# What'SUP? Summer 2015

## News of the School of Urban Planning at McGill University

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Dear friends and colleagues,

Greetings! After a harsh winter, Montréal is in full bloom again. The shift from frozen tundra to luxuriant garden seemed more sudden and dramatic than ever this year. It took about two weeks to see café terraces replace snow-banks and sandals substitute for snow-boots. There is no spring, really, in Montréal, but there certainly is an incredible reawakening of nature.

### WELCOMING A NEW RECRUIT

New beginnings are happening at the School as well. I am very happy to announce that McGill's Board of Governors has approved the hiring of David Wachsmuth as Assistant Professor as of August 1st, 2015. David is currently a postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Geography at UBC. His CV (see sidebar) contains an impressive list of degrees, awards and publications, as well as an interesting list of planning jobs in Canada and Latin America. In his dissertation, David used US case studies to show that city-regions are inventing new institutional configurations, including multi-city economic partnerships, to be more competitive.

At McGill, David will develop a research and teaching program in urban governance, while also working, where needed, in the areas of environmental policy and planning, community planning, planning history and theory, GIS and research methods. He will strengthen the links between our field and geography, sociology and public policy, and he will raise the School's international profile thanks to the widespread recognition his work enjoys and because his new research involves a comparative analysis of sustaina-bility policies (and of their contribution to equity and democratic governance) in Amsterdam, Buenos Aires, New York, and Singapore. We are looking forward to many happy years of fruitful collaboration with him. (If you want to meet David, see sidebar on next page.)

### SOCIAL, BUSINESS AND ACADEMIC ENTREPRENEURSHIP

It is becoming a trope that workers in the post-industrial economy must be individual entrepreneurs who fashion their own career. Professors, too, are increasingly seen as academic entrepreneurs. Agents of change in society are no longer revolutionaries or presidents; they are *social entrepreneurs*. Dean Jim Nicell rightly wants entrepreneurship to be a new objective in our teaching and learning activities.

Students in the School of Urban Planning did not wait for new courses in entrepreneurship to be created to launch entrepreneurial initiatives. Here are a few examples of such initiatives by students and graduates:

- Raphaëlle Aubin, Melanie Lambrick and Catherine Thibault created **Bricolage urbain** to make "learning, thinking about and participating in urban planning fun and useful." One of their primary clients is the Office de consultation publique de Montréal. (http://bricolageurbain.ca)

- Eadeh Attarzadeh and five colleagues founded **Lande**, a group whose mission is to promote the reuse of vacant land in the city. (www.landemtl.com/en/)

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*David Wachsmuth, a 'short' CV*



*Education: PhD in Sociology (Urban Political Economy), New York University, 2014; Master of Science in Planning (Housing and Social Policy), University of Toronto, 2008; Bachelor of Arts (Joint First-Class Honours in International Development and Classics; minor in Mathematics and Statistics), McGill University, 2004.*

*Dissertation: "Post-City Politics: US Urban Governance and Competitive Multi-City Regionalism."*

*Professional urban planning experience in the non-profit sector, the Ontario provincial government and the Venezuelan barrios.*

*Research experience at the Superstorm Research Laboratory, the Institute for Public Knowledge and the Department of Sociology, New York University.*

*Awards (selection): Best Edited Book Prize of the International Planning History Society (for a book chapter co-authored with Neil Brenner), 2014; Killam Postdoctoral Research Fellowship and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Postdoctoral Fellowship, 2014; Edward W. Soja Prize for Critical Thinking in Urban Research (UCLA), 2009; Centre for Urban and Community Studies Award and Ian D. Macpherson Award for Excellent Achievement in Planning (University of Toronto), 2008.*

*Languages: David masters all languages in which theses may be submitted at McGill: English, French and Latin!*

*In memoriam: Jean Doré (1944-2015)*

*Jean Doré, mayor of Montréal from 1986 to 1994, died on June 15. From Jean Drapeau, he inherited a centralised governance system, a downtown full of parking lots, and industrial areas in decline. He responded to these conditions by creating administrative and planning districts, setting up consensus-based policy-making processes, and launching import important projects. He gave Montréal its first Master Plan (in 1992) and a plan for the protection of Mount Royal. He worked to redevelop the Old Port, the Lachine Canal corridor, the Angus Shops, and to create a blue and green Montréal. He championed historic preservation, affordable housing, public transit, citizen participation, gender and racial equality, and cultural diversity. In short, he made Montréalers believe in sustainable development.*

- Alex Caruthers, Jill Merriman and Stephen Charters founded **Made in Montreal / Fait à Montréal**, a not-for-profit organisation whose mission is to promote local manufacturing and other forms of production and creation in Montreal (www.madeinmontreal.org).

- Gabriel Damant-Sirois, Vincent-Charles Hodder and Colin Stewart launched the start-up company and website **NexMoov**, to offer specialised travel and relocation services by using GIS technology. (www.nexmoov.com)

- MUP graduates Mark Elsworthy and James DiPaolo have teamed up to create **Upstream Planning / Aménagement en amont**, "a town and country planning team focusing on rural realities in Quebec, Atlantic Canada, and New England." (www.upstream-enamont.com)

I will be glad to share news of similar initiatives if you share it with me.

One form of academic entrepreneurship is the search for research funding. In that realm, too, our students have been doing well. Their success rate in the competition for SSHRC Fellowships remains stellar. Master's students Scott Bagg, Charis Loong, David Paton, Sibeal McCourt and Eleni Taye, and doctoral student Dea van Lierop earned a fellowship this year.

Success can also be measured in "scientometric" terms, i.e., in terms of empirical measures of scientific productivity. In that respect, an article in the *Journal of Public Transportation* identified our own Ahmed El-Geneidy as the ninth-most productive scholar in the world in this field of research! (See http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1424&context=jpt for details.)

### URBAN DESIGN CHARRETTE & GEWURZ LECTURE

The annual McGill–UdeM Interuniversity Charrette in Urban Design was organised in partnership with Les Amis de la montagne and was entitled "Rue University: Between City and Mountain, a Reinvented Link." It was held at the School on February 6-8 and was preceded by a public showing and discussion of "Frederick Law Olmsted: Designing America" on February 5. The first prize for the winning team was the "Prix Eugène Riesman des Amis de la montagne." As its name indicates, it was donated by Eugene Riesman, who is a former student of the School of Urban Planning, a real-estate developer and a benefactor of Les Amis and other organisations.

On March 13, Adam Greenfield delivered the annual Brenda and Samuel Gewurz Lectur in Urban Design. After a career in high-tech firms, Adam founded the consulting firm Urbanscale to advise public and private clients on the "design of products, services, and spatial interventions wherever networked information technology intersects the urban condition." He is also a Mellon Fellow in the Humanities at the London School of Economics and a Senior Research Fellow at LSE Cities. He is the author of *Everyware: The dawning age of ubiquitous computing*, of *Urban Computing and its Discontents* (with Mark Sheppard) and of *Against the Smart City*. In his lecture, entitled "Another City is Possible: Practices of the Minimum Viable Utopia," he showed the promise of smart phones, 3D-printers and other devices as tools of individual and community empowerment and presented an image of the Smart City not as a project of large corporations and governments but as a laboratory for grassroots activities that foster urban citizenship, participation and equity.