



Completed during the fall of 2004, the Frontenac Street development project consisted in revitalizing old Sherbrooke by keeping an urban, architectural, artistic, environmental and event-driven approach for this city center area.

The creation of a new urban area of significant magnitude required several organization steps. The development plan included the demolition of the Gabr building, the removal of many piers overhanging the Magog River, the development and installation of terraces on Frontenac Street, between Dufferin Street and Wellington Street North. The plan also included planting trees, installing new lighting and flags, the creation of a pedestrian access close to the river banks and the creation of the Place des Moulins completed with a sculpture. The Esplanade Frontenac is a new destination and constitutes a remarkable point of interest in the center of the city for Sherbrooke residents and visitors.

The development of Place des Moulins and the installation of a sculpture at the end of Wellington Street North are a part of the Esplanade Frontenac and leave considerable room for contemporary art. The sculpture, entitled *Une célébration... de l'eau à la lumière* (a celebration ... from water to light), is signed by world-renowned artist and architect, Melvin Charney.

The first step of the development plan of the Esplanade Frontenac consisted of the acquisition and deconstruction of the Gabr building, located at 101, Frontenac Street. In 1954, a supermarket was built on piers on the Magog River in order to solve an environmental problem. Indeed, history has it that this site served as an illegal dump! By erecting a building at that location, the river was protected and the promoter had committed to cleaning the river bed as he was erecting the building.

Fifty years later, it was also for environmental reasons that this building was deconstructed in order to create a wonderful public place. We have to use the word "deconstruct" since the contractor's estimate was very strict environmentally in regards to work methods and materials recovery.

At the same time, the extension of the pier from 105-107 Frontenac Street was deconstructed during the summer of 2003. On April 1st, 2004, this building was engulfed in flames. Sherbrooke, Cité des Rivières has done everything to have it rebuilt with respect to its original architecture.



The new street and sidewalk layout of the Esplanade Frontenac improved traffic and pedestrian geometry while allowing merchants to take advantage of outside terraces.



On Friday, May 6th, 2005, Mayor Jean Perrault proceeded to the lighting of the sculptures at Place des Moulins. The moment was well-awaited; this place had been kept in the dark since its inauguration on September 12th, 2004. The fire of the adjoining building had completely destroyed the electrical system while the insurance settlement had prolonged other important delays. The sculptures will now be visible at night thanks to a carefully programmed lighting system. For security reasons, the underside of the slab, river-side, will also be lighted. The light pollution norms were taken into account with the help of Mont-Mégantic's Astro Lab.

The Esplanade Frontenac, including Place des Moulins, is seen as an exceptional cultural and environmental place highly appreciated by Sherbrooke residents and tourists. Quite unpopular before 2004, the place was greeted by more than 4,000 persons who enjoyed an outside concert at the inauguration on September 11th, 2004. The first edition of this unique cultural experience was so popular with the population and tourists that a second outside concert was offered by the Sherbrooke Symphonic Orchestra on September 11th, 2005, this time for more than 5,000 persons. With these large-scale free public activities, presented by the Sherbrooke Symphonic Orchestra, Sherbrooke, Cité des Rivières gave the population a chance to take advantage of a rewarding cultural experience.

Several elements show the importance of the socioeconomic impact brought forth by the Esplanade Frontenac. The city's investments in the Sherbrooke, Cité des Rivières project have major impact. The acquisition of buildings by the Corporation has brought private funding which are reflected as an appreciation in value with the city's assessment roll.

For example, Biblairie GGC moved and relocated on King Street West, at the corner of Argyll, this made the construction of a new building for the Econo Sport store necessary.

In the spring of 2005, the Sherbrooke, Cité des Rivières Corporation won two nationally recognized prizes for the development of Frontenac Street with the realization of the Esplanade Frontenac. During the 18th annual symposium held in Gatineau from May 11-13, 2005, Sherbrooke, Cité des Rivières received the 2005 Development Award, a unanimous decision of the jury of the coalition "Les Arts et la Ville" in the "Municipality of more than 100,000 inhabitants" category. Moreover, during the gala of the 2005 congress, presented by the Regroupement des centres-villes et artères commerciales and held at the Trois-Rivières Convention Center on April 21st, 2005, the Corporation received the Mérite Arteria Award in the physical development category.