

**Speech by Alan DeSousa**

**Executive Committee member responsible for sustainable  
development and economic development**

**At the announcement of the 2005-2010 City of Montréal  
Economic Development Strategy**

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**Thursday, June 9, 2005**

To be checked against delivery

My fellow Executive Committee members,  
Montréal partners,  
Friends,

On behalf of Montréal Mayor Gérald Tremblay and my fellow Executive Committee members, including Chair Frank Zampino, and speaking for myself, I am very happy to welcome you to the announcement of our economic development strategy for 2005-2010.

What we are offering is a way of making Montréal one of the great metropolises by 2025, raising it to the ranks of North American cities with the highest standard of living and best quality of life!

Yes, this is an ambitious objective. But we have defined it through a vast and rewarding consultation and co-ordination process, starting with the Montréal Summit, and leading to a consultation document submitted last November.

And our objective reflects the ambitions of Montrealers. All the partners who have been consulted since the Summit, in particular at public hearings held by the Commission permanente du conseil sur la mise en valeur du territoire et du patrimoine, have approved our strategic orientations and helped fine-tune the action plan. My compliments to Richard Deschamps, Chair of the Commission. Everyone has given us their support.

Never before have consultations on the economic future of our city, bringing together all the stakeholders, been as productive. I wish to offer my sincere thanks to everyone who participated. We took account of all their points of view and most of the Commission's recommendations. This unanimity and this commitment to making Montréal a first-class metropolitan region already mark the beginning of our success.

In fact, the theme of our economic strategy reflects that confidence: success@montreal, success in Montréal. What other word than SUCCESS could better sum up our economic development strategy? What other word could better convey our commitment to creating an environment designed to foster business, innovation and the emergence of new knowledge?

Our strategy fits in with the economic development plan of the Montréal Metropolitan Community, unveiled one month ago. We share the same central objective, of positioning ourselves among the leaders.

Local action plans for the economy and employment, drafted by local development centres in the boroughs, will reinforce our strategy.

Finally, we will ensure that our strategy is in tune with the five-year plan drawn up by the regional conference of elected officials, chaired by my colleague Georges Bossé, and the major issues it is addressing, including that of Montréal, city of learning, knowledge and innovation.

Overall, Montréal has experienced an economic rebound in recent years and ranks among the top metropolitan areas in North America in terms of job creation. All the indicators in our economic report, of which you were given a copy today, clearly bear this out.

We are pleased with this improvement, but we must do even better. We have to continue working hard to make up lost ground and catch up with the most dynamic North American metropolitan areas in economic terms.

The solution lies not only in boosting our productivity, but also in creating a solid partnership with the provincial and federal governments. According to the Conference Board, Canadian municipalities are incapable of meeting their investment needs alone.

Our new economic development strategy targets five factors for economic success: knowledge, culture, creativity, know-how, and openness to the world. It is by building on them that we will increase the value of our economic activity.

These factors define the new reality in Montréal. This reality is based on two shared values – sustainable development and solidarity.

The projects we have chosen for success@montreal focus on the city's primary functions in its own areas of responsibility, its attractiveness and its international image.

For instance, through the e-Cité initiative, Montrealers will soon be able to apply for permits and subsidies on line, consult a directory of available industrial and commercial buildings, download economic data or simply submit queries around the clock, 7 days a week.

As promised, we are moving ahead by supporting the establishment of a non-profit organization in the film sector. Our annual contribution will be \$100,000, in addition to the nearly \$1 million we invest in our city's Film and Television Commission every year. The goal of this new NPO, headquartered in Montréal, will be to attract international productions and carry out structural initiatives to benefit the industry as a whole.

We will also be investing \$250,000, starting this year, to launch the commercial facet of a new program, ICI Montréal (ICI standing for Industrial and Commercial Incentives). This will allow us to support two short-term initiatives for businesspeople's associations: rallying them, by enhancing the Commercité program and extending it to the entire island, and developing diagnostic tools and master plans to guide them.

Eventually, the City of Montréal and the boroughs hope to provide financial support for renovating businesses, in keeping with the spirit of the former Programme Opération Commerce, better known by its French acronym, "POC".

We will continue to study the options for the industrial facet of the ICI Montréal program. Financial assistance would make it possible, for example, to make better use of industrial spaces and stimulate private initiatives in the appropriate zones and sectors, including large spaces standing vacant or suitable for conversion, artists' studios and areas around metro, train and bus stations.

In light of the findings of the Conseil des industries bioalimentaires de l'île de Montréal (CIBIM), which has been advocating a bio-food industry centre, the City allocated \$1 million in its three-year capital plan to this major project in east-end Montréal. Already, \$300,000 had been allocated to the CIBIM to conduct studies and draw up business plans.

In addition, we recently announced our recovery action plan for the Acadie-Chabanel district, the heart of the city's garment and textile industry, and our commitment to building a station on the Montréal-Blainville suburban train line. This is a recurring commitment worth over \$500,000 per year.

These infrastructure investments come on top of some other very important projects, including the L'Acadie Circle, the Dorval Circle announced a few weeks back, work in progress on the Parc-Des pins exchange and upcoming work on Notre-Dame Street.

These projects, among many others, will keep my colleague Claude Dauphin very busy.

We are also pleased to see that as a result of hard work by Tourisme Montréal, the Quebec government has announced that it will be charging an accommodation tax of 3% starting on July 1, 2005. This will give Tourisme Montréal better means to promote our city as a tourist destination.

The Formula 1 Grand Prix, to be held this weekend, kicks off a very busy season of huge festivals and events, giving Montréal an opportunity to shine like never before, showcasing its openness to the world and its zest for life. Our culture, needless to say, is one of our key distinctive assets.

The draft cultural development policy that my colleague Francine Senécal and her team are proposing will allow us to build on these strengths.

We are suggesting a vision, an orientation and a strategy to our partners that will allow us to provide our investors and entrepreneurs with an environment in which they can truly put their talents to work.

Today, in addition to the programs I have just outlined, I am pleased to announce that we are launching five new strategic initiatives.

First initiative: *success in making Montréal a health technopolis*

To make the most of the upcoming major investments in the UHCs and build on our assets in the health and life sciences, the City is going ahead, starting today, with work on the life sciences cluster for Metropolitan Montréal promoted by Montréal International. The Executive Committee has decided to draw up an action plan to develop the health technopolis concept and put it into practice. A task force will be set up in collaboration with our partners for this purpose.

Second initiative: *success in a new emphasis on entrepreneurship*

To better encourage the birth, attraction and growth of new businesses in Montréal, the City and its partners will do their utmost to foster a culture of entrepreneurship among Montrealers, through Entrepreneurship Montréal. Our network of local development centres will play a key role here, and will receive \$12.6 million in confirmed support from the Quebec government, in addition to \$880,000 from the City. Montréal International, our main partner when it comes to marketing our city, will also be playing a vital role. We are counting on it to attract even more foreign firms and international organizations.

Third initiative: *success in making Montréal a design city*

The City recognizes the importance of design and plans to draw up an integrated strategy and action plan for highlighting design quality. In order to develop Montréal as a centre of design excellence, we will be establishing a “design innovation platform”, with the goal of co-operating with the other stakeholders in making this a more attractive city.

This initiative will also contribute, through a partnership and diversified networking, to confirming Montréal’s national and international leadership as a “design city”.

I salute my colleague Stéphane Harbour, member of the Executive Committee responsible for urban planning, who shares my views about the importance of making this a more attractive city.

Fourth initiative: *success in developing an expanded downtown*

Downtown Montréal, from the St. Lawrence to the Mountain, is bustling with a number of major projects, and will be even busier in years to come: from the Quartier international, which has become a benchmark in urban design and development, to the arts and entertainment district, Old Montréal, the Harbourfront, Mount Royal, the UHCs, residential development, transforming major arteries and many other projects.

All these projects will contribute to improving the public face of the city and confirming the crucial economic role of the greater downtown area.

Our land and heritage development department, the Service de la mise en valeur du territoire et du patrimoine, will be responsible for mobilizing the partners concerned, so as to ensure the maximum co-operation and consistency by all parties in their efforts.

Fifth initiative: *success in property development by major institutions*

Lastly, we will be creating a dedicated team to assist the universities in their real-estate expansion plans and our major institutions that wish to continue their expansion and carry out major projects. Aside from the universities, there are the Port of Montreal, Montréal-Trudeau Airport, and the Old Port of Montréal Corporation, to mention a few examples.

We now have an economic development strategy that will help mobilize efforts and stimulate our individual and collective desire to succeed. We are proposing a series of concrete actions and projects unanimously endorsed by our partners.

We are sure that we will receive a sympathetic hearing from the provincial and federal governments, and that they are firmly committed to the success of our strategy.

We have mentioned some projects that are already underway. We have announced some new structural initiatives. The strategy identifies many others, to be launched at a later date. Others are sure to emerge along the way.

I wish to thank all those who have given of their time and energy since the Summit and have shown their interest and desire to continue working on the economic development committee so as to monitor the implementation of the strategy and Montréal's success.

I would also like to thank my team at the City of Montréal, the economic development commissioners in the boroughs, and our local development centres. I salute their major contribution to the City's Economic Development Strategy.

I am convinced that we will succeed in creating a prosperous economy by ensuring solidarity and profound respect for the environment and future generations. I call on all our public- and private-sector partners to help us attain SUCCESS, together, in enhancing our standard of living and quality of life.

We have the assets we need. The players are ready and willing. We are sure that the government partnerships will be forthcoming to provide our entrepreneurs, creators, scientists, artists, educators and institutions with the right conditions for their success, for our success. Our success in achieving the Montréal to which we all aspire.

Thank you.