



The Chamber of Commerce
of Metropolitan Montreal

INFORMATION SHEET

“I love working downtown”

On many occasions over the past year, the Chamber alerted private and public decision makers about the risk of destructuring the business base in downtown Montréal. The many calls for aid received, our surveys, analyses, and consultations conducted as part of the metropolitan economic movement **Relaunch MTL** shed light on the vulnerability of downtown Montréal given the pandemic and mandatory health measures.

With lockdown continuing, forcing an almost complete stoppage of work in office towers, the absence of tourists and business visitors, the absence of university students – many of them international students – the closing of a growing number of businesses, and the prospect of a spread of hybrid models of work after the pandemic are factors that could lead to this serious, costly destructuring.

For these reasons, we asked governments to treat downtown Montréal and the downtown areas of other major urban centres as economic sectors in their own right that need targeted relaunch strategies. In response, **Quebec’s Ministère de l’Économie et de l’Innovation has given the Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan Montreal a mandate to contribute to the economic relaunch of downtown Montréal.** This mandate comes with a budget of **\$8.5 million.**

THE MANDATE

The Chamber will introduce “I love working downtown,” a relaunch platform for downtown that will be a catalyst for ambitious initiatives, in a spirit of inclusion and participation. This effort is intended to start a positive cycle of revitalization for downtown and will create the conditions for a lasting relaunch of the area.

“I love working downtown” will be used to **rapidly deploy initiatives to facilitate the return of workers to downtown and increase traffic** in the area, to benefit merchants, hotel operators, restaurant owners, cultural and creative organizations, and the entire commercial fabric. The initiatives developed will **complement efforts deployed by the governments and the Ville de Montréal.** The efforts will stretch over the next 12 to 16 months and will **respect health measures in place.**

THE INITIATIVES

1

Return to office towers

The Chamber will work directly with downtown employers to resolve issues for the return of workers downtown, determine what needs to be done, and gather the resources to finance the required communication efforts and strategies.

OBJECTIVES:

- Drive the return to downtown of a larger number of employees, while respecting health measures and public health directives;
- Increase the confidence of workers and employers and showcase the advantages of working downtown;
- Reinforce the attractiveness of downtown as a place to work and convert workers into customers for area businesses;
- Foster new partnerships among merchants, employers, transit companies, public health, etc.

2

Work space solution

The Chamber will work with different partners to develop a strategy to support deployment or promote solutions that respond to the challenges of employers in managing their premises for office space downtown. Not exclusively, these solutions could include support services or tools for

networking between downtown businesses that have extra space and other organizations seeking offices downtown or looking for co-working spaces.

OBJECTIVES:

- Help employers manage their workspaces downtown;
- Facilitate the use and optimization of premises for offices downtown;
- Promote co-working space offers downtown to attract workers;
- Increase the occupancy rates of downtown offices;
- Foster partnerships and synergy between complementary large businesses, functions, and sectors.

3

Creative projects to enhance downtown as a place to work

The Chamber will issue a call for projects to create and implement signature projects downtown that will run for 12 to 18 months to attract workers and visitors with their innovation and spectacular nature.

These projects will complement those developed by the Ville de Montréal and other partners on the ground, offering concrete solutions to support downtown's commercial base and bringing customers back to businesses.

OBJECTIVES:

- Increase the attractiveness of downtown as a place to work and hold business meetings;
- Offer quality activities downtown that enhance Montréal's creative offer, to complement current and future projects;
- Increase traffic in the short, medium, and long term by increasing the attractiveness of downtown, while encouraging traffic in stores and restaurants.

4

Strengthening downtown and its business sectors

The Chamber will support mobilization in the business community to identify strategies to implement platforms to promote the relaunch of strategic sectors.

For example, the Chamber will support the initiative proposed by a group of chefs to promote the relaunch of the gastronomical sector. This mobilization will establish partnerships among leaders from the Quebec food scene and the supply ecosystem to create a boom in the industry here and around the world.

The Chamber will also work with the community to develop a strategy to foster a green relaunch of downtown.

OBJECTIVES:

- Mobilize the business community around unifying, structuring initiatives;
- Position strategic sectors of downtown and foster the green relaunch of the sector;
- Avoid a wave of closings in the retail and restaurant sectors;
- Stimulate and restore economic activity downtown.