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Central Business District

General goals

- Develop vacant lots
- Increase residential development
- Improve the design quality of public spaces and main thoroughfares



Planning issues

The heart of Montréal's economy, the Central Business District's bustle and buildings make it an exceptional place. The Central Business District reflects Montréal's vitality and contributes to its renown by providing a generally attractive, friendly and safe environment.

Numerous vacant lots dot the Central Business District, accounting for approximately 20 of its 177 hectares. The heavy concentration of vacant lots in the southwest section is mainly due to the Ville-Marie Expressway's access ramps and the rail infrastructure that both contribute to the area's destructured character. Development of this vacant land would consolidate the built environment, make the streets livelier and improve the urban environment.

Residential activities currently play a marginal role in the Central Business District. Their development is desirable in order to revitalize sections that are less suitable for retail or office space, including Paper Hill north of the Quartier international and the Chaboillez area. An influx of new residents would also help to consolidate the retail activity along Sainte-Catherine Street, which varies considerably among its different segments.

Some large public spaces in the Central Business District are in need of a facelift, notably Dorchester and Phillips Squares. Several important thoroughfares and their surroundings (McGill Street / Beaver Hall Hill, Peel and University streets, René-Lévesque and De Maisonneuve boulevards) should be carefully redesigned so that they project an image that is in keeping with the role of the Central Business District.

The comfort and security of pedestrians and cyclists is of particular concern in the Central Business District. In this sense, any redesign of the public realm should increase the amount of space for pedestrians and encourage the use of bicycles.

Planning guidelines

- 1 Support the development of vacant lots through appropriate measures, such as a rigorous application of parking regulations, the development of new standards in parking lot design, or the acquisition and assembly of lots.
- 2 Support development of residential activities in the Paper Hill and Chaboillez areas.
- 3 Improve certain main thoroughfares and large public spaces and their surroundings.
- 4 Create new bikeway links and increase the number of secure bicycle parking areas.
- 5 Prioritize the needs and comfort of pedestrians when redesigning the public realm.
- 6 Install bicycle parking areas in appropriate locations.
- 7 Study different scenarios for the redesign of the southwestern section of the Central Business District.