

What'SUP? Fall 2011

News of the School of Urban Planning at McGill University

Chers amis et amies / Dear friends,

This past semester was a rather tumultuous one. With the **strike of McGill's administrative and technical staff**, professors and senior administrators scrambled to keep all things academic going. Anand and Gladys walked the picket lines from September 1, when hopes and temperatures were high, to December 9, by which time both ardour and air had considerably cooled. During that period, the School wasn't the same place without them. The strike pit two tough parties against each other, a vocal union that aimed for the best deal possible and a university administration that meant business. In the end, they came to what appears to be a reasonable compromise.

The worst moment this past semester was the late afternoon of November 10, when **Montréal's "riot police"** used batons, shields and pepper spray to remove student demonstrators from campus after a number of them briefly occupied parts of the James Administration Building. As Dean of Law Daniel Jutras noted in his report about these events, the clash occurred in the context of the "Occupy" movement and of growing acrimony over the loss of collegiality at McGill. Some healing is in order.

Additional turmoil came from the Faculty of Engineering, where Dean Christophe Pierre resigned rather abruptly in order to take on a Vice-President's position at the University of Illinois, and from the School of Architecture, where Michael Jemtrud left the director's seat after four years. The search for a new dean is on in Engineering; in Architecture, **Anmarie Adams** took over as director, and we are looking forward to working with her.

In this semester of conflict and change, **Jeanne Wolfe Day** signified friendship and continuity. The event, held on Dec. 2, saw former and current students and colleagues honour Jeanne's memory with fine words and fine drinks. Beth Moore Milroy very kindly made the trip from Toronto to talk to us about the current state of Jeanne's book project on Canadian utopian communities, a project which she and Brian Osborne took over after Jeanne's death.

Despite the turbulence, academic work does go on smoothly. For instance, **Madhav Badami** is acting as a point person for the university in efforts to strengthen links between Canada and India; **Lisa Bornstein** is running or starting up major projects to build planning capacity in the community, here and abroad; **David Brown** is editing planning scholarship in Canada and consulting in the Caribbean; **Ahmed El-Geneidy** is advising the government of Québec on its long-term transportation policy; **Raphaël Fischler** is working on planning education at national and international levels; and **Nik Luka** is disseminating urban design research in various provinces and in Europe.

We cannot end 2011 without saluting the new President of the Canadian Institute of Planners, SUP alumna **Andrea Gabor** (MUP '76, partner at Urban Strategies in Toronto). Congratulations to her, and best wishes for a fruitful mandate at the helm of CIP! Kudos also to **Kevin Manaugh**, a doctoral student, for earning the award for Best Student-Led Paper at the World Symposium on Transport and Land Use (with Prof. El-Geneidy).

Montréal Planning News

After ten years of existence, the Montreal Metropolitan Community (CMM) finally has an official plan. The *Plan métropolitain d'aménagement et de développement* (PMAD) was recently adopted by the Council of the CMM, with opposition from North-Shore municipalities but with support from many civil-society organisations. The plan contains a set of rules to curb sprawl, foster Transit-Oriented Development and protect natural and agricultural lands.

The PMAD does for the Montreal region what the Places to Grow Act and other enactments have done for the Toronto region: it calls for minimum urban densities, steers development toward growth poles and corridors where public transit is available, and sets ecologically important areas and agricultural land off-limits to development (at least for a while). Unlike its Ontario counterpart, the PMAD does not include employment in the calculation of development density, relying only on housing density to regulate a phenomenon in which commercial and industrial land uses play an important role. Some of the density requirements also appear to be on the weak side, a result of political prudence, but they represent a good first step. Members of the School of Urban Planning, including David Brown, Ahmed El-Geneidy, Raphaël Fischler, Jason Prince and Ray Tomalty, gave feedback to CMM planners during the drafting of the PMAD and/or submitted briefs during the public-consultation process.

The City of Montréal has started work on a *Plan de développement* that is supposed to serve as an umbrella plan for its physical, environmental, economic and other plans. The School has started to be involved and will surely participate as work on the plan progresses. The City also increased maximum building heights in parts of downtown, to spur development of remaining parking lots. But it is not sure that the long-lasting boom in condominium construction, on which the City is counting to fill empty lots, can be sustained much longer.

Meanwhile, professors and students continue to publish articles and submit briefs on various aspects of planning in Montréal and in Québec, for instance on the new planning law that the Government of Québec has just tabled. In early December, Jordan Kemp (2nd-year MUP student), Jason Prince, Ray Tomalty and Raphaël Fischler published an op-ed piece in the *Montreal Gazette* urging the government to look at development charges as a possible source of municipal revenue. Their article was featured as noteworthy planning news on PLANETIZEN, the North-American planning listserv.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Thursday, March 8, 2012, 6 P.M.

Annual Lecture in Urban Design: Learning from Masdar City

For this year's Brenda and Samuel Gewurz Lecture in Urban Design, the School of Urban Planning is teaming up with the Urban Development Institute of Québec (Institut de développement urbain du Québec). Together, we will welcome a varied audience of planners, designers and developers to hear and see the presentation by the British firm of Foster + Partners. This firm has planned and designed the most ambitious new-town project of the 21st century, Masdar City, in the United Arab Emirates. The project represents the state of the art in sustainable urban development and building technology, while also exemplifying the use of local tradition in modern urban design.

Thursday, November 8, 2012

Celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Master of Urban Planning program and the 65th anniversary of urban planning education in Canada

In 1947, McGill University inaugurated the first program in urban planning in the country. At first a joint program, in which students had to register in another discipline, it became an independent Master of Urban Planning program in 1972, nearly forty years ago. To mark this occasion, the School will host a day-long symposium on the future of Montréal. In the evening, we will partner with the Ordre des urbanistes du Québec to hold a special evening of speeches and awards. We would like hundreds of alumni and alumna and other friends to show up for this event. If you ever thought of coming back to Montréal for a visit, Nov. 8, 2012 will be the right time to do so!

Also keep your eyes and ears open for news on our various seminars:

- *TRAM seminars on transportation*, Thursdays at 12 noon, every week

- *urban.studies@mcgill seminars*, Friday at noon, January 20, February 17, March 16 and April 6

RECENT STUDIO PROJECTS

This Fall, first-year students worked on the area east of the Outremont Railyards, where the new campus of the Université de Montréal is going to be built. Planners from the City of Montréal and from the Rosemont—Petite-Patrie borough received interesting ideas from them for overcoming the barriers represented by train tracks, for meeting the needs of the current immigrant population and of the future student population, and for integrating green technology in new development.

Our second-year students produced four professional-calibre reports for “clients” in Québec and Ontario. Thanks to alumnus Yan Claprood, now a planner in the borough of Ahuntsic-Cartierville, one team developed a strategy for the “mise en valeur” of the Gouin corridor, along the Rivière des Prairies. Working for Montréal’s parks department and for the borough Saint-Laurent, another team developed a plan for a green corridor across the borough’s territory. A third team used extensive “community engagement activities” to generate a vision and set of interventions for the Village of Mansonville, in the Eastern Townships. Finally, with the help of Our Man in Ottawa, Michel Frojmovic, a fourth team submitted an adaptive re-use plan for a public property and adjacent land on Bayview Road, in Ottawa, to the Hintonburg Community Association and the Wellington West BIA. We wouldn’t be surprised if, twenty years from now, well-known planning consulting firms traced their roots back to this studio.



REMEMBERING MAXIM WELLS

I must close this newsletter with very sad news. Maxim Wells, a student in our Master of Urban Planning program who had been on leave since last Winter, died on September 29. To his professors, Maxim was a smart and well-read person; to his fellow students, he was also a sweet and funny guy; to his friends in Ottawa, he was Elmaks, the maker of “Swap Boxes.” (Search the web with the terms “Elmaks” and “Ottawa” to see various texts and images about Maxim.) Classmates and friends from Ottawa, Montréal and Toronto gathered at the School, together with Maxim’s parents, to honour his memory by building new Swap Boxes.

Life is precious; keep safe and be well in the year ahead. *À tous et à toutes, nos meilleurs vœux pour 2012—une année de bonne santé avant tout, ainsi que de réussites et de satisfactions en tous genres.* Raphaël Fischler

PLEASE SHARE THIS NEWSLETTER WITH ALL S.U.P. PEOPLE YOU KNOW. PUT IT ON YOUR SOCIAL NETWORK IF YOU WANT.

AND PLEASE SEND US YOUR UPDATED CONTACT INFORMATION.
write to anand.sood@mcgill.ca