



McGill School of Urban Planning Newsletter

Winter 2019, no.4 - March

Cars can be fun... but should they? Photo: .Shearmur

And now for something completely different...

The academic year is drawing to a close: it does not feel like it, since we are all immersed in term-papers, teaching, preparing for spring and summer... but the end is nigh: we can look forward to a change in rhythm and in weather.

Things have been particularly busy at the School because we are searching for a new faculty member. This has involved considerable work on the part of administrative staff and faculty (many CVs to read, meetings to organize, discussions to have), and I would like to thank them, as well as the students who have participated in the process.

This is all very serious stuff, but one should never forget that studying and teaching are fun: we can discuss ideas, have arguments, test novel ways of doing, and question things we don't understand. Thinking and developing ideas requires playfulness – which itself requires being non-judgemental of failure, of ideas that don't chime with our own, and of thought experiments. Indeed, there is nothing more enjoyable than engaging with ideas we don't understand or with which we disagree.

I had a lot of fun at the demolition derby pictured above. Yes it's part of car culture, uses up fuel, and is not subtle (but note the cultural reference to 1980s' TV series). Yet everyone there had a good time (well, I did), watching the last gasp of beaten-up cars, eating greasy food, getting wet and taking photos: what was there not to enjoy?

Have fun this summer,

Richard Shearmur

NEWS

PhD news

Since October two students have been granted PhDs, and one has successfully defended

Bruno Marot, in November 2018, for “Redeveloping post-war Beirut (1990-2016): The political economy of “Pegged Urbanization”.

Geneviève Boisjoly, in February 2019, for “Towards a better implementation of accessibility indicators in land use and transport planning practice”

Emily Grisé successfully defended her PhD in February 2019, and will graduate in Spring.

Filipa Pajevic and **Meahbh Maguire** have both successfully completed their comprehensive exams and defended their proposals. The simple task of producing a thesis is now all that remains for them to do.

The dossier to obtain a PhD program at the School, submitted to the Ministry of Education in December 2017, is now being evaluated by the Ministry of Education. We have received positive feedback from the external evaluators, which is of course good news.

MUP (Masters): News from the front

Second year MUP students are busy undertaking research activities for their Supervised Research Projects. Here are some brief descriptions of what they are up to

Chris Kuno: When a stadium is developed in an existing urban context, there are a plethora of factors that must be considered beyond spectator experience and financial constraints. This SRP explores effects of German and UK stadia location on socio-economic activity in surrounding environments. A guidebook providing recommendations for best practice will be created to ensure decision makers understand stadia outcomes. Photo: Chris Kuno.



Eric Pitre: Ensuring housing affordability in Canadian cities is a significant challenge. But providing housing in urban areas is not simply a one-dimensional problem. This SRP examines the case study of Baugruppe development in Berlin to explore how certain modifications to the process of producing housing can lead to homes that are not only more affordable but of higher quality, with better social, economic and environmental outcomes. Photo: Eric Pitre



Photo: Eric Pitre

<https://www.urbansky-architekten.de/projektauswahl/ch24/>

Jasmine Ali: This SRP examines the development logic underpinning Kuwait's national strategy to construct new cities. By drawing upon scholarship relating to Gulf urbanism, new master-planned cities and the discourse of eco-cities, my research examines how, why, and with what consequences the global 'new cities' idea is being adopted in Kuwait, and what are the main drivers and influences? Photo: Jasmine Ali



Alexandra Doran: As cities continue to promote and provide for Active Transportation, it is critical that equity



become a central tenet in planning and policy-making. This SRP critically reviews what currently exists in terms of cycling equity research and Canadian planning practice, and from such findings discusses what directions may be taken to better understand the intersection of equity and cycling, and how to more effectively incorporate it into planning practice. Photo Anne Lusk, [CC BY-ND](#)

Liam Murphy: Urban densification policies in many North American cities are negatively impacting the provision and use-level of accessible, high-quality green spaces. Concerns are also rising regarding the interrelationships between urban green space provision, environmentalism, gentrification and affordability. This SRP reviews how urban densification and environmental policies interact with the provision, development and design of public green spaces in Vancouver, Canada, as well as how these policies reflect dominant contemporary ideologies and affect urban development.



Photo: Anne Lusk, [CC BY-ND](#)

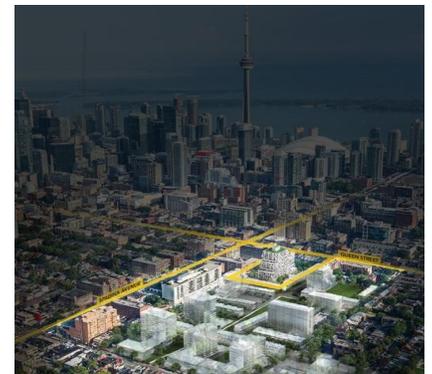
Maaz Khan: Water scarcity affects up to 4.1 billion people worldwide. Much of this scarcity is temporal in nature and affects vulnerable urban and peri-urban residents. This SRP aims to understand how small urban, peri-urban, and island communities in Colombia exist with, cope with, and adapt to, water scarcity, and how these lessons can be leveraged elsewhere. Photo: The Andes, Colombia (Maaz Khan, 2018)



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Ayman Jalloul: My SRP looks at how the broad concept of sustainability is defined and applied in hot property markets. I am analyzing the Alexandra Park project to understand the negotiations, challenges & partnerships developers go through to achieve sustainable development in the context of the GTA. This analysis will allow me to propose strategies to achieve triple bottom line considerations in real estate.



Louis-Étienne Couture: Underground rail corridors play an important role in regional transport accessibility but their insertion into existing urban form have impacts for decades after. My project documents urban design interventions in the infrastructural spaces of the Jonction Nord-Midi in Brussels and the Mount Royal Tunnel in Montréal through the lenses of landscape, public space, programmatic diversity, and multi-layered cities and will generate strategies for improving the planning of similar spaces.



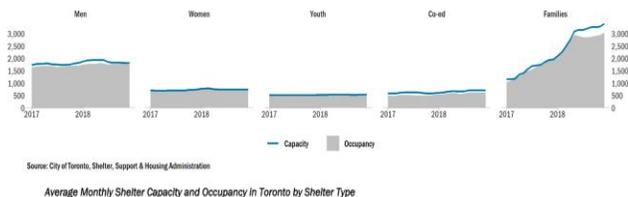
Jamie Rathwell: Over the last several decades, food packaging has contributed to the growing stream of waste generated in urban areas. The purpose of this SRP is to understand the role various actors play in the pursuit of drastically reducing food packaging waste and the barriers that need to be overcome to achieve this goal. In addition, I am examining the operations of zero-waste food retailers in Canada and the attitudes, behaviors and demographic characteristics



of their clientele. Photo: R. Shearmur

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Olwen Bennet: In recent years, a growing number of refugee claimants have been arriving in Toronto. Faced with an unaffordable housing market, many are using the City's shelter system, causing a jump in the demand for shelter spaces for families. Responding to this increased demand, the City has resorted to renting hotels, an expensive and short-term fix. This SRP explores alternative options for providing high quality affordable housing for asylum seekers in a more financially sustainable and socially inclusive way.



UPCOMING EVENTS

- **19th March, Tuesday, 12.45pm:** presentation of May 2018 Panama field-trip. Room 420.

- **SOUPosium:** after a successful and fun initial symposium in March 2018, the Souposium will be back on afternoons of Thursday 28th and Friday 29th March 2019.

Tentative program:

Thursday 28th:

- 12.00: Lunch (for registered participants)
- 12.45: ask-a-prof: Nik Luka
- 13.45: Mythbusters: planning abroad
- 15.00: research vignettes (PhD presentations)
- 16.10: Round table: The Role of Design

Friday 29th:

- 12.00: Lunch (for registered participants)
- 12.45: Charette: coproduction & urban design
- 13.45: ask-a-prof: Richard Shearmur
- 14.45: research vignettes (PhD presentations)
- 16.10: Round-table: Gender & Sexuality
- 18.00: Social evening

All are welcome!

Free City a planning journal edited by SUP students, has just published its fourth volume. It presents cutting edge, fun and provocative short pieces dealing with planning issues. <http://free-city.ca/>

SELECTED FACULTY PUBLICATIONS & RESEARCH

Lisa Bornstein is co-investigator in the on-going FQRSC project '*Controverses théoriques et pratiques liées à la vulnérabilité, la résilience et la reconstruction durable*'.

Nik Luka is co-investigator in the on-going Swedish research project: '*Sustainable leisure mobilities in compact towns: changing patterns of outdoor recreation in transit-oriented development*'.

van Lierop, D., A.El-Geneidy and M.Badami, 2018, What influences satisfaction and loyalty in public transport? A review of the literature, *Transport Reviews*, 38.1

Meili, R. and R.Shearmur, 2019, Diverse diversities – Open Innovation in Small towns and Rural Areas, *Growth and Change*, doi.org/10.1111/grow.12291

Wachsmuth, D. and A.Weisler, 2018, Airbnb and the rent gap: Gentrification through the sharing economy, *Environment & Planning A*, 50.6

IMPORTANT NOTICE RE: PACKAGES

Please note that whilst the School is happy to receive letters and small items (such as books) on behalf of students, other arrangements need to be made for larger parcels. Thanks.

QUIZ

Land value capture is the flavour of the month. The Globe & Mail (16th May 2018) has recently described the Caisse des Dépôts' efforts to pay for some of its light-rail costs by recovering the increase in real-estate value from owners of properties the value of which is being enhanced by the railway . In what year did a bye-law "*provide for the widening of certain streets in London and for the recovery of a contribution ... from owners and occupiers of property the value of which was enhanced by the widening*"?

Previous Quiz: Being male and long deceased do not necessarily earn you a place in an Atlas: what did Ptolemy, Strabo, Mela and Herodotus do to earn front page exposure in the circa. 1921 *Times Atlas & Gazetteer of the World*? Answer: They each proposed a map of the world, and were the GIS experts of their respective eras.

NEWS FEED

Please let **Richard Shearmur** or **Paula Domingues** know of short announcements, events, achievements or (odd) facts for the newsletter. Suggestions for quizzes are also welcome. Note that, in the interest of brevity, we may not be able to include all suggestions.

Many thanks to all who have contributed to this edition of the Newsletter.

PEOPLE

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