



April 15, 2019

**Gérald-Leblanc Park – Redevelopment of a downtown public space**  
*Public input sought until April 25*

**MONCTON** – This fall, construction will begin on the redevelopment of the public space located in front of Moncton City Hall (655 Main Street), which was named in honour of the late Acadian poet, Gérald Leblanc. He featured Moncton prominently in his work, and was a familiar presence in the downtown over the years.

Considering the popularity of the space, the City is seeking input from residents, downtown workers and visitors, to better understand the guiding principles and features that are most important. Survey questions will also focus on the types of activities urban park users most appreciate. Best practices from cities all over the world are being considered, and the feedback gathered will have a positive impact on the final design of this new urban park.

“ We know that great public urban spaces build community; these places fit into the urban fabric, contribute to the neighbourhood’s beautification, provide beneficial green space and enhance the vitality of downtown public life,” said Catherine Dallaire, General Manager, Recreation, Culture and Events. “As we rightly honour Gérald Leblanc’s literary legacy, we also have a wonderful opportunity to create a destination that is unlike anywhere else in the city.”

To participate in the survey, citizens must visit [www.LetsChatMoncton.ca](http://www.LetsChatMoncton.ca). Registration is quick and easy, and the survey should only take 3-5 minutes. The survey will be available from April 15-25, after which all feedback will be gathered into a report to help protect participants’ anonymity. The report will be remitted to the landscape architects, and made public at the ground-breaking ceremony, which is expected to take place in August. Further details will be unveiled in the coming weeks.

Ms. Dallaire added: “There is tremendous environmental and cultural value in the beautiful trees on this site that have become an integral part of our downtown landscape, and we want to reassure everyone that these will not be touched, and that we’re exploring innovative ways to integrate further greenery.”

**About Gérald Leblanc’s work**

“The City of New Orleans has renamed a park to celebrate Louis Armstrong, Gabrielle Roy House is featured in Winnipeg, Jean-Paul Riopelle Place was created in Montreal, and accordingly, the City of Moncton should rightly name a public space after its most famous poet. Other cities or regions in the world have the chance to be associated with renowned writers: Joyce in Dublin, Kafka in Prague, Mistral in Provence are only some notorious examples.

At its own scale, Moncton is also blessed with a writer who is immediately connected to the City’s name, and therefore, it would be quite natural to respond and associate Moncton with the literary legacy of

Gérald Leblanc, who set his sights on the City. Moncton is the favourite subject of Gérald Leblanc's work. He shows an unwavering commitment to the City despite its challenges for a francophone writer.

The story of his sole novel, *Moncton Mantra*, is set in Moncton, and the title is a testimony to Moncton's insistent presence in his imagination and work. He also wrote one of the iconic songs of the 1755 band – *Rue Dufferin* – to reiterate his passionate love for the City of Moncton.”

Benoît Doyon-Gosselin, Associate Professor  
French Studies Department, *Université de Moncton*  
Lead of the *Chaire de recherche du Canada en études acadiennes et milieux minoritaires*

### **Thoughtful public participation**

The City is currently developing its Public Participation Charter, a document that will outline the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in engagement activities, including the public, as well as how and when such activities will happen. Equally important, the Charter will define any legislative constraints or requirements, and explain to what extent public feedback will influence a decision-making process.

Based on the principles and values outlined by the International Association of Public Participation ([www.iap2canada.ca](http://www.iap2canada.ca)), the City intends to propose a common definition of the term “**Engagement**”, with the ultimate goal of establishing clear expectations for all, and consistency in its execution.

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### **INFORMATION**

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