

MONTRÉAL GLOBAL CITY

MANIFEST FOR A COSMOPOLITAN RENAISSANCE

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MAY 2017

Provincial
Metropolis
or Global
City?

Executive
Summary

Manifest

Montrealers
first

Français

1. Provincial Metropolis or Global City?

Montréal was one of the most important and global cities on the planet.

It was the main trading port for New France.

Then it was one of the most important for the British empire.

It was truly international, cosmopolitan and global.

Since the early 70's it declined considerably.

Nationalism destroyed much of its important fabric and it has languished as a "minor league" urban centre since then.

The decline has been enormous. The economic performance disastrous. It "exported" much of its capable and talented youth to permit the considerable rise of Toronto as its replacement.

We do not believe this trend needs to be permanent.

Montréal still has significant great assets but it suffers completely from thinking and acting like a regional metropolis instead of thinking and acting like a world class city.

Many ideas and concepts are being discussed.

Nearly all are minor in nature and deal with modest changes with modest improvements to be expected .

Our project is totally transformational.

It deals squarely with what can make Montréal great again as it gets released from the regressive negative thinking that permeates the current environment.

Its never too late to move forward. However the longer we wait, the more severe the damage and the more ingrained our thinking and behaviour become.

Poor performance becomes natural and acceptable which makes improvement just so much harder.

If you are part of the small group of Montrealers that believe dramatic improvement is possible, we invite you to read on.

There is much work to be done, but first we all need to understand where we are and where we can get to.

2. Executive Summary (1 of 7)

Any informed evaluation of Montréal's performance will quickly reach the conclusion that this City is a huge mystery. How can a city with such great assets produce such poor economic results?

This manifest for Montréal as a global city identifies several main causes of the present mediocre economic performance, it proposes a goal to develop Montreal to its full potential and outlines some strategies to get from here to there. This Executive Summary presents a brief overview of these points which are developed in greater detail in the main text.

THE CAUSES OF THE CITY'S MEDIOCRE ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

First, Francophone Nationalism overreached itself. The awakening of the French Canadians and their effort to become masters of their own destiny was not unusual nor unique and it was an inevitable development . But like so many other such movements it went too far and almost destroyed what was valuable in the previous regime (seventy-five international business headquarters left Quebec). The Quebec drive for primacy of the French language rather than bilingualism, although quite understandable for historical and cultural reasons, was counter to what was happening internationally as the world wide evolution was geared towards globalization, bilingualism (multiculturalism!), international integration and efficient networking.

Secondly, the Government of Québec was the mechanism selected to develop Quebec's economic power and autonomy. As with all government involvement, this led to very high levels of centralization. As proven many times through history, central planning does not work as it reduces initiative, performance and limits freedom.

Finally, to support this massive government centralization, Québec personal taxes had to be increased and Quebecers are now the third most heavily taxed group in the world as a percentage of GDP. This burden is a major disincentive for investment, work and productivity.

2. Executive Summary (2 of 7)

In the present government structure, with Montréal being obligated to defer to the Québec government on virtually all matters, one sees that the city, like utilities (Hydro-Québec) beforehand, has been effectively nationalized. Those are the same forces at play that led to the recent Brexit vote that will impact London. Montréal is now a provincial city, not a National or Global city as it used to be. Before this disruption, Montreal was one of the most cosmopolitan cities on the planet but got hollowed out by the ascendancy of nationalism.

Such phenomena are not unique to Québec and Montréal. Great Britain, the United States with the Trump presidency and France with the Front National are major examples of similar nationalistic surges. Great Britain with its recent Brexit vote is the most concrete example at this time. The city of London finds itself in a similar position as Montréal was in 1976, its cosmopolitan culture is being derailed by nationalism. The reaction there is immediate as illustrated in the Guardian article in Appendix to this Summary. Interesting to note that London reacted within three months. For Montréal, it has been forty years with no action.

FOR MONTRÉAL, THERE ARE STILL TWO POSSIBLE FUTURES

It can continue to be driven by Nationalist policies and will remain a provincial city. Or it will re-establish its cosmopolitan heritage and regain its position as a National and Global city.

This Manifest for a Global City is a call for action to the open-minded and forward thinking citizens of Montréal to re-establish the primacy of its cosmopolitan culture.

PROPOSED GOAL

This transformation can be done. It starts with selecting a proper and unifying goal: one that is challenging but achievable, a goal that every one can support. The aim should be to become the world's most liveable city. There is a quality of life index that is produced annually by three world class organizations. It covers the key elements of good living for citizens: economic, social and cultural. Montréal is already among the top 25 cities in the world. Why not become Number 1 and show the world we can excel?

2. Executive Summary (3 of 7)

FIVE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

How should this be done? Here are five ideas, which will have the highest strategic impact.

1. **Create a Bilingual Canton/Region**

This idea is not new and is in fact borrowed from the Swiss. Berne, Switzerland's national capital, is a bilingual canton whereas all the other cantons are unilingual. For Montréal, the area west of Boulevard St-Laurent (The Main) should be designated as a bilingual region. This would allow the companies located there to truly operate on a global basis. The acid test would be the capacity to hire unilingual Anglophones who can send their children to English Schools. Those schools, in fact, all schools in the Bilingual region, would be completely bilingual at the primary level and trilingual at the secondary level. Based on this common European Standard, Montréal could then start to attract the best people on the planet and become again the locomotive of the Québec economy.

2. **Masters of our own destiny, Maîtres chez nous - Devolution**

The only way to achieve a challenging goal is to control the processes needed to achieve this. The Québec government must provide Montréal with much greater control of the political and legal tools required to reach its goal.

This would involve, for example, language laws in the bilingual region, education, immigration, professional and labor laws.

3. **Do more with less**

Under devolution Montréal must rethink the massive role of government in the economy. This is a unique, once in a lifetime, opportunity for reinvention which can drive innovation and increase private investment. Entrepreneurship is badly needed instead of the massive bureaucracy that is currently in place.

2. Executive Summary (4 of 7)

4. Smart growth

The first three concepts above will have a significant impact on economic activity. Montréal will have a great story to tell and sell to the world. The message should be complemented with targeted sector strategies that develop Montréal's strengths.

5. Human capital

This is a major and very significant issue for Montréal, from school dropout to retention of university graduates. A complex problem which will start to be resolved with effective control of education. We must change the environment so people with all types of backgrounds can find decent jobs and can enjoy fruitful careers. Losing the huge numbers of trained university graduates to other jurisdictions does not make sense.

Let's conclude with a story from the past and see how it compares to the present. Peter McGill (of McGill University fame) was the first Mayor of Montréal and became the first President of the Bank of Montréal. Now, the Bank of Montréal headquarters are ... in Toronto. Let's recapture the agenda!

The possible growth of Montréal from a provincial scale to a global international scale is a challenge for each of its citizens. Montréal has been the home to many great initiatives. The people who achieved great things in the past are either dead or have emigrated. It is now up to the current citizens to make the necessary changes.

This Manifest for a Global City lays the issues out in greater detail.

Michel David

May 11, 2017

2. Executive Summary (5 of 7)

Appendix to Montreal Global City Executive Summary

The case for a more independent, post-Brexit London is gaining strength

The capital is far from becoming a separate city-state, but debate about giving it increased autonomy is gathering intensity.

Communities secretary Greg Clark has told the Financial Times he is “very keen” to devolve further powers to London and spoken highly of new London mayor Sadiq Khan, who he thinks “has shown himself to be a pragmatist that wants to work well with central government, to the advantage of London and the country”. That’s quite an endorsement, given that Clark’s fellow Conservative Zac Goldsmith spent the first four months of the year claiming that Khan is a dangerous, Corbynite ideologue and apologist for Islamist extremists.

If Clark is surprised by Khan’s approach, he shouldn’t be. The mayor has always been on Labour’s practical rather than its doctrinaire left. As he demonstrated throughout the mayoral campaign, he has long understood that unless London mayors work constructively with London boroughs, London employers and national government they get nowhere. Khan was never going to be Jeremy Corbyn’s creature in City Hall, as Goldsmith’s dire campaign falsely and fruitlessly alleged.

It seems possible that Khan might seal a better devolution deal for London than his predecessor Boris Johnson even hoped for. There was always the potential for that. When Johnson was lobbying for extra mayoral powers last year, Tory rivals were discouraging: George Osborne made fun of him and Theresa May kicked him in the water cannon. Now, as a “challenging” post-Brexit economic landscape takes shape - in large part courtesy of Johnson, you may recall - the Labour mayor and what currently passes for the Conservative government seem to be moving on to common ground in trying to protect London’s economy for the good of the country as a whole.

2. Executive Summary (6 of 7)

Appendix to Montreal Global City Executive Summary (Cont'd)

Like or not, the capital is the source of 23% of the UK's economic output, and a new study by think tank Centre for Cities has found that it generates no less than 30% of the UK's "economy taxes" - a growing proportion and as much as the 37 next biggest UK cities put together. Khan's argument is that giving London more control over its own affairs can help it and the wider economy to better weather the Brexit storm. It is a case that's gaining strength.

Khan is seeking additional responsibility for the spending of property taxes raised in London, and wants London government to more directly run skills training and further education. He's also after further powers over housing and planning, transport, health and policing. This is not, Khan stresses, a demand for London to be handed more taxpayer cash than it already receives, but to be put more in charge of how taxes raised in London are spent in London, ensuring that the money is used to best effect.

He has also asked for a "full seat" at the Brexit negotiations, whenever they eventually begin, and has described remaining in the European single market as essential to London's, and therefore the UK's, economic resilience. This call underlines the awkward fact that EU leaders have insisted that single market membership means the free movement of people within single market territory too. Given that a wish to lessen foreign immigration was a large motivator for leave voters across the land, it's hard to see how that circle can be squared.

And yet, as guests of the London Assembly's economy committee remarked last week, post-Brexit uncertainty means all sorts of things are now worth discussing that were on no-one's agenda before. Mark Littlewood, director general of free market think tank the Institute of Economic Affairs, said that "asymmetrical immigration rules" within a UK that went in for devolution on a large scale are not "a technical impossibility". There could, in theory, he explained, be different visa arrangements for different areas. It was possible, for example, to "imagine a world in which an immigrant qualifies for a national insurance number with an 'L' at the end of it", which would mean he or she could work legally within Greater London's boundary but nowhere else.

2. Executive Summary (7 of 7)

Appendix to Montreal Global City Executive Summary (Cont'd)

UCL professor Albert Weale pointed out that this might be tricky if a London-based company had offices elsewhere in England, but LSE professor Tony Travers drew attention to an article by Rohan Silva, a former adviser to David Cameron, in which Silva said it would be “straightforward” to implement London-only work visas on a “simple points system”, and that he’d been advocating this for years.

“At first sight that sounds a bit surprising,” Travers said, but added that “place-sensitive immigration systems” were now being discussed, and indeed already exist, notably in Canada. Yes, this was a complex and speculative area. However, Travers observed: “One of the intriguing consequences of the vote is that things are on the table to discuss which have never been considered before.”

London is a long, long way from becoming the independent city-state that some pro-EU Londoners, mostly half-jokingly, have dreamed of in the wake of the referendum shock. But momentum for it - along with other cities within the UK - becoming more independent within the UK appears to be growing in all kinds of fascinating ways.

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/davehillblog/2016/jul/11/the-case-for-a-more-independent-post-brexit-london-is-gaining-strength>

3. Manifest (1 of 4)

A new strategy to break out of the current stagnation:

- Control our destiny
- Bilingual "Canton"
- Smart growth
- Do more with less
- Human Capital

MONTREAL GLOBAL CITY MANIFEST FOR A COSMOPOLITAN RENAISSANCE

GOAL: THE MOST LIVEABLE CITY IN THE WORLD

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SEPTEMBER 26, 2016

The following people have collaborated in the development of this manifest. Not all agree on everything.
The author bears sole responsibility for the final product and any errors it may contain.

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This text is being edited.

Une version française est en préparation.

3. Manifest (2 of 4)

"Montréal's destiny is to become one of the world's great cities."

Jean Drapeau
Mayor of Montréal
from 1954 to 1957 and
from 1960 to 1986

3. Manifest (3 of 4)

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4. Montrealers First

Montréal will be a global city when a majority of its citizens adopt a cosmopolitan culture.

Such citizens will be Montrealers first because their cosmopolitan culture is different from the nationalist culture prevalent in the rest of Québec. This does not mean abandoning the Québec culture, but for Montrealers, it places it in support of the global priority.

For such a movement to take form, a *Modèle Montréalais* is required to provide a common vision and a clear framework for all. This is what we have endeavored to propose in this project.

Montréal already has a nucleus of citizens that are cosmopolitan. Others are open to it, they have to decide to actually migrate to it. Others are deeply Nationalistic. This is the same situation as in so many other places in the world where the debate rages between the two cultures. Our hope is that the cosmopolitan culture will come to dominate in Montréal.