Research Aims:
How to transform the urban void into a neighborhood connector? How to increase the permeability of the city? As a result of Montreal’s deindustrialisation during the 20th century, Outremont’s rail yard is now considered a residual site, a forgotten fragment in the urban tapestry in dire need of a new vision. Landscape designers use the word “drosscape”, or “the productive integration and reuse of waste landscape”, to define the challenge posed by such bits of urban land. The Université de Montréal acquired this land to develop its new Outremont Campus over the next 20 years; our work is complementary to this expansion process. It compliments earlier studio work on the site and surrounding done by McGill and Université de Montréal students.

Our research has two aims: 1) Visualise, over a 40-year period, the Outremont rail yard’s potential to become a new type of exchange platform between neighborhoods; and 2) Analyse how the site and its surroundings could work as a physical and social link.

Site constraints:
- Residual site, unused, drosscape, contaminated
- Large scale
- Surrounded by dead ends
- Discontinuity between the different neighborhoods
- Presence of multiple rail tracks

Key results to date:
The success of this type of urban renewal resides more on connectivity and the relationships it can create off-site, with the surrounding city, than on the site itself. It does not truly matter if the project is a campus or a park, but it is essential to consider the present void as an opportunity to create new physical relations with the surroundings so as to ensure a permeable space and avoid an impenetrable one. We believe that the fluidity of movement, in particular when it comes to public transportation, cycling and walking, could trigger a redevelopment beneficial to the entire city.

Proposal of new urban connections — Rail yard as a park, showing the different connections and potential development.