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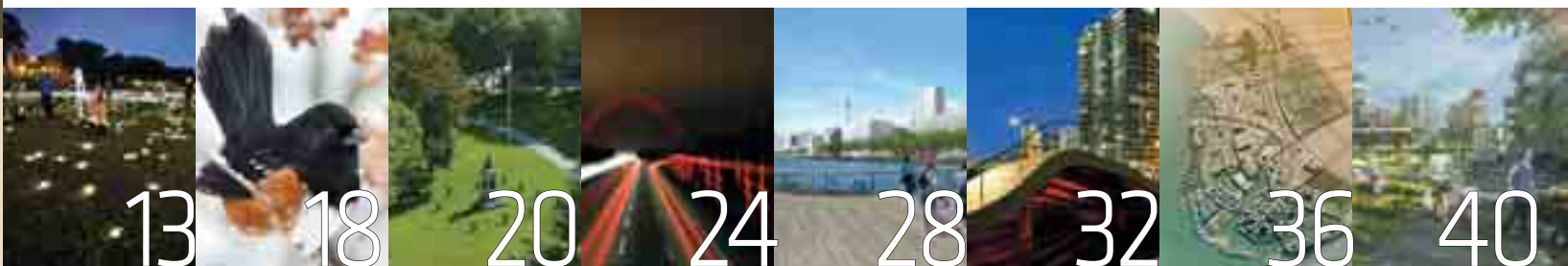
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Toronto Central Waterfront Aerial Plan
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WENDY GRAHAM



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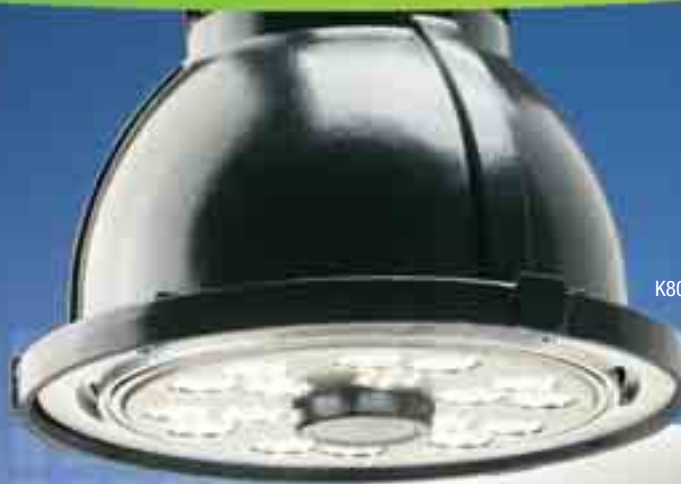
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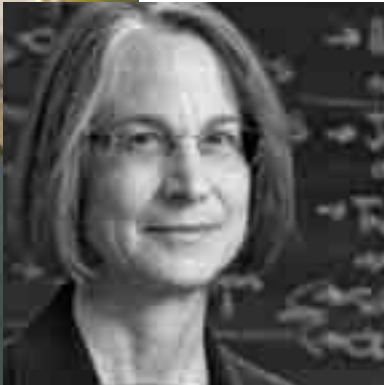


**“Ecology is urbanization
and urbanization is ecology.”**
« L'écologie est l'urbanisation
et l'urbanisation est
l'écologie. »

...MICHAEL HOUGH

THE ELUSIVE CITY LA VILLE INSAISSISSABLE

JEAN TROTTIER + CYNTHIA GIRLING
GUEST EDITORS | RÉDACTEURS INVITÉS



EN_

THE 21ST CENTURY city is elusive – ever-evolving, complex, diverse and resistant to characterization. It is fitting, then, that urban design remains such an ambiguous nexus of ideas, practices, and professions. Landscape architects' greatest contribution lies, perhaps, in our ability to reframe this urban project. Moriyama & Teshima Planners / SOM / Buro Happold's master plan for the King Abdullah Economic City and West 8 / DTAH's plan for Toronto's waterfront are both stellar examples of "big picture" urbanism informed by regional landscape phenomena. At the other end of the spectrum, Gordon Smith and Steffen Käubler remind us that urbanism owes much to small town planning, a sentiment echoed by Ron Williams' review of Colonial Maritime Towns.

What strikes us most in the projects reviewed in this issue of LP is the extent to which the old city-nature dualism has given way to a more holistic, hybrid conception of urbanity. As Ken Greenberg and Michael Van Valkenburgh argue, landscape may be the great synthesizing element here. This is certainly evident in their scheme for Toronto's Lower Don Lands as well as in Phillips Farevaag Smallerberg / Perkins + Will's proposal for the Edmonton City Centre Airport.

Whether it is visualizing urban futures, re-imagining infrastructure, engaging the public or designing for wildlife, the projects included in this issue show the strong, clear, and purposeful hand of landscape architects. As Doug Carlyle writes: "If we want to create great places, we need to speak out loudly and get involved fearlessly... Bring along passion and knowledge, to design places that are innovative, sustainable and humanistic in concept and in execution."

FR_

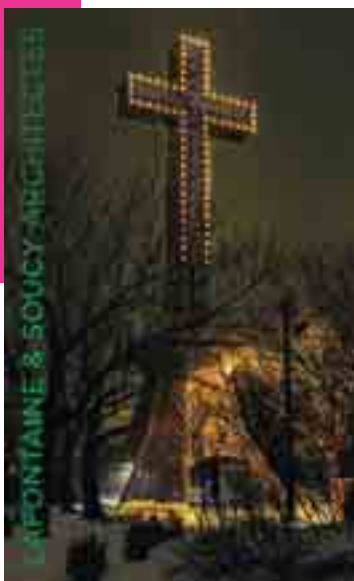
LA VILLE DU XXI^e siècle est insaisissable – en constante évolution, complexe, diversifiée et résistante à la caractérisation. Il convient donc que le design urbain demeure un carrefour ambigu des idées, des pratiques et des professions. La plus grande contribution des architectes paysagistes réside peut-être dans notre capacité à recadrer ce projet urbain. Le plan directeur de Moriyama & Teshima Planners/SOM/Buro Happold pour la cité économique du roi Abdullah et le plan de West 8/DTAH pour le front d'eau de Toronto sont d'excellents exemples d'urbanisme « holistique » informé par des phénomènes de paysages régionaux. À l'autre extrémité du spectre, Gordon Smith et Steffen Käubler nous rappellent que l'urbanisme doit beaucoup à la planification des petites villes, sentiment partagé par Ron Williams dans son examen des villes des Maritimes.

Ce qui nous frappe le plus dans les projets examinés dans ce numéro de LP, c'est la mesure dans laquelle l'ancien dualisme ville-nature a cédé la place à une approche plus globale et hybride de l'urbanité. Comme Ken Greenberg et Michael Van Valkenburgh le soutiennent, le paysage peut être le grand élément de synthèse. C'est certainement évident dans leur plan pour les Lower Don Lands de Toronto, ainsi que dans la proposition de Phillips Farevaag Smallerberg/Perkins + Will pour l'aéroport d'Edmonton.

Que ce soit pour visualiser un futur urbain, repenser l'infrastructure, faire participer le public ou concevoir en fonction de la faune, les projets inclus dans ce numéro montrent la main ferme et délibérée des architectes paysagistes. Comme Doug Carlyle l'a écrit : « Si nous voulons créer des lieux formidables, nous avons besoin de parler à haute voix et de nous impliquer sans crainte... Apportez votre passion et vos connaissances pour concevoir des lieux qui sont novateurs, durables et humanistes dans leur concept et dans leur exécution. »

KING ABDULLAH ECONOMIC
CITY, SEE|VOIR P 36
IMAGE SOM + MORIYAMA + TESHIMA

UPFRONT PROLOGUE



MONUMENTAL RESTORATION

WENDY GRAHAM

1 2004: LA VILLE DE MONTRÉAL DÉCIDE DE RESTAURER LA CROIX QUI DOMINE DEPUIS 80 ANS LE MONT ROYAL. **2** LES TRAVAUX COMMENCENT - RESTAURATION DE LA CHARPENTE D'ACIER (2008), REMPLACEMENT DU SYSTÈME D'ÉCLAIRAGE (2009), SOCLE, BASE ET L'AMÉNAGEMENT PAYSAGER (2010-12). **3** LE NOUVEAU SOCLE PERMET AU VISITEUR DE SE TENIR SOUS LA CROIX. **4** ACHÈVEMENT DES TRAVAUX À L'AUTOMNE 2012. LA CROIX EMBLÉMATIQUE S'ILLUMINE À NOUVEAU.

COLLABORATION LUCE LAFONTAINE (ARCHITECTURE), GENIVAR (GÉNIE), NIP PAYSAGE (ARCHITECTURE DE PAYSAGE) + WENDY GRAHAM, VDM (GESTION DU PROJET)

PHOTOS COLLECTION WENDY GRAHAM

GROW OP

VICTORIA TAYLOR, OALA



LP+

“Playfulness should be taken far more seriously”

- DAN GRAHAM



LUNCH MEET

ADAM VASILEVICH, BCSLA, CIP, PIBC

LAST SUMMER, EVERY Thursday in July, a half block of Abbott Street in downtown Vancouver was transformed into a place for people – people happily sharing a communal outdoor meal right on the street, while local musicians entertained. The Thursday Lunch Meets were an exercise in place making in an area with no benches to sit on, no places to stop and meet. And the idea worked brilliantly. Lunch Meet became a place to start conversations and share experiences—the first step to building a community.

Lunch Meet was developed by the Vancouver Public Space Network (VPSN) in collaboration with Space2Place, a local Landscape Architecture firm located down the street from the Lunch Meet site. “The staff at Space2Place were excited about this project because it gave us an opportunity to make connections with the interesting mix of businesses in the Gastown and Crosstown neighbourhoods,” said Jeff Cutler. “We thought we could bring some place-making experience to the project as Landscape Architects.”

Lunch Meet grew out of VPSN's five-year tradition of street parties, held with portable sound systems. The VPSN has developed a series of events in partnership with the City of Vancouver's Viva Vancouver program to spur interaction on the streets. The VPSN is a grassroots collective that believes that place making activities can lead to a more dynamic street life and more walkable, livable cities. This includes developing community-friendly urban design, fostering public dialogue and democratic debate, and devising creative ways to re-green the neglected corners, alleys and forgotten spaces of the city.

PHOTOS 1+2 SPACE2PLACE

ADAM VASILEVICH is a Landscape Architect, Planner and former Chair of the Vancouver Public Space Network. aav@telus.net



ELEMENTAL, EPHEMERAL

TORONTO'S QUEEN WEST community is celebrating spring with the four-day Gladstone Grow Op: Exploring Landscape and Place (25–28 April 2013). Play is the order of the weekend. To mark opening night, GROUND magazine/OALA is hosting a Public Forum, “Playing with the Landscape: Making Art in the Open.” Throughout the event weekend, Grow Op's selected artists and designers are showcasing creative approaches to landscape, gardens and art: from painting, sculpture and video to plants, live chickens, workshops, and an offsite urban sound walk. To celebrate Grow Op's exploration of new territories and new ways of expression, we are posting the catalogue for all CSLA members to enjoy. For a glimpse of projects from the prosaic to the poetic... the elemental to the ephemeral... visit LP+ <http://bit.ly/V63X5R>

GLOW IN THE PARK (SCOTIABANK NUIT BLANCHE, TORONTO, 2012), INSTALLATION BY ROBERT CRAM + JACLYN BLUMAS. PHOTOS 1 ANDRIJA DIMITRIJEVIC (ADPHOTOGRAPHE) VICTORIA TAYLOR coordinated the Grow Op exhibition. Victoria.taylor@sympatico.ca





PARK(ING) DAY POPS-UP MONICA GIESBRECHT



ON A SEPTEMBER morning in 2012, colourful balloons floated ten feet above Winnipeg's Main Street beckoning to curious commuters. They soon noticed waving grasses too, filling a space normally reserved for cars. What was this whimsical oasis amidst the city's familiar concrete canyons? A comfortable, lively outdoor patio, complete with a hot lips sofa and playful cubes, covered the worn paving of the parking stall and engulfed the sidewalk in front of Parlour Coffee and Berns & Black Hair Salon. Students, daycare kids, strolling seniors and suits couldn't help but wander into the space. Once inside and sheltered from eight lanes of traffic by the lush cattail screen, friendly neighbourhood LAs explained that Park(ing) Day had blossomed on the street. Park(ing) Day is a global event that promotes "public open space awareness one parking stall at a time," explained local LA Bhavana Bonde, who orchestrated the one-day event with the Winnipeg Design Festival and Storefront Manitoba. The parkettes had sprouted because such public spaces make us feel good; because they bring more business to our local shops; because they encourage us to meet and talk. The Manitoba Association of Landscape Architects (MALA) produced one of the most engaging installations, coordinated by

Monica Giesbrecht. Volunteers questioned each visitor. "If you could remove some of the surface parking from the downtown, what do you think it should be filled with instead?" The answers were posted on fluorescent adhesive notes all over the parking meters on the block. Some were cheeky ("more hot lips"); some practical ("better lighting," "more green space") and some big picture ("a bike network," "green infrastructure," "interconnected parks"). By the end of the six-hour installation, volunteers had talked to 200+ people and gathered 60 ideas to be forwarded to the city. Meanwhile local media, intrigued by the Pop-up Patio, brought this idea to thousands more. The sea of surface parking in downtown Winnipeg will not evaporate overnight but a new consciousness is developing. Come September 2013, MALA encourages all our counterparts across Canada to take over a parking stall and share their bright urban ideas with the public. Start planning today at parkingday.org.

THE TEAM: Monica Giesbrecht coordinator of the MALA pop-up + staff of HTFC, Smith Carter, Scatliff Miller Murray, FT3, City of Winnipeg, Manitoba Conservation. mgiesbrecht@htfc.mb.ca

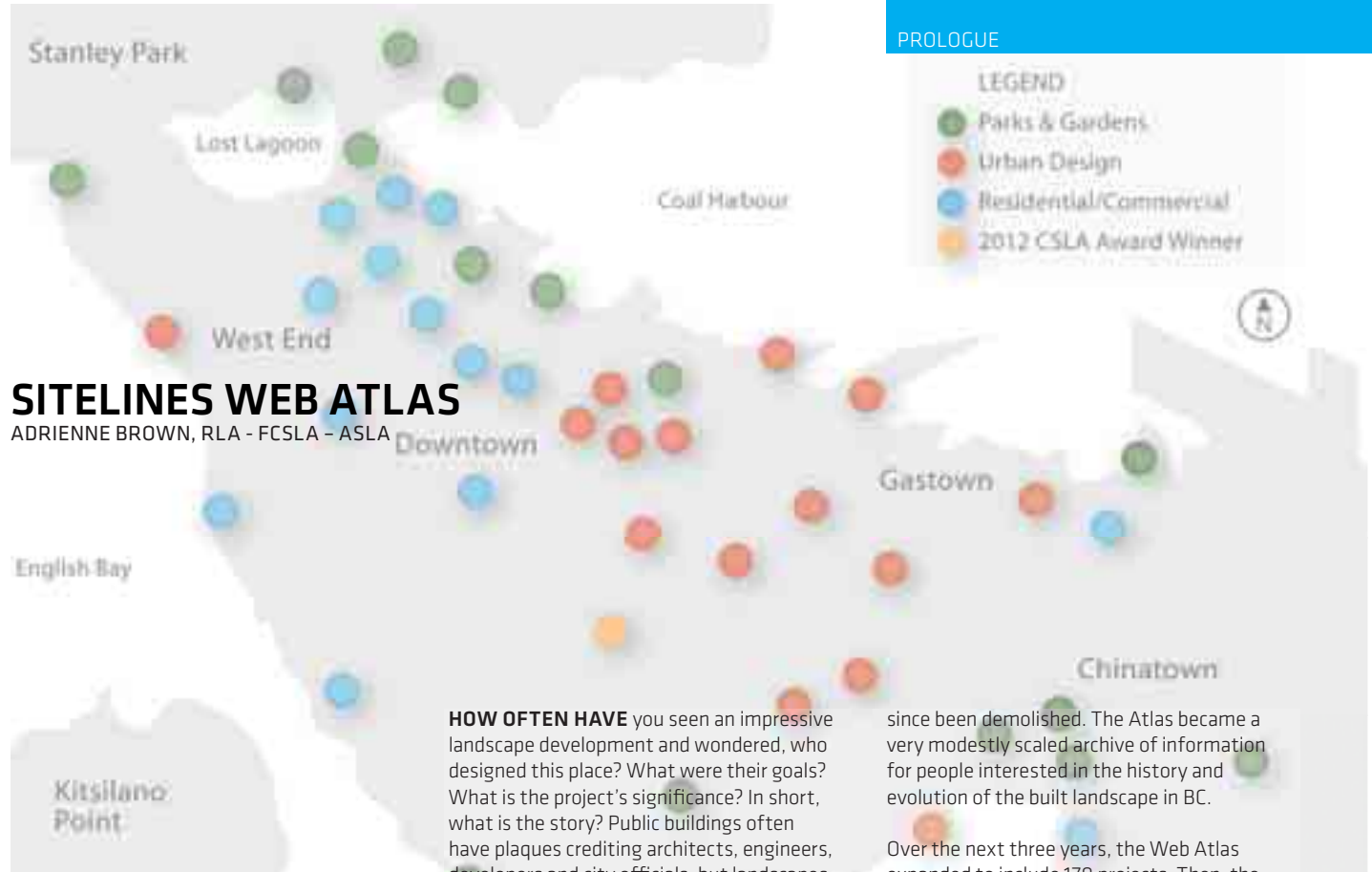


LENTICULAR CURTAIN LISA RAPOPORT, OAA, MRAIC, LEED AP

WHEN HARBOURFRONT CENTRE hosted the 2012 exhibition, Breathtaking: Constructed Views, it set out to question "the role of architecture in our experience of nature." At Plant Architect, we took the question a step further. We wanted to explore a fusion of architecture and landscape that obliterates the threshold between the two. Lenticular Curtain is a moving and inhabitable architectural construction of a landscape. The 10.5-foot-square constructs a Parry Sound forest using four images (one per side), each composed of image strips. Each image is repeated on multiple, precisely positioned, layers, with alternating image strips missing. Standing outside and looking dead on, the entire image coalesces into one and we look into the forest, but as we move from side to side, the image has depth and is lenticular (the same principle as those old-fashioned plastic postcards that appear to show movement when we move our heads.)

As visitors move, the "forest" casts multiple shadows on the floor. This is a forest to be entered. The strips easily move aside, parting like a bead curtain, but with their weighted bottoms, they quickly return to position to maintain the sanctity and surprise of the interior experience – for the forest has concealed an ovoid interior space that is an expansive seascape (Peggy's Cove.) Inside, a fabric wrapped log bench invites visitors to sit, positioning them accurately to the horizon that seems to stretch to infinity. The lenticular effect here is especially pronounced – so immersive that some people almost felt vertigo, and exclaimed with surprise. Thus, landscape infuses the architecture... and the architecture inhabits and amplifies the landscape.

THE TEAM: Lisa Rapoport, Mary Tremain, Chris Pommer, Andrea Mantin, Lisa Dietrich, Lauren Barhydt, Zac Mollica, Peter Osborne + additional hanging volunteers: Amy Turner and Damian www.branchplant.com lisa@branchplant.com



SITELINES WEB ATLAS

ADRIENNE BROWN, RLA - FCSLA - ASLA



HOW OFTEN HAVE you seen an impressive landscape development and wondered, who designed this place? What were their goals? What is the project's significance? In short, what is the story? Public buildings often have plaques crediting architects, engineers, developers and city officials, but landscapes are rarely endowed with a public record.

My opportunity to do something about this came in 2004, when I took a mapping course as part of a mid-career upgrade. My assignment: to create a web atlas. It only took me a moment to decide the theme. Landscape Architecture was my first choice. BCSLA members contributed photographs of 60 of their completed projects, and I handed the resulting "Go Live" site in to my professor. In short order, it became apparent that the new website fit into the BCSLA's Professional and Public Relations program, so the following spring, the society linked the Web Atlas to its homepage. Over the next few months Landscape Architects across BC came forward with another 60 projects.

THE BUILDING PHASE

When it was first launched, the site consisted primarily of maps with links to projects, with some additional information on history and the province's degree program. Each project page showed the address, the date of completion, and the name of the firm or designer responsible for the landscape architectural component of a given project. Within the next year, I expanded this to include a project description. Residential garden design was excluded from the atlas in order to protect the privacy of individual clients, but all projects with a public component within BC were potential candidates. Since BCSLA had just celebrated its 40th Anniversary in 2004, I also recognized designs completed in the early 1960s, including examples of some that have

since been demolished. The Atlas became a very modestly scaled archive of information for people interested in the history and evolution of the built landscape in BC.

Over the next three years, the Web Atlas expanded to include 170 projects. Then, the BCSLA decided to launch a new website called Sitelines.org to formally separate promotional activities from regulatory ones. Sitelines.org was named after the BCSLA newsletter, which has been in circulation since the early 1970s. The new site, launched in 2008, became home to information about the profession: its history, professional degree programs, a suppliers' index, an on-line archive of the newsletter and the Web Atlas. More than 40 firms have contributed to the Web Atlas since its launch. The common project strengthens the sense of community among our members, although they compete in the marketplace year after year. BCSLA members continue to offer valuable feedback, including corrections and clarifications on the attribution of individual designs. Such input is crucial to the site's evolution, and an invaluable contribution to the historical record.

MOMENTS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Today, the Web Atlas homepage regularly features up to six projects grouped around a single theme, which changes a few times each year. (We've done greenways, waterfront parks, CSLA Awards and so on.) Now, the [Sitelines Web Atlas](http://Sitelines.org) has grown to include 240 projects on 7 maps. Since 2008, about 1,100 people have visited each month, logging 3000-4000 individual page views. In the coming years, we hope to add a search tool, additional maps and an improved overall layout to aid navigation. In the meantime, I enjoy corresponding with a wide variety of fellow landscape architects as part of the editing and incremental expansion of the site.

BACKGROUND SAMPLE WEB PAGE LUNA DESIGN.
VANCOUVER DOWNTOWN SITES: 1 GRANVILLE STREET
REDESIGN, PWL 2 AIR INDIA MEMORIAL, STANLEY PARK, LEES +
ASSOCIATES WITH CHRIS PHILLIPS

ADRIENNE BROWN has inspired a national initiative! A national web atlas for the CSLA is under development. adrienne@alaureldesign.ca

www.sitelines.org/webatlas/vandowntown



1

DOUGLAS CARLYLE, CSLA, FCSLA

RIDING THE C-TRAIN

CALGARY'S 7TH AVENUE LRT

FR_

À BORD DU C-TRAIN : LE TRAIN LÉGER DE LA 7^E AVENUE DE CALGARY

LE CORRIDOR DE transit de la septième avenue au cœur de Calgary a fait l'objet d'une remise en valeur qui l'a transformé en parc linéaire le long des voies du train léger (appelé C-Train). Ce boulevard intègre la rue avec les parcs, places et espaces dégagés.

ENG_

WHEN THE DOWNTOWN West-Kerby Station opened for transit service on December 10, 2012, it marked the completion of all stations in Calgary's downtown corridor. The 7TH Avenue Transit Corridor extends from 4 Street S.E. to 11 Street S.W. in the heart of downtown Calgary. With close to 700,000 passengers arriving and departing weekly, the two-km-long stretch is the focus of Calgary Transit's 50 km LRT network.

Federal, provincial and municipal governments contributed an estimated \$183.3 million to the 7TH Avenue Refurbishment Project over the past ten years. Seven stations were refurbished or constructed, with new stations now accommodating four-car trains. Technical

improvements included upgrading traction power and enabling improved train frequencies (from 3 minutes to 90 second headways, or 40 trains per hour.)

But for many Calgarians, it is the safety and aesthetic appeal of the downtown core that speaks most loudly. LRT patrons and pedestrians alike are enjoying wider sidewalks, improved lighting, and enhanced streetscapes – including sidewalks integrated directly from adjacent buildings onto each platform. On 7TH Avenue, elegant design is the rule. "It's not a platform beside a sidewalk – the platform IS the sidewalk," said Mac Logan, General Manager of Transportation of the City of Calgary.

Although work remains to be done, the upgrades and the city's overall prosperity are attracting development to underutilized sites along the Avenue, bringing more people to live, work and ride the C-train.

A CONDUIT BECOMES A BOULEVARD

From the beginning, the vision adopted by GEC Architecture, Sturgess Architecture and Dialog signaled a sea change in perspective. 7TH Avenue would be conceived as a linear park or boulevard through which the LRT

(C-train) travels, connecting Fort Calgary to the east with Millennium Park to the west. This boulevard would integrate the street with existing parks, plazas and open spaces along 7TH Avenue.

Designers removed the physical barriers between these places and planted trees in the right-of-way, creating a canopy and defining the pedestrian realm. The project specific designs of the streetscape furniture accentuates the overall boulevard character, and even the street elements such as power, overhead catenary and light poles are coordinated. To create a continuous sidewalk that merges seamlessly with the platforms, the design team incorporated long walkways with 5 percent slope, thereby integrating non-station walkways with the ground plane of station platforms (910 mm above the trackway). The sidewalks were finished in a uniform pattern, creating a straight forward ground plane from building face to curb. Wherever possible, the finished floor of building entrances was adjusted to equal the platform/sidewalk.

The LRT stations themselves are inspired echoes of a railway terminus, with high canopies of glass and steel that shelter



2

passengers and passersby. Stations with twinned platform canopies are positioned as gateways to downtown at east and west ends of the Avenue. Public art, commissioned under the City's Public Art Program, is integrated throughout.

TREES MATTER

Tree planting was an integral part of transforming the right-of-way to a boulevard – a decision widely supported by Calgarians. The constraints were many: a limited 66 foot right-of-way, a fixed dimension trackway, primary and local site utilities both above and below grade, LRT specific utilities and the limitations of encroaching on historic buildings. Construction logistics were also critical: disruptions to train operations needed to be minimized. The team searched for tree planting strategies in a series of customized infrastructure workshops. The key solution: a system of continuous large soil volumes under load bearing sidewalks. In the longer term, Transit and Urban Forestry agreed to maintain

the tree canopy as it matures, and manage live wire clearance zones.

Upgrades have indeed improved both LRT operations and the overall pedestrian experience, but the successes owe a great deal to the coming together of many discrete interests. As the project evolved, a restaurant opened a coffee-to-go fronting onto a platform, a large scale comprehensive development renovated its entrances to integrate with the platform, and at the Court of Queens Bench, the new station and Law Courts Park by Scatliff + Miller + Murray were integrated together. Improvements will hopefully continue, as the City focuses on strategies to add more life to the street: enabling food carts on platforms, for example, and reducing and eliminating bus operations in the long term. A gradual cultural transformation will enable a greater ease of pedestrian movement and overall vitality on the street.

<< The world seems to be looking for designers to help solve our complex problems in cities. Urban Design is a way of thinking about the design of cities, to create places that offer opportunity for an engaging community life. If we want to create great places, we need to speak out loudly and get involved fearlessly in our local and global communities. Bring along passion and knowledge, to design places that are innovative, sustainable and humanistic in concept and in execution. >>

... DOUG CARLYLE

CREDITS City of Calgary Transportation Infrastructure and Calgary Transit.
dcarlyle@designdialog.ca



1 7TH AVENUE TRANSIT CORRIDOR CARRIES 700,000 PASSENGERS WEEKLY **2** SIDEWALKS INTEGRATED DIRECTLY ONTO EACH PLATFORM **3** STATIONS ECHO A RAILWAY TERMINUS **4** THE CORRIDOR WAS CONCEIVED AS A LINEAR PARK | **1** LE CORRIDOR DE TRANSIT DE LA 7^E AVENUE VOIT PASSER 700 000 PERSONNES PAR SEMAINE **2** LES TROTTOIRS SONT INTÉGRÉS DIRECTEMENT À CHAQUE PLATEFORME **3** LES STATIONS RAPPELLENT UNE GARE **4** LE CORRIDOR A ÉTÉ CONÇU COMME UN PARC LINÉAIRE
PHOTOS 1+2 © RLEMERMEYER **3+4** DOUGLAS CARLYLE



3



4



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PATRICK MOONEY, FCSLA, ASLA + MARGO LONG, FCSLA

SONGBIRD CITY: VANCOUVER'S RIVER DISTRICT



5

FR_

VILLE AUX OISEAUX : LE QUARTIER RIVERAIN DE VANCOUVER

Comment s'y prend-t-on pour dessiner des habitats répondant aux exigences très pointues des oiseaux chanteurs qui fréquentent les paysages de quartier East Fraserlands de Vancouver? Patrick Mooney explique l'élaboration de la stratégie depuis ses débuts au printemps de 2005.

ENG_

HOW PRECISELY DO you design habitats that meet the exacting specifications of the songbirds that frequent the varied landscapes in and around Vancouver's East Fraserlands? For Patrick Mooney, it began with a careful analysis of what each avian species asked of its habitat. Mooney first classified all regional birds into guilds based on their foraging strategies and then linked the 12 guilds to 9 habitat types. But that is just one small part of the story. Patrick Mooney explains the development of the River Lands Songbird Strategy from its beginning in spring, 2005.

In April 2005, new urbanist architect Andres Duany came to Vancouver to lead a public design charrette on the site of the former Canadian White Pine lumber mill. The charrette, hosted by developer ParkLane Homes, was the public beginning of one of the last large developments in Vancouver, on the north shore of the Fraser River. Just three years later, the CSLA recognized PWL's master plan of the area with a 2008 National Honour Award. This 130-acre, 1.5-km waterfront parcel, now named the River District, is transforming into a mixed-use development housing 7,000 people.

DEVELOPMENT WITH A DIFFERENCE

From that initial charrette, it was clear that the developers and planners envisioned something out of the ordinary. The charrette participants included not only a long list of professionals, but a vigorous representation of local residents as well, who repeatedly pushed the design team to incorporate habitat for salmon and other species into this urban, brownfield site. Landscape architects Don Wuori (BCSLA) and Patrick Mooney attended as well, and long before ParkLane/Wes Group approached the city for a development permit, their planning group (Holland-Barrs, now HB Lanarc) had hired the two landscape architects to consult on what was to become a *Songbird Strategy*.

Over the next year, Mooney supplied regional species-habitat modelling and he, Wuori and Holland-Barr staff translated that scientific material into a design proposal that became part of the development proposal. It was thereafter a key component of the PWL master plan, which was designed to mitigate past environmental impacts through sustainable site planning and landscape design.

CLOCKWISE 1 SITE PLAN INCLUDES MULTIPLE SONGBIRD HABITATS + A RIVERFRONT DESIGNED FOR PEDESTRIANS **(2)** WITH VIEW CORRIDORS TO THE WATER **3** SPOTTED TOWHEE **4** WILSON'S WARBLER **5** HOUSE FINCH **1** PLAN D'AMÉNAGEMENT INCORPORANT DE MULTIPLES HABITATS POUR LES OISEAUX CHANTEURS + UNE RIVE CONÇUE POUR LES PIÉTONS **(2)** AVEC DES CORRIDORS DONNANT UNE VUE SUR L'EAU **3** TOHI TACHETÉ **4** PARULINE À CALOTTE NOIRE **5** ROSELIN FAMILIER
PHOTOS 1+3 PWL PARTNERSHIP LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS **2+4** JOHN LOWMAN



3

A STRATEGY THAT'S FOR THE BIRDS

The *Songbird Strategy* is intended to maximize avian diversity. Mooney classified the birds into 12 guilds and linked them to 9 habitat types. He described the characteristics that maximize habitat quality and avian use for each habitat type and also included a catalogue of native plants describing their ecological requirements, habitat value and suggested use in habitats. The data were then incorporated into the Urban Songbird Design Guidelines.

Since birds would not be the only users of the site, however, planners also considered such important design elements as views, both for aesthetics and for crime prevention. For example, the design guidelines specified that view cones would define the placement of songbird habitat patches. The site was divided into sub-areas, and the proposed habitat of each was designated. The waterfront walkway was envisioned as a musical score in which the user would encounter alternating wild habitat gardens and formal gardens using non-native plants. At the water's edge "messy" native shrubs could be used and Black Cottonwood trees would be planted in clusters to avoid blocking views. The planting strategy not only reinforced the *Songbird Strategy*; it also contributed to foreshore restoration of the Fraser River, a critical environment for important salmon species.

Throughout the development of the Master Plan, PWL Partnership worked with the City and the development team to further enrich the environment for songbirds, whether on the riverfront itself, or in parks, on greenways and streets. It is too early to assess the results, but as the project builds out, songbird counts will be taken and new habitats measured, to ensure the vision is being met and offer a model to other metro development sites.

INVESTING IN SONGBIRDS

In 2011 the Vancouver Art Gallery ran an exhibition called *WE: Vancouver – 12 Manifestos for the City*. ParkLane Homes participated with *Making Space for Song*: an exhibit that described ParkLane as "the first developer to have invested in a strategy to protect existing songbird habitat along the edge of a river and to integrate urban songbird habitats into a community landscape." This announcement indicates the value of River District songbirds to the public and potential buyers. The landscape architects who championed the Songbird Strategy believe that developers can continue to benefit from the landscape guidelines if site planning, design and development are undertaken from this inclusive perspective. Strategies that benefit songbirds contribute to regional sustainability and don't cost more. (They may in fact reduce maintenance costs.) And while planning for songbirds may seem complex, the community will exhibit the marriage of art and science in design. As landscape architects, all our solutions must be multi-functional, deliberate, appropriate and meaningful if they are to help heal the environment.

The waterfront walkway was envisioned as a musical score... | La promenade de la rive a été envisagée comme une partition musicale...



4

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2

MY FAVOURITE URBAN PLACE

<< Our favourite urban places are those which make us feel that the day is full of endless potential. They create a lump in our throats, and make our hearts beat faster, when we are there... >>

...ATELIER ANONYMOUS

LP INVITED OUR authors to share their favourite “lump in the throat” urban haunts. Now – it’s your turn!

POST YOURS ON FACEBOOK!

Atelier Anonymous

... continued... They are places where the city seems to stand still, no matter what time of the day, and we are lost in a moment... They are places which are at the heart of a community, where people have taken ownership of them. They are an oasis within the city. Many of the small squares in Barcelona (Barcelonetta) elicit these emotions. But on a recent trip back to New York we found a sense of elation spending a few wonderful summer hours in **2 BRYANT PARK**.

Doug Carlyle

What is my favourite urban place? It's part memory and part imagination. It's the conviviality of the Edmonton outdoor market on 4th Street in the summer, or the epicurean café on a busy Chicago street where the mounted police and couriers sip their mid-day espressos. It's the excitement of my children experiencing late night New York on the 4th of July. It's a bright sunny morning in St. John's, walking with a friend through quiet old neighbourhood streets with big views to the sea, past **6 FRONT DOORS** that are a celebration of colour. It's the smells and tastes of a late night dinner with friends on a crowded terrace on St. Denis. It's the surge of humanity on the Toronto subway's crowded Yonge line; it's “urban hiking” anywhere, exploring a new city. It's the pop-up shops and food carts; it's a glass of wine at the bar watching the river go by... and it's the neighbourhood where the world is a walk around the corner and down the street.

Steffen Käubler

One of my favorite urban places is a series of courtyards and buildings in a dense urban neighborhood of my birthplace **1 DRESDEN**, Germany. Filled with artisan shops, playgrounds, fountains and outdoor cafes, the courtyards playfully marry art, architecture and landscape design and create a quaint and quirky oasis in the midst of a bustling city. One of the highlights is the “Court of Water.” When rain starts to fall, the colourful drain and gutter system attached to the façade of a building turns into a delightful musical instrument that makes the passerby pause in even the most torrential of downpours.



1



3

Gordon Smith

Most people probably wouldn't consider **3 McCallum** an urban place. It has a population of under 120 and is only reachable by a coastal steamer along the south coast of Newfoundland. But it has all the characteristics of a city or town. So what if the wharf, the surrounding shanties and the one general store are the downtown? So what if the central square is the harbor? So what if the roads are wooden boardwalks and the only motorized vehicles in town are four ATVs? This is a dense community shaped by its surroundings, where people come to work and live together.

Ken Greenberg

One of my favorite urban places is **4 Victoria Memorial Square**, a hidden gem in a previously neglected part of Toronto where I live. From 1794 to 1863, it was the cemetery for the garrison of Fort York and contains approximately 500 graves, but since the 1880s, it has been operated by the City as a public park. My joy is watching it continue to evolve and improve as the rapidly growing mixed-use neighbourhood surrounding it comes to life. A community-led restoration has made improvements to the park – re-grading it, adding lighting and pathways, trees and plantings, furniture and playground. It is a visible public commemoration of the rich history it embodies.

Michael Van Valkenburgh

Like many emerging landscape architects who are very taken with the challenges of the contemporary city, I didn't want anything to do with Olmsted as a young designer. When I started to work on Teardrop Park in New York, however, the client had this idea that we should be making a place that captures the wildness of upstate New York. So, he encouraged me to go up to **5 Central Park** and look around. After spending a day there, I just kept thinking, "You dumb bastard, why did you not go look at this sooner?" Now it's my favorite urban place.

Patrick Mooney

7 Hinge Park is one of many places in my favourite urban open space, Vancouver's Southeast False Creek Waterfront. Designed by the PWL Partnership, this space has places for walking, biking, eating, resting, socializing or just viewing the water. It's for everyone and so it is intensively used. Additionally, its artful, sustainable design has created terrestrial and aquatic habitat.

Margot Long

2 Bryant Park is a fantastic landscape. As a restored derelict site turned civic asset, its history is the classic "rags to riches" New York story. This park has been designed to be flexible in use from the grand lawn which supports large events to the moveable chairs that office worker's use for al fresco lunches. Every imaginable kind of event has likely been accommodated here. Large-scale trees and dramatic perennial plantings reinforce the structure of the landscape and provide seasonal interest. The success of the park can be measured by its place in the hearts of all New Yorkers, and Canadians, too!



4, 5, 6, 7

favourite urban places...

Ron Williams

Of several favourite urban places, I'll choose the quirky and heterogeneous **8 PLACE D'YOUVILLE** in Quebec City. It's a complex plaza, roughly triangular in shape, always busy since it's strategically located on a sloping site where the main shopping street of Quebec City (rue St-Jean) passes through the old city wall. Surrounded by buildings and structures built over centuries, the space accommodates summer concerts and a skating rink. Two famous old theatres, both rejuvenated, face each other across the square; sidewalk cafés spill out here and there. It's a fascinating place to walk through or stay awhile in the *Vieille Capitale*.

Wendy Graham

My favorite urban places is not a place, it's a **9 PATHWAY** on the edge of Mount Royal's southeast escarpment. It never ceases to amaze me how I can find myself in the middle of a forest, on top of a mountain – in the heart of the bustling city of Montreal. Perhaps it's because I have walked this slippery path so many times in the last thirty years that I've come to love it so. The variety of city views is never-ending and changes with the season: dramatic, open, filtered and closed. It's an experience of simultaneous connection and disconnection. From the forest, I see the city buzzing below and beyond. Quite simply, it makes me happy.

Jean Trottier

If you are fleeing Rome's winter chill, you'll end up making your last grand stand on the steps of **10 SANTA MARIA IN ARACOELI**, grudgingly conceding ground by bum-hopping upward towards the stoic wall of the basilica. There, thinly perched over two thousand years of magnificent ruins, you'll gasp, and then slowly descend into the city below, already dark and cool like a deep Canadian lake.

Cynthia Girling

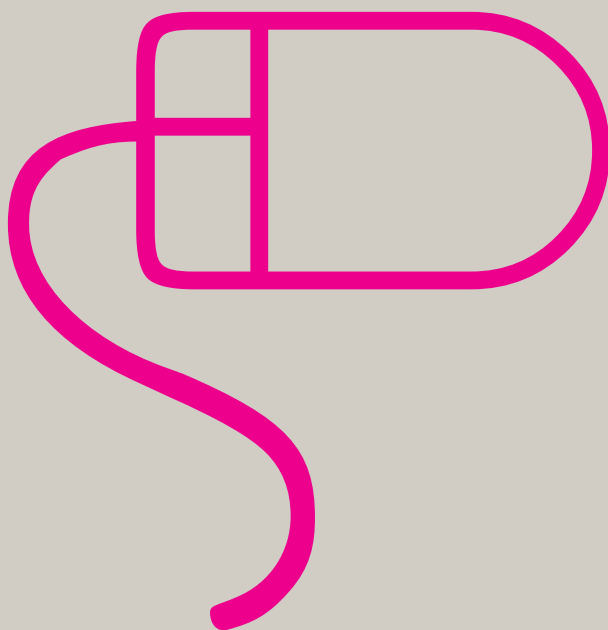
I love the crowded, complex, diverse, crazy, dangerous streets of **11 OLD AMSTERDAM**...bicycles absolutely everywhere, people riding five abreast along the paths and bikes piled upon each other along the edges...outdoor seating taking over the entirety of the narrow sidewalks...cars and trucks squeezing past one's chair...bicycles flying past, sometimes knocking into people...people standing and sitting, oblivious to the din, deep in conversation. It is rich, fun (yet annoying), risky and therefore exhilarating.

Nathan Brightbill

The **12 PARK BLOCKS IN PORTLAND, OR** have always been a special place to me because of their influence in drawing me toward landscape architecture. Prior to becoming a Landscape Architect, I spent several years in Portland and found myself spending a lot of time at the park blocks or Pioneer Square getting lunch from the food carts or meeting friends after work. People watching, festivals and performances were plentiful and the importance of these spaces to the vitality and walkability of downtown was clear. Time has only improved the Park Blocks with additions by Walker, Dreiseitl and Olin.



8, 9, 10, 11, 12



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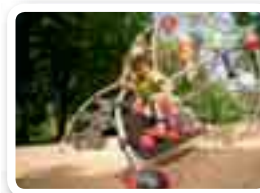
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LE DESIGN COMME OUTILS DE CONCERTATION



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LES IMAGES DES LAURÉATS DU CONCOURS INTERNATIONAL D'IDÉES YUL-MTL : PAYSAGES EN MOUVEMENT | THE THREE WINNERS OF THE COMPETITION, YUL-MTL LANDSCAPES IN MOTION 1 ©GILLES HANICOT, 2011: PRODUCTION CONSOMMATION 2 ©BROWN AND STOREY ARCHITECTS, 2011: UNDERCOVER MONTREAL 3 ©DLANDSTUDIO, 2011: INFRA-SUTURES

FR_
LE DÉVELOPPEMENT DES réseaux de transports routiers au 20^e siècle a créé l'éclatement des villes. Sans limites, les villes et les métropoles se sont étalées en territoires indéterminés. Dans l'expérience autoroutière d'une approche urbaine, il devient de plus en plus difficile de saisir la singularité des espaces traversés. Le territoire qui s'offre à la vue est bien souvent dénué d'expressions et de cohérences territoriales. Ces constats résultent souvent d'une absence de projets territoriaux et des impacts générés par les infrastructures de transport qui fragmentent, séparent et isolent les quartiers ou les entités paysagères. Le cas de Montréal est générique à d'autres métropoles à l'échelle internationale.

Aussi, le parcours international d'entrée de ville entre l'aéroport Trudeau et le centre-ville via l'autoroute 20 constitue-t-il une expérience négative. Banal, anonyme, gris, beige, déstructuré, sont parmi les qualificatifs les plus souvent entendus qui caractérisent le territoire de ce corridor d'entrée. Or, Montréal est reconnue à l'échelle internationale par son ouverture, sa créativité, son esprit « hip » et sa qualité de vie. Au moment où la métropole montréalaise célébrait le 5^e anniversaire de sa nomination au titre de « Ville UNESCO de design », il apparaissait urgent d'engager une réflexion sur les visions d'aménagement à privilégier pour réinventer ce territoire d'entrée de manière cohérente et y insuffler une nouvelle vitalité urbaine.



Au début de l'année 2011, la Chaire en paysage et environnement de l'Université de Montréal et la Chaire UNESCO en paysage et environnement en collaboration avec le ministère des Transports du Québec et les acteurs publics et privés rassemblés autour de la table de travail sur l'entrée de l'autoroute 20, entreprennent une recherche-action pour engager un processus de planification concertée en vue de requalifier l'aménagement de cette entrée autoroutière.

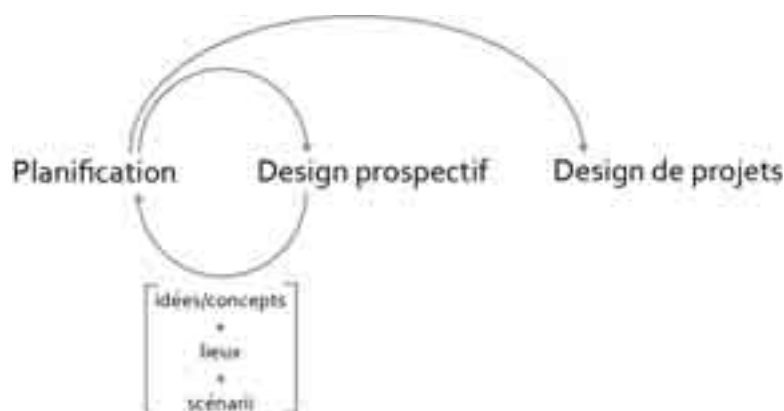
Cette démarche est singulière, car elle réunit au sein d'une table de travail des représentants de l'ensemble des organismes ayant un rôle dans la planification et le développement de ce territoire afin de produire une vision cohérente et concertée de l'aménagement des infrastructures

de transport et des milieux adjacents. De même, elle utilise les processus d'idéation, soit le concours international d'idées (YUL-MTL : paysages en mouvement) et l'atelier de design urbain et de création paysagère (WAT_UNESCO – Montréal) pour générer des propositions qui permettent de visualiser les contraintes et les potentiels du territoire et d'alimenter la concertation des acteurs locaux.

UNE VISION TERRITORIALE COMME ASSISE AUX EXERCICES D'IDÉATION

De manière à alimenter la programmation des deux exercices d'idéation, des entretiens individuels ont été menés, entre autres, auprès des représentants de la table de travail concernant les enjeux, préoccupations, aspirations et opportunités

de projet associés au corridor d'entrée de ville. La synthèse des informations colligées a permis de définir un énoncé de vision commun qui se dégage suivant trois principaux axes d'intervention. Le premier axe vise « un projet de paysage évolutif et emblématique pour la métropole » en créant une identité culturelle forte et distinctive qui tienne notamment compte de l'héritage industriel et du patrimoine urbain et porte une attention au design urbain. Un second concerne « une scénarisation des parcours d'expériences » marquant la progression vers le centre-ville, en développant plus de cohérence tout au long du parcours notamment en améliorant les interfaces entre les infrastructures de transport et le milieu riverain, le cadre de vie et en créant un environnement convivial et sécuritaire.



Un dernier vise « une démarche concertée de développement urbain durable » notamment par le verdissement, la mise en réseau des espaces naturels et la requalification des espaces résiduels.

Cette vision territoriale a été enchâssée dans le cahier d'appel à propositions du concours international d'idées YUL-MTL et formait la base des critères d'évaluation des propositions soumises. Par la suite, les enjeux d'aménagement ont été précisés pour les six secteurs d'interventions identifiés pour le WAT_UNESCO. Les deux exercices d'idéation ont permis de recueillir 61 propositions établissant des stratégies globales d'interventions (voir propositions lauréates du concours) ainsi que 12 propositions se penchant sur des secteurs de planification plus détaillés.

Afin de mieux comprendre la portée du contenu de ces propositions, une phase d'analyse a été réalisée pour produire une synthèse des résultats. La méthode retenue est basée sur la déconstruction de chacune des propositions en idées individuelles d'intervention. Ainsi, plus de 500 idées individuelles ont été repérées dans les propositions des concepteurs et regroupées en 47 familles d'interventions distinctes.

L'IDÉATION COMME OUTIL DE PLANIFICATION TERRITORIALE

Au terme de la synthèse des propositions d'aménagement du concours international d'idées et du WAT_UNESCO, deux catégories d'outils ont été développées pour poursuivre le processus de planification concertée. D'abord des principes et des critères de design ont été identifiés comme moyen d'application de chacune des familles d'intervention et arrimés à la vision d'aménagement de la table de travail. Ils constituent des guides pour l'action locale et couvrent une grande variété de préoccupations en matière d'aménagement de l'autoroute et des milieux adjacents. Ensuite, des scénarios d'aménagement ont été identifiés afin d'inspirer le développement d'une vision stratégique du territoire en illustrant des futurs possibles. Pouvant conduire à des options différentes d'aménagement, les

scénarios constituent des thèmes qui pourraient colorer l'identité de cette entrée de ville. Loin d'être des outils à appliquer directement sur le territoire, les principes et les critères de design ainsi que les scénarios d'aménagement sont des outils de concertation. Chacun à leur façon, ils illustrent une variété de possibilités de développement de la vision initiale.

ENGAGER LE PROJET DE PAYSAGE D'ENTRÉE DE VILLE

Cette démarche exploratoire a donc permis de démontrer l'utilité des approches d'idéation dans un processus de planification (Figure 1). Dans ce contexte, le design n'est pas une finalité. C'est un exercice de vision essentiel à la mise en images d'un positionnement, à la programmation, à la réalisation d'un cahier des charges et à la prise de décision. Suivant cette perspective, ce n'est pas l'aboutissement d'une démarche de projet, mais bien une constituante clé d'un processus de qualité en aménagement urbain et en projet de paysage. Néanmoins, le succès de la démarche de planification concertée doit passer par l'appropriation locale de cette vision territoriale qui est probablement un des principaux défis à relever pour l'avenir.

REMERCIEMENTS

Ce projet s'est inscrit dans un partenariat avec le ministère des Transports du Québec, le ministère des Relations internationales du Québec, Tourisme Québec, le ministère de l'Environnement, des Parcs et de la Faune du Québec, le ministère des Affaires municipales et des Régions du Québec, le ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec, l'Agence métropolitaine des Transports et la Ville de Montréal. Les auteurs désirent exprimer leur reconnaissance à Patrick Marmen, agent de recherche à la CPEUM, pour sa contribution à ce projet.

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LAURÉATS + MENTIONS
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4,5,6 WAT_UNESCO FIGURE 1 LE DESIGN COMME CONSTITUANTE D'UN PROCESSUS DE PLANIFICATION
PHOTOS © PHILIPPE POULLAQUEC-GONIDEC, 2011 FIGURE 1 © CPEUM-2012



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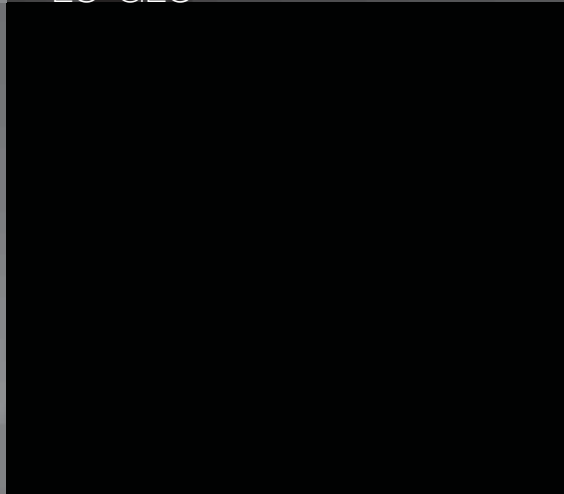
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IN CONTEMPORARY URBAN design, the disciplinary boundaries of planners, architects and landscape architects have effectively been subsumed within a much larger urban design dynamic with fluid boundaries and shared leadership. The Port Lands Estuary proposal, created in 2007 by our two firms, Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates (MVVA), based in Brooklyn, and Greenberg Consultants, Inc., based in Toronto, and an international team of engineers, ecologists, architects and economic advisors, is one example of this trend. In our experience, this broad fusion of different kinds of expertise and knowledge, based on an expanded perception of urban context as an interrelated ecology, is not compromising but enabling.

REPOSITIONING OF NATURAL SYSTEMS

The Lower Don Lands Project, which evolved from the Port Lands Estuary project, lays out a plan for Toronto to "colonize" 114 hectares of its formerly industrial Port Lands as a model of sustainable urbanism. The proposal stands out among similar post-industrial

renewal projects by virtue of its size, scope, complexity and the degree to which it proposes a comprehensive, contextually dynamic transformation of the site. Recognizing that all of the site's challenges and opportunities were deeply interrelated, the team proposed a radical repositioning of natural systems and attendant landscapes, transportation networks and urban environments, with the reconfigured river and the need for flood protection as the engine of transformative urbanism.

TRANSFORMATIVE URBANISM

The project is located on the former site of the Ashbridges Marsh, once the largest wetland on the Great Lakes, created by the Lower Don River as it emptied into Lake Ontario. Existing conditions include a high percentage of impermeable surface, a flood-prone river diverted into a limestone canal, and transportation networks that create a barrier between the Port Lands and the remainder of the city. Devoid of natural features, public infrastructure and neighbourhood amenities, transformative improvements are unlikely to occur through piecemeal urban growth.

With encouragement from decades of public advocacy on behalf of the ecological health of the river, and a city-council appointed Task Force to Bring Back the Don,



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Waterfront Toronto sought to dramatically reconfigure the Port Lands. In 2007, they held a six-week competition, which was won by our team. As a public redevelopment agency formed by the federal, provincial and municipal governments, Waterfront Toronto laid the groundwork for this project to be more than a single-purpose infrastructural solution to flooding. If flood protection for the city of Toronto were the only priority for the project, a solution could be reached simply by depopulating the affected area or by creating another hard-lined channel.

Instead, Waterfront Toronto asked for proposals that envisioned a new celebrated presence for the mouth of the Don River, and a coordinated interaction between river and city that could be experiential as well as functional. The Lower Don Lands would be used not only to protect Toronto's citizens from flooding, but also to form connections between new and existing neighbourhoods and parks, to strike a more environmentally beneficial balance between natural conditions and human settlement, and to create a destination that would be both an urban and natural amenity for the city.

THE SYNTHESIZING ELEMENT

The big-picture thinking provided by the client and the integrated multidisciplinary design team that we assembled in response, enabled this project to address urbanization and naturalization with equal degrees of intensity. The heart of the design makes the mouth of the Don River the centrepiece of the Lower Don Lands neighbourhood, releasing the river "where it wants to be," at the shore of Lake Ontario. This approach to

1 ILLUSTRATIVE SITE PLAN **2** EXISTING CONDITIONS
3 DESIGN TEAM MEETING **4** RENDERING: BOARDWALK
PROMENADE **5** RENDERING: RIVERFRONT TRAIL |

1 PLAN ILLUSTRATIF DU SITE **2** LES CONDITIONS
EXISTANTES **3** RÉUNION DE L'ÉQUIPE DE CONCEPTION
4 RENDU DU TROTTOIR DE BOIS **5** RENDU DE LA RIVE
IMAGES COURTESY GREENBERG CONSULTANTS INC. + MICHEAL
VAN VALKENBURGH ASSOCIATES





LEGEND

- | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| wooded prospect | lot stop | non-motorized public boat launch |
| passive use lawn | bicycle trail | small boating |
| multi-use recreation | school | public space |
| esplanade | daycare | sport sports |
| playground | cultural uses | |
| public garden | library | |
| event space | special commercial | |
| water access | community centre | |
| heritage structure | sports centre | |

6 LANDSCAPE TYPOLOGIES AND PROGRAM PLAN 7 RENDERING: MULTIMODAL ACCESS POINT
 8 RENDERING: WINTERTIME RECREATION 9 RENDERING: CITY/PARK ADJACENCY | 6 TYPOLOGIES
 DE PAYSAGES ET PLAN DU PROGRAMME 7 ILLUSTRATION : POINT D'ACCÈS MULTIMODAL
 8 ILLUSTRATION : RÉCRÉATION HIVERNALE 9 ILLUSTRATION : PROXIMITÉ VILLE PARC
 IMAGES COURTESY | IMAGES OFFERTES PAR GREENBERG CONSULTANTS INC. + MICHEAL VAN VALKENBURGH ASSOCIATES

city building engages the many systems of the city (from ecology, to infrastructure, to social networks and how we live) in a holistic and interactive manner, with the landscape as a synthesizing element.

Our team had an underlying philosophy that saw the landscape's potential strength as the engine for urban transformation, but this was only possible when landscape excellence was supported by creativity and rigor in all aspects of the plan. Our team's methodologies and working style was non-hierarchical, iterative rather than linear, and supported by an embrace of communications technology, which permitted rapid information sharing. Many complex variables were addressed by related initiatives layered into the work of different team members.

Our plan takes as its starting point a branching off of the main flow of the river away from the Keating Channel into a naturalized mouth. This provides the flood protection needed for development, and allows infrastructure to emerge as a catalyst for further urban growth. As the primary outlet, the naturalized river mouth creates a generous recreational landscape, and dramatically increases the area available for parkfront and waterfront development. On top of the river system and urban zones are layered major and minor road networks sized in relation to the population and employment targets for the specific neighbourhoods. The neighbourhoods and circulation are coordinated to allow for high population density even with limited road networks by integrating a comprehensive bicycle lane system as well as transit lines with stops of no more than a five-minute walk from anywhere in the project boundary.

INTEGRATION AND LAYERING

The urban design is further shaped to accommodate the reuse of existing heritage structures, such as the Keating Channel, as



neighbourhood centres, and to coordinate the location and type of community facilities with open space programming of the adjacent river and channel parks. Stormwater management also becomes an integrated element in which the clean water from neighbourhood green roofs is used to flush street trees of salts and to provide a clean water source for wetland creation.

THE DNA OF A VIBRANT CITY

Within this unique setting, our team proposed the sequential development of distinct neighbourhoods, each with the complete DNA of a vibrant city: a mix of the life-cycle housing, commercial, cultural and work spaces, schools, daycare, community centres, public realms, parkland, and access to water. The urban design is part of an overall vision which places priority on public spaces. With this in mind, program and massing were studied so that sunlight is assured on major public spaces and floor plates are considered to maximize the ability of the buildings to depend on natural light and heat gain, allowing for a district energy system that will minimize energy consumption over time. Within each neighbourhood, different scales of landscape provide for social interaction on broad tree-lined sidewalks, in cafes, in the squares, and on play fields tucked in throughout the riverfront parks.

A successful city is an amalgamation of inputs from many individuals and cannot necessarily be designed in advance. Nonetheless, detailed design integration and big-picture thinking is initially necessary in order to craft planning legislation with enough flexibility to implement comprehensive improvements. Therefore, the Lower Don Lands plan is broad in its vision as a framework with the capacity to evolve, but also very specific in its attention to the quality of the public realm. For instance, by mandating built-form that

meets stringent environmental standards, the plan will ensure a green civic-minded architecture in keeping with the broad environmental and sustainability goals adopted by Waterfront Toronto and the City.

CITIES IN TRANSITION

Major world cities such as Toronto are in transition. Perhaps more rapidly than we realize, we are witnessing the *force majeure* dissolution of the false dichotomy, both professional and conceptual, that divided the city from the natural world. Like many powerful and timely impulses, this reconciliation has had many sources: scientific, cultural and aesthetic. It is a simultaneous realization motivated by a sense of crisis as the scientific community calls attention to the appalling degradation, dangerous consequences and undeniable fragility of human life on the planet.

Once we accept cities as complex, multi-generational and inherently unfinished artifacts of human creation, we are forced to confront our limitations as designers operating at one point in time. Overly prescriptive templates do not hold up well given the reality that market forces, changing programs and new needs come into play. What are needed instead are flexible frameworks that guide innovation, hybridization, organic growth, change and surprise. While this shift is challenging to the kind of risk-averse planning which aspires to an illusionary level of end state predictability, its inherent pragmatism has the potential to liberate design and harness many levels of creativity and initiative.

The Port Lands Estuary proposal heralds a new approach to orchestrating the relationship between the urban and the natural. The plan is now the official framework for introducing urban development, native ecologies, and public infrastructure to the Port Lands, a process that will unfold over the course of many years.

...the reconfigured river
...[is] the engine of
transformative urbanism...
... la rivière réaménagée ...
est le moteur de l'urbanisme
transformateur.

Toronto's City Council approved the plan's several closely related initiatives, including a zoning bylaw, in 2010, laying the groundwork for further design and implementation. After municipal elections, an attempt was made to radically reshape the direction of the project with a scheme that would have called for a mega-mall, an upscale marina, a Ferris wheel theme park and a greatly diminished area of parkland. The public pushed back in a widespread defense of the integrity of the plan and, with some technical adjustments, the plan remains intact.

Between the grass-roots involvement of the public, the support of Waterfront Toronto, and the highly integrated professional collaboration of MVVA, Greenberg Consultants Inc., and our team, the Port Lands Estuary/Lower Don Lands proposal is a challenge to the idea that positive urban transformation is contained within the vision of one discipline or the legacy of one single administration. The success of our project will rest on its execution and on the degree to which creativity, professional rigor, governmental support and interdisciplinary collaboration continue to be the hallmarks of its process through implementation. Already, this project opens the door for a new type of neighbourhood for Toronto, one that is designed to interact with the river and the lake in a dynamic and balanced relationship – an urban estuary.

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8



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ATELIER ANONYMOUS: ARIEL VERNON, ALYSSA SCHWANN, JAN HAENRAETS

AN INTIMATE ENGAGEMENT WITH NATURE

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UNE COMMUNION INTIME AVEC LA NATURE
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ON NOVEMBER 16, 2012, ground was broken on the Queens Quay Boulevard in Toronto, marking the initiation of a long-awaited revitalization of a 3.5-kilometre stretch of Toronto's Central Waterfront. The Boulevard will bring the city an important step closer to realizing the award-winning vision for the Central Waterfront generated in 2006 by the Dutch landscape design consultancy, West 8, in joint venture with Toronto's DTAH.

The wavedecks have created a distinct waterfront identity for the Central Waterfront, and were a central component of the visionary masterplan. Yet the real reach of the original design proposal extends much further than these iconic elements in its examination of how nature can be represented and integrated in our cities.

THE BIG PICTURE

Over the past 25 years, the waterfront has become one of the central fields for large-scale urban renewal and city branding. Indeed, the stated objective of Waterfront Toronto's 2006 design competition was to produce "a bold and compelling image that expresses Toronto's unique character and has the same kind of instant recognizability of other waterfront cities like Barcelona and Sydney." West 8 and DTAH's design met this challenge through two key strategies.

The first was to create a continuous water's-edge public promenade for the length of the central waterfront, principally constituted by an 18-metre-wide granite walkway and cantilevered wooden boardwalk, a series of floating wooden docks, and arching pedestrian bridges.

The second was transforming Queens Quay into a generous city boulevard where the "city kisses the lake." The wavedecks – a series of dramatically undulating timber structures built on three of the quay's slips – articulate this point of contact or "kiss" between the city and the water.



A SINGULAR GESTURE

The wavedecks are the most visible portion of the built components of the masterplan to date. Reflecting the sinuous shoreline contours of the Canadian lakefront, the wavedecks suggest a new typology of urban dock, identifiable as sculpture as much as a gathering place. The distinctive wavedecks have become instantly recognizable features, yet some have interpreted them as symbols of redevelopment, rather than as elements within a fully robust and functional waterfront redesign; their scale is simply too small. However, they were never intended to stand on their own. The Queens Quay boulevard and the slip heads are meant to act together as a singular gesture with surprising variations that articulate the city's first contact with the water's edge. Until now, the wavedecks have been like bodies without arms: beautiful in and of themselves, but unable to reach out and provide an essential continuity between them.

A NEW THRESHOLD TO THE LAKE

Three years after the building of the wavedecks, the next phase is underway. The new boulevard will exhibit a powerful design language that will have the strength and simplicity to overcome the existing visual noise along Queens Quay and provide a coherent connection to the lakeshore.

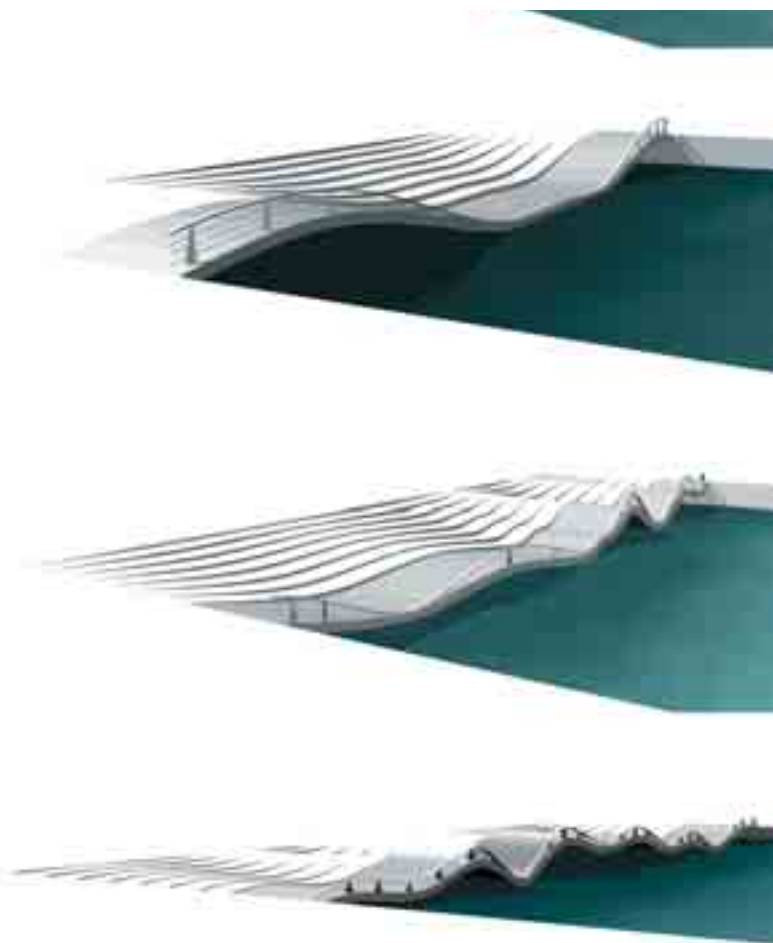
Today, Queens Quay is a traffic-heavy liminal roadway sitting between Toronto's central business district to the north and one of the city's most heavily used pedestrian areas, the Central Waterfront, to the south. It is also an important east-west transportation corridor

... this euphoric feeling of connection...
hearing water lapping the rocks, or
soothing hollow footsteps on the wooden
boardwalk...seeing the sunlight glint on
the water or the seasons change through
the shifting hues of thickly planted and
skillfully choreographed native trees.

between the city's burgeoning waterfront communities. It is the spine of current and future waterfront development, and yet for pedestrians and cyclists who are forced to inhabit the narrow and disjointed spaces that have been leftover once cars and streetcars are accommodated, the Quay is an inhospitable barrier to the lake. The re-imagined boulevard will include a new streetcar corridor and traffic lanes with improved turning lanes and signal timing, but the design will put people first. It will enable pedestrians and cyclists to move comfortably along the waterfront, and a vibrant native tree canopy and bold pavement patterning will create a welcoming threshold to the lakeshore.

1 TORONTO CENTRAL WATERFRONT AERIAL PLAN **2** QUEENS QUAY AT HARBOUR-FRONT CENTRE: LOWER SIMCOE | **1** VUE AÉRIENNE DU FRONT D'EAU DU CENTRE DE TORONTO **2** LE QUAI QUEEN À HARBOURFRONT CENTRE : RUE LOWER SIMCOE
PHOTOS **1** WEST 8 + DTAH **2** COURTESY WATERFRONT TORONTO | **1** WEST 8 + DTAH **2** COURTOISIE DU PORT DE TORONTO





3

CITY + NATURE

Both the wavedecks and new streetscape work to create an architecturally coherent public realm imbued with a distinct waterfront identity. There is a third objective, however, that informed the entire design process and which has yet to be fully realized: reconnecting Toronto with its greatest natural asset, Lake Ontario.

West 8 and DTAH recognized that the divide imposed between the city and its lakeshore by the heavy infrastructure of Queens Quay and the Gardiner Expressway is as much a cognitive schism as a physical one. Their design foresaw an engagement with nature that would reconnect Torontonians emotionally to Lake Ontario.

LONGING FOR WILDERNESS

It could be suggested that the design team were striving to capture the same slightly mystical feeling that one gets from observing many early Canadian 20th century Group of Seven landscape paintings: even though you know you are experiencing a nature that is mediated through art – the heavy impasto and bright colors of the paintings draw your attention to the surface patterning – you inherently feel that they are incredibly robust representations of the Algonquin wilderness.

The paintings invoke fantasies of being in an Ontarian landscape unaltered by human development. Perhaps because of their mediated nature, they are even closer to the imaginative ideal of the northern Canadian wilderness that we all share – those idyllic landscapes of untrammelled woodscapes, serene open spaces, vivid colors and endlessly emotive and diverse waterside vistas.

Queens Quay [will become] a generous city boulevard where the “city kisses the lake”...

Hoping to satisfy this inherent longing for wilderness felt keenly by so many city dwellers, and to capture the poetic monumentality of the Canadian landscape, the idea was to offer a compelling experience that would induce visitors to momentarily escape the city and feel a kind of euphoria offered by an interaction with nature.

The designers understood that this euphoric feeling of connection is only created through an intimate engagement with nature: by hearing water lapping the docks, or soothing hollow footsteps on the wooden boardwalk...by seeing the sunlight glint on the water or the seasons change through the shifting hues of thickly planted and skillfully choreographed native trees.

The most important aspects of the design proposal – the simple and regional material and plant palettes, the spaciousness of the boardwalk, the diversity of spatial qualities that allow for shade and protection within the tree canopy and the openness and exposure along the lake edge – all serve to generate these ephemeral qualities. These more subtle design moves contrast with the spectacular and surreal curves of the wavedecks, providing the context within which people should encounter them.

A SUSTAINING VISION

The 2006 Innovative design competition was the inaugural architectural competition within a much larger program. The design was met with great optimism by the newly constituted board of the Toronto Waterfront Revitalisation Corporation, the competition judges and the public at large. Enthusiasm was perhaps fueled by a rare confluence of political will, strong planning foundations and the external incentive of the 2012 Olympic bid. That vision has been slow to materialize, however, challenged by successive shifts in government priorities, a failure to secure the Olympic bid and a protracted three-and-a-half year environmental assessment.

Perhaps the wavedecks have acted as a catalyst for securing enthusiasm and funding for the current redevelopment along the Quay. Yet, for those who are committed to the original vision, their existence has acted as a persistent reminder of all that still remains to be accomplished.

There are many vital aspects of the masterplan that risk falling into obscurity. The issue of pedestrian connectivity has not been fully resolved for what about accessibility along the eastern end of Queens Quay between Bay and Parliament? Will we ever be able to play on the fourth and most ambitious wavedeck on the Parliament slip?

Most importantly, we must address the discontinuous condition along the water's edge. Through the boulevard redevelopment, Toronto is moving closer to connecting with its waterfront, yet



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many of the realized elements of the original plan remain fragmented, disconnected and even underwhelming through their isolation. Only with full realization of a connected and coherent Central Waterfront will a re-imagined nature in the city emerge.

3 SLIP HEADS AT THE INTERSECTION OF MAJOR AVENUES: DRAWING THE LINES OF CULTURE FROM CITY TO WATERFRONT **4** THE QUAY TO THE CITY EVENT, 2006, TESTED REAPPOINTING A LANE FOR PEOPLE **5** A GREEN FOOT FOR TORONTO: MULTIPLE ROWS OF ROBUST NATIVE TREES AT THE WATERFRONT TO EQUAL THE MAJESTY OF THE CITY SKYLINE **6+7** THE WAVEDECKS - PART RAMP, PART DOCK, PART STAIR, AND PART NEW HABITAT - BECKON PEOPLE TO THE WATER'S EDGE | **3** INSECTION D'AVENUES MAJEURES : TRAÇANT LES LIGNES DE LA CULTURE DE LA VILLE À LA RIVE. **4** L'ACTIVITÉ QUAY TO THE CITY, EN 2006, A MIS À L'ESSAI LA RESTITUTION D'UNE VOIE AUX CITOYENS. **5** UN PIED VERT POUR TORONTO : DE MULTIPLES RANGÉES D'ARBRES ROBUSTES FAISANT ÉCHO À LA MAJESTÉ DE LA SILHOUETTE URBAINE. **6+7** LES WAVEDECKS - À LA FOIS RAMPES, QUAIS, ESCALIERS ET NOUVEAUX HABITATS, INVITENT LES CITOYENS À S'APPROCHER DU BORD DE L'EAU.

PHOTOS 3 + 5 WEST **8+** DTAH **6** BLOGGY MARY. FR

4+7 COURTESY WATERFRONT TORONTO | COURTOISIE DU PORT DE TORONTO



alyssa.schwann@ad.umanitoba.ca



PHILIP ENQUIST + DREW WENSLEY
IN CONVERSATION WITH | EN ENTREVUE AVEC JEAN TROTTIER

هايملل اري دقت



*TO CHERISH WATER

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Following on their award-winning rehabilitation of Wadi Hanifah (see LP Fall 2011) Moriyama & Teshima Planners were asked to collaborate with Skidmore, Owings & Merrill and Buro Happold on the master plan for the King Abdullah Economic City, a Saudi 'window to modernity' of 2 million people. We joined Drew Wensley and Philip Enquist at SOM's Chicago Headquarters.

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CHÉRIR L'EAU
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Suite à leur réhabilitation primée de l'oued Hanifah (voir LP automne 2011) Moriyama & Teshima Planners ont été invités à collaborer avec Skidmore, Owings & Merrill et Buro Happold sur le plan directeur pour la ville économique du Roi Abdullah, une « fenêtre sur la modernité » saoudienne de deux millions d'habitants. Nous avons rejoint Drew Wensley et Philip Enquist au Siège de SOM à Chicago.

**FOR THE FULL
INTERVIEW, VISIT LP+**

1 ON THE LAND 2 MASTER PLANNING: FOR
KING ABDULLAH ECONOMIC CITY | 1 SUR
LE TERRAIN 2 PLANIFICATION DE LA CITÉ
ÉCONOMIQUE DU ROI ABDULLAH
IMAGES SOM, MORIYAMA & TESHIMA PLANNERS

JT: Drew tells me there is an interesting story behind your two firms' collaboration on this project...

PE: Well, we kept hearing about Wadi Hanifah. So I said: "Let's call 'em". We desperately needed help because this site sits on the Red Sea and there's also this very remote inland saltwater lagoon that is just pristine. [The original master plan] was based on canals – kind of a Dubai idea of canals with boats and private yachts – and as interesting as that is we knew that this was going to erode the lagoon and the coral reef. So we got Drew on board and he turned the team around 180 degrees.

DW: We got this call from Phil and about 10 minutes in we were all saying: "Yes, yes, yes. These ideas are really exciting!" Our relationship was built on the foundation of that very phone call and the ideas blossomed from there over the following eight months.

JT: Your revised master plan puts the Red Sea and the wadis literally front and center. What was the impetus for that?

PE: It wasn't easy. The clients didn't feel that Wadi Hanifah was applicable because this is a saltwater environment. They were worried about long-term maintenance, what it would look like, whether it would add value or just look like vacant land. We went through a very detailed cost-comparison. This scheme was saving them about 7 billion Riyals.

DW: So now we get not only a stronger stormwater system that really protects the city from major rainstorms but also a park system, a trail system and public access to all waterfronts. We've actually built an environmental commitment into the whole image of the city. So I think this is very different from just about anything that is getting built in Saudi Arabia.



The important thing is that we don't treat it as a static piece of infrastructure, but as breathing, living infrastructure.

L'important, c'est de ne pas le traiter comme un élément d'infrastructure statique, mais comme une infrastructure qui vit et respire.



I love Buckminster Fuller's quote, "How big can we think?"
J'adore cette question que posait Buckminster Fuller : « Jusqu'où pouvons-nous pousser la démesure? »

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JT: Were there any considerations of also dealing with sewage, as in Wadi Hanifah?

DW: It's a vital piece that we're really looking at. Because the city is phased in a very strategic way we're bringing treated sewage effluent gradually online to promote irrigation and to make sure we're closing the loops as we can, so that we're not putting additional burden on infrastructure.

JT: What other changes did you make to the 2006 plan?

PE: The original plan also had major elevated freeways running through the community and no real system of local streets. We completely re-thought the access to a system of boulevards and local streets that are connected and also bring everybody to the waterfront, the Red Sea, or the edges of this lagoon park. By doing that we raised the land value throughout the whole community.

We also expanded the setbacks to the lagoon and created this very deep lagoon

park. The central business district had originally been located in the lowest part of the site – the most prone to flooding. So we picked that up and moved it to the high-speed train station that's under construction on the line that will link Medina to Jeddah. We're trying to shift to a transit strategy, and then we are hoping to get much more diversity in the land uses and a stronger presence of the natural environment.

JT: You also have a much finer urban grain, built around complete neighborhoods.

PE: We're hoping for that – not just old compounds that are isolated from each other. We're hoping that you can take streets from one neighborhood to another. And yet there are cultural traditions of walling your residential environment, so we have to see how that works itself out.

DW: The wadis will provide frontage for those developments and a great public realm by going right through the city like fingers,

shaping and connecting the districts with each other.

JT: In a previous interview, George Stockton talked about trying to get people "out of their air conditioned boxes." There's a big emphasis in your master plan on outdoor uses, workability and public transit. Is that realistic?

DW: Our experience over the last 12 years, in Riyadh specifically, is that the public did come out. We're getting 250,000 people annually in the Wadi Hanifah. It really is heart-warming to see families interacting and being out in their environment. I'm confident that they're going to enjoy KAEC in the same manner.

PE: Yeah, I agree. I think we're very optimistic and I think the client is, too. You have to provide quality transit; otherwise people won't use it. We have this high-speed train asset so people will be arriving at the site without a car – that in itself is very

... Lester Brown... has this Plan B for the planet... He thinks the 21st century is really about repairing natural systems.
... Lester Brown... a un plan B pour la planète...
Il croit que la tâche du XXI^e siècle sera de restaurer les systèmes naturels.

unusual. So we have the ability to pick them up and move them around – a city in transit. We've even talked about self-guided electric vehicles. I think this could be a phenomenal opportunity for next generation infrastructure.

JT: The previous plan lasted about 5 years. What are the chances that your plan will last the projected 20?

PE: We're talking about a very different strategy. Instead of developing a plan and ending there we're really looking at a very close ongoing role. We're talking about putting staff in Jeddah. We're talking about long-term ongoing commitments with the client.

DW: That's the great thing about SOM's leadership. They do not see this as a static document but one that will evolve. That's the fundamental approach we've been a part of. It's a great and very rewarding process.

JT: Do you feel confident that the ecological infrastructure you are putting into place will be resilient enough?

DW: The great thing about these natural systems is that they have their own lives. The most important thing we can do is set the system in place and let it evolve just the same way we've learned from 12 years in Wadi Hanifah. We know that we make mistakes, we learn from them. The important thing is that we don't treat it

as a static piece of infrastructure, but as breathing, living infrastructure.

JT: Now Phil, for quite a while you've been promoting the "Great Lakes Century" initiative that looks at water sustainability from a regional perspective. It seems to me that this project is doing the same thing: stepping back to guide the urbanization process...

PE: Drew did exactly that when he started the project. He just went a little bit outside the site, like ... 200 miles upstream. He came to one of our first project meetings – after engineers had been on the project for quite a long time – with a map that showed the full extent of the watershed to demonstrate how critical it is to get it right because we're right in the way of any major storm event [that is] in the mountains and coming to the sea. We're right in the way of this. So giving this system room to breathe helped shape the plan. I think stepping back and understanding the environmental aspects of the project before you start to put lines on paper is critical. I also think political boundaries are arbitrary; they don't reflect natural systems so when you master plan you have to forget political boundaries and try to look at the bigger picture.

DW: That's exactly what our starting point was: to back out and really see how this site was located within this regional catchment. And then, obviously, it's part of a vastly larger system. We had our first meeting [in

Jeddah] and the minute we stepped back, it got the client's attention in a whole new way. And then the conversation and the design evolved from there.

JT: Both of your firms are currently involved in large international projects. What's your take on 21st century urban design?

PE: I love Buckminster Fuller's quote, "How big can we think?" Today we're 3-and-a-half billion people in cities and by 2050 we'll be 7 billion people. That's kind of a phenomenal trend. If we don't learn to live in quality high-density environments, well, then we're in trouble.

So what kind of problem is a city anyway? It's a very complex set of conditions and issues but I do think data and scientific research is helping us deal with aspects of urban design, with trends and efficiencies. And then there are the human aspects of city design – I think [these] are really more instinctive and trial and error – that help get more diversified urban environments that are healthy and provide a high quality of life.

DW: I'm very interested in seeing how these natural systems can replace the traditional types of infrastructure that have been developed over the last 30 to 40 years and how these systems can be set in place to really bring a new level of connection with the urban environment. That's a significant challenge for us in the next decade.

PE: Do you know the writer Lester Brown, the founder of the Earth Policy Institute? He has this Plan B for the planet and one of the big agenda items is repairing nature from what we've done to it: harvesting it, adjusting it, industrializing it. He thinks the 21st century is really about repairing natural systems. In a way that's what we're doing here, we're accommodating growth but we're also respecting natural systems and fixing some things that were disturbed so I



think that's a good principle on every urban project: not only accommodating growth but repairing nature.

JT: This makes me think of one of the 12 principles guiding your master plan: "A city that cherishes water." That almost sounds like a spiritual imperative, no?

DW: That's really beautifully put. That really resonates with us and I know that for our client it is imperative that we address water, both as it arrives and goes through the site, and how it actually connects to the Red Sea. It's been the subject of a great many conversations about how to do this and make sure it's integrated into the city structure.

PE: I think it's a really important subject that everybody identifies with, whether you're in Saudi Arabia or Chicago. I think people are realizing the importance of water and the threat to water availability because of our tremendous population growth on the planet. Today we showed around one of our clients from Jeddah. He was here, and he looked out the window, and I said: "You know that's all fresh water." He's looking at Lake Michigan. And he said: "I just can't believe it. To live in a place where water is so plentiful, I just can't believe it." I think that if you live in a desert environment you're very aware of how much water you use. So the idea of capturing it, recycling it, being smarter with it, is the right thing to do, and it does kind of ask: "Where's the spiritual aspect in it?"



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SERIES 3 RENDERINGS DEVELOPMENT IN PHASES **4** RESIDENTIAL INTERIOR BLOCK RENDERING
5 MARINA GLITTERING WATERS RENDERING | **3** **RENDU DU** DÉVELOPPEMENT PAR PHASES
4 L'INTÉRIEUR D'UN IMMEUBLE D'HABITATION **5** MARINA : L'EAU CHÂTOYANTE
RENDERINGS SOM, MORIYAMA & TESHIMA PLANNERS





1, 2

Blatchford Field
finds a new vision.
Blatchford Field trouve
une nouvelle vision.



1 IN THE FURROWS: PARK SPACES FRAMED BY ORCHARDS + COMMUNITY GARDENS (NOTE HISTORIC CONTROL TOWER REMNANT) 2 BLATCHFORD FIELD IS JUST 2 KM NORTH OF DOWNTOWN 3 FESTIVAL HILL PROVIDES A DOWNTOWN VIEW 4 THE PROPOSED RIVER TO RIVER LOOP | 1 DANS LES SILLONS : DES PARCS ENCADRÉS DE VERGERS ET DE JARDINS COMMUNAUTAIRES (ON REMARQUE LES VESTIGES DE LA TOUR CE CONTRÔLE). 2 BLATCHFORD FIELD EST À DEUX KILOMÈTRES À PEINE AU NORD DU CENTRE-VILLE. 3 FESTIVAL HILL DONNE UNE VUE SUR LE CENTRE-VILLE. 4 LA BOUCLE PROPOSÉE.
IMAGES PHILLIPS FAREVAAG SMALLENBERG



3

ON THE RUNWAYS

FR_

AÉRODROMES ET AURORES BORÉALES

Le terrain de l'aéroport central d'Edmonton, appelé Blatchford Field, a toujours été connu pour repousser les frontières. En 2010, la ville a entrepris de les réaménager en quartier résidentiel pour 30 000 Edmontoniens.

Nathan Brightbill passe en revue la planification qui a fait d'Edmonton un leader mondial de l'urbanisme durable.

ENG_

EVEN BEFORE ITS inception as Canada's first registered air harbour, the lands known as Blatchford Field, or Edmonton City Centre Airport, were synonymous with pushing boundaries. Adventurers like Wilfred "Wop" May flew daring missions to help Canada's expansion into the resource frontier. He, and others like him, cemented Edmonton's reputation as Gateway to the North. Later the site played a substantial role in the development of early airlines, and then became a strategic base in World War II and the Cold War.

But that was a half-century ago, and more. At the beginning of this millennia, Blatchford Field was a vast, fenced, 217-hectare black hole in the city, fully the size of Edmonton's downtown, and just two kilometres north of it.

A HOME FOR 30,000

For Edmonton, the situation was untenable. "The current dispersed, low density form of development is ... unsustainable from a variety of perspectives," said a 2008 City Council report. The City began a push to repurpose the land, and in 2010, held a design competition that demanded aggressive goals. The lands would be "home to 30,000 Edmontonians...in a sustainable community that uses 100 per cent renewable energy, is carbon neutral, significantly reduces its ecological footprint, and empowers residents to pursue a range of sustainable lifestyle choices." In short, the City wanted to recapture the visionary thinking of the site's early days.

Vancouver's Perkins + Will Canada won the competition, with a large interdisciplinary team including Phillips Farevaag Smallerberg as landscape architects. The team seized the opportunity to turn the site inside out, reviving its identity and reconnecting it to the city. The plan's vision, according to Jacob Alderdice writing in *Canadian Architect* magazine, is proof that "contemporary Edmonton is a world leader in sustainable urbanism."

KEEP THE RUNWAYS!

The plan begins as a study in forging four strong connections. First, the new neighbourhood will be connected to history: it is to be structured around the dominant form of the runways. Second, within the V-shaped axes of the runways, it will connect to nature, through the creation of a destination park with hills and stormwater lakes. Third, the neighbourhood will be connected to surrounding communities: its grid will be aligned with intersecting streets, and with a (proposed) expansion of the regional greenway. Finally the planning will be connected to that of growth catalysts that will shape the area's future. The site, for example, will incorporate room for the adjacent Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) to expand, and for a future hospital and other potential city services.

Within this overarching structure, the planning is multi-layered, incorporating a wide diversity of elements essential to a sustainable city region: strategies for light rail transit, streetcars, multi-use trails and minimal width streets; planning for stormwater, wind, snow, solar energy and geothermal energy; strategies for urban agriculture, habitat creation, domestic water treatment and heat recovery.

Joyce Drohan, the team lead from Perkins + Will, believes that synthesizing the many strong perspectives and disciplines of the Blatchford Design Team resulted in "a more robust plan...Team members strived to find common ground through many iterations and hands-on sessions," she said.

A "FLYWAY" BECOMES A PARK

Since green space is lacking in this portion of the city, a new regional destination park, Flyway Park, is at the core of the proposal, together with a series of community parks. It was Flyway Park that captured people's imagination. Conceptually the plan takes its cues from the broader Edmonton landscape: vast prairie lands, aspen parkland, oxbows, ravines, agricultural landscapes and windrows. The centerpiece of Flyway Park is the 30-metre high Festival Hill, built from the materials excavated to create stormwater lakes and building foundations. Based on the idea of kettle-and-knob, this most basic cut-and-fill strategy yields a hill that functions as guard against winter winds and offers a view to downtown. Festival Hill provides habitat, and plentiful opportunities for tobogganing, hiking and other kinds of year-round fun. Its base functions as a south-facing amphitheatre on a great lawn, and the summer beach and boating pond becomes a skater's pond in winter.

Around Flyway Park, constructed ravines are intertwined with public greenways. They bring stormwater from the eastern neighbourhood, while channels through the urban agriculture parks deliver stormwater from the west. Running north-south along the old main runway is the main promenade, Northern Lights, designed to echo the real aurora. Here, pavilions and light displays bring a playful glow on long winter nights. The south end of the promenade harbours historical aviation installations and airport remnants, set in linear park blocks. Wop May Plaza is in the town centre. Heading northward, the boulevard passes stormwater lakes, where designers envision pavilions and demonstration zones for ecological education. Further on, sport courts





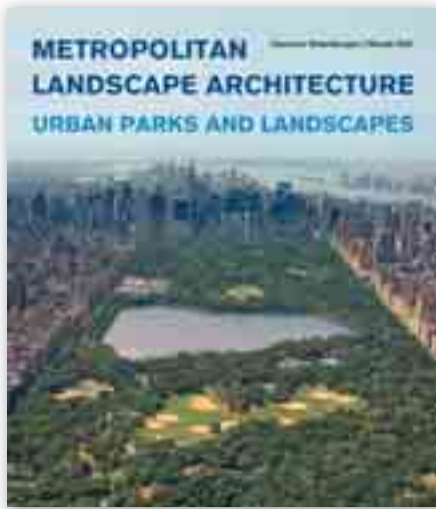
Running northwest from the Town Centre is the Oxbow Trail, which winds its way through small bluffs and wetlands. The east/west City Greenway intersects Oxbow, and could ultimately link to a regional River to River Loop trail system. The proposed Loop would offer a green and walkable linkage between three diverse urban districts, each with its own blend of history and culture, recreation and green space.

Connections to the site, both physical and cultural, will be built over time. The build-out is projected to last 30 years, and the implementation strategy calls for gradual improvements across the entire park, rather than the completion of zones one at a time. This approach provides a way for Edmonton's citizens to repossess the site right away. The stormwater lakes and part of Festival Hill will be created as part of the first phase, and initially, the airport lands could be opened as a park with no other improvements. An open park will build a sense of belonging, and ultimately engage Edmontonians in a democratic design process. Trail routes, for example, might be initially established but completed once park visitors clarify exactly where key trails should be.

Competitions are about finding ideas that the community will embrace. The much longer task is to test those ideas against reality. Even before initial rezoning, it is essential to probe the wishes of the community, the city and the developer, and to factor in engineering and cost constraints. Already, the public realm plan has shifted, but the essence of the idea has held firm, with open space at the forefront of urban design. Every redevelopment opportunity demands a democratic response. This is central to shaping a welcoming new neighbourhood that is at home in its landscape.

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5, 6



Book info:

Metropolitan Landscape Architecture:
Urban Parks and Landscapes
by Clemens Steenbergen + Wouter Reh Bussum,
The Netherlands: THOTH Publishers. 2011. 448 pages.
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ISBN: 9068685916

READ BY ALAN TATE

URBAN PARKS AND LANDSCAPES

METROPOLITAN *Landscape Architecture* comprises eleven chronologically presented analyses of major urban parks and set-piece urban landscapes in western Europe and the eastern United States – Horti Farnesiani, Rome (1556), Jardin des Tuileries, Paris (1664), The Regent's Park, London (1811), The Gartenreich of Potsdam, Berlin (1826), Central Park, New York (1857), The Eixample, Barcelona (1859), Vondelpark, Amsterdam (1865), Emerald Necklace, Boston (1876), Stadtpark, Hamburg (1902), The Nidda Valley, Frankfurt (1925) and The Grüngürtel, Cologne (1925). These analyses (they do not have a sufficiently consistent template to be considered case studies) are book-ended by introductory and concluding chapters promoting what Steenbergen and Reh, landscape architect colleagues at the Technical University, Delft, term "landscape architectonic design".

This is a big book and, at over 2.5 kilograms, it weighs-in alongside *Time-Saver Standards for Landscape Architecture* and *Landscape Architectural Graphic Standards*. But, unlike those reference volumes, it offers a continuous narrative based on Steenbergen and Reh's theory of "landscape architectonic design" – a theory that equates to what Waldheim *et al* would call "landscape urbanism" and which most others may simply see as one of the many aspects of landscape architecture.

From the outset it is apparent that "landscape architectonic design" is primarily form-driven. This is reinforced in the eleven analyses. And in the concluding chapter – which consists of a pair of essays annoyingly laid-out, for no apparent reason, side-by-side in two columns – Steenbergen and Reh summarize their theoretical stance: "the whole metropolitan field can be covered

with the aid of these landscape architectonic interventions"... "landscape theatre, the flow landscape and the plantation" (p. 427-8). They do, however, accompany this with recognition that the "landscape contains a generative structure that can serve as a transformative framework for the metropolis" (p. 430) even though they describe individual nineteenth century parks (like Birkenhead and Central Park) in simple, reductive terms as Garden + Meadow + Wilderness. By contrast, the book provides a clear appreciation of underlying landscape morphology as the canvas on and over which cities (and their parks) are painted and re-painted.

This appreciation is convincingly demonstrated in the crumpled computer-generated grids of the geomorphology beneath each city that they examine. These include a number of the representations from Steenbergen and Reh's earlier books – particularly their *Architecture and Landscape: The Design Experiment of the Great European Gardens and Landscapes* (2003) and Steenbergen's *Composing Landscapes* (2008), to which this volume is a sequel – and they form an integral part of the authors' argument about the role of geomorphology as a "generative structure" of cities. The numerous historical plans (which represent, amongst other things, a major exercise in obtaining copyright clearance) are also excellent. Some of their own plans, despite being full-page and full-colour, are less legible and the photographs dilute what would otherwise be a stunning visual complement to the copious theoretical commentary.

The written style is somewhat dry and sometimes veers into excessive detail (that I should complain about someone who

writes so clearly in a second language!). The bibliography is reasonably thorough but, surprisingly for the topic, does not include Galen Cranz's *The Politics of Park Design* (1982), reference to which could have helped the authors to economize on their explanation of changing eras in park design. And the citation of sources, particularly in the chapter on Boston, would raise eyebrows (and red pens) in most North American academics.

Nevertheless, *Metropolitan Landscape Architecture* is further evidence of the holistic thinking that underpins Steenbergen and Reh's earlier books – a kind of thinking that sometimes seems instinctive to the citizens and scholars that live in such a vulnerable, largely human-made landscape. This volume makes a significant contribution to thinking on urban parks and on metropolitan landscape planning, and to the use of computer models in the large-scale analysis of urban geomorphology. Not insignificantly, it provides a valuable English-language account of the work of Leberecht Migge (1881-1935), an early advocate of urban agriculture and "the idea of the growing city as a coherent landscape" (p. 364). And coherence, perhaps as much as architectonics, is one of Steenbergen and Reh's key concepts for the planning and design of metropolitan landscapes.

This book belongs in every serious landscape architecture or planning library, and it would be an excellent companion for any landscape architect visiting any of those eleven cities – providing their luggage is on wheels their ecological conscience is on hold!

Alan Tate PhD, PPLI, CSLA, is Professor + Head of Landscape Architecture at the University of Manitoba and author of *Great City Parks* (2001).

STEFFEN KÄUBLER + GORDON SMITH, CBCL

SMALL COMMUNITY URBANISM: SMALL CAN BE BEAUTIFUL

FR_ MICRO-URBANISME

Les discussions sur la valeur du design urbain tournent essentiellement autour des grands projets d'investissement dans les métropoles canadiennes. Étrangement, on ne mentionne pas les petites villes et les villages. Les auteurs préconisent un urbanisme typiquement canadien, mis à l'échelle des petites localités – un « urbanisme des petites communautés » privilégiant des interventions modestes aptes à rehausser la qualité de vie.

EN_
THE DEBATE AROUND a distinct Canadian Urbanism as a shared approach to city-building in Canada is steadily gaining traction. Organizations like the Council for Canadian Urbanism are providing much-needed advocacy and have begun issuing calls for long-term government funding and legislative tools for urban resiliency and success. However, discussions about the value of urban design and progressive city building largely revolve around capital intensive examples from large Canadian metropolises. Curiously absent from the discourse are smaller cities, towns and villages. Despite the continuing urbanization of Canada, about one in five Canadians still lives in small towns and rural areas. Many are determined to maintain their small-town pride and distinctly local way of life.

Aren't the urban qualities of small towns just as important as those in bigger cities? Aren't comfortable streetscapes and attractive public spaces equally essential to small towns? In fact, many of the principles of urbanism have their origin in small, tight-knit, dense and walkable small towns. Villages, like large metropolises, need physical places where we can gather, chat and enjoy a chance encounter.

Through working with small- and mid-size communities for many years, we have gained a deep appreciation for their crucial role as part of our country's social fabric. Canada needs these small centres, but their survival as cohesive communities is not assured. What we need is a distinct Canadian

Urbanism, scaled to fit the context of small communities and neighborhoods – a “small community urbanism” that focuses on modest and affordable design interventions that promote quality living environments.

We live in a world of fast-paced change and digitally brokered relationships, yet we need places that invite us to connect and interact in the real world. With small community urbanism, we focus on preserving the “place-ness” of our small towns, to create stable and resilient communities.

WHAT IS SMALL COMMUNITY URBANISM?

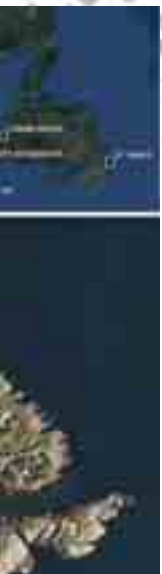
The tenets of small community urbanism can differ notably from big city style planning. The public space projects cannot be copied and pasted from the global design vocabulary of downtown revitalization. Those schemes, with their rich and fairly conventional streetscaping vocabulary, have often paralyzed rather than empowered small towns. In Canada, small town urbanists must revitalize in ways that are affordable and realistically attainable by communities with limited financial and human resources. They need to avoid stereotypical main street solutions and find answers rooted in local authenticity. Small-scale interventions can be context sensitive and add meaning to a town's public spaces, yet at the same time be designed for easy implementation that allows for evolution over time.

SMALL URBANISM IN ACTION

Fairly recently, our team was invited to provide design expertise to a small town in Newfoundland. The Town of Channel-Port aux Basques is known as the hub of southwestern Newfoundland and is the region's economic activity center. Together with the surrounding rural communities it serves, the town's population numbers some 8,000



1, 2, 3



residents. The influence of the downtown – its economic well-being, or lack thereof – radiates well beyond the boundaries of the town. The downtown can either be an asset or a liability, as the region attempts to recruit new residents and tourists and to attract business.

For centuries, downtown Port aux Basques has been the bustling heart of the community, but in recent years, development patterns have shifted; business and housing growth has taken place elsewhere. The town's centre, like those in many other small towns, has lost its vitality. Channel-Port aux Basques is faced with an increasing need to do more with less.

The town has, however, embraced these challenges and embarked on a process of downtown revitalization aimed at restoring the area's visual appeal and its economic diversity. The Port aux Basques Downtown Design Study delivers a visionary yet implementable plan that builds on the community's enduring qualities. It is a tight-knit community with tangible assets, including its scenic setting and the short commuting distances between residences, businesses and services. The solutions we proposed were pragmatic, allowing for ready ease of implementation. Not least because of their practical nature, the proposals were met with excitement, and helped to significantly raise the profile of the town core not only amongst traditional downtown stakeholders, but more importantly, amongst those in the region's outlying business community.

Some of the proposals sparked a new vision for the heart of the town. Channel-Port aux Basques could, for example, use the rocky terrain as a canvas for main street beautification and emphasize the use of colorful native plant material that is resilient and requires low maintenance. (We cautioned the community to avoid the tempting prescription of tree planting on Main Street.) We also discouraged the town from heavily investing in already planned infrastructure that would become susceptible to damage from the likely impacts of climate change. Instead, we advocated a broader, community-based approach. Focus on



4, 5

raising the community's buy-in, by showing how beautifully designed and maintained public spaces can sustain community pride. Utilize town asset divestment for focused public realm improvements. Leverage public incentive dollars to achieve investment in the beautification of private property. Our study advised the town to rely on the urban qualities of its tight-knit community and to build on how it has functioned for over two decades. Even seemingly major issues, such as the perceived parking shortage, could be solved relatively easily, through parking management and low-budget delineation of parking spaces. The Port aux Basques and Area Chamber of Commerce received the study with a high degree of enthusiasm that will prove crucial in building the capacity necessary for its implementation.

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1-5 CHANNEL-PORT AUX BASQUES DOWNTOWN DESIGN STUDY: PRACTICAL, EASY-TO-IMPLEMENT WAYS TO RAISE THE PROFILE OF THE TOWN'S CORE |

1-5 ÉTUDE CONCEPTUELLE DU CENTRE-VILLE DE CHANNEL-PORT AUX BASQUES : DES MÉTHODES PRATIQUES, FACILES À METTRE EN ŒUVRE POUR METTRE EN VALEUR LE CENTRE-VILLE
IMAGES CBCL



1

SARA BARRON, SHIRLENE COTE, LUKAS HOLY, RORY TOOKE + STEPHEN SHEPPARD

ENERGY: A NEIGHBOURHOOD AFFAIR

ILLUSTRATED GUIDE TO COMMUNITY ENERGY

<http://calp.forestry.ubc.ca/projects/>

ENG_

A CHANGE IS slowly sweeping across British Columbia: communities are starting to come together to reduce their energy use and markedly reduce their energy footprint. Community energy projects such as the wood-fuelled bioenergy plant at Docks Green in Victoria, which supplies the neighbourhood with heat and electricity, are becoming increasingly common. At the same time, these projects are often misunderstood and face resistance from concerned neighbours.

Citizens, perhaps for the first time, are being asked to consider renewable energy options at the community scale. They are examining what they can do collectively as neighbours and as a region, to create positive change in the way we create and use energy. This community focus is relatively new. For years, programs such as BC Hydro's Powersmart, and the Ontario Power Authority's "saveONenergy" have informed citizens about how to save on energy services, and ultimately reduce energy demand. At the same time, provincial energy policy has focused on setting minimum clean energy requirements for electric utilities, such as BC's Clean Energy Act. But we've been missing a key piece of the puzzle: the geographic realm between the utility and the individual. How can we promote better urban design choices at the scale of the community? The Visualizing Energy Futures project aims to pull together existing information, model new case studies, and map renewable energy supplies to help inform citizens of the potentials of community energy.

WE NEED A GUIDE

Because communities need tools and information to make positive choices, two University of British Columbia research labs, Elements Lab and the Collaborative for Advanced Landscape Planning (CALP) have partnered to produce the new *Illustrated Guide to Community Energy*, a highly visual learning guide replete with basic information, mapping, modelling and local success stories to help citizens make meaningful connections with community energy solutions. The Guide aims to raise energy literacy, particularly around renewable energy sources and district energy options. It explores types of energy and related factors such as greenhouse gas emissions, energy security and energy prices. Perhaps most inspiring, however, are the case studies: profiles of communities in action and what they are achieving.

MODELLING RICHMOND

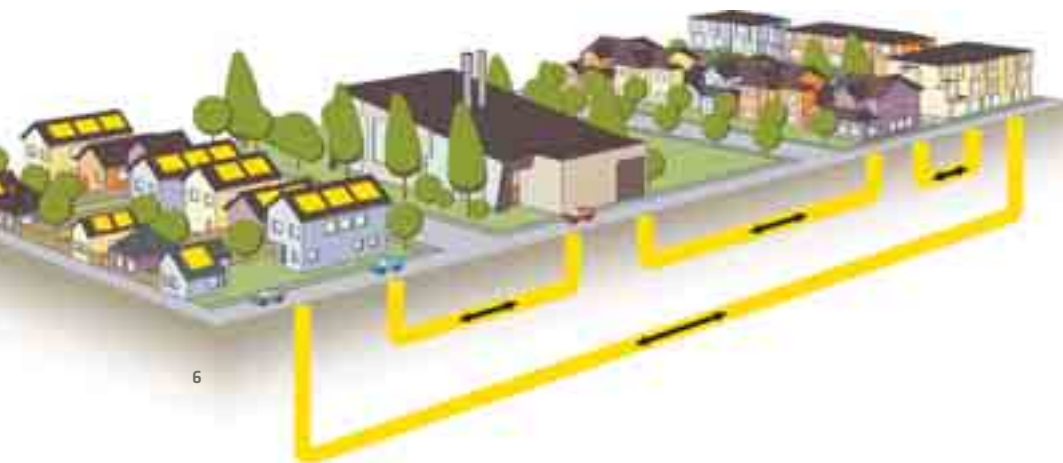
As well as the vignettes outlining successful community initiatives already underway, the Guide devotes two chapters to the results of unique case studies developed in Richmond (a city centre neighbourhood energy scenario) and in Surrey (a suburban block energy scenario.) These two locations represent common community types, and were chosen as examples which other communities in Metro Vancouver might replicate.

ElementsLab modeled the case studies specifically for the Guide to illustrate the real potentials of urban design choices and energy technologies. ElementsLab has developed this service and used it in other communities across BC and Western Canada.

The City of Richmond, for example, needed to better understand the potential of urban design and new energy technologies to reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, yet some potential solutions had not been modelled or studied, nor did explanatory data and graphics exist. According to project partner Cecilia Achiam, Interim Director of Sustainability & District Energy for Richmond, "Richmond, like many other Metro Vancouver communities, is moving quickly toward greater energy solutions to address energy security, local control, and reduction of carbon emissions, but many members of the public have yet to engage on these important issues."

The team modelled an existing under-developed neighbourhood that includes a large mall site and is well served by transit. (See the illustrations, next page.) They laid out a series of future scenarios that visualize what the neighbourhood might look like if it transitioned to become a low-carbon neighbourhood served by community energy systems. The first scenario, in which people live in new, smaller dwelling units with shared walls, shows the potential of urban design and increased building efficiencies to reduce per capita energy use by 25 per cent, and greenhouse gas emissions by up to 30 per cent. The second and third scenarios explore the potential of rooftop solar systems (yellow) and a community-scale geo-exchange system and a bioenergy plant (blue), which together have the potential to heat up to 8,000 apartments. The three scenarios combined reduce per capita residential building emissions by over 70 per cent.

These measured visualizations have generated increased interest in developing more specific energy strategies for use



in neighbourhood public consultation and planning. As well, the Guide's graphic presentation makes it easier to engage the public on complex community energy projects. Over the longer term, the project is expected to improve energy literacy and garner support for sustainable energy use, while building a sense of local ownership and responsibility. The guide will be available in early spring online as a downloadable PDF document, and the next phase will include an interactive web interface incorporating recently developed data, presented through text, animations, dynamic "fly through" 3D visualizations and video.

The team's landscape architects have contributed both visualization expertise and an understanding of the complexities of sustainable urban design. They bring an important perspective, looking beyond strictly technical exploration to a more holistic exploration of community.

PROJECT TEAM SARA BARRON, SHIRLENE COTE, LUKAS HOLY, MESA SHERRIFF, RORY TOOKE, MIKE VANDER LAAN, KEVIN ZHANG, RON KELLETT, STEPHEN SHEPPARD
Centre for Interactive Research on Sustainability

CALP: <http://calp.forestry.ubc.ca>

ElementsLab: <http://elementsdbsala.ubc.ca>

1 AN URBAN NEIGHBOURHOOD SUPPLYING ITS OWN ENERGY (ORANGE) DOESN'T FEEL VERY DIFFERENT FROM A TRADITIONAL NEIGHBOURHOOD.

2 MODELLING A RICHMOND COMMUNITY THE EXISTING SITE INCLUDES A LARGE MALL AND LARGE PARCELS OF SURFACE PARKING.

3 SCENARIO 1 URBAN DESIGN CHOICES, INCLUDING SMALLER DWELLING UNITS WITH SHARED WALLS (SHOWN IN RED), REDUCE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS UP TO 30%.

4 SCENARIO 2 ALL NEW ROOFS ARE EQUIPPED WITH SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC AND SOLAR HOT WATER PANELS (YELLOW), PROVIDING OVER 10% OF RESIDENTIAL BUILDING ENERGY (PLUS AN ADDITIONAL 5% OF NON-RESIDENTIAL).

5 SCENARIO 3 A BIOMASS ENERGY PLANT AND GEOEXCHANGE FIELD (BLUE) PROVIDE OVER 35% OF THE RESIDENTIAL BUILDING ENERGY (PLUS AN ADDITIONAL 50% OF NON-RESIDENTIAL). COMBINING ALL THREE SCENARIOS, THE REDUCTION IN GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IS MODELLED AT 70%.

6 A COMMUNITY SYSTEM SUPPLIES ENERGY FROM RENEWABLE OR CLEAN ENERGY SOURCES AND DISTRIBUTES IT WITHIN THE COMMUNITY.

IMAGES 1 CALP; ADAPTED FROM COURTNEY MILLER, GREENEST CITY CONVERSATIONS PROJECT **2-3-4-5** ELEMENTS LAB **6** CALP

RON WILLIAMS, AAPQ, FCSLA

PLANNED CITIES OF THE MARITIME PROVINCES

A NEGLECTED TRADITION IN CANADIAN URBAN DESIGN

FR_
ÉTAT DES LIEUX
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ENG_
IN UNIVERSITY COURSES on the history of Landscape Architecture, we usually look to the early British colonies in what is now the United States for examples of orderly and rational colonial town planning. The nine-square town plan and central green of New Haven, Connecticut (founded 1638); the central public space and four neat squares within Philadelphia's regular street grid (1683); and the "cellular" structure of residential blocks around green squares at Savannah, Georgia (1733), are favourites. The plans of these towns are pretty much burned into the minds of anyone who has ever studied the subject, and the three cities are justifiably recognised as National Historic Landmarks.

In typical Canadian fashion, it seldom occurs to us to think about the Canadian counterparts of these classic American town plans, but the Maritime Provinces have several outstanding examples that are just as elegant and rational as their American counterparts. The Canadian towns were military and commercial settlements that owed their founding to the imperial rivalries of the 18th century. Each was sited in a defensible location on a peninsula, with an excellent, sheltered harbour. All were compactly laid out on a rectangular grid, with streets parallel and perpendicular to the shore, around which protective fortifications were built. A central open space provided for the assembly of the militia and served as the focus of civic life, both as church square and market; and the lands beyond the fortifications were allocated for common use and farmland.

The grid plan of **Halifax**, founded in 1749 at Chebucto Bay on the southern coast of Nova Scotia, was superimposed on a site that sloped sharply down towards the port. Halfway up the slope, two central blocks



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3



4



The Canadian towns...owed their founding to the imperial rivalries of the 18th century.



were left open to create a great open space, the "Grand Parade," graded flat to serve as a parade ground and as a site for major public buildings. The centre of the space was left open, preserving splendid views between the port below and the Citadel (rebuilt several times between 1749 and 1856), located at the top of the slope. The two were connected by the axis of the town's main thoroughfare, George Street, which crossed right through the middle of Grand Parade; the uphill end of this sloping axis was elegantly terminated by the building of a now-iconic Town Clock by the Duke of Kent, the region's military commander, in 1800.

The plan of **Lunenburg**, established further west along the coast in 1753, is virtually identical with that of Halifax, but on a smaller scale. A centre for fishing and boat-building, this town was settled by non-British Protestant immigrants, primarily of German and Swiss origin. Its equivalent of "Grand Parade" is a central oasis of grass and large trees, enclosed by historic houses and public buildings, as steeply sloping today as it was when first laid out. A replica of an antique bandstand and a war memorial find their homes here. Business is concentrated at the bottom of the slope, opposite great wooden sheds at the waterside that shelter the activities of the fishing industry. This classic arrangement, reinforced by a unique vernacular architecture, has won Lunenburg the rare distinction of being named a "World Heritage Site" by UNESCO.

The peninsula site of **Charlottetown**, laid out in 1768, is enclosed by arms of the sea and rivers. The city descends a more gradual slope oriented southeast towards the waterfront. The plan is an almost precise replica of Philadelphia, at a reduced scale: a regular grid divided by major roads into four quadrants, each structured around a central green square. These squares still exist and each has its own unique personality: bright, flowery and formal adjacent to the provincial government office buildings, sober in middle-class residential districts. All are framed by immense elms and lindens. At the centre of the city is Queen Square, a larger two-block space that provides

an urban and ceremonial focus. Its dominant feature, Province House, a massive, formal and symmetrical building in Palladian style, provides a splendid termination to Great George Street, a broad avenue bordered by gigantic elm trees, that connects the heart of the city to the port.

The masterpiece among these colonial town plans is perhaps that of Saint John in New Brunswick, founded in 1783 on two rocky peninsulas at the mouth of the Saint John River. The city's central district is fitted to the topography of the site like a glove. The customary orthogonal grid was laid out to create a "virtual" central axis along the crest of the peninsula, linking two public squares. King's Square is the busy focal point of the commercial district, featuring a central two-storey "bandstand" crowned by a flamboyant roof. Queen Square, the central green space of a quiet residential area, has its sloping lawn enlivened by a monument to Champlain.

CEMETERY AND COMMONS

Each of these eighteenth-century colonial towns included larger green areas, either within or just outside of the town's central urban grid. First were **municipal cemeteries** like the "Old Burying Ground" in Saint John and St. Paul's Burial Ground in Halifax. These quiet gardens were usually enclosed within a wrought iron fence, with rows of burial stones punctuating a grassy lawn bordered by tall trees. Extending over hills and marshes beyond the wooden palisade that enclosed the central town, **common lands** provided pasturelands for the residents' livestock. Today these undeveloped areas, such as the Halifax Common, provide treasured sites for public institutions and parks in the cities' greatly expanded urban areas.

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ROW 1 HALIFAX **ROW 2** LUNENBURG
ROW 3 CHARLOTTETOWN **ROW 4**,
1+2 ST. JOHN **ROW 4**, **3** HALIFAX BURIAL GROUND
ROW 4, **4** ST. JOHN BURIAL GROUND



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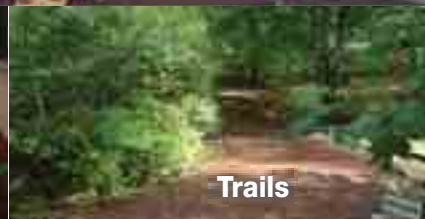
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18 PHILIP ENQUIST is leader of the global city design practice of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP (SOM), whose studios have improved city living on five continents by creating location unique strategic designs. Phil passionately believes that the world's explosive growth must be managed by humanely bold and holistically sustainable thinking, and that human habitat design will become the alpha design science of the 21st century. www.som.com

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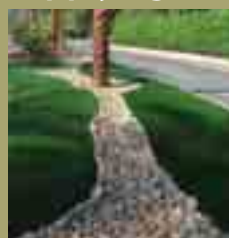
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CAT GOT YOUR TONGUE?

Landscape architecture is the only professional force that can honestly extend nature throughout urban areas, and without nature our cities are dead.

ENG_

I WOULD IMAGINE that almost everyone considers the “growing up” phase as one of life’s biggest hurdles. I specifically remember two sayings (of likely dozens) that were formative in my early years. My mother used the phrase, “Cat got your tongue?” when she wanted to encourage me to speak up if I had something to say. My gang of childhood friends offered another challenge. I was constantly “double-dog dared” to do something that was so far out of my comfort range, it was certifiably idiotic.

THAT DOUBLE-DOG DARE

I’m all grown up now and, if nothing else, I would characterize myself as a risk-taker and as someone who is willing to speak up, take a position and provide leadership. These are characteristics that have served me well as a landscape architect in Canada. In the last couple of decades, I have been primarily interested in urban design projects that push the boundaries of scale, of civic influence and of place making, and I have been fortunate to have led such work in Canada, the US, Europe and Asia.

Design is a tricky thing. Designing in the public realm is even trickier and, from my perspective, large scale urban design is the trickiest of all. Clear visions can quickly become political and politics has a way of creating distortion. At times great civic-building ideas are hijacked by a particular interest group. And, as design consultants, we quickly find we have hundreds of bosses (clients) who are quick to share their opinions with us. Urban design, as a way to effect societal change, entails a very complex series of considerations. By necessity the design process folds in public engagement which always fuels the debate, with opinions that run the gamut from pragmatic to idealistic.

A BLADE RUNNER FUTURE?

2011 marked the first time in our history when, globally, more people lived in cities than in rural areas. Here in Canada the percentage of urbanites is approaching 80 per cent. This fact has huge consequences for the way landscape architects move forward in shaping our cities. Our choice is a simple one. We either accept a Blade Runner future or we take charge of designing the places that most of us inhabit.

Many of the contributions to this edition of **LANDSCAPES | PAYSAGES** help to illustrate my belief that one aspect of Landscape Architecture trumps all others: leadership. The longer I practice, the more convinced I am that landscape architecture holds the best way forward to a positive future for our cities. Landscape architecture creates systematic solutions and for cities there is no other way to think. Landscape architecture is the only professional force that can honestly extend nature throughout urban areas in any substantive way, and without nature our cities are dead. Lastly, landscape architecture is perhaps the most compassionate of the design professions and compassion is what we need to restore the social and environmental balance to urban life.

So, speak out and take some risk. Life is short and now’s our time. Don’t let the cat get your tongue.

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