



MONTRÉAL
CENTRE—VILLE

Strategic Plan for the Enhancement of Open Spaces

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

APRIL 2024

 **Stantec**

The Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan for the Enhancement of Open Spaces aims to provide coherent guidance for future temporary and semi-permanent developments in the downtown area.



1. Sainte-Catherine Street, SDC Montréal centre-ville

Downtown Montreal is renowned for its vibrant outdoor spaces. These spaces are sometimes animated by a rich cultural and events program, and sometimes spontaneously used by a wide range of users. It brings together workers, students, visitors and tourists, as well as a growing number of residents.

As part of the revival of the downtown area following the COVID-19 pandemic, outdoor spaces play a central role in the user experience. We must now redouble our efforts to attract them and offer them quality spaces, so that they can make the most of what this unique space has to offer.

In recent years, temporary and semi-permanent development initiatives have taken place on a case-by-case basis in the downtown area, without any real coherent overall vision.

In response to the growing interest in these initiatives, Montréal centre-ville has drawn up a strategic plan to guide the future development of temporary and semi-permanent installations. This plan mobilizes the stakeholders involved in the development, occupation and animation of downtown's outdoor spaces, to ensure that future installations contribute optimally to the heart of the city.

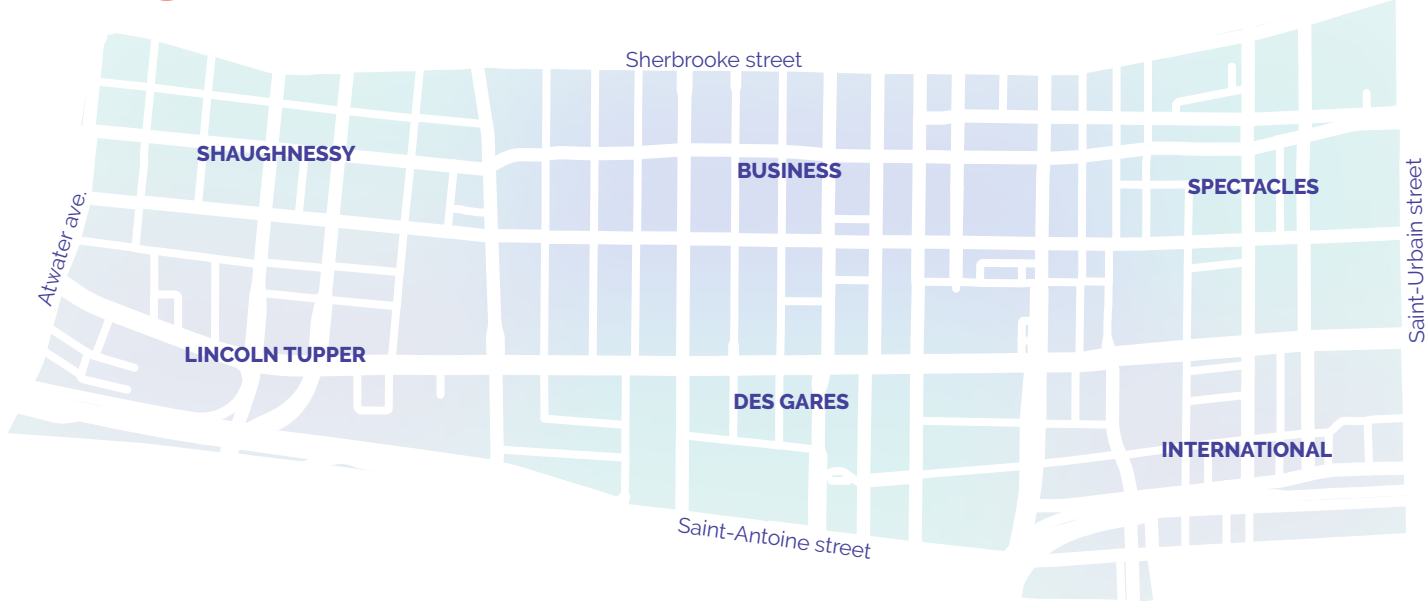
The Purpose of the Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan is aimed at helping Montréal Centre-Ville, the City of Montreal and downtown stakeholders wishing to set up a temporary or semi-permanent installation in open space.

This frame of reference aims to identify various factors that need to be taken into account to ensure that future projects fit harmoniously into their physical and social environment. The Plan includes a comprehensive toolbox to help ensure success.

For each intervention, the readers are invited first to familiarize themselves with the guiding principles, then with the best planning practices applicable to any type of approach, and then to refer to the degree of opportunity and the type of site he wishes to develop.

Downtown Montreal and its Neighbourhoods



Montreal's bustling downtown is not only the city's main employment hub, but also a major tourist destination, home to many higher education institutions and a fast-growing residential population. A wide variety of users frequent it on a daily basis.

The downtown area is made up of different neighbourhoods forged over time, with distinctive characteristics in terms of activities and urban form. These characteristics influence how open spaces are used.

Shaughnessy Village

Shaughnessy is one of Montreal's most densely populated neighbourhoods. It's made up of quiet residential streets, lively businesses and historic institutions. Away from the hustle and bustle of the financial district, this district attracts a variety of people and offers a diversity of atmospheres.

Shaughnessy is made up of a number of foot traffic-generating hubs, including places of higher education such as Concordia University. The district's residential character and social mix make it a lively area where thousands of students and workers converge. This considerable daily influx contributes to its liveliness and effervescence.

USERS

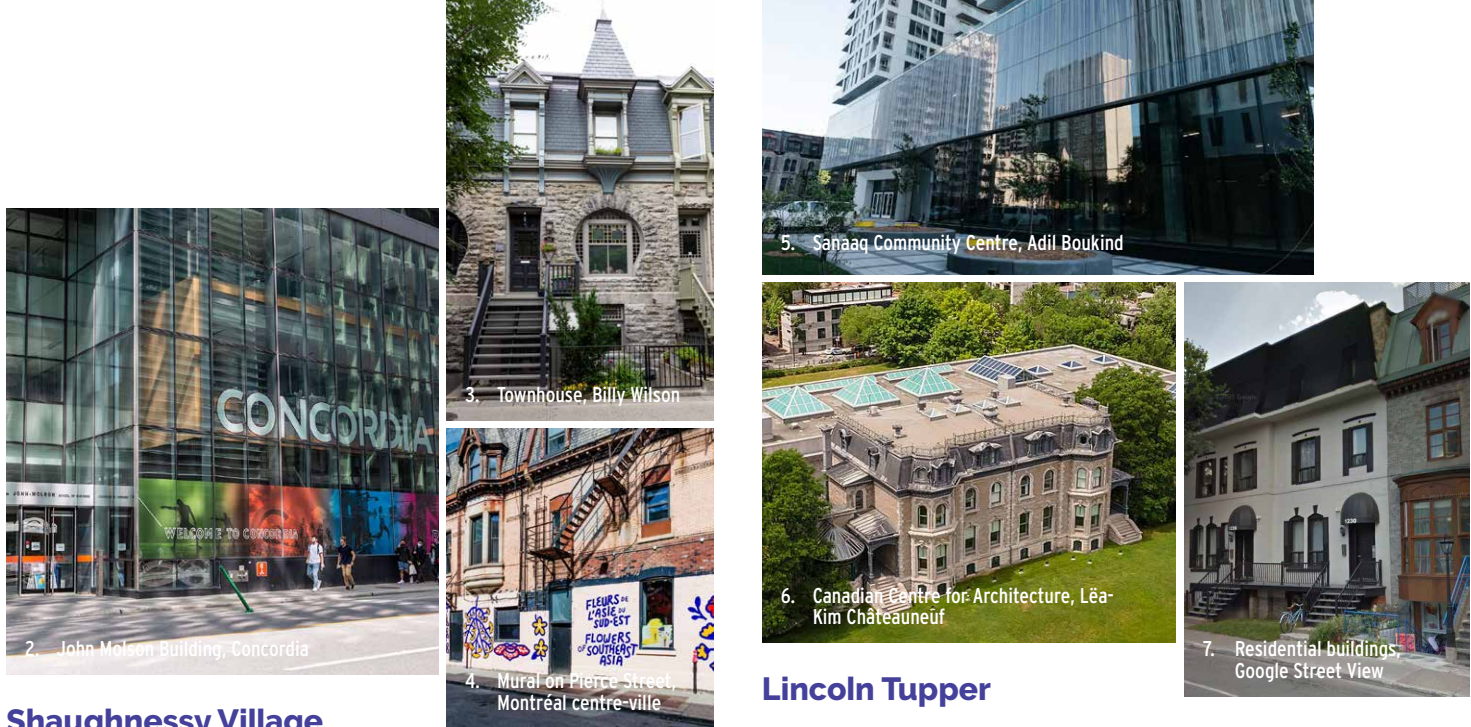
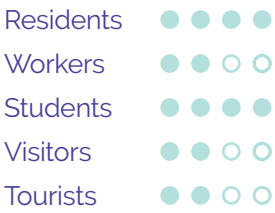


Lincoln Tupper

Located in the southwest of downtown, Lincoln Tupper is a residential neighbourhood where several heritage contiguous townhouses and high-rise apartments are built. The district is also made up of major traffic generators, including vast institutional gardens and places of higher education, endowed with a rich architectural heritage. The combination of its strong institutional core and its residential function makes it an area through which a large influx of residents, students and workers pass, bringing life to the district.

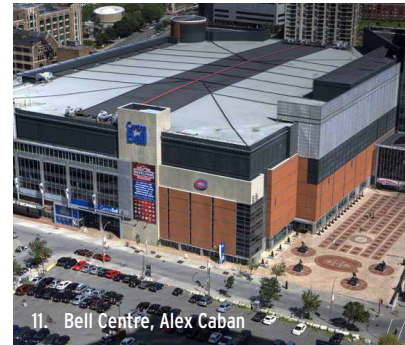
Over the years, the district has been transformed by the construction of high-rise apartments, the renovation of shopping centres and the renewal of public spaces.

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9. Sainte-Catherine street, phase 1, Barbes Rochechouart



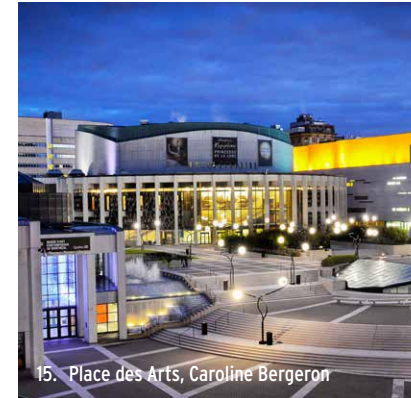
11. Bell Centre, Alex Caban



13. 1000 de la Gauchetière, Groupe Petra



14. International Jazz Festival, Jazz Festivals Canada



15. Place des Arts, Caroline Bergeron



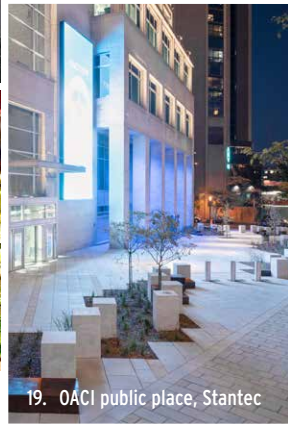
16. Place des Arts, Maud Wagnier



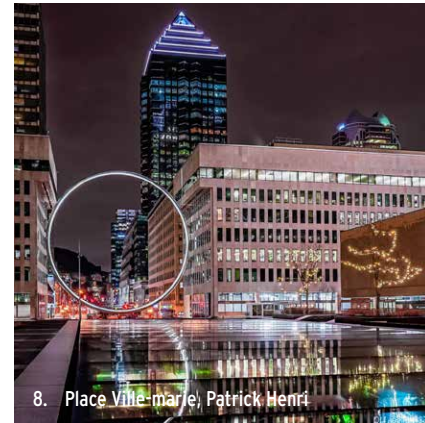
17. Robert-Bourassa boulevard, Eric Banover



18. Convention Centre, French Picman



19. OACI public place, Stantec



8. Place Ville-Marie, Patrick Henri



10. Sainte-Catherine street, phase 1, Eric Branover



12. des Canadiens avenue, Marco Campanozzi

Quartier des Gares

Taking its name from the historical presence of railway infrastructure, the Quartier des gares boasts a number of transportation hubs, including the Bell Centre, Rio Tinto Courtyard and Place Bonaventure. It is distinguished by the presence of two railway bridges, including the Canadian National bridge, which ends at Central Station, a major transit point.

Despite its high-density mix of uses, it's the increased concentration of shops that contributes most to the liveliness of the streets, especially rue de La Gauchetière. The latter is an atmospheric street, as some sections are pedestrian-friendly. As a gateway to the city, the large influx of workers, students, visitors and tourists contributes to the liveliness of the district.

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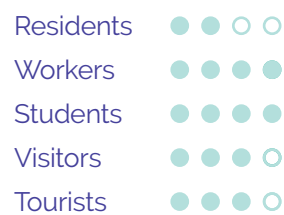


Business District

The Central Business District is the second largest in Canada and the heart of Montreal's economic activity. It is home to many headquarters, the main shopping malls, with hundreds of stores, hotels and several major employment centres, as well as a number of museums and universities.

In addition to the commercial artery of Sainte-Catherine Street, Place Ville-Marie, the Golden Square Mile and Peel, Crescent and de la Montagne streets make this district a lively place, with a visual and physical connection to Mount Royal.

USERS



Quartier des Spectacles

The Quartier des spectacles symbolizes the cultural heart of Montreal. It is home to a high concentration of cultural and commercial uses, as well as many institutional spaces, including a portion of the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) campus.

Thanks to this diversity of activities, the neighbourhood is vibrant all year round, at any time of the day or night. High-density real estate developments have revitalized the atmosphere, welcoming many new residents. The redevelopment of the Place des Festivals and Sainte-Catherine Street has made it possible to hold a number of events, ensuring a quasi-permanent cultural program.

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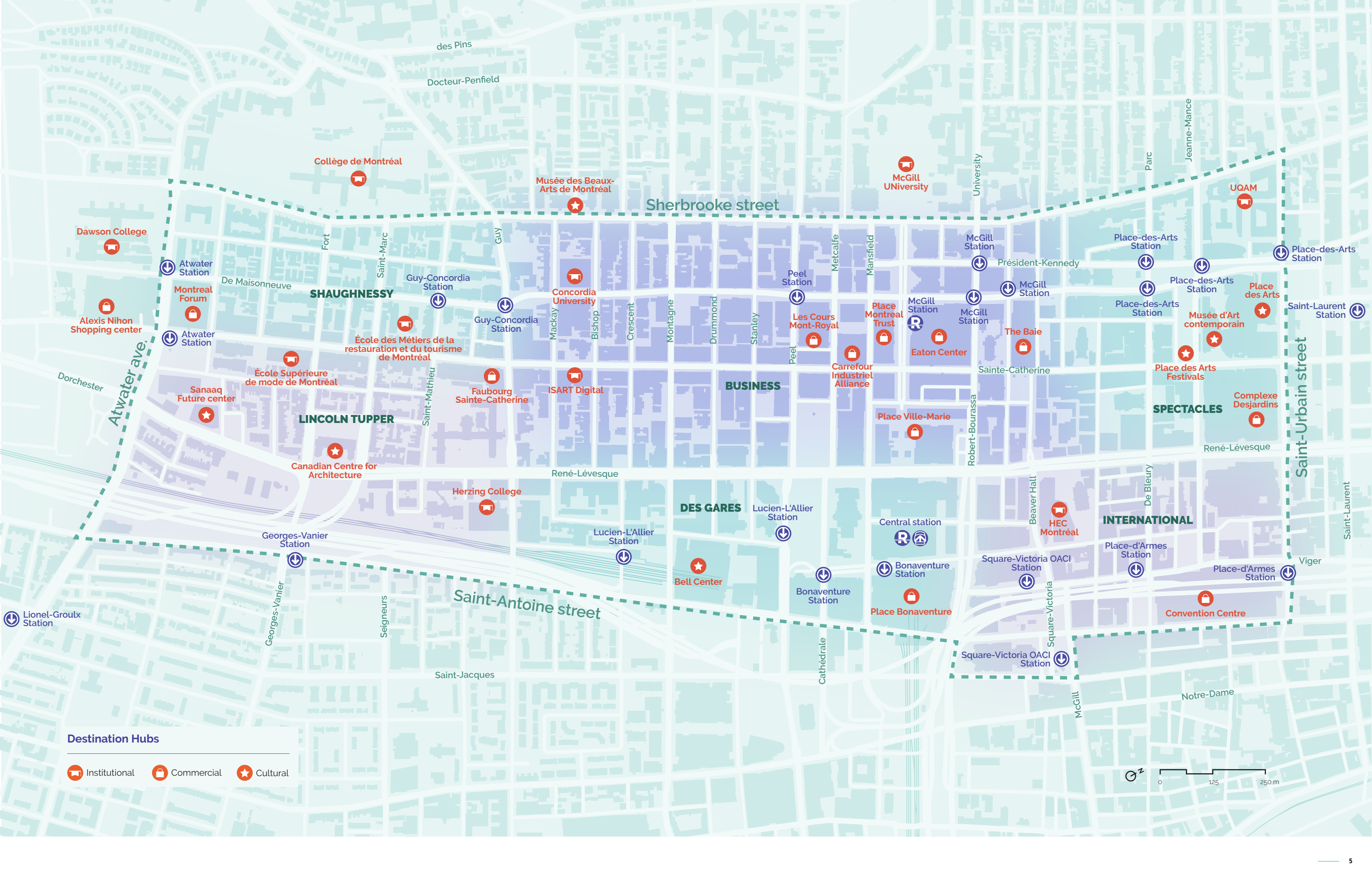
International District

Montreal's International District offers a transition between the business district and the historic centre of Old Montreal. It has undergone major investment over the years, giving it the distinctive urban form we see today.

It is home to the country's largest concentration of international organizations. The district is also home to the Palais des Congrès convention center, the headquarters of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the Stock Exchange Tower and the World Trade Centre Montreal. The location of these buildings encourages interaction between tourists, conventioners, employees of international organizations and foreign business partners. The area's lively public squares and infrastructure for international activities set it apart.

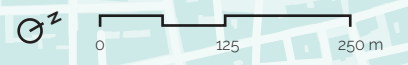
USERS





Destination Hubs

-  Institutional
-  Commercial
-  Cultural



Types of Interventions Observed

A host of temporary and semi-permanent installations have taken up residence throughout the downtown area over the years. They have multiplied in number and, by the same token, have taken on a variety of forms and styles.

In order to bring facilities together within a flexible planning framework, six broad types are identified and divided into two categories: interventions focused on physical installations and those more focused on programmatic improvements.

Within these six types lies a vast array of installations, some of which have yet to be imagined.

Category 1

Interventions focused on **physical installations** are designed to improve the physical conditions of the places where they are installed.



Pedestrian Experience at its Best

Getting the most out of the downtown experience means getting around on foot. However, a number of improvements can be made to make these journeys safer, more pleasant and more user-friendly.



Improved Comfort Conditions

Open spaces fail to reach their full potential due to lack of lighting or available seating. However, some installations can enhance the components of open spaces to make them welcoming, comfortable and safe.



A Breath of Fresh Air

Downtown is one of the areas of the city where mineralized surfaces predominate, increasing the heat generated in open spaces. Interventions designed to green and enhance the vegetation character of the downtown area can be deployed to counteract this discomfort.

Category 2

Programmatic enhancement installations are designed to introduce programmatic changes; to achieve their full potential, they require the contribution of a third party, such as a visual artist, musician or retailer, among others.



32. Playful game, La Presse



34. Playful art installation, Hubert Lafore



33. Playful game, Er. Par. Jsa



35. Sports activity, Parant Park

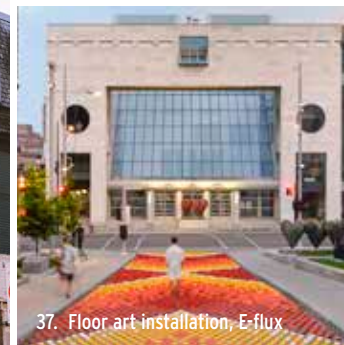


The Stage of all Possibilities

Open spaces are the stage for spontaneous or programmed performances that constantly reinvent the downtown experience. A few installations can intentionally enhance and amplify this cultural character.



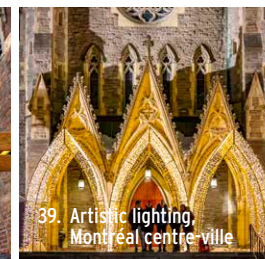
36. Mural, Montréal centre-ville



37. Floor art installation, E-flux



38. Threshold signage, Montréal centre-ville

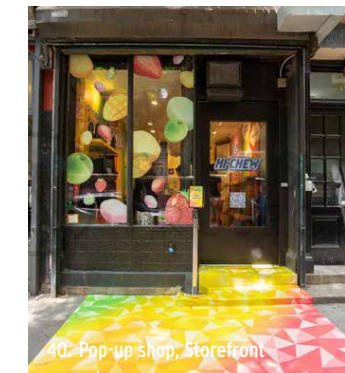


39. Artistic lighting, Montréal centre-ville



A Canvas for Local Ownership

Downtown has a unique, vibrant identity, shaped over time. A wide range of facilities can contribute to the evolution of its history and the sense of belonging it generates among Montrealers.



40. Pop-up shop, Storefront



Information booth, Ministère du tourisme



42. Mobile café, Tarte



42. Animation booth, Quartier des spectacles



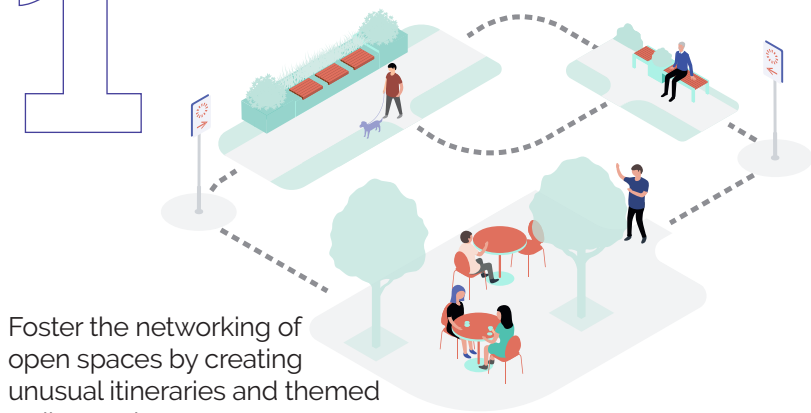
A Living Ecosystem

Like an ecosystem, the dynamism of the downtown area is based on the interrelation of commercial, cultural and tourist activities. Partnerships can be forged between the various players in the downtown area to help animate open spaces and contribute to its vitality.

Guiding Principles

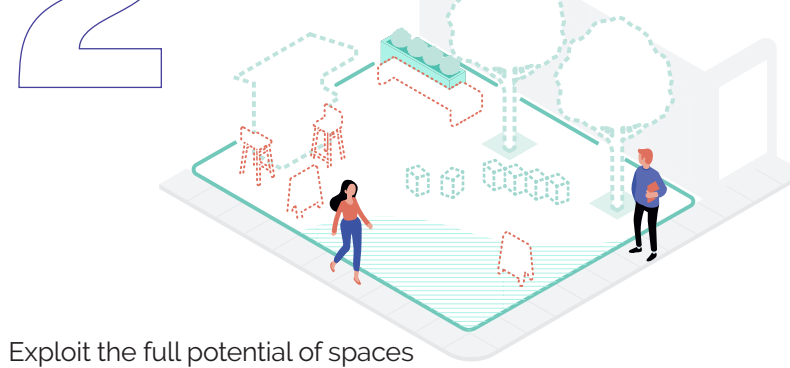
The 6 guiding principles provide a framework for future temporary or semi-permanent installations in an open space in downtown Montreal.

1 Networking



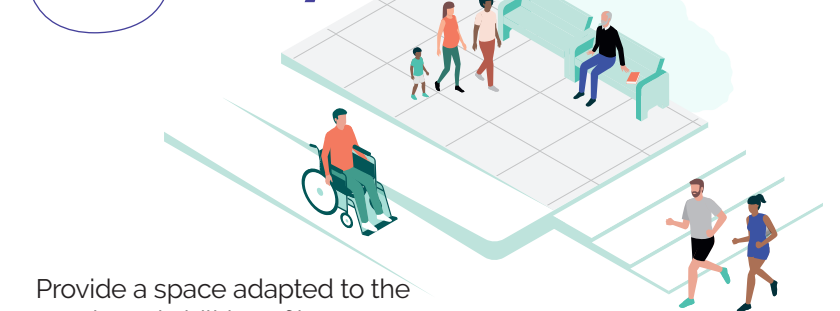
Foster the networking of open spaces by creating unusual itineraries and themed rediscoveries.

2 Targeting Potential



Exploit the full potential of spaces to create better places that adapt to users' desires.

3 Creating a Space for Everyone



Provide a space adapted to the needs and abilities of its users through inclusive facilities.

4 Taking Advantage of Seasonality



Encourage year-round use of the spaces by offering seasonally compatible programming.

5 Becoming an Urban Lab



Promote the development of unique spaces through innovative partnerships and urban experimentation.

6 Seeking Balance

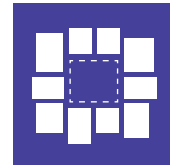


Ensure a balance between the flexibility of the space and the programming of activities to ensure appropriation and spontaneity among users.

Important Considerations and Best Practices

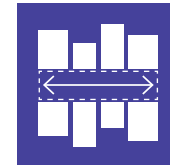
A number of design criteria can, when considered, help to move towards best practice in the development of temporary or semi-permanent facilities in open spaces.

These criteria fall into seven categories.



Integrated Environment

The insertion concept takes into account the unique characteristics of the neighbourhood, including its ambience, its urban configuration, and the main users likely to frequent the spaces.



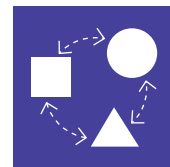
Consistency and Legibility

Coherence and legibility refer to the scale of the site, its dimensions and spatial composition, including the streets or buildings that form the boundaries and the various programmatic areas, such as pedestrian walkways, planted areas and street furniture, among others.



Urban Ecology

Sustainable development refers to the strategic and optimal use of resources to achieve more environmentally friendly developments.



Citizen Ownership

Citizen appropriation refers to the ability of users of an open space to shape and adapt it to their various needs and desires, transforming it into a place with which they identify.



Seasonality and Temporality

Seasonality and temporality call for the use of open spaces throughout the year, rain or shine, and all day long.



Inclusiveness and Universal Accessibility

Inclusivity and universal accessibility refer to taking into account the different needs, realities and challenges of potential users of open spaces, and the obstacles they may face.



Connectivity

Connectivity refers to the consideration of mobility conditions according to different modes of travel.

Opportunity Considerations

The potential of downtown open spaces, each with its own unique characteristics, can be determined by the degree of opportunity they offer.

These characteristics determine the role that a potential installation will play in the urban environment.

For example, in an undeveloped area, the primary objective of the installations will be to activate and energize the public space. On the other hand, in a high-traffic location with quality amenities, installations should complement the existing animation of the space and respect the visual signature of the site.

Criteria are therefore to be considered according to three degrees of suitability of the open space.

1

Strategic Opportunity

Space with lower visibility, where temporary or semi-permanent installation generates interest in the area.

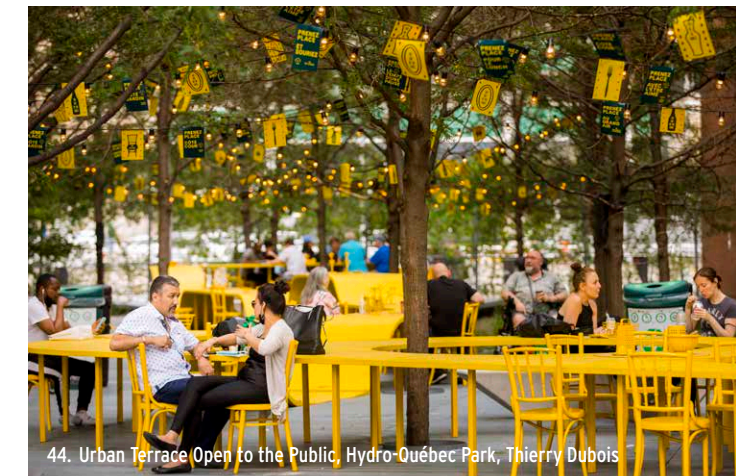
These spaces can form part of an interesting network and benefit from temporary amenities that can bring in traffic that would otherwise be lower. Facilities in these spaces can also create a spontaneity that is attractive to pedestrians.



2

Promising Opportunity

Space with good visibility, but not in the heart of downtown action. These spaces have facilities conducive to temporary initiatives. Temporary or semi-permanent installation adds value to a space that already has a certain level of interest and traffic.



3

Exceptional Opportunity

A space that already has a high profile, significant traffic and attractive permanent fixtures. A temporary or semi-permanent installation puts the finishing touches to a site whose vocation and traffic are already established.



Open Space Considerations

Downtown open spaces have been categorized according to a typology divided into three main types, which in turn are divided into subtypes.

The siting of a temporary or semi-permanent installation must be sensitive to the characteristics of the type and subtype of open space into which it is inserted.

These characteristics explain why certain types of intervention are favoured over others in certain sub-types of spaces.

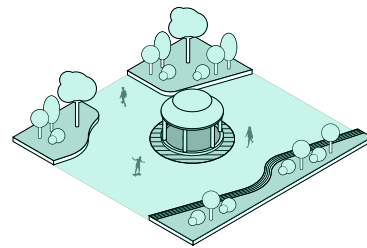
1

Parks and Public Spaces

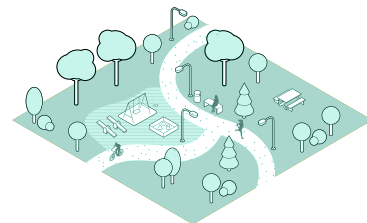
Essential and intrinsically linked to Montreal's urban character, the city's parks and public spaces contribute to the well-being of all Montrealers. They take a variety of forms and vary according to the nature of the activities that take place there, and the historical context in which they were established or developed.

Subtypes

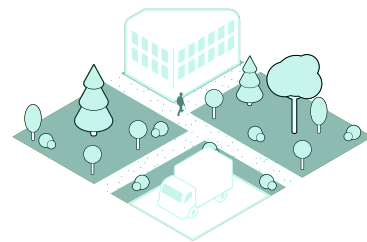
A PUBLIC PLACE



B PARK



C GREEN SPACE



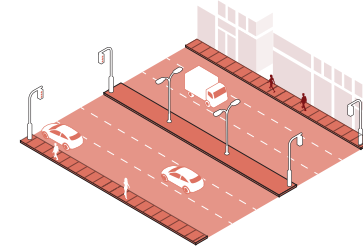
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Streets and Alleys

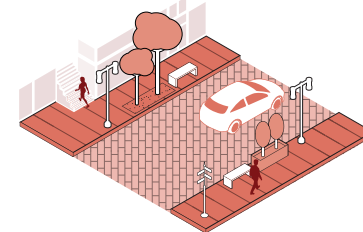
Downtown Montreal is served by a road network comprising a multitude of vehicular and pedestrian lane types. Each of these typologies offers different development possibilities and has its own characteristics and potential.

Subtypes

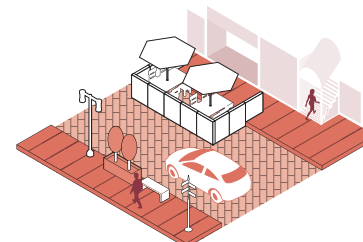
A COLLECTOR



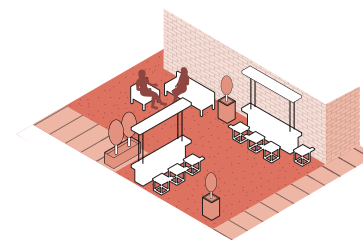
B URBAN PROMENADE



C AMBIANCE STREET



D ALLEY



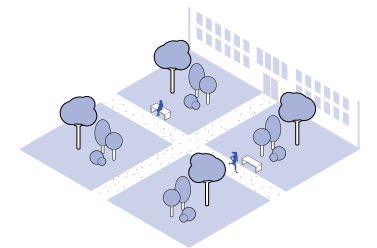
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Privately Owned Publicly Accessible Spaces

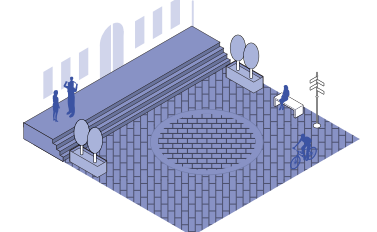
Private spaces accessible to the general public are an integral part of downtown Montreal's offering. The use of these spaces, along with appropriate programming, helps to optimize the user experience and opens up new possibilities for the creation of temporary installations.

Subtypes

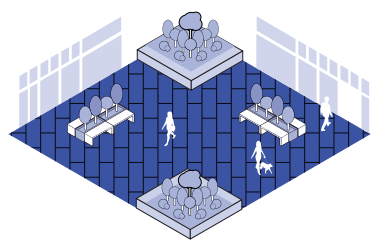
A GARDEN / COURTYARD



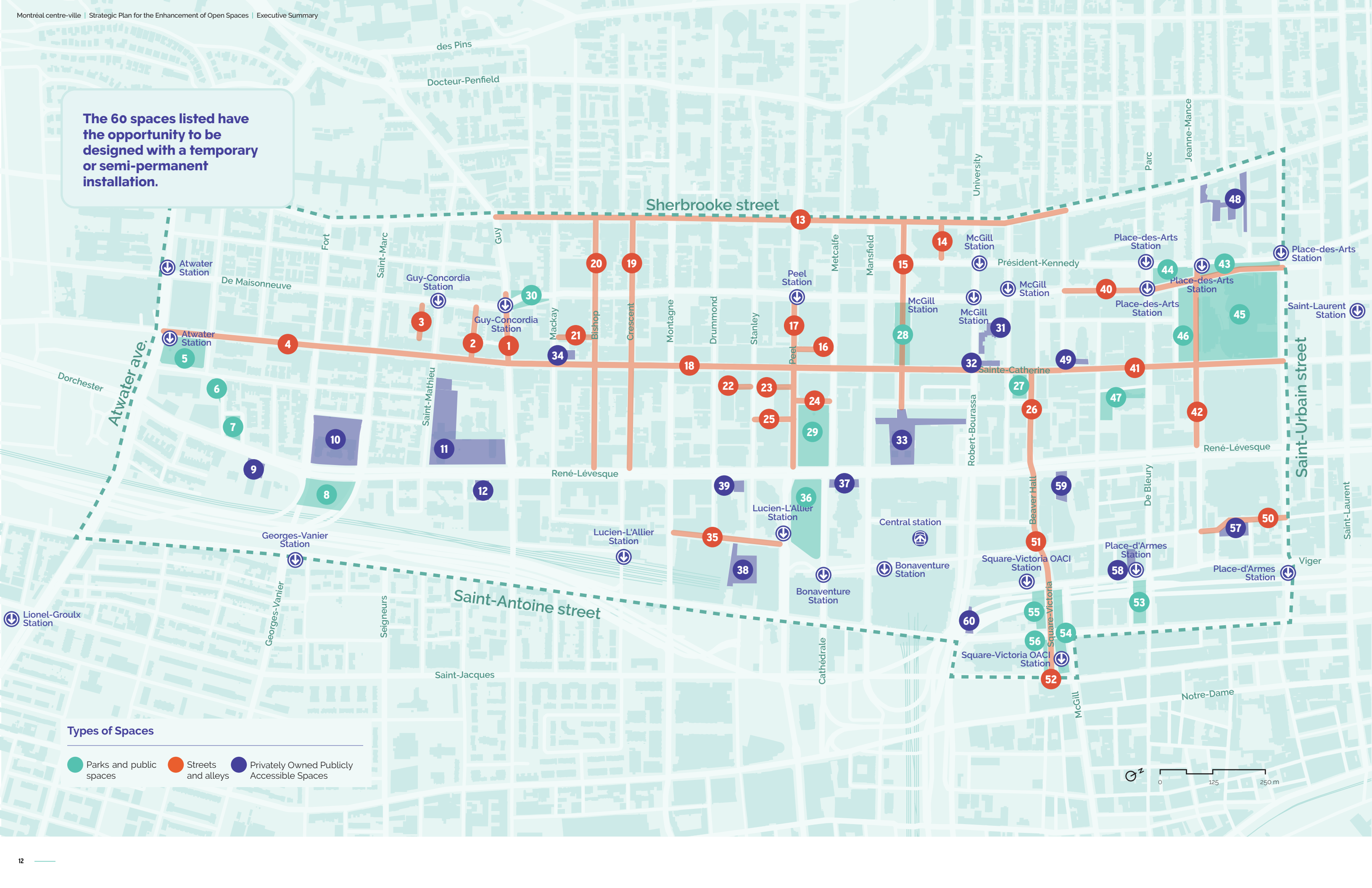
B BUILDING ENTRANCE



C PLAZA

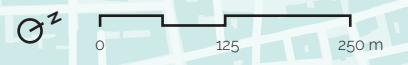


The 60 spaces listed have the opportunity to be designed with a temporary or semi-permanent installation.



Types of Spaces

- Parks and public spaces
- Streets and alleys
- Privately Owned Publicly Accessible Spaces



Example 1

Place du Canada

Place du Canada is the perfect place to contemplate Montreal's emblematic architectural icons. Nestled in the heart of downtown, it serves as a peaceful refuge from the hustle and bustle of the city. It becomes a lively outdoor space, injecting a timely breath of animation into the daily lives of working people—all the while respecting the historic essence of the square.

NEIGHBOURHOOD : Quartier des Gares

TYPICAL USERS : Workers/Tourists

SUBSPACE TYPE : Public square

DEGREE OF OPPORTUNITY : Promising opportunity

COMPATIBLE INTERVENTIONS : 



Source de l'image : Pierre-Selim Huard

Example 2

Avenue des Canadiens-de-Montréal

Vibrant with the seasons, Avenue des Canadiens-de-Montréal is a lively promenade that captures both the effervescence of festive events and the simplicity of everyday moments. It's a place of convergence, welcoming a diversity of users for a short or extended break.

NEIGHBOURHOOD : Quartier des gares

TYPICAL USERS : Workers / Tourists / Visitors / Residents

SUBSPACE TYPE : Ambiance street

DEGREE OF OPPORTUNITY : Exceptional opportunity

COMPATIBLE INTERVENTIONS : 



Source de l'image : Google Earth

Example 3

Square Victoria

As one of Montreal's urban icons, Square Victoria is the link between Old Montreal and downtown, between the river and the mountain. Enhanced by playful interventions, it serves as a meeting and exchange hub for workers, visitors, and long-stay tourists, while also guiding metro exiters to various nearby destinations.

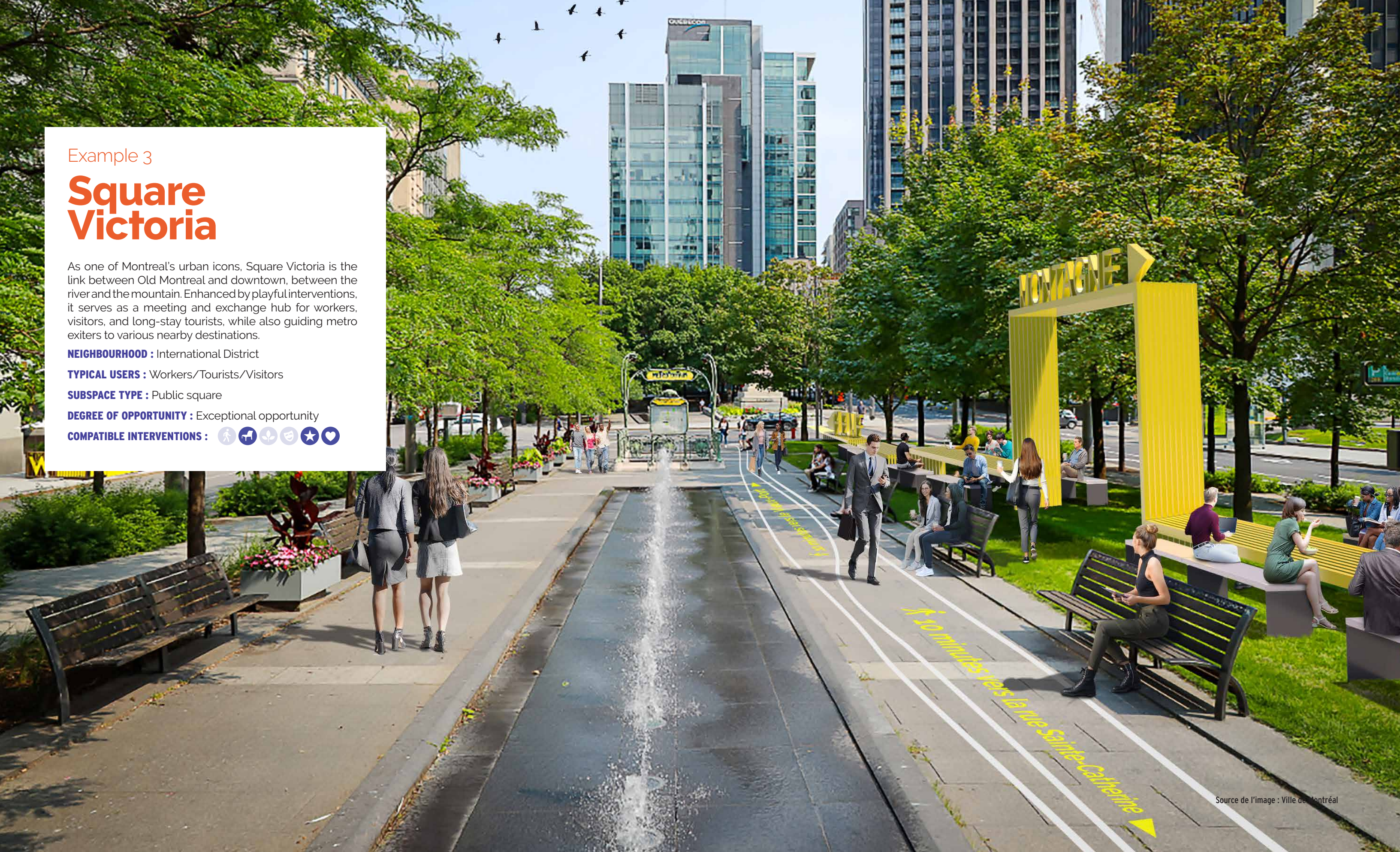
NEIGHBOURHOOD : International District

TYPICAL USERS : Workers/Tourists/Visitors

SUBSPACE TYPE : Public square

DEGREE OF OPPORTUNITY : Exceptional opportunity

COMPATIBLE INTERVENTIONS : 



Source de l'image : Ville de Montréal

