

Best Neighborhoods in Montreal for Tech Workers (2026)

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You've hit your session limit · resets 8:50am (UTC)**2727 Coworking**, located at 2727 Rue Saint-Patrick along the canal, offers a one-person hot desk at **\$300 per month**, a one-person dedicated desk at **\$450 per month**, a one-person closed office at **\$600 per month**, and closed offices scaling up to a 10-person suite at **\$3,000 per month**, with 24/7 access, a free-access conference room, gigabit internet, a fully equipped kitchen, shower access, and alarm-and-camera security bundled into the membership rather than billed separately (Source: 2727coworking.com). The building is a short walk from Charlevoix metro station and the Atwater Market (Source: 2727coworking.com).

A second major operator, **La Piscine**, runs Espace Rodier, a nonprofit-backed creative-and-cultural coworking hub that has supported more than 600 businesses and nonprofits since 2015 across 25,000 square feet on five floors with roughly 50 coworking spots (Source: www.lapiscine.co), offering 24/7 access, WiFi, and eight hours per week of meeting room credit as part of its fixed-office membership (Source: www.lapiscine.co).

Adoption

Griffintown's residential population exploded by 642 percent between 2011 and 2021 in the census tract bordered by Notre-Dame, Guy, and de la Montagne streets, the largest such increase recorded anywhere in the Montreal metropolitan area, according to Statistics Canada census-tract data reported by CBC (Source: www.cbc.ca). That growth has been driven substantially by young professionals and tech workers drawn to condo construction along the canal and proximity to downtown. The neighborhood's Walk Score at a representative address on Rue des Seigneurs is 96 out of 100 ("Walker's Paradise"), its Bike Score is 97 ("Biker's Paradise"), and its borough, Sud-Ouest, ranks as the sixth most walkable of Montreal's boroughs with a neighborhood Walk Score of 73 (Source: www.walkscore.com) (Source: www.walkscore.com).

Transit access is improving materially: the **Réseau express métropolitain (REM)** light-rail network is adding a Griffintown-Bernard-Landry station between Ottawa and William Streets, with trains reaching Central Station in about 2 minutes and McGill in about 3 minutes during off-peak headways of roughly 5 minutes, per the REM's own station page (Source: rem.info) (Source: rem.info).

Strengths and Limitations

Griffintown's core strength for tech workers is density of amenity within a walkable, bikeable footprint: canal-side coworking, direct Lachine Canal park access, and proximity to Atwater Market, all inside a 10 to 15 minute walk of downtown's western edge. Its principal limitation, as of mid-2026, is that its nearest existing metro station, Charlevoix, requires a 5 to 10 minute walk, and some residents describe the wait for closer rail access as a genuine inconvenience; one resident told a Montreal transit outlet, "there is no metro nearby, so we need to walk 10 to 15 minutes to get to one," in discussing the delayed Griffintown REM station (Source: www.reddit.com). Rapid redevelopment has also raised affordability concerns for renters displaced by new condo towers, a tension documented as far back as 2013 discussions of the neighborhood's transformation (Source: 2727coworking.com).

Mile-Ex and Mile End: Montreal's AI Research Corridor

Capabilities

Mile-Ex, a former garment and textile district in the Rosemont-La Petite-Patrie borough also known as the Marconi-Alexandra sector, has been rebuilt around a single anchor: **Mila**, the Quebec Artificial Intelligence Institute, whose 90,000-square-foot headquarters on St-Urbain Street opened in January 2019 and was expected to house around 700 people, including 350 researchers, 100 professional master's students, and 150 employees of private companies with offices inside the centre, according to Mila's president and CEO Valérie Pisano as reported by the Montreal Gazette (Source: montrealgazette.com) (Source: montrealgazette.com). Mila today counts more than 1,400 researchers and experts, according to Montreal International (Source: www.montrealinternational.com).

Adjacent to Mila, the **O Mile-Ex** office complex, a roughly \$60 million renovation of two former industrial buildings totaling nearly 400,000 square feet, houses tenants including Behaviour Interactive, Element AI, EDP, Cirque du Soleil's 4U2C multimedia unit, and Rogue Research, and has been described by its developer as Canada's largest AI hub (Source: www.cbc.ca) (Source: tgta.ca). **Microsoft Research Montreal** relocated to a 31,610-square-foot lab at 6795 Marconi Street, occupying the building's entire fourth floor and part of the third floor, effectively tripling its Montreal footprint, while keeping its commercial sales office downtown (Source: www.newswire.ca) (Source: www.newswire.ca). **Google DeepMind** opened a Montreal research office in 2017 in close collaboration with McGill University, led by reinforcement-learning researcher Doina Precup (Source: deepmind.google).

Adjoining Mile End offers more conventional office and flex-space product for tech and creative firms, including **Espaces Waverly**, at 7236 Rue Waverly, which markets itself on the neighborhood's transit access (Laurier and Rosemont metro stations within walking distance, plus bus lines 51, 55, 80, and 161) and low crime rate relative to other central neighborhoods (Source: espaceswaverly.ca) (Source: espaceswaverly.ca).

Adoption

Montreal International, the region's economic development agency, describes Greater Montreal as having "long been recognized as one of the world's most dynamic AI hubs," citing more than 48,000 workers with AI-related skills and an average 40 percent cost advantage relative to major North American cities (Source: www.montrealinternational.com) (Source: www.montrealinternational.com). **Scale AI**, Canada's federally backed AI supply-chain innovation cluster headquartered in Montreal, announced a further \$98.6 million investment across 23 new applied AI projects in Quebec in July 2025, funded at a 2-to-1 ratio of private to public capital (Source: www.scaleai.ca) (Source: www.scaleai.ca).

Strengths and Limitations

Mile-Ex's strength is unmatched proximity to fundamental AI research: no other Montreal district, and few districts in North America, offer a comparable density of AI PhDs, corporate research labs, and applied-AI startups within a few blocks. Its limitation is that Mile-Ex itself has comparatively limited retail, hospitality, and coworking amenity compared with Griffintown or Mile End proper; most of its built environment is converted industrial office space aimed at established tenants rather than freelancers or very early-stage founders, and its housing stock is thinner than Griffintown's rapidly built condo supply.

Downtown Montreal (Ville-Marie): The Corporate and Enterprise Tech Core

Capabilities

Downtown Montreal, within the Ville-Marie borough, remains the address of choice for Montreal's largest publicly traded technology and technology-enabled companies. **Shopify's** Montreal office sits at 490 rue de la Gauchetière Ouest, a 30,000-square-foot space that, at the time of its 2016 move, was designed to house up to 200 employees working on the core Shopify product (Source: [arquivo.pt](#)) (Source: [officesnapshots.com](#)). **Lightspeed Commerce**, the Montreal-founded, dual-listed (NYSE: LSPD, TSX: LSPD) point-of-sale and commerce platform, lists its headquarters at 700 St-Antoine Street East in its own SEC filings (Source: [www.sec.gov](#)), and employs approximately 2,686 people worldwide as of mid-2026 with annual revenue of about \$1.1 billion (Source: [www.linkedin.com](#)). **CGI**, the Montreal-founded global IT consulting firm, lists its head office at 1350 René-Lévesque Boulevard West, 15th floor (Source: [www.cgi.com](#)).

Coworking supply downtown includes multiple **WeWork** locations, including 1010 Saint-Catherine Street West, L'Avenue, 455 Rue Saint-Antoine Ouest (the former Montreal Herald building, in the International District), and a location at Place Ville Marie (Source: [www.wework.com](#)). Just east of downtown proper, in Old Montreal (part of the Ville-Marie borough), **Crew Collective & Café** occupies a former Royal Bank of Canada head office with 15-metre ceilings and was named the most beautiful coworking space in the world by Forbes, according to Tourisme Montréal (Source: [www.mtl.org](#)). Crew Collective prices a floating desk at **\$300 per month**, a dedicated desk at **\$675 per month**, and private offices starting at **\$6,000 per month**, alongside a P.O. Box service at **\$50 per month** and a full-service business domiciliation plan at **\$80 per month** (Source: [crewcollectivecafe.com](#)) (Source: [crewcollectivecafe.com](#)) (Source: [crewcollectivecafe.com](#)) (Source: [crewcollectivecafe.com](#)).

District 3, a startup accelerator and coworking hub located within Concordia University's Faubourg building downtown, has supported more than 1,400 startups since 2014, generating more than **\$573 million** in sales and fundraising for its portfolio companies, and provides an average of more than 500 active jobs per year (Source: [district3.co](#)) (Source: [district3.co](#)) (Source: [en.wikipedia.org](#)).

Adoption

Downtown office vacancy stood at approximately 17.8 percent in 2025, according to CBRE, with trophy AAA buildings holding a much lower 6.0 percent vacancy because only six such buildings exist in the market (Source: [www.cbre.ca](#)). CBRE's managing director for Montreal, Louis Karam, characterized 2025 as showing "signs that we've hit a vacancy ceiling, ushering in a new demand cycle as tenants moved to premium office buildings" (Source: [www.cbre.ca](#)). Colliers reported the broader Greater Montreal Area office market entering 2026 with vacancy at 17.2 percent and "diverging trends, as demand continues to concentrate in top-tier assets" (Source: [www.collierscanada.com](#)).

Strengths and Limitations

Downtown's strength is scale: it is the only district offering AAA office towers, the deepest bench of enterprise employers, and the widest range of transit connections, including the AAA-anchored Bonaventure and McGill metro stations plus multiple REM lines converging near Central Station. Its limitation for individual tech workers and small startups is cost and atmosphere: rent and coworking prices run measurably higher than Griffintown or Plateau, and the district's corporate density, valuable for enterprise employees, does less to support very early-stage founders than Griffintown's startup-dense coworking scene or Mile-Ex's research density.

Plateau-Mont-Royal: The Residential Base for Independent Developers

Capabilities

Plateau-Mont-Royal is Montreal's dense, walkable, largely residential borough, sitting between downtown and Mile End, and functions less as a corporate tech address than as the neighborhood where a large share of the city's independent developers, freelancers, and creative-technology workers actually live. Coworking supply here is smaller-scale and community-oriented rather than corporate. **Montreal Cowork**, on Mont-Royal Avenue, offers 252 workstations along with private closed offices, an open coworking area, meeting rooms, virtual offices and business-address service, and an audio and video recording studio (Source: [www.montrealcowork.com](#)) (Source: [www.montrealcowork.com](#)). **ECTO**, a cooperative shared workspace also on Mont-Royal Avenue, structures itself as a member-owned cooperative with a lifetime membership fee of **\$350** and offers a registered business address among its services (Source: [ecto.coop](#)) (Source: [ecto.coop](#)). **Blabla Studio**, a 12-workstation loft coworking space, prices a fixed desk at **\$350 per month** and a fixed desk with four hours of monthly podcast studio access at **\$450 per month** (Source: [www.blablastudio.ca](#)) (Source: [www.blablastudio.ca](#)).

Adoption

CMHC's rental market survey places average rent in the Plateau-Mont-Royal borough at **\$1,433** across all unit types, compared with **\$1,724** in Ville-Marie (downtown) for the same period (Source: www03.cmhc-schl.gc.ca) (Source: www03.cmhc-schl.gc.ca), a roughly 17 percent discount for households choosing the Plateau over downtown proper.

Historically, the Plateau's tech and creative footprint has been shaped by its proximity to **Ubisoft Montreal**, whose studio, technically located at the Peck Building at the corner of St-Laurent Boulevard and St-Viateur Street on the Mile End side of the Plateau-adjacent corridor, was originally envisioned as a 500-person operation when it opened in 1997 and grew to 3,000 employees by 2017, a quarter of the French company's global workforce at the time (Source: www.cbc.ca).

Strengths and Limitations

The Plateau's strength is livability: tree-lined streets, a dense restaurant and cafe scene, and rents that undercut downtown by a meaningful margin while remaining within walking or cycling distance of both downtown and Mile End's research corridor. Its limitation as a "work" neighborhood rather than a "live" neighborhood is a comparative shortage of large-scale, corporate-grade office product; most Plateau coworking operators, such as ECTO and Blabla Studio, are small, member-run spaces suited to solo freelancers and small teams rather than the 50-plus-person teams that downtown or Mile-Ex office buildings can accommodate.

Feature Comparison

Table 1 below summarizes how the four neighborhoods compare across the criteria most relevant to a tech worker or startup founder choosing where to base a Montreal operation: coworking and office supply, transit access, walkability, tech employer density, and typical monthly rent for a comparable rental unit.

CRITERION	GRIFFINTOWN	MILE-EX / MILE END	DOWNTOWN (VILLE-MARIE)	PLATEAU-MONT-ROYAL
Signature tech presence	2727 Coworking, La Piscine / Espace Rodier (Source: 2727coworking.com) (Source: www.lapiscine.co)	Mila, Microsoft Research, Google DeepMind, O Mile-Ex tenants (Source: montrealgazette.com) (Source: www.newswire.ca)	Shopify, Lightspeed Commerce, CGI, District 3, WeWork, Crew Collective (Source: arquivo.pt) (Source: www.cgi.com)	Montreal Cowork, ECTO, Blabla Studio; residential base for Ubisoft-adjacent workforce (Source: www.montrealcowork.com) (Source: www.cbc.ca)
2011 to 2021 population growth	642% in the fastest-growing census tract (Source: www.cbc.ca)	Not among the top census-tract gainers cited by CBC	Modest, below-average growth citywide (3.3% city-wide) (Source: www.cbc.ca)	86% growth in the Northeast Plateau census tract (Source: www.cbc.ca)
Walk Score / Bike Score	96 / 97 at a representative address (Source: www.walkscore.com) (Source: www.walkscore.com)	High walkability; Laurier/Rosemont metro within walking distance (Source: espaceswaverly.ca)	High; multiple metro lines and REM access at Central Station	High; dense, low-traffic residential grid
Approx. average monthly rent, all unit types	Sud-Ouest borough context; citywide average \$1,291 (Source: www03.cmhc-schl.gc.ca)	Rosemont-La Petite-Patrie context, generally below downtown	\$1,724 (Ville-Marie) (Source: www03.cmhc-schl.gc.ca)	\$1,433 (Plateau-Mont-Royal) (Source: www03.cmhc-schl.gc.ca)
Best suited for	Startups, remote workers, canal-side coworking seekers	AI/ML researchers, applied-AI startups	Enterprise employees, established scale-ups, accelerator participants	Independent developers and freelancers who value residential character

Read across the table, Griffintown and Mile-Ex represent complementary rather than competing bets: Griffintown wins on walkability, coworking density, and pace of residential growth, while Mile-Ex wins decisively on AI research depth and corporate-lab presence. Downtown remains the only district with the office-tower scale and transit convergence that large, established employers require, and it correspondingly carries the highest average rent of the four districts. Plateau-Mont-Royal undercuts downtown rent by roughly 17 percent while still sitting within a short commute of both downtown and Mile End, which is why it functions as a residential rather than a headquarters choice for most of the workers profiled here.

Performance and Benchmarks

Coworking cost is one of the clearest, most comparable benchmarks across Montreal's tech districts, because most operators publish monthly or daily pricing directly. *Table 2* compares representative desk and office pricing from operators headquartered in each of the four districts, alongside 2727 Coworking's Griffintown pricing, presented honestly on its own membership-inclusive basis rather than forced into an hourly rate.

OPERATOR (NEIGHBORHOOD)	ENTRY-LEVEL DESK	DEDICATED / FIXED DESK	PRIVATE OFFICE	NOTES
2727 Coworking (Griffintown)	\$300/month hot desk (24/7 access, gigabit internet, free conference room included, not billed hourly)	\$450/month dedicated desk	\$600 to \$3,000/month for closed offices (1 to 10 people)	Amenities (kitchen, showers, security, HVAC) bundled into the membership rather than metered separately (Source: 2727coworking.com)
La Piscine / Espace Rodier (Griffintown)	Included in fixed-office membership	Fixed-office membership with 8 hrs/week meeting room credit	Custom pricing for events and retreats	Nonprofit-backed, creative/cultural sector focus (Source: www.lapiscine.co)
Crew Collective & Café (Old Montreal / Downtown)	Day pass available	\$300/month floating desk; \$675/month dedicated desk	From \$6,000/month	Also offers a \$50/month P.O. Box and \$80/month business domiciliation plan (Source: crewcollectivecafe.com) (Source: crewcollectivecafe.com)
Montreal Cowork (Plateau-Mont-Royal)	Open coworking space	Private closed offices for up to 10	Virtual office and business address available	252 total workstations (Source: www.montrealcowork.com)
Blabla Studio (Plateau-Mont-Royal)	N/A	\$350/month fixed desk	\$450/month fixed desk with podcast studio access	12-workstation loft (Source: www.blablastudio.ca)
Halte 24-7 (Plateau-Mont-Royal)	\$32.50/day hotspot desk	\$249/month plus \$30/month for 24/7 access	N/A	Minimum 3-month contract; month-to-month rate \$299 (Source: www.halte24-7.com) (Source: www.halte24-7.com)

The table shows that entry-level desk pricing across Montreal's coworking market clusters tightly between roughly \$249 and \$350 per month, regardless of neighborhood, with Griffintown's 2727 Coworking at \$300 for a hot desk sitting squarely in that band while including a free conference room and 24/7 access as standard rather than as add-ons. Downtown's Crew Collective charges a comparable \$300 for its entry-level floating desk but scales sharply upward for dedicated desks and private offices, reflecting the premium associated with its Old Montreal heritage building and its central business-district location. Plateau operators, by contrast, tend to price slightly below Griffintown and Downtown at the entry tier, consistent with the borough's lower average residential and commercial rents documented in the CMHC data above.

Beyond coworking cost, commute performance is a second concrete axis of comparison. The REM's Griffintown-Bernard-Landry station will place the neighborhood 2 minutes from Central Station and 3 minutes from McGill station at peak frequency of one train every 2 minutes 30 seconds (Source: rem.info), while Mile-Ex commuters from Microsoft Research's or Mila's buildings reach downtown by metro or bus in a comparable window given the neighborhood's position along the Blue and Orange lines' feeder routes. On internet infrastructure specifically, 2727 Coworking in Griffintown advertises gigabit-speed connectivity as a standard, bundled amenity rather than a paid upgrade (Source: 2727coworking.com), a specification consistent with what most surveyed downtown WeWork and Crew Collective locations also provide as standard for coworking members.

Data Analysis and Evidence

Compensation data offers the clearest quantitative picture of what it means, financially, to work in Montreal's tech sector regardless of neighborhood. As of July 2026, Levels.fyi reports a median total compensation of **CA\$112,945** for software engineers in Montreal, with a 25th to 75th percentile range of **CA\$89,030 to CA\$146,142** and a 90th percentile of **CA\$202,834** (Source: www.levels.fyi). That places Montreal third among Canadian

metros in the same dataset, behind Vancouver (**CA\$172,839**) and Toronto (**CA\$140,442**), but ahead of Calgary (**CA\$113,253**) (Source: www.levels.fyi). Within Montreal specifically, **Shopify** is the highest-paying employer in the dataset, with a median total compensation of **CA\$220,010** for software engineers, more than double the citywide median (Source: www.levels.fyi).

Robert Half's 2026 salary data places Montreal software engineer and developer base compensation between **CA\$87,975** at the low end and **CA\$134,130** at the high end, describing the market as "2% higher than national average" (Source: www.roberthalf.com) (Source: www.roberthalf.com). PayScale's independent survey, based on 117 salary profiles, reports a considerably lower average base salary of **C\$81,383**, with a 10th to 90th percentile spread of **C\$61,000 to C\$103,000** (Source: www.payscale.com). The spread across these three sources, roughly \$81,000 to \$135,000 depending on methodology and sample composition, illustrates why compensation benchmarking should draw on multiple independent surveys rather than a single source; Levels.fyi's self-reported total compensation figures, Robert Half's staffing-agency placement data, and PayScale's smaller, base-salary-only survey are measuring related but distinct things.

On the employer side, CBRE's 2025 Scoring Tech Talent analysis, the industry's most widely cited North American benchmark, found Montreal's tech talent density at **7.9 percent** of the total workforce, trailing Ottawa (12 percent), Waterloo (11.7 percent), Toronto (10.7 percent), and Vancouver (8.9 percent), but roughly on par with Quebec City (8.4 percent) and Calgary (7.9 percent) (Source: www.waterlooeedc.ca). Montreal's tech talent pool grew 6.9 percent over the measurement period, slower than Calgary (61.1 percent) or Waterloo (58.2 percent) but ahead of Edmonton (negative 1.2 percent) and Quebec City (negative 1.1 percent) (Source: www.waterlooeedc.ca). Critically for employers weighing where to expand, CBRE's estimated one-year operating cost for a benchmark tech workforce in Montreal is **\$37.5 million**, the joint-lowest among the eight Canadian cities in the analysis alongside Quebec City, compared with \$41.7 million in Vancouver and \$41.4 million in Toronto (Source: www.waterlooeedc.ca).

Real estate figures reinforce the affordability finding at the neighborhood level. Statistics Canada's quarterly rent survey found Montreal's average asking rent for a two-bedroom apartment reached **\$1,930** in the first quarter of 2025, up 70.8 percent from **\$1,130** in the first quarter of 2019, and ranking 17th among Canadian census metropolitan areas, well below Vancouver (\$3,170), Toronto (\$2,690), Victoria (\$2,680), and Ottawa (\$2,490) (Source: www150.statcan.gc.ca). Downtown office vacancy sat at approximately 17.8 to 18.0 percent through 2025 per CBRE (Source: www.cbre.ca), while the Greater Montreal Area's overall office vacancy rose slightly to 17.2 percent in the first quarter of 2026 per Colliers (Source: www.collierscanada.com). The modest discrepancy between the two figures (17.8 to 18.0 percent downtown-only versus 17.2 percent region-wide, measured roughly a year apart) reflects both the different geographic scope of each report and normal quarter-to-quarter movement in a market CBRE itself describes as approaching a "vacancy ceiling" (Source: www.cbre.ca).

Case Studies and Real-World Examples

Mila and the Mile-Ex AI Cluster

Mila's relocation to a purpose-built, 90,000-square-foot facility in Mile-Ex in January 2019 is the single most consequential real estate decision in the recent history of Montreal's tech geography. The institute, a partnership between the Université de Montréal and McGill University, was designed to house roughly 700 people, including 350 researchers, when it opened, according to president and CEO Valérie Pisano (Source: montrealgazette.com). Mila's scientific director, Yoshua Bengio, welcomed Microsoft Research's subsequent decision to relocate across the street, stating that the move was "good for the AI ecosystem and for collaborations between all its actors" (Source: www.newswire.ca). Montreal's then-mayor, Valérie Plante, described the cluster as reaffirming "the city's emerging position as a global leader in artificial intelligence" (Source: www.newswire.ca). Today, Mila counts more than 1,400 researchers and experts under its umbrella, according to Montreal International (Source: www.montrealinternational.com).

Ubisoft Montreal's Two Decades in Mile End

Ubisoft opened its Montreal studio in 1997 in the old Peck Building at St-Laurent Boulevard and St-Viateur Street, originally envisioned as a 500-person operation; by its 20th anniversary in 2017, it employed 3,000 people, a quarter of the French company's international workforce at the time (Source: www.cbc.ca). Ubisoft's vice-president of communications and human resources, Cédric Orvoine, described the balance the company tries to strike as "kind of a fine balance, in terms of social communities, of businesses and in terms of cultural presence" (Source: www.cbc.ca). The relationship has not been without friction: long-time Mile End resident Yumna Siddiqi told CBC the changes predated Ubisoft but that "it's become much more expensive and very, very trendy" as a result of the studio's growth (Source: www.cbc.ca). As of mid-2026, Ubisoft's global workforce stood at 16,590 people as of March 31, 2026, and the company announced in June 2026 that it would reassign 170 Montreal employees away from

Rainbow Six Siege projects as part of a broader restructuring that also closed its Belgrade and Winnipeg studios, affecting about 2.3 percent of its total workforce (Source: gameworldobserver.com) (Source: gameworldobserver.com). The episode is a reminder that even Montreal's most established tech-adjacent employers are not immune to the volatility affecting the global games and technology industry.

Notman House's Rise and Closure as Montreal's Original Startup Hub

Notman House, a heritage building at 51 Sherbrooke Street West near the Golden Square Mile, served since its founding by Real Ventures and the OSMO Foundation in 2011 as, in BetaKit's words, "the only such hub in Montréal," acting as a nexus for the city's emerging tech industry through coworking space and the popular Café OSMO (Source: betakit.com). By December 2023, the OSMO Foundation owed **\$323,000** in unpaid mortgage fees to the Business Development Bank of Canada and Investissement Québec, out of a total of **\$6,853,630** lent to Osmo since 2012, according to BetaKit's reporting (Source: betakit.com) (Source: betakit.com). A former Notman campus manager, Emma Williams, said "the community cares a lot about Notman House because they built it with blood, sweat, and tears" (Source: betakit.com). By 2025, Notman House had in fact shut down as a startup hub and was in the process of converting to the Notman Philanthropy House, with only the OSMO x MARUSAN café remaining open, according to the organization's own website (Source: notman.org). The closure underscores that Montreal's tech real estate landscape is not static, and that a single legacy hub cannot be assumed to remain available indefinitely, reinforcing why founders now spread across multiple districts, including Griffintown and District 3, rather than concentrating in one heritage building.

District 3's Accelerator Model Inside Downtown Concordia

District 3, founded in 2013 within Concordia University's Faubourg building in downtown Montreal, has since supported more than 1,400 startups and generated more than \$573 million in combined sales and fundraising for its portfolio, while sustaining an average of more than 500 active jobs per year across its startup community (Source: district3.co) (Source: district3.co) (Source: en.wikipedia.org). The accelerator was funded in part by a \$1 million grant from André Desmarais and France Chréien Desmarais, according to Wikipedia's summary of its founding (Source: en.wikipedia.org). District 3 illustrates downtown's continuing role as an incubation venue for very early-stage founders who want proximity to a major research university without paying market office rates.

Microsoft Research's Two-Prong Real Estate Strategy Between Mile-Ex and Downtown

Microsoft's decision in September 2018 to relocate its research lab from downtown to a new, 31,610-square-foot facility at 6795 Marconi Street in Mile-Ex, while explicitly retaining its commercial sales office in the downtown central business district, is a clean illustration of how large technology employers now split their Montreal footprint deliberately by function rather than concentrating everything in one district (Source: www.newswire.ca). Canderel associate Eric Cordon called the relocation confirmation of the building's role as "the preeminent office complex in the global hub for artificial intelligence research, Montreal's Mile-Ex" (Source: www.newswire.ca). Montreal International's president and CEO, Hubert Bolduc, framed the move as reinforcing "Montreal's unique position and reputation as a global leader in the field of artificial intelligence" (Source: www.newswire.ca).

Implications and Future Directions

The clearest structural trend across these five case studies is functional specialization by district rather than convergence toward a single "best" Montreal tech neighborhood. Microsoft's explicit two-prong strategy, research in Mile-Ex, sales downtown, is likely to be replicated by other mid-size and large employers as the AI research cluster around Mila continues to mature and as Montreal's downtown office market continues bifurcating between a scarce set of AAA towers at 6.0 percent vacancy and a much softer broader market at 17.2 to 18.0 percent vacancy (Source: www.cbre.ca).

The completion of the REM's Griffintown-Bernard-Landry station is likely to be the single most significant near-term infrastructure change affecting where tech workers choose to base themselves, since it will cut the neighborhood's current 5-to-10-minute walk to Charlevoix metro down to a same-station transfer reaching Central Station in roughly 2 minutes (Source: rem.info). Given that Griffintown already recorded the metropolitan area's fastest population growth in the most recent census period (Source: www.cbc.ca), improved rail access is likely to accelerate both residential demand and coworking supply in the district over the remainder of the decade.

The Notman House closure is a cautionary counterpoint: a single legacy hub, however storied, is not a permanent fixture, and the Montreal ecosystem's continued reliance on multiple parallel venues, District 3 downtown, 2727 Coworking and La Piscine in Griffintown, and the corporate labs clustered around Mila in Mile-Ex, appears more structurally resilient than concentration in any one address. On compensation, the persistent gap

between Montreal's median software engineer pay (CA\$112,945 per Levels.fyi) and Toronto's or Vancouver's (Source: www.levels.fyi) is likely to continue functioning as both a headwind for talent retention and a structural advantage for employer cost efficiency, consistent with CBRE's finding that Montreal offers the lowest or joint-lowest estimated one-year operating cost among Canada's largest tech markets (Source: www.waterlooeedc.ca).

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Is Griffintown or Mile-Ex better for a tech company? The two districts serve different needs. Griffintown offers denser, more affordable coworking supply (2727 Coworking's hot desks from \$300 per month) (Source: 2727coworking.com) and the metropolitan area's fastest recent population growth (Source: www.cbc.ca), making it well suited to startups and remote-first teams. Mile-Ex offers unmatched proximity to Mila and corporate AI research labs including Microsoft Research and, historically, Element AI (Source: tgta.ca), making it the better choice specifically for AI and machine learning teams.

What are the best coworking spaces in Montreal for startups? Beyond 2727 Coworking in Griffintown, notable options include La Piscine's Espace Rodier (also Griffintown, creative and cultural sector focus) (Source: www.lapiscine.co), District 3 inside Concordia University downtown, which has supported more than 1,400 startups since 2014 (Source: district3.co), and Crew Collective & Café in Old Montreal, named the world's most beautiful coworking space by Forbes (Source: www.mtl.org).

Where do AI startups work in Montreal? The large majority cluster around Mila's 90,000-square-foot facility and the adjacent O Mile-Ex complex in the Mile-Ex neighborhood, which has been described by its developer as Canada's largest AI hub and has hosted Element AI, Rogue Research, and multiple other AI and multimedia tenants (Source: tgta.ca).

What is a good coworking or virtual office option for a Montreal tech company that needs a registered business address? Several operators bundle business-address or virtual office services into their memberships: Crew Collective & Café offers a P.O. Box at \$50 per month and a full-service business domiciliation plan at \$80 per month (Source: crewcollectivecafe.com) (Source: crewcollectivecafe.com); Montreal Cowork in the Plateau explicitly lists virtual offices and business address service among its offerings (Source: www.montrealcowork.com); and ECTO's cooperative membership includes a registered address option (Source: ecto.coop).

What is the best area to live in Montreal for a software engineer? For workers prioritizing lower rent and residential character while remaining within commuting distance of both downtown and Mile-Ex, Plateau-Mont-Royal's average rent of \$1,433 across all unit types undercuts downtown's \$1,724 by roughly 17 percent (Source: www03.cmhc-schl.gc.ca) (Source: www03.cmhc-schl.gc.ca), while Griffintown's Walk Score of 96 and Bike Score of 97 suit workers who want car-free access to canal-side coworking (Source: www.walkscore.com).

Conclusion

Montreal does not have a single best neighborhood for tech workers; it has four districts that specialize. Griffintown offers the highest concentration of startup-friendly coworking space at competitive monthly pricing, anchored by operators such as 2727 Coworking, and continues to absorb the fastest population growth of any part of the metropolitan area. Mile-Ex and adjoining Mile End remain the undisputed center of gravity for artificial intelligence research and applied AI companies, anchored by Mila and corporate labs from Microsoft and Google DeepMind. Downtown Montreal retains the scale, transit convergence, and enterprise employer base that startups eventually graduate into, even as its office vacancy sits close to a market-wide ceiling. Plateau-Mont-Royal, meanwhile, functions as the affordable residential base from which many of the city's independent developers commute into the other three districts. The right choice depends on what a given worker or company is optimizing for: coworking density and growth momentum favor Griffintown; research proximity favors Mile-Ex; corporate scale favors downtown; and residential affordability favors the Plateau. Given Montreal's comparatively low operating costs, its dense AI research base, and its improving transit infrastructure, all four districts are likely to remain viable, differentiated answers to the underlying question well beyond 2026.

Tags: montreal tech neighborhoods, griffintown coworking, mile-ex montreal, montreal ai hub, montreal coworking spaces, montreal virtual office, downtown montreal coworking, plateau mont-royal, montreal software engineer salary, 2727 coworking

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