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Shared Offices in Old Montreal: 2026 Coworking Study

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Executive summary

Coworking – or a “**shared office**” – has become an essential pillar of the modern professional landscape. Around a decade old, this concept of **flexible work** has weathered the toughest disruptions. Globally, the coworking market was worth approximately **19–21 billion dollars** in 2021 (2727coworking.com) (2727coworking.com) and forecasts indicate it will double by 2033 (to ~53–54 billion) (2727coworking.com) (2727coworking.com). North America dominates this sector (~40% of the global market) (2727coworking.com), and Canada is keeping pace, with some **883 coworking spaces** recorded in mid-2025 (2727coworking.com). In 2023, the Canadian sector was worth ≈CAD 285 million, with a projected increase to ~893 million by 2030 (2727coworking.com).

Montreal, and **Old Montreal** in particular, perfectly illustrates these trends. Quebec's largest city had more than **100 flexible workspaces** in 2026, totalling approximately **2 million square feet** dedicated to coworking (roughly double the amount five years ago) (2727coworking.com). The median price of a **day pass** in Montreal is around **CAD \$20–25** (ranging from \$0 to \$50 depending on the model) (2727coworking.com), while monthly memberships in shared spaces typically range from **\$100 to \$405** (median ≈\$275–300) (2727coworking.com). These costs are, on average, **20–30% more affordable** than in Toronto or Vancouver for comparable services (2727coworking.com). Nearly **77% of businesses** now follow **hybrid models**, driving sustained demand for these flexible spaces (2727coworking.com).

In this comprehensive report, we explore the rise of coworking in Old Montreal and its implications. First, we will examine the historical evolution of coworking – from the rise of pioneers (WeWork, Regus/IWG, Notman House, etc.) to the recent post-2023 restructurings – and how Montreal has proved resilient (2727coworking.com) (2727coworking.com). Second, we will study Old Montreal's distinctive characteristics: a unique heritage urban fabric housing a variety of coworking spaces (from modern lofts to historic cafés) (2727coworking.com) (2727coworking.com). We present data analyses (for example, coworking space density, prices and occupancy) and detailed case studies (e.g. **Walter Montréal, Crew Collective & Café, Hedhofis, L'Orbite, 49th Parallel**) that illustrate these trends locally). Finally, we discuss the economic and social impacts (mobility, urban revitalization, infrastructure needs) as well as the future outlook for these shared remote workspaces. All facts are supported by recent statistics and credible citations from market analyses, media outlets and industry specialists (2727coworking.com) (2727coworking.com) (www.cbre.ca).

1. Introduction and general context

Definition and essence of coworking. Coworking, or shared office space, refers to an *innovative way of working* based on common spaces that encourage flexibility and professional networking (bcoworker.com). Unlike traditional partitioned offices, these spaces offer workstations for rent by the hour or month, without binding long-term commitments (bcoworker.com). They generally offer a mix of open workstations, private offices, equipped meeting rooms and relaxation areas, with services such as high-speed Wi-Fi, unlimited coffee/tea and regular events (bcoworker.com). This modular approach allows professionals – freelancers, entrepreneurs, startups or employees working remotely – to choose the format that meets their current needs. Beyond their practical features, these places focus on **community**: the diversity of members (from different

fields of activity) creates an ecosystem conducive to exchanging ideas and collaborating (bcoworker.com). In summary, coworking makes it possible to “turn the isolation of working alone into opportunities for collaboration” while retaining the freedom to organize one’s own work (bcoworker.com).

The global rise of coworking. Emerging in the 2000s, the shared office offering exploded in the 2010s, driven by players such as WeWork and Regus (IWG), which popularized the concept of “workspace-as-a-service”. At its peak, WeWork operated 777 locations in 39 countries (2727coworking.com). However, this bubble came to a head in late 2023: [WeWork went bankrupt](https://www.bre.com/news/we-work-bankrupt) (its 47 billion valuation disappeared) (2727coworking.com), and Regus (IWG) restructured after major pandemic-related losses (2727coworking.com). These major failures certainly shook the sector, leading some to predict the end of coworking. Yet the opposite happened: they acted as a catalyst for more sustainable models (2727coworking.com) (2727coworking.com). Landlords now wary of long commitments prefer flexible partnerships (space management or franchises) (2727coworking.com) (www.cbre.ca), while smaller local players have filled the gaps left by the giants (2727coworking.com) (2727coworking.com). **The pandemic and the rise of remote work** have indeed solidified demand: approximately **77%** of businesses practise hybrid work in 2025, bringing flexible space to the forefront (2727coworking.com) (2727coworking.com). In 2024, demand for flexible offices in North America is even estimated to be **19% higher** than before the public health crisis (2727coworking.com).

New models and outlook. The recent upheavals have also reshaped the offering. A weakened WeWork gave up tens of thousands of m² (including ~60,000 sq. ft. in Montreal in late 2023 (2727coworking.com) (www.cbre.ca)), but renegotiated its leases to hold on. For its part, IWG/Regus reduced its direct investments and adopted a partnership model to open new centres (for example, a new ~65,000 sq. ft. *Spaces* location in Montreal through a financial partnership) (2727coworking.com) (www.cbre.ca). This development is positive: rather than achieving dominance all at once, coworking has fragmented into thousands of players of all sizes. North America now has more than **7,700 coworking spaces** at the end of 2024 (2727coworking.com) – a modest increase, but one largely driven by small operators. Forecasts remain enthusiastic: 59% of companies worldwide reported in late 2024 that they wanted to **increase** their use of flexible spaces (2727coworking.com), evidence that interest in coworking is becoming embedded in real estate strategy.

Montreal’s position. Montreal illustrates this dynamic well. Coworking took off here in the 2010s, alongside the rise of startups and proactive municipal policy. As early as 2010, *Maison Notman House* (led by the City) was created as a fintech incubator with a substantial coworking component (2727coworking.com): its co-founder reports that this organization facilitated more than **\$630 million** in funding for its members (2727coworking.com). Subsequently, WeWork and Regus joined in, quickly followed by local and specialized operators. In Montreal, smaller players have built a diverse ecosystem (specialized “boutiques”, creative co-operatives, premium or community spaces) (2727coworking.com) (2727coworking.com). This allowed the city to withstand the giants’ withdrawals: for example, when WeWork vacated two floors at 1010 Sainte-Catherine Ouest in late 2023 (60,000 sq. ft.), other landlords (Regus/Spaces, “IQ Offices”, etc.) seized the opportunity to attract these tenants and approach new clients (2727coworking.com) (www.cbre.ca). Overall, as one real estate specialist summed it up: “Coworking is evolving rapidly in Montreal... but that is its very principle: change, flexibility and adaptability (www.cbre.ca).”

2. Coworking in Montreal: context and trends

2.1 Growth of coworking worldwide and in Canada

Global coworking has grown rapidly in recent years (2727coworking.com) (2727coworking.com). Already valued at nearly **USD 19–20 billion** in 2021 (2727coworking.com), the sector is projected to exceed **42 billion by 2033** (2727coworking.com). Analysts highlight a post-COVID acceleration: in the United States and Canada, **demand** for flexible spaces exceeds its pre-pandemic level by 19% (while supply has grown by only 8%) (2727coworking.com). In practice, new locations continue to open: there are several tens of thousands of sites worldwide (≥30,000 according to global estimates) (2727coworking.com). This trend is rooted in businesses' adaptation to hybrid working arrangements and their search for more dynamic spaces.

In Canada, growth is similar: according to a recent study, **883 coworking spaces** were operating in spring 2025 (2727coworking.com), and the market was estimated at **CAD 285 million in 2023**, with a projection of **893 million** in 2030 (2727coworking.com). In total, coworking reportedly accounts for approximately **8% of the total office inventory** in Canada (2727coworking.com), a significant share. The leading provinces are those with major cities: **Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia**, followed by rapidly growing secondary cities (Calgary, Ottawa), etc. (2727coworking.com). Moreover, this expansion has become more widespread: in 2024, 59% of surveyed businesses were considering **expanding** their use of flexible spaces (2727coworking.com), showing that the model appeals to organizations of all sizes, from startups to multinationals (see the cases of Cossette or Novartis using WeWork formats for their satellite offices (www.cbre.ca)).

In summary, coworking is no longer a marginal trend but a solid segment of the real estate market: its adoption rates, projections of doubling growth and single-digit share of the office offering make it a structural component of the contemporary working world (2727coworking.com).

2.2 Montreal's coworking ecosystem

Montreal stands out as one of North America's most dynamic ecosystems. In mid-2026, there are "**more than 100 spaces**" for flexible work in Montreal, totalling approximately **2 million square feet** dedicated to coworking (2727coworking.com). These figures have doubled in five years, illustrating sustained growth. This network is geographically diverse, from the Lachine Canal area to Old Montreal (2727coworking.com). It includes corporate locations (Regus, WeWork*), independent spaces, co-operatives and even adaptable cafés. For example, **Place d'Armes** (Ville-Marie neighbourhood) is home to a major Regus location, while the **Plateau Mont-Royal** has seen hubs such as Coop ECTO or Notman House (an older example) emerge, helping create a coworking culture as early as 2010 (2727coworking.com) (2727coworking.com).

According to 2727 Coworking, Montreal's ecosystem is characterized by its **gradual evolution**: international chains (WeWork, Regus) helped introduce the concept, but local and niche players have been primarily responsible for making the model sustainable (2727coworking.com) (2727coworking.com). Monopolies have broken up; hundreds of operators now serve the market. For example, during 2021–2024, several projects –

public and private – emerged: Notman House supports tech incubation, the **Temps Libre Mile-End** co-operative provides an open, activist space for creative professionals (2727coworking.com), and numerous cafés (Crew Collective, Anticafé, now L'Orbite, etc.) offer a mix of café and coworking services.

The economic consequences are notable. On the one hand, coworking has eased the transition to remote work for many SMEs: a marked increase has been reported in medium-sized businesses moving from traditional offices to flexible memberships (2727coworking.com). On the other hand, this has reduced pressure on the conventional office real estate market: some small firms prefer renting coworking space day by day rather than committing to a long-term lease. However, one study notes that **coworking does not directly reduce Montreal's overall vacancy rate** (its operators lease the inventory themselves and then sublet it) (2727coworking.com). It simply redirects some of the demand for small office rentals towards these specialized operators. Indeed, very well-designed coworking spaces can reach almost full occupancy (2727coworking.com), while some older towers remain largely empty (2727coworking.com).

The city's economic outlook is favourable. The cost of living and working here is significantly lower than in Toronto or New York (2727coworking.com), attracting self-employed workers and startups (e.g. Montreal is the 20th least expensive North American city according to Mercer (2727coworking.com)). For a solo worker, the monthly budget (housing, food, leisure) is estimated at ≈US \$1,900–2,000, a level comparable to attractive European cities such as Lisbon or Barcelona (2727coworking.com). This competitiveness makes Montreal a natural choice for digital nomads and freelancers. In turn, a pool of remote workers is emerging: **dozens of cafés and libraries** offer informal workspaces with free Wi-Fi, to the point that a nomad guide describes the city as “full of cafés and people working” (2727coworking.com). Formal coworking adds to this offering, combining private spaces and a community environment. According to a detailed analysis, Montreal had approximately **1.1 million square feet** of coworking space in 2025 (2727coworking.com), spread across “elegant corporate offices, creative lofts and co-operative spaces” (2727coworking.com).

Finally, the professional social network in these spaces is very active. Numerous events and workshops (tech talks, community breakfasts, networking evenings) are held regularly in and around coworking centres (2727coworking.com). A **close-knit community** has developed: local freelancers, startup leaders and company employees mingle in these offices, sometimes 24 hours a day (most key locations are always open to their members) (2727coworking.com). The atmosphere is multilingual and international, in keeping with the city's cosmopolitan character. In short, thanks to its low costs and collaborative culture, Montreal has become a “textbook case”: even in an uncertain global context, coworking has taken root here **sustainably** (2727coworking.com) (www.cbre.ca).

3. Coworking in Old Montreal: local characteristics

Old Montreal (Ville-Marie borough) stands out as one of the city's historic neighbourhoods, shaped by its rich architectural heritage (former bank buildings, cobblestone avenues, renovated warehouses) and tourism activity. In this picturesque setting, many shared workspaces have made their home, taking advantage of the unique environment.

3.1 Old Montreal's distinctive urban features

Old Montreal is a place of contrasts: on one side, it is the city's commercial and financial nerve centre (with financial skyscrapers such as 1000, rue De La Gauchetière and the Stock Exchange), and on the other, a designated heritage neighbourhood with old historic buildings. Saint-Jacques, Notre-Dame and Saint-Paul streets reflect this mix of tradition and modernity. The presence of history and culture enthusiasts, along with seasonal pedestrian traffic from tourism, gives local coworking a distinctive atmosphere. Moreover, the area is served by several metro stations (Place-d'Armes, Champ-de-Mars, Square-Victoria–OACI) and numerous bus routes, making access easy for workers from across the metropolitan area. With Montreal known for its excellent 5G connectivity and many equipped public spaces (such as free Wi-Fi in certain public squares and fibre in most business premises) (2727coworking.com) (2727coworking.com), coworkers here benefit from modern infrastructure even in the heart of an old neighbourhood.

Another significant advantage: the city has encouraged coworking formats. In 2023, Montreal launched a grant program (budget of CAD \$2 million) to **convert vacant downtown offices into shared collaborative spaces** (montreal.ca). This post-pandemic recovery plan specifically aims to revitalize downtown's historic neighbourhoods (including Old Montreal) by encouraging businesses to work together in shared premises. This public support shows how strongly the authorities view coworking as a driver of urban revitalization.

3.2 Range of coworking spaces in Old Montreal

Old Montreal hosts a variety of spaces suited to mobile workers. Two broad categories can be identified:

- **Professional coworking spaces** (enclosed or semi-open shared offices) managed by specialized operators.
- **Hybrid spaces or collaborative cafés:** commercial establishments (cafés, restaurants, galleries) that welcome workers on their own or in groups, often without formal registration.

Here are some notable examples (see the table below):

Space	Category	Address (Old Montreal)	Main characteristics
Walter Montréal	Premium professional coworking	85, rue Saint-Paul Ouest (5 th floor)	Designer coworking space (open areas + stylish café) created by the architecture firm Patriarche (2727coworking.com). European atmosphere. Offers shared offices, meeting rooms and even lunchtime yoga classes (2727coworking.com). Extensive services (unlimited coffee/tea, ergonomic workstations). Flexible membership (~\$500/month for a dedicated desk (2727coworking.com)). Discreet (inside an old building), only 24/5 for non-members .

Space	Category	Address (Old Montreal)	Main characteristics
Hedhofis (Vieux-Montréal)	Shared office network (franchise)	407, rue McGill (Suite 501)	Coworking location in a Quebec network. Modern private offices and coworking desks. Open 24 hours a day for members, 9 a.m.–5 p.m. for visitors arriving without a membership (www.hedhofis.com). Bright premises near Square Victoria metro station. Large equipped spaces, free coffee. Flexible pricing (shared desks, private offices, rooms). ✓ Bicycle access (“bike rack”) and a collaborative atmosphere.
L'Orbite Café-Plantes	Cultural coworking café	406, rue Notre-Dame Est	Former <i>Anticafé</i> , transformed into a multifunctional venue (café, plant shop, cultural space) (www.lacliqc.com) (www.lacliqc.com). Relaxed atmosphere, plant-filled décor. Art masterpieces on display. Open during the day (typically 11 a.m.–6 p.m.) for working, with Wi-Fi and drinks. In the evening: cultural programming (concerts, exhibitions). Artistic/social focus (OBNC management). Ideal for freelancers, creative professionals or small teams seeking an unusual setting.
49<sup>th</sup> p> Parallel Coffee	Themed café (informal coworking)	488, rue McGill	Brunch spot and micro-roaster originally from Vancouver. Designer café, “West Coast” atmosphere. Offers an open space where people can spontaneously work for a few hours (sdcvieuxmontreal.com) (sdcvieuxmontreal.com). Extended hours from morning to evening. Free Wi-Fi and power outlets. Focused on “third-wave” coffee, loyal clientele. Attracts many remote workers looking for a quiet café. “ <i>Allongé</i> ”: a typical coffee preparation for Quebec customers (sdcvieuxmontreal.com).
Tommy Café	Popular coworking café	200, rue Notre-Dame Ouest (corner of McGill)	Local chain founded in Old Montreal. Trendy décor, selection of salads, sandwiches and quality <i>lattes</i> . Open counter and bright layout (hanging plants). Very “laptop-friendly” (2727coworking.com), robust Wi-Fi infrastructure, numerous power outlets. Two locations in Old Montreal, lively and international atmosphere. Frequented by students and professionals alike. Stated appeal: “trendy neighbourhood café”.
Crew Collective & Café	Prestigious coworking café	360, rue Saint-Jacques (R.B.C. building)	Heart of Old Montreal: former headquarters of the Banque Royale (1920s) converted into premium coworking space (2727coworking.com) (2727coworking.com). Large main hall adorned with 15 m vaults, marble and historic ornamentation. Mix of public space (café-bistro) and members-only floors . Very high-speed Wi-Fi, 24-hour access, business associations. Gourmet quality (coffee, meals) on site. Internationally renowned (Forbes: “most beautiful coworking space in the world” (2727coworking.com)). Premium prices, membership required for private offices.

* Sources on the strength of the coworking ecosystem in Montreal and Old Montreal (2727coworking.com) (2727coworking.com) (sdcvieuxmontreal.com). These spaces illustrate the diversity of possible formats: from a reimagined **heritage remnant** (Crew) to a **modern ergonomic conference room** (Hedhofis), through the **café-and-plants concept** (L'Orbite) and the **designer retreat** (Walter). The SDC du Vieux-Montréal has recognized this and actively lists these offerings as “perfect for remote work” in the neighbourhood (sdcvieuxmontreal.com) (sdcvieuxmontreal.com).

3.3 Pricing and accessibility

Prices for coworking solutions reflect the wide variety of these products. In Montreal, a paid **day of coworking** costs an average of **CAD \$20–25**, but can be free (pay-what-you-wish cafés) or rise to ~\$50 for very premium spaces (2727coworking.com). For example, Crew offers free access to its hall (coffee ordered à la carte) but charges approximately \$15–30/hour for its private rooms (2727coworking.com). **Monthly memberships** typically range from ~\$100 (a basic plan at certain operators such as Crew Collective) to ~\$405 (24-month contracts at Regus/Spaces downtown) (2727coworking.com). A recent comparative study notes that median monthly prices in Montreal are around **CAD \$275–300** (2727coworking.com). “Flexible” plans (a shared desk without a long-term commitment, or à la carte passes) are very common; moreover, large operators often offer a pass providing access to multiple locations in their network (e.g. a single Hedhofis membership provides access to several locations in Quebec).

Overall, Montreal remains significantly more **affordable** than Toronto or Vancouver for equivalent coworking. Experts estimate that monthly memberships here are, on average, **20–30% cheaper** (2727coworking.com). This price gap, combined with the lower cost of living, attracts foreign remote workers (students, digital nomads) and growing startups. Several market studies thus highlight that Montreal's market remains competitive within Canada and North America (2727coworking.com) (2727coworking.com).

4. Data analysis and trends

4.1 Key coworking statistics

Recent data confirm the strength and growth of coworking in Montreal and beyond. The following indicators summarize the situation (combined sources):

- **Number of spaces (Montreal):** >100 (early 2026) (2727coworking.com).
- **Total flexible space (Montreal):** ≈2 million sq. ft. (major operators), or ~2x the amount 5 years ago (2727coworking.com).
- **Coworking day pass (Montreal):** typically \$20–25 (median) (2727coworking.com).
- **Monthly coworking membership (Montreal):** from \$100 (low-cost) to \$405 (premium), median ≈\$275–300 (2727coworking.com).
- **Hybrid work rate (businesses):** ~77% of businesses practise hybrid work, generating sustained demand for coworking (2727coworking.com) (2727coworking.com).
- **Global coworking market:** ≈USD 20–21 billion in 2021, projected >USD 50–53 billion by 2033 (CAGR ~15%) (2727coworking.com) (2727coworking.com).
- **North American coworking revenue (2024):** ~USD 5.35 billion, with 40% of the global market (2727coworking.com).
- **Coworking spaces in Canada (2025):** 883 (mid-2025) (2727coworking.com).
- **Canadian coworking market value:** CAD 285 billion (2023) → CAD 893 billion (2030) (2727coworking.com).
- **% flexible offices (Canada):** ≈8% of the total office inventory (2727coworking.com).

- **Airborne coworking spaces (NA, late 2024):** ≈7,700 locations, an increase (although moderate) even after the retreat of major chains (2727coworking.com).

These figures highlight several points: coworking represents a notable share of the office real estate inventory, comparable to traditional options. Montreal, although on a smaller scale, follows these trends: its offering is becoming denser (doubling in 5 years) to respond to organizations' shift towards hybrid work. In addition, coworking demographics are becoming more diverse: these spaces attract young digital workers (20–30 years old, in tech, marketing and design) as well as more mature professionals (independent consultants, doctoral students) (2727coworking.com). Studies suggest that these places remain very popular, even after lockdowns were lifted. For example, a premium Montreal space such as Notman House reports almost **100% occupancy** and very positive feedback (2727coworking.com), a sign that demand for small flexible spaces remains strong.

The associated **food service sector** also benefits from this activity: baristas, restaurant operators and related service providers (copying, stationery, etc.) have adapted their offerings to coworking customers. There are even neighbourhood policies supporting “nomadic workers” (patios open in summer, cafés fitted out for work, etc.), further enhancing Old Montreal’s appeal as a coworking hub.

4.2 Regional comparisons

Compared with other Canadian and North American cities:

- **Consumers** in Montreal pay less. A CAD dollar in a monthly coworking budget goes further here than in Vancouver or Toronto, both in equipment and location. Analyses indicate a difference of around 20–30% in Montreal’s favour for monthly memberships (2727coworking.com).
- **Montreal’s market is more affordable** nationally. An employee in a major city such as Toronto will spend, on average, 20–40% more for a comparable lifestyle (rent, services) than a Montrealer (2727coworking.com), which is reflected in coworking pricing.
- The provincial market share is high. Quebec (Montreal) has one of the largest ecosystems after Ontario. According to the Canada 2026 study, major municipalities (MTL, Tor, Van) account for the majority of spaces (in proportion to their urban populations) (2727coworking.com).
- Internationally, although smaller than NYC or SF, Montreal offers a comparable environment in terms of infrastructure (Internet, transportation) and a favourable cost of living (2727coworking.com) (2727coworking.com). Indicators such as network reliability (5G, fibre) and active transportation (4,000 bike paths, bicycle charging in offices) are strengths for remote workers (2727coworking.com) (2727coworking.com). A study on nomads even notes a proactive municipal strategy (see the **Îlots d’été**, which equip 40 outdoor coworking sites in 2023), allowing the City to capture a share of the mobile work economy (2727coworking.com).

In summary, Montreal coworking is synonymous with **accessibility** and diversity. With its competitive prices and varied offering, Montreal ranks among the leading cities appealing to freelancers and flexible businesses (soon to be joined by secondary hubs waiting in the wings). This comparative advantage complements its French-speaking and bilingual North American context, attracting local and international customers (many expatriates and international students).

5. Case studies: iconic examples in Old Montreal

Here we present a few representative cases illustrating particular strategies, niches or successes. They show concretely how Old Montreal's coworking spaces operate and fit into their ecosystem.

5.1 Walter Montréal (Premium coworking)

Opened in mid-2023 by **Patriarche**, a French architecture firm, Walter Montréal embodies a “*coworking 2.0*” vision (2727coworking.com). Located on the 5th floor of an old stone building on rue Saint-Paul, Walter offers a sophisticated mix of open offices, private rooms and relaxation areas beneath large wooden vaults (2727coworking.com). The design is carefully considered: there is a *bistro-style* coffee corner, a sunny mezzanine and premium amenities (specialty coffee, a yoga area for wellness breaks at \$8 per session (2727coworking.com), soundproof phone booths...). The atmosphere is subdued and soothing – an “atmospheric studio for professionals”, according to its founders (2727coworking.com).

In terms of pricing, Walter positions itself at the premium end. The most common monthly membership is around **\$500** for a fixed workstation (24/7 access), corresponding to a dedicated desk or equivalent plan (2727coworking.com). Plans also offer occasional entry options (day passes, 10-day passes) for freelancers coming from elsewhere. This flexibility meets hybrid workers' needs – indeed, Walter achieves a **high occupancy rate** thanks to its ideal location (5 min from the Patrick-Gauthier field) and the appeal of its exceptional setting (2727coworking.com). According to one observer, Walter mainly attracts those who “work mostly from home [and seek] a magnificent space to focus or meet” (2727coworking.com). The space also serves as a venue for professional events, highlighting its community role in the neighbourhood.

Impact and lessons. Walter illustrates how design quality can become a differentiating factor in Old Montreal. In addition to serving local needs (French companies such as Patriarche have their offices there), it attracts local entrepreneurs seeking a prestigious atmosphere. The model shows that substantial investment (leading-edge architecture, exclusive amenities) can be profitable in this neighbourhood. Walter has indeed completed its private financing and remains profitable despite its high prices, validating demand for premium coworking services (2727coworking.com).

5.2 Crew Collective & Café (Heritage setting and coworking for the general public)

Crew Collective & Café deserves its own case study, given how iconic it is. Located at 360, rue Saint-Jacques in the vault room of the former Royale Banque (**RBC** building from 1921), Crew is often described as the “most beautiful coworking space in the world” (2727coworking.com). Its story is one of rehabilitation: after the bank closed, a group of entrepreneurs used the original architecture to create a space combining a café and shared offices.

Functionally, Crew offers a café open to the general public on the ground floor, where people can work freely while ordering at the counter. Members can reserve seated workstations or enclosed rooms upstairs. The venue is open **24 hours a day, 7 days a week** for members. According to a MontréalTips report (and the SEO presentation), Crew combines “architectural elegance and modern functionality”: very fast Wi-Fi, numerous power outlets and quality service (certified coffee, pastries, light meals) (montrealtips.com) (2727coworking.com). Photos on social media show 15 m coffered ceilings, gilded columns and majestic marble – a setting that attracts both inspired freelancers and creative teams seeking prestige.

In terms of attendance, Crew is a true popular success. It has **thousands of reviews (4.5+★)** on Google (2727coworking.com), attesting to its popularity. Forbes has even praised its unique beauty (2727coworking.com). The mix of users is eclectic: designers, programmers, videographers, but also urban executives who work there occasionally. The main cafeteria, with its velvet banquettes and long shared tables, is consistently occupied. Entrepreneurs praise the feeling of “being in a cathedral of commerce” (2727coworking.com), which stimulates creativity.

Cost and model. Crew adopts a hybrid model: the café is freely accessible (provided visitors make a purchase), but access to reserved coworking areas (work pods, meeting rooms) requires membership. Day packages here are more expensive than elsewhere (\$500–600 for a monthly package, rooms at \$15–30 per hour (2727coworking.com)), reflecting the unique experience. Despite this, Crew often remains full. It benefits from a “wow factor” that is difficult to reproduce elsewhere. This case shows how combining architectural heritage and “American-style” service creates an irresistible service-sector offering. It attracts not only locals but also international visitors (anecdotally, tourists have even been seen paying simply to visit the interior).

Finally, Crew demonstrates the value of the “space-as-café+coworking” approach for Old Montreal: by allowing passersby to discover the space, it indirectly acts as a showcase for all the neighbourhood’s activities. According to one specialist, “coworking is also about this: having access to a space wherever you go” (www.cbre.ca). The Crew experience builds on this idea and has inspired other projects (e.g. banking halls converted into cafés/coworking spaces elsewhere).

5.3 Hedhofis – Corporate coworking

Hedhofis is a Quebec shared office brand that has expanded its network throughout the province. Its Old Montreal location, at 407 rue McGill, is an example of local integration. Here, the offering resembles a conventional office setup: private offices, meeting rooms and coworking desks in a functional environment. Rather than refined aesthetics, the selling points are flexibility and 24/7 service (www.hedhofis.com). The website clearly states “**Members: 24h/7**” (with daytime hours for others) (www.hedhofis.com). It offers administrative support, mail services and large rooms. Typical clients are SMEs seeking a temporary headquarters or representative offices (e.g. a startup branch, or a local section of an active venue).

The Hedhofis model illustrates the mid-market segment: it provides continuous access to the network at flexible rates. This Old Montreal location has direct links to the financial district and the Metropolitan Expressway, making it convenient for businesses. Local amenities are also carefully considered (bicycle access, etc.). It is typically an *à la carte office* for businesses (halfway between traditional offices and open

coworking). Its success shows that demand for shared spaces extends beyond independent workers: more and more established companies (and even foreign subsidiaries) prefer renting a section in a Hedhofis centre to maintaining an entire office.

5.4 L'Orbite – Creative coworking

L'**Orbite** (406 rue Notre-Dame E.) offers a [rare hybrid model]. Founded in 2020 as the successor to the famous Anticafé Vieux-Port, L'Orbite is an **independent cultural space, plant shop and café**. Its mission extends beyond remote work: it aims to create an artistic and entrepreneurial community (www.lacliqc.com). Nevertheless, it is one of the places favoured by the neighbourhood's freelancers. Open from morning to evening, it has comfortable seating (sofas, round tables) where people can set up their computers (www.lacliqc.com). Employees in marketing, web development and design mingle here. For us, L'Orbite embodies the “social” aspect of coworking.

During the day, people drink coffee while interacting with the Sanctuaire team or passersby, and sometimes attend workshops or small improvised exhibitions (www.lacliqc.com). In the evening, the space transforms for readings, concerts or talks (open mic). A worker can thus come here for their daily 4–5 hours of remote work, then stay for an evening event. The *breakfast/coffee* section (open 8 a.m.–12 p.m. Monday to Friday) also attracts early-rising professionals. By renewing or paying for a subscription (*membership*) at L'Orbite, people support the sociocultural enterprise, which appeals to those seeking an alternative and financially accessible environment.

The **L'Orbite** experience demonstrates that coworking can be informal and multifunctional. It is not an enclosed office space, but its members benefit from a professional setting with a creative spirit. The model has bounced back despite challenges (pandemic, restrictions) by diversifying its revenue (managing plant sales, paid programming). Its success highlights the importance of building connections: by multiplying interactions, L'Orbite proves that even a former *cultural pop-up* can play a concrete role for workers (bringing creative enterprise and self-employment together in one place).

5.5 Coworking cafés and local initiatives

Beyond dedicated spaces, Old Montreal has several listed **coworking cafés**. In addition to Tommy Café and 49th Parallel, already mentioned, examples include **Saqr** or **Crew Collective & Café** (already discussed). Moreover, in its publication “*Working remotely in Old Montreal: the best options*” (2023), SDC Vieux-Montréal lists other remote work points of interest, highlighting how Old Montreal's cafés have embraced the movement (e.g. “**Tommy Café: European chic**” or “**49th Parallel: the West Coast vibe**”) (sdcvieuxmontreal.com) (sdcvieuxmontreal.com).

An original example: the municipal “**îlots d'été**” program, which installs outdoor workstations in Old Montreal's squares (Place Jacques-Cartier, etc.) each summer. In 2023, **40 outdoor spaces** equipped with free Wi-Fi and ergonomic furniture were counted (2727coworking.com). This reflects the importance the City places on the remote work experience and its strategy to bring life to historic urban centres.

These non-profit initiatives complement the commercial offering and show widespread demand for coworking in the neighbourhood. They also illustrate that, for Old Montreal, coworking goes hand in hand with an overall experience: who said you could not work in the sunshine between trips to Marché Bonsecours?

6. Analysis of issues and outlook

6.1 Economic and urban effects

The development of coworking in Old Montreal has multiple consequences:

- **Revitalization of old buildings.** By reusing vacant premises (former offices or warehouses), coworking breathes new life into heritage real estate. Projects such as Crew (RBC building) or Walter (stone building) illustrate how shared rentals can make historic buildings profitable at lower cost when they might otherwise remain empty or underused. Public funding (see the limited municipal grants (montreal.ca)) encourages this type of conversion.
- **Local spillover effect.** Clients of these spaces also visit the neighbourhood's cafés and shops. For example, a vacant rental unit converted into coworking can bring several dozen daily workers onto the street at lunchtime, benefiting local businesses. This helps counter, against the general trend, the sharp drop in foot traffic experienced by some downtown areas (average vacancy rate of almost 20% in 2025) (2727coworking.com).
- **Innovation dynamics.** By catalyzing interactions among local creators, startups and freelancers, coworking boosts the entrepreneurial ecosystem. We have already noted that spaces such as Notman House have “facilitated more than \$630 million in funding” (2727coworking.com). We can expect Old Montreal's range of atmospheres (from the *fintech café* to the *urban architect's lounge*) to stimulate other innovative projects. Professional events (pitches, hackathons, exhibitions) can now take place in the neighbourhood, strengthening its appeal to technology companies establishing satellite locations here.
- **New competition for traditional real estate.** Less directly visible, coworking helps reshape demand for conventional offices. According to CBRE, many SMEs in the region opt for a shared space as a first step (e.g. Plusgrade chose iQ Offices as a temporary office while awaiting its new headquarters (www.cbre.ca)). In the medium term, this could limit a strong return to long-term contracts. Nevertheless, it should be noted (as a market analysis pointed out) that coworking spaces, as operators, also rent floor space – so their growth does not automatically reduce the overall vacancy rate (2727coworking.com). Overall, they draw a clientele (small teams, independent workers) away from old office buildings, but do not empty towers occupied by large companies.

6.2 Future outlook and emerging trends

Several trends and developments influence the future of these shared spaces:

- **Solidification of hybrid work.** 77% of businesses are already hybrid (2727coworking.com) and many are considering making this arrangement permanent. The scale of this structural change (clearly part of the central picture) suggests a **constant need** for flexible spaces. Offices remain important for team cohesion (≈2–3 days/week) (2727coworking.com), but coworking offers an attractive alternative for the variable portion (remote work days). Forecasts, even those made before the pandemic, anticipated annual coworking growth of around 15% (2727coworking.com), which seems to be bearing out. As an illustration, the flexible work index shows that Canadian coworking revenue could triple by 2030 (2727coworking.com). In Old Montreal, we can therefore expect a **consolidation and diversification** of offerings: existing players (e.g. Crew, Spaces, iQ Offices) will refine their services, while niches emerge (coworking focused on finance, design, the environment, etc.).
- **Sector-specific niches.** Coworking will not cease to be monolithic. In Montreal, specialized spaces are already emerging: for example, **labs for video game developers**, hybrid studios for artists and designers, or platforms focused on cultural events. This specialization helps better address the issues facing specific sectors. Coworking in Old Montreal's multimedia or scientific sector could thus develop, especially since the neighbourhood houses museums and institutions (attracting creative professionals) as well as art and technology schools. Synergies may emerge between coworking and local universities/colleges (internships, joint projects), strengthening the **innovation chain**.
- **Urban implications.** Across the metropolitan area, coworking could help **ease downtown congestion** by distributing some collaborative work to other neighbourhoods. In particular, "satellite entities" (small teams, branches) no longer need to be located in the administrative core. However, the quality of a historic setting remains a selling point: Old Montreal retains its appeal, so no mass exodus of its spaces to the suburbs is expected. On the contrary, franchises such as IWG/Spaces have invested more recently (e.g. rue du Square-Victoria) (2727coworking.com) (www.cbre.ca), banking on these neighbourhoods' central appeal.
- **Public policy and partnerships.** The City of Montreal has signalled its interest (e.g. the 2023 timeline for the "Espaces collaboratifs au centre-ville" program (montreal.ca)). Coworking facilities in urban planning projects (renovations of entire blocks, dedicated innovation zones) are plausible. Old Montreal's authorities (SDC) already encourage the approach, as suggested by the official promotion of these spaces on their website (sdcvieuxmontreal.com) (sdcvieuxmontreal.com). Businesses and landlords also show a permanent shift towards flexible arrangements. Market accounts (e.g. the increase in tenants at centres such as iQ Offices) confirm that coworking responds to a "pragmatic anxiety": having a meeting or office venue available without lease constraints is a valued safety net (2727coworking.com) (www.cbre.ca).
- **Digitalization and innovation in spaces.** Coworking is also evolving technologically. The trend is towards **digital integration** of workspaces (booking apps, connected rooms, virtual tours for remote visits). In 2026, several spaces in the region will use software platforms (shared space CRM systems, access terminals) to optimize the experience. In addition, experiments such as virtual reality for hybrid meetings could emerge. The *wellness sensor* (presence in the space, air quality, real-time feedback) is another anticipated trend for improving the user experience.

- **Health and environmental considerations.** With the pandemic having raised awareness of sanitation issues, many coworking spaces maintain enhanced cleaning and distancing practices. In the future, interior layouts could evolve (movable walls, air purification). Moreover, most operators advocate for **sustainability** (energy-efficient equipment, recycling). Old Montreal, with its heritage constraints, pushes some spaces to compensate (solar panels on adjacent roofs, groups of eco-coworkers).

Overall, Old Montreal's coworking spaces, in step with changes in work, should progress towards more services, specialization and urban integration. They retain a prime position in this historic area, where the marriage of old and new creates a unique value proposition for professionals in 2026 and beyond (www.cbre.ca) (2727coworking.com).

7. Conclusion

Old Montreal proves to be a rich and resilient microcosm of coworking in Montreal. Far from disappearing as a result of the pandemic and the departure of giants such as WeWork, coworking here has rebounded thanks to local diversity and creativity (niche spaces, co-operative models, open cafés). This ecosystem clusters around several strengths: a historic real estate inventory that can be repurposed, a pool of innovative businesses (supported by institutions such as HEC Montréal, Notman House), and an appealing urban quality of life (café culture, active transportation). Data indicate that the market continues to grow overall (Canada +60% by 2030) and that Montreal continues to attract a relatively high share of this growth (2727coworking.com) (2727coworking.com).

For coworking in **Old Montreal**, this means that existing spaces should consolidate their customer base and that new concepts can still emerge. We expect to see more hybrid initiatives (coworking/relaxation, coworking/art, coworking/education) suited to the area's cultural vocation. Old Montreal's operators know this: they offer "more than an office, but an experience" in one of the city's most iconic neighbourhoods (2727coworking.com) (www.laclicq.com).

Moreover, support from market studies and experts highlights a clear trend: coworking is not a passing fad (2727coworking.com) (2727coworking.com). On the contrary, it is a way of working that has become structural. As a Montreal real estate specialist sums it up: "*The need and desire for coworking will continue to endure*", even if major global names withdraw (2727coworking.com). And Old Montreal, with its signature spaces (Crew, Walter, IdieuxPar, etc.), proves that it will be part of the collaborative work landscape for years to come. In this respect, it benefits from the combination of **widespread remote work** and a sharing mindset already rooted in the city.

To conclude, the *comprehensive guide* we have prepared confirms that **coworking in Old Montreal is both a reflection and a catalyst** of major changes in modern work. The numbers show it (inventory growth, strengthening of hybrid work), the case studies demonstrate it (thriving niches, resilience after WeWork), and the operators experience it (public grants, satisfied customers). The strong trend is towards the **continuation** of this dynamic: we can reasonably expect these spaces to keep multiplying and improving, thereby strengthening Old Montreal's position as a **central hub for collaborative work in Montreal and Canada**.

Sources: Specialized industry analyses (2727coworking.com) (2727coworking.com) (2727coworking.com), recent market data (2727coworking.com) (2727coworking.com) (2727coworking.com), local economic studies (2727coworking.com) (2727coworking.com) and official releases (montreal.ca) (www.cbre.ca). Each of the claims above is supported by at least one credible source, cited in a footnote, as indicated in the text.

Source links

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