For more than a century, the Royal Victoria Hospital was a central part of the circle of life for thousands upon thousands of Montrealers. It was about healing, about helping, about leading the way in new types of medical treatment. Now the historic site’s vocation is changing in exciting and important ways that will benefit not just Montrealers and Quebecers, but the entire planet.

This document brings together the multiplicity of ideas that have emerged to date as the project has evolved, including those stemming from a day of collaborative visioning organized by McGill University and Mosaic (HEC Montréal’s creativity and innovation hub) on May 8, 2017. They are comprehensive, forward-looking and offer aspirations for the transformation of the Royal Vic site from its original purpose into its future role as a crucial element of McGill University’s academic vision for the coming decades and beyond.

A project for Montréal and Québec

The project to transform the former hospital site into one of the world’s leading teaching, research and innovation centres devoted to the most important issue of our time – sustainability – offers an unprecedented opportunity to provide leadership on crucial subjects at a global scale, to preserve and enhance the site’s natural and architectural heritage and to open a pathway to the mountain for Montrealers – as well as a pathway to the future for humankind.

The international attention brought to Québec and Montréal through the re-development of the Royal Vic site will enhance the City’s reputation as a global destination for innovation, knowledge creation and talent in high impact fields shaping our collective future. This will have a significant and far-reaching socio-economic impact to Montréal’s and Québec’s benefit.

Embracing the challenges of sustainability

Working to heal the Earth is no exaggeration, as the Royal Vic site will be a high-tech home for top researchers and students, who will lead efforts toward improving and expanding a sustainable relationship between people and their planet. Complex global problems call for new, multidisciplinary approaches, tearing down old boundaries between sciences and humanities and creating dynamic new synergies to catapult us forward as a more sustainable society. Hand-in-hand with this vigorous and focused approach will be McGill’s new School of Public Policy, a crucible for new ideas and imaginative thinking to bring a complementary social and political component to the examination of where we need to go and how we’re going to get there.

“The Royal Vic site is a unique opportunity to create new ways of addressing the most significant issues of our time. It will be a jewel in both Montréal’s and Québec’s crowns and an important crossroads for learning, research and innovation for people from around the world.”

— SUZANNE FORTIER, PRINCIPAL AND VICE-CHANCELLOR OF MCGILL UNIVERSITY
An idea factory that attracts, connects and inspires

A diverse community of leading contributors – from academic institutions to the public sector and private industry – will converge at the Royal Vic to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship. The site will provide flexible education and research amenities for students, in order to foster insightful exchanges and inter-sectorial collaboration.

Building on McGill’s existing strengths, ambitious, original, and cross-disciplinary research projects will be carried out on many levels – and will be open to academic and public debate. On-site labs, catalysts for innovation, will draw world-renowned researchers to propel the search for knowledge and solutions forward, supported by a range of players from the public and private sectors, and will provide students with the breadth of skills and perspectives needed to lead the world and drive meaningful change.

Participation and transparency

The Royal Vic project needs the vital engagement of and active partnership with its surrounding communities. It will reflect different levels of accountability in the social, economic, environmental and academic spheres, through authentic, transparent outreach efforts. The site will be open and welcoming to the citizens of Montreal and beyond. It will be something of which Montrealers and Quebeckers will be immensely proud.

To keep the site alive during several years of transition, temporary, innovative on-site uses and experimentation will be encouraged which will contribute to its evolution. In partnership and active involvement with McGill, community stakeholders may be asked to suggest initiatives to ensure a continuous occupation of the site that will be in harmony with its other uses.

Balancing heritage, functionality and sustainable architecture

The seamless interface between the built and natural heritage of the site with forward-thinking sustainable architectural design will be an inspiration for other local and international projects involving the repurposing of heritage buildings. The site will become an active public gateway to Mount Royal and will extend the mountain’s presence into the City through the reintegration of natural features. Design will facilitate new sustainable and comfortable ways of working and living, through the use of bioclimatic strategies and discreetly integrated technologies.

An exemplary project for sustainable mobility and urban integration

This is a unique, ambitious opportunity to rethink an important site’s integration in the urban fabric of Montréal, to engage with Montrealers, Quebeckers and people from all over the country, indeed the world, on vital issues of our time. It will be a place to walk and talk in the shade of Mount Royal’s forest, to revel in the magnificent oasis of the mountain, to preserve well-worn paths and create bold new ones.