

ENDURING SPACES

COMMUNITY
EMPOWERMENT
THROUGH PUBLIC
SPACES



Internship Report
June 2022

**ENDURING SPACES:
Community Empowerment Through
Public Spaces**

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Experimental Learning Program

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Foreword Note Donny Seto

My attention on Montreal's Chinatown started about five years ago, stemming from the loss of the Chinese Community & Cultural Centre of Montreal and its possible sale to a private institution. I was asked by Dr. Norma M. Rantisi and Dr. Kevin A. Gould from my Department of Geography, Planning and Environment at Concordia University to meet with May Chu and Jessica Chen to brainstorm planning solutions to address the call for the protection of space for the community's use and benefit in Chinatown. After this meeting, many other planning issues came to light, including the mounting gentrification forces, developers wanting to reshape Chinatown to reflect the Central Business District (CBD), large infrastructure projects announced with little or no consideration of the impact on this historic district, growing community concerns for the current heritage businesses, and displacement of aging and at-risk population. Given the complexity and the emergency of these issues, I joined May Chu and Jessica Chen and many other concerned citizens to form the Chinatown Working Group.

These numerous threats of erasure on this historical site and its intangible living culture site brought me to contribute some of my university classes and my expertise to help study and tackle some of these paramount planning concerns. My interest in Chinatown is also one that is vested in my childhood experiences. Growing up in Quebec City, I witnessed first-hand the peak and sharp decline of Quebec City's Chinatown and its community. I am adamant about not witnessing such a loss or destruction anew. Hence, I am undertaking what I can to help ensure that Montreal's

Chinatown endures for generations to come.

As a lecturer in the Geography, Planning and Environment department of Concordia University, our teaching philosophy is to give students a real-world problem where they can make a difference to empower communities to vocalize their concerns and study different planning alternatives or approaches to the current situation. Students in my urban planning classes were invited to use a multiple prong approach to analyze, assess, and understand the current issues in Chinatown and consulted with local actors about our proposals to intervene. We identified urban assets, problems, opportunities, and limitations (SWOC analysis), analyzed built form, studied the social demographics data, assessed case studies' public planning policies and by-laws, and used these tools to understand, test, and apply sustainable development practices to reinforce Chinatown.

This internship report by Francis Grenier is guided by this holistic planning philosophy. We humbly thank Concordia's Experiential Learning program for funding this collaborative project. It elaborates some of the student projects on Chinatown from my urban design class and discusses different approaches to enriching and preserving heritage starting from an open/public space lens. Why start planning from open space? Open/public spaces are often seen as singular in function and are only considered as the last step in most planning activities. However, when planned sensitively with the neighbourhood's needs in mind, they may operate on many levels, from extensions of

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Donny Seto

storefronts and commercial spaces that house night markets and street fairs to community spaces that allow gatherings, events, and chance encounters. These spaces are the backbone of sustainable urban spaces; using them as a starting point to intervene instead of for embellishment purposes should provide interesting insights and discussion about the future of Montreal's Historic Chinatown.

This collaborative approach between the community and academics seeks to equip the community with tools to better engage in the planning of the local environment that would otherwise be decided for them – while the impacts, negative or positive, often land squarely on their shoulders. We must move away from an informative community consultation approach and actively involve the community as equal partners so that planning tools can be maximized to address the multiple dimensions of urban planning equitably, environmentally, and economically for all its citizens.



Foreword

Note

Jessica Chen

My relationship with Chinatowns started in Vancouver. From 1999 to 2011, I was a city planner working in Vancouver's inner-city neighbourhoods, the Downtown Eastside, which includes Chinatown. I tackled various urban issues such as gentrification, revitalization, heritage conservation, affordable housing, and social inclusion. After relocating to Montréal in 2013, I founded Wabi Sabi Planning Lab to research and advocate for community-owned assets, particularly housing and cultural heritage, to help shape a more resilient urban economy.

I have been deeply involved in Montréal's Chinatown for the past three years through my participation in the Chinatown Working Group (CWG). CWG was formed in 2019 as a volunteering community collective to fight gentrification. We were deeply concerned when the community lost its critical assets, such as the Chinese Community Cultural Centre and the YMCA recreational facility. We realized that condos and hotel developments without relevance to Chinatown had been proposed without community consultation.

Since I joined the CWG, I found that there was no proper recognition of Chinatown's historical significance by the government, no presence of Chinatown in the narrative of the City and its official documents, and no regulatory protection to manage land speculation and development pressure. Montréal's Chinatown was going through an active erasure of its identity, cultural heritage, legacy business, and way of life. Coming from

Vancouver, where its Chinatown has been designated as a heritage area since the 1970s after the struggle over the massive land expropriation for the urban renewal programs that happened in many North American cities, and where I have lived and witnessed the process of gentrification with grave emotions, I was truly worried that if nothing was done quickly, we might lose the last remaining Chinatown in Québec.

CWG realized very quickly that there was no baseline data about our Chinatown to help us really understand the issues, what is at stake, the true sense of urgency, and the possible interventions available at all levels of government. While I am used to having a team of planners at the City of Vancouver able to research and analyze data and information, as a group of volunteers, CWG did not have access to these resources and skills. That is why we approached the Department of Geography, Planning and Environment at Concordia University and started to work with their lecturer Donny Seto. Over the last two years, Donny Seto and his students from the planning and design studios have generated the much-needed information for the community to be able to voice their concerns and advocate with concrete data and informed analysis. This includes, but is not limited to, property ownership and community assets mapping, demographic analysis, and research on best practices for urban design solutions. The following internship report by Francis Grenier is a great example of how the collaborative approach between the community

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Jessica Chen

and academia can be so empowering. Chinatown Working Group is very grateful for all the support received from Concordia University, the leadership provided by Donny Seto, and the work done by all the students.

After Chinatown received heritage designation and protection at both the provincial and municipal levels in January 2022, several CWG members worked to establish Jia Foundation as a non-profit organization in Quebec to continue and formalize some of the work initiated by the CWG and to build community capacity, expertise and leadership. We hope this collaborative, community-based and action-oriented research in Montréal Chinatown can continue with the partnership established between the Jia Foundation and Next-Generations Cities Institute at Concordia University.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This internship report was prepared in partnership with the Chinatown Working Group (CWG) and Concordia University through its Experimental Learning Experience. It expands upon a student project completed in 2021 as part of a course in the Urban Planning program. In this course, under the teaching supervision of Donny Seto, students explored real-life issues for Chinatown through an iterative process that involved periodic feedback from community stakeholders, including members of the CWG. This immersive approach offered a pragmatic learning framework that challenged students' academic knowledge with real-life expectations and limitations. The result was the production of a two-fold document, joining a detailed analysis report of the research area with a comprehensive design proposal targeting three key locations pertaining to the issues at hand – public space expansion. The full report, Resilient Space Project (RSP), can be found in the annex.

This report aims to support the original document by providing additional contextual information to better frame the relevance of public space expansion in the context of Chinatown's preservation efforts and to provide further conceptual information related to the selection process behind each intervention. It also provides an update on key development issues, reflecting on an eventful year that brought important situational change to Chinatown. Showcasing a partnership

between academic and community, it highlights the value of community knowledge and student initiatives and illustrates the potential of alternative planning approaches, which favour a more preventive approach to development.

The report begins with a contextual presentation of Chinatown, linking its repressive history to the main challenges and threats that obstruct Chinatown's adaptive capacity and limit its capacity to flourish into a healthy living community. It investigates how development in Chinatown is affected by land pressure and external forces that encroach in or around the neighbourhood. It also examines how heritage protection relates to the preservation of Chinatown's historic scale and character. It is this particular set of obstacles that compel the exploration of creative approaches to development. As revealed through the making of these documents, public spaces are well-suited for the task and can function as a pillar of Chinatown's heritage preservation in various ways.

Next is an overview of the RSP interventions and presents how they address these challenges. Each intervention is considered part of a sequence of interventions that collectively create a network of public spaces, attempting to stitch up Chinatown's fragmented part, create a sense of harmonization throughout the area, and facilitate daily flows in and around the neighbourhood.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

First, in the spirit of reinforcing the scale and character of Chinatown, the RSP proposes the redesign of Brady Street in the very heart of the neighbourhood. Due to its centrality, it acts as a point of convergence and the linking element between Sun Yat-Sen Park and De La Gauchetière Street west of St-Urbain Street. It represents an affirmation of Chinatown's communal character and carries the influential potential for sensitive housing development along Clark Street.

Second, in acknowledgment of the many historical wrongs, the RSP proposes the transformation of the public square of Palais des Congrès into a valuable place of gathering for the community. It serves as an act of reclamation of land that was taken away and as an act of reconciliation between past, present, and future. It also contributes to unclogging Chinatown, extending Chinatown's compressed boundaries, and bringing about a breath of fresh air for its community's social life.

Third, through the perspective of an incomplete community, the RSP proposes the ambitious reconfiguration of Viger Avenue and the access to the 720 on-ramps, as well as the conversion of the parallel space running on its southern side into a green corridor connecting Champ-de-Mars to Place-d'Armes metro station. This 3-phases proposal revisits the typical definition of public spaces by seeking to optimize street space and activate underutilized fringe spaces. This inter-

vention emphasizes how the culture and heritage of the land are indissociable from the people that inhabit its territory. Thus, reinforcing the social aspect behind heritage protection.

In light of these analyses, some final recommendations outline priority points and suggest a vision for what should come next.

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CONTEXT

General Overview



Fig. 1 Ville-Marie Borough
(Source: Author)

Chinatown is located in the borough of Ville-Marie on the southern edge of the island of Montreal. For this document, Chinatown refers to the area comprised between René-Lévesque Boulevard, Viger Avenue, De Bleury, and Sanguinet Street.

Importantly, these boundaries reflect the community perspective of what constitutes Chinatown and its living community, as experienced today. In addition, they align more closely with Chinatown's historical territory and counteract the effect of urban renewal that drastically shrunk the neighbourhood. Consequently, the recognition of these boundaries represents a direct effort toward heritage protection and reaffirms Chinatown in proper alignment with its identity.

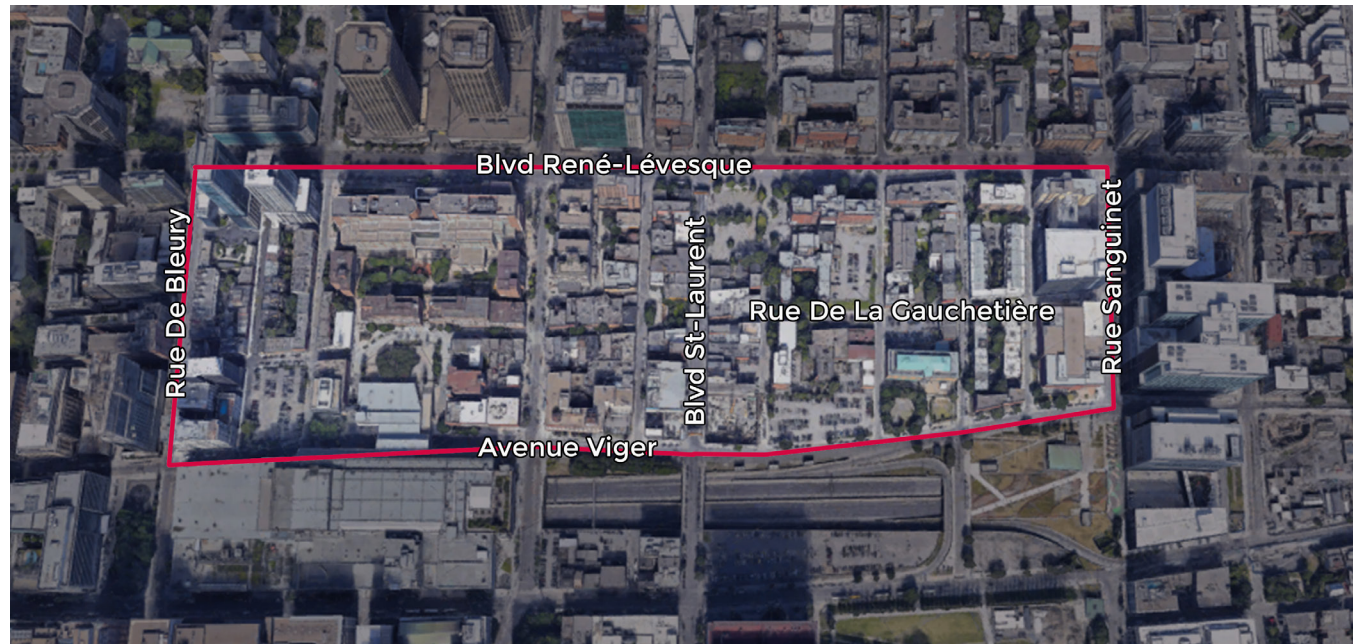


Fig. 2 Chinatown Boundary
(Source: Author)

From its historical significance as a refuge for immigrants to its centrality as a cultural and economic hub, Chinatown has established itself as a pillar of Montreal's identity. In that view, the benefits of Chinatown spill well over its physical boundaries. However, while the neighbourhood's long historical presence has profound implications for the city's dynamic, Chinatown is often underrepresented and absent from official City maps, as exemplified by the recent PPU des Faubourgs.

However, the City of Montreal has undertaken steps in the right direction with its new Plan d'action 2021-2026 pour le développement du Quartier Chinois

released in June 2021. Still, there is the urgency to legitimize and reaffirm Chinatown as a dynamic economic, cultural, and physical asset for the City of Montreal through concrete legislative actions. While the Plan d'action is definitely a good start, it only signifies the beginning of this long journey of reparation and protection.

CONTEXT

Historical Context

Chinese immigrants in Canada have historically been subjected to various forms of prejudice and structural discrimination, which played an important role in shaping the urban form of Chinatown today. Whether this was imposed by legislatures, such as the head tax on Chinese businesses and the Chinese Immigration Act of 1923, or experienced through land expropriation, Montreal's Chinatown has suffered a long history of institutional discrimination. The result was a socially and legally vulnerable Canadian Chinese population in need of a safe space for civil, social, and cultural conservation; functions which Chinatown still serves today (Chan - 1).

With the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1886, waves of Chinese workers migrated eastward from British Columbia over to various regions of eastern Canada - notably in the province of Quebec, which had become home to the second largest Chinese population in the country by 1901 (Lay & Chan - 2). In the early 1890s, several Chinese stores emerged on De La Gauchetière in what was Montreal's Dufferin District. During the 1910s, Chinatown was rapidly growing and expanding to other nearby streets as the district factories' male working population generated a significant demand for laundries, cafés, restaurants, and other services, which Chinese immigrants were providing (2).

In 1920, two years after a Spanish influenza epidemic in Chinatown, community leaders gathered the fund to purchase a building on De



Fig. 3 Chinatown, 1940
(Source: Conrad Poirier / Bibliothèque et Archives National du Québec)

La Gauchetière for a Montreal Chinese Hospital that would address the lack of medical institutions in the area (2). The Chinese Hospital was later condemned and closed in 1962 and had to be relocated outside of Chinatown as, during the 1950s and 1960s, the area had become prey to land speculation. Indeed, many vacant sites were converted into parking lots, and various old buildings were bought, demolished, and sold to developers at a great price.

CONTEXT

Historical Context

In the post-WWII urban renewal era, many North American Chinatowns either significantly declined or disappeared. This is notably the case with the former Quebec City's Chinatown, which was replaced by a highway. In Montreal, urban renewal efforts were driven by the provincial and federal governments. Indeed, the period of the 1970s and early 1980s was marked by a series of expropriations and redevelopment projects, which greatly reduced Chinatown's footprint. In 1975, Place Guy Favreau, a massive complex of high-rise offices and apartment buildings, was enabled by the Government of Canada, while the Government of Quebec sponsored, in 1977, the construction of the Palais des Congrès on the southern boundary of Chinatown, blocking any possible expansion to the south (2). In addition, in 1985, a municipal zoning bylaw prohibited additional commercial development on De La Gauchetière east of St-Laurent – the only possible path of expansion left – establishing a trend of gentrification in and around Chinatown.

In 1982, revival efforts in Chinatown led to the construction of the Catholic Community Centre and Bo Ai Lou, a residential building for senior citizens, along with a plan for the revitalization and pedestrianization of de la Gauchetière Street between St-Laurent and Jeanne-Mance Street (2). In 1985, the St-Laurent's Gates were built with the help of the Government of Shanghai, and in 1986, the Sun Yat-sen Park was built by the City of Montreal. While these later interventions brought some degree of positive changes to Chinatown,



Fig. 4 Construction of the Complexe Guy-Favreau
(Source: Phillippe Dumais / Archives de la Ville de Montréal)

they fell short of addressing the scale of wrongdoings of urban displacement. In addition, these events highlight how the various interventions have mainly contributed to shaping and reinforcing Chinatown's image of an economically driven and tourist-oriented destination, demoting social needs as an afterthought.

CONTEXT

History of Chinatown

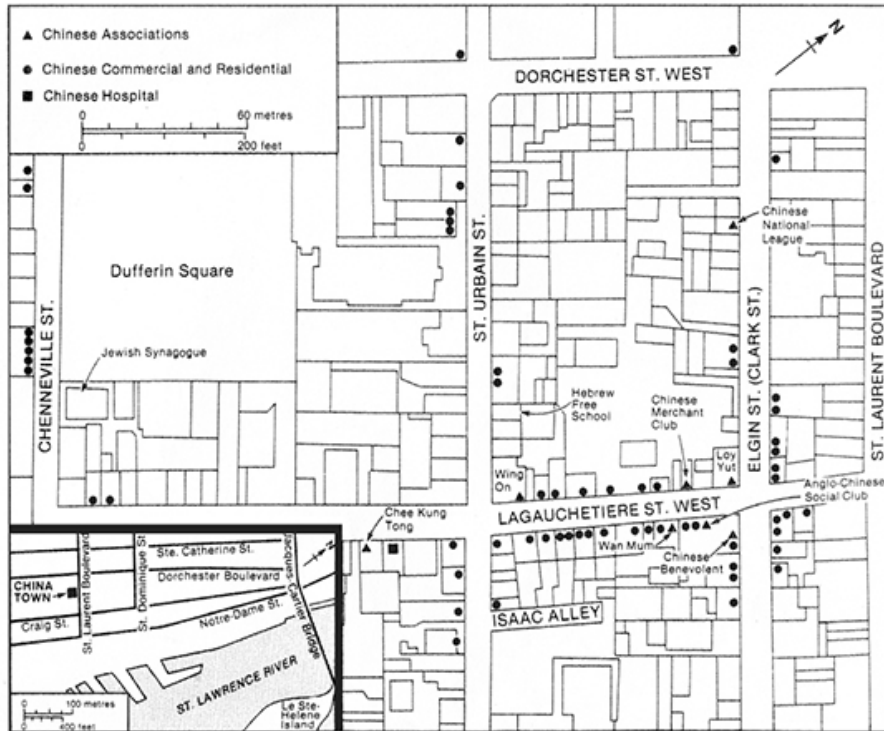


Fig. 5 Montreal Chinatown, 1921
(Source: Chuenyan Lai & Chiu Man Chan)

The first map highlights the historical residential nature of Chinatown's urban fabric composed primarily of small lots.

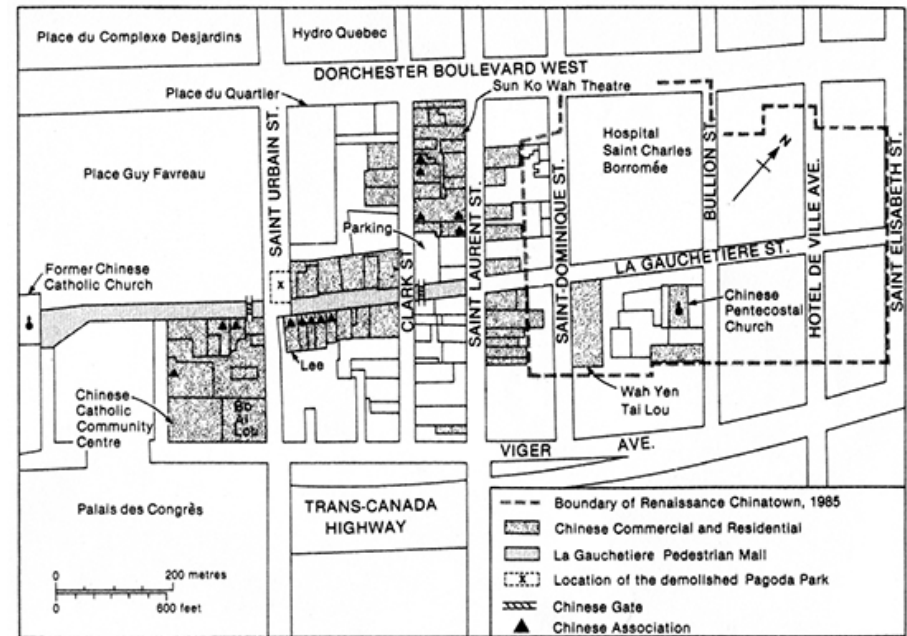


Fig. 6 Montreal Chinatown, 1986
(Source: Chuenyan Lai & Chiu Man Chan)

The difference between the two maps illustrates the radical transformation of Chinatown from its period of rapid growth, in the early 20th century, to the devastating passage of urban renewal of the 1970s and 1980s.

CHALLENGES & THREATS

Land Pressure



Fig. 7 Land Pressure Map
(Source: Author)

In Chinatown, the threats and pressures are numerous, both in types and numbers, highlighting the magnitude of land pressure exerted on the area.

Type of Land Pressure

- Awaiting / In the process of development
- At risk of development
- Institutional / historic pressure
- Hotel & Condominium tower
- Functional transformation
- External pressure
- Highway infrastructure

CHALLENGES & THREATS

Land Pressure

Like most North American Chinatowns, Montreal's Chinatown is strategically located in proximity to the downtown core and, as such, evolved into a site of contention between the aspirations of developers and the needs of the local community. As presented above, development in Chinatown has historically been invasive, permissive, and insensitive. This approach has dramatically facilitated gentrification, limiting the community's capacity for adaptation through organic growth as it simply cannot compete with the greater external force of developers. Here, organic growth refers to growth that is influenced by the community in a way that is coherent with the needs of its residents and local businesses and that develops at a pace that is compatible with the form and characteristics of the neighbourhood it operates in; thus, resulting in development that expands rather than expunges.

However, the current situation is one that features an inadequate regulatory framework and opportunistic gentrifying forces that directly challenges the state of Chinatown as a complete living environment. More so, it threatens the neighbourhood's cultural preservation as it drives away the people that keep its culture alive. Much more than mortar and bricks, culture is the collective manifestation of everyday acts of living. Consequently, preserving the capacity of Chinatown's residents to live in the neighbourhood is crucial for heritage protection.



Fig. 8 Hampton Inn & Serenity
(Source: CWG)

Hampton Inn & Serenity

The advent of the Hampton Inn & Serenity represents a pivotal movement in the modern history of Chinatown's land pressure, rising as a red flag that heralded a disturbing new trend of development in the area. This event propelled the community into mobilization, influencing notably the formation of the Chinatown Working Group.

This project exemplifies intrusive and insensitive development in both its function and form. While the availability of affordable housing is already an established issue in the area, the luxury hotel and condominium project blatantly ignores local housing needs as it aims instead to attract new, wealthy residents into to the area, cashing in on the back of a vulnerable community. Moreover, the project directly conflicts with the scale of the

historic urban envelope, which represents a vital attribute for a thriving local culture and economy. The towering structure radically clashes with its surroundings, and, as it replaced a former parking lot on the northeast corner of Viger and Saint-Laurent, this represents a complete transformation of this emblematic Chinatown entrance. Sitting right on the property line, the structure rises only inches away from the South Gate. As a result, this greatly undermines the gate's significance as a landmark – an act reminiscent of the East Gate on De La Gauchetière and St-Dominique, which also found itself hemmed in between new condominium buildings. Importantly, this highlights how the recent development process has allowed the quiet erasing of Chinatown's boundaries with relative impunity.



Fig. 9 One Condominium
(Source: CWG)

CHALLENGES & THREATS

Land Pressure

Additionally, the project sets a dangerous precedent for future development in Chinatown, presaging a wave of similar constructions along the Saint-Laurent axis as various other vacant lots are awaiting development. Indeed, on the opposing corner from the Hampton Inn & Serenity, a project is set to produce a comparable massing envelope. As such, this could rapidly lead to a snowball effect and a soon-to-be complete makeover of the street's historical character, leading Chinatown's long-lasting community on an inevitable path of erosion. As such, this emphasizes the need for adopting a pre-emptive approach to development.



Fig. 10 South Gate next to Hampton Inn & Serenity
(Source: CWG)

Where did the Gates go? Modern redevelopment has significantly impaired the iconic landmark's visibility, exemplifying the insensitive treatment of Chinatown's heritage.



Fig. 11 East Gate
(Source: CWG)

The East Gate, located near the corner of De La Gauchetière and St-Dominique, living a life of isolation, trapped in-between condo towers.

CHALLENGES & THREATS

Land Pressure



Fig. 12 Wing Noodles
(Source: CWG)

Wing Noodles

In January 2022, the provincial government signed an official notice of intent to grant heritage status to Chinatown's historic core. The move came as a response to waves of intensified community pressure following the news of Wing Noodles' building sale to a private developer. Indeed, this historic block, framed by Saint-Urbain, Côté, De La Gauchetière, and Viger, has experienced rapid change in ownership through incremental lot acquisitions by a single developer. As one of the most historic blocks of Chinatown, 200 years of history are actively being threatened, emphasizing the sense of urgency for heritage protection.

Considering the current zoning restrictions and the developer's pedigree, the cumulative acquisitions appeared to signal the coming of yet another high-rise development in the neighbourhood. In this scenario, Chinatown's western boundaries would once again be challenged, adding to its history of institutional land grabs and further enclosing Chinatown within the confines of a few blocks. More so, this would isolate the Chinese Catholic Church and the Western Gate, which would remain as a lone historical island in a sea of insensitive modernity. Indeed, this would represent the last remnant of Chinatown history west of Saint-Urbain.

Furthermore, the continuity and character of De La Gauchetière Street as a commercial axis would significantly be undermined, restricting this iconic segment to the two blocks between St-Urbain and St-Laurent. Even in the event of façade preservation, the mismatch in scale would be enough to substantially upset the local character of the street. It is only through the preservation of the neighbourhood's urban fabric at the human scale that Chinatown can hope to preserve its identity.



Fig. 13 De La Gauchetière West
(Source: CWG)

CHALLENGES & THREATS

External Pressures



Fig. 16 Latest design of the REM station by the CDPQ infra
(Source: CDPQ infra, 2022)

As demonstrated in this document, land expropriation and large redevelopment projects have significantly contributed to narrowing and fencing off Chinatown through different sets of external pressures. More recently, while the faith of the REM de l'Est has recently changed hand, a shift that could mitigate the most contentious element of the project, it illustrates the lasting vulnerability of the neighbourhood. Indeed, the whole process demonstrates how Chinatown is still considered as a mere afterthought in the planning process. To the South, the redevelopment of the Place des Montréalaises proposes nothing that relates to or works to include or enhance Chinatown in some capacity. Both projects will be briefly explored in relation to their pressuring impacts on Chinatown development.

REM de L'Est

The new proposed transit line, which planned its course through downtown Montreal as an elevated light-rail train, quickly raised community



Fig. 17 View of the aerial structure, illustrating its scale as a physical barrier
(Source: CDPQ infra, 2022)

concerns. Initiated by the Provincial Government through the CDPQ infra, the REM de l'Est unsurprisingly predisposed a regional perspective on benefits. In its latest iteration, the project alarmingly undervalues local impacts, focusing mainly on peripheral benefits and ignoring the in-between, as exemplified by the absence of community consultation. With a stop on Saint-Laurent and René-Lévesque, community concerns were quick to erupt as the voices of Chinatown were once again ignored. Fortunately, the City of Montreal echoed many concerns over community benefits and social costs and is set to be actively involved in the project going forward.

From the outset, the aspect of urban integration of an elevated track running through downtown was of concern. Indeed, due to the nature of the infrastructure, the REM would inevitably materialize as a hard physical barrier regardless of the design and the degree of mitigation effort it features. For Chinatown, such a structure would block the view into the neighbourhood, restrict local access to the area, and block the Northern Gate visibility – adding to the pattern of suppression of Chinatown's landmarks. Moreover, the project would further contribute to the current process of development that is hemming Chinatown to the point of suffocation – in this case,

CHALLENGES & THREATS

External Pressures

sharpening the neighbourhood's edges with yet another significant barrier framing Chinatown.

While densification around transit nodes should be encouraged, here in Chinatown, the process of densification is well underway, positioning the REM as an ill-suited project. Indeed, this structural behemoth challenges the current scale of the neighbourhood by promoting modern, high-rise type of infrastructure, which reinforces the current development trend of insensitive development. Thus, acting as another powerful gentrifying force working against the neighbourhood's best interests.

Additionally, the lot on the corner of St-Laurent and René-Lévesque has been used on various occasions for local community events (i.e., night market) but more importantly, it represents the last significant open space in the neighbourhood. What Chinatown needs is for development to slow down, not accelerate. Moreover, the advent of such a large, modern infrastructure is inconsequent with the recent development of heritage protection. While efforts are made to preserve the historic built environment of Chinatown, heavy development projects are still being promoted, creating confusion over Chinatown future.

Place des Montréalaises

While there are multiple merits to the current design, it represents a failed opportunity to reverse the historical trend of development that continuously overlooked Chinatown. More so, it fails



Fig. 18 Place des Montréalaises design overview
(Source: Ville de Montréal, 2022)

to activate the full potential of Place des Montréalaises as a holistic placemaking project that relates to all surrounding communities and acts as a stitching element in this highly fragmented environment.

Sitting in close proximity to Chinatown's eastern ends, the project makes no mention of the neighbourhood in its presentation, nor does it include any bridging elements toward Chinatown, as it does for instance over St-Antoine Street. Instead, the project focuses solely on its connection with Montreal's downtown and the Old Port to the South. Thus, through omission, the project draws yet another line that excludes Chinatown and reinforces its boundary as a barrier.

View of Place des Montréalaises, looking South. Here, the area north of Viger Avenue is whited out, minimizing its most direct neighbouring communities in Chinatown.

CHALLENGES & THREATS

Scale & Character



Fig. 19 Chinatown map, illustrating its numerous physical barriers and the overall contrast of scale
(Source: Author)

The 3D map illustrates the stark contrast in scale that constrained and wall-off Chinatown in all directions.

The area, which sits near the city's downtown core, is easily accessible as it connects with various transit nodes and main automobile thoroughfares. While these features make Chinatown an attractive destination for both locals and visitors alike, it also renders the area particularly vulnerable to land speculation. In recent years, private development has rapidly been eating away at the scarce, coveted land.

The provided map highlights the level of discrepancy in the area's built form as brutalist modernity eclipses Chinatown's historical fabric. Collectively, these imposing physical barriers have rounded and enclosed Chinatown, denying all possibilities for growth in every direction. As such, this illustrates how the threat of being absorbed in a vision of modernity that negates the area's cultural heritage is increasingly real.

Chinatown's history of discrimination and expropriation has translated into a landscape of visible inequality. While large institutional complexes have historically reshaped and scarred the local urban landscape, persistent development pressure from private investors continues to box Chinatown toward a point of rupture. Indeed, issues of scale are unmistakable, blurring Chinatown's identity into a mismatch of shapes and purposes.

CHALLENGES & THREATS

Scale & Character

Eastern end

Chinatown is a severely fragmented urban landscape, and its eastern end is no exception. While the residential area sits outside the official boundaries of Chinatown, it lies within the contours of perceived and experienced boundaries for its local residents. Pertaining to the dynamic of a complete community, the scope of considerations should mirror the range of socio-economic interactions that reflect residents' daily life activities. Indeed, many locals rely on Chinatown's core for daily shopping, work, and socialization. While Chinatown is typically depicted as a destination, the vision of Chinatown as a home and living community is gravely understated.

Due to the disjointed nature of the neighbourhood, the eastern end is often forgotten and left out of Chinatown's consideration. However, a comparative analysis of the eastern end's built form reveals how directly it relates to Chinatown's core and likewise suffers the same speculative pressure as surrounded by high-rise developments. To that end, an emphasis should be made on bridging gaps in a way that supports and enhances the natural flow of activities and knits disjointed areas together. In that sense, extending the definition of Chinatown's boundary to include the eastern ends can only help to solidify Chinatown's scale and character.



Fig. 21 Built form of the eastern end
(Source: CWG)



Fig. 20 Built form of the eastern end
(Source: CWG)



Fig. 22 Built form of Chinatown's core
(Source: CWG)

The jarring sight of the eastern end pressed against a backdrop of high-rise development.

CHALLENGES & THREATS

Scale & Character

1050 St-Laurent

Located at the very heart of Chinatown, on the bustling corner of Saint-Laurent and De La Gauchetière, this small piece of land packs great potential. Beyond the palisade walls, a handful of young trees stretch tall and undisturbed as if in quiet defiance of their surroundings. While Chinatown critically lacks public spaces and canopy coverage, this lot has been resting vacant for countless years. As adjacent to the sole public space in the neighbourhood, the site represents a natural expansion of Sun Yat-sen Park. Such an outcome would directly help to affirm and solidify Chinatown's character and identity, turning the site into an anchor of socio-cultural stability and creating a focal point from which change can radiate. The site also represents an entry point to the iconic pedestrian street of De La Gauchetière and, as such, deserves an iconically equivalent entrance.

Unfortunately, the lot is privately owned and is likely to be developed for commercial use. After many years of silence, development plans for the lot were released in the summer of 2021. However, the project was ultimately abandoned due to community pressure. Indeed, the proposal failed to reflect local needs while offering very little in terms of integration with its surroundings. Consequently, the community heavily rejected the project, criticizing it for being strikingly unambitious, unresponsive to its surroundings (e.g., framing Sun Yat-sen Park with a passive facade), and blatantly ignoring the potential of its locality.



Fig. 23 Sun-Yat-Sen Park with a view on the 1050 St-Laurent's lot
(Source: CWG)

CHALLENGES & THREATS

Scale & Character

Clark Street

The revitalization of Clark Street represents a strategic opportunity for development that supports local housing needs while supporting the scale and character of Chinatown. Indeed, the City of Montreal owns multiple assets along Clark Street (1092-98 Clark), and additional land behind on the same block, including the street segment of Brady. In that light, consolidating those assets into a holistic affordable housing project represents a prime opportunity for the City to act upon its intention of preservation, as culture and heritage are synonymous with the people that inhabit the space.

The redevelopment of Clark Street presents great urban stitching potential. Whether it is by creating functional links and smoothing the transition between the buildings, the street, and Sun Yat-sen Park, by harmonizing car and pedestrian traffic in a way that reflects and facilitates cultural and economic activity patterns, or by reinforcing paths and nodes as part of a network of public spaces, the benefits are numerous. The Resilient Space Project (RSP) redesign of Brady Street stems from the idea of a network of public spaces.



Fig. 24 View of Clark Street, looking South
(Source: CWG)

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Resilient Space Project

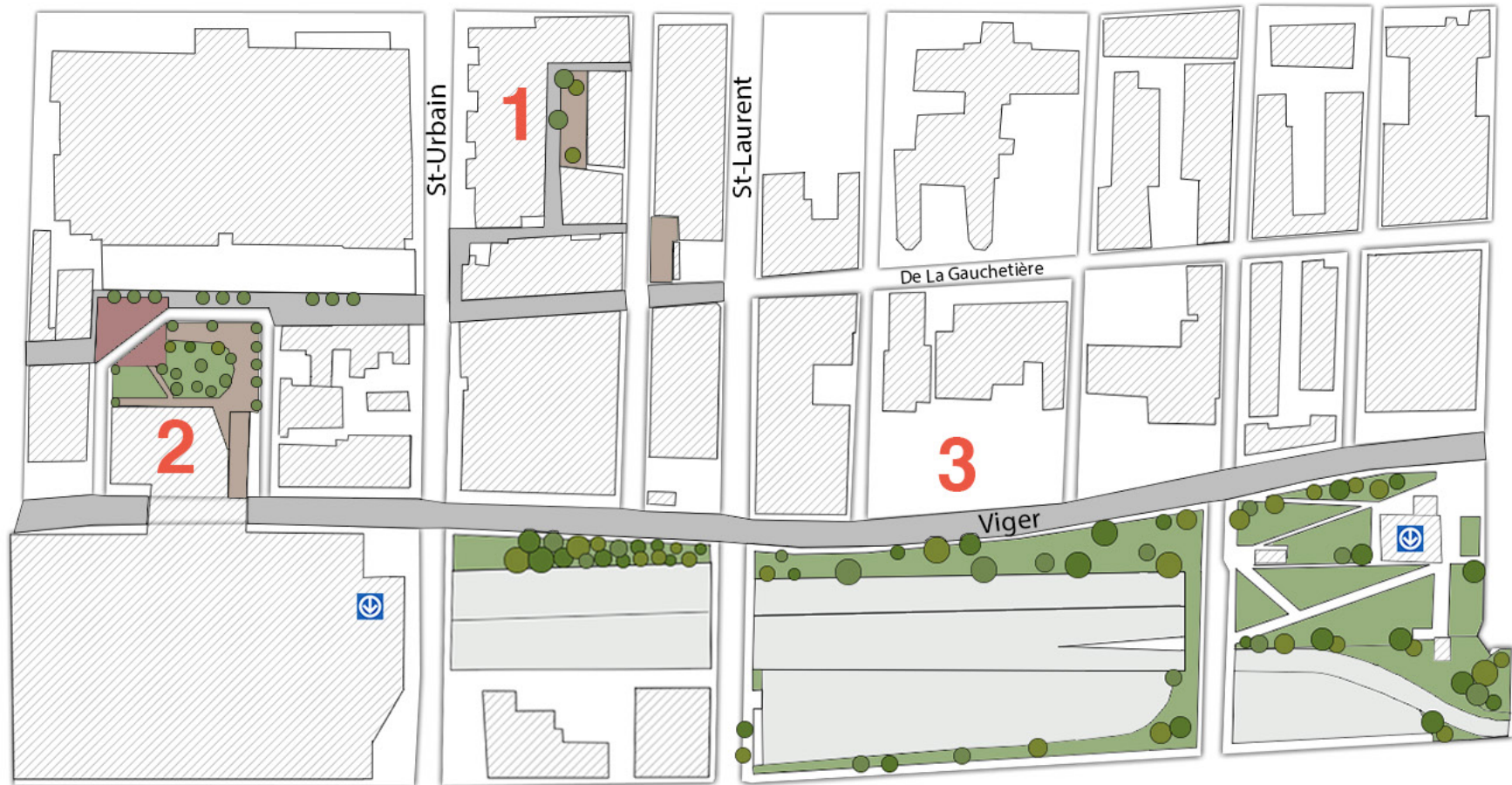


Fig. 25 RSP - Map of site intervention
(Source: RSP, 2021)

The next section presents a summary of the Resilient Space Project, presenting a brief overview of each intervention. The full document can be found in Annex at the end of this document.

RSP INTERVENTIONS

1. Brady Street
2. Palais des Congrès
3. Viger Area

SCALE & CHARACTER

RSP: Brady's Transformation

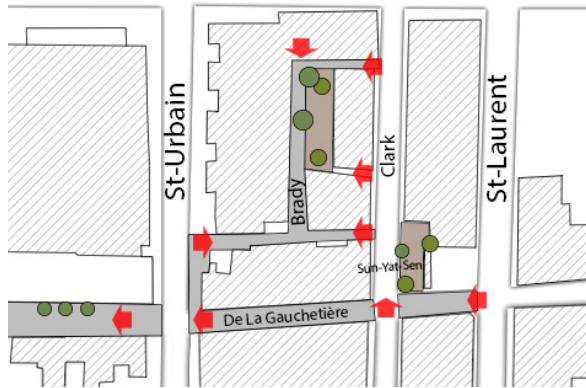


Fig. 26 Location of and flows around Brady Street
(Source: Author)

BRADY'S DESIGN MERITS:

- » Introduces an attractive, safe, and useful community destination
- » Includes versatile space for Chinatown's diversified activities
- » Forms connections between existing community nodes (i.e., Sun Yat-sen Park)
- » Stimulates the local economy through commercial partnerships
- » Provides a comfortable space for social interaction
- » Promotes Chinese culture through design
- » Contributes to the area's tree and plant life



Fig. 27 Sketch of Brady Street
(Source: RSP, 2021)

Concept

The transformation of Brady Street operates under the consideration of five grounding themes: identity, safety, vegetation, interaction, and destination. Due to the spatial nature of Brady Street as a secluded alleyway, it is crucial to draw people in with a strong visual identity, from its entry point to the center space. As such, it activates all connecting nodes, aiming to redirect some of the peripheral pedestrian flows from St-Urbain and De Le Gauchetière. It also reinforces its connection to Clark Street and Sun-Yat-Sen Park, connecting pockets of public spaces into a larger whole.

The space offers a quiet retreat and gathering spot for the residents right in the heart of Chinatown. Through the reclamation of this forgotten fringe space, the project grounds Chinatown's identity in a vision of resilience and creative survival that has always been characteristic of its population. More so, the centrality of its location and the branching ways of Brady Street directly align with the concept of a network of public spaces that forces its way through this seemingly impermeable environment. In that sense, this small space carries the anchoring potential to support the preservation of Chinatown's scale and character.

View of Brady Street, looking South.

URBAN RENEWAL LEGACY

Public Square of Palais des Congrès



Fig. 28 Targeted area referred to as the Square
(Source: Author)

Urban renewal across North America has historically targeted ethnic and poor neighbourhoods, favouring transport infrastructure and large redevelopment projects to the detriment of local marginalized communities. The case of Montreal's Chinatown is no stranger to such processes of structural discrimination. Here, urban displacement in and around the neighbourhood was spearheaded by government's initiatives, which exhibit little to no effort of integration with their surroundings, whether it is in terms of function or form.

The effect of urban renewal was most prominent in the western end of Chinatown. These notably include the Complexe Guy-Favreau, a mega-structure of federal office buildings for which the clearance of 6 acres of land was required, razing a large number of buildings and expropriating its residents. Around the same time, the widening of St-Urbain and Jeanne-Mance added a few more buildings to the demolition list. With the convention centre of Palais des Congrès, the provincial government also contributed to urban displacement and created a massive barrier on the southwestern edge of Chinatown. Paired with the scar of the Autoroute 720 infrastructure, the walling



Fig. 29 Construction of Palais des Congrès in 1981
(Source: Bibliothèque et Archives Nationales du Québec)

off of Chinatown's southern border was completed. Thus, stopping any possibility of expansion either toward the West or the South.

These urban renewal projects created a radical scale change in the built environment, leaving behind a disparate and fragmented urban landscape. In that sense, the third intervention evokes Chinatown's urban renewal legacy in the spirit of reconciliation. The selected site is the ambiguous square-like public space framed by the Palais des Congrès' northern-most entrance, les Habitations du Centre-Ville, Chenneville, and Côté Street. The RSP proposes a comprehensive reformulation of the Square to reclaim this large, isolated, and alienating piece of expropriated land and repurpose it into a multi-faceted asset serving the community it overlaps.

URBAN RENEWAL LEGACY

RSP: Square's Reclamation

SQUARE'S DESIGN MERITS

- » Reclaims alienating and inaccessible expropriated land for the community
- » Unlocks the unique potential of a large, underutilized space
- » Breaks down complex structures into breathable space
- » Removes barriers and activates unused structural components
- » Permeates imposing structures that house important informal gathering spaces
- » Reinforces routes and connections to important nodes and assets (e.g., metro)
- » Situates site improvements within a larger agenda for reparations
- » Includes a large, versatile, four-season space for gatherings, events, and activities
- » Stimulates the local economy through commercial partnerships (e.g., market)
- » Bolsters commercial vitality along De La Gauchetière
- » Affirms and preserves Chinatown's cultural and historical significance
- » Prioritizes pedestrian use of the space and safety (especially seniors).
- » Promotes partnerships with local businesses, artists, and community organizations
- » Fills the void of components lost due to fragmentation
- » Provides space for community gardening initiatives (Green Chinatown).

Main features

Intended as a multi-purpose space, the new Square offers multiple key features aiming to provide flexibility of use and facilitate and stimulate the cohabitation of various groups of users. Indeed, one of the main RSP's objectives is to supply Chinatown with an important place of gathering, responding to community concerns as identified in the 2019 CEUM report. More so, the new design would transform this insensitive and underutilized space into a community landmark that reflects and celebrates the local culture and acknowledges its complicated history. The redesign is equally a project of urban stitchwork that reconnects the lone West Gate and the Chinese Church to De La Gauchetière and its connecting parts.

More specifically, the redesign aims to optimize and activate as much space as possible in and around the Square, creating several zones that provide for different types of activity. For instance, expanding the Square to the area adjacent to the Church creates a large flat gathering space. As such, it offers an open, accessible, and inviting space that links with its surroundings – a link that can be reinforced through soft design elements such as lanterns, banners, or pavement material and paint. In addition, a natural amphitheatre, created using the natural declination of the Square's west side, frames the gathering space and provides two rows of sitting stairs.



Fig. 30 Sketch of the Square redesign
(Source: RSP, 2021)

Second, the redesign proposes a green oasis with various trees, plants, and grassy areas, breaking the bleak platitude of an overbearing concrete environment. While the current design includes vegetation, its design is rigid rather than organic and aesthetic rather than functional, creating a non-interactive and ambiguously secluded space. As such, the RSP design seeks to optimize the functionality of the already-limited canopy coverage in Chinatown as well as to bridge the distance between the urban and the natural, nurturing a sense of intimacy necessary for a healthy living community.

URBAN RENEWAL LEGACY

RSP: Square's Reclamation



Fig. 31 Sketch of the Square redesign
(Source: RSP, 2021)

Culture & History

One of the RSP design goals is to promote the historical significance and the resilience of Chinatown. As such, it features a large pagoda that acts as a defining feature and landmark of the revamped space in reminiscence of the original pagoda that was lost in the widening of St-Urbain Street in 1981.



Fig. 32 Former Pagoda Park in Chinatown
(Source: Adrien Huber / Bibliothèque et Archives Nationales du Québec)

INCOMPLETE COMMUNITY

While Chinatown's function as a local economic driver is at the forefront of public discussions, its social and cultural functions are often under-represented, reflecting the community's historic struggle for recognition. Indeed, the typical depiction of Chinatown is one of lively, bustling pedestrian streets teeming with tourists on a quest for flavours and souvenirs. However, this idealization of Chinatown is a dangerous simplification that undermines local social challenges. Moreover, it reinforces a process of commodification of Chinatown's culture that excludes people from the product of the expression of their identity. It suggests culture as a static element rather than the cumulative experience of a community that manifests in continuity through everyday acts of living.

If Chinatown functions today as an incomplete community, it is largely due to its long history of development laxity, resulting in the incremental suppression and dismantlement of essential services and amenities, which have been carved out of the urban fabric by several large redevelopment projects. As such, the perspective of Chinatown as an incomplete community is derived from the acknowledgment of these historical wrongs and overall planning insensitivity that led to the demolition of housing blocks, various local businesses, groceries, parks, and religious buildings - never to be replaced. More recently, the closure of the YMCA created yet another dent in the socio-cultural fabric of the neighbourhood. As Chinatown is ever-so a site of contention, provid-

ing essential services – including the provision of public space – becomes increasingly more challenging.

In regard to Chinatown as an incomplete community, some main takeaways have served as the baseline of the third RSP intervention and are outlined as follows. First, the significant mismatch in the scale of the urban form results in a fragmented neighbourhood and creates hard physical barriers all around Chinatown. Second, the presence of multiple high-volume streets creates a hostile environment for pedestrians and restricts overall walkability in and to the neighbourhood. Third, with the current state of land availability, the need to explore new creative forms of development, which expand upon the definition of what constitutes public spaces, has

become essential. Lastly, considering the level of difficulty in retrofitting public spaces and other amenities in a rapidly densifying area, there is an urgency to plan ahead of needs. As such, considering the combination of historical deficits, land scarcity, and future needs, the RSP selected Viger Avenue and its surrounding areas as its next intervention site.

The redesign of the Viger area is a more ambitious 3-phases proposal that affirms Chinatown as a complete living community, seeking to reaffirm development at the human scale. This multi-phase plan would allow much-needed flexibility to adapt to and palliate for change. More so, it is the missing puzzle piece that could connect the disjointed area of Chinatown, Old Port, the PPU des Faubourgs, and complement Place des Montréalaises in a way that integrates and supports Chinatown.

The definition of a complete community must reach beyond that of a commercial life and a single public space.



Fig. 33 Intersection of Clark & De La Gauchetière
(Source: CWG)

INCOMPLETE COMMUNITY

RSP: Viger's Restructuring

VIGER'S DESIGN MERITS:

- » Calms aggressive traffic along Viger
- » Reclaims automobile infrastructure
- » Preserves the scale and character of Chinatown
- » Improves connectivity, continuity, and safety for pedestrians
- » Provides compatible, sustainable, and affordable mobility
- » Repairs and reweaves fragmented land
- » Reappropriates space to fill the void of lost community assets
- » Provides means of anticipation for future needs

Phase 1: Reconfiguration of avenue Viger

Acts to preserve the scale and character by providing a safer environment, balancing transport mode priority, and better connecting Chinatown's fragmented parts. It supports local flows, by restructuring Viger Avenue into a residential street rather than this aggressive thoroughfare. More so, it affirms and supports Chinatown as a residential community.



Fig. 34 Section cut of Viger's redesign
(Source: RSP, 2021)

Phase 2: Green corridor along avenue Viger

Expands Chinatown boundary, softens hard barriers, reconnects fragmented land, activates non-utilized space, and significantly increases the supply of green space in the area.

Phase 3: Coverage of the A-720

Due to its complexity and to respect the scope of the class assignment, the last phase is suggested as the next step but is not designed. However, the first two phases open a window of opportunity for coherent and sensitive development for a project that has already been considered by the City of Montreal and fits in as a logical continuity of development in the area (i.e., coverage of the A-720 to the East, PPU des Faubourgs, and Place des Montréalaises).



Fig. 35 Green corridor along Viger
(Source: RSP, 2021)

WHAT COMES NEXT?

Vision & Priorities

In recent years, Chinatown has experienced a series of rapid change that warranted concerns. True to its resilient nature, the community was quick to mobilize and coordinate resistance. However, in a battle against gentrification, the power difference is such that community groups simply cannot compete on their own. More so, the historical structural discrimination provides a handicap that exacerbates this power imbalance.

Nevertheless, through dedicated collaborative efforts, the community has managed to harmonize its voices into a narrative of comprehensive urgency that compelled the City of Montreal into action. In the summer of 2021, the City of Montreal revealed their five-year action plan, providing the basis for change supporting Chinatown's heritage protection. While the Plan d'action 2021-26 pour le développement du Quartier Chinois aligns the City's priorities in the right direction, it represents small steps in the long journey toward reparation of historical wrongs and the safeguard of Chinatown's future.

Indeed, the materialization of this vision necessitates a process of multidimensional collaborative engagement. More specifically, it requires the synergic strength of institutional capacity, community representation, and grassroots organizing. Here, institutional capacity refers to all three levels of government and should be supplied by different sets of regulatory frameworks, providing a comprehensive approach to planning that is properly located in the broader socio-spatial

context of Montreal. For sustained and meaningful community representation, official channels of communication between the City of Montreal and the community need to be supported and maintained. At the community level, grassroots organizing must stay strong and vigilant, ensuring the opportunity for all community voices to be valued and heard. Importantly, it is only through this careful alignment of forces that Chinatown can hope to leverage the necessary power to secure a long-term and thriving future.

Conserving culture and heritage

A strong, healthy vision of Chinatown is based on three main priorities. The first entails the conservation of Chinatown's identity through development frameworks that support, enhance, and celebrate its culture and heritage. As presented before, the heritage designation of a strip of Chinatown by the provincial government represents an important achievement for the neighbourhood. However, this new heritage status is limited by its narrow boundaries. As argued throughout this report, gentrifying forces are numerous and operate in and all around, generating a level of pressure that outmatches the force of heritage status, even in the event of expanding its coverage over most, if not all, of Chinatown's area.

Enhancing the quality of life for its existing residents

The second entails enhancing the quality of life of existing residents by cementing its presence as a complete community. Indeed, Chinatown's

cultural identity reflects the legacy of the people that inhabit its area. More so, culture derives its significance as a function of social interactions and interactions between people and their living environment. As such, culture is both a collective and personal experience that reflects the complexity of socio-spatial connections, emphasizing the inseparable bond between the human and the physical. Preserving the ability of current residents to live in the community they directly shaped and brought to life is thus of vital importance.

Through the premise of incomplete community, several areas of concern have been identified, namely the lack of affordable housing, services and amenities, and public spaces, and support for the local economy. By focusing on enhancing the quality of life for existing Chinatown residents, not only does it secure the long-term vitality of Chinatown, but it also challenges patterns of exclusions initiated by the various aggressive housing developments.

In its current form, Chinatown desperately lacks greenery and adequate public spaces, whether it is in terms of quantity, size, or functions. Moreover, the current scarcity of land, combined with a future influx of residents attracted by luxury condominiums, is likely to exacerbate the situation even more. Not only is acquiring and setting aside land for public use now of dire importance, the exploration of public space expansion has revealed a strong synergy between public

WHAT COMES NEXT?

Vision & Priorities

spaces and community preservation.

While the Plan d'action brushes the contours of public space's current issues, it fails to acknowledge and define current limitations and needs, proposing an approach that is more aesthetic than functional. The Plan d'action orientation 1 deals with the quality of life, housing, and public spaces. Section 1.1.1-3 deals with public space in terms of movement, connectivity and pedestrian security, although its main concern is turned toward external connectivity. Section 1.1.4 deals with increasing greenery and dynamization of small vacant lands but more in terms of reducing UHI. Section 1.1.5 deals with soft design elements (bike rack, lighting, public restrooms).

From the preservation of scale and character, to the celebration and affirmation of cultural identity, to the unification and reconnection of fragmented parts, the benefits of public spaces are abundant and thus, should be addressed with significance.

Solidifying Chinatown's future

The third priority is ensuring a coherent long-term vision for Chinatown development by securing its current foothold through institutional capacity and regulatory framework. From the outset, community advocates have recommended a Chinatown-specific Plan Particulier d'Urbanisme (PPU) as a corresponding response to the level of threats that challenge Chinatown. Indeed, the borough of Ville-Marie is no stranger to such planning process as the area welcomed several



Fig. 36 Chinatown art
(Source: CWG)

PPUs in the past, including the PPU for Quartier des Spectacles and more recently, the PPU des faubourgs. The latter is of notable interest as it neighbours Chinatown on its eastern edge and suggests a PPU for Chinatown as a logical developmental continuity.

While acting with good intentions, the City responded with the CEUM consultation, leading to the Action Plan, and various committees, including the heritage tri-committee, resulting in

fragmented efforts with limited potential. As such, this creates an environment of confusion, which sustains a sense of disconnection between city officials, developers, and residents. While community residents struggle to navigate between the various consultation processes, the tangible outcomes are projects like the Hampton Inn and the One Condominium, resulting in distorted expectations and disengagement.

The Action Plan outlines four orientations, focusing on quality of life, commercial vitality, heritage and identity, and consultation. While touching upon important issues, they suggest rather than enforce, and lack the much-needed specificity and regulatory power to counteract the current process of gentrification.

In light of this report analysis, it should be emphasized that Chinatown's struggles are not only over mortar and bricks but importantly a delicate race against time. As politics tend to operate slower than developers, identity-breaking projects are rapidly moving forwards with relative impunity. This discrepancy reinforces the precarity of the neighbourhood and emphasizes the urgency for appropriate regulatory changes, reflecting the actual level of threat pressuring Chinatown today. The proposed changes to the urban plan must be followed by a meaningful planning process that leads to an urban design plan for Chinatown that is able to ensure a future Chinatown that addresses the multitude of needs while celebrating this significant cultural heritage site.

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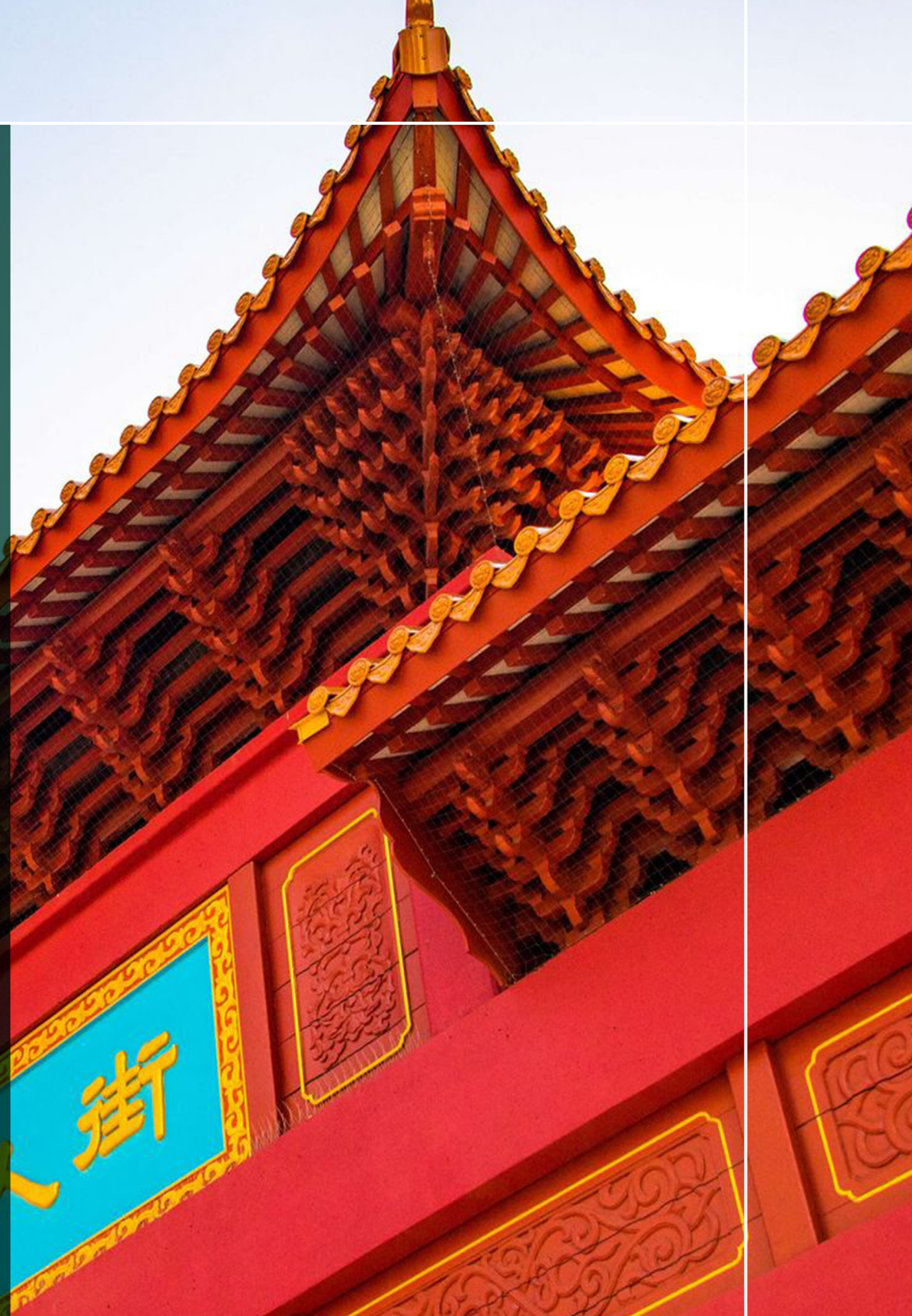
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 - » Cover Page: CWG

APPENDIX

Resilient Space Project

Vision for Chinatown
Presented to Donny Seto
URBS 433
Advanced Urban Laboratories
Concordia University



MANDATE

The Resilient Space Project (RSP) seeks to solidify Chinatown's unique cultural identity through the unification of the district's fragmented areas, using strategies to optimize and activate the existing formal and informal public spaces.



THE TEAM



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Fig. 1 Montreal's Chinatown 1966
(Source: n.d. / Archives de la Ville de Montréal)



1

Introduction

REGIONAL SITE CONTEXT



Fig. 2 Ville-Marie Borough
(Source: Authors)

The neighbourhood of Chinatown is located in the Ville-Marie borough, aligning north of Old-Montreal and the Old-Port. In addition, the area is in proximity to the city center and benefits from good transit connections and automobile corridors. With a longstanding history and cultural heritage, the neighbourhood represents a prime destination for locals and visitors alike. Amongst its most iconic landmarks are the large, ornamented gates, denoting the neighbourhood's four entrances. Its local economy is concentrated along Saint-Laurent Boulevard and the pedestrianized portion of De La Gauchetière Street, acting as one of the city's main gastronomic and cultural hubs.

Over time, the historical neighbourhood has endured numerous transformations, particularly losing ground due to large Federal and Provincial institutional initiatives. More recently, the borough of Ville-Marie has experienced many large redevelopment projects, such as the Quartier des Spectacles, which borders Chinatown on its northern edge. Since 2002, the borough of Ville-Marie has pursued five PPUs, with the most recent being the PPU des Faubourgs, representing 263 hectares of land to be transformed just East of Chinatown (Ville de Montréal, 2020). The Plan

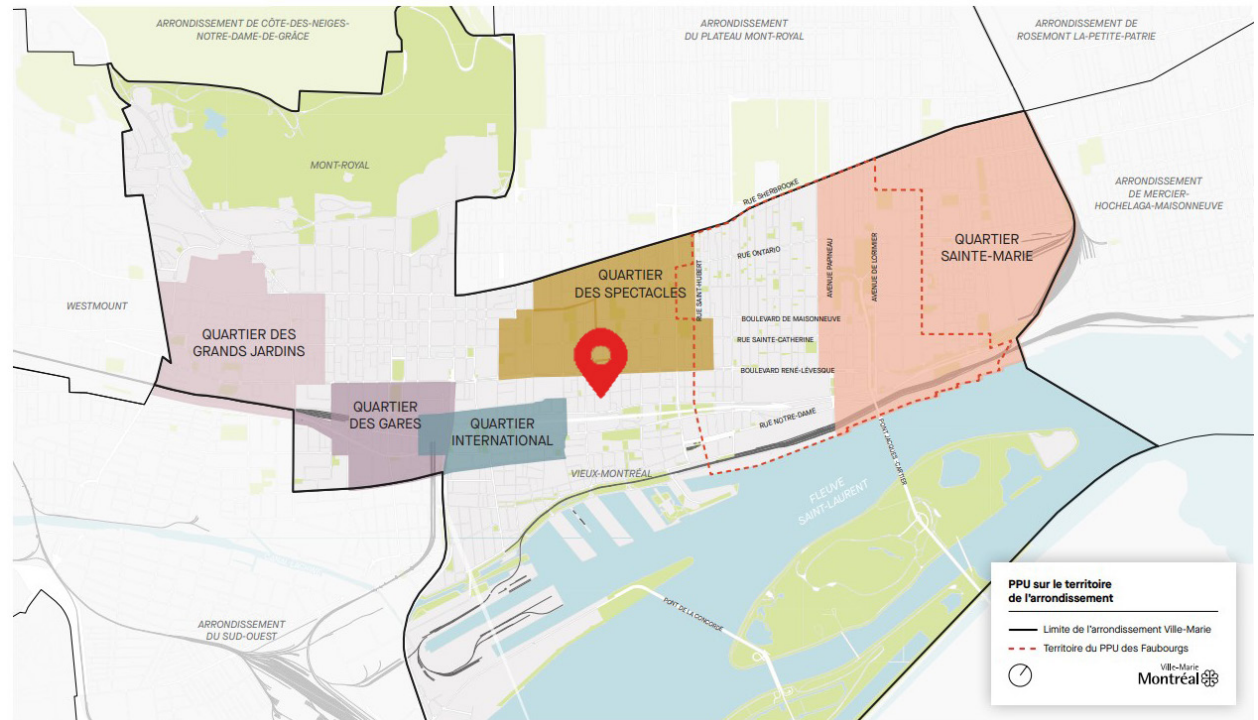


Fig. 3 Location of Chinatown within the borough of Ville-Marie
(Source: Ville Montréal, 2020)

notably includes a reconfiguration of the Ville-Marie expressway and its connecting streets west of and around the Jacques-Cartier bridge.

In addition, the current route proposal for the REM de l'Est comprises four stations along boulevard René-Lévesque, including one stop at the intersection of Saint-Urbain. While many structural scenarios are being considered, the CDPQ-infra currently favours an elevated structure for this portion of the itinerary (CDPQ-infra, 2020), further contributing to the boxing-in of Chinatown. With

a long list of insensitive, modern urban projects looming around and intensifying towering pressure from every side, Chinatown's future is persistently challenged.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Since the late 1800s, Montreal's Chinatown has been the centre of Chinese immigration in Eastern Canada and has since acted as a commercial and religious hub for the city's Asian populations (Pare, 2017; Chuenyan & Chan, 2014). Community groups such as the Chinese Family Associations, the Chinese Benevolent Society, and the Montreal Chinese Community United Centre (MCCUC), have all played important roles in resolving community issues, addressing external threats to the community, and politically representing Chinatown in the context of Montreal (Chuenyan & Chan, 2014).

During the late 1950's and early 60's, properties in Chinatown were increasing in value as the area was confined between the Old Port and the commercial business district (Chan, 1986; Chuenyan & Chan, 2014). Land speculators purchased and demolished many old buildings in Chinatown, using them as parking lots until attractive prices were offered. For example, in 1962 the Chinese Hospital was condemned by the Montreal fire department and closed, with the new Chinese Hospital being built outside of Chinatown due to lack of suitable land (Chuenyan & Chan, 2014).

This period is representative of the beginning of a wide range of injustices and land expropriations which took place in Chinatown. The Chinese United Church was demolished for the development of Hydro-Québec offices, and many houses were demolished for the widening of René Lévesque Boulevard. Many residential buildings



Fig. 4 Chinatown
(Source: Philippe Dumais / Archives de la Ville de Montréal)

were demolished and not replaced, resulting in a lack of affordable housing in Chinatown (Chan, 1986; Chuenyan & Chan, 2014). The only significant community project throughout this period was the establishment of Pagoda Park on Saint-Urbain Street. To celebrate Canada's centennial in 1967, a pagoda was donated by the owners of Wing Lung Hing, now Wing Noodles Ltd. which became a significant landmark in Chinatown (Chuenyan & Chan, 2014).

Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, Montreal's Chinatown was reduced by further expropriation and redevelopment (Pare, 2017). In 1975, the federal construction of Complexe Guy-Favreau, a massive complex of high-rise offices and apartment buildings was announced. The development resulted in the expropriation and demolition of the Chinese Presbyterian Church, Chinese Pentecostal

Church, the Wong Wing Food Products factory, Chinese grocery stores and other non-Chinese structures on the block (Pare, 2017; Chuenyan & Chan, 2014). The Chinese Catholic Church was the only structure that escaped demolition due to it being designated a historic monument in 1977 (Chuenyan & Chan, 2014).

The Wing Wing Building at the corner of De La Gauchetière and Rue Côté is the oldest existing building in Chinatown. Built in 1826 by James O'Donnell, the architect of Notre-Dame Basilica in Old-Montreal, the Wing building has been a military school, a paper box factory, and warehouse. Currently it houses Wing Noodles, a variation of the business which has existed within the Lee family since 1897, when it began as an import/export business (Lazar & Douglas, 1994).

In spite of the negative outlook for the future of Chinatown, concerned community leaders created the Montréal Chinese Community United Centre (MCCUC) which represented roughly forty-eight Chinese groups and attempted to unite the community to save Chinatown (Chuenyan & Chan, 2014). In May 1981, the city planned to expropriate and demolish the Lee's Association Building to widen Rue Saint-Urbain. The MCCUC succeeded in mobilizing over 2,000 people to sign a petition to preserve the building, however Pagoda Park and the pagoda was ultimately removed for the expansion - less than 15 years after it was erected (Chuenyan & Chan, 2014; Pare, 2017).

HISTORICAL CONTEXT



Fig. 5 Montreal's Chinatown 1966
(Source: n.d. / Archives de la Ville de Montréal)

A revival effort of Montréal Chinatown began in 1982 with the installation of street signs throughout Chinatown and construction of the Catholic Community Centre and Bo Ai Lou, a residential building for senior citizens (Chuenyan & Chan, 2014). The Montréal Chinatown Development Association (MCDA) worked closely with the city on the 3.5-million-dollar plan which converted De La Gauchetière Street between St-Laurent and Jeanne-Mance Street into a tree-lined, brick-paved pedestrian mall and resulted in the construction of two arches, now known as the East and West

gates. Several old limestone buildings with steep Mansard-like roofs were also cleaned and repainted during this period (Chuenyan & Chan, 2014).

In 1983, the Palais des Congrès de Montréal was built on Chinatown's southern boundary blocking its expansion to the south. In the same year, the Complexe Guy-Favreau and the Place du Quartier were completed and attracted middle-class professionals and businesspeople to live near Chinatown (Chan 1986; Chuenyan & Chan, 2014). In 1984, the City zoned most of De La Gauchetière Street east of St-Laurent Street as residential, preventing businesses from expanding eastward. After protests from Chinese residents, the City amended the by-law and zoned the blocks between St-Laurent and St-Dominique for commercial use (Chuenyan & Chan, 2014).

In 1986 the City of Montréal built Dr. Sun Yat-sen Park, one of the few public spaces still existing in Chinatown. Other developments included the Chinese Ren Ai Lou, a twenty-two unit senior citizens' home built in 1988, the Holiday Inn hotel completed in 1991 with Chinese style roof design, and the two Paifangs (arches) donated by the Government of Shanghai in 1999, now known as the North and South gates on Boulevard Saint Laurent (Chuenyan & Chan, 2014).



Fig. 6 Montreal's Chinatown 1966
(Source: n.d. / Archives de la Ville de Montréal)

LAND PRESSURE

Montreal's Chinatown, like many North American Chinatowns, is strategically located within the city's downtown due to its historic segregation and resilience as a community. At the same time, the importance of the area's geography has been a driving factor in the land pressure and speculation which Chinatown has historically, and continues to face (Vitiello & Blickenderfer, 2018).

Over the last century, Chinatown has experienced an abundance of unethical and unthoughtful developments within and surrounding the community. Developments from the 1960's onwards including Hydro Quebec's offices, the widening of René-Lévesque and Saint-Urbain, and the development of two massive government complexes, have completely changed the physical landscape of Chinatown. These encroaching developments have ultimately displaced much of the Chinese population due to physical space and subsequently accessible pricing (Chan, 1986).

The displacement triggered by these megadevelopments coincided with the infiltration of land speculators and developers into Chinatown. As early as 1983, the Place Quartier condominium complex was constructed within Chinatown at the intersection of René-Lévesque and Saint-Urbain, with highly priced units (74,000 - 118,000\$), which were sold out within 3 years (Chan, 1986).

More recently, Chinatown has experienced sustained development pressure and land speculation due to its prime location, lack of available land, and rising property values. This



Fig. 7 Hampton Inn & Serenity Condos
(Source: Skah High / Agora Montreal)

trend has resulted in the construction of insensitive developments such as the new combined Hampton Inn by Hilton and Serenity Condominium building which towers over the South Gate at the Northeast corner of Saint-Laurent and Avenue Viger.

The continued treatment of vital land as purely investment assets and the ruthless land grabs (e.g., the recent purchase of the Wing Noodles building and other historic buildings on Rue Côté), put immense pressures on the community. For instance, mounting development interest challenges the preservation of scale, culture and character of Chinatown and forces the remaining residents into an uncertain future. Due to the purchases on rue Côté, historical status

is being pushed for the Wing Building by the Chinatown Working Group to try and preserve the neighbourhood (Scott, 2021). Developments such as the one described above are becoming more and more common in Chinatown, with increased height and area limits being granted more willingly by the City.

To ensure the survival of the Chinatown community and the unique cultural diversity it encompasses, it is important the City of Montreal take steps to produce a sufficient action plan for Chinatown and its surrounding areas, and to avoid insensitive development before it takes place. Highrise developments such as the condominiums, hotels, and office buildings that have been erected around Chinatown have had complete disregard for the historical fabric of Chinatown and continue to threaten the neighbourhood in terms of scale, culture, character, and affordability.

LAND PRESSURE

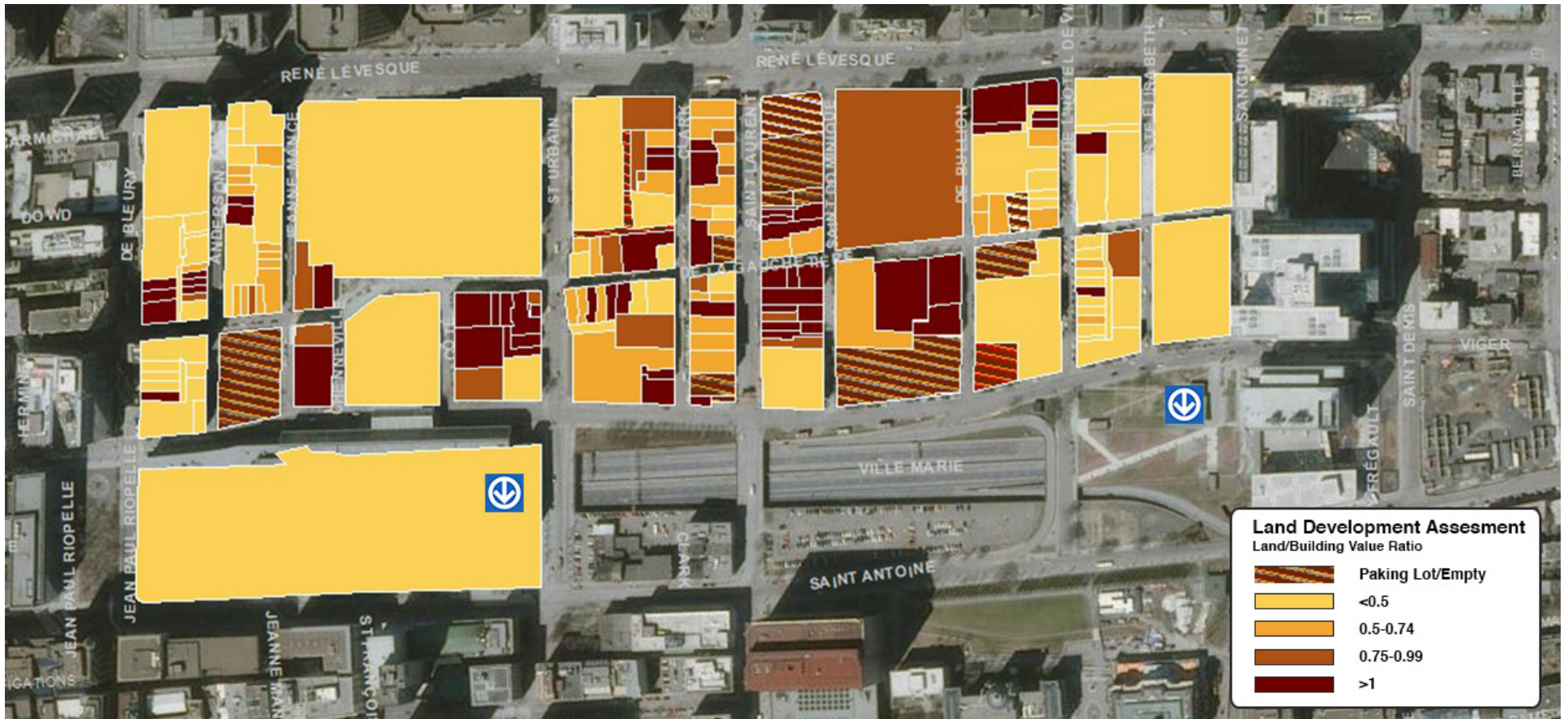


Fig. 8 Land Development
(Source: Donny Seto / URBS 433)

The map displays properties with their assessed property value, in relation to the building occupying said property (Land Value/Building Value). Fundamentally, the map highlights the community's vulnerability to land speculation and development, and places emphasis on the few remaining low and mid-rise buildings in the area.

SCALE & CHARACTER

Scale, Character and Barriers

The provided 3D map illustrates the physical reality of Chinatown where the smaller built form in the central neighbourhood is juxtaposed against the central business district and massive government projects to the west (e.g., Complexe Guy-Favreau, Palais des Congrès), the Quartier des Spectacles and towers along René-Lévesque to the north, the more recent CHUM Hospital to the east, and the open wound that is Autoroute 720 on the southern edge. On top of the immediate damage caused by rampant land expropriation (e.g., demolition of community assets), the map illustrates the ways in which the large government projects and Ville-Marie expressway have continued to pose major challenges for the neighbourhood.

More recently, the neighbourhood has experienced a wave of growing land pressure that has boiled over into the construction of insensitive developments that encroach on the neighbourhood and disregard its historic fabric. For instance, the new joint Hilton Hampton Inn Hotel and Serenity Condominium building has become an offensive presence in the landscape as it towers over Chinatown's South Gate (at the Northeast corner of Avenue Viger and Saint-Laurent). As visualized, many of these sites (new, old, and proposed) challenge the neighbourhood in terms of scale and character, while also creating hard edges and barriers along the periphery.



Fig. 9 3D concept map of Chinatown
(Source: Authors)

Nodes, Landmarks and Paths

Chinatown's integral nodes in terms of gathering spaces include the small but heavily used Sun Yat-sen Park and the interior space of the Complexe Guy-Favreau. The most prominent landmarks, as identified on the map, are the large gates along Saint-Laurent (at René-Lévesque and Viger) and the two smaller and less celebrated gates on De La Gauchetière. In terms of paths, De La Gauchetière is highlighted as an important pedestrian pathway, which along with Saint-Urbain and Saint-Laurent, comprise the main commercial arteries.

The provided concept map highlights key Lynchian elements including districts, edges, paths, nodes, and landmarks, as well as potential sites for public expansion. Additionally, the 3D rendering provides important spatial context regarding scale, character, and barriers.

CONCEPT MAP

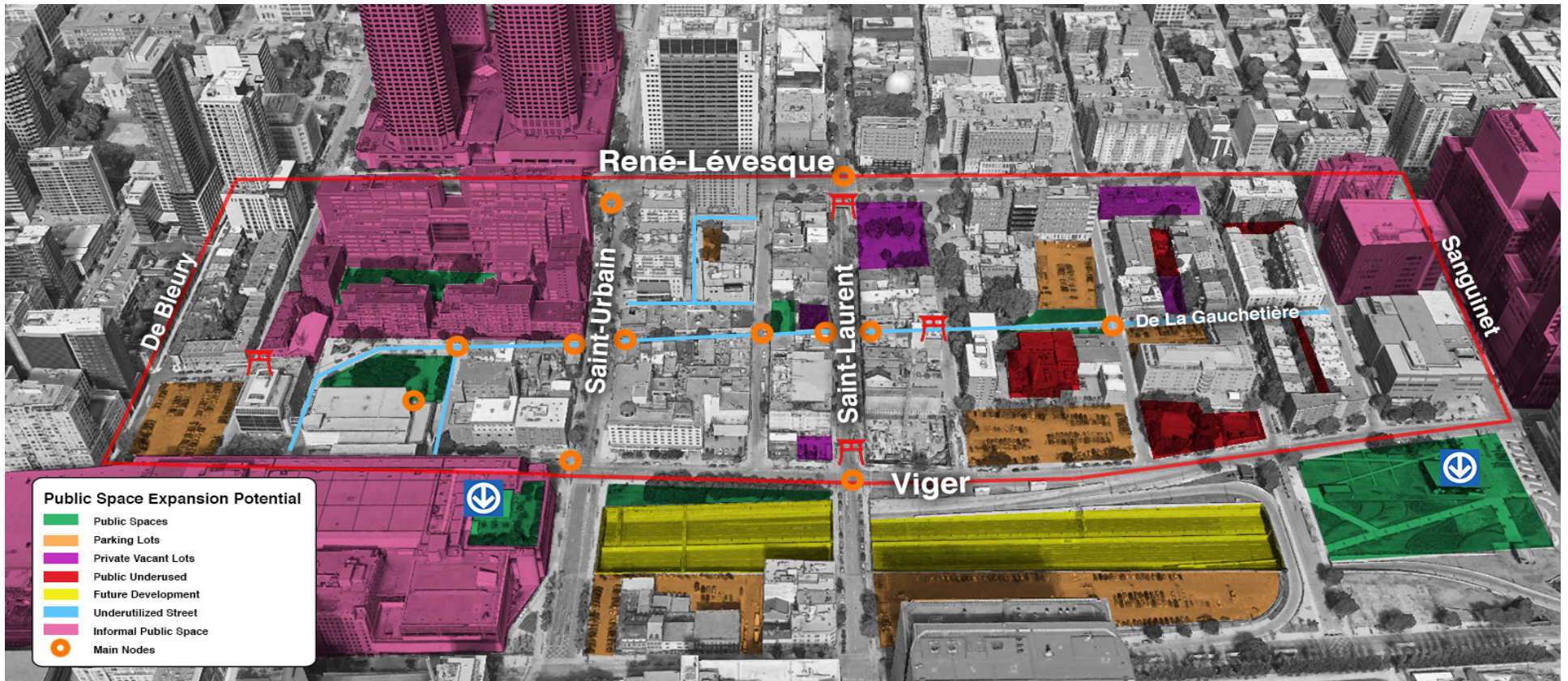


Fig. 10 3D concept map of Chinatown
(Source: Authors)

Potential Sites for Expansion

The Resilient Space Project for Chinatown takes a two-pronged approach to the expansion of public space which includes:

- » Optimizing underutilized public land
- » Formalizing informal uses of public and private space.

As such, the provided map identifies and catalogues Chinatown's formal and informal public spaces into various spatial typologies ranging from those most obvious (e.g., vacant lots) to hidden fringe spaces (e.g., hidden laneways). The most promising spaces in terms of unique potential for expansion have been identified on the map and include: the underutilized square at the north entrance to the Palais des Congrès, the large

privately owned vacant lot at Saint-Laurent and René-Lévesque, the publicly owned alleyway in the heart of Chinatown known as Brady Street, and finally, the dead space around and potentially on top of the Autoroute 720.

SWOC ANALYSIS

In terms of strengths, Chinatown is a dense, centrally-located, and transit-connected neighbourhood with a resilient community. Chinatown's weaknesses include its hard edges, barriers, and wind tunnels, missing services and amenities such as schools and green space, and limited affordable housing.

In terms of opportunities, Chinatown is the focal point for the Chinese community, has numerous vacant lots and investment interest (also a challenge), appeals to tourists, and is close to many large events (e.g., conferences; festivals). Finally, challenges include land speculation and insensitive development pressure from all sides and the lack of a master plan, political representation, or adequate funding. Ultimately, Chinatown is a complex neighbourhood that necessitates a thoughtful approach to public space expansion.

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Accessibility through various transport modes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Metro, bus, cars » Density <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › High foot traffic › Concentrated & varied local economy » Centrally located <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Point of convergence for locals & tourists » Proximity to CBD » Vibrant pedestrian street » Rich culture and history <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Architectural heritage, cuisine, identity, etc. » Resilient community » Heritage and cultural mandate in existing and future development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Hard edges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › History of fragmentation › Autoroute 720, Palais des Congrès, CHUM, etc. › Difference in building heights with the surroundings » Wind tunnels on René-Lévesque » Missing services and amenities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Schools, open space, housing, etc. » Lack of greenspace » Limited and unaffordable housing » Limited space for intervention |
| Opportunities | Challenges |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Numerous vacant or underutilized lots <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › A challenge that holds potential » Investment interest (also a challenge) » Focal point for Chinese community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Many live elsewhere (e.g., Brossard) » Lively pedestrian commercial street <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Potential for enhancement & expansion » Tourist destination <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Strengthen local economy & attractiveness of the area » Events and attractions that can be leveraged to stimulate local economy (e.g., conferences) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Development pressure from all sides » Insensitive and unsupervised development » Land speculation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › E.g., vacant lots being held as assets » No master plan » Lack of political representation » Inadequate funding » Preserving Chinese culture » Enforcing stylistic continuity » Loss of important community spaces (e.g., YMCA) » Economic challenges of COVID » Challenging socioeconomic status » Cohabitation of many groups in limited spaces » Meeting needs of local demographics (e.g., seniors) » Disconnected sections of neighbourhood |

DESIGN GOALS

The Resilient Space Project (RSP) for Chinatown is a multi-faceted design undertaking that seeks to expand and strengthen the presence of public space by proposing a range of community-reinforcing interventions at diverse sites throughout the neighbourhood. It is imperative that our work is guided by a set of carefully considered objectives to ensure that our interventions are in the best interest of the community. As such, we have provided five overarching design goals and corresponding approaches further sensitized to the Montreal Chinatown context.

- 1. Improve the quality of life for existing populations through inclusive, accessible, and versatile public gathering spaces.**
 - » Spaces and interventions sensitized to the needs of Chinatown's large senior female population, the 10% of the population who do not speak official languages (CDUM, 2020), and economically vulnerable populations.
 - » Sites for diversified activities and that support cohabitation of many groups (CDUM, 2020). This entails consideration for a range of uses including political events, religious activities, traditional exercises, art installations, market infrastructure, and services for people experiencing homelessness.
 - » Meeting places that foster a sense of community, provide high-quality ambiance, and contribute to the area's tree and plant life (CDUM, 2020).
- 2. Secure and strengthen Chinatown's presence and heritage into the future through the development of public space.**
 - » Spaces that increase continuity and connections across Chinatown's varied sections, land-uses and built forms. For instance, reinforcing connections to the residential area beyond the East Gate.
 - » Prioritizing community-reinforcing uses in the underutilized spaces along Chinatown's perimeter which serves to combat encroachment from adjacent land pressure.
 - » Spaces that fill the void of components lost in Chinatown and adjacent neighbourhoods due to fragmentation and historical wrongs. For instance, services and amenities required for a complete community, such as schools, open spaces, and housing.
 - » Reparations to mediate issues caused by land expropriation and strengthen Chinatown. This entails actions such as purchasing vulnerable lots for the community, proper land use delegation and zoning, and funding for community projects.

DESIGN GOALS

3. Re-interpret and revitalize underutilized public and private lands into vibrant public spaces.

- » Repurpose underutilized sites to fill voids from past wrongs. This includes more mainstream fringe sites like alleyways and surface parking, as well as less obvious spots like lobbies and hallways.
- » Re-interpret existing public lands to offer expansion for activities from community organizations, cultural centres and family associations in the area.
- » Building relationships with small businesses in the community where pop-up, semi-permanent or permanent infrastructure can be used to create public spaces that enhance quality of life while also stimulating the local economy.

4. Economic development that stimulates the neighbourhood's overall commercial vitality without jeopardizing the health of existing local businesses and character.

- » Develop spaces that benefit the existing local businesses and encourage respectful community enhancing development and commercial life.
- » Avoid creating spaces that encourage the insensitive development that already challenges the neighbourhood.

5. Promote Chinese culture and foreground Chinatown's historical significance.

- » Spaces that affirm and preserve the unique character of Chinatown by promoting cultural activities, practices, and artistic identity.
- » Listening to members of the community to properly address their problems, needs and wants. For instance, a previous study in the area highlighted community desire for the presence of statues, plaques, architectural heritage, diversified cuisines, calligraphy, martial arts, Tai Chi, and Chinese events (CDUM, 2020).
- » Educational spaces designed to facilitate intergenerational meetings, welcoming immigrants, teaching languages, and providing health services (CDUM, 2020).

2

**Design
Proposals**

DESIGN PROPOSALS

Overview

The Resilient Space Project for Chinatown includes design proposals for three diverse sites across Chinatown that are inspired by the potential for underutilized space to address community needs. Each project represents a tangible and intangible transformation of an informal public space and is presented alongside site-specific goals, designs, and merits.

The RSP selected interventions:

- » First, the RSP proposes a low-cost high-impact project that transforms the forgotten back alleys of Brady Street into a versatile community hub.
- » Followed by an ambitious three-phase proposal to restructure rue Viger, that includes a range of interventions scaling up from strategic traffic mediation to major neighbourhood expansion.
- » Lastly, the RSP is proposing a comprehensive reformulation of the Square, which will reclaim a large inaccessible and alienating piece of expropriated land and transform it into a multi-faceted asset for the Chinatown community.

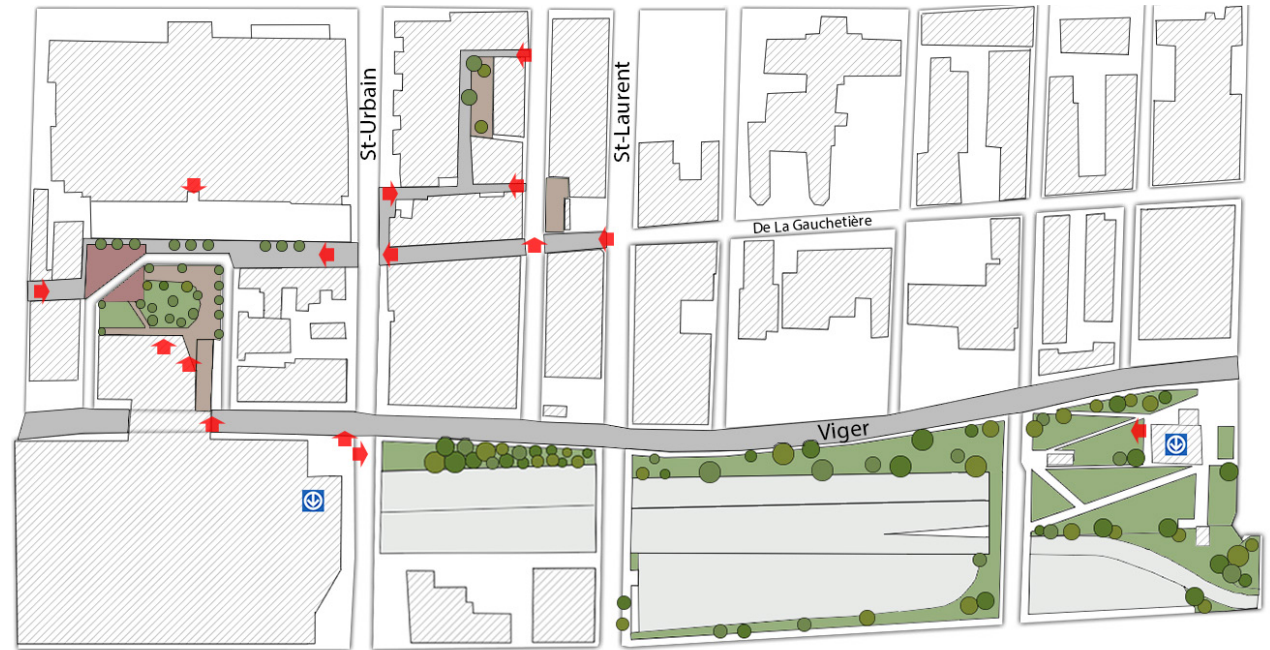
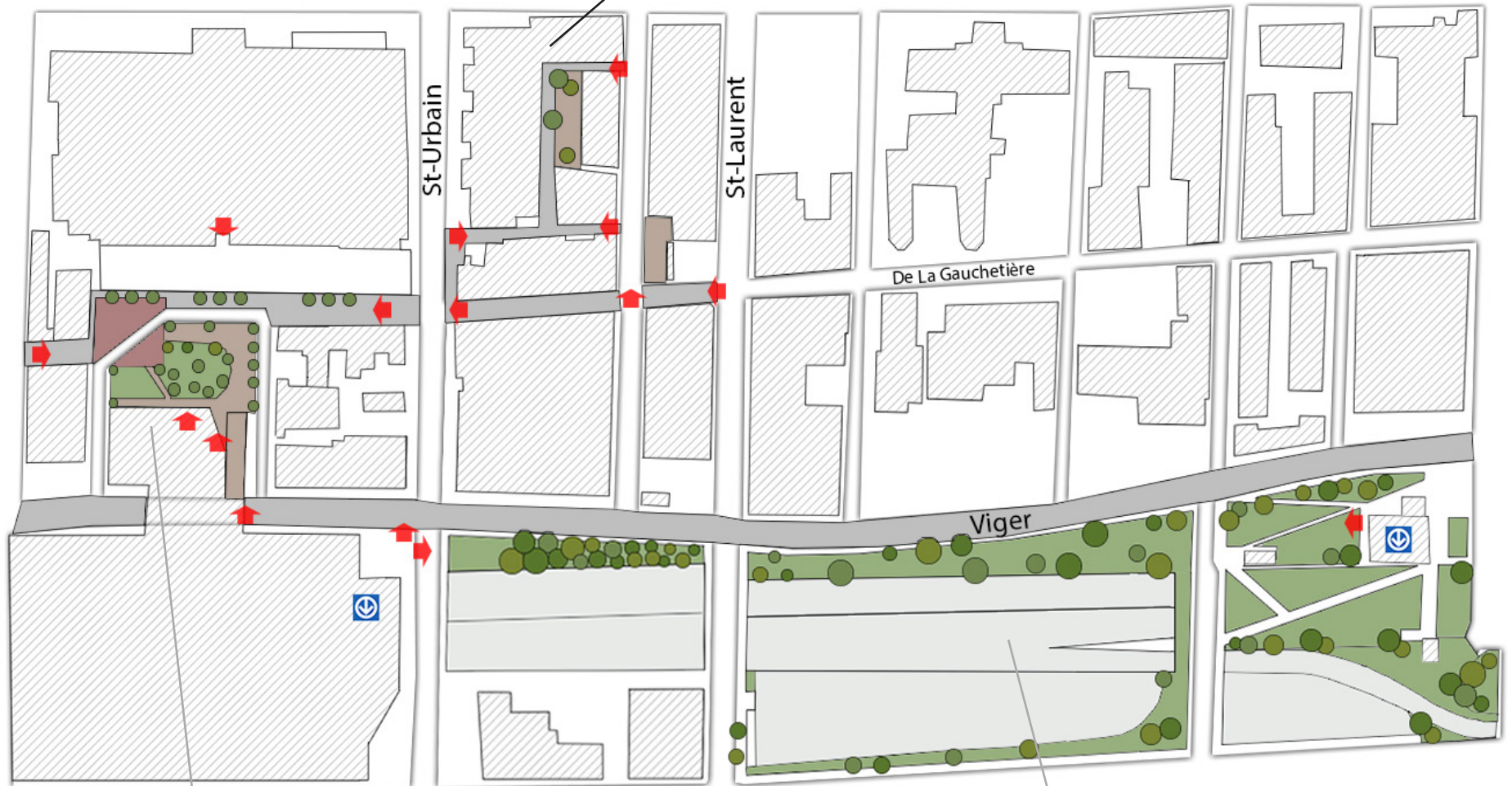


Fig. 11 The RSP intervention proposal for Chinatown
(Source: Authors)

As a collection, the three unique proposals are intended to solidify Chinatown's cultural identity and presence into the future through the unification of the district's fragmented areas.

1. Brady Street



3. Square Palais
des Congrès

2. Viger Area

BRADY STREET

Site Overview

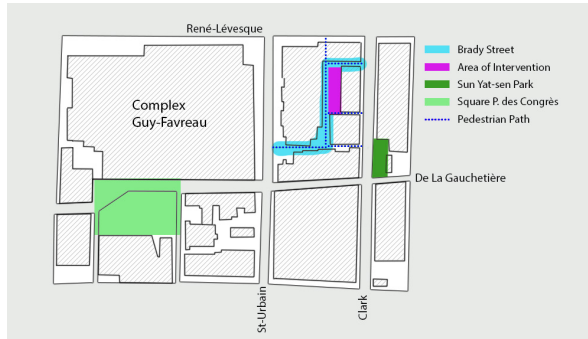


Fig. 12 Location of Brady Street
(Source: Author)

Montreal's Chinatown suffers from a lack of public space and due to its valuable location and built dense form, there is considerable pressure on the few pieces of available land. The challenging nature of public space expansion within contested urban neighbourhoods such as Chinatown necessitates the creative reimagining of underutilized space. Addressing this challenge, the RSP seeks to identify and repurpose overlooked fringe sites and unlock their unique potential for the community.

In that sense, the RSP has highlighted a large web of forgotten pathways within the heart of Chinatown, collectively known as Brady Street. We This network of unused space has the potential to benefit the community in myriad ways from filling gaps in the provision of services and amenities to forming strong physical, social, and economic connections. As such, the RSP presents a low-cost high-impact proposal for the transformation of the back alleys of Brady Street from an urban void to a versatile community hub. The neglected network,



Fig. 13 Panorama of Brady's access points (left: rue Saint-Urbain, right: rue Clark)
(Source: Authors)

hereinafter referred to as Brady, has two defining components: the lanes and the centre lot.

Lanes

Brady consists of a small network of lanes and passageways that have the potential to form strong connections between existing nodes in the centre of Chinatown. For instance, the Southern passage provides a direct route between two of the neighbourhood's most integral public spaces; the Complexe Guy-Favreau (informally used interior space) and Sun Yat-sen park (small primarily concrete square).

In terms of connectivity, the network has five potential access points, including a wide entrance on Saint-Urbain just north of De La Gauchetière, a blocked entrance under the Travelodge on Rene Leveque, and three entrances along Rue Clark. However, these entranceways are uninviting, the lanes are intimidating, and there is no indication of utility for any prospective user of the space. Ultimately, while there is clear potential for this network to activate new spaces and pedestrian routes, it is imperative that these entranceways be redesigned to pull people in.

Centre Lot

The second important spatial component hidden within the Brady network is a relatively large city-owned lot that is roughly the size of Sun Yat-sen Park and currently unused. The RSP proposed a range of interventions within this unique space designed to provide high-quality ambiance, foster a sense of community, and address a range of challenges facing the area.

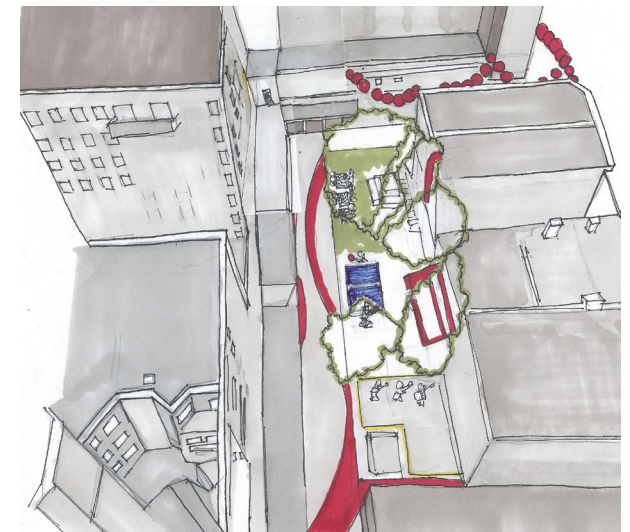


Fig. 14 Bird view of Brady's centre lot
(Source: Authors)

BRADY STREET

Concept

The transformation of Brady Street has been approached with consideration for five themes (identity, safety, vegetation, interaction, destination) and through a realization of their corresponding goals.

1. Increase the accessibility of Brady Street through the formation of a strong identity.
2. Design a space that is safe, well-lit, and inviting.
3. Enhance the area's tree and plant life.
4. Create a comfortable environment conducive to social interaction.
5. Make an attractive, useful and quality-of-life enhancing destination for the community.

The design features used to achieve our stated goals and the generative merits of our interventions are presented here in unison.

Identity

The RSP intends to increase the accessibility of Brady Street through the formation of a strong identity (because after all, if no one knows about it, no one will use it). As such, we have included memorable characteristics such as large murals that promote Chinese culture, custom multilingual signage that clearly marks entrances, and street painting that guides pedestrians in and around the space. Ultimately, the RSP suggests renaming Brady Street to better reflect the cultural and historical heritage of the neighbourhood.



Fig. 15 Design of Brady's centre lot Street
(Source: Authors)

Safety

The spatial nature of Brady Street as a secluded alleyway means that it must be designed as a well-lit space that people feel comfortable entering and safe spending time in. For this reason, the

RSP proposes a range of illuminating features and introduce artful elements including street lamps and hanging lanterns, which serve to both invite pedestrian activity and enhance the ambiance of the space.

BRADY STREET

Concept



Fig. 16 Design of Brady's lane and access points
(Source: Authors)

Vegetation

The centre lot currently includes a handful of trees but due to its placement within an urban canyon, large sections do not receive adequate sunlight for ground-level gardening. As such, the RSP has embraced the shade and included a variety of hanging plants and vines that can flourish in precarious lighting situations, thus creating a relaxing environment while still contributing to the area's tree and plant life. At the same time, large community planters have been added in strategic locations, such as the wide intersection of the south passage and north file, which will receive more sustained sunlight.

Interaction

Installing street furniture is an effective way to reclaim alleys for pedestrians and provide a comfortable place to sit, relax, rest, eat, gather and play. To address a lack of public seating in Chinatown, especially for large groups, the RSP proposal includes a small urban living room that facilitates activities and interaction for individuals and groups alike (e.g., Mahjong).

Left

Design preview of the middle lane, looking ahead into Sun Yat-sen Park and leading left into the centre lot.

Right

Design preview of the centre lot, looking South.

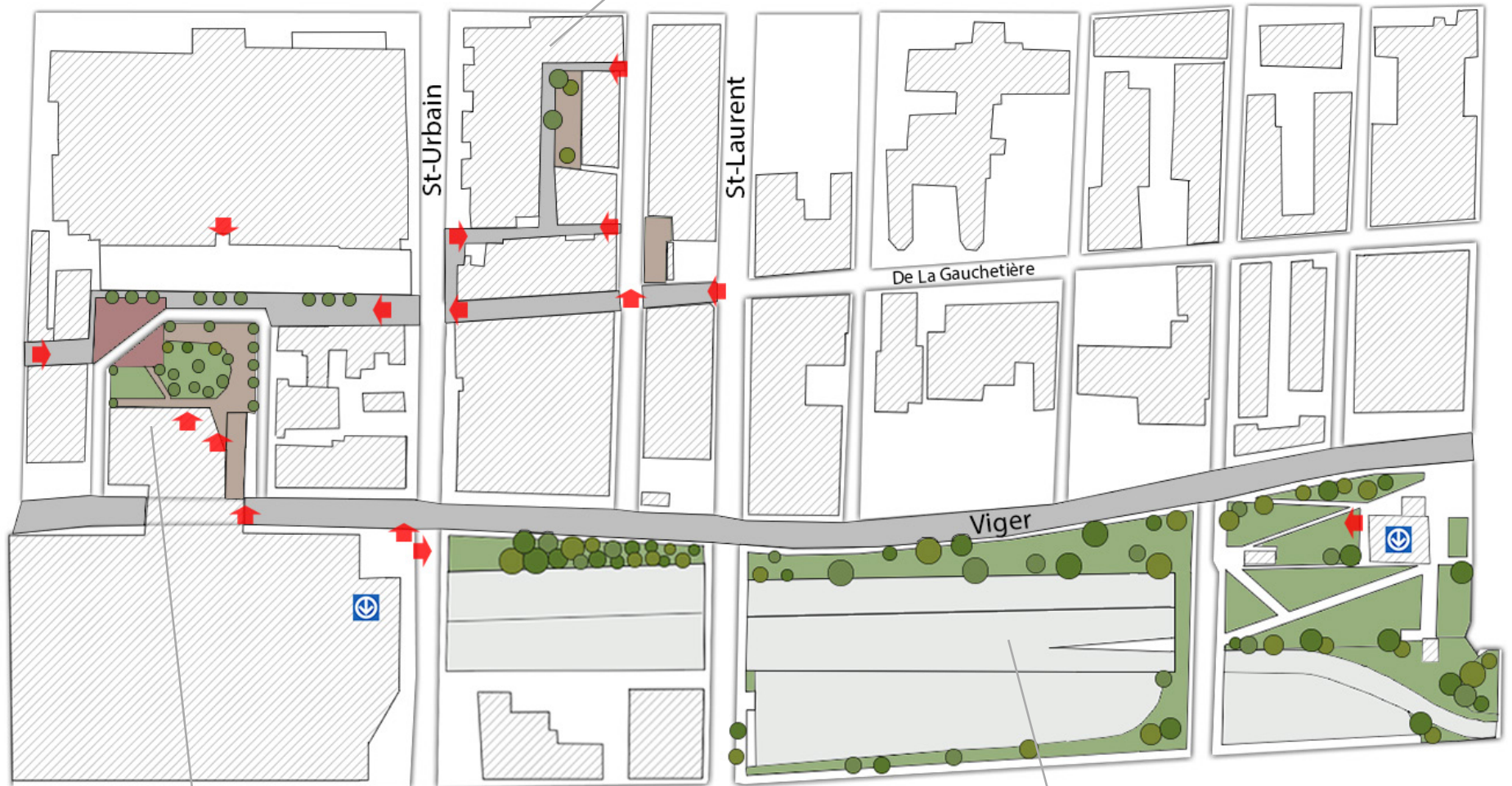


Fig. 17 Design of Brady's centre lot
(Source: Authors)

Destination

The RSP seeks to design a space that prioritizes the needs of the Chinatown community and includes interventions that directly enhance the resident's quality of life. As such, the proposal includes versatile infrastructure that, paired with the right programming, can address the needs of the community and make Brady Street an attractive destination that residents want to use. For instance, the proposal includes covered structures for services and vendors, which can encourage relationships with local businesses, attract visitors to the space, and stimulate the local economy. The RSP also proposes a multi-purpose space that can facilitate gatherings, activities, and exercises (e.g., Tai Chi, Qigong), which begin to fill the void left from the YMCA closing.

1. Brady Street



3. Square Palais des Congrès

2. Viger Area

VIGER AREA

Summary & Site Overview

Avenue Viger is an aggressive thoroughfare that flanks the hard southern edge of Chinatown. In its present form, the street is entirely at odds with the neighbourhood's character and poses many challenges in terms of safety, accessibility, connectivity, and overall livability. To mediate the threats of this uncompromising space the RSP is proposing a comprehensive redesign of Avenue Viger.

Restructuring

Our proposed restructuring of Viger has been approached through the realization of five goals.

1. Mediate traffic threats along Viger through the closure and reclamation of automobile infrastructure
2. Improve connectivity, continuity, and pedestrian flows to all corners of Chinatown
3. Support compatible, sustainable, and affordable mobility throughout Chinatown
4. Repair fragmented land and remove hard barriers along Chinatown's perimeter
5. Reappropriate space to strengthen Chinatown's presence and fill the void of lost community assets

Specific threats, our proposed design mediations, and the immense catalytic potential of our interventions will be presented in unison through the detailing of our 3-phase proposal



Fig. 18 Overview of Avenue Viger and the A720 access points
(Source: Google, 2021)

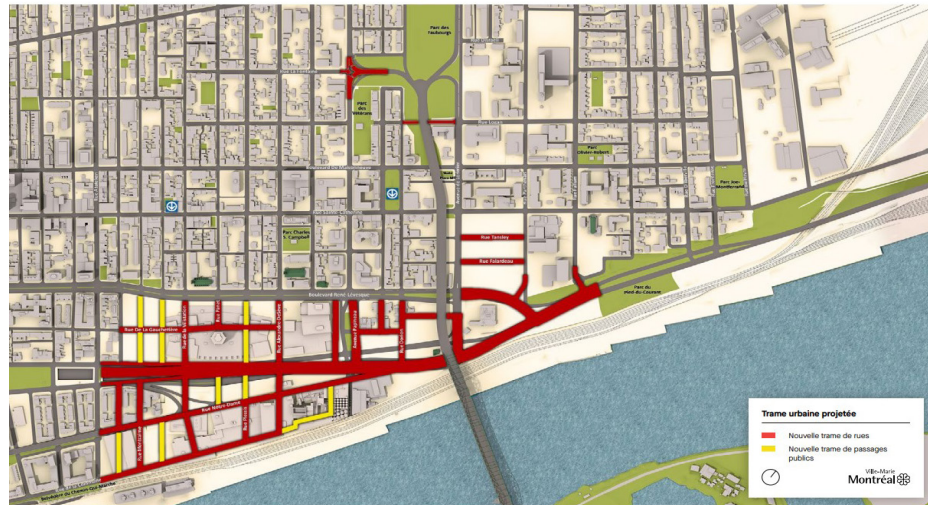


Fig. 19 PPU des Faubourgs
(Source: Ville de Montréal, 2020)

Area Overview

Highlighted in purple is the portion of the street network of Viger and A720 targeted by our interventions.

Current Plan

Excerpt from the PPU des Faubourgs, which proposed a reconfiguration of the Ville-Maire expressway and its connecting street adjacent to our target area of intervention.

VIGER AREA

Phase 1

Removing Threats

The excessive level and aggressive nature of automobile traffic currently flowing along Avenue Viger is of great danger and disservice to all who use the route or adjacent spaces. As such, the RSP recommends the closure of the westbound entrance to A720 and the restructuring of the Viger and Saint-Antoine on-ramp. Removing these ramps will immediately disincentivize the influx of drivers who currently pour onto Viger (from Berri, Saint-Denis, and de l'Hôtel-de-Ville) for the sole purpose of entering A720. The RSP believes that the reformulation of this infrastructure will lead to immediate benefits for the community and open the door for a range of meaningful design interventions (detailed below).

Connectivity & Continuity

The RSP recognizes a lack of connectivity and continuity between Chinatown proper (within the gates), the largely residential area beyond the East Gate, and all land below Viger. To further mediate traffic and support movement between these spaces, the proposal includes the installation of a raised crossing with neckdowns at the intersections of Viger at Sanguinet, de l'Hôtel-de-Ville, Saint-Laurent, and Saint-Urbain. These interventions will encourage pedestrian flows through the Eastern half of the Chinatown living environment and improve access to the Champ de Mars Metro station. Furthermore, these reinforced links will help activate unsuccessful and underused greenspace south of Viger (e.g., Place Marie-Joseph Angélique and Place des Montréalaises) and connect to the new proposed greenspace.



Fig. 20 Section cut illustrating the proposed reconfiguration of Avenue Viger
(Source: Authors)



Fig. 21 Street view of Avenue Viger
(Source: Google, 2021)

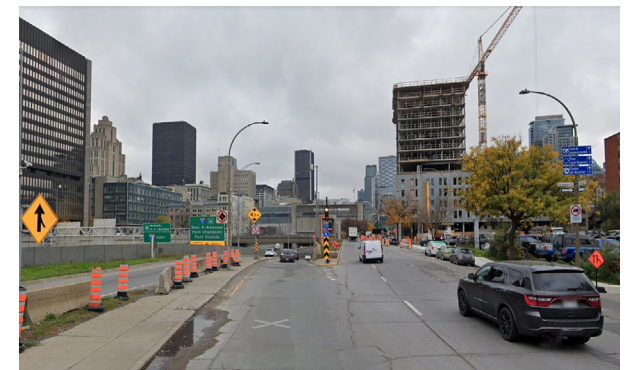


Fig. 22 Street view of the A720 on-ramp
(Source: Google, 2021)

VIGER AREA

Phase 1

Compatible Mobility

Avenue Viger is currently an unsafe route for cycling due to aggressive automobile traffic and a sorely inadequate provision of bike lanes. This glaring deficiency is compounded with a lack of bike infrastructure on parallel arteries such as Saint-Catherine and René-Lévesque. In addition to the traffic calming measures, the RSP wants to encourage cycling through the construction of a two-way protected bike lane on the north side of Avenue Viger. We expect that over the coming years, intensification, and massive redevelopment projects in areas directly east of Chinatown (e.g., Radio-Canada; Molson Brewery), will lead to a significant increase in both population and commuters. As such, it is imperative that an attractive east-west cycling route is established to promote utilitarian cycling and limit additional automobile traffic along Avenue Viger.

Preserving Scale & Character

Finally, the RSP proposes a reallocation of space that narrows Viger by one lane. Having already disincentivized drivers and offered sustainable alternatives, it is unnecessary for Avenue Viger to remain a three-lane thoroughfare as its current force is incompatible with pedestrian activity. Narrowing the street will further mediate automobile traffic and acts to preserve the scale and character of Chinatown. As such, the southernmost lane of Viger will be redesigned to better serve the community and incorporated into a larger green corridor proposed in **Phase 2**.



Fig. 23 Section cut illustrating the proposed reconfiguration of Avenue Viger
(Source: Authors)



Fig. 24 Street view of Viger with a focus on its hostile bike path
(Source: Google, 2021)



Fig. 25 Street view of the green solitude along Viger
(Source: Google, 2021)

VIGER AREA

Phase 2



Fig. 26 Green corridor along Avenue Viger
(Source: Authors)

Phase 2 involves the reappropriation of space that is currently occupied or made inaccessible by the Viger on-ramp and Saint-Antoine loop-ramp. In addition to the considerable space taken up by this infrastructure, the ramps currently slice through the landscape leaving multiple pockets of dead space and dead-end sidewalks. To salvage this space, the RSP proposes to cover the depressed portions of the ramp, which in turn allows to fill gaps, restitch the fragmented parcels of land and reconnect sidewalks. More so, the resulting piece of land could be merged with the south

lane of Viger and redesigned into a multi-purpose greenspace that facilitates several activities and a range of programming (e.g., Green Chinatown). Furthermore, repairing this space will allow for a green corridor that stretches from Champ de Mars Metro to Palais de Congrès and adds meaning to the underused green spaces along the way.

**Creation of a green corridor,
injecting life in a desolate sea
of concrete.**

VIGER AREA

Phase 3

Phase 3 is a proposal for the complete coverage of Autoroute 720 between de l'Hôtel-de-Ville and Saint-Laurent. Transforming this hard barrier into new land has the potential to expand the perimeter of Chinatown and to help fill the void of community components lost due to fragmentation and historical wrongs. For instance, this expansive covering could be used to provide services and amenities that are underprovided in the area, such as schools and open space.

Although this is a truly optimistic proposal, it is a natural progression of the expressway's coverage that has been occurring east of the CHUM Hospital. As the PPU des Faubourgs is unfolding nearby, the RSP believes the timing is right for the City to move forward with a project that has already been identified as part as their Master Plan (Ville de Montréal, 2004). More so, the proposed interventions could easily be integrated in harmony with the PPU's current development as it already aims to connect in some ways with our prescribed area of intervention (as shown on the map). More specifically, the Plan aims to improve and complete the bike network by reconnecting existing bike paths and creating new ones, complementing the future REV on René-Lévesque (Ville de Montréal, 2020).

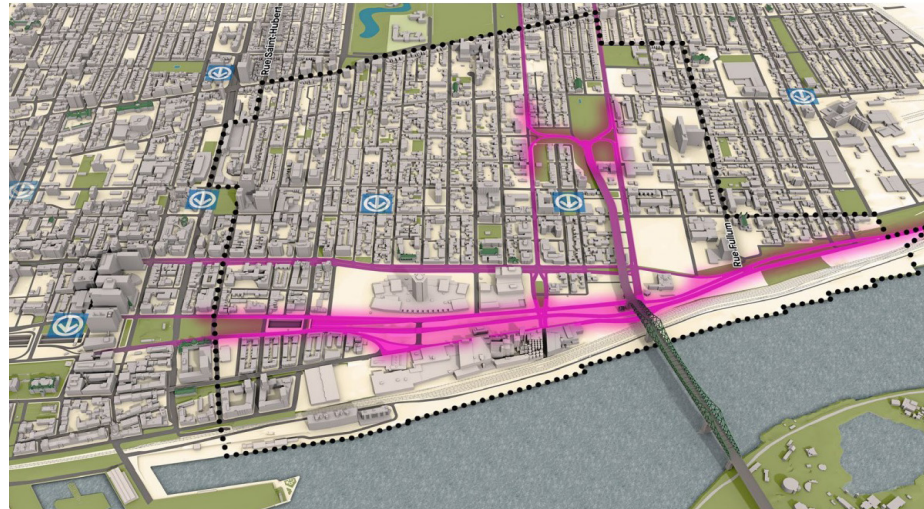
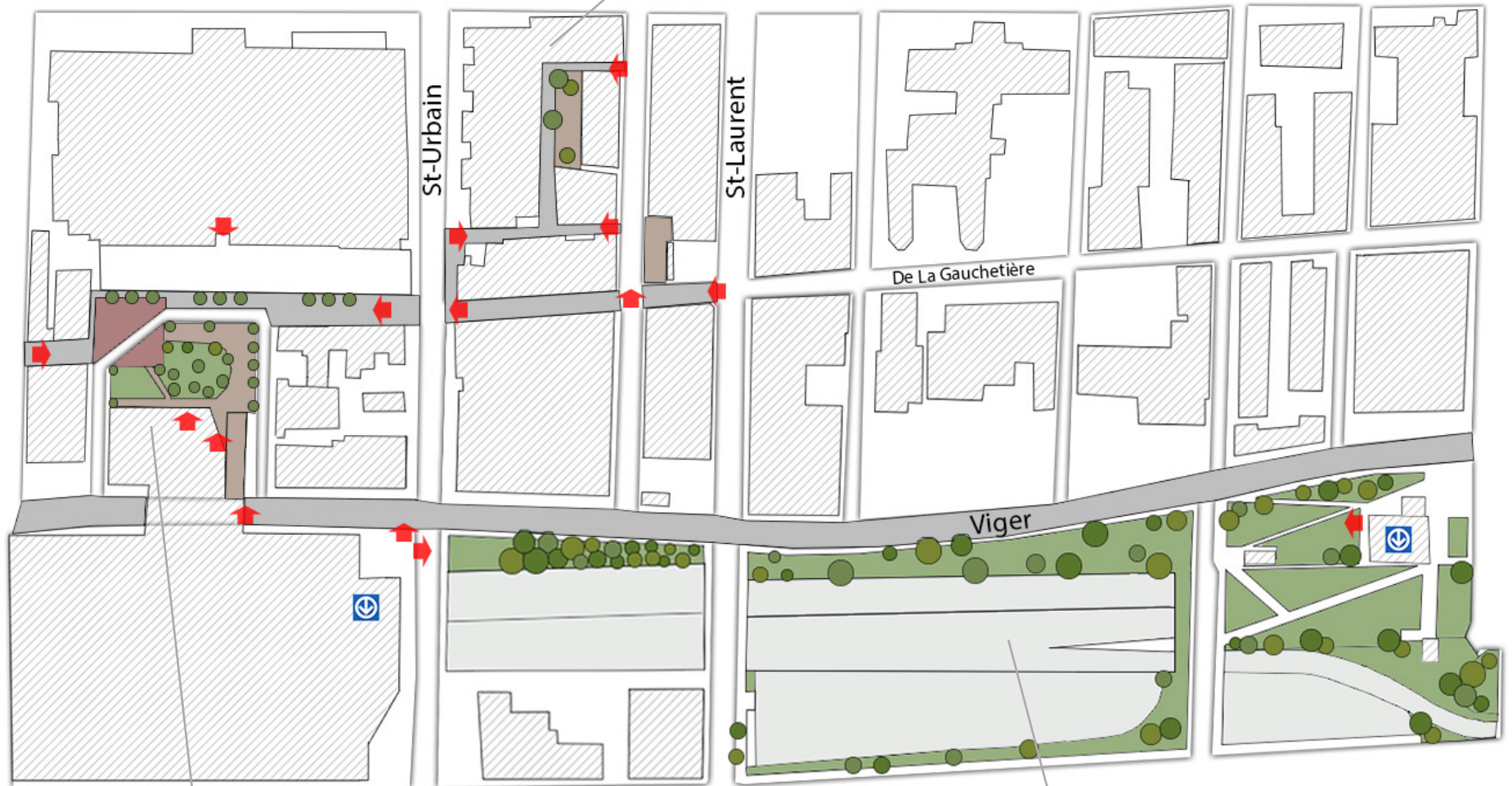


Fig. 27 PPU des Faubourgs
(Source: Ville de Montréal, 2020)

Current Plan

Excerpt from the PPU des Faubourgs, presenting a design proposal for the highlighted segment of streets. As shown, the plan overlaps with the RSP current proposal, offering a prime opportunity and natural continuity of integration.

1. Brady Street



3. Square Palais des Congrès

2. Viger Area

SQUARE PALAIS DES CONGRÈS

Site Overview

The third proposal of the Resilient Space Project for Chinatown entails a total reformulation of the large square located on the south side of De La Gauchetière between the Palais des Congrès and the Complexe Guy-Favreau. In its current form, the square is a contentious space that is at odds with its surroundings and the Chinatown community. From a design perspective, it is a hostile area characterized by concrete walls, concrete stairs, and large concrete slabs of wasted space. Its elevation and hard barriers remove it from the community and produce a space that is inaccessible and alienating. It has clearly been designed with the community as an afterthought and feels like the expropriated land that it is. The space does not acknowledge the historical or cultural significance of the area and operates as more of a patio for those attending conferences than it does a community space.

As a relatively massive and underutilized space resting in the heart of Chinatown - a neighbourhood sorely lacking public space - the Square holds a great deal of unique potential. As such, designing and realizing an appropriate reformulation of the space should be treated as a priority. Understanding the urgent need for public space provision and protection in Chinatown, the following interventions proposed by the RSP have been designed to adapt to considerable structural challenges rather than eliminate them entirely and aim to promote flexible and imaginative uses of an otherwise uncompromising space. Ultimately, the proposed reformulation is intended to reclaim the square and reimagine it for the community.



Fig. 28 Square of Palais des Congrès
(Source: Google, 2021)

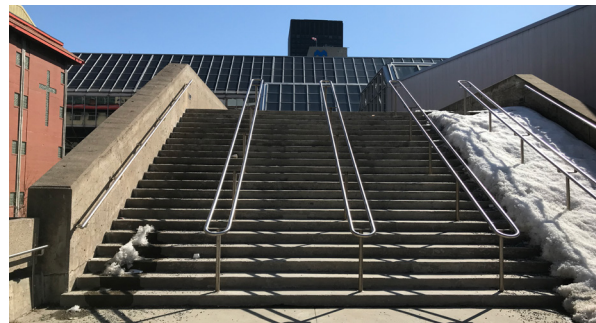


Fig. 29 Cold concrete design & wasted space
(Source: Authors)



Fig. 30 Uninviting space, completely inactive during winter
(Source: Authors)

SQUARE PALAIS DES CONGRÈS

Concept

The following proposal for the total reformulation of the square will be presented through the detailing of individual design elements paired with their corresponding objectives and generative merits.

Natural Amphitheatre

The RSP recognizes the need for (and lack of) public gathering space across Chinatown and aims to reverse the Square's currently inadequate provision of convivial space. As such, a large multi-purpose square has been proposed in the northwest quadrant, which serves to open the larger space to the community, support cohabitation of many groups, and facilitate diversified activities (**Design Goal 1**).

This newly created square combines two underutilized parcels of land on either side of De La Gauchetière and will be clearly defined using lanterns, custom banners, and consistent materials. The proposed design takes advantage of the elevation on the south side of De La Gauchetière and transforms the space into a natural amphitheatre that incorporates two rows of sitting stairs ideal for small audiences and gatherings, as well as regular stairs and ramps for everyday mobility. The entire venue will be heated to ensure four-season use and safety, and funding will be approached through the discussion of reparations with appropriate sponsors (e.g., Palais-de-Congrès, Hydro-Québec).



Fig. 31 Redesign of the Square at Palais des Congrès
(Source: Authors)

The RSP seeks to optimize underutilized space and design areas that can contribute to a sense of community through their various functions (stated in **Design Goals**). The natural auditorium satisfies this goal through the creation of a flat, safe, and accessible space that is sensitive to the larger senior population and available for regular activities such as Tai Chi, while also practical for larger community gatherings and cultural events (e.g., lion dances).

Carving out a large multi-purposed square, opening the space to Chinatown's community, supporting the cohabitation of various groups and facilitating diversified activities

SQUARE PALAIS DES CONGRÈS

Concept

Tree and Plant Life

In terms of tree and plant life (see **Design Goals**), the RSP looks to reverse the space from an overwhelmingly concrete structure to one with engaging natural features. As such, the sitting stairs have been designed to incorporate grass benches and build around existing trees rather than remove them.

The central patch of trees has also been dispersed throughout the redesigned Square since its current density, dominant placement, and awkward layout, render it a barrier that limits other uses. In their place, small fruit trees, whose growth and production over time will represent a symbolic parallel to the motivation of the space itself as an evolving community asset, were added. Large portions of concrete have been turned to grass and a small hill has been added in the southwest quadrant that both extends the natural auditorium and provides a place for play and relaxation.

Finally, large planters have been constructed on the elevated platform in the southwest quadrant and a green roof has been installed atop the Palais des Congrès entrance, both of which offering a new home for community gardening initiatives such as Green Chinatown.

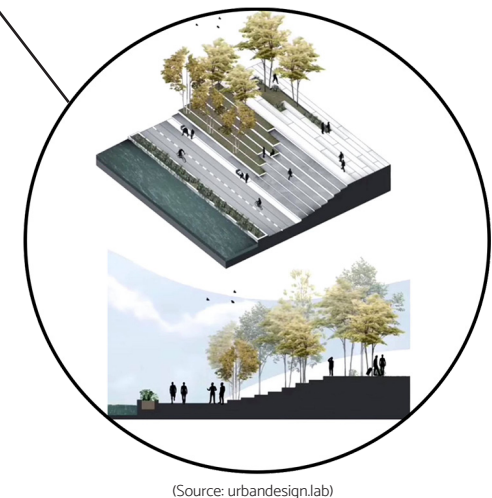
Bollards

To encourage and support gatherings, the RSP has included retractable bollards in strategic locations on the edges of the space, as well as on adjacent streets. This low-cost infrastructure can be used to block vehicles during determined times and



Fig. 32 Top view of the Square with focus on design elements
(Source: Authors)

transform the area into a purely pedestrian zone that is conducive to events and festivals, while still allowing for important existing uses in the area (e.g., Wing Noodles driveway; drop-off zones). An additional kiss-and-ride has been proposed at the intersection of Jeanne-Mance and De La Gauchetière to accommodate drop-offs when the bollards are erected and to ensure there is always a convenient and accessible route to and from important nodes (e.g., Complexe Guy-Favreau). The RSP posits that this intervention may also introduce life to the immediate area around Chinatown's West Gate.



SQUARE PALAIS DES CONGRÈS

Concept

Marketplace

The RSP aims to design spaces that will stimulate the local economy (stated in **Design Goals**). In the context of the Square, this goal can be further refined to represent the bolstering of commercial vitality along the west portion of de la Gauchetière. As such, the proposed design includes semi-permanent infrastructure for vendors, small businesses, and services, which will create a vibrant marketplace that pulls people into the park. The RSP sees potential here to foster meaningful relationships with local businesses, stimulate the local economy and enhance quality of life. For instance, the low-cost infrastructure can be utilized as an incubator for new businesses or for the on-site community garden to sell affordable produce.

The proposed location of the market in the southeast quadrant of the space (pink zone on the map) is conducive to high traffic and especially advantageous for vendors and visitors alike, due to its convenient location directly outside of the entrance to the Palais des Congrès Metro station. Additionally, as the market is situated on the doorstep of Quebec's largest conference centre, there is potential to capture associated revenue for the community.

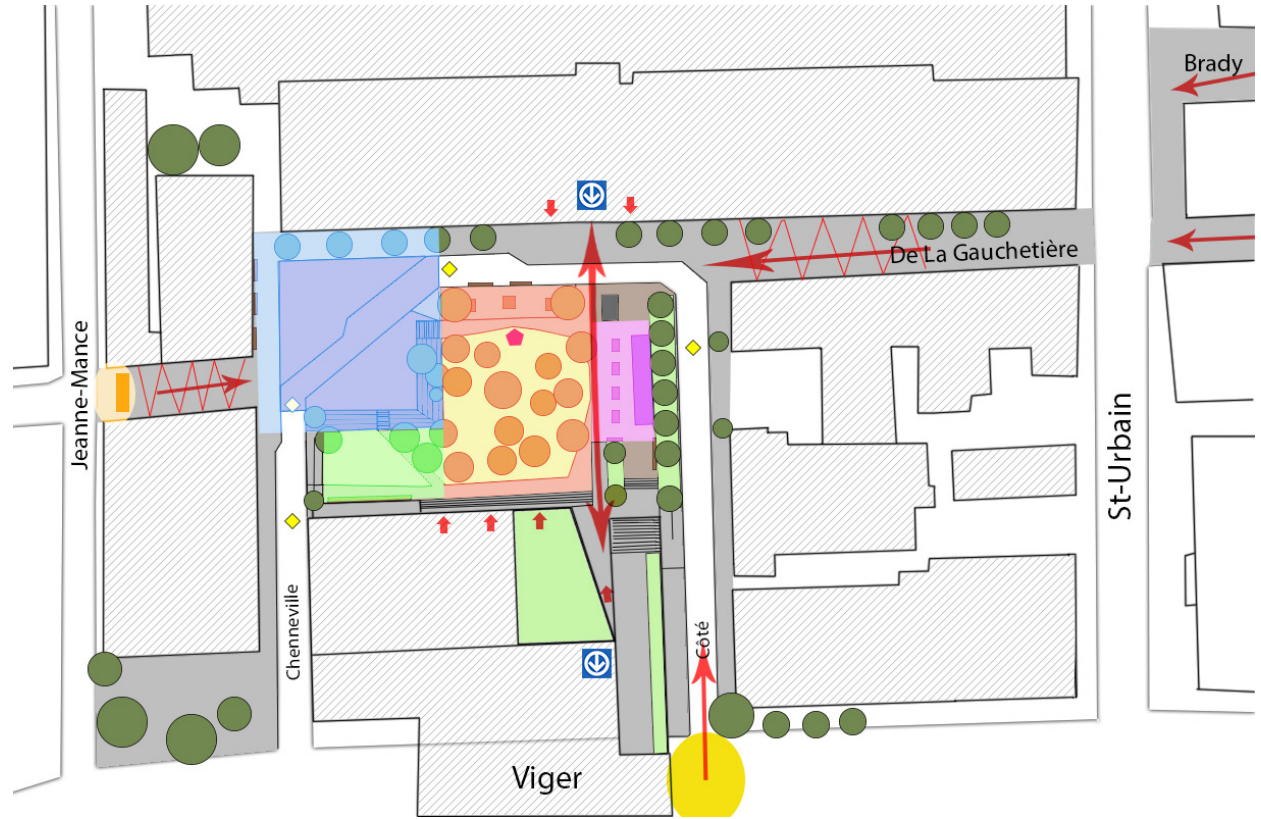


Fig. 33 Highlight of flows and movement and the different zones of the square
(Source: Authors)

Zones & Flows

Highlighted on the map above are the major pedestrian flows and movements, leading into the Square. For instance, the travel corridor between the Palais des Congrès and the Complexe Guy-Favreau and their respective metro entrances. Overlaid are the key areas of intervention, which seek to capitalize on the existing major flows in the space as well as reinforce less central

flows such as those from Avenue Viger and the pedestrianized areas of De La Gauchetière and the West Gate. The four zones are as follows: the multi-purpose gathering space (blue), the grassy playground area (green), the central forested area (orange), and the marketplace (pink).

SQUARE PALAIS DES CONGRÈS

Concept



Fig. 34 Former Pagoda Park located along Saint-Urbain
(Source: Adrien Hubert / Archives nationales du Québec)

Culture and History

The RSP seeks to promote Chinatown's culture and historical significance (see **Design Goals**). This goal was approached through interventions that affirm and preserve the unique character of Chinatown by promoting cultural activities, practices, and identity. The principal intervention aligned with this goal is the inclusion of a large pagoda at the front of the Square which would act as a defining feature and landmark for the revamped space. The new pagoda would serve as an important historical reference to the one from



Fig. 35 Street level view of the square, looking West towards the Gate
(Source: Authors)

Chinatown's former Pagoda Park. The original Pagoda, donated in 1967 by Wing Noodles, served as an important visual testimony of the Chinese presence in Montreal, but was lost in 1981 during the widening of rue Saint-Urbain. The RSP feel that the prominent placement of a pagoda within expropriated land and across the street from the historic Wing Noodles, serves as both an important act of land reclamation and a powerful testament to Chinatown's resilience.

Collaboration with Local Artists

In terms of accessibility, the revamped space will include multilingual signage that accommodates those who do not speak an official language and enhanced lighting features that create a safe and attractive environment (e.g., lanterns). Further design interventions include custom banners on light poles, cultural and historical visual projects, and creative audio elements, all of which creating an opportunity to collaborate with local artists and promote Chinese culture and identity (see **Design Goals**).

SQUARE PALAIS DES CONGRÈS

Holistic Goals & Merits



Fig. 36 Montreal's Chinatown 1966
(Source: n.d. / Archives de la Ville de Montréal)

It is a goal of the RSP to present design interventions that break down imposing and complex structures (e.g., Palais des Congrès) into breathable spaces. This task has been approached throughout the site with design corrections including the removal of concrete barriers and the activation of unused structural components (e.g., roof garden).

The RSP have also recognized that the square is well situated to improve the permeability of these imposing structures and form connections

between them. As such, the redesigned space includes ramps, pathways and openings that reinforce comfortable routes towards their entrances and access to metro stations. This is especially important as interiors such as those of the Complexe Guy-Favreau have become important informal public gathering spaces.

The reformulation of the Square was inspired by the goal to strengthen Chinatown through a process of reweaving and reinforcing the important community assets that it currently impedes. This process includes activating the space around the West Gate, enlivening the west stretch of De La Gauchetière, and emphasizing the heritage of adjacent pillars of the community. For instance, the latter may include a partnership with Wing Noodles for the introduction of a new pagoda, with local businesses for the use of market infrastructure, or with local artists to commission visual or audio elements that celebrate the historic Chinese Catholic Church of the Holy Spirit which shares the space.

Finally, the RSP approached this project with the goal of filling the void of components lost due to fragmentation and historical wrongs in both Chinatown and surrounding neighbourhoods. The presented reformulation of the square is one that takes a major step in that direction by reclaiming the space from the Palais des Congrès and reimagining it as a vibrant multi-purpose centre for the community.

3

**Design
Merits**

DESIGN MERITS

Summary

Brady's Transformation

- » Introduces an attractive, safe, and useful community destination
- » Includes versatile space for Chinatown's diversified activities
- » Forms connections between existing community nodes
- » Stimulates the local economy through commercial partnerships
- » Provides a comfortable space for social interaction
- » Promotes Chinese culture through design
- » Contributes to the area's tree and plant life

Viger's Restructuring

- » Calms aggressive traffic along Viger
- » Reclaims automobile infrastructure
- » Preserves the scale and character of Chinatown
- » Improves connectivity, continuity, and safety for pedestrians
- » Provides compatible, sustainable, and affordable mobility
- » Repairs and reweaves fragmented land
- » Reappropriates space to fill the void of lost community assets

Square's Réclamation

- » Reclaims alienating and inaccessible expropriated land for the community
- » Unlocks the unique potential of a large, underutilized space
- » Breaks down complex structures into breathable space
- » Removes barriers and activates unused structural components
- » Permeates imposing structures that house important informal gathering spaces
- » Reinforces routes and connections to important nodes and assets (e.g., metro)
- » Situates site improvements within a larger agenda for reparations
- » Includes a large, versatile, four-season space for gatherings, events, and activities
- » Stimulates the local economy through commercial partnerships (e.g., market)
- » Bolsters commercial vitality along De La Gauchetière
- » Affirms and preserves Chinatown's cultural and historical significance
- » Prioritizes pedestrian use of the space and safety (especially seniors).
- » Promotes partnerships with local businesses, artists, and community organizations
- » Fills the void of components lost due to fragmentation
- » Provides space for community gardening initiatives (Green Chinatown).

References & Appendix

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APPENDIX 1 - CASE STUDY

Vancouver

Mah Society Building Redevelopment using Urban Acupuncture - Chinatown, Vancouver

Urban Acupuncture – A Methodology for the Sustainable Rehabilitation of “Society Buildings” in Vancouver’s Chinatown into Contemporary Housing

Overview

This report examines the possibility to use small scale design interventions in community buildings to improve community life, under the City of Vancouver’s economic strategies for historic revitalization including:

- » Heritage Rehabilitation Program
 - » Incentives are intended to meet “shortfall costs of renovation projects”
 - » 10 year property tax exemption for heritage rehabilitation
- » Facade Rehabilitation Program
 - » Provides up to 25,000\$ for principal facade rehabilitation

The report focuses on the practice called urban acupuncture which uses selective redevelopment to choose appropriate sites within the historic fabric; carefully remove the elements that are not working in the site; and insert a contemporary and appropriate intervention to stimulate urban regeneration. Interviews, historical photographs, and community narratives were collected and analyzed to understand the use and significance of the chosen areas by the community.

Mah Society Building

The Mah Society Building features a traditional economic structure with retail on ground floor, residential rooms on midlying floors, and the society space on the fifth floor. The issues in the building were largely in regards to the midlying residential floors, and their general living conditions: small living spaces, small amounts of natural light, and shared bathrooms and kitchens. In this case study, two redevelopment scenarios were proposed. Both involved the division of the Mah Society Building to allow for the introduction of a courtyard. The main difference in the two design options were the proposed circulation types, the first being an external staircase and fire escape, and the second being an elevator.

The benefits that would be seen given these redevelopments would be immense, including increased living space, natural light, a green space created for residents and the Mah Society, and increased accessibility from the rear entrance. Some negatives regarding the proposed redevelopment that are noted, include the increased size and new redevelopment costs factoring into an increased rental cost. This will limit the ability to rent to lower income groups including elderly residents.



Fig. 37 Mah Society building
(Source: Viktor Birkus, 2018)

APPENDIX 1 - CASE STUDY

Philadelphia

Folk Arts and Cultural Treasures School (FACTS) - Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Reclaiming Urban Space: The Growth of Philadelphia's Chinatown and the Establishment of a Community School

Philadelphia's major Chinese immigration occurred following World War II, due to changes in national immigration policy created with the National Immigration Act of 1965 which resulted in large numbers of skilled workers from Hong Kong. Additionally, the Vietnam War (1955-1975) throughout this period, resulted in increased Southeast Asian immigration and a greater diversity of Asian populations in Chinatown's across North America, including Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotian immigrants and refugees.

Despite the rising numbers of families and children in the community, the historical lack of accessibility to public schools was felt within the community, both physically and systematically. The existing schools were not only inaccessible due to proximity and mobility concerns, but they also had no bilingual teachers or language programs.

In 2000, a development for a new Major League Baseball (MLB) stadium was proposed for the Philadelphia Phillies, directly in Chinatown. This proposal resulted in massive community mobilization, shutting down the city's main streets, and effectively denying the proposal. In 2005, thousands of signatures and hundreds of letters addressed to the Philadelphia School Reform Commission served as a referendum for the envisionment of

Chinatown. The referendum culminated in the creation of the Folk Arts and Cultural Treasures School (FACTS).

The creation of FACTS was a central point in maintaining the culture of Chinatown. The school aimed to bridge gaps between immigrant and non-immigrant communities, and focused on a range of language programs catering to the diversity of the community. To help create connections between communities, the K-8 school actively seeks non-immigrant attendees, and the organization's overwhelming success resulted in the application of a second charter school, FACTS(2), in 2015.



Fig. 38 FACTS
(Source: FACTS, 2015)

APPENDIX 1 - CASE STUDY

Washington, D.C.

Commodified Culture - Washington, D.C

Commodified language in Chinatown: A Contextualized Approach to Linguistic Landscape

This case study examined the use of language in Washington D.C.'s Chinatown, and compared different language patterns in retail and public spaces. The patterns found throughout the study coincided with different phases of development, which resulted in the changing fabric of Chinatown's residents and its retail activity.

The following criteria were selected to create a standardized classification for different patterns of language:

- » Language (Chinese or English)
- » Types of symbolic and ideational meanings communicated
- » Time period that a business or institution was established
- » Type of institution

The first wave of gentrification in the 1970's and 80's was characterized by two main types of retail spaces. The first, included small Chinese owned businesses, with Chinese language communicated on the building's facade and interior for informational purposes. In these cases, Chinese text is as large or larger than English text. The second type of retail during this period was English owned, not catering directly to Chinese populations or

stocking Asian goods. These retailers included small grocers and small chain stores such as Radioshack.

The second wave of gentrification was characterized by corporate non-Chinese owned businesses, which displayed Chinese language only on the building facades. In these cases, English is larger than the Chinese text, which is exclusively used for display and commodification, not interactional information such as store hours or menus.

The establishment of English owned and catered spaces in the first wave of gentrification created support within the Chinatown community, to create language bylaws within the community, pertaining to Asian language. Though these bylaws were created with support of the community, the resulting landscape favoured corporate, typically English owned businesses who subsequently commodified Chinese language for aesthetic purposes to draw upon an Asian and non-Asian customer base.

This case study should be used as an example of how language and more broadly, bylaws pertaining to cultural elements, can miss the mark in terms of cultural sensibility, and how language and culture can be commodified for commercial use.



Fig. 39 Corporate non-Chinese owned
(Source: Jennifer Leenan, 2009)

APPENDIX 1 - CASE STUDY

Toronto



Fig. 40 A community land trust in Chinatown?
(Source: Friends of Chinatown Toronto - FOCT / facebook, 2021)

Friends of Chinatown Toronto Community Land Trust - Toronto, Ontario

FOCT Mandate: Friends of Chinatown Toronto (FOCT) is a grassroots community organization comprised of multidisciplinary actors and community residents, fighting for community controlled affordable housing

Community Power for Anti-Displacement: Inclusive Future for Downtown Chinatown

Friends of Chinatown Toronto was created due to intense development pressures and speculation in the area of Chinatown, and more broadly Toronto and the GTA. In the current situation, developers in the area are subscribing to current city bylaws and then some, by providing an additional 10 “affordable units” more than they were required, in an veiled attempt to seem altruistic among the community.

Friends of Chinatown Toronto is demanding more, due to the gap between existing regulation and reality. Despite the existing policies for affordable housing, the term affordable is subjective and would therefore deny access to these units for a majority of Chinatown’s long term and existing residents. Despite these demands, city planners and architects have still not actively engaged with community members from Chinatown.

Friends of Chinatown Toronto is attempting to create a nonprofit Community Land Trust (CLT) within the community. This would enable the organization to hold land on behalf of the community, to serve as a long-term steward for affordable housing, community, retail, and commercial spaces, and more. Though FOCT has yet to create the community land trust, the organization has been active in the community in a number of capacities. The group’s current role in the community consists largely of community organization and outreach, which includes providing eviction and legal aid, as well as legitimacy when addressing authorities such as the city, property owners, and developers to express community and individual concerns.

The group is currently searching for a suitable property, or property owner to partner with to initiate the community land trust. Additionally, the group is making a number of requests to the city regarding proposed and future developments in the area. Firstly, FOCT is asking for 100% affordable housing, with affordable rentals being defined by FOCT, not the city. Secondly, they requested a moratorium on all development until an action

plan for Chinatown has been developed. In the context of retail, the group wishes to create a cultural competency process for retail tenants, use measures to deter big box stores in new builds such as creating low ceilings on ground floor retail spaces, and to maintain current retail rents in existing buildings and limit rents for new builds.

Though these requests are ambitious in the context of the massive development pressures in Chinatown and more widely downtown Toronto, it is necessary for ambitious requests to push political actors in this direction. This case study is important in understanding the pressures which many Chinatown’s across North America face, and a potential route to ensure their defence of Chinatown and its residents. Additionally, the facade put on by developers in providing “affordable apartments” should be noted moving forward in the case of Montreal.

APPENDIX 2 - CHARETTE SUMMARY

The summary consists of two sections, those being (1) a synopsis of feedback relating to our proposed intervention sites and (2) a summary of key takeaways and priorities moving forward.

(1) Sites of Interest

Our first site of interest was the **Square** (on De La Gauchetière between Palais des Congrès and Complexe Guy-Favreau). It was agreed that there is not enough happening in this space and that it could be better utilized to activate the community. We received encouraging feedback for our low-cost high-impact idea to integrate pop-up shops that could create an engaging space while also contributing to the area's commercial vitality. The concept of reparations was discussed in specific reference to the fact that the square is crammed between massive "public" buildings located on expropriated land. It was suggested that reparations should be exacted from those involved in the expropriation or who are currently using the land (e.g., Hydro-Qébec, Desjardins). This could include money for engaging community and public space, sponsoring renovations, mortgage or insurance breaks, upgrades to existing community buildings and upgrades to make space more energy efficient. Finally, it was suggested to emphasize the heritage and cultural relevance of the immediate area (e.g., Wings Noodles Ltd., light manufacturing). **Key takeaways 3-6 are pertinent.**

Our second site of interest, the **Viger area**, was appreciated by all stakeholders due to the immense impact that covering it would have on the trajectory of Chinatown in the coming years.

However, due to the sheer scale and timeline of that intervention relative to our project and the numerous challenges currently facing Chinatown, it was not considered to be the most feasible undertaking. Stakeholders were less interested in high-cost high-reward interventions and more interested in smaller, pressing and immediate interventions. During this discussion we were encouraged to prepare a feasibility/impact matrix for all potential interventions, and we plan to conduct this regardless of which project we pursue.

Our third intervention site, the large vacant lot adjacent to the **North Gate** (René-Lévesque and St Laurent), prompted insightful discussions about the importance of appropriate programming at these spaces. For instance, there was an interesting pop-up taking place on this lot last summer (picture in our package) but it was mentioned that local residents did not know who organized the event. In this case, the lack of transparency and community involvement lead to a disconnect from the community. It raises questions of who these spaces are designed for and who are they benefitting. It was concluded that programming must activate the community and is just as important as the space itself. Conversation drifted away from the actual use of this lot for our project which is understandable. Similar to the Autoroute 720, this is a pivotal piece of land for the trajectory of Chinatown but one that may be out of the scope of our project, largely due to it being privately owned. **Key takeaways 2 and 4 are pertinent.**

Our final proposed intervention, at **Brady Street**, generated interest with all four stakeholders as a space with unique potential. It is well situated to form connections between existing public spaces (e.g., Sun Yat-sen Park), informal spaces (e.g., Complexe Guy-Favreau), and main nodes and activity flows (e.g., De La Gauchetière). It was suggested that the adjacent cultural centre will be revitalized and potentially lead to natural foot traffic. Small scale interventions are suitable for this space, but more ambitious ideas were also broached such as covering the space (atrium). The vacant lot within Brady Street was a potential site for Green Chinatown but the lack of sun was an issue and continues to be a concern. It fits with the stakeholder's prioritization of immediate and pressing interventions. **Key takeaway 6 was highly pertinent.**

(2) Key Takeaways

We received a wealth of invaluable suggestions from all stakeholders, which were not directly linked to specific interventions sites, and that have been consolidated below as key takeaways.

1. Visuals. Our 3D concept map was particularly effective in illustrating the neighbourhood in terms of scale and perimeter which led to a discussion of the importance of preserving Chinatown's scale, building height, form and identity. Additionally, while all stakeholders applauded our (mistakenly) much more favorable and optimistic boundary of Chinatown, they encouraged us to also visualize the official boundary.

APPENDIX 2 - CHARETTE SUMMARY

2. Intangible and Tangible. Overall, our design goals and concept received positive feedback. Specifically, it was noted that we had a strong mix of tangible and intangible interventions. However, moving forward it would strengthen our project to make clear connections between the two. For instance, mixing physical elements and programming.
3. Identifying mismatches. It was suggested that we don't limit ourselves to underutilized spaces, rather we could be looking at spaces where there is a mismatch between the intended use and how the space is actually being used. In other words, a disconnect between allocation of space and the need or appropriate use of said space.
4. Recognize unintended public spaces. We were encouraged to look for unintended public spaces (e.g., Guy-Favreau) and consider the ways we can formally recognize these spaces and their functions. This can solidify their role in the community, and it was suggested that we approach this from a programming perspective.
5. Break down complex buildings into breathable spaces. We know that within and adjacent to Chinatown are massive quasi-public institutional buildings (e.g., Palais des Congrès, Guy-Favreau, CHUM Hospital) that threaten the area (e.g., scale, barriers) but also act as informal gathering spaces. It was suggested that we look for ways to break these complex and opaque "public" buildings down into breathable spaces and take advantage of their public space characteristics. For instance, the Square is well situated for interventions that improve the permeability of Palais des Congrès and Guy-Favreau (and connections between the two).
6. Making connections. A helpful interpretation of our approach was to use fringe sites to weave and reknit the urban fabric (e.g., urban acupuncture). This perspective clicked with many suggestions we received throughout the charrette and the concept of strengthening connections was another through line. For instance, we were encouraged to think about the ways we can connect intervention sites and existing community spaces. This involves looking at usage patterns in the area and the movement in, out, and between important nodes.
7. SDCs. It was recommended that we look into SDCs as a way to build business partnerships within the community and thus facilitate a unifying vision and self-governance.
8. Final specifics. It was stressed that there is a specific need for public space near the residential areas that offer seniors, particularly women, a place to exercise. Dispersing the load of existing public space and making all green space public were additional objectives.