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BUILDING MONTRÉAL UNESCO CITY OF DESIGN \$1.2-MILLION INVESTMENT OVER THREE YEARS

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VILLE UNESCO DE DESIGN

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Montréal, June 3, 2009 — Christine St-Pierre, Minister of Culture, Communications and the Status of Women, Nathalie Normandeau, Deputy Premier and Minister of Municipal Affairs, Regions and Land Occupancy, Richard Deschamps, Senior Vice-President of the Conférence régionale des élus de Montréal, and André Lavallée, Ville de Montréal Executive Committee Vice-Chair Responsible for the Transportation Plan, Urban Planning, Heritage and Design, have announced that \$1.2 million is to be invested over three years in the project *Réalisons Montréal Ville UNESCO de design* (“Building Montréal, UNESCO City of Design”). This investment will be used to finance the holding of design and architecture competitions and to promote Montréal’s initiatives via the realisjonsmontreal.com Web portal.

This project, initiated by the Design Montréal Office and the UNESCO Chair in Landscape and Environmental Design of Université de Montréal, aims to stimulate opportunities for creation and highlight initiatives by the design industry that give vital and tangible expression to Montréal’s status as a UNESCO City of Design. As such, it aims to achieve the objectives put forward in the *Action Plan 2007–2017 — Montréal, Cultural Metropolis*.

“The promotion of excellence in architecture and design is among the objectives identified in the *Action Plan 2007–2017 — Montréal, Cultural Metropolis*, and so I am delighted that the Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine is taking part in implementing this sweeping project, which will, among other things, help raise public awareness of the role of architecture in society and promote best practices in design,” Ms. St-Pierre stated. She added: “In this regard, the series of handbooks *Imaginer, réaliser la ville du 21^e siècle, Cahiers des bonnes pratiques en design*, which is inspired by successful experiments abroad and highlights recent examples of best practices in design in Montréal, is concrete evidence of the desire to enrich the quality of our urban environment in a sustainable manner.”

Making Montréal with input from designers

The main challenges of Building Montréal, UNESCO City of Design are to:

- lead the various influential players in urban development to engage with the project to conceive and build the city with input from designers;
- develop, by the power of example, Montrealers’ interest in and taste for—and, consequently, their demand for—good design;
- promote design competitions as the preferred process for awarding public commissions, because of their transparency, their educational scope and the quality that they generate;
- facilitate access to public commissions both by emerging and experienced designers;

- promote best practices and highlight the work of all those who champion quality in design;
- encourage the undertaking of projects that contribute to the quality and sustainability of the living environment, and to the development of Montréal’s urban landscapes.

Beginning this fall, a call for proposals aimed at identifying design and architecture competitions will be issued to public and parapublic institutions as well as non-profit organizations. A selection committee made up of independent experts will assess the relevance and feasibility of the competition proposals submitted. Terms and conditions as well as the selection criteria will be defined in the months to come.

The objective is to implement, over a three-year horizon, public competitions leading to exemplary achievements on a variety of scales (e.g., buildings, parks and public spaces, street furniture) resulting from actions by practitioners of different design disciplines: architecture, landscape architecture, urban planning, interior design, industrial design, graphic design and signage, and the like.

“*Building Montréal, UNESCO City of Design* is a collective project that engages everyone from elected officials to citizens, experts, entrepreneurs and designers,” Mr. Lavallée said. “We want to foster creative activity that will enhance the design quality of public spaces through improved integration of designers from various disciplines at an earlier stage in urban development projects. It is also an opportunity to strengthen the dissemination as well as the local and international networking of made-in-Montréal design via a new Web portal.”

Montréal, a recognized hub of dynamic design

Montréal was designated a UNESCO City of Design in June 2006, based on the strong concentration of talent in the city and its effervescent design scene. The designation is not a label; rather, it is a call to mobilization and action to make creativity in design a key thrust of Montréal’s development.

“Montréal is a member of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, alongside such great cities as Berlin, Buenos Aires and Kobe,” Ms. Normandeau emphasized. “It is only natural that we should be a partner in this wide-ranging project, *Building Montréal, UNESCO City of Design*, which is contributing to the international reputation, reach and influence of the city. Encouraging the participation of municipal elected officials, along with citizens, and stimulating the creativity of architects and designers to make Québec’s metropolis more attractive are goals that I fully endorse.”

For his part, Mr. Deschamps added: “This investment in *Building Montréal, UNESCO City of Design* by the Conférence régionale des élus de Montréal confirms our belief in the strategic nature of this project. It also acknowledges that designers are key members of our most innovative workforce, and frontline partners in making Montréal into a world-renowned creative and knowledge capital.”

A key component of this project, launched online today, is a dynamic Web portal presenting all of the past achievements and current initiatives that are part of the ongoing affirmation of Montréal as a UNESCO City of Design. The website, like the city, will be built as the weeks go by, with new projects added regularly—a reflection of Montréal’s drive and dynamism when it comes to design.

The *Building Montréal, UNESCO City of Design* project has already given rise to two successful events: the Pecha Kucha Night for Elected Officials, which took place on September 30, 2008, and the Youth Design pilot project, presented as part of the third annual Design Montréal Open House, held this past May.

Building Montréal, UNESCO City of Design is an initiative of the Design Montréal Office of the Ville de Montréal and the UNESCO Chair in Landscape and Environmental Design of Université de Montréal. The \$1.2-million project is being funded in equal parts by the Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine, the Ministère des Affaires municipales, des Régions et de l'Occupation du territoire, the Conférence régionale des élus de Montréal and the Ville de Montréal.

For more information: www.realisonsmontreal.com

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