

# Annual Report 2024





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# A Word from the Chair of the Board and the Executive Director

Dear Members,

In 2024, we made decisive progress towards our objectives of improving the downtown experience and boosting visitor traffic.

Our internal reorganization allowed us to rethink our approach and develop our operational capacity to increase the impact of our efforts and optimize our existing resources without increasing the financial burden on our members.

Our pragmatic approach focuses on taking action where we can make a difference, while gauging the real impact of our initiatives. Using business intelligence to concretely measure the impact of our actions, this approach is yielding highly promising results, as user satisfaction in the downtown area is on the rise.

We still face many challenges and will have to step up our efforts to ensure the downtown area's vitality amid the economic downturn and homelessness crisis. That is why we continue to implement key projects designed to position downtown Montréal as one of the most attractive and dynamic city centres on the continent.



**GLENN  
CASTANHEIRA**  
Executive Director



**NATHALIE  
GAGNON**  
Chair of the Board



The Downtown Business Development Corporation (SDC) Montréal centre-ville

## Key Figures

Established in 1999, the SDC Montréal centre-ville is the largest organization of its kind in Quebec. The SDC is a not-for-profit organization made up of businesses located between Atwater Avenue and Saint-Urbain Street, and between Sherbrooke Street and Saint-Antoine Street.

**4,550**

contributing members

**40**

hotels

**850**

hospitality businesses

**300+**

terraces

**550**

shops



Major university  
hub

**30**

academic  
institutions

**135,000**

students

Residential hub

**24.2%**

population growth\*

World-renowned  
cultural hub

**25+**

festivals

**60**

art, culture and  
leisure venues

\*According to the latest Statistics Canada census

Cleanliness and Safety







#### Cleanliness and Safety

## The Cleaning Brigade: Keeping Downtown Spotless

For more than two decades, the cleaning brigade has worked every day to ensure the downtown area remains safe and welcoming, while also fostering social and professional integration.

A 2024 pilot project successfully installed four containers in alleys near Sainte-Catherine Street, which has decreased the number of trash bags on sidewalks. This measure has improved cleanliness, freed up pedestrian space and enhanced the downtown's image.

The cleaning brigade also took on new responsibilities, now maintaining several public areas through tasks like trash collection and the management of public-use furniture.

In 2024, the brigade also significantly expanded its operations to areas on the periphery of downtown, ensuring consistent city cleanliness and enhancing the overall experience for users.

**14.5M**

litres of  
waste collected

**210**

bags of waste collected  
per day on average

**53.396**

hours worked

**36**

employees

Beautification







#### Beautification

## Year-Round Greening: For a More Vibrant Downtown Area

Our long-term vision is to shape downtown Montréal into a model of urban sustainability—a vibrant community where people can live, work and play. Our greening initiatives are a crucial part of this plan, helping us tackle current environmental challenges head-on.

Our greening initiatives span the entire downtown territory—from Atwater Avenue to Saint-Urbain Street and Sherbrooke Street to Saint-Antoine Street—profoundly transforming the urban landscape in the city's core.

**1,039**  
summer amenities

**80**  
winter amenities

**58**  
fall amenities

**48**  
spring amenities

**45**  
mature potted trees



### Beautification

## Revamping the Squares and Hosting Events

In 2024, an initiative to enhance Montréal's public spaces aimed to revitalize and optimize the use of central public spaces, notably Phillips Square, Dorchester Square, Victoria Square, Place Jean-Paul Riopelle and the Saint-Jax Centre garden. Drawing inspiration from the Bryant Park model in New York City, this project was part of a strategic effort to improve downtown's attractiveness.

To top it all off, over 50 concerts further contributed to a rich experience for users.

# 4

squares outfitted with furniture for public use

# 58

concerts held at Phillips Square and Victoria Square

# 80

tables set up

# 76%

of visitors greatly appreciated the terraces and urban furniture





#### Beautification

## Outdoor Coworking Spaces in Shaughnessy Village

Shaughnessy Village is a bustling downtown neighbourhood made up of residents, students and businesses. To address the lack of terraces in this area, Montréal centre-ville set up two free outdoor workspaces. These attract customers to the area and nearby restaurants.

In order to boost economic development in the Shaughnessy neighbourhood, Montréal centre-ville aims to create meeting places.

**2**

outdoor workspaces

**4**

months of free access

**46**

average daily visitors

**930+**

Wi-Fi connections





#### Beautification

## Small Plaza at Peel Station Offers Greenery and Welcoming Atmosphere

From June to November 2024, a pop-up plaza at the Peel metro station exit turned a simple urban space into a welcoming, green oasis. The area provided a new space for workers and passersby to socialize and relax in the heart of downtown, thanks to the installation of new benches, flower planters and potted trees.

The plaza successfully improved the user experience by beautifying the surrounding area and fostering positive engagement in the public space. In addition to beautifying the area, the greening initiative also led to higher visitor satisfaction levels.

# 9

benches

# 10

flower boxes

# 2

mature potted trees



## Beautification

# Information Kiosks

Montréal centre-ville launched an innovative project to improve the urban user experience by setting up information kiosks at Victoria Square, Phillips Square, Dorchester Square and Place Jean-Paul Riopelle. Automatically lighting up at night, these elegant kiosks provide essential information to help visitors find their way around or discover nearby activities and services.

4

new tourist  
information kiosks

4

strategic locations





### Beautification

## Public Art: Le Mignonisme by Philippe Katerine

In 2024, the major artistic project known as “Le Mignonisme” swept through downtown Montréal. Set up in Phillips Square as part of a Quartier des Spectacles Partnership initiative, Philippe Katerine’s work was a unique visual attraction, encouraging visitors to explore the surrounding area.

The exhibition not only helped revitalize the downtown area but also offered visitors a memorable artistic experience.

# 4

months on display

# 1

member of the cleaning  
brigade responsible for upkeep

# 11

works of art on display in  
downtown Montréal

# 70%

of visitors greatly appreciated  
the public art downtown



# Lighting and Heritage Presentation

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## Lighting

# Spotlight on Downtown Public Spaces

Lights add a warm, enchanting glow to the winter season, lighting up Montréal's downtown core. The year 2024 featured major new initiatives to illuminate the city centre. The work done at Place du Canada, Phillips Square and Victoria Square significantly enhanced our initiative by turning these squares into magnetic, must-see hubs for residents, workers and visitors alike.

The standout innovation of 2024 was a new light trail through downtown Montréal, which provided an enchanting holiday setting that drew visitors and day-trippers to the area's shops, restaurants and cultural venues.

**203**  
new structures

**23 km**  
of string lights

**54%+**  
illuminated decorations

\*As compared to 2023.





# Worksite Mitigation

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## Worksite Mitigation

# Worksite Mitigation for Sainte-Catherine Street West Redevelopment

The mitigation plan for the Sainte-Catherine Street West redevelopment project is designed to lessen the disruption to local businesses and daily urban life. This latest phase (April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025) continued the efforts established in the prior period (November 2023 to March 2024).

Adjustments were made based on an in-depth analysis of previous initiatives and key lessons learned. The Sainte-Catherine Street West project took a more strategic and enhanced approach to better serve the needs of users and businesses without compromising the street's iconic character.



#### Worksite Mitigation

## Welcome Brigade

4

welcome brigade agents

3,982

directions given to residents and tourists

449

member visits

289

cleanliness complaints resolved

## Window Cleaning

12

street sections cleaned each week

54

participating businesses





Worksite Mitigation

## Information Kiosks

4

information kiosks to showcase the final project and provide a local map for navigating around the construction site



## Urban Oases

10

half moon benches

3

display arches



#### Worksite Mitigation

## Window Dressing

2

storefront windows decorated in order to beautify vacant spaces and increase their visibility



## Beautification of Peel Street

16

beautified concrete barriers

9

trees illuminated

14

flower boxes





Worksite Mitigation

## Summer Communication Campaign

52

transit ads (bus shelters and metro stations)

2

media placements with *The Main* and *Urbania*

1

Meta and YouTube campaign

3

articles on the Montréal centre-ville website



# Attracting and Retaining Major Events

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Attracting and Retaining Major Events

## Festivals and Events Are Always on the Agenda

A robust, year-round schedule of festivals and events brought downtown Montréal to life in 2024. Significant milestones in 2024 included the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Francos de Montréal, the 15<sup>th</sup> for Montréal Complètement Cirque and the 25<sup>th</sup> for ComediHA! In addition, over 2 million visitors took part in free cultural and sporting events held in the Quartier des Spectacles' public spaces, including Montréal en Lumière and the Great Montréal Christmas Market.

The SDC is proud to have played an instrumental role in the success of numerous 2024 events by providing key financial, logistical and strategic support.

# \$345,000

total amount of financial  
support





## Major Events We Support

Festival International de Jazz de Montréal

Franco de Montréal

M.A.D. Festival

Montréal en Lumière

The Great Montréal Christmas Market

Montréal Complètement Cirque

Art Souterrain

Just For Laughs





© @victordiazlamich



© @stephaniedinsdale



© Amir K. Photoart



Promoting the Area





Promoting the Area

## The 72<sup>nd</sup> Annual Santa Claus Parade: A New Chapter

On November 23, the 2024 Santa Claus Parade brought light and excitement to downtown, officially launching the holiday festivities. This year, the route was moved to René-Lévesque Boulevard for a better visitor experience.

A number of new additions contributed to the event's success:

- The debut of The Grinch float was a standout addition to the parade, representing the event's first new float in 20 years!
- Sponsor activations transformed Dorchester Square into a vibrant event space, creating an immersive experience for attendees.
- Olympic medalist Maude Charron added an exceptional touch to the parade with her performance as the Star Fairy.

The parade allowed thousands of families to experience the magic and traditions of Christmas in the heart of downtown, creating unforgettable memories.





# Busiest

day of the holiday season

## 108,000+

visits to the  
Santa Claus Parade website

## 1,000+

volunteers and artists

## 690,000+

TVA viewers

## 1.5M+

ad impressions

## 150,000+

spectators  
along the parade route

## 90+

mentions in the media

## \$92

in average spending  
per spectator





# Member Relations







### Member Relations

Montréal centre-ville's goal is to bring business intelligence to the downtown core on par with the pivotal role it plays for all of Quebec. This involves collecting, analyzing and consolidating key data from foot traffic counters, surveys and studies, among other sources. Results confirm that the downtown area has regained its pre-pandemic momentum, particularly in summer, with peaks in the fall.

**2**

training sessions organized

**6**

businesses honoured at the  
Montréal centre-ville Awards

**49**

new businesses showcased  
on our platforms

**334**

mentions of member  
businesses on our website

**6**

large stores participated in the  
SPVM's shoplifting operation

**350**

individual visits

# Business Intelligence





## Business Intelligence

# Performance of Downtown Montréal: A Story of Growing Appeal

Business intelligence allows the SDC Montréal centre-ville to collect and analyze strategic data to better understand the area's commercial and urban dynamics. Through tracking tools and in-depth studies, it evaluates foot traffic trends, profiles visitors and residents, and analyzes their satisfaction. Surveys are used to assess their perception of downtown according to the season, their overall experience and their views on issues like homelessness and accessibility. This information then guides the strategies and initiatives we develop to improve the downtown experience.

In 2024, the integration of dashboards and various data sources strengthened the SDC's ability to anticipate the needs of businesses and users. This approach made it possible to optimize projects, adapt development strategies and better target initiatives based on public expectations and profiles.

**177,350**

average daily foot traffic  
recorded by counters

**Sainte-Catherine / McGill**

busiest downtown  
intersection

**17%**

office vacancy rate  
(Class A)

**80%**

average downtown  
retail occupancy rate





## Business Intelligence

# Highlights of Our Achievements

### Reports:

- Montreal City Centre Report – 7<sup>th</sup> edition – annual publication
- Traffic reports – monthly publication

### Studies:

- Santa Claus Parade Foot Traffic and Visitor Origin Study – 500 respondents
- Study on the Impact of Homelessness on the Downtown Economy
- Feasibility Study for Territorial Expansion
- Strategic Plan for the Enhancement of Open Spaces

### Surveys:

- Winter Survey of Merchants and Visitors – 500 respondents
- Summer Survey of Merchants and Visitors – 500 respondents
- Surveys of workers, merchants and a Quebec-wide panel on the impact of homelessness – 2,500 respondents

### CRM:

- New SDC Member Database

# Representation and Business Development

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#### Representation and Business Development

## Economic Missions and Hosting of Delegations

Through its representation activities in Canada and abroad, Montréal centre-ville draws inspiration from best practices, while promoting local expertise and establishing the downtown area as a world-class destination.

Montréal centre-ville's efforts included the following:

- ▶ Presented at the International Downtown Association conference in Seattle (September 13, 2024)
- ▶ Hosted a South Korean delegation from the Korea Association of Regional Development Institutes (October 7, 2024)
- ▶ Hosted a delegation from the City of St. Louis for a working meeting on the dynamics of downtown areas (May 3, 2024)





#### Representation and Business Development

## Briefs and Public Consultations

Montréal centre-ville acts as a key intermediary for its members, bringing priority issues to public authorities' attention in order to maintain and develop downtown Montréal's vitality. Montréal centre-ville took part in multiple public consultations in 2024.

These included the following:

- ▶ Advocated on Parliament Hill with the Canada IDA, the national coalition of the International Downtown Association, to highlight issues related to the homelessness crisis, mental health, substance abuse and public safety on our streets.
- ▶ Participated in the City of Montréal's Commission sur le développement économique et urbain et l'habitation for the draft policy on nightlife.
- ▶ Participated in public consultations on the City of Montréal's 2050 Land Use and Mobility Plan.
- ▶ Advocated for the interests of downtown during the Sainte-Catherine Street redevelopment project.
- ▶ Participated in the OCPM's preliminary consultations regarding homelessness and social harmony.

# Media Coverage and Marketing

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#### Media Coverage and Marketing

## In the Media

Montréal centre-ville plays a crucial role in representing its members' interests and promoting downtown as a world-class destination. As such, the organization regularly appears in the media through the executive team, who act as spokespersons.

# 520

mentions

# 165M+

impressions

# \$769,000

worth of advertising





### Media Coverage and Marketing

## Media Relations

In 2023, Montréal centre-ville stepped up its promotional and media efforts to actively contribute to revitalizing the downtown core. Based on an analysis of 100 media reports, Montréal centre-ville achieved over \$600,000 in media reputation gains and a performance score of 106%, indicating very successful media coverage for the organization.

**\$300,000**

for 100 news stories

**10**

press releases

**90**

interviews

**1,000+**

media mentions

**4**

public affairs events

**2**

open letters



## Cafouillages au Grand Prix du Canada

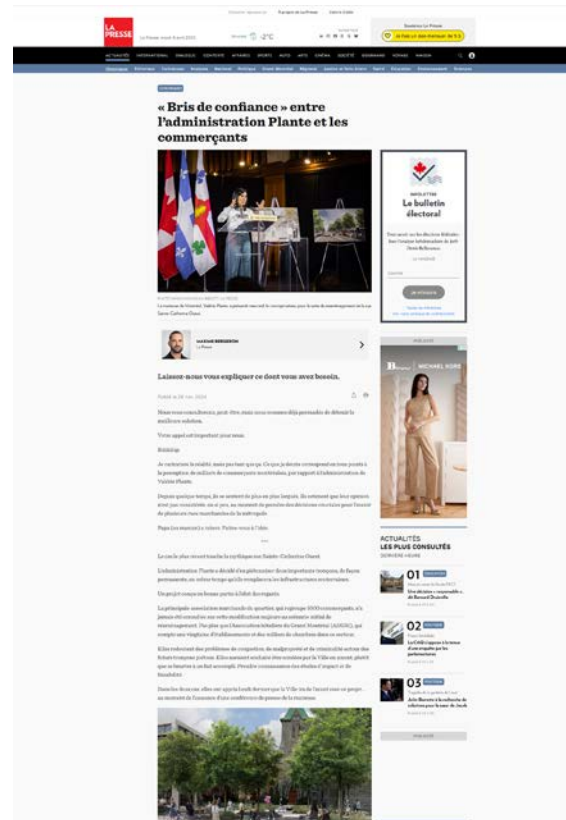
Segment | 12 juin 2024 | 6 minutes 11 secondes



De **Le téléjournal avec Patrice Roy**

Partager

L'image de Montréal amochée, après un week-end de Grand Prix chaotique. Entrevue avec le directeur général de Montréal centre-ville, Glenn Castanheira.



## Hausse de 30% de l'achalandage au centre-ville de Montréal depuis la rentrée



HAUSSE DE L'ACHALANDAGE AU CENTRE-VILLE

PHOTO

**SIMON GAGNACHE FORTIN**

Journaliste, chroniqueur, présentateur

L'achalandage est en hausse dans les rues du centre-ville de Montréal depuis la rentrée et les habitudes des travailleurs y ont pour quelque chose. Une augmentation de la fréquentation de 30% a été enregistrée depuis le début du mois de septembre par rapport à la même période l'an dernier, selon Montréal centre-ville.



## Montréal implante de nouvelles règles pour les inspections du SIM



Photo: Gilles Rogée / Le Devoir



## Media Coverage and Marketing

## Follower Growth Compared to 2023

Over the course of 2024, Montréal centre-ville increased its presence on social media with a content strategy centred on the downtown area's diverse cultural, commercial and experiential offerings. The organization's initiatives were also showcased on its various platforms. Another key development at the end of 2024 was the SDC's move to reassign social media management to a dedicated staff member.

**36K****3,000****30K****6,000****3.7K****5,000**





Media Coverage and Marketing

## Website and Newsletters

In 2024, the SDC launched its new website: [montrealcentreville.ca](https://montrealcentreville.ca). The site aims to position the organization as a concierge for the general public.

**185,000**

visitors

**50+**

newly opened  
businesses featured  
in articles

**9**

active users per minute

**378,000**

page views



#### Media Coverage and Marketing

## Excellent Performance of Monthly Newsletters in 2024

### Newsletters for the general public

- ▶ Number of subscribers: 11,838
- ▶ Average open rate: 46.16%
- ▶ Average click-through rate: 6.19%

### Member newsletters

- ▶ Number of subscribers: 2,005
- ▶ Average open rate: 45%
- ▶ Average click-through rate: 5%

More Than Meets the Eye...







More Than Meets the Eye...

## Snapshot of Our Other Activities in 2024:

- ▶ 5,000 toques handed out to the public during the Santa Claus Parade
- ▶ Nomination for a Tourisme Montréal 2024 Prix Distinction for a public space development project
- ▶ A tribute in *La Presse* to Gino Chiasson, marking 20 years with the cleaning brigade
- ▶ 5 new, state-of-the-art counters installed in the area
- ▶ 20 checkered flags set up for the F1 Grand Prix weekend
- ▶ 3 marriage proposals in front of our winter light displays
- ▶ Connections made with over 50 new local businesses
- ▶ Participation in Discover McGill 2024, the university's new student welcome day





# Excerpt from the Financial Statements

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# Excerpt from the Financial Statements

Revenue	2024	2023
Membership dues	\$4,181,400	\$4,292,007
Grants	\$1,306,929	\$1,736,126
Sponsorships in the form of services	\$447,159	\$663,002
Sponsorships	\$172,800	\$84,000
Other revenue	\$104,783	\$147,117
Contributions related to tangible assets	\$428,077	\$296,671
Contribution – Fondation Montréal centre-ville	\$500,000	\$350,000
	<b>\$7,141,148</b>	<b>\$7,568,923</b>

Operating expenses	2024	2023
Communications, promotion and outreach	\$2,122,413	\$2,346,007
Programs and special projects	\$1,265,390	\$1,156,531
Cleanliness and safety	\$1,628,832	\$1,545,559
Beautification and local development	\$1,220,521	\$1,095,123
Development and business intelligence	\$704,446	\$660,572
Administration	\$345,790	\$392,103
Depreciation of tangible assets	\$585,591	\$363,244
	<b>\$7,872,983</b>	<b>\$7,559,139</b>

Excess (shortfall) of revenue over expenses before investment income	\$ (731,835)	\$ 9,784
Investment income	\$ 173,312	\$ 180,394
Excess (shortfall) of revenue over expenses	\$ (558,523)	\$ 190,178

# Board of Directors and Senior Management

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# Board of Directors as at December 31, 2024

## Chair

Nathalie Gagnon  
Partner, Lawyer,  
BCF Business Law

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## Director

Anne-Marie Laoun  
President, Georges  
Laoun Opticien

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## Vice-Chair

Paul-André Goulet  
President, Groupe Goulet Sports

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## Director

Chantal Riopel  
General Manager,  
Hotel Le Westin Montréal

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## Secretary

André Bouthillier  
Executive Vice-President,  
NATIONAL Public Relations

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## Director

Luciano D'Iorio  
Regional President and  
Associate Director, CDN Global

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## Treasurer

Simon Castonguay  
President, Sentinel RC  
gestion de risque

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## Director

Alain Dufresne  
Director – Department of Public  
Works, City of Montréal –  
Borough of Ville-Marie

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## Director

Sonia Gagné  
Architect, Principal Partner,  
Provencher Roy

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# The Montréal centre-ville team as at December 31, 2024



**Glenn Castanheira**  
Executive Director

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**Franck Subra**  
Deputy Director

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**Alicia Orlowski**  
Communications and  
Marketing Manager

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**Selma Emna Jmii**  
Membership Liaison and  
Business Intelligence Manager

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**Théo Closson**  
Field Team Manager

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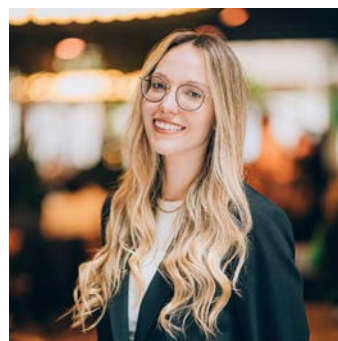
**Rachel Van Velzen**  
Special Project Manager

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**Nicolas Bernier**  
Project Manager – Strategy and  
Social Media Management

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**Elisa De Maertelaere**  
Project Manager –  
Communication and Marketing

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**Matthias Puc**  
Data and  
Member Relations Coordinator

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**Marie-Claude Desrosiers**  
Accounting and  
Administrative Coordinator

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**Gino Chiasson**  
Head of the Cleaning Brigade

