

Tourism on the campaign trail 2025

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The electoral tourism platform of Tourisme Montréal



**TOURISME /
MONTREAL**

Message from the President and CEO

Following the celebration of its 100th anniversary in 2019, Tourisme Montréal decided to play a more active role in shaping the development of our destination's offerings.

In 2021, with the COVID-19 crisis still weighing heavily on the city, tourism became a key topic in Montréal's municipal election campaign with the launch of the first local tourism platform. Tourisme Montréal also publicly engaged the leading mayoral candidates in a spirited debate. Why? Because the Ville de Montréal is both our foremost strategic partner and the principal owner of the Montréal brand.

We return this year ahead of the November 2 elections. The context has, of course, shifted: tourists are back in Montréal, and we can once again look ahead with both clear-eyed realism and optimism.

Realism first. Globally and across North America, we face legitimate concerns about operations whose smooth functioning we took for granted, affecting everything from trade agreements or the future of our planet.

And yet, optimism—because Montréal has so many strengths. We must showcase them now more than ever to benefit both residents and visitors.

For several years now, Tourisme Montréal has championed its harmonious destination strategy to encourage more sustainable tourism. The aim is to exemplify how Montréal, as a tourist destination, can generate a positive impact on local communities, foster a harmonious coexistence between residents and visitors, and promote responsible tourism across our ecosystem.



In this spirit, Tourism on the campaign trail 2025 focuses on two overarching priorities. First, the quality of the urban environment: the cleanliness, maintenance and safety of public spaces. Tourisme Montréal is already contributing to the city's vibrancy by financing murals, public art installations such as The Ring at Place Ville Marie, and initiatives like the Bonjour Montréal structure at the Grand Quay of the Port of Montréal. Second, strengthening major structuring projects that enhance walkability: encouraging both residents and visitors to discover, connect with and take ownership of the city.

With that in mind, Tourisme Montréal has identified ten sectoral priorities requiring special attention from the Ville de Montréal. They form the heart of our current approach as well as the main topic of this document.

Happy reading!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yves'.

Yves Lalumière
President and CEO

The harmonious destination: building a better city



The framework for tourism in Montréal: the harmonious destination

Tourism on the campaign trail 2025 is rooted in the **harmonious destination** strategy led by Tourisme Montréal.

At its core, sustainable development requires thoughtful trade-offs between interests that are sometimes challenging to mesh. Short-term rental accommodation—particularly through platforms like Airbnb—is a concrete example. On one hand, the issues at stake are serious and legitimate, and must be managed carefully. On the other hand, Montréal needs a year-round, diversified accommodation offering to remain competitive. A growing share of travellers—families, remote workers, long-stay visitors, younger tourists—are seeking alternatives to traditional hotels.

Tourisme Montréal has also adopted a sustainable tourism approach that includes organizing greener events, promoting active and public transportation among visitors, and encouraging carbon offsetting. Our objective is clear: to make tourism a driver of collective well-being by maximizing shared benefits while reducing nuisances such as noise, congestion and pollution. We seek to build a metropolis where tourists and residents coexist respectfully and to everyone's benefit.

That is why we invite candidates to embrace this principle and support the recommendations it generates.

Creating a truly harmonious destination requires strong political will and coordinated action. Tourisme Montréal provides the vision, but bringing it to life hinges on close collaboration with the Ville de Montréal and local communities. Without the implementation of the measures proposed in this document, Montréal risks losing ground to fast-growing North American destinations that are poised to capture the attention of both leisure travellers and major events—weakening our competitive edge and undoing years of progress.

A harmonious destination involves...

1.1 – The quality of the urban environment

The urban environment—its cleanliness, upkeep and overall look—plays a central role in how visitors perceive a city. Today's cleanliness challenges are complex: visual pollution, litter, deteriorating street furniture, insufficient public washrooms, and maintenance gaps in some parks and squares are all issues that are far from trivial. They affect both the resident and the visitor's experience and require assertive, strategic municipal action adapted to today's climatic and social conditions.

Concerns about safety in certain districts, voiced by both Montrealers and visitors, also need to be acknowledged. This is not about dramatizing or stigmatizing, but about recognizing that growing social vulnerabilities (linked to homelessness and addiction) combined with perceptions of disorder or neglect are undermining harmonious coexistence in some public spaces. These realities affect not only residents and visitors but also hoteliers, restaurateurs and merchants, who experience the consequences firsthand.

Tourisme Montréal calls on the municipal government to address these issues not in isolation, but as essential elements of destination management.

ACTION 1

The Ville de Montréal should:

- maintain a high and consistent standard of cleanliness and upkeep in high-tourism areas, year-round;
- ensure a visible and reassuring presence of public space staff;
- expand greening initiatives in a true four-season approach.

1.2 – The walkability of the destination

Tourisme Montréal strongly supports the recommendation of the Office de consultation publique de Montréal (OCPM) to integrate the concept of walkability into active mobility planning with the aim of fostering discovery and a sense of ownership of the city at large from a pedestrian's perspective. Not only will this invite a more intimate interaction with Montréal's diverse neighbourhoods, it will result in a widening of the city's tourist zones beyond the traditional sites.

- Exploring a city on foot is one of the best ways to experience its atmosphere and discover its hidden gems. Montréal must be both shaped and lived at street level: a visitor walking our streets is one who shops locally, connects with Montrealers, and fully immerses themselves in its rich urban culture.

By prioritizing pedestrian experiences, Montréal will strengthen its identity as a harmonious destination—an urban environment where soft mobility and leisurely strolling are shared values between residents and visitors. And of course, any pedestrian can easily turn into a cyclist, a public transportation patron or a driver at any moment, were they to wish to explore further afield.

To achieve this vision of walkability, improvements are needed in signage, accessibility and urban design.

Signage: update and unify tourism wayfinding, especially in high-traffic districts. Visitors should be able to navigate with ease, from Pointe-à-Callière Museum to Mount Royal Park, without fear of getting lost.

Urban design: continue prioritizing pedestrians in key tourism areas, through measures like sidewalk widening, pedestrianization of iconic streets, safe evening lighting and attractive landscaping.

Accessibility: strengthen universal accessibility, especially near major attractions. A wheelchair user or a family with a stroller should be able to explore Montréal seamlessly.

ACTION 2

The Ville de Montréal should:

- adopt a comprehensive policy on clear and effective signage;
- enhance urban design to enrich the pedestrian experience;
- reinforce universal accessibility, especially around major tourism sites.

Ten priority sectoral issues /

To strengthen Montréal's standing as a leading international tourism destination, Tourisme Montréal has identified ten major sectoral issues that require not only examination but priority action.

2.1 – Montréal as a welcoming, diversified and well-regulated destination

As Montréal works to position itself as a four-season destination, regulating short-term rentals has become a strategic issue. The new bylaw, in effect since March 31, 2025, limits primary residence rentals to the summer season (June 10 to September 10). Tourisme Montréal supports the municipal government's commitment to stronger inspections and enforcement of the provincial law adopted in 2021, while also underscoring the need for a diversified accommodation supply.

ACTION 3

The Ville de Montréal should:

- find year-round solutions for collaborative accommodation to preserve Montréal's hosting capacity.

2.2 – Montréal as an international cultural and event metropolis

Montréal is internationally recognized as a vibrant cultural metropolis and a hub of world-class events. Festivals play a critical role in this reputation: they build visitor loyalty, attract new audiences and contribute significantly to the local economy, from hotels to restaurants to shops.

Culture is at the heart of Montréal's strategic positioning. In its 2025–2030 cultural development policy, the municipal government reaffirmed its commitment to consolidating Montréal's role as an international cultural metropolis. Objective 12 specifically calls for the 2026 relaunch of a governance structure inspired by the Montréal, cultural metropolis alliance. This forum will bring together major cultural, economic and tourism stakeholders alongside governments to better coordinate efforts, pool resources and boost the mediatic, economic and social impact of Montréal's cultural offering.

This governance must also integrate the iconic districts identified in the municipal government's urban planning and mobility plan and be kept informed of preparations for Montréal's 400th anniversary celebrations. Tourisme Montréal, a strategic ally of the Ville de Montréal's support of festivals, expects strong municipal leadership of all partners, both private and public, in terms of financial commitments, logistical support and circumstantial solutions.

Montréal's vibrant nightlife is also a tourism and economic asset. To maximize its potential, a balance must be maintained with residents' quality of life. The Ville de Montréal has adopted an ambitious nightlife policy that must now be implemented quickly and effectively, with clear governance and fair regulations.

ACTION 4

The Ville de Montréal should support festivals and events by:

- indexing annual financial support and ensuring predictability to maintain Montréal's status as a festival city;
- encouraging resource sharing among festivals and events to optimize costs and efforts, in collaboration with major partners such as the Quartier des spectacles and Parc Jean-Drapeau;
- supporting event organizers in their transition to more eco-responsible practices, fostering harmonious coexistence between visitors and residents;
- relaunching, by 2026, cultural governance inspired by the Montréal, cultural metropolis alliance.

ACTION 5

The Ville de Montréal should:

- maximize the potential of its nightlife by implementing fair regulations for all stakeholders.

Ten priority sectoral issues (continued 1)

2.3 – Montréal as a culinary capital

Montréal is renowned across North America for its culinary diversity, cultural influences and local expertise—ranging from iconic establishments to innovative neighbourhood restaurants led by a new generation of chefs. This vitality is a defining strength for our metropolis, shaping its brand image and boosting international recognition.

Montréal's culinary excellence, backed by growing international acclaim, deserves a structured municipal strategy to secure its position as North America's culinary capital.

ACTION 6

The Ville de Montréal should help to:

- foster major gastronomy events to maintain Montréal's reputation as a leading culinary destination;
- support restaurateurs in their ecological transition by facilitating adoption of more eco-responsible practices and access to short supply chains.

● 2.4 – Montréal as a leading convention city

The Palais des congrès de Montréal is a cornerstone of Montréal's business tourism sector, generating major economic spin-offs and stable annual traffic for hotels, restaurants and shops. Montréal ranks first in North America for hosting international association events.

But this leadership is under threat as other Canadian cities expand their convention infrastructure. Expanding the Palais des congrès is therefore necessary—not only to offer modern, versatile spaces, but also to reinforce Montréal's reputation as a hub for international meetings and conventions with strong economic, social and intellectual impact.

ACTION 7

The Ville de Montréal should:

- step up support for the Palais des congrès modernization project and join Tourisme Montréal in urging other levels of government to make it a strategic priority.

2.5 – Montréal as a sports destination

Over the past 50 years, Montréal has built a strong reputation in sports tourism, anchored by its Olympic legacy. But global competition in this sector is fierce. To stay among the top destinations for major sporting events, Montréal must expand its hosting capacity and ensure sustained leadership and financial backing from the Ville de Montréal.

Tourisme Montréal recommends creating a municipal fund dedicated to major sporting events. Such a fund would consolidate Montréal's position internationally, provide flexibility in attracting events, reduce financial risks for promoters and streamline administrative processes for funding requests.

The quality and upkeep of sports facilities are equally critical. Tourisme Montréal has co-financed a feasibility study on building a roof over the Jarry Park tennis stadium. This project must result in a modernized venue, allowing the National Bank Open to remain among the world's top tennis tournaments in its category.

ACTION 8

The Ville de Montréal should:

- support the creation of a municipal fund for major sporting events;
- join Tourisme Montréal in actively advancing the Jarry Park tennis stadium project.

Ten priority sectoral issues (continued 2)



2.6 – Montréal underground

The underground pedestrian network, the RÉSO, is well known locally, with 500,000 people passing through daily. Many international visitors also seek it out and are often amazed by this “underground city.”

But RÉSO suffers from a dull image and is hard to navigate for outsiders. Modernization is needed to :

improve signage to guide visitors clearly;

integrate art and thematic spaces to enrich the experience;

refresh the design to make it brighter, more welcoming and safer.

Tourisme Montréal and the Ville de Montréal are already working on a joint study and action plan. A revitalized RÉSO would extend the tourism season, offer a comfortable yet exploratory experience, and become an attraction in its own right.

ACTION 9

The Ville de Montréal should:

- actively engage, with institutional and private partners, in revitalizing RÉSO and formally include the underground pedestrian network as a district in its next downtown strategy.

2.7 – Montréal and its river

The St. Lawrence River, largely hidden by port and highway infrastructure, is an essential part of Montréal's identity and an undeniable tourism asset. Enhancing river access and revitalizing the waterfront would place Montréal among the world's leading port cities.

Two major projects are already underway: transforming the Bonaventure Expressway into an urban boulevard with a green corridor along the river, and the Molson project reconnecting the city visually to the river beyond the Jacques-Cartier Bridge.

However, the central part of the waterfront — the Old Port, the top destination for tourists thanks to its exceptional location — deserves better than a shelved master plan dating back to 2017.

ACTION 10

The Ville de Montréal should:

- propose an integrated vision for river access and the enhancement of Old Montréal, the Old Port and heritage infrastructure;
- formally call on both the federal and provincial governments to demonstrate stronger leadership on these strategic sites.

Ten priority sectoral issues (continued 3)

2.8 – Montréal and its mountain

Mount Royal, with its park marking its 150th anniversary in 2026, is one of Montréal's greatest assets: a forested mountain in the heart of the city, home to over 100,000 trees, wooded trails and panoramic views of downtown and the river. Attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors annually, it is a destination in itself, internationally recognized for its beauty and heritage value.

The Ville de Montréal aims to reduce car traffic across the summit to reinforce sustainable mobility, but Tourisme Montréal has urged that bus access remain available on both sides of the mountain, to ensure universal accessibility and equity.

ACTION 11

The Ville de Montréal, as part of the Camillien-Houde/Remembrance redevelopment, should:

- promote both active mobility and public transit by maintaining bus access on both sides of Mount Royal.

2.9 – Montréal and Indigenous cultures

Globally, travellers increasingly seek authentic, meaningful experiences built on fairness and respect. Montréal is the main gateway to Québec's Indigenous tourism network and home to a significant urban Indigenous population.

Supporting Indigenous tourism initiatives is not only just, but also a step toward a Montréal more aligned with its history and commitments to diversity and reconciliation.

Tourisme Montréal supports the Tourisme Autochtone Québec project to create an Indigenous cultural and tourism embassy on the riverfront. Recognition of Indigenous Peoples' role in Montréal's past and present calls for visible, structural action.

ACTION 12

The Ville de Montréal should:

- renew its support for the Indigenous cultural and tourism embassy project at Pointe-du-Moulin;
- take concrete steps to highlight Indigenous presence in Montréal's life, including support for artists, Indigenous tourism entrepreneurship, heritage trails, signage and toponymy;
- celebrate the 325th anniversary of the Great Peace of Montréal in 2026.

2.10 – Showcasing Montréal's history

Showcasing Montréal's history enriches the visitor experience with authenticity and uniqueness. The island's heritage appeals not only locally but to history enthusiasts worldwide.

Montréal boasts abundant heritage resources—museums, universities, archives, historical societies, toponymy, history festivals. Yet the current offering remains fragmented. A coherent strategy is essential to structure, catalogue and promote it to meet visitor expectations. Our historic sites should educate the public thanks to enhanced storytelling that provides geographical and historical context that extends beyond the confines of Montréal.

ACTION 13

The Ville de Montréal should:

- launch, by 2026, a major initiative to showcase Montréal's history. Tourisme Montréal will participate with the conviction that this history—in all its dimensions—has the potential to interest millions of visitors.

Setting course for the 400th anniversary



3.1 – A landmark project to celebrate Montréal's identity

In 2042, only 17 years away, Montréal will celebrate its 400th anniversary, a rare milestone for a North American city. This anniversary is a unique opportunity to highlight Montréal's singular character, its ability to blend history, innovation, cultural diversity and quality of life.

This landmark celebration must be grounded in a shared vision across institutional, cultural and economic actors, oriented toward collective well-being. It offers a powerful platform to elevate Montréal on the international stage and inspire civic pride.

Tourisme Montréal proposes that the Ville de Montréal adopt, at the start of the next municipal mandate, a phased plan leading up to 2042. This could take the form of a public timeline integrated into municipal strategy and backed by clear, realistic and measurable commitments.

Several priorities in this platform naturally align with this long-term perspective—particularly those relating to Montréal's identity, Indigenous presence, waterfront and history.

Tourisme Montréal intends to seize this anniversary as an opportunity to generate unprecedented excitement for Montréal.

ACTION 14

The Ville de Montréal should:

- launch, at the beginning of the next municipal mandate, a major mobilization and strategic reflection with its partners to ensure the 400th anniversary celebrations are a true success.

Tracking commitments



Following the elections, Tourisme Montréal intends to establish a tourism compass to monitor, over the years, the commitments made by candidates regarding tourism—through to the next municipal election. This tool will document progress on the ten priority sectoral issues. By ensuring rigorous and transparent follow-up, Tourisme Montréal aims to encourage continuity of effort and maintain active dialogue with municipal authorities to advance more sustainable and harmonious tourism, for the benefit of all Montrealers.