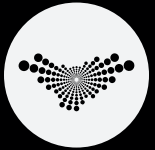


AMBITIONS AND ACTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

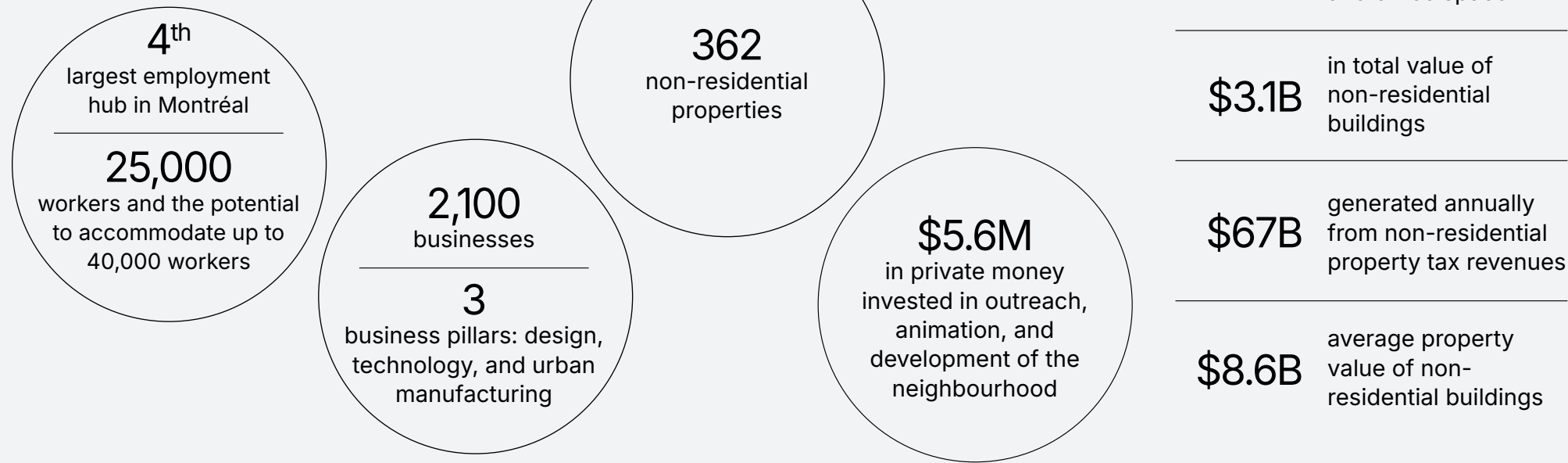


DISTRICT CENTRAL

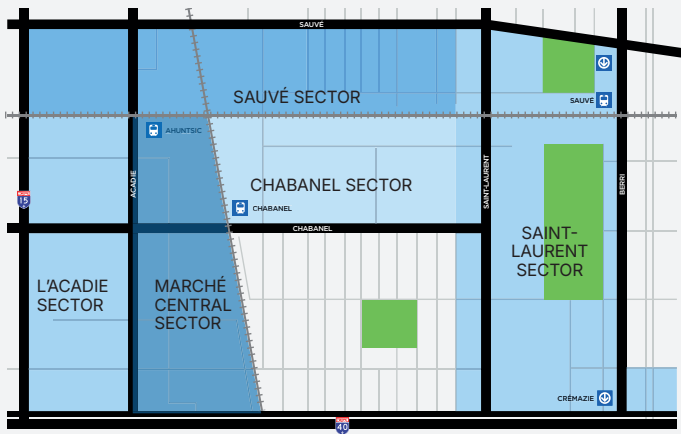




The District Central is



3km² of territory



The SDC District Central is the catalyst and the voice for the Ahuntsic-Cartierville business world. It represents the combined forces of 2,100 business leaders united to develop a sector with outstanding economic, urban and human potential.

THE MISSION IS CLEAR:

Breathe new life into this legendary neighbourhood make it shine on a broader stage and propel it to the very top of Montréal's economic landscape.



Montréal's production heartland



District Central is one of Montréal's largest employment and economic hubs, home to more than 2,100 businesses and over 25,000 workers. With a strong concentration of manufacturing, logistics and technology activities, the territory plays a strategic role in the economic vitality of northern Montréal and in strengthening Québec's competitiveness.

Historically rooted in manufacturing, distribution and design, District Central has evolved into a diversified business ecosystem that now includes technology, artificial intelligence, and applied innovation.

Businesses in the territory are operating in an increasingly challenging environment characterized by economic uncertainty, supply chain pressures, rising costs, labour shortages, and rapid technological change. At the same time, mobility challenges and major infrastructure projects continue to affect access to businesses, workers' commutes, and the efficient movement of goods.

In this context, the Société de développement commercial (SDC) District Central is taking the opportunity of the 2026 provincial election to raise awareness among local candidates and political parties about the realities and needs of the territory. The recommendations outlined in this document aim to support innovation, productivity, mobility, manufacturing modernization, talent attraction and the sustainable economic development of both District Central and Québec.



Recognizing District Central as a strategic hub for innovation and productivity



The Sauvageon Cidery in operation at the Centrale Agricole in the Acadie sector.
Photo credit: Charles-Olivier Bourque



Recognizing District Central as a strategic hub for innovation and productivity

CONTEXT

District Central is a unique economic territory in Québec, bringing together manufacturing, logistics, technology, creative and processing businesses that innovate directly within their operations.

Built on a diverse mix of industries that strengthens economic resilience, the territory stands out for its applied innovation model—one rooted in production, collaboration, and proximity to markets.

This is reflected in:

- the development of products and services through local manufacturing;
- hybrid business models integrating manufacturing, design, and distribution;
- short supply chains and local procurement practices;
- circular economy approaches and resource recovery initiatives; and
- strong collaboration among businesses to address practical, real-world challenges.

This dynamic aligns with the objectives of innovation zones by accelerating the path from idea to market, attracting investment, and fostering sustainable growth. This positions District Central as a hub within a solutions-driven economy.

At a time of mounting productivity pressures and the reshoring of supply chains, District Central represents a strategic territory for Québec's economy.

Innovation does not depend solely on concentrating a single industry within a given territory. It also relies on the ability to transform and revitalize existing urban environments. Yet District Central does not fully align with the current criteria for the Government of Québec's innovation zones, which are still largely designed around sector-specific or institution-based models.

Its mixed urban ecosystem—combining manufacturing, logistics and technology—represents a strategic asset for Québec's productivity, innovation, and economic resilience. Greater recognition of this distinctive model would enable government programs and policy tools to better reflect the realities of large urban economic hubs.

SDC DISTRICT CENTRAL'S REQUEST

Formally recognize District Central as a strategic territory for economic, manufacturing, logistics and technological innovation, and adapt government support mechanisms to better serve large-scale, mixed urban ecosystems.



Mobility, accessibility and the impacts of major infrastructure projects



Meilleur Street at the corner of Louvain Ouest.
Photo credit: Branden Desormeau



Mobility, accessibility and the impacts of major infrastructure projects

CONTEXT

District Central is one of northern Montréal's major employment and economic activity hubs, generating significant daily movement of workers and goods.

However, mobility challenges are becoming an increasingly significant concern for businesses operating in the district. Congestion, construction-related disruptions, and partial infrastructure closures are making it more difficult for employees to get to work and for goods to move efficiently.

District Central is directly affected by current and upcoming interventions on the Metropolitan Autoroute (A-40), a strategic corridor for the movement of people and goods. While construction activities are already multiplying along the corridor, the major project to rehabilitate the elevated structures still lacks a clear timeline. This situation creates uncertainty for businesses, which must contend with both recurring short-term disruptions and the prospect of a major long-term construction project. The challenge is not only the scale of the work itself, but also the lack of clear visibility regarding its timeline, implementation, and impacts.

These challenges directly affect:

- the attractiveness of the territory;
- business productivity;
- operating costs;
- access to labour; and
- the competitiveness of Québec businesses.

At the same time, despite its proximity to several major public transit infrastructures, including the REM, District Central remains insufficiently connected to the region's key mobility networks.

In a context where businesses are already facing economic challenges, labour shortages and technological transformation, the impacts of major construction projects and accessibility issues further hinder the territory's development.

Yet mobility is a critical driver of economic development, competitiveness, and attractiveness for the entire northern Montréal region.

SDC DISTRICT CENTRAL'S REQUEST

Implement a coordinated strategy and planning framework to sustainably improve accessibility and mobility in District Central, while reducing the economic impacts of major construction projects on businesses and workers in the territory.



Support for urban manufacturing and economic development



Innotex - Production facility for protective clothing for firefighters and first responders



Support for urban manufacturing and economic development

CONTEXT

District Central remains one of Montréal's most significant urban manufacturing territories and plays a strategic role in Québec's economy. The territory is home to a strong concentration of businesses operating in areas such as processing, production, distribution, logistics and local supply chains.

Recent years have highlighted the importance of maintaining a strong and diversified manufacturing capacity in Québec, particularly in terms of economic resilience, local sourcing, and supply chain security.

Businesses in the territory contribute directly to:

- maintaining local production, processing, and distribution capacity;
- supporting local supply chains;
- creating diverse jobs rooted in the real economy;
- developing practical solutions tailored to market needs; and
- contributing to a diversified productive ecosystem that serves as a key driver of territorial resilience.

However, in a more challenging economic environment, many businesses are facing:

- an evolving regulatory and planning environment;
- rising operating costs;
- pressure to transform business models in response to modernization efforts;
- international competition;
- increasing pressure on strategic industrial land; and
- productivity challenges, particularly due to mobility conditions that do not fully meet businesses' needs.

Maintaining a strong manufacturing and logistics presence in an urban environment is a strategic priority for Montréal's and Québec's economy.

SDC DISTRICT CENTRAL'S REQUEST

Prioritize and support the modernization, competitiveness and retention of strategic manufacturing and logistics activities in urban areas.



Labour force, economic immigration and competitiveness



Connector of opportunities company
visit at Broderie Eno.
Photo credit: Charles-Olivier Bourque



Labour force, economic immigration and competitiveness

CONTEXT

District Central brings together a significant number of businesses operating in key sectors of Québec's economy, including manufacturing, retail, design, fashion, logistics and professional services. The territory is home to more than 2,100 businesses, reflecting a dense, diverse economic ecosystem deeply rooted in the real economy.

Across these sectors, businesses are facing persistent labour shortages, particularly for technical, specialized and operations-related positions. The concentration of manufacturing, wholesale and processing businesses further intensifies this pressure at a time when maintaining local production capacity has become a strategic priority.

The territory relies heavily on a skilled workforce to maintain its productivity and competitiveness, including the significant contribution of workers from economic immigration. However, some essential workers already employed in the territory remain in precarious administrative situations, resulting in both human and economic consequences and creating challenges related to employment stability, workforce retention, and policy alignment.

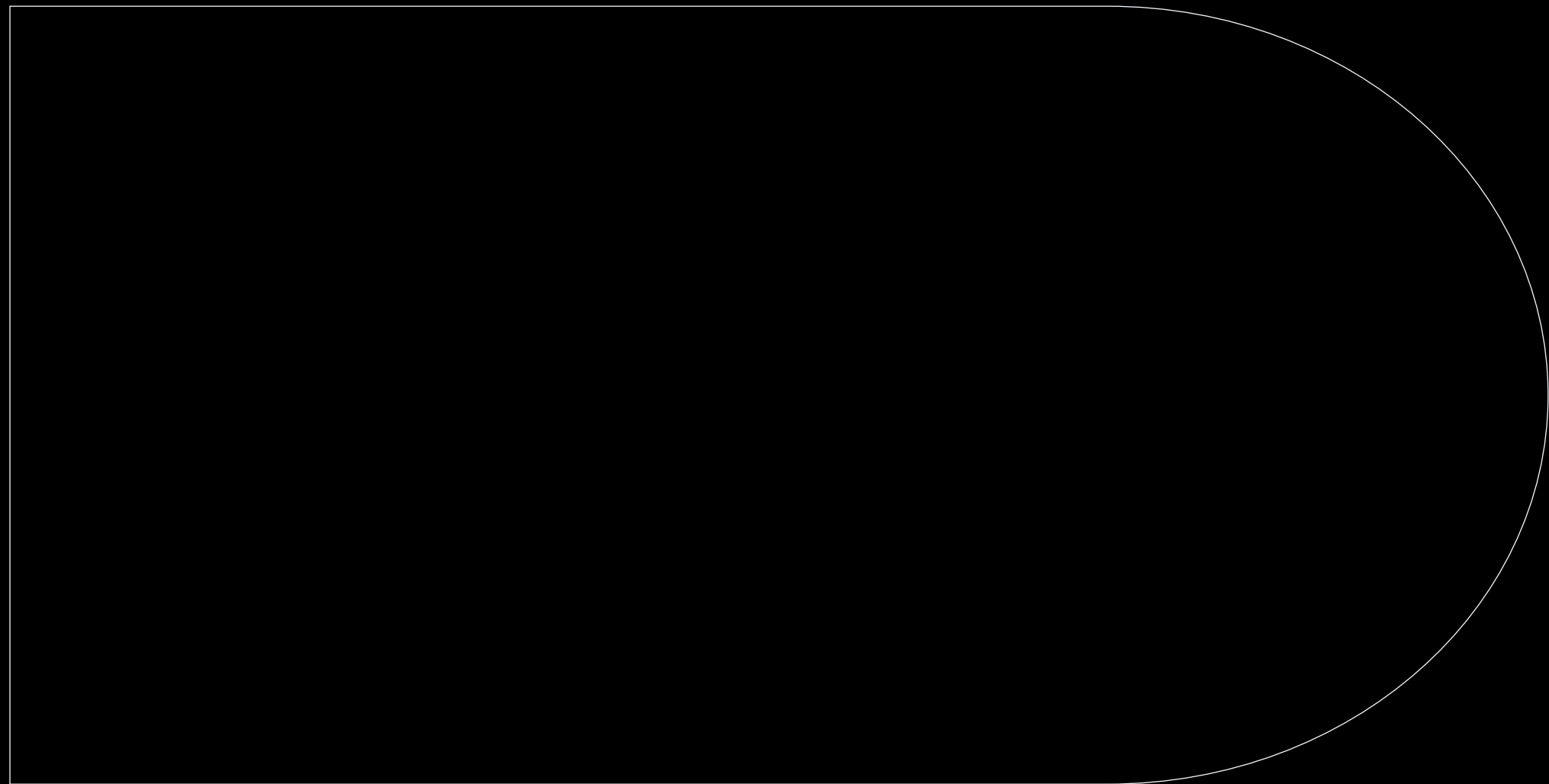
Furthermore, frequent changes to immigration programs, administrative delays and uncertainty surrounding certain government directions make business planning more complex and weaken talent retention efforts.

Many businesses in the territory have invested significant resources in integrating international workers and students. The stability and predictability of immigration policies are therefore essential to supporting economic growth.

In a context of global competition for talent, Québec must remain competitive and provide a predictable environment for both businesses and workers who choose to establish themselves here.

SDC DISTRICT CENTRAL'S REQUEST

Ensure stable, predictable labour force and economic immigration policies that are aligned with the needs of strategic sectors, while supporting the stabilization and retention of workers already present in the territory.



www.district-central.ca
info@district-central.ca

T. 514 379.3232
F. 514 379.3233

555, rue Chabanel Ouest,
Bureau R-02A,
Montréal (Québec) H2N 2H7