



Héritage Champlain Co-Design Workshop

Summary Report



Ponts
JACQUES CARTIER +
CHAMPLAIN
Bridges
Canada

March 2020

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Introduction

The original Champlain Bridge was decommissioned on June 28, 2019 after the opening of the Samuel De Champlain Bridge. The Champlain Bridge is at the end of its service life and will be deconstructed in 2020, which will free up seven hectares of land along the shoreline that will be used for a public project. Called “Héritage Champlain,” this program will enhance the freed-up shoreline areas as well as the Champlain Bridge Estacade that crosses the St. Lawrence River.

Héritage Champlain Program

To enhance the shoreline and the ice control structure, The Jacques Cartier and Champlain Bridges Incorporated (JCCBI) created the Héritage Champlain program as a framework for land redevelopment after the bridge deconstruction. This program is an opportunity to create a unique site, give the community improved access to the St. Lawrence River, and preserve some components of the bridge to commemorate its place in Montreal's history. This program is in keeping with the goals of the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy, which are to:

- Bring Canadians closer to nature;
- Keep wildlife populations healthy;
- Promote safe and healthy communities.

In December 2019, JCCBI organized a co-design workshop to ensure that these development projects meet the community's expectations based on the three major themes that emerged from the public consultations: active mobility, access to water and commemoration.

Co-Design Workshop

The goal of the co-design workshop was to engage the community in generating ideas to redevelop the shoreline and the Estacade for recreational, commemorative and active transportation purposes. The workshop was designed to deepen reflection on these three aspects that emerged has main themes from the public consultations on the deconstruction project held in spring 2019.

Summary Report

This report presents the highlights from the workshop discussions and reflections and will be considered in initiatives created for the Héritage Champlain program.



Workshop Description

Participants

Participants attended the workshop by invitation. In addition to JCCBI's representatives and consultants, the following stakeholder groups were invited:

- People who participated in the spring 2019 consultations who indicated an interest in attending a future workshop on developing the shoreline and the Champlain Bridge Estacade.
- Members of the Deconstruction Advisory Committee.
- Stakeholders involved in the deconstruction project.
- Professionals and stakeholders from various fields, such as the environment, visual arts, tourism, sports and leisure, culture and heritage.
- Academic researchers and representatives, particularly those from the urban planning, design, engineering and environment sectors.

A group of 11 students from the Faculty of Environmental Design at Université de Montréal also participated in the workshop. Their role was to contribute their knowledge to the discussions, provide logistical support, and take notes during the activity.

Overall, 72 people participated in the co-design workshop.

Participant's guide

A preparation workbook (see appendix) was sent to all guests when they confirmed their attendance. This book contained information to help participants prepare for the workshop:

- Details about the workshop.

- Description of the deconstruction project and the Héritage Champlain program.
- Description of the four sites to be developed.
- Feedback on ideas proposed by the public at the previous consultations.
- Implementation constraints for all sites.
- Existing structures that could be preserved.
- JCCBI's preliminary ideas.

Agenda

The activity took place during the evening of December 2, 2019. After the participants were welcomed, there were presentations on:

- The deconstruction project and the goals and orientations of the Héritage Champlain program, presented by JCCBI.
- The characteristics of the sites to be redeveloped.
- Issues and the metropolitan context, presented by Jean-Paul Boudreau, member of the Fayolle-Magil Construction Research Chair in Architecture, the Built Environment and Sustainability, Université de Montréal.

Participants were then invited to join two 60-minute round-table discussions. The first discussion focused on a vision for the entire territory that includes the shoreline and the Champlain Bridge Estacade.

The second addressed the possible redevelopment initiatives for the different target sites. For this second discussion, participants were put into groups according to their preference for one of the following four sites:

- 1 Île des Sœurs
- 2 Champlain Bridge Estacade
- 3 St. Lawrence Seaway Dike
- 4 Bridge Right-of-Way in Brossard

The eight people on each of these round tables led their own discussions. A student took notes at each table using the provided sheet to record the highlights and main ideas from the discussions. A plenary session followed each of the two round-table discussions. Each note taker had a few minutes to share the main ideas from their table with all participants.

Design plans and materials were available at each table to stimulate creativity and to help participants express their ideas.

Overall Vision

The following reflective questions guided the first discussion period:

1. How will the Héritage Champlain project benefit the Greater Montreal community?
2. What theme or unifying element could define an overall project that includes different sites?
3. How can we commemorate the original Champlain Bridge and its importance in the urban development of both shores?

Benefits for Greater Montreal

The participants mentioned a number of potential benefits of the site's development for Greater Montreal, and the following aspects received the most attention:

- Create a vision that makes the project part of a city-wide approach and that connects it to other waterfront projects.
- Help people take ownership of the shoreline and access the water through the addition of public access points.
- Improve the active mobility and pedestrian network, particularly in the form of loops and circuits.
- Add recreational and outdoor activities, such as sport fishing.
- Restore the natural environment and biodiversity corridors.
- Make activities possible year-round.
- Create relaxation spaces.

Unifying Concept

Sub-groups had conversations and raised a number of components that could be part of a unifying concept that would define an overall project that integrates different initiatives across the territory. The main aspects mentioned were:

- The historical importance of the river and its resource (water), for Greater Montreal.
- Connectivity of the entire territory and access to the various sites along the shoreline.
- Use of virtual or augmented reality to view or commemorate the original bridge.
- Interpretation about the site and its history.

Other aspects such as sports and leisure, recreational facilities, and the arts were also mentioned a number of times as unifying elements.

Key activities and developments

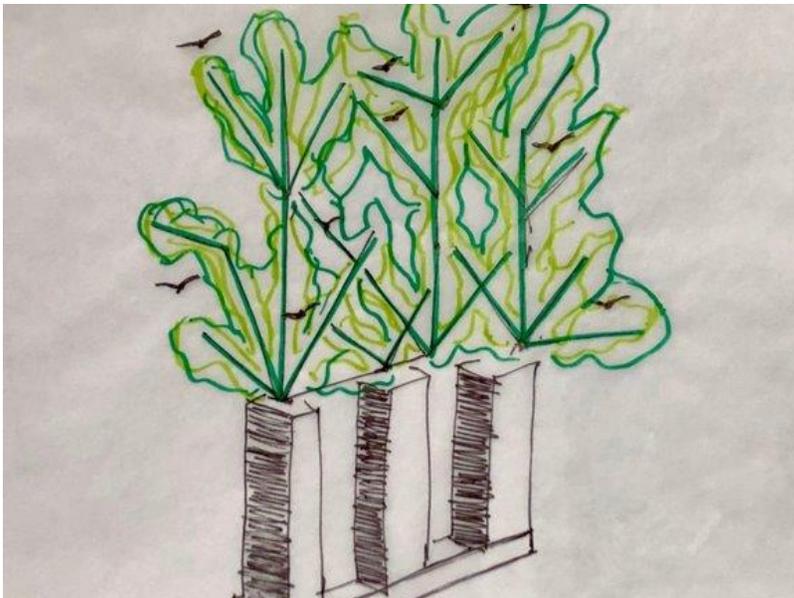
In keeping with this “node” idea, some participants suggested that the site be developed as a relaxation stop with services (e.g., public bathrooms). It was suggested that there should be access to the water and points of interest, particularly to highlight biodiversity and the natural environment, with attractions related to wild and plant life and the water, air and soil.

Material reuse

For this site in particular, it was suggested that assemblies from the bridge be preserved, for example, for sculptures or other artistic works.

Use of preserved pillars

Both groups agreed that it would be a good idea to keep one or more pillars in their current state as remnants or landmarks. They also discussed the possibility of making sculptures out of the pillars.



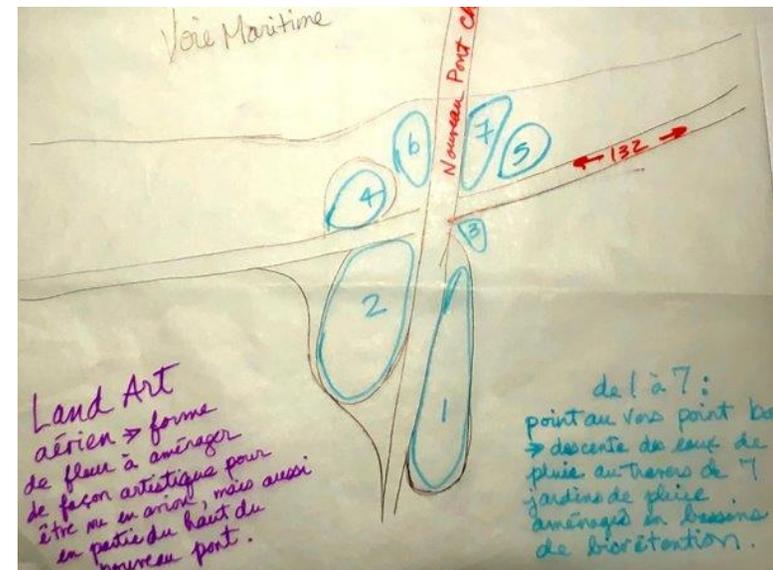
Site ④: Bridge Right-of-Way in Brossard

Three groups discussed the bridge right-of-way in Brossard.



Key activities and developments

The group suggested developing areas for sport fishing, facilitating access for pedestrians and cyclists from neighbouring areas, creating areas for relaxation and observation, making the banks greener, and creating rain gardens and land art.



Material reuse

In terms of reusing materials for this site, the suggested options included habitats for wildlife and plant life, structures for scenic views to highlight or accentuate landscape elements, ground markings, mineral environments, street furniture, and playground equipment.

Use of preserved pillars

It was suggested that one or more piers be used to create a wharf on the Brossard side that would not compromise the pillars' visibility as remnants of the deconstructed bridge. Other suggestions included allowing nature to grow back around the pillars, making them greener, or using them as observation towers.

End-of-Workshop Summary

To conclude, the workshop participants made additional comments to the entire room. Many people took the opportunity to summarize the lessons learned and takeaways from the workshop. The importance of having a common thread between the initiatives at the different Héritage Champlain sites and other waterfront areas was reiterated. Some pointed out that the site's northern character should not be overlooked when choosing development ideas and activities. Finally, many shared the hope that future developments would acknowledge not only the original Champlain Bridge but also the architects, builders and workers who helped build the structure and, of course, highlight the lessons learned from how the bridge changed over its life span.

Conclusion

Main Trends and Orientations

The Héritage Champlain Co-Design Workshop allowed participants to discuss unifying ideas and the best orientations for the future.

Helping residents take ownership of the shoreline emerged as a central aspect of these discussions, as shown through the recurring themes of public access to the water. Redeveloping the Champlain Bridge's assets will help fulfill the community's desire for public spaces to be developed along the river.

Everyone agreed on the importance for these different sites to be part of an overall vision and expressed the desire to treat this land as a Montreal destination that fits with an overall regional vision and that connects with other riverside routes and attractions.