



**Speech by Mr. Gérald Tremblay
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**Montreal: Collaborative Ways of Doing Business Creatively
Speech given to the members
of the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce**

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The speech as delivered takes precedence over the written text**

Thank you Nancy (Ploeger, president of the MCC) for that kind introduction.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you all for joining me for this special breakfast.

To get our priorities straight, first a word about the food. This morning we have bagels - both Montreal and New York style. The sweet and the salty. Ours were specially delivered overnight, by their bakers. I will not debate which is the better of the two; that is really too grave an issue for breakfast. Besides, the New York Times has already run taste tests. But I am happy to point out that bagels have become iconic of both our cities' culture. More on this later.

I'm in New York today as part of Montreal's delegation to Advertising Week. Several of our most dynamic entrepreneurs in the advertising and entertainment industries are here to develop business between our creative community and its counterparts worldwide.

As such, I'd like to recognize a few heads in the room:

To borrow from the advertising lingo, my presentation will focus on how we are positioning Montreal in the North-American marketplace. I'll try to give you a sense of what's been done, where we're heading - and also how New Yorkers and Montrealers might do business in the future, in pursuit of their common goals.

Many of you already know Montreal, but for those of you who don't, let me quote a few numbers that will paint a picture of where we stand in North America.

At 1.9 million, Montreal ranks sixth among North American cities, behind Houston and ahead of Phoenix. If we're looking at metropolitan areas, we're in fifteenth position, at 3.6 million.

In terms of gross product, Montreal weighed in at 95 billion last year, about the same as the District of Columbia.

Major industrial clusters located in Montreal include information and communication technology, aerospace, life sciences (which include pharmaceuticals and biotech), cinema and television, clean technologies, financial services, and agri-food. Today, with major players such as Bombardier and CAE, Montreal is second worldwide in aerospace, behind Seattle and ahead of Toulouse. In high-tech manufacturing and service jobs, we're among the top ten in North America.

Looking back on the recession, both our financial and real estate markets withstood quite well. Not a single financial institution had to be bailed out. Residential real-estate market values continued to rise: up 20% from 2007 to 2010.

After badly dropping last year, employment in Montreal had returned to its pre-recession level as of last May, and has since risen to an all-time high.

Taking the long view, Montreal's economy evolved over the past century from a traditional industrial base to a higher-tech manufacturing and service-oriented economy. Metallurgy and petrochemicals declined while culture/tourism, design and media grew to prominence. Garment manufacturing declined whereas fashion design bloomed.

New flagships have replaced some of the old titans from the industrial era. Last year, our main convention centre, the "Palais des congrès", ranked first in North America for association events, especially in life sciences. And we're now a leader in video gaming, a far cry from anything traditional.

Higher education also has evolved into an export industry. With 170,000 university students, of whom 17,000 come from abroad, Montreal has the highest density of university students in North America.

Montreal, a highly creative community

These industries, among others, are home to what some call the "creative class": those employees and entrepreneurs who create not only works of art, but also new ideas, technologies and products. By that measure, one study found that Montreal has the second greatest share of its workforce in the core occupations of the "creative class", among North America's 25 largest cities.

That supports our vision of Montreal as a place where creators of all sorts like to live and work. Going forward, we're focused on a handful of urban developments projects that will open up new opportunities for creative types, and strengthen our position as a city bent on innovation.

First, we have plans to build or upgrade four of our teaching and research hospitals. Two of these projects are already underway: the McGill University Health Centre and the University of Montreal Research Centre. These major facilities will help attract and retain the talent we need to consolidate our position in the life-sciences cluster. They will also create venues for further partnerships between academic, public and private bodies. For instance, companies wishing to commercialize some of the knowledge discovered at the UofM Research Centre can locate in a health industries building to be part of our new life sciences district, what we call the "Quartier de la santé". All told, eight billion dollars are being invested in our hospital, research and university projects.

Second, we are in the midst of a downtown urban redevelopment plan that will give Montreal a true theatre district, as in New York or London. Our "Quartier des spectacles" is currently being built in one square kilometre around on our existing main cultural assets. With its upscale design, it will become Montreal's nexus for creating and having fun and, of course, a tourist attraction in itself.

Third, our four nature museums-the Biodome, the Botanical Garden, the Planetarium and the Insectarium-have joined forces with University of Montreal to establish a natural sciences district. What we call "le Quartier de la vie" is being built around what is

already Canada's largest grouping of natural science museums. It will include a new biodiversity research centre to create a critical mass of institutions for research, conservation and outreach. Attracting visitors and research talent can thus go hand in hand.

These projects, and others I don't have time to go in to right now, will build capacity in Montreal for creative endeavours of all sorts, thereby raising what some call our "creative quotient" – "C.Q." or "Quotient Créatif" in French.

Collaboration to spur creativity

That being said, at least 180 cities around the world see themselves as creative communities. How then can we stand out?

Well, our particular brand of creativity stresses collaboration. For the past twenty years, I have been a steadfast proponent of collaboration between firms, academia, unions, public bodies, and civil society, within industry-specific clusters, as Michael Porter originally defined them. Now, we need to foster more collaboration across industries and disciplines.

Perhaps the original example of such cross-sector creativity in Montreal was in 1985, when four kids barely out of school directed a computer-animated short film that went on to shake the industry. "Tony de Peltrie", was a landmark to computer graphics in movies, just as Chaplin was to traditional movie making. One of its creators, Daniel Langlois, went on to write animation software that Spielberg would use in Jurassic Park, among others. Interestingly, this production was the result of a collaborative effort between artists, designers, a computer programmer, and the University of Montreal mathematics department.

More recently, an industrial design company, a bicycle firm, an aluminium multinational, and a community group joined forces to set up a self-service public bike rental system for Montreal, the first in North America. TIME Magazine nominated the BIXI one of 2008's most important inventions. Since then, five other cities purchased its technology: Minneapolis, Washington, London, Melbourne and very soon, Toronto.

A final example could be our when our "Cirque du Soleil" circus and a multimedia animation shop called Moment Factory joined up to blend IT and the circus arts into a hybrid kind of show. By the way, the Cirque du Soleil will be showcased at Advertising Week's grand wrap-up party in Central Park. It's tonight at nine and you're all welcome.

But these success stories are just the visible part of the iceberg, what economist Patrick Cohendet calls the "Upperground". Less well known are the dozens of institutions, groups, venues and events that allow creators to meet and to new ideas to germinate, what he calls the "Middleground". For example, our "Society for Arts and Technology" brings together artists, scientists and techies to establish partnerships with industry and

educational institutions. We counted some 380 such assets that play a significant role in Montreal's creativity ecosystem. That's quite a lot for a city our size.

Can a city government do anything to feed this ecosystem? For sure. We can support the institutions and venues where the cross-pollination of cultures, ideas, technologies and competencies occurs. That in turn will result in a rich matrix from which new ideas and products might emerge. In a word: we can build the most collaborative city in North America. And, at the end of the day, an inspirational place to live and work.

New York and Montreal

A few minutes ago, I mentioned how bagels had become icons of both New York and Montreal cultures. But is that all we have in common? In fact, there may be more.

Manhattan and Montreal are the only two major North American communities that are islands. Back in the eighteen hundreds', both our cities asked Frederick Olmsted, the great landscape architect, to design our largest city park: your Central Park and our Mount Royal Park.

If bagels have risen to such fame in our cities, it is perhaps because New York and Montreal are both open cities: open to foreign foodstuffs, to new ideas, to immigrants from all parts of the world.

A century ago, it was the Eastern European Jews who brought their bagels - and so much more. Since then, New York and Montreal have welcomed countless immigrant communities: from Haiti, South-East Asia and Latin America in particular, all of which have enhanced our cities in their own special way.

Today, we face similar challenges, like finding the money to maintain or grow our public infrastructure, especially our transit systems that have been so instrumental in our development. Or rallying stakeholders and the public around key redevelopment projects.

Creativity requires an open environment and New York is of course a worldwide hub of creative minds. I will contend that Montreal is a special place too, on that count.

These commonalities have perhaps allowed our cities to inspire each other to some extent. In 2004, your "Design Times Square" group purchased from our Montreal Design Bureau a licence to establish a commercial design contest that had successfully worked for us. Conversely, your successful Times Square District redevelopment project inspired the plan for our "Quartier des Spectacles". And yesterday, your Queens Library signed an agreement with Quebec's national library and archives that help it improve services to our ethnic groups.

In Montreal, we get to see some of your Broadway shows that tour the continent, and our Montreal Symphony Orchestra has played New York 25 times over the past 35 years, the last time at Carnegie Hall in 2008. This year, our most promising young maestro,

Yannick Nézet-Séguin made waves conducting “Carmen” at the Met. And of course, a few days ago, Quebec’s artistic director Robert Lepage opened the Met’s fall season with Wagner’s “Das Rheingold”.

The free flow of ideas sometimes requires a meeting of minds, face to face. That’s why, despite all the rage about digital communications, road, rail and air travel continue to grow. Recognizing the need to shift part of intercity passenger travel toward cleaner modes, President Obama unveiled his high-speed intercity rail plan last January.

That plan includes the New York to Montreal route. And that says something about how your Administration values Montreal. Understandably: when the New York Times ran a travel story last month on Montreal, it turned out to be the second-most read article on their website that day.

In February, the idea of a high-speed rail link to Montreal gained traction, if I may, when Transportation Secretary Lahood and Quebec Premier Charest established a working group to conduct feasibility studies. A lot remains to be done but that group is a step in the right direction.

One hundred and thirty-five years ago, a trainload of New Yorkers made an inaugural voyage to open a new railroad to Montreal. Records show it took 30 years to muster the support and the funds to complete that project. Overcoming the hurdles, its proponents persisted till they succeeded.

Reflecting on that story might strengthen our resolve to see our current projects through to completion: our near-term, in-city infrastructure projects, as well as our grander, longer-term projects like this high-speed rail link.

I will suggest that increased collaboration between Montrealers and New Yorkers, in tourism, culture, business and academia, along the lines I mentioned, will make our two cities ever more dynamic and interesting.

Let’s be an inspiration and a unique act to follow!

Thank you.