of Trade, such initiatives promote growth because they encourage higher levels of government to provide financial support.

Something else the Board of Trade believes should be considered, and that has a major impact on the image projected by the metropolis on the international stage, is the promotion of public works of art and the quality of street furniture. These two elements contribute greatly to the City's signature and the quality of life and place of public areas. For the Board of Trade, this element should be prioritized and approached in connection with related initiatives in the City of Montreal's proposed cultural policy.

Finally, the Board of Trade wishes to stress the importance that must be placed on the quality of the projects undertaken: for the benefit of the metropolis and local stakeholders, the City would do well to undertake only high-quality projects. The heritage buildings now valued in Montreal are the result of good planning and development, and it is the duty of today's planners to bequeath modern, sustainable, high-quality buildings and infrastructures to future generations.

This consideration should be part of the City's commitment to playing an "exemplary role." From this point of view, the Board of Trade proposes a review of the Quebec government's Bill 106¹ to enable managers of institutional projects to do business with the most competent tenderers, who will contribute to the sustainable development of the metropolis, rather than with those who earn the highest rating according to the formula for selecting professional services, particularly on the basis of low cost. In the opinion of the Board of Trade, it is the implementation of truly high-quality projects that will set in motion a ripple effect generating significant economic spin-offs for the metropolis.

¹ *Cities and Towns Act*, (R.S.Q., c. C-19)

Conclusion

In developing a heritage policy, the City of Montreal is taking an important step toward protecting and developing the many components of its heritage. While the policy covers primarily the heritage elements to be protected and enhanced, the Board of Trade wishes to stress the importance that must be placed on the ways in which the City will be able to implement the policy.

The Board of Trade believes the City will have to adopt a creative approach in ensuring both the coherence of actions taken by the many stakeholders working to protect and enhance heritage and the adequate financing of projects likely to generate economic spin-offs. For the Board of Trade, it is through the policy and the various tools it contains, the subject of this document, that the City will truly be able to adopt a visionary attitude to the protection and enhancement of Montreal's heritage.

Convinced of the importance of heritage to development and quality of life – and because it wishes to be a contributory player in the development of the metropolis – the Board of Trade fully supports the City in pursuing future efforts surrounding the implementation of this policy.