Research Aims:

In the first-year Studio course, Urban Planning masters students at McGill studied the neighbourhood of Ville-Émard/Côte-Saint-Paul with the goal of creating five different master plans to guide change in the area. Each of the five visions for the future of Ville-Émard/Côte-Saint-Paul had a distinct focus to guide the process of making a Master Plan for the neighbourhood, such as transportation, ecology or the economy.

Research in the community of Ville-Émard/Côte-Saint-Paul in the first part of this studio course necessarily involved interviewing a number of local community organisations: the Coordinator of Operation Galt, an integrated urban revitalization (RUI) program, was interviewed and invited to attend the final project presentations.

Community Request:

The students were asked by the community sector if a summary of the final presentations could be presented directly to an Operation Galt (RUI) committee meeting in the spring of 2011. As the first year students were excited to hear that their work would be presented to the community, they readily agreed; the author was nominated to present a synthesized version of the research and final plans created by the students. This presentation took place on March 23rd, 2011, followed by a lively question and response period in which community actors expressed their interest in many of the students’ ideas for ways to guide change in the area.

Further community/university collaboration:

As an outcome of this research presentation, options for further collaboration are being pursued. The community leaders have expressed interest in creating a mandate for the Studio III course project in Fall 2011, in which 4-5 students would draw upon Studio 1 work to continue the collaboration, working as a “consultant” for a project developed by the “client”, defined and directed by the community sector in Ville-Émard/Côte-Saint-Paul.