Making Megaprojects Work for Communities was invited to have a central role in the Educator’s day of the Canada Green Building Council’s (CaGBC) National Summit, held in Montreal in May 2009. The aim of this project was to produce visual and textual material that conveyed to CaGBC Summit participants the essence of the CURA, its implementation and any learning to date. A team of diverse students – from Concordia, McGill and the Université de Montréal, from different disciplines and with different degrees of familiarity with the CURA – worked for 6 weeks with professors Danny Pearl and Lisa Bornstein to synthesize key elements of the project. Three themes were selected as a focus, as detailed below. Information derived from CURA activities, and from discussions amongst the research-design team, was used to produce graphic images and short text on the CURA’s work. This material was transferred to large display boards, which were presented at a booth at the Summit, used in a workshop at the Educator’s Day, and later incorporated into a synthesis report.

**Key results:** Students and faculty involved in this project found it an intensive learning experience, as we reconciled different understandings, perspectives on the projects and its challenges and emerging representations of new knowledge. Participating students said it was a valuable learning exercise. Other results are grouped by the three themes and the synthesis and design process.

**Overview of the CURA:** Since 2007, the CURA has established a role in the planning of the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC) project and, more recently, the Turcot expressway. The research strives to address numerous levels: neighbourhood quality and change; planning strategies and projects; and community capacity to contribute to urban planning and development. The number of interested parties in these mega-projects, and in the CURA itself, imposes a level of complexity that makes it difficult to determine who is involved, or should or could be. Students new to the CURA struggled to understand and convey the project’s scope and stakeholders.

**Sustainable urban projects in a complex world:** The extreme complexity of large-scale urban projects requires new forms of analysis, new alliances, and, indeed, new methods: transdisciplinary, iterative and community-partnered approaches to design, planning and decision-making in the case of the CURA. CURA’s work in these challenging areas includes comparative study of different approaches to the assessment and promotion of sustainable projects at the building and neighbourhood scale (e.g., LEED-NC, LEED-ND, life cycle analysis, urban ecology (C. Rueda, 2008) approaches, and integrated design process).

**The role of universities in the community:** In a CURA, universities act as community partners and research/teaching institutions. They contribute to the development of knowledge for academics, communities, government and developers; CURA’s support to the Concertation interquartier (CIQ) entailed helping CIQ to formulate and negotiate their needs with the developers, supporting them with information on the strategies, tactics and tools employed elsewhere, and accompanying the negotiation process to assess its evolution and outcomes. Material on Community Benefits Agreements has been an important input to the CIQ’s approach to the MUHC. Subsequent efforts have focused on communicating community priorities to the two consortiums bidding on construction and management of the Glen, and negotiating a new entente with the hospital.

**Community-university involvement in the MUHC and Turcot projects also includes:**

- active participation of students from the different postsecondary institutions
- courses on environmental impact assessment, urban ecology, and urban design and planning
- organization of workshops, seminars and presentations to the community
- research projects on community defined themes
- reports and publications (including the book Montreal at the Crossroads)
- participation in the BAPE, press conferences, and public events