

CHAPTER SIX

Development Constraints and Potential of the Montréal Harbourfront



6.1 Development constraints

In Chapter 5, we carried out an in-depth analysis of the two phenomena that constitute the harbourfront's main problems of urban development:

- the rips in the urban fabric caused by expressways and rail-transport infrastructure as well as the fragmentation that they cause in that network;
- problems of accessibility (land, river and waterfront), the shortcomings of the public transit system, and the lack of a consistent transportation management strategy, leading to acute problems with automobile traffic and its ensuing serious consequences (including air pollution), during the summer season in particular.

These two major problems create structural difficulties and compromise not only harbourfront development, but also any hope of establishing a harmonious, promising vision for the future. Action on both fronts is therefore a high priority in establishing an urban development plan focused on pursuing the movement to bring Montréal and the St. Lawrence closer together that began some 30 years ago.

This process will also involve other development-management challenges. In some cases, these involve the technical and financial constraints related to the problems of contamination (soil management and water quality); in others, the formulation and implementation of a development model for resolving or preventing conflicts of cohabitation among the urban functions (e.g.: residential vs. industrial, recreational/tourism vs. residential or industrial (Figure 6.3)). This section is devoted to an analysis of these types of constraints.

6.1.1 Managing contaminated soil

In many North American and European cities, once-flourishing industrial zones have experienced an irreversible decline, dragging down both employment and population levels. Economic activity has transformed emerging sectors and relocated elsewhere within the city, to other regions, or even to other countries.

This phenomenon of significant long-term economic change opens the door to redevelopment of abandoned or underutilized land. However, given that these areas are difficult to redevelop, owing to the obsolescence of municipal infrastructure and general site conditions, they are very often contaminated to varying degrees by industrial operations dating back to a time when environmental management was not yet a concern of plant owners.

On the Island of Montréal, former industrial zones, railway and marshalling yards rights-of-way and infrastructure, the old oil-refinery sector, and multiple land-fill sites have all put urban redevelopment on hold.

The history of land use on the Montréal harbourfront—the cradle of the Canadian industrial revolution—has turned it into an area that is particularly affected by contaminated soil over most of the territory. As shown in Figure 2.10 (see Chapter 2), the shoreline of the harbourfront is composed mainly of landfill. With the exception of Sainte-Hélène and Notre-Dame islands (which are composed of clean fill from Montréal's Metro and expressway projects) and the northern tip of Nuns' Island (where the shoreline has not been significantly altered except near the Champlain Bridge), it is more than likely that most fill has been contaminated to varying degrees. Moreover, soil-quality problems also plague sectors other than those composed of fill.

Data, analyses and extrapolations provided by the laboratory division of the City of Montréal's department responsible for environment, roads and systems reveal that there is a high incidence of soil contamination throughout the harbourfront other than on the Ste-Hélène and Notre-Dame Islands and the northern tip of Nun's Island where the probability of contamination is low.

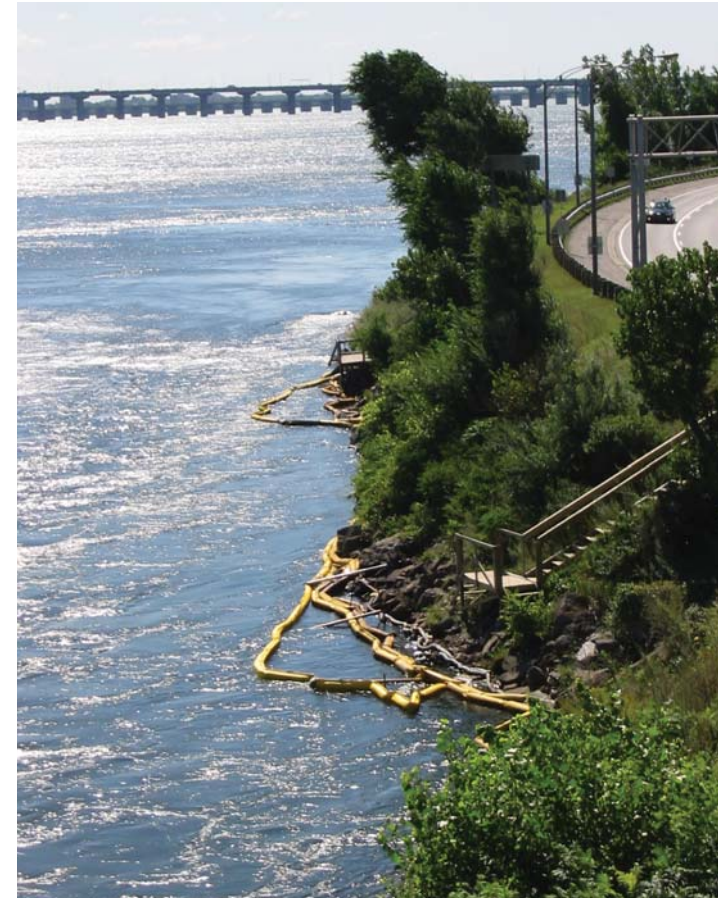


Figure 6.1 Controlling oil spills in the Technoparc sector, near the Victoria Bridge.

This does not necessarily mean that the degree of contamination is high, but rather that the probability of contamination is high. In accordance with criteria established by the ministère de l'Environnement du Québec, these levels may be considered "low," "average" or "elevated."

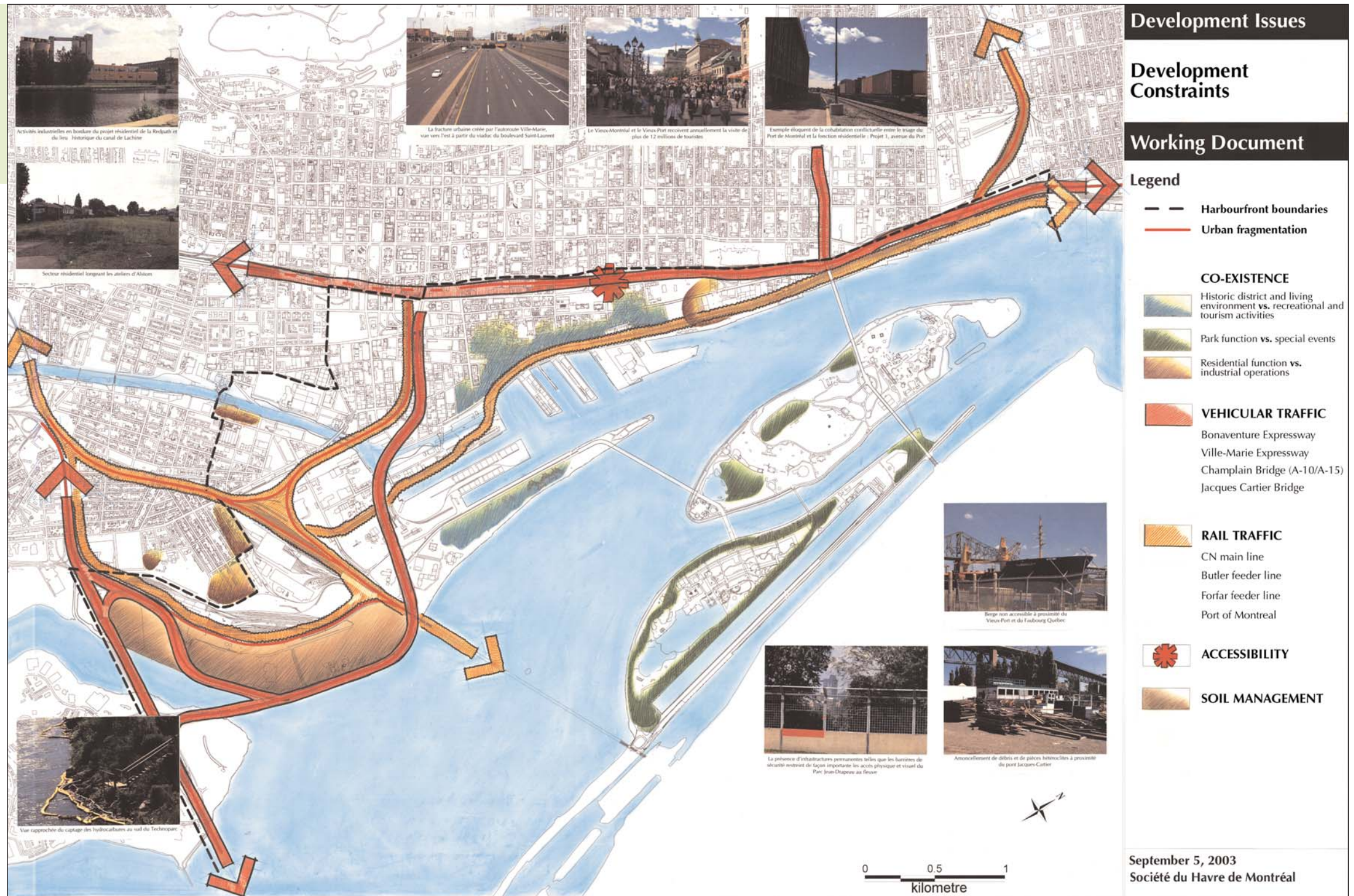
Only case-by-case, comprehensive analyses will reveal the exact condition of the soil and the measures required to decontaminate it or mitigate the impact of contamination (depending on expected use). For example, the decontamination standards of the ministère de l'Environnement du Québec are stricter for residential than for commercial or industrial use, where mitigating measures, rather than the removal of contaminated soil, are more likely to be accepted.

Such decontamination criteria assume that rehabilitation costs of land will vary considerably depending on the contamination levels (for instance, by hydrocarbons or other toxic products), the need to transport the contaminated soil to an authorized burial site, the soil's bearing capacity (for old landfills), and the type of occupancy planned (residential, commercial or industrial) for a given project.



Figure 6.2 Land being decontaminated for a residential development in Faubourg Québec.

Figure 6.3
Development
constraints.



By way of illustration, take the case of a developer wanting to purchase the Sud-Ouest Technoparc for a massive residential project. Below are some of the constraints that would probably have to be addressed:

- As the Technoparc is an old landfill site, all structures would have to be built on piles and waterproof slabs.
- Although biogases are currently managed by a collection system, they still constitute a major public-health risk to a residential project. Therefore, all underground conduits would have to be leak-proof and work under pressure, so as prevent gas infiltrating into homes via sewer and water pipes.
- Monitoring and alarm systems would have to be installed everywhere to prevent biogas accumulations and assist in evacuations, should the need arise.
- Layers of hydrocarbons already under the Technoparc or accumulating from under neighbouring properties and draining into the river would have to be collected and pumped out.
- Soil contaminated in excess of ministère de l'Environnement's criteria would have to be excavated and transported to an authorized site (transportation costs are high, and fluctuate).
- Excavated soil would have to be replaced by clean soil.

It is obvious that the cost of rehabilitating this land for residential use would be prohibitive. Given the astronomical costs, as well as the public-health risks involved, such a development can hardly be envisaged.

However, more appropriate uses, such as industrial or commercial projects would be more financially viable. In this case, the biogas-capture system is already in place, and decontamination of the surface layer has not proven necessary for industrial use.

In an industrial or a commercial context, and taking a risk-management approach, the supplementary cost of development, without soil decontamination, is currently about \$4.50 per square foot.

Risk-analysis management

As part of a soil-rehabilitation program, risk-analysis management consists of leaving contaminants in place, depending on the toxicological and ecotoxicological hazards they represent and the future use to be made of the rehabilitated land.

Assuming that the problem of leaking hydrocarbons under the Technoparc and in the river is solved at some point, a linear park (greenbelt) along the St. Lawrence, with an appropriate layer of clean soil and geotextile membranes preventing contaminants from reaching that new layer, would be a perfect use for this portion of the Technoparc.

In addition to rehabilitating the site in accordance with the risk-management approach, the development of a shoreline linear park would make this sector much more attractive to businesses, major recreational, tourism and sports facilities, or an international trade fair centre and hotel. Such occupants would enjoy not only a magnificent view of the river but also be located at the gateway to downtown; they would also be very well served by the road network to be relocated behind the Technoparc, along the CN tracks. Thus residents from adjoining neighbourhoods would not suffer any adverse effects due to the increased truck and automobile traffic this new draw would bring — efficient, attractive public transit links would connect them to other areas of the harbourfront and to downtown.

Elsewhere on the harbourfront, other innovative approaches will have to be developed to enable soil rehabilitation that does not involve astronomical development costs for each project.

Insofar as the development of an urban habitat (a mix of residential, institutional, community, commercial, cultural and recreational uses) constitutes a priority for the SHM and its partners, the establishment of efficient methods and strategies of soil management and development is paramount, from both a financial and a qualitative point of view.

As far as strategy is concerned, development possibilities for a given type of occupancy or use (residential, commercial, industrial) on potentially highly contaminated land should be evaluated. As regards methodology, the risk-analysis method (i.e., management via mitigating measures) should be encouraged, rather than systematic decontamination and removal of contaminated material.

6.1.2 Conflicting of cohabitation among urban functions

Over the past 25 years, the urban-revitalization movement and the gradual return of residents to Old Montréal and the surrounding area, as well as to the Lachine Canal district, have re-established the conditions required to create a highly urban milieu, in which the widest range of activities (dwellings, businesses, community and institutional services, recreational and cultural facilities, and economic activities conducive to job creation) co-exist.

It is this mix and diversity of activities, co-existing in harmony, that is referred to as the "urban habitat."

However, this emerging habitat is still young and fragile. It is not yet firmly established and suffers to a certain extent from growth problems that could threaten its balance. For example, the harmony between the urban functions and the supply of commercial, community and institutional services is not always sufficiently developed to allow the harbourfront to qualify as a well-rounded, stable urban habitat.

Urban habitat

By definition, an urban habitat differs significantly from a suburban environment, where, on a formal level, land use is based on a very clear delineation of urban functions (residential, commercial, industrial). The typical suburban urban plan establishes industrial zones (or parks) that are completely separate from commercial areas (retail centres), which in turn are separate from the residential districts (or "bedroom communities").¹

Accordingly, the main challenge facing the SHM and Montrealers themselves will be to design and implement a development plan able to integrate the various urban functions and correct existing problems while ensuring that future developments neither exacerbate such problems nor create new ones.

Figure 6.3 provides a schematic illustration of those harbourfront areas where existing conflicts among the urban functions are particularly significant and already in need of remedial measures.

These conflicts are of three types:

- the increasingly problematic cohabitation of recreational/tourism activities and the urban habitat (in blue and yellow stripes on the map, i.e. Old Montréal/Old Port, and Cité du Havre);
- the considerable strain and inconvenience caused by special events on Jean Drapeau Park's green spaces, parks and heritage sites (in green on the map);
- the incompatibility of heavy industry (such as rail and trucking activities) with residential functions (in brown and yellow on the map).

1. This does not mean that remains of the old villages (a public square surrounded by a church, rectory, notary's house, school, and businesses including a general store), long since absorbed by the phenomenon of urban spread, cannot still be found.

6.1.2.1 Increasingly problematic cohabitation between recreational/tourism activities and the urban habitat

Living downtown is not like living in the suburbs or the country. Residents who choose to live in the centre of the city, and in particular downtown, do so in full knowledge of the constant activity. They do so for several reasons.

Proximity to work or studies, movie theatres and concert venues; the variety of restaurants; the experience of living in an exceptional historic district and contributing to its preservation; the beauty and ambience of the area; and the presence of the St. Lawrence are all reasons why people live in and around Old Montréal, Cité du Havre and the Lachine Canal.

The harbourfront constitutes a potential urban habitat, a vibrant place to live and one that its 25,000 inhabitants (approximately 3,500 of whom reside in Old Montréal and its *faubourgs*) wish to see developed harmoniously, in the hope that their numbers will attract the local businesses as well as the institutional and community services that are currently lacking.

As we have seen in previous chapters, the harbourfront has also become a major recreational, tourism and cultural destination. Its three main recreational and tourism draws — i.e., Old Montréal and the Old Port, Jean Drapeau Park and the Lachine Canal — now attract more than 23 million visitors a year (primarily during the three or four months of the peak season, i.e., May through August).

These attendance spikes, concentrated in time and stimulated by major special events, create acute automobile congestion problems in both Old Montréal and Jean Drapeau Park. The situation has become intolerable, particularly for Old Montréal and Cité du Havre residents. It is also very irritating for tourists and visitors in search of available parking, who may well lose patience in the area's narrow, overcrowded streets.

As illustrated by more than one case,² the harbourfront seems increasingly eager to deny its urban-habitat vocation, preferring instead to emphasize its recreational and tourism role.

In the end, unless measures are implemented to rectify matters, the sector's urban-habitat role could well lose its momentum.

- The previous chapter discussed how the lack of an integrated traffic-management strategy on the harbourfront has considerably exacerbated the problems of cohabitation between increasingly numerous recreational and tourism activities and residents of the central harbourfront.

The development and implementation of an efficient traffic-management strategy is vital.

- A better temporal (i.e., over the four seasons) and spatial distribution of special events and recreational and tourism facilities should also be explored to promote better cohabitation between the urban and recreational/tourism functions on the harbourfront.

However, these huge attendance spikes during the summer are merely the tip of the iceberg.

This "identity crisis" and its attendant seasonal recreational and tourism peaks create other (although sometimes less obvious) problems as well. Real-estate, economic, social and urban development is affected in very different ways depending on whether — and in which direction — social stakeholders and public or private investors mobilize their resources.

Several questions may be asked about the functional shortcomings of the harbourfront's urban habitat. For example:

- What can be done to allow the many seasonal businesses that close their doors for six months a year to operate year-long, so as to better serve area workers and residents?

- The corollary to this question: what can be done to ensure residents do not have to jump in their cars if they must leave the area to buy even the smallest grocery item?

In this regard the development of a concerted commercial strategy and the implementation of measures aimed at encouraging the transformation of seasonal operations into year-round local businesses should help develop and consolidate the harbourfront's urban habitat.

- What can be done to enhance social mix and the diversity of families if new housing targets only a very limited segment of the population (singles, childless professional couples, and well-off empty nesters)?

- What can be done to attract families with children when there are no neighbourhood schools or playgrounds?

In short, what can be done to reconcile the efforts made over more than 25 years to develop the urban environment and bring back a resident population to the harbourfront with the phenomenal growth in recreational and tourism activities, festivals and other special events taking place during the three or four months of the peak season? Is it possible to reconcile such contradictory needs?

The related choices and development priorities must be established. This is one of the great challenges that the SHM wishes to address with Montrealers.

6.1.2.2 Considerable strain and inconvenience created by special events in Jean Drapeau Park's green spaces, parks and heritage sites

Another "identity crisis"

With its 268 hectares of green and public spaces, Jean Drapeau Park is one of Montréal's largest parks. Although some may be surprised, this riverside area is even larger than Mount Royal Park (now protected by its new status as a historic and natural site), which is 188 hectares in size.

However, the area's essential role — i.e., as a public park where the development of green and blue spaces is a priority — seems to have been forgotten. The number and variety of facilities, special events and recreation and tourism industry operators pose a constant challenge to anyone intent on establishing an identity or role for Jean Drapeau Park as a park or green and blue space.

Figure 6.4
Fence around Gilles Villeneuve racetrack, blocking river view and shoreline access.



2. Specifically, the conflict created by the installation of a giant electronic billboard on the front of the Science Centre — a conflict that has put the Old Port of Montréal Corporation and Old Montreal residents and merchants on opposite sides of the fence. Other cases in point are the growing tension between Loto-Quebec and Cité du Havre residents over the non-stop traffic (five million cars annually) on Pierre Dupuy Avenue due to the presence of the Montréal Casino on Île Notre-Dame, as well as the concerns raised by planned additions to the Casino.



Figure 6.5
Place des Nations, converted into parking lot for rock megaconcerts.

The pressure created by these events on natural or developed spaces is often such that it leaves them depleted, dirty and damaged. Considerable resources must be devoted to site cleanup and restoration.

Under such circumstances, increasing the resources for capital projects or new improvement/rehabilitation efforts for degraded or abandoned sites is difficult to imagine.

Site visits made by the SHM team revealed significant deterioration and/or damage in several locations on both islands:

- Place des Nations;
- footpaths and deteriorated wooded areas in the old part of Île Sainte-Hélène;
- Degraded children's play areas including broken and damaged equipment;
- Floralties gardens, canal banks (erosion), and degraded urban furniture;
- the general state of the site before, during and after megaconcerts held on the Lac des Cygnes green space and hill (fenced areas, waste);
- the inaccessible, abandoned marina at the eastern tip of Île Sainte-Hélène;
- the roads department yard at the eastern tip of Île Notre-Dame turned into a dump for car-racing equipment.

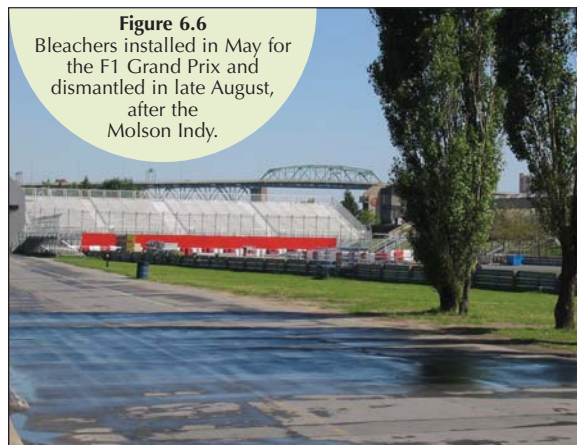


Figure 6.6
Bleachers installed in May for the F1 Grand Prix and dismantled in late August, after the Molson Indy.

Degradation of the site

Despite considerable efforts by the City of Montréal and the Société du parc des Îles (island park corporation) to revitalize and develop various areas of the park since the early 1980s (involving expenditures of \$240 million from 1980 to 1992), the repercussions of the past 10 years' budget cuts and problems experienced in establishing a sustained investment and maintenance program can clearly be seen.

This increasing fragility of the Park's physical and natural environment has been exacerbated, in particular, by the holding of, and infrastructure for, major events such as the F1 Grand Prix, Molson Indy and open-air rock megaconcert).

Potential shoreline and water access sites sacrificed for parking

The park's landscape-development potential has also been severely compromised by the need for roads and parking spaces, as most of the 10 million annual visitors use their vehicles to get to the site. Such infrastructure already occupy an enormous amount of space, and requirements are increasing all the time.

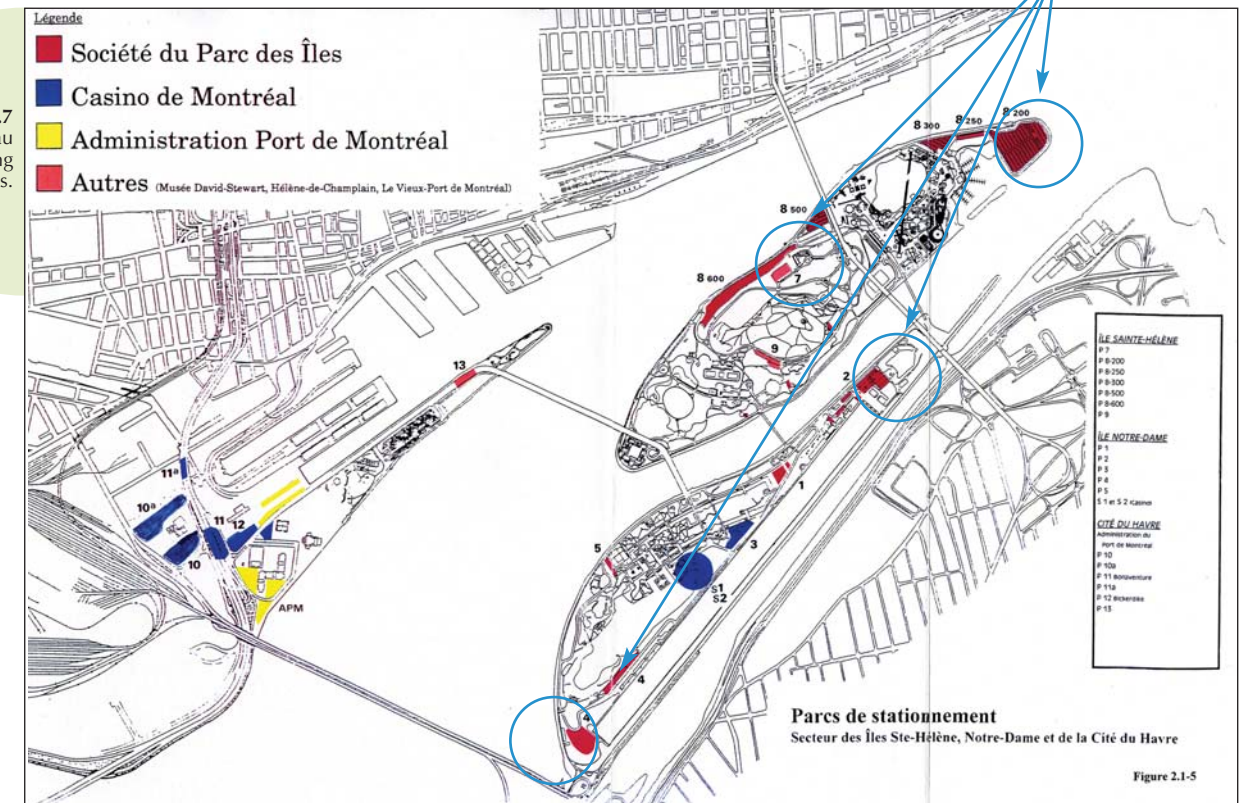
Today, Sainte-Hélène and Notre-Dame islands alone offer 7,782 parking spots. If we add the 2,200 units developed by the Montréal Casino at the former Autostade site, there are about 10,000 parking spaces currently available to serve Jean Drapeau Park and its many attractions. The Montréal Casino alone accounts for 6.5 million visitors out of the park's 10 million annual total.

Figure 6.7 illustrates the existing parking facilities on Sainte-Hélène and Notre-Dame islands, in Cité du Havre and in the old Autostade sector.

If current parking trends continue in the years to come, there is every likelihood that the private and parapublic operators and partners of Jean Drapeau Park will try to further accommodate their customers— making for more parking lots and less green and blue space.

The blue arrows in the diagram below point to the shoreline parking lots that should be part of the areas redeveloped in order to promote more direct contact between the islands and the river.

Figure 6.7
Jean Drapeau Park parking lots.



Source: Société du Parc des Îles, Étude de faisabilité d'un système léger sur rail, Final report, November 2000.

In short, the SHM team has identified several problems with regard to the maintenance, development and accessibility of Jean Drapeau Park's green and blue spaces. While chronic underfunding is certainly one of the main reasons behind these problems, the rather uneasy cohabitation of the public park and green and blue spaces of the islands on the one hand, and facilities for and activities related to high-traffic special events on the other, is another source of serious problems.

On a more basic level, these cohabitation problems raise the entire issue of the identity of the site. The question then becomes what purpose the limited funds available for improvements and capital projects should serve.

6.1.2.3 Incompatibility of heavy industry, (rail and trucking), with residential functions

Over the past few years, the lack of unoccupied or available land in the central areas of the city, coupled with development pressures in the residential real-estate market, has persuaded municipal authorities to authorize housing projects on sites that were formerly rail marshalling yards or shops. Even today, most of this land is located immediately adjacent to freight rail corridors or rail yards.

Some of these sectors have seen rational urban planning, with light-industry or commercial zones acting as buffers between rail corridors and residential areas. The reconversion of Canadian Pacific Railway's old Angus shops is an eloquent example of this rational, viable approach to urban development.

However, other residential developments constructed over the past few years near rail infrastructure have not been planned in this way, with the result that cohabitation between the two urban functions is sometimes very problematic, especially because of the noise.

Moreover, although no major incidents (toxic spills or leaks, train derailments, or explosions) have occurred to date near such developments, the risks of such accidents must still be taken seriously and incorporated into any development plans.

The Angus project: a perfect example of reconversion of a heavy-industry zone

Located in the Rosemont/Petite-Patrie borough, the Angus site was formerly home to Canadian Pacific Railway's largest rolling-stock manufacturing and maintenance complex. Between 1975 and 1992, gradual shop closures enabled CPR to recover almost 90 hectares of industrial land, which was then redeveloped over more than 20 years. Phase one of the project (1983-1994) was basically residential — with 2,587 housing units, of which 40% were devoted to social housing — while the more recent phase (1998- 2007) involves a broad mix of uses (40% residential, 40% industrial, and 20% commercial). As part of the phase-two redevelopment planning process, talks between CPR and the ministère de l'Environnement resulted in a soil-management strategy that ensured compliance with environmental standards while at the same time considerably reducing decontamination costs (see Appendix 1, p.162).

In its urban planning framework of 2001, the Quebec government studied the issue in depth. Addressing itself to the Montréal Metropolitan Community, which is responsible for the community's urban plan, the provincial government asked that environmental repercussions, irritants and risks to public health created by proximity to rail, maritime and air transport equipment and infrastructure be taken into account in establishing planning standards and criteria, in particular by:

- limiting urbanization near potential irritants (airports, railway lines, marshalling yards, waste-disposal sites, wastewater-treatment plants, energy processing stations);
- developing or maintaining buffer zones alongside such facilities, with special regard to sensitive uses (residential, institutional and recreational);
- ensuring proper access;
- providing access to rail corridors for emergency response teams;
- ensuring that zoning is compatible with existing facilities.³

3. Government of Quebec, ministère des Affaires municipales et de la Métropole, *Cadre d'aménagement métropolitain et orientations gouvernementales pour la région métropolitaine de Montréal*, June 2001, pp. 112 to 115.

These standards and criteria should be used as a reference for all future Montréal harbourfront development. To the extent that Port of Montréal operations will, in the future, continue to attract fairly heavy rail traffic (Port of Montreal marshalling yards and rail lines along the river, in particular near the Jacques Cartier Bridge) and the VIA Rail shops and CN lines in Point St. Charles will also remain very active, the construction of proper buffer zones will be vital, both to mitigate noise pollution and to ensure responsible management of public safety and health hazards.

Accordingly, existing and future residential developments in Point St. Charles and Faubourg Québec should be the focus of special attention (see brown-and-yellow striped areas in Figure 6.3).

With respect to the rail corridor that crosses the Old Port and Old Montréal from east to west along De la Commune Street (Figure 6.3), problems of noise and safety, and of cohabitation between residential and recreational/tourism functions, will remain as long as CN and the Port of Montréal use these lines for their own needs and those of their customers.

At present, the three or four trains that go through Old Montréal daily, including two at night, constitute an irritant (noise and vibrations) for residents and a risk for visitors to the Old Port (level crossings).

This is an example of a situation where it is impossible to satisfy everyone. If, in a nod to Old Port of Montréal Corporation needs, schedules were changed so that all trains travelled at night, it would severely compromise the quality of life of people living near the tracks.

On the other hand, scheduling all traffic during the day, especially in tourist season, would exacerbate safety problems while reducing accessibility to the Old Port.

For the moment, one can only hope that rail traffic does not increase along this corridor, which is used primarily by CN (and even this is not guaranteed, as at some point CN could well increase its market share of container transport in relation to that of CPR).

Figure 6.8
Marshalling yards south of Faubourg Québec.



Figure 6.9
Port of Montreal, still active south of Faubourg Québec.

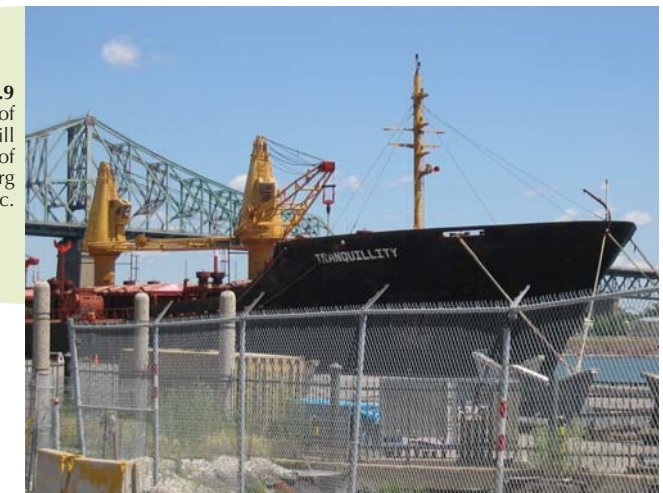


Fig. 6.10
The Angus project: an example of rational planning for urban-function cohabitation.





Figure 6.11
Old Port rail lines: uneasy cohabitation between old and new.

Source: Richard Arteau photo archives.

Conclusion

To sum up, then, in addition to the structural problems created by rips in the urban fabric and the numerous accessibility difficulties identified in Chapter 5, the harmonious development of the harbourfront is also compromised by constraints related to:

- previous occupancy, landfill and resulting contamination (both documented and potential);
- an imbalance among the harbourfront's various urban functions, which sometimes create conflicts of cohabitation between former uses (industrial, port, rail) and new roles (recreational/tourism, urban habitat), as well as critical cohabitation problems among those new roles (recreational/tourism, urban habitat and green and blue spaces)— in short, all the characteristics of growing pains coupled with an acute identity crisis!

6.2 Development potential: enhancing the harbourfront's heritage and landscape



Figure 6.12
The Montréal harbourfront: a port heritage to be preserved.

6.2.1 Analytical framework: main values

After presenting a detailed analysis of the main obstacles and specific development and improvement constraints affecting the Montréal harbourfront (Chapter 5 and Section 6.1), it is time to determine the harbourfront's landscape-enhancement potential.

In keeping with our analyses, we have classified harbourfront development and improvement potential into six categories (Figure 6.15):

- shoreline enhancement;
- lookouts/view enhancement;
- land development (vacant lots);
- urban-redevelopment sectors (Point St. Charles marshalling yards, Lachine Canal basins and Victoriatown, Griffintown and Faubourg des Récollets, Ville-Marie Expressway north of Champ-de-Mars);
- sectors to be rehabilitated (Jean Drapeau Park);
- sectors to be consolidated (Old Montréal and the Old Port).

Related planning and implementation efforts, however, must be guided by the principle of sustainable urban development. In the introduction to this report, we identified the essential components of what we understand by this term — i.e., a development model based on:

- a sound urban and social mix: the balanced development of — and harmonious cohabitation among — urban functions and activities, avoiding the creation of ghettos of wealth or poverty;
- responsible, effective environmental management (soil, air and water quality);
- the preservation and enhancement of the harbourfront's architectural, historic and natural heritage.

The first two aspects were discussed in Section 6.1, as well as in Chapter 3 (socioeconomic profile of the population). This section will deal primarily with the third point (the enhancement of the harbourfront's urban and natural landscape), especially as regards potential future development and improvement. In the words of André Malraux:

"It is good to protect landscapes. It is even better to create them."

6.2.2 Landscape potential

Why begin with the concept of the landscape in discussing the Montréal harbourfront's development and improvement potential?

For residents of any community, the landscape is a vital element of identification with place. The natural and built heritage composing that landscape is the source of a deep bond and identification for the community that, via the many landmarks erected through time, reflects its attachment to homes, workplaces and recreational sites. In other words, landscapes are primary components of our culture and collective imagination.

Landscapes — in particular, urban landscapes — are in constant evolution. As expressed by Montréal architects Gavin Affleck and Richard de la Riva:

"The surrounding rural and urban land has been deeply altered over time; today, the landscape represents the sum of all past and present states, a sort of environmental-change log book."⁴ [translation]

Landscapes can thus be viewed as a cultural "project," in which changes should further reveal and enhance those landscapes for the benefit of the community.

Landscape improvement becomes an opportunity for the community to learn about the history and future of the places it inhabits and frequents, identify the main steps and significant periods in the development of those places, and participate intelligently in launching projects that, while opening the door to innovation, also bolster a sense of identification. All improvement and development parameters should stem from this basic concept.

The enhancement and development of harbourfront potential must be based on a design and planning process that embodies the spirit of the site, with all its physical and memory landmarks. Accordingly, historic heritage and natural spaces should not be considered constraints, but rather highly valuable assets. Development and improvement projects must form part and parcel of this dynamic, taking account of the fact that any city is in constant evolution and that land use changes in keeping with economic and social transformation.

6.2.2.1 An urban landscape characterized by built and archaeological heritage

Chapter 1 dealt with the importance and vibrancy of the old harbourfront's history. A former Native American settlement and trading post, the original site of present-day Montréal, briefly the capital of the British colony of United Canada and crucible of the Canadian industrial revolution, the Montréal harbourfront in itself constitutes a major heritage ensemble containing, not only the remains, but also the early urban fabric and numerous buildings from every major era in Montréal's history.

4. Affleck and De la Riva, *Plan d'aménagement pour la cour de triage Glen*, September 1999, 23 pages.

As shown in Figure 6.23, excluding the Technoparc, Cité du Havre, Île Notre-Dame and the landfill portions of Île Sainte-Hélène, the Montréal harbourfront is a vast heritage complex, protected at various levels by federal, provincial and municipal legislation and by-laws.

First, there is the Old Montréal historic district, protected by Quebec legislation, with its 18 sites and buildings classified under the *Cultural Property Act*. In all, this Act covers 21 classified, designated or recognized sites or buildings in the Montréal harbourfront (see Table 6.1).

The harbourfront is also home to one archaeological site classified under the Act (i.e., Pointe-à-Callière, the birthplace of Ville-Marie) and 16 archaeological sites included in the Inventory of Archaeological Sites in Quebec.

Federal legislation has designated 15 national historic monuments and sites on the harbourfront, including the Lachine Canal National Historic Site, which

includes the approaches to the canal and the Grand Trunk railway shops area in Point St. Charles, now owned by CN (although forming part of the Lachine Canal National Historic Site, the shops are not classified or recognized *per se* by federal legislation).

In addition, two buildings have been classified by the Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office (FHBRO): the George-Étienne Cartier house at Notre-Dame and Berri, and the Clock Tower in the Old Port. The harbourfront is also home to six buildings recognized by the FHBRO, including the three components of Grain Elevator # 5 located near the Old Port at the entrance to the Lachine Canal.

Municipal by-laws also protect more than 30 heritage buildings on harbourfront land. However, although edifices such as the Notre-Dame Basilica, Bonsecours Market, City Hall and Ernest Cormier Building (future site of the Quebec Court of Appeal) on Notre-Dame Street, to name a few, are located in the historic district, they are not subject to any specific protective provisions.

Figure 6.13
Peen & Buchanan
warehouses,
Lachine Canal.



Source: Pierre Malo image bank.

Table 6.1 Montréal Harbourfront sites and buildings classified, designated or recognized under the *Cultural Property Act*

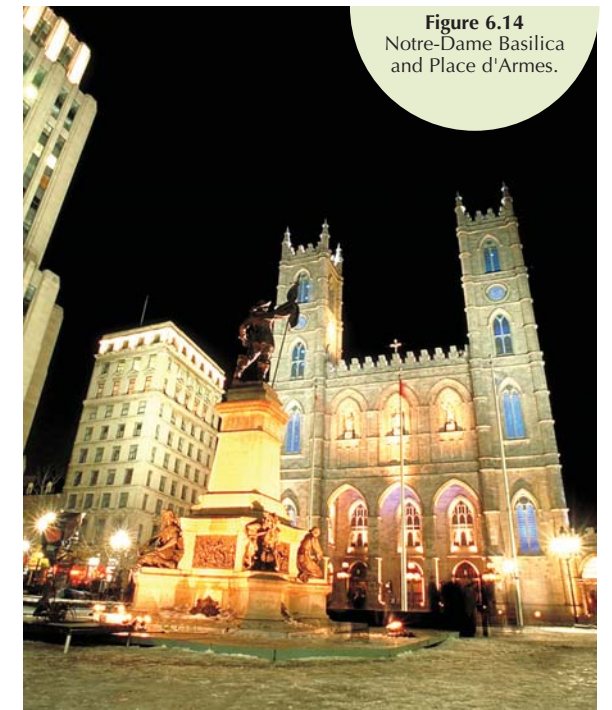
OLD MONTRÉAL HISTORIC DISTRICT	REMAINDER OF HARBOURFRONT AND SURROUNDING AREA
Old Sulpician Seminary	Saint-Gabriel Estate (Point St. Charles)
Seminary Site	Saint-Joseph de Montréal Church
No. 43-51 Saint-Jacques (now the Place d'Armes Hotel)	Buchanan Warehouse (Faubourg des Récollets)
Congregation House (Saint-Laurent Blvd.)	Bagg House (Faubourg des Récollets)
Chateau Ramezay (Notre-Dame Street)	Engineers' Club (René Lévesque at Beaver Hall)
Nolin House (Bonsecours Street)	St. Patrick's Basilica (René Lévesque Blvd.)
Papineau House (Bonsecours Street)	Gésu church (Bleury Street)
Cotté House (Jacques Cartier Square)	Church of the Saint-Esprit Chinese Catholic mission
Viger House (Saint-Paul Street)	Monument national (Saint-Laurent Blvd.)
Beament House (Saint-Paul Street)	Saint-Jacques church (Saint-Denis Street)
Patriot's House (Saint-Paul Street)	Saint-Sulpice building (Bibliothèque nationale, Saint-Denis Street)
La Minerve House (Saint-Paul Street)	Saint-Pierre-Apôtre site and church (Panet Street)
Bertrand House (Saint-Vincent Street)	Îlot des Voltigeurs (Faubourg Québec)
Mass Media House (Saint-Paul Street)	Prison-du-Pied-du-Courant (Faubourg Québec)
Brossard-Gauvin House (Saint-Louis Street)	
Old Courthouse (85 Notre-Dame Street East)	
Old Courthouse – Annex (85 Notre-Dame Street East)	
Original site of present-day Montréal (Pointe-à-Callière)	

Source: City of Montréal, Service de la mise en valeur du territoire et du patrimoine.

It should also be noted that the old part of Île Sainte-Hélène, Griffintown, Victoriatown (Autostade), and the Des Récollets, Saint-Laurent and Québec *faubourgs* have been identified as sites of archaeological interest by the City of Montréal.

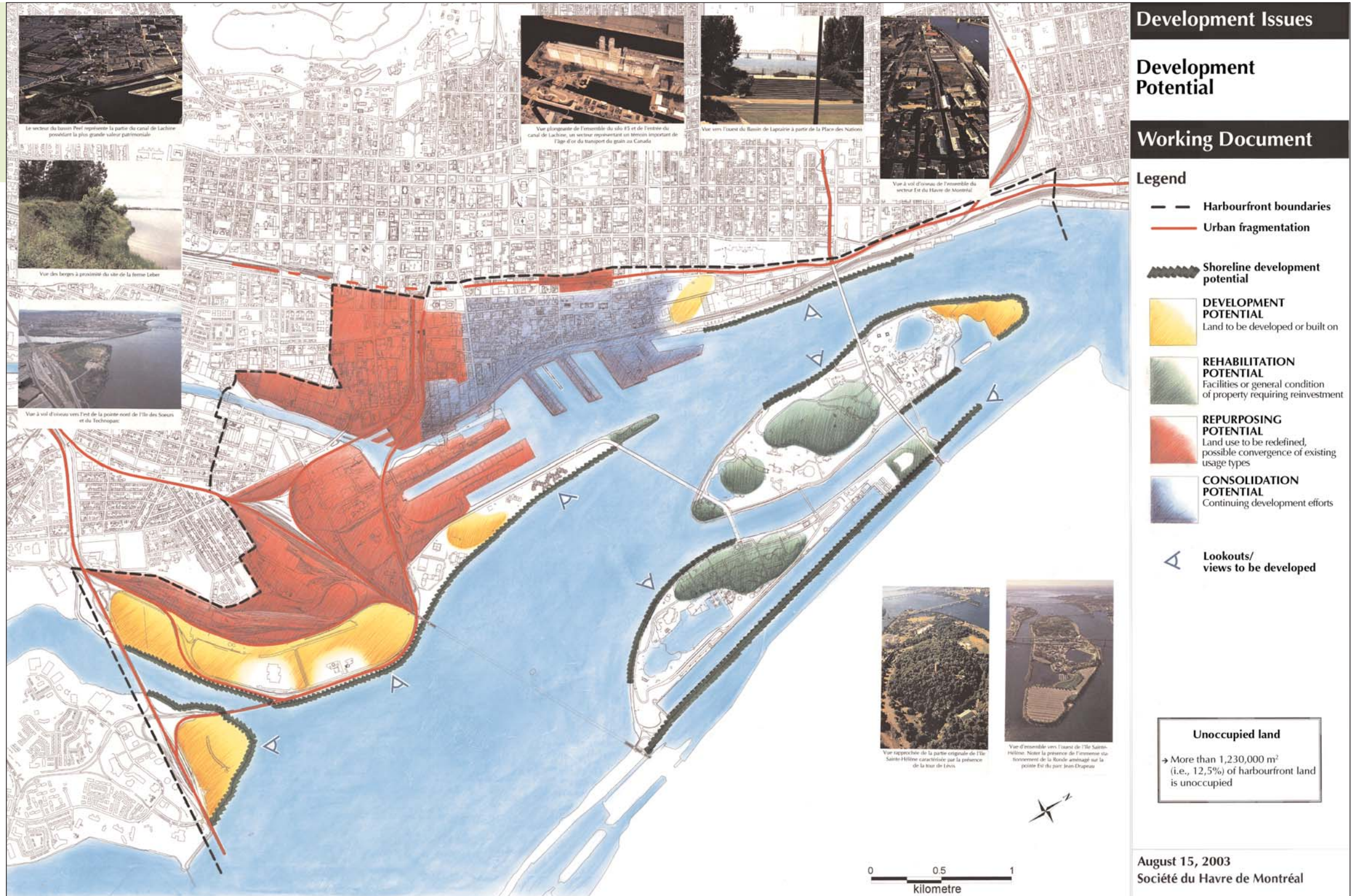
To date, several inventories have been compiled by a number of different public agencies and heritage experts. Existing expertise in this area should be systematically organized and updated, and, in a subsequent step, the potential of the harbourfront as a major symbol of Montréal, Quebec and Canadian historical heritage should then be assessed. A complete inventory should be carried out in order to ensure that future development and improvements continue to enhance the significant aspects of the area's old buildings and archaeological remains.

Figure 6.14
Notre-Dame Basilica
and Place d'Armes.



Source: Pierre Malo image bank.

Figure 6.15
Development potential.



6.2.2.2 Modern heritage and contemporary public art as integral parts of the urban landscape

In the same vein, the invaluable contribution of architects and contemporary artists whose works enhance the harbourfront while constituting bona fide visual and cultural landmarks also deserves recognition. As with the harbourfront's historical heritage, an inventory of such works should be made as a follow-up to this report. Below are a few significant examples of this contemporary heritage.

The legacy of Man and His World (Expo 67)

Man and His World, the World's Fair that took place in Montréal in 1967, was an extremely dynamic laboratory for architecture and contemporary public art. Although most of the pavilions and facilities no longer exist, many of the main components still form part of the island landscape, and are visible from the Old Port shoreline and Mount Royal.

Some great names are associated with these landmarks: Buckminster Fuller, Alexander Calder and Moshe Safdie, to name only three.

Figure 6.17
L'Homme,
by
Alexander
Calder.



Source: Société du parc des Îles.

Figure 6.18
Habitat 67
(Moshe Safdie,
architect).



Figure 6.16
The Biosphère
(former United States
pavilion, designed by
Buckminster Fuller).



Major contemporary works in Old Montréal

Two major works of art by signatories of the *Refus global* manifesto can be found in Old Montréal, just 800 metres from each other along Saint-Antoine Street: the stained glass windows of the Champ-de-Mars metro station, by artist Marcelle Ferron, and *La Joute*, a sculpture by Jean Paul Riopelle located on the city square that bears his name, between the Palais des congrès and the new site of the Caisse de dépôt et de placement, in the heart of the Quartier International.

La Joute, a tremendously important work commissioned for the Montréal Olympic Games in 1976, is a recent addition to the Montréal harbourfront. Until 2003, it stood near the Olympic Stadium due to the

failure to provide the mechanical devices initially planned by the artist (circle of fire and fountains). Its relocation to the core of Montréal's Quartier International, and the installation of its electro-mechanical components, allowed it to be displayed in a highly visible setting in a public square dedicated to the artist (The move generated considerable controversy among the residents of Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve).

As for the stained-glass windows of the "automatist" Marcelle Ferron at Champ-de-Mars, efforts to bring this work "out of hiding," as it were, are doubtless required. The expressway site where it is located is certainly not conducive to proper appreciation, at least not as things now stand. With a view to pursuing urban-fabric repairs in the Ville-Marie Expressway area, behind Champ-de-Mars, the City of Montréal is currently looking at the possibility of building on top of the expressway and redesigning its approaches. Enhancing the presentation of Ferron's work should definitely be included in the planning process now underway.

The construction of the Pointe-à-Callière Museum of Archaeology and History (Dan Hanganu, architect) in the early 1990s also deserves mention. Erected on the site where Ville-Marie was founded, this prestigious institutional structure fits in well with the shoreline extension from which it takes its name, while at the same time incorporating the site's port atmosphere—altogether an exemplary model of architectural integration and urban planning in the Old Montréal historic district.

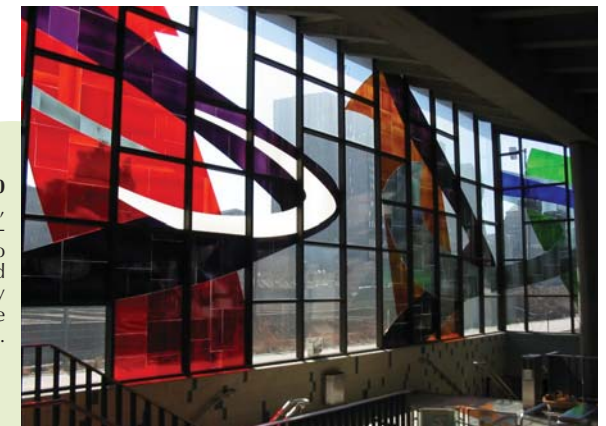
Figure 6.21
Pointe-à-Callière
Museum of
Archaeology and
History: an
exemplary case
of architectural
integration.



Fig. 6.19
Detail,
La Joute, by
Jean-Paul
Riopelle (back-
ground:
stained glass
panels of
renovated
Palais des
congrès).

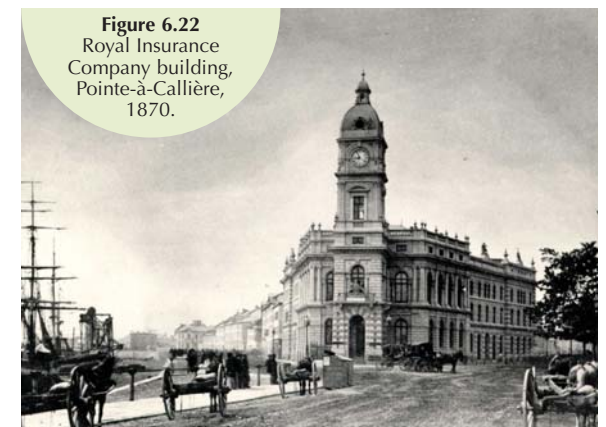


Figure 6.20
Detail,
Champ-de-
Mars metro
station stained
glass, by
Marcelle
Ferron.



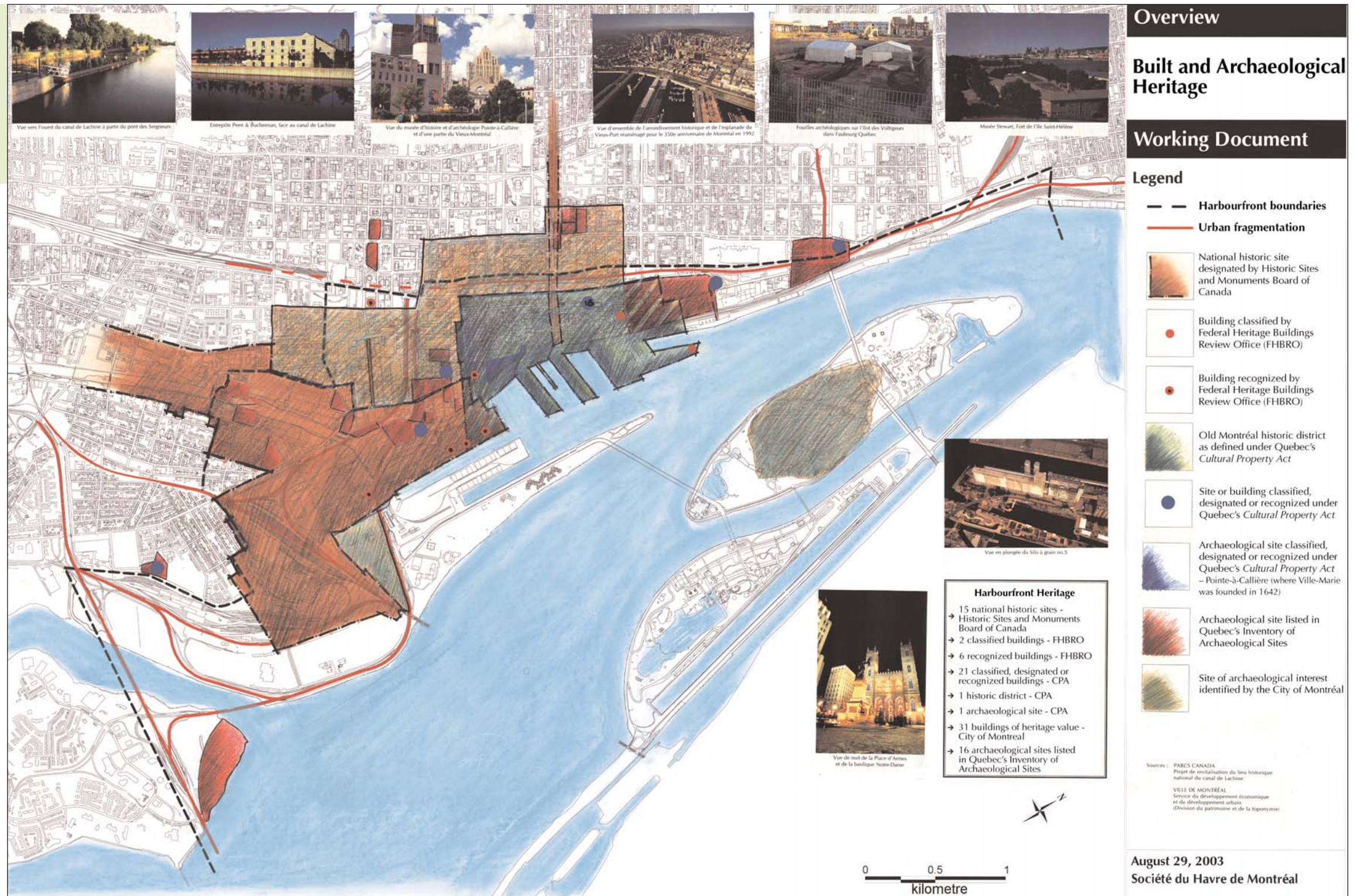
Source: Richard Arteau image bank.

Figure 6.22
Royal Insurance
Company building,
Pointe-à-Callière,
1870.



Source: Port of Montreal archives

Figure 6.23
Built and
archaeological
heritage.



Thanks to their special quality and the research undertaken to ensure their integration into the landscape, a number of new structures and recent improvements have also enriched the harbourfront. This is the case, in particular, of the new head office of the Caisse de dépôt and de placement headquarters, the redesigned Square Victoria, and Place Jean-Paul Riopelle, all three located in Montréal's Quartier International. Also deserving of mention are the rehabilitation of Champ-de-Mars, Place Jacques Cartier, De La Dauversière Park, and Place Youville in Old Montréal.

Improvements to the Old Port have been implemented so as to respect and enhance the port ambiance of the area. Residential projects such as "1 McGill Street" are good examples, respecting a process, aimed at establishing a visual signature that embraces the river and the old harbourfront.

In the coming years, in order to accentuate all the area's development and improvement potential, a sustained effort should be made to highlight the connection of the harbourfront's urban spaces with the river and the port, especially those spaces that border the river, while respecting the existing urban fabric and attempting to integrate heritage aspects (industrial, commercial, residential) as skilfully as possible.

6.2.2.3 Shorelines and natural landscapes to be developed

The urban improvement model to be proposed by the SHM is based on two simple ideas that have proven their worth throughout North America and Europe:

- develop the banks of the St. Lawrence and the Lachine Canal, making them accessible to the public, and improve access to the water;
- bring the urban fabric as close as possible to this public space on the shoreline.

The urban-redevelopment projects involving river or sea shores conducted in Bilbao, Rotterdam, Boston, Vancouver and Ottawa are prime examples of these principles in action (see Appendix 1).

For the Montréal harbourfront, these simple ideas will require major investment.

As mentioned in Chapter 5 (Section 5.4), out of 31 km of harbourfront shoreline, 22 km (or 71%) is still inaccessible. These 22 km represent superb potential for improvement and a wonderful opportunity for Montrealers to increase their contact with the river.

Figure 6.15 illustrates the undeveloped portions of the shoreline (see jagged dark-green line). At the moment, the following areas are inaccessible:

- the shoreline of the northern tip of Nuns' Island, that has changed very little from its original state,
- the Technoparc shoreline,
- the Cité du Havre shoreline,
- the shoreline on either side of the Jacques Cartier Bridge, which cannot be developed as long as the Port of Montréal, CN and CPR continue to operate here (see Section 5.4),
- most (approximately 65%) of the shoreline of Jean Drapeau Park blue space, including the Seaway dike.

Natural environments to be preserved, spaces to be renaturalized

The four illustrations above represent undeveloped sectors of the harbourfront. Other than the Technoparc shoreline, these areas are home to fairly diverse plant life — one that is typical of aquatic environments. As seen in the summer, this same diversity characterizes area bird life, with a broad spectrum of species nesting on the northern tip of Nuns' Island and in some parts of Jean Drapeau Park, and feeding on the aquatic ecosystem provided by the river.

Natural-environment preservation and enhancement objectives — or the renaturalization of any part of the riverbanks that is reclaimed (especially the Technoparc sector) — should therefore form part of Montréal harbourfront urban development priorities.

Scenic view-points to be enhanced

Harbourfront landscapes offer a wide range of scenery and view-points to residents and visitors. Figure 6.15 pinpoints the main undeveloped or inaccessible locations where the view of the river or urban landscape is so beautiful that a photograph could not replicate the feeling evoked.

- The view of the river and skyline from the northern tip of Nuns' Island, with Mount Royal providing an impressive backdrop;
- The view of entire harbourfront, downtown, and Mount Royal from the Champlain Bridge. Of all thoroughfares leading into Montréal, this is doubtless the most majestic.

Figure 6.25
The Technoparc waterfront: highway facilities.



Fig. 6.27
Mouth of Le Moyne Channel, between Sainte-Hélène and Notre-Dame islands: a peaceful, well-guarded secret.



Figure 6.24
Northern end of Nuns' Island: an unaltered shoreline.



Figure 6.26
Inaccessible Cité du Havre shoreline and magnificent river environment.



Figure 6.28
Downtown and Mount Royal from northern end of Nuns' Island.





Source: Ville de Montréal, Service de la mise en valeur du territoire et du patrimoine. Editing: Société du Havre de Montréal.

- Once the expressway is relocated behind the industrial park, a view of the entire De Laprairie Basin and the Champlain Bridge will be available to cyclists on the shore of the Technoparc.
- The superb view of the river and islands from the southern shore of Cité du Havre
- Views from the islands, magnificent landscapes of the old harbourfront, downtown, Mount Royal and the Port of Montréal's eastern sector should be enhanced by making them more accessible.

6.2.3 Sectors with development, repurposing, consolidation or rehabilitation potential

As shown in Chapter 5, the SHM's planning area covers a total surface area of 10 km², 12% of which is vacant or underutilized (1.2 million m² or 12.4 million ft²).

On a preliminary basis, the residential development potential of this land has been estimated at more than 12,000 new units (in those areas that would permit such use). Should proposed changes to the Bonaventure and Ville-Marie expressways go ahead, the vacant or underutilized land nearby could also make the development of tens of thousands of square metres of office, commercial and industrial space viable.

To this overall area, 92,900 m² (or 1 million ft²) of land belonging to Canada Post and located at 1470 Ottawa Street, east of the Des Seigneurs Bridge on the Lachine Canal, as well as the property (278,700 m² or 3 million ft²) on which the CN shops in Point St. Charles are located (made available by the closing of the Alstom shops), will soon be added.

In total, then, more than 1.5 million m² (or 16 million ft²) of vacant or underutilized land is available for development or redevelopment, with some 75% of this property being publicly owned or belonging to large institutions like CN (Pointe St. Charles shops).

Figure 6.35 shows the distribution of publicly owned (or institutional) properties on the Montréal harbourfront in 2003. Note the relatively limited number of public and institutional landowners with large holdings. In the case of the northern tip of Nuns' Island, there is, as well, just one proprietor.

This limited number of stakeholders could be a major advantage in implementing a concerted development and improvement plan for the area over the coming years.

Fig. 6.29
Downtown and Mount Royal from the Champlain Bridge.

The challenge will be to convince these different stakeholders, federal and provincial departments and agencies, and the City of Montréal to incorporate their actions and development plans into the framework of the vision proposed by the SHM, whose different components are to be carried out sequentially over a 25-year period.

Figure 6.30
St. Lawrence River and Champlain Bridge, from the Technoparc.



Figure 6.31
Downtown, from undeveloped site on Île Sainte-Hélène.



Figure 6.32
Île Notre-Dame, from Cité du Havre.



Figure 6.33
Natural and port spaces, from mouth of Le Moyne channel.



6.2.3.1 Sectors with development potential

In Figure 6.15, sectors with development potential are shown in yellow. The SHM proposes to integrate these large tracts of vacant land, which have never been developed, into its long-term planning and development vision. The following areas are included in this category:

- A) the northern tip of Nuns' Island;
- B) the Technoparc;
- C) the portion of Cité du Havre near the Port Authority head office, west of existing residential developments;
- D) the eastern sector of Faubourg Québec;
- E) the eastern tip of Île Sainte-Hélène (La Ronde parking and inactive marina).

A) Northern tip of Nuns' Island

Located at the extreme west of the Montréal harbourfront boundaries, the northern tip of Nuns' Island has a development potential of 22 ha (2 million ft²). At present, this area is occupied by a golf driving range and a restaurant—temporary uses on land currently zoned as low-density residential and industrial.

The City of Montréal and the borough of Verdun have conducted a planning exercise as part of their preparations for the next development plan. Use, density and height parameters are to be reviewed, with 75% of the site likely slated for residential development (as compared with the existing 50%); existing density and height allowances will be much higher than at present. The owner of the land (also the site developer) intends to build a group of luxury condominium towers, providing future residents with extraordinary views of downtown and the river. The residential development potential will be between **1,200 and 1,500 units**.

As part of this project, the shoreline on the northern tip of the Island (over a width of about 15 metres) will be transferred to the City, for the purposes of developing a linear park.

Two major archaeological sites

The northern tip of the island holds the remains of two major archaeological sites listed in the Inventory of Archaeological Sites in Québec (Figure 6.23). The sites, which border on each other, are located near the shoreline in the southwestern part of the tip of the island, near the Champlain Bridge.

- One site, a prehistoric Native settlement, contains remains from the Archaic and Woodland periods, with the oldest dating back 4,000 years (Archaic period). The grave of a Native child dating back 2,500 years (Woodland period) was transferred to the Kanawake Mohawk Reserve in a special ceremony.
- The other, the Le Ber estate, was a thriving farm and trading post owned by the merchant Jacques Le Ber, son-in-law of Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville. The Le Ber agricultural complex was made up of many buildings (house, barn, stable, bakery, limekiln, fortified walls and so on). This area is an important archeological site and its remains are still located there. These, as well as the Iroquois remains, were the subject of major digs in the 1990s.

Development potential for the northern tip of Nuns' Island

The changes currently being made to the City of Montréal's urban plan will allow high-density residential development. Given that this development should help enhance the Montréal harbourfront overall, the following planning guidelines should be taken into account by the developer and the borough.

- Develop the urban habitat on the northern tip of the island in a manner consistent with Nuns' Island traditions of innovation and architectural quality (1,000 to 1,500 potential units).
- Ensure that this high-quality development enhances the gateway to the harbourfront and downtown.
- Preserve existing views of the river and downtown, without altering its distinctive skyline.
- Protect and enhance the archaeological sites and integrate them into the planning and development of the area (especially for historic and archaeological interpretation purposes along the linear park to be developed).
- Design the linear park with a view to preserving natural spaces and bird and aquatic life.

B) Technoparc

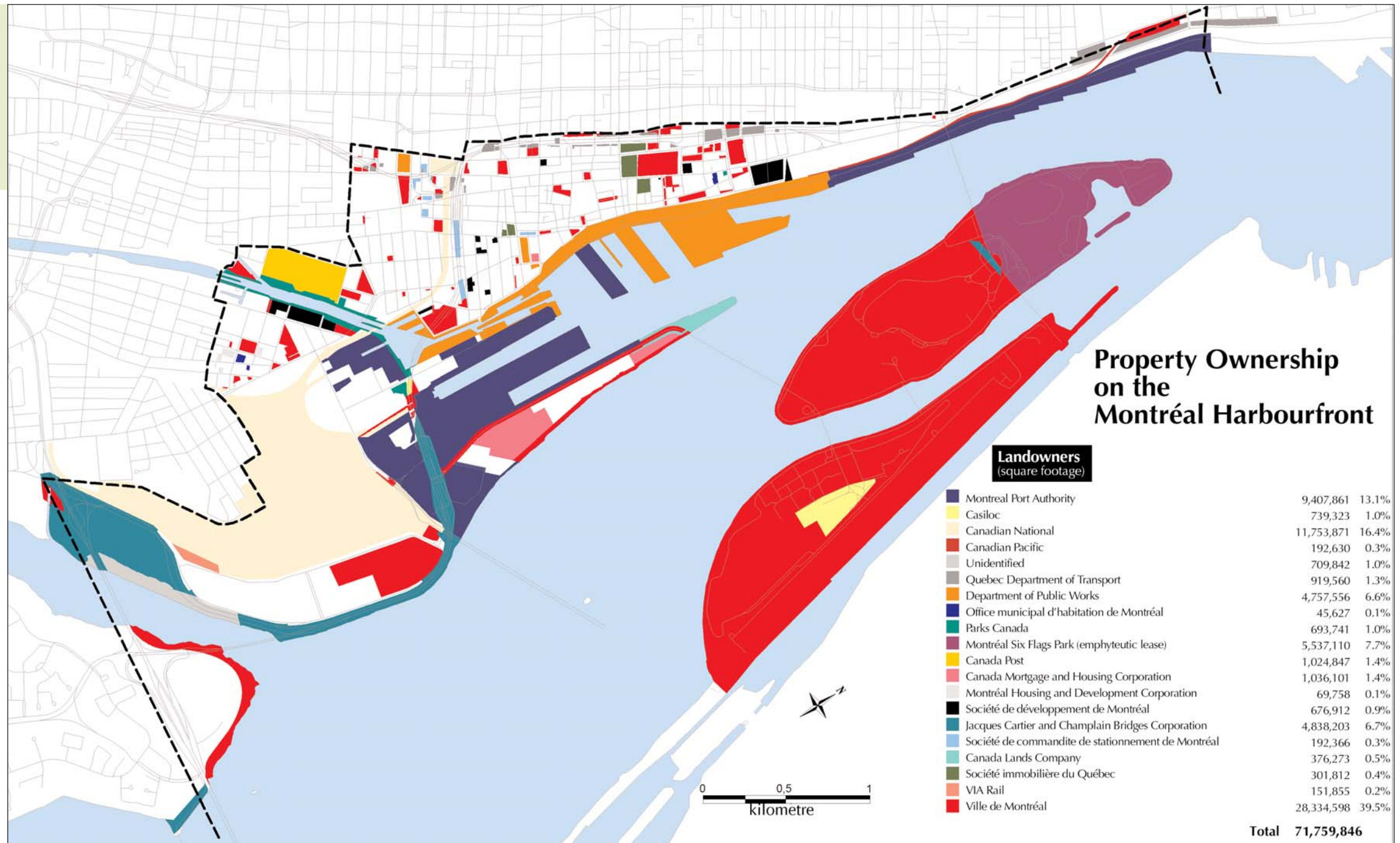
As things now stand, the Technoparc is, without a doubt, one of the harbourfront's biggest development challenges. The bearing capacity of this former landfill site and related contamination limit the types of reasonably feasible uses. Within the current environmental risk-management framework, only industrial or commercial zoning is suitable for this huge tract of land—as witnessed by the presence of Mel's Cité du Cinéma studios, Bell Mobility and Teleglobe. Residential use is out of the question, as decontamination costs would quickly become prohibitive. The view of the SHM is that the Technoparc's full development and improvement potential will be achieved only by soil remediation or the safe management of biogases and hydrocarbon leachate.

The fact that the Bonaventure Expressway runs along the St. Lawrence shoreline also severely compromises the site's development potential. In our view, fulfilling that potential is contingent upon relocating this portion of the expressway and transforming the waterfront into a linear park, or upon renaturalizing certain portions of this shoreline. If this can be achieved, the area will become an extraordinary site, located at the gateway to downtown. It will become a strategic location much more likely to attract other companies, recreational/tourism facilities, a marina, and perhaps even an international trade fair centre.



Figure 6.34
Northern end
of
Nuns' Island
and the
Technoparc.

Figure 6.35
Property ownership on the harbourfront.



Source: Société du Havre de Montréal and City of Montréal (2003 assessment roll).

C) Portion of Cité du Havre near Port Authority head office, west of existing residential developments

In contrast to the land at the tip of Cité du Havre and east of Habitat 67 (which the SHM would like to see preserved as a park), the undeveloped area located more to the west could be used for residential development. The new buildings, fairly high in density and designed to harmonize with existing structures, could be laid out in a pattern similar to that used for the Expo 67 pavilions.

The residential-development potential of this area has been estimated at **1,000 units**.

D) Eastern sector of Faubourg Québec

Faubourg Québec is not yet completed, but will probably be developed faster than the other harbourfront sectors discussed in this section (those with development potential).

Work is still going on in the eastern part of the Faubourg, and the blocks opposite Saint-Antoine Street will be available for residential occupancy fairly quickly, with 50% of the total number of units (i.e., **220** out of **440**) reserved as affordable housing; this development will be built on the northern side of Notre-Dame Street. On the southern side of the elevated portion of Notre-Dame Street, larger structures (including high-rises fronting the river) have been planned, for a possible total of **300 units**.

Given the number of people these projects will attract, it can only be hoped that the local commercial, institutional and community services that are currently lacking will follow.

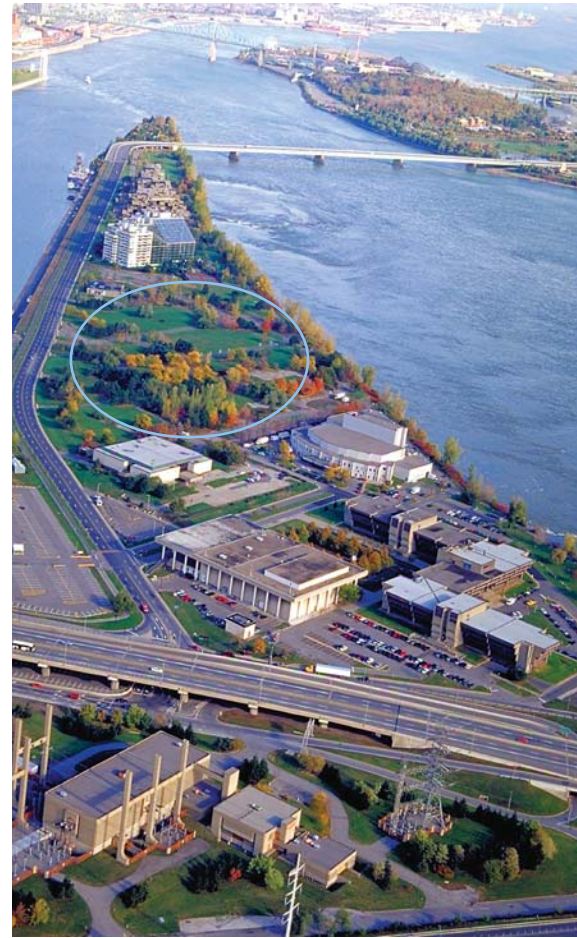


Fig. 6.36
Land suitable for residential development—western part of Cité du Havre.

An elementary school could easily be opened in the City building that currently houses a day-care centre for municipal employees. Such a school—a compromise between a neighbourhood school and a theme school—could serve the families of Old Montreal and the *faubourgs* as well as workers in the area wishing to enroll their children close to their place of work, as is currently done for day care.

A new vocation should also be found for the superb edifice formerly home to Viger Station, which, with the rehabilitation of Viger Square currently being planned by the City of Montreal, could again become a major centre of activity. Changes to the old station and square would complete the urban-repurposing cycle changing Berri Street into an institutional centre, with the Grande bibliothèque, Émilie Gamelin Park, and the Archives nationales (formerly the École des HEC), opposite the station on either side of the square.

Source: Pierre Malo image bank.

E) Eastern tip of Île Sainte-Hélène

If it were not a huge parking lot left unused for six months of the year, the eastern tip of Île Sainte-Hélène could be a magnificent site. It could be transformed into a major recreational and tourism destination featuring buildings and lookouts with magnificent views of the St. Lawrence and its cargo and cruise ships. The marina could also be re-opened to service new recreational facilities.

It would be the *Pointe de la Cité*, Montrealers' own Ellis Island. This exceptional but underused site should be the subject of a public debate and a call for suggestions that would see it developed to its full potential.

Figure 6.38
Island sector with high development and improvement potential.

Figure 6.37
Faubourg Québec—areas still awaiting development.



Municipal-services building housing the Coeur de l'Île daycare—an ideal site for an elementary school to serve families who live or work in and around Old Montréal.



6.2.3.2 Sectors with urban-redevelopment potential

These sectors are illustrated in red in Figure 6.15. They are vast areas that include:

- A) the CN shops in Point St. Charles;
- B) the Basin area: the Peel Basin, agri-food sector, and Bickerdike and du Moulin piers;
- C) Griffintown and the northern part of Faubourg des Récollets;
- D) the area stretching from the former Canada Post regional mail-sorting centre to the Des Seigneurs Bridge;
- E) the Ville-Marie Expressway behind Champ-de-Mars, between Saint-Urbain and Sanguinet streets.

We refer to these as redevelopment sectors because they all form part of areas fragmented by the rail lines and the Bonaventure and Ville-Marie expressways, and because, between the mid-1800s and the 1960s and '70s, they were inhabited, vibrant suburbs or villages.

These communities and villages had names: Victoriatown or Goose Village (Village-aux-Oies), Griffintown or Faubourg Sainte-Anne. The area south of Champ-de-Mars was part of Faubourg Saint-Laurent, whereas the now-abandoned railway shops in Point St. Charles always had this role from the golden age of the Grand Trunk Railway to the more modern era of the Alstom shops (which were closed in 2003).

In short, these are sectors that surrounded the Old City (more specifically, the western and southwestern districts) and, apart from improvements to the Peel Basin, have not yet been the subject of any systematic revitalization measures.

The urban-redevelopment of these areas cannot be done effectively or in a way that is fiscally viable for the municipality, unless several major steps are taken, including:

- the transformation of the Bonaventure Expressway into an urban boulevard between the Victoria Bridge exit and Notre-Dame Street, with the new boulevard going either underneath the Peel Basin via a tunnel or over it via a bridge that would serve as a stamp of architectural excellence, a major work of art for the harbourfront, and a gateway to downtown;
- the covering of the Ville-Marie Expressway near Champ-de-Mars and the construction, on this new space, of city blocks that could easily be incorporated into the grid of the original Faubourg Saint-Laurent streets.

A) CN Rail shops in Point St. Charles

CN wishes to divest itself of its property in Point St. Charles occupied, until recently, by Alstom, a railway-equipment manufacturing company. The land in question covers 3 million ft² (almost 280 000 m²), and is one of the largest properties on the entire harbourfront.

Together with the Technoparc, this area is among those that could eventually accommodate an international trade fair centre. As part of its urban planning process, the City of Montréal and various socioeconomic stakeholders from the Sud-Ouest borough are also discussing the future of the site; several of those stakeholders would like the eastern part of the area to maintain its rail vocation. In the short term, however, the probable sale of the property in question may well shake up the debate over its future.

Urban-habitat functions (housing and services) could be developed in the western part of the site, towards the south as far as the VIA Rail shops as an extension of the existing residential network (the block formed by Wellington, Sébastopol, Le Ber and Ash streets), with a construction potential of some 400 units.

In any event, the site is large enough to allow for the development of a broad spectrum of economic and urban activities.

It must be noted, however, that the transformation of the CN property, through repurposing and redevelopment in a new direction would be contingent, on the financially viable and efficient management of contaminated soil. The management model used with the former Angus rail shops in the Rosemont district might serve as an example.

Finally, the redevelopment of CN land will require that the site escape from its current isolation in the east-west axis, in particular by extending Mill Street under the railway lines, via the land now occupied by the Costco parking lot. On the southern side, approaches to the Technoparc and shoreline should be developed as part of the project for relocating the Bonaventure Expressway proposed by the SHM (see document entitled *Vision 2025*).

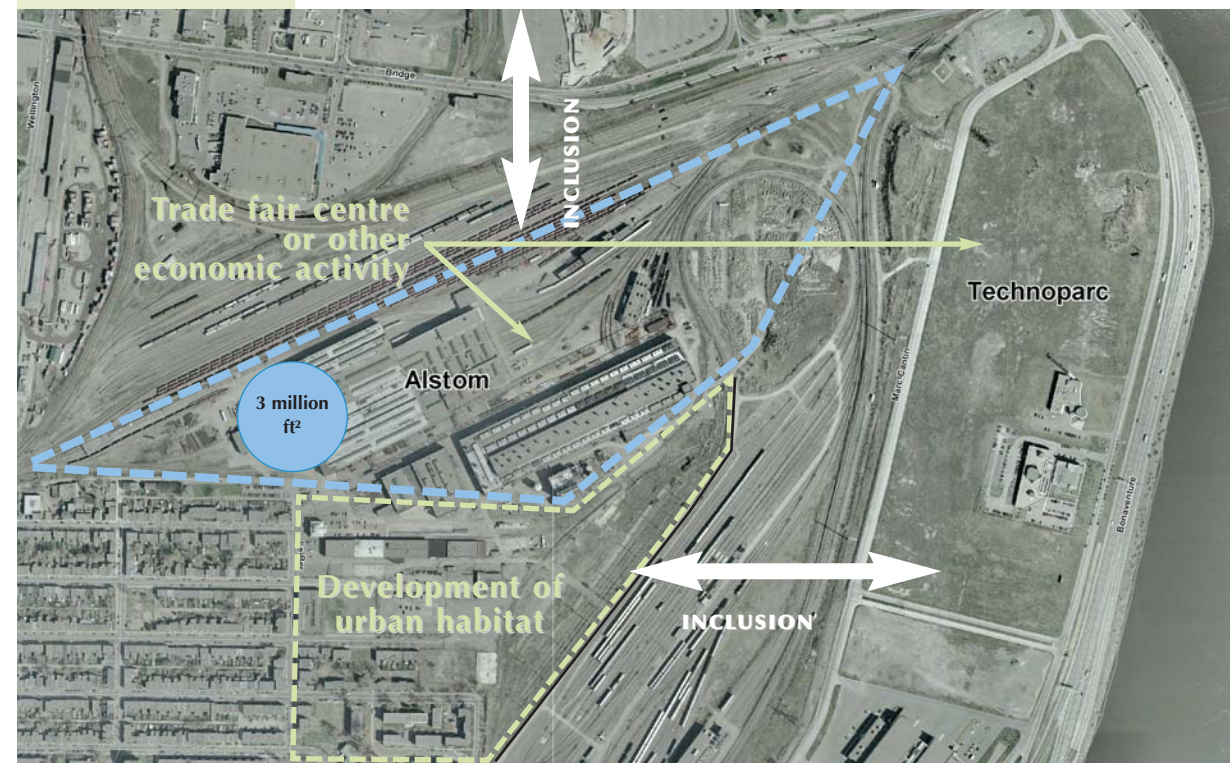
B) The Basin area: Peel Basin, agri-food sector, and Bickerdike and du Moulin Point piers

This centrally located, as yet unexploited area, strategically situated between the St. Lawrence and the city centre on one of the main approaches to downtown, constitutes a key element in the urban planning and development project for the Montréal harbourfront.

Its development potential rests on Montrealers' ability to reclaim the land in question, which has been severely compromised by the presence of the Bonaventure Expressway (extending, in elevated form, throughout the basin area, Griffintown and Faubourg des Récollets).

In coming years, transformation of this sector will also have to take account of continuing port and rail operations (CN lines, bulk and container cargo traffic at the Bickerdike Pier, service for Port of Montreal clients in the agri-food area (ADM, Five Roses, Canada Maltage, etc.)).

Figure 6.39
Point St. Charles Shops



Source (orthophoto): City of Montréal.



Figure 6.40
Basin sector near Bonaventure Expressway.

Home to the Dow Planetarium, located in front of the former brewery of the same name, the area is still peppered with parking lots. Peel Street is the backbone of this sector, which lies just below downtown, and connects it to the recently excavated Peel Basin.

At present, two major real-estate projects are under construction: phase two of the ÉTS, and the Cour Chaboillez (part of the Terrasses Windsor complex), a 1,200-unit residential project. Griffintown could also accommodate another 1,200 residential units, for a total of **2,400**.

With the transformation of the Bonaventure Expressway into an urban boulevard, there is also huge commercial and office development potential on both sides of the expressway.

D) Area from the former Canada Post regional mail-sorting centre to Des Seigneurs Bridge

According to a 2001 study by the City of Montréal and Atelier B.R.I.C., the land of the former mail-sorting centre on Ottawa Street (11.4 hectares, or 1 million ft²) represents a real-estate development potential of approximately 3 million ft².

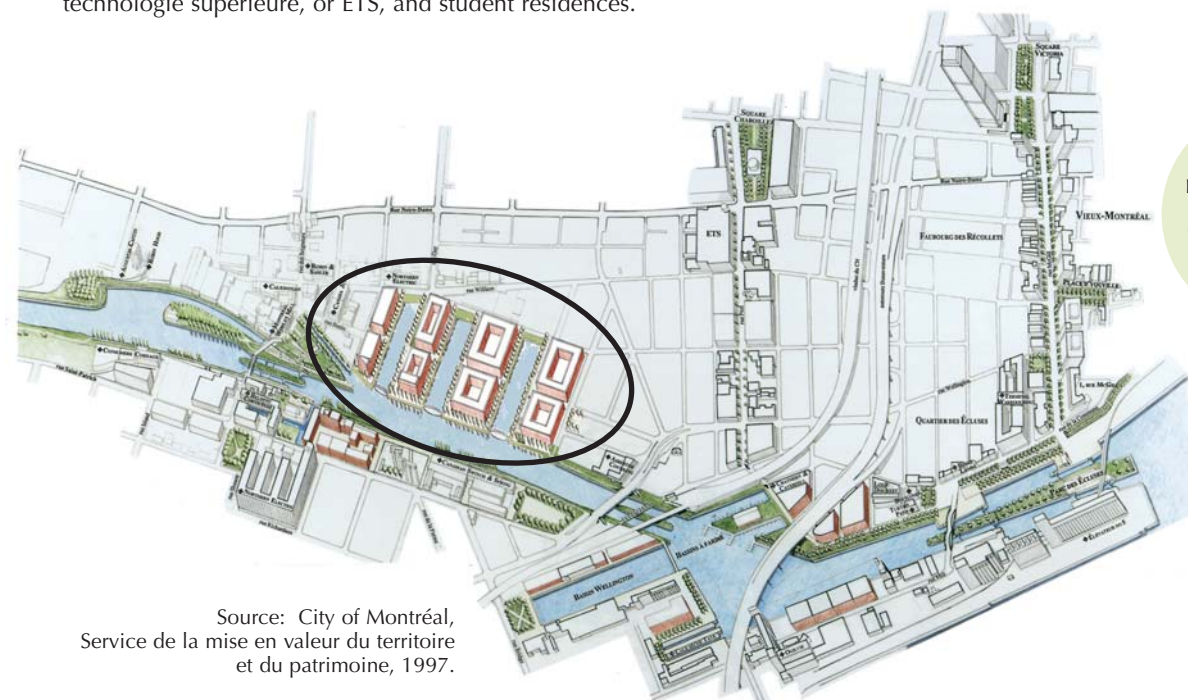
A high-density, multi-use real-estate development could easily be integrated into this gateway to downtown. The Peel Basin certainly offers enormous potential for major recreational and tourism facilities and infrastructure (including a marina), or developments with density and height parameters consistent with those of the Business Centre (Centre des affaires).

The excavation of the Wellington and Tate basins, southwest of the Peel Basin, and the complete restoration of Reach No. 2, located north of du Moulin Pier (the site of the Mosaiculture International Exhibition) would make it possible to complete the Lachine Canal Park project in this sector.

This is one of the harbourfront redevelopment sectors that represents the most fantastic potential with respect to both real-estate development and Lachine Canal enhancement. The area's residential-development potential is evaluated at **2,000 units**.

C) Griffintown and the northern part of Faubourg des Récollets

Griffintown — bounded on the east by the Bonaventure Expressway, on the west by De la Montagne Street, on the north by the Ville-Marie Expressway, and on the south by the Lachine Canal — has been the object of redevelopment for some years now, especially with the arrival of the Université du Québec's École de technologie supérieure, or ÉTS, and student residences.



Source: City of Montréal, Service de la mise en valeur du territoire et du patrimoine, 1997.

Figure 6.41
Former Canada Post mail-sorting centre (William St. sector), near Lachine Canal (simulation).

E) Area of Ville-Marie Expressway behind Champ-de-Mars, between Saint-Urbain and Sanguinet streets

This sector, which is bounded by Saint-Urbain, Viger, Saint-Antoine and Sanguinet streets, covers an area of 85,000 m² (915,000 ft²). The City of Montréal is currently examining the possibility of developing the site via reconstruction on concrete slab (as was done with the Quartier International) directly overlying the expressway and its off- and on-ramps. To do so, existing entrances and exits will have to be moved.

One of the scenarios currently under study points to a major institutional, commercial or residential potential of more than 185,800 m² (two million ft²) on a developable area of 50,000 m² (533,000 ft²), the whole divided into five blocks that would extend the urban fabric between Faubourg Saint-Laurent and Old Montréal (Figure 6.43).

The possible transformation of this site into a mixed-use area (residential, commercial and office) constitutes a planning approach that should be given special preference in order to ensure optimum development. A significant number of affordable or community housing units should also be included. With all this in mind, the total number of units that could be built is approximately **1,200**.

In terms of height and density, the area could accommodate projects of six to eight storeys (residential equivalent), which is consistent with the height of the Redpath Complex situated opposite, on the other side of the canal. Given the development criteria recently presented to Canada Post by the Sud-Ouest borough, the minimum and maximum height allowances would be a bit higher than the five stories stipulated by the borough. This would help offset the slightly reduced "footprint" on the ground and ensure the possibility of excavating at least three of the four basins in the future.

Site improvements should be incorporated into ongoing efforts to enhance the Lachine Canal and surrounding area by planning for the total or partial excavation of the old Saint-Gabriel Basins, which were filled in and on which Canada Post built its sorting centre and outdoor parking lot.

Naturally, subdivision plans would have to be designed accordingly, so as to schedule excavation in accordance with phase-based development planning.



Figure 6.42
Ville-Marie Expressway trench north of Champ-de-Mars — development potential of more than 185,800 m².

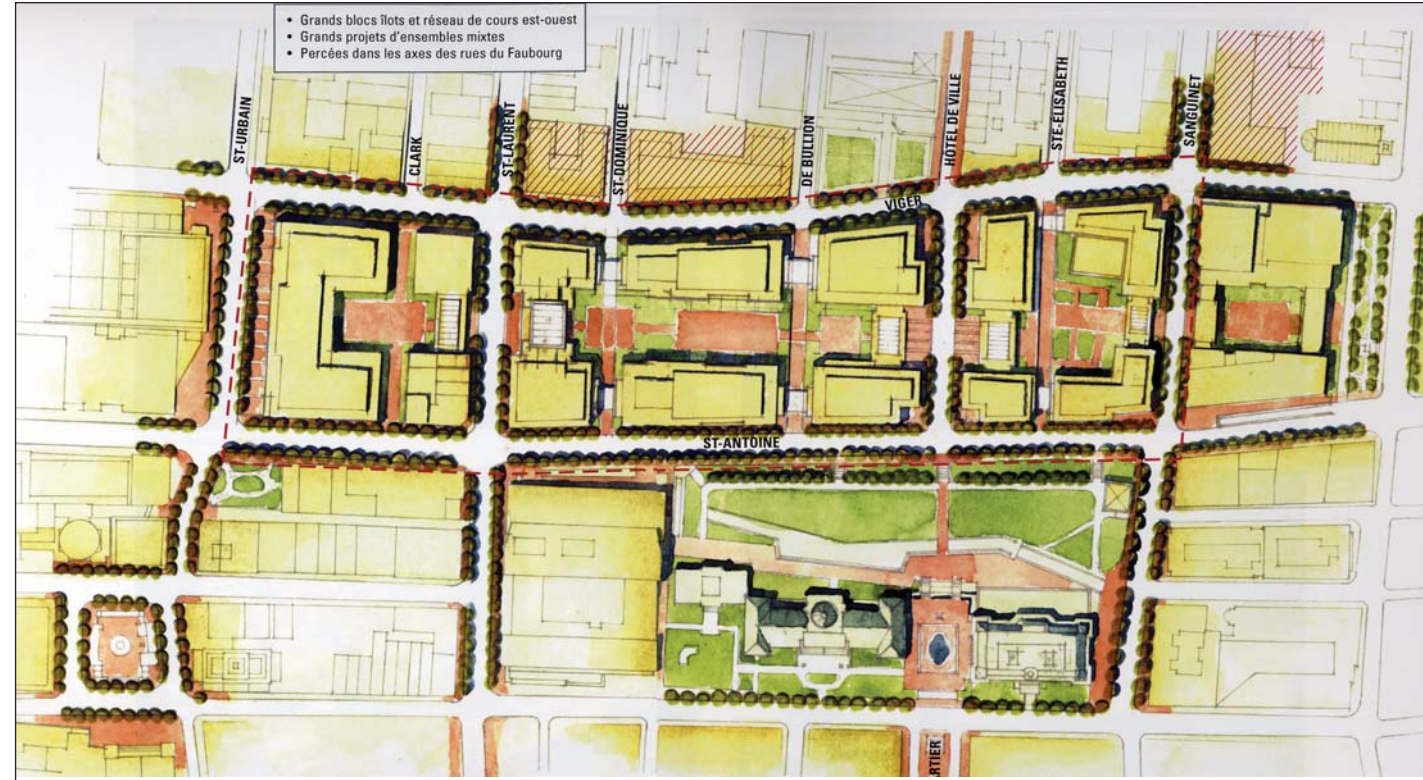


Figure 6.43
Ville-Marie Expressway overlay and development project, between Saint-Urbain and Sanguinet streets (scenario under study).

Source: City of Montréal, Service de la mise en valeur du territoire et du patrimoine /Daniel Arbour and Associates, *Recouvrement de l'autoroute Ville-Marie entre les rues Saint-Urbain et Sanguinet*, Final Report, Feasibility Study, March 2004.

6.2.3.3 Sectors with consolidation potential: Old Montréal and the Old Port

Despite all the investments made to revitalize Old Montréal and the Old Port over the past 25 years, this part of the harbourfront still offers numerous possibilities. The main challenge will lie in promoting development based on a better balanced development cohabitation among recreational/tourism, residential and industrial functions (see sections 5.3.2 to 5.3.4 and section 6.1.2 above).

Old Montréal

With respect to the historic district of Old Montréal as such, some 15 vacant properties or blocks remain to be developed. According to the Société de développement de Montréal (SDM) estimates, this land represents a potential of **400 units**.

Another **600 units** resulting from the recycling of partially or totally vacant historic buildings can be added to this potential for new construction. A simple walk along the streets of Old Montréal is a forceful reminder that these old commercial structures, with their upper-storey warehouses, are often under-occupied or vacant.

In total, therefore, Old Montréal still has a development potential of **1,000 units**. In future, this potential will have to be consolidated in order to attract (with the concomitant development of the *faubourgs*) a higher resident population that can sustain local commercial, institutional and community services.

Old Port

In addition to being a major regional public space (with more than 80% of its eight million visitors coming from Greater Montréal), the Old Port also constitutes an extraordinary destination that has made a considerable contribution to revitalizing Old Montréal as an urban habitat.

The improvements and buildings constructed or recycled since 1992 have helped enhance the area's port ambience while enabling residents and visitors to get closer to the river and appreciate the magnificent views offered by the old harbourfront, with port operations still being conducted in the western section (Iberville Passenger Terminal and Bickerdike Pier). However, some uses and events incorporated into the Old Port's facilities and spaces over the past few years (IMAX Theatre, Science Centre, Mosaiculture International) have altered the philosophy that guided initial improvement efforts, focused primarily on the area's port atmosphere. At least, this was a comment made on several occasions during public talks organized by

the SHM in the fall of 2003, especially by urban planning academics and professionals.

Moreover, the fact that the Clock Tower, King Edward and Alexandra piers (for the Iberville Passenger Terminal, in the last case) contain almost 1,700 parking spaces constitutes a development choice that merits reconsideration. These parking lots could eventually be transformed, and provided with facilities, that would make better use of the piers and approaches to the river. Moreover, they become destinations in themselves that generate massive automobile congestion during the summer season. The gridlock on De la Commune turns that street into a huge open-air parking lot.

These parking lots are an important source of revenue for the Old Port of Montréal Corporation, however, which would have trouble balancing its budget without them. Nevertheless, this does not mean that they have to remain on the site of this urban park devoted to relaxation and enjoyment of the waterfront.

Accordingly, the SHM's traffic-management suggestions (new tramway system, park-and-ride centres, ferries, etc.), contained in the document entitled *Vision 2025*, are certainly able to provide solutions consistent with Old Port Corporation interests, while at the same time significantly mitigating the impact of massive automobile traffic from late May through mid-September.

The Old Port Corporation is currently updating its master plan and capital program for the next few years. A number of major projects are being reviewed:

- New improvements to Old Port entrances will make the site more physically and visually approachable from the streets of Old Montréal.
- The Clock Tower Pier will doubtless have its nautical role enhanced by improvements to the marina.
- The Bonsecours Basin will be developed further as a site for family activities.
- The Jacques Cartier Pier will continue to be the setting for special events.
- The King Edward Pier will further develop its educational role (science and technology).
- The Alexandra Pier, which falls under the jurisdiction of the Montréal Port Authority, will retain its maritime vocation.

In the latter case, the Iberville Passenger Terminal should be modernized and redesigned in order to provide a welcoming facility that enhances the Montréal harbourfront's image as a quality, prestigious destination.

6.2.3.4 Sectors with rehabilitation potential: Jean Drapeau Park islands

These sectors are illustrated in green in Figure 6.15.

Site visits made to Jean Drapeau Park in 2003 by the SHM team revealed a number of major development problems for this magnificent 268-ha site (as compared with 188 ha for Mount Royal Park).

If at first sight, it is obvious that the park has pressing maintenance and investment problems, it is also generally suffering from a major identity crisis. The many uses made of the Park, and the number of high-attendance events hosted there, seem to have caused its main role — i.e., the preservation and enhancement of blue and green spaces — to slip into the background. The Park also has another, extremely important aspect of its identity that should be enhanced.

These two fundamental aspects of its identity (preservation and enhancement of green and blue spaces, and a repository of memory) should definitely be taken into account when park management develops its next master plan.

The economic and financial spin-off of these special events and high-use facilities should, moreover, be used to benefit the Park in terms of maintenance, as well as enhancing island landscapes and shorelines.

Expo 67

Almost 40 years after the event that made Montréal's international reputation, the 1967 World's Fair is still very much a part of the city. Accordingly, Jean Drapeau Park has become one of the most significant memory landmarks for generations of Montrealers born after the War and in the 1960s. Thanks to Expo 67, Sainte-Hélène and Notre-Dame islands are an integral part of the Montréal identity.

Île Sainte-Hélène's former military role

However, the island's roots go back much farther. The original part of Île Sainte-Hélène — i.e., the central portion, which is not composed of landfill — constitutes a historic location of great importance. In fact, Samuel de Champlain, who named Île Sainte-Hélène after his young bride, Hélène Boullé, noted the ceremonial role already given the site by Natives.⁵

Although often forgotten, it is doubtless its military past that gives Île Sainte-Hélène such historical weight. Charles Le Moyne (1656-1729), Seigneur of Longueuil and Infantry lieutenant of French naval forces, loaned Île Sainte-Hélène to the troops as a bivouac and drill area in preparation for expeditions into Iroquois territory. Later, with the British conquest, the island was where the French troops stationed in Ville-Marie made their last stand and where, according to legend, they burned their colours rather than surrendering them to the English.

The island then gained strategic importance as part of the British army's defence network against possible attacks by from the Americans, and acted as a central resupply facility for garrisons spread throughout Upper and Lower Canada. It is, therefore, buildings crucial to the resupply function (arsenal, powder magazine, storerooms and barracks) that most characterized the site, rather than defence works as such.⁶

Figure 6.44
Expo 67, a significant memory landmark for Montrealers.

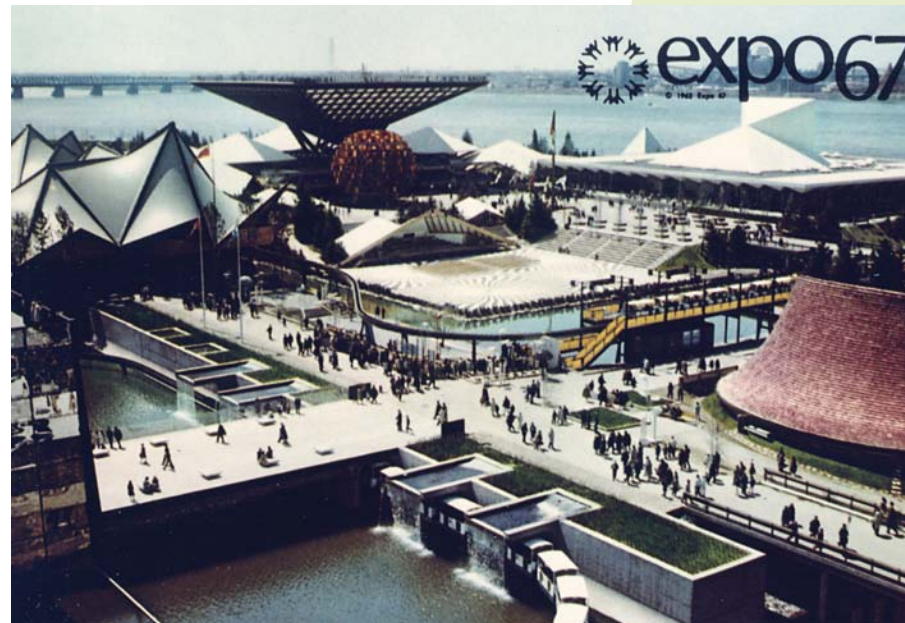
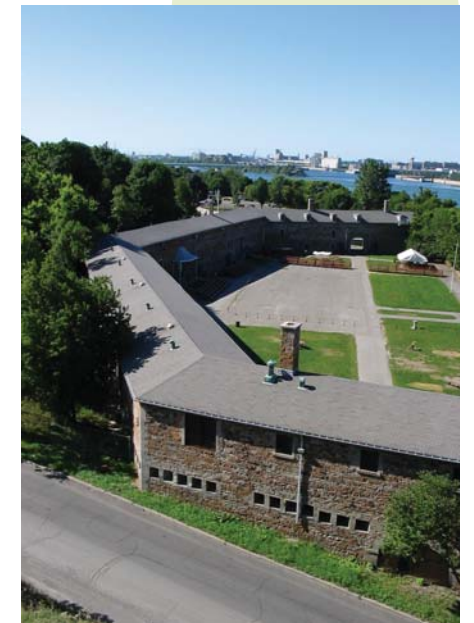


Figure 6.45
Fort on Île Sainte-Hélène, a major component of the island's identity.



Source: Bibliothèque nationale du Québec.

5. Jean Drapeau Park, City of Montréal, ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec, Ethnoscop, *Plan directeur de mise en valeur du site militaire de l'île Sainte-Hélène*, September 2001, 116 pages, p. 19.
6. *Ibid.*, p.9.

Île Sainte-Hélène's public park role

Until 1870, Île Sainte-Hélène was a military barracks and depot. In 1874, its first public park was inaugurated. Between 1936 and 1939, at the request of the municipal authorities, landscape architect Frederick G. Todd started the rehabilitation of the island in accordance with a development plan that he drew up and that, while still recognized today, should really be updated.

With Expo 67, the island's basic shape and public park role were radically changed, although most of the original site (today, the central portion) was spared.

Other major events and facilities have helped develop and alter the park's role and appearance:

- the Olympic games of 1976 led to the creation of the Olympic Basins on Île Notre-Dame;
- improvements to and opening of the Gilles Villeneuve racetrack and holding of the first F1 Grand Prix in 1978;
- holding of the first "Floralies Internationales" on Île Notre-Dame in 1980;
- development and opening of the public beach on Île Notre-Dame in 1990;
- landscape improvements to the western part of Île Sainte-Hélène in 1992 (Lac des Cygnes, lookout and Place Calder);
- opening of the Casino in the former French pavilion in 1993;
- opening and recycling of the Biosphère in 1995.

Finally, the 11th World Swimming Championships, to be held in 2005, will also make it possible to carry out a major modernization of the pools and associated facilities.

Most of the above measures have helped enhance the islands' role as a public park and repository of memory. A major problem is the Société du parc des Îles's financial ability to provide upkeep for the premises.

Figure 6.46
Original portion of Île Sainte-Hélène.

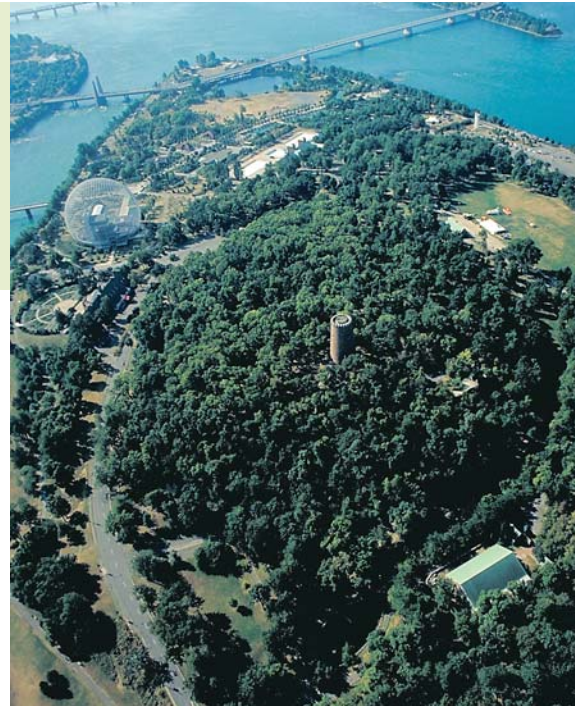


Fig. 6.47
Place des Nations: enchanting site with unrestricted view of the river.



As well, certain facilities and special events are also exerting considerable pressure because of the intense automobile and pedestrian traffic they create; or because some areas, like the Floralies gardens, become inaccessible for the entire car-racing season; or because the facilities installed to support an event remain in place during the whole summer.



Figure 6.48
Floralies garden canals: intimate atmosphere amidst an explosion of fragrance and colour.

Given this state of affairs, certain magnificent sites have deteriorated over the past few years, in particular those sectors that had been landscaped in the 1990s. Other high-potential areas, such as Place des Nations, have fallen into disrepair.

In the old part of Île Sainte-Hélène, footpaths and wooded areas are poorly maintained, if at all. Several areas of the Floralies gardens (Île Notre-Dame) and their urban furniture have deteriorated, and the canal banks are increasingly being eroded.

To conclude, there are five areas of Jean Drapeau Park in need of a rehabilitation or upgrading plan and the funding required to get the work done.

On Île Notre-Dame, problematic sectors are the Floralies gardens, located near the Montréal Casino and in the centre of the Gilles Villeneuve racetrack, as well as the roads department depot on the eastern tip of the island, which is used mainly to store racing equipment.

On Île Sainte-Hélène, a new role for — and renovations to — Place des Nations would provide a significant boost to plans for improving the islands and Montréal harbourfront. Proper maintenance and continuing landscape improvements in the Lac des Cygnes area, as well as a plan for highlighting the military site and Frederick Todd's landscaping in the old part of the island, will help re-establish Jean Drapeau Park's role as a public park, green and blue space, and highly significant memory landmark.

Managers of special events and high-attendance facilities should ensure that these identity-related dimensions are incorporated into their own development or business plans. The financial and economic benefits flowing from these events and facilities should also have a positive effect on the condition of the site and its capital projects.



Figure 6.49
Downtown,
from Lac des
Cygnes on Île
Sainte-Hélène.

Conclusion

The area occupied by the Montréal harbourfront, as defined and described in the previous chapters, offers undreamed-of improvement and development opportunities. Making the most of this potential does not consist in promoting an all-encompassing recreational/tourism or real-estate development model. Rather it should focus on harmoniously developing the urban habitat (well-rounded living environment, a mix of socioeconomic levels of people) and economic, recreational, tourism and cultural activities in this vast space between downtown and the river.

The planning and development strategy must also be based on enhancing the harbourfront as a historic site of paramount importance, comprising major heritage components such as Old Montréal (including the Old Port), the *faubourgs* and former villages, the Lachine Canal National Historic Site, and Jean Drapeau Park. In

this regard, in phase two of the SHM's mandate, available knowledge should be more extensively pursued and consolidated to paint a more complete picture of the situation. In the next 25 years, the success and quality of this enormous project will be largely contingent on Montrealers' ability to develop and improve these sites while preserving their identity, as well as the historic landmarks that form part of the city's urban fabric and built heritage. Future developments and improvements should be designed to enhance that heritage, which should be seen as an opportunity rather than a constraint.

In the same vein, it will be equally important to succeed in our goal of bringing the city and river closer together. This will require continued efforts to develop public access to the shoreline, the river and the banks of the Lachine Canal. It will also be important to put greater emphasis on deliberations and analyses aimed at enhancing the harbourfront's magnificent landscapes

and green and blue spaces, while better targeting the sectors that might benefit from a renaturalization strategy. Accordingly, an in-depth study and the development of a landscape-enhancement plan should be conducted by the SHM in co-operation with its partners.

As this initial exploratory and conceptualizing process on the harbourfront draws to a close (see *The Montréal Harbourfront – Vision 2025*), there remains sufficient issues to be documented and design work to be done to justify undertaking a detailed urban-planning exercise, which should eventually result in a master development plan for the entire harbourfront.