

Montreal / landscape under lockdown

march 13 — may 16 2020



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1 – Introduction

At the start of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic boasted a profound impact on cities in several regions of the world. This leads us to ask fundamental questions about the social, cultural, economic, environmental and physical (habitat, streets, parks, etc.) aspects of urban settings. COVID-19 has radically redefined, in a succinct period, the behaviour and concerns of citizens in the city. Urban populations have changed their routines and have adapted to this new reality with appropriate measures to curb this pandemic.

COVID-19 revealed the importance of experiencing the city on a day-to-day basis during the lockdown. It convinced us to question the role and functions of public and private spaces, just as it exposed major problems of use and accessibility to certain urban attributes (parks, streets, etc.). It also led to the emergence of new actions as well as solutions adapted to this context of crisis.

This research, entitled “*Montréal/Landscape in Lockdown*” and produced by the UNESCO Chair in Urban Landscape (CUPUM), reports on the situation with a focus on public spaces during the lockdown period. Based on a review of the media of that period, certain non-profit organizations (NPOs) and press releases from the City of Montréal, it was possible to find answers to a series of questions related to the mission of the UNESCO Chair and its affiliated UNESCO programs.

This investigation also provided an opportunity to examine the experience of the public space by analyzing the various images produced by press and professional photographers during this period of lockdown in Montreal. The interpretation of these photographs permitted to outline the identity of the urban landscape, revealing the key attributes of the experience of the city in “lockdown” mode.

2 – Background context

This reflection follows the call for good initiatives from the cities of the International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities network ([ICCAR](#); [SHS-UNESCO](#)) in March 2020. The aim of this call from UNESCO's Human and Social Sciences was to:

- contribute proactively to addressing social challenges under the circumstance of the coronavirus pandemic;
- encourage the ICCAR community with the good practices introduced, in order to promote solidarity and demonstrate the importance of defending human dignity in the context of this pandemic;
- receive information on the impact of measures taken by cities and communities on the citizens' lives in urban areas; and
- learn from experiences that could be inspiring to other cities and communities.

The research conducted by the UNESCO Chair in Urban Landscape at the University of Montréal offers some answers to these expectations, particularly on issues related to Montreal's public space.

The information markup and analysis involved in this research, which covers only the lockdown period from March 13, 2020 to May 16, 2020, should shed new light on Montreal's urban landscape in the context of the global pandemic and provide a basis for reflection on the future of public spaces. Thus, this reflection represented an opportunity to:

- draw conclusions on the public spaces of Montreal's urban landscape (streets, parks, commercial streets, sidewalks, bicycle paths, subways, etc.) where the lockdown issues of COVID-19 crystallized by way of journalistic concerns, certain NPOs relevant to the subject and the municipal community in this lockdown phase;
- interpret the viewpoint of press photographers towards Montreal's public space.

The results of these two objectives are presented successively in the following pages. Included in that presentation is the [UNESCO interactive map](#) that lists the experiences of cities through UNESCO networks (i.e., [UNESCO Cities Platform](#)) to encourage and promote international collaboration and solidarity.

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Initiative in partnership with:

[UNESCO's Social and Human Sciences Sector](#)
[International Coalition of Inclusive and
Sustainable Cities](#)
[Canadian Commission for UNESCO](#)
[Sid Lee Architecture](#)

UNESCO Cities Platform, gathering eight networks and programs:

[UNESCO Creative Cities Programme](#)
[UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities](#)
[Megacities Alliance for Water and Climate](#)
[Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience](#)
[International Coalition of Inclusive and
Sustainable Cities](#)
[World Heritage Cities Programme](#)
[Media and information Literate Cities](#)
[UNESCO – Netexplo Observatory Cooperation on Smart Cities](#)

4 – Issues of the Montreal urban landscape

The issues of Montreal's urban landscape during the lockdown phase were chronicled to provide answers to a series of concerns about public space. To achieve this, it was agreed to document these issues by scrutinizing the content of the Montreal media from March 13 to May 16, 2020.

This section presents the results of this information review and analysis. The sampling of articles for this review was established from twelve (12) sources of information from Quebec City and Montreal (in French and English), grouped into four (4) groups:

1. newspaper articles
2. government press releases
3. web platforms of NPOs
4. online magazines

From the various sources and an RSS feed, a sample of 163 articles was selected based on keywords drawn from the questions and issues that the CUPUM and UNESCO (SHS) are examining to complete this information review. Once the articles were identified, a qualitative analysis of the essential information (title, date, author, type of article, summary) and the problems addressed (questions and keywords) for each article was recorded in a spreadsheet. Upstream, the Atlas.ti data processing software made it possible to count quantitative statistics on the information review to glean conclusions on urban attributes (car traffic and mobility, shopping, parks, streets, city).

This analysis is predicated on the following data sources:

- the RSS feed of the main Quebec media sources from Feedly:
 - Le Devoir
 - La Presse
 - Journal de Montréal

- Journal Métro
- ICI Radio-Canada and Grand Montréal Radio-Canada
- CBC
- The Gazette
- Press releases from the City of Montréal

→ News wires consulted individually:

- [Services Québec. News wire. CNW Telbec](#)

→ Web platforms for NPOs and subscriptions to the newsletter:

- [Old Brewery Mission](#)
- [La Maison du Père](#)
- [Fondation Accueil Bonneau](#)
- [Mouvement pour mettre fin à l'itinérance à Montréal \(MMFIM\)](#)
- [Architects Without Borders Québec \(ASFQ\)](#)
- [Héritage Montréal](#)
- [First Nations of Québec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission](#)

→ Subscriptions to newsletters from magazines and other sources:

- *Esquisse* (monthly magazine)
- *Formes* (bimonthly magazine)
- *L'actualité* (bimonthly magazine)
- *Kollectif* (web page)

The information monitoring research is divided into four subsections presenting the investigations and results in a qualitative, quantitative and graphic manner.

Subsection [4.1 – Questions in search of answers](#) introduces a written qualitative analysis of the main questions posed by the CUPUM during the lockdown of COVID-19.

The subsequent section ([4.2 – Targeted urban attributes](#)) uses graphic tools to offer a quantitative analysis of the occurrences of the urban attributes labeled in the sampling.

Section 4.3 – **Montreal's lockdown in initiatives** provides a global and territorial vision of Montreal during the lockdown of COVID-19 by identifying the initiatives implemented geographically and chronologically. This section was not translated into English because it is entirely interactive and doesn't fit the PDF format.

Finally, the last section ([4.4 – Human as an adjectives](#)) opens with an analysis of the occurrence of human qualifiers, highlighting its place in Montreal during the lockdown.

4.1 – Questions in search of answers

The questions raised by the UNESCO Chair in Urban Landscape during the lockdown due to COVID-19 in Montreal can be divided into two themes: lifestyle and environmental design. In the following, we address the social, cultural and environmental dimensions for these two themes.

Each response is structured chronologically and according to sources. We begin with factual information from press releases and newspaper articles, followed by opinion pieces, including columns and editorials, and conclude with the main findings on the issues acknowledged (highlighted). Only the highlighted part was translated into English.

→ Lifestyle / Lockdown

1. What were the impacts of COVID-19 on the lifestyles and well-being of Montrealers?

The lockdown quickly marked the lifestyles and well-being of Montrealers, primarily by forcing them to stay inside their homes. According to some experts, suburban life was more amenable to lockdown given the morphology of the habitat and the low-urban density. Thus, the lockdown was more difficult on people in Montreal's central urban neighbourhoods, seeing that they live in close quarters and the density of housing units. Montrealers expressed wanting to integrate more daily leisure activities that would allow them to enjoy the urban landscape and nature. Among other things, the popularity of bicycle rides, visits to the park and the growing demand for gardening, community gardens and green alleys

seem to indicate a real interest in outdoor activities, namely across all Montreal neighbourhoods. However, this type of urban well-being hasn't been accessible to all Montrealers, especially those from certain disadvantaged communities. This raises the need to engage in reflection and action towards the public spaces of these populations.

2. What citizen actions have taken form in the public space?

Citizen actions such as the distribution of masks, food, bicycle deliveries and preventive measures against Montreal's spring floods were deployed in various Montreal communities. These actions, conducted in the public space, were diversified according to the needs of Montreal's diverse communities and populations. The NPOs that adapted and continued their activities played an important role in helping vulnerable Montreal communities (Architecture Sans Frontières Québec, Cactus, Organisation des Jeunes de Parc-Extension, Ressources action-alimentation). However, the NPOs accommodating the homeless were shown to experience problems in pursuing their service offer due to the lack of equipment and the physical distancing that was challenging to maintain. Beyond the difficulties reported, it's interesting to note that citizen actions associated with the *Ça va bien aller* movement (displaying rainbows on the windows of homes), projects by graphic designers (e.g., Paperole posters) and projects by acrobats (e.g., the Bonheur Mobile circus) revealed the importance of creating a sense of collective solidarity, entertained the population and brightened up Montreal's public space during the lockdown.

3. In terms of private or public living spaces, what measures have been taken to meet the needs of the population?

Private and public living spaces vary greatly according to Montreal's diverse population. Indeed, the most deprived and racialized communities have been the most vulnerable to the crisis, as shown in the above-mentioned articles. As an example, the borough of Montréal-Nord has been

strongly affected by the health crisis. The City of Montréal's sustained efforts were deployed to support this distressed population, such as the distribution of masks and the expansion of health corridors. Nevertheless, one of the populations most vulnerable during the lockdown remains the homeless. Since their living space is mostly public, they have encountered many difficulties in their daily lives (reduction in the services offered by the NPOs helping them). Although some public buildings have granted them access, such as the BANQ library, homeless people were often apprehended by public authorities because of their failure to respect lockdown rules and distancing. That failure has been attributed mainly to the impossibility on the part of the homeless to comply with sanitary measures and find housing. It is in this way that the lockdown was experienced in a differentiated way by the Montreal population depending on their place of residence.

4. Did the lockdown period lead to an enhancement of the urban landscape among Montrealers?

The lockdown period encouraged the population to do more outings in Montreal's public parks. Many Montrealers were also disappointed that bicycle repair shops weren't considered essential services (such as grocery store, pharmacy, etc.) at the beginning of the lockdown, as this impeded their bike use. At the end of the lockdown, the announcement of the implementation of a "Summer Plan" to encourage walking and cycling suggested significant changes in urban space. The transformations in public space reported by the media, such as bicycle paths and pedestrian streets, diversified Montreal's landscape experience, despite the constraint of physical distancing. By redeveloping certain commercial streets and adding bicycle paths, the Summer Plan was to help create new landscape perspectives (ambience, animation, reappropriation of public space) in Montreal streets. Moreover, the lockdown, which had forced Montrealers to stay inside their homes, seemed to encourage them to subsequently go outside in order to reconnect with nature and to explore Montreal's urban landscape differently.

→ Environmental design / Lockdown

5. What instructions have been issued by government and municipal authorities for the use of public spaces and collective spaces?

The directives issued by government and municipal authorities for the use of public spaces were identical across the entire territory of Montreal and Quebec. They stipulated that a distance of two metres should be kept between people from different households in public spaces. These measures applied to visits to the park, community gardens and all other usages of public space. Regarding indoor community spaces, no directives were published by the City authorities concerning their use, as these remained closed for the whole lockdown. However, municipal officials were not able to request mask wearing in public transit, which remains essential for Montrealers' mobility, although they did strongly recommend mask wearing as distancing appeared difficult to maintain. Despite the obligation to respect the distance between people and the ban on gatherings, it was still legal to meet in public places when preserving a two-metre distance. The directives prohibiting the elderly from leaving their senior citizens' centres (CHSLD and others) were subject to much criticism and seen as violating their freedom to go outside and as constraining their daily activities.

6. During Montreal's lockdown period, what actions were taken in public spaces?

The measures and tools deployed in Montreal regarding public spaces mainly concerned urban mobility and assistance to vulnerable people,

such as the homeless. Regarding measures and tools to help these people, Montreal's public space hasn't been the subject of any planning or action, except in public places already known to the homeless in Montreal. The future of these initiatives, in the post-lockdown period in Montreal, seems uncertain in both cases. About efforts in public spaces occupied by the homeless, there is a risk that these ambitions won't continue beyond the lockdown, considering that NPOs will be able to resume their support and mutual aid operations for the homeless once distancing ceases to be mandatory. According to the municipality's press releases, various measures to develop public spaces have been established to adapt urban mobility in all the districts. Among other things, the health corridor was initially unique to the Plateau-Mont-Royal borough but then quickly multiplied to different districts. Following the lockdown, the City of Montréal implemented safe active lanes and its Summer Plan throughout the territory to encourage walking and cycling between Montreal's major parks. Moreover, the borough of Rosemont-La-Petite-Patrie organized the division of its territory and the distribution of mobility (car, bicycle, walking) in a local and singular way, inspired by the Catalan concept of superblocks. Health corridors and safe active lanes seemed to facilitate physical distancing and advocate for slow mobility to the detriment of automobile travel. In the short term, after the lockdown, the implementation (urban redevelopment) of the Summer Plan should encourage Montrealers to cycle and walk during the summer. This strategy should promote urban conviviality with the temporary improvements planned on the street and thus reduce the ecological footprint of car traffic. However, in the long term, the changing seasons will undoubtedly limit the impacts of new creations in public space due to Montreal's northern climate.

7. What has been the challenges and issues associated with commercial streets and health measures?

Commercial arteries face numerous challenges and issues associated with the health measures. In Montreal, commercial arteries are composed of a commercial space, which consists of an interior space (and an adjacent terrace), the sidewalk and the street. Throughout the lock-

down, the implementation of health corridors forced the interference of public space (vehicular traffic lanes) due to the restricted width of sidewalks in many Montreal neighbourhoods. As well, the operation of essential businesses required the creation of outdoor commercial waiting areas on sidewalks, relegating pedestrians to the traffic lanes. Exposed to outdoor conditions, these waiting areas, while effective during the spring and summer, will need to prove their worth in the winter. Thus, outdoor facilities in the public domain will undoubtedly have to be rethought. According to the information gathered, the opening of stores (May 25, 2020) and restaurants (June 22, 2020) in Montreal during the post-lockdown period generated new commercial spaces (e.g., restaurant terraces) on the street, thus privatizing public space (sidewalks, traffic lanes).

8. Was the mobility of workers in the urban area a concern during Montreal's lockdown?

The mobility of workers in the urban territory has been a concern during the Montreal lockdown. Despite the practice of working from home for some employees, many workers had to travel to their place of work by public transit. These workers increased their risk of contagion and that of their community. However, working from home, when applicable, has greatly reduced Montreal's metropolitan traffic and, consequently, greenhouse gas emissions. It allows people to respect lockdown and avoid the spread of COVID-19. Mobility and work from home have brought to the forefront discussions on urban sprawl and triggered expert debates on the density of central urban neighbourhoods.

9. Following Montreal's lockdown, what changes can we expect from individual, collective, municipal and governmental actions?

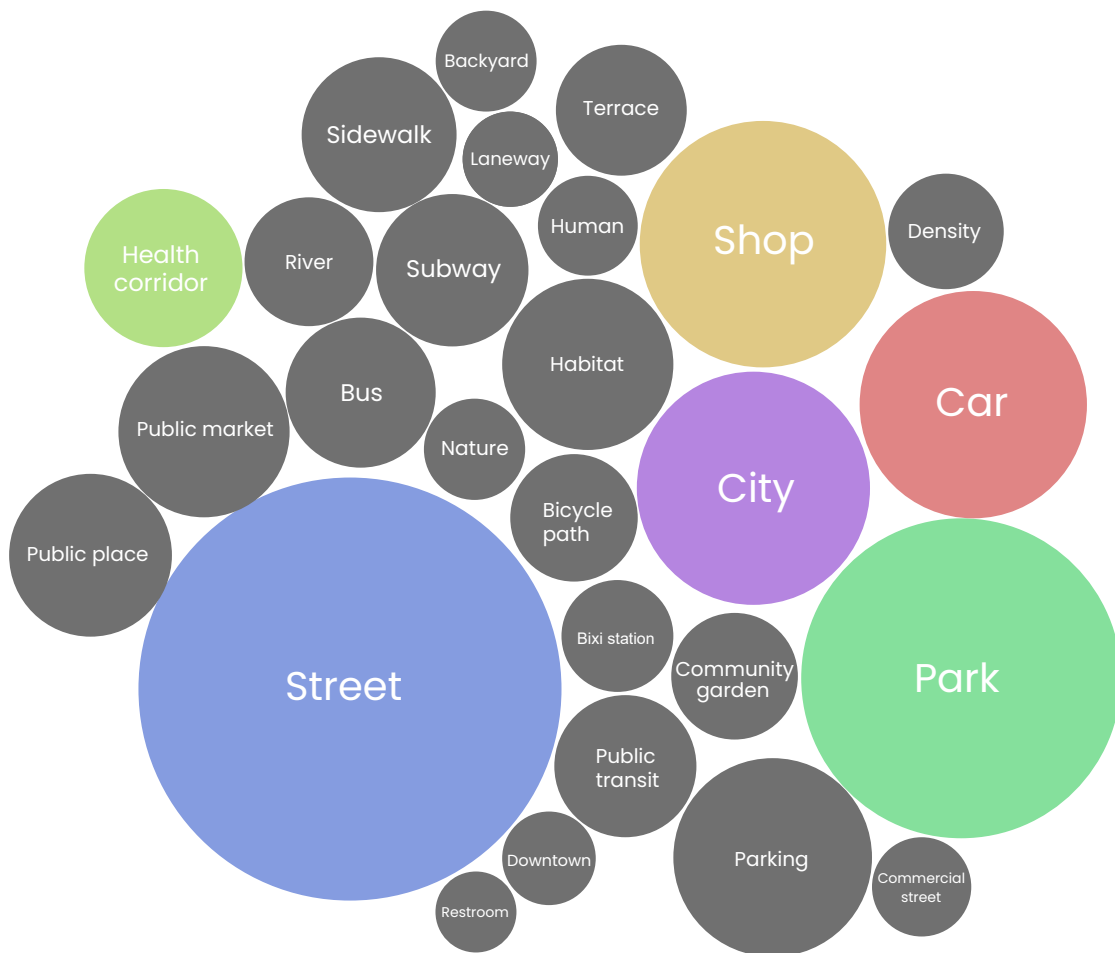
Because of Montreal's lockdown, various changes can be anticipated depending on individual, collective, municipal and governmental actions. As for individual actions, public transit has been of less inter-

est to Montrealers, given the difficulty of obeying health measures in a limited space. However, the measures taken by the City of Montréal in the Summer Plan to promote more sustainable and affordable mobility (namely cycling and walking) throughout Montreal could encourage the population to adopt these two modes of transportation individually in the short and medium term. As for collective actions by businesses and the business community, the lockdown period made it possible to test the efficacy of working from home, which has proven its relevancy to preserving economic activities in the tertiary sector. Following the lockdown, it will be interesting to evaluate the maintenance of this mode of work and its impact on the development of North American city centres (mobility, office space, services, etc.) and the environment (e.g., reduction in the production of greenhouse gases). Furthermore, accessibility to Montreal's public parks was shown to be uneven across the communities. Hence, efforts should be made to make park access more inclusive for all Montreal communities, so as to optimize the potential contribution of parks to urban well-being in a health crisis. As pointed out by some experts, it appears necessary to increase the City of Montréal's public health investments in the sectors most affected by COVID-19, such as the boroughs of Montréal-Nord and Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve.

4.2 – Targeted urban attributes

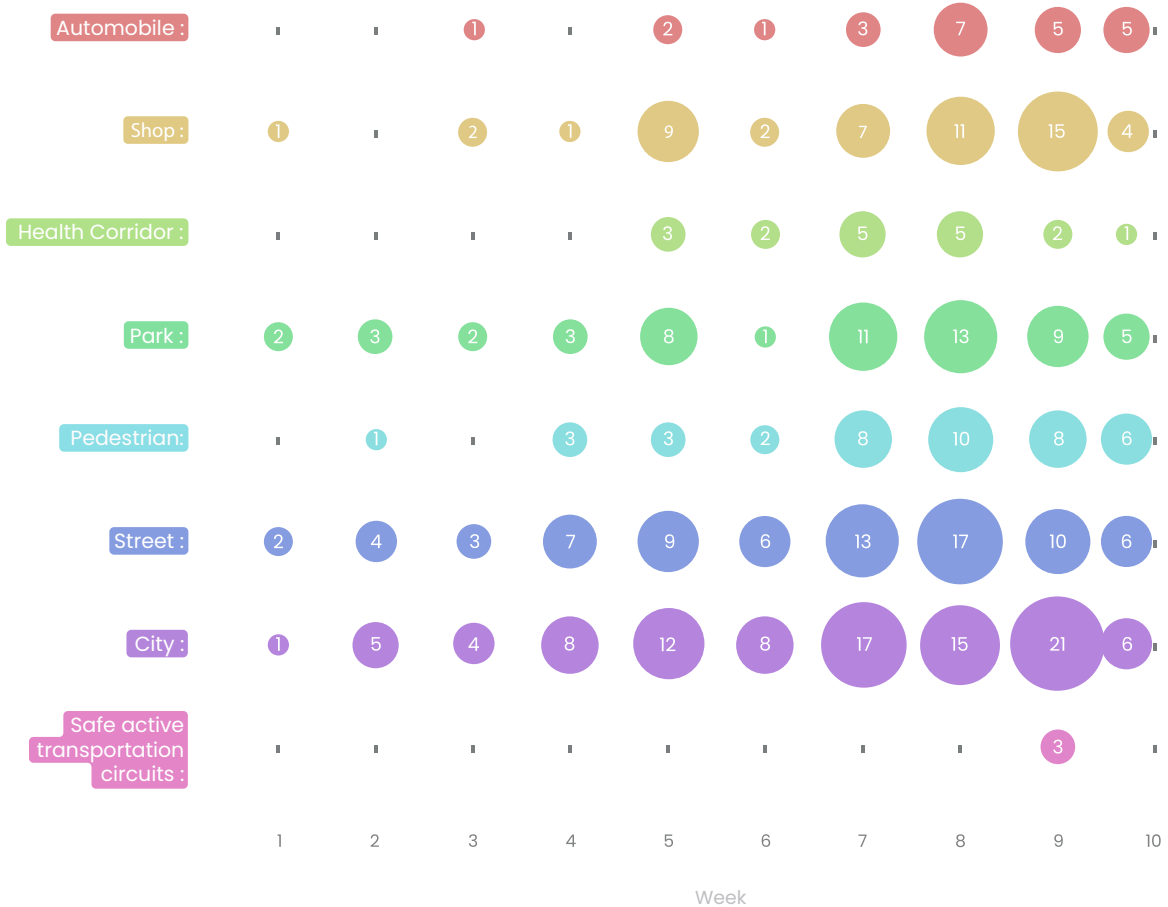
What attributes of the urban landscape are the subject of concern in the Montreal media?

The main urban attributes that have captured the media's attention were **shops, parks, streets** and the **city**, followed by the **automobile**, the **health corridor** and the **pedestrian**.



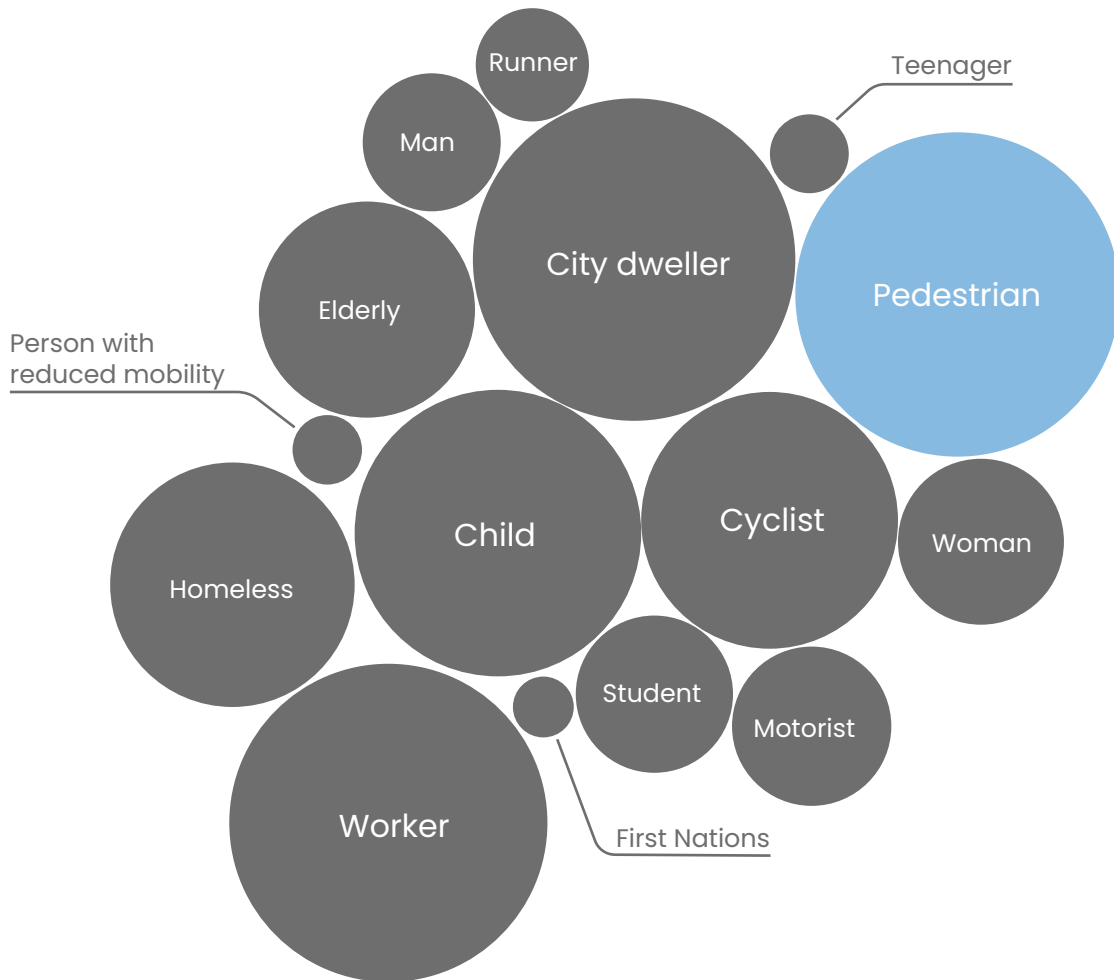
When did the press articles address each of the main attributes of the urban landscape?

The last three weeks of lockdown were the ones with the highest occurrences for each of the urban attributes, related to the end of the quarantine and the return of good weather (spring).



4.4 – Human as an adjective

The **pedestrian**, the **city dweller** and the **worker** were the three dominant figures resulting from an analysis of the words most frequently used to qualify the Montreal population during the lockdown. The **child** and the **homeless** remained an important concern, as did the **cyclist** vis-à-vis the public space. It's also interesting to note the absence of certain social groups, such as First Nations and racialized (including immigrants) people in the media content. Gender (male and female), the elderly and the motorist were secondary terms regarding Montreal's public space.



5 – Photographic perspectives of the urban landscape

Following the characterization of the issues associated with the lockdown phase of the COVID-19 crisis regarding public space, we analyzed the perception of photographic views of Montreal's public space, interpreting their visual framing, the subjects, the atmospheres captured and their evocations.

This photographic portrayal tries to disclose the Montreal landscape of public space in times of a pandemic. What are the expressions and impressions of this urban landscape? Did these photographic glimpses reveal a meaning or a singular landscape identity during this lockdown phase?

A series of photographs taken between March 13 and April 24, 2020 by press and professional photographers on various digital platforms (Radio-Canada, La Presse, Le Devoir and Flickr) was compiled for this purpose. This sampling of 117 photographs from 11 photographers was then subjected to an interpretive analysis. That analysis also drew on prior research conducted on the Montreal landscape by Philippe Poullaouec-Gonidec and Sylvain Paquette and published in their book *Montréal en paysage*, (2011, Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal). Established on this conceptual foundation, the approach consisted of:

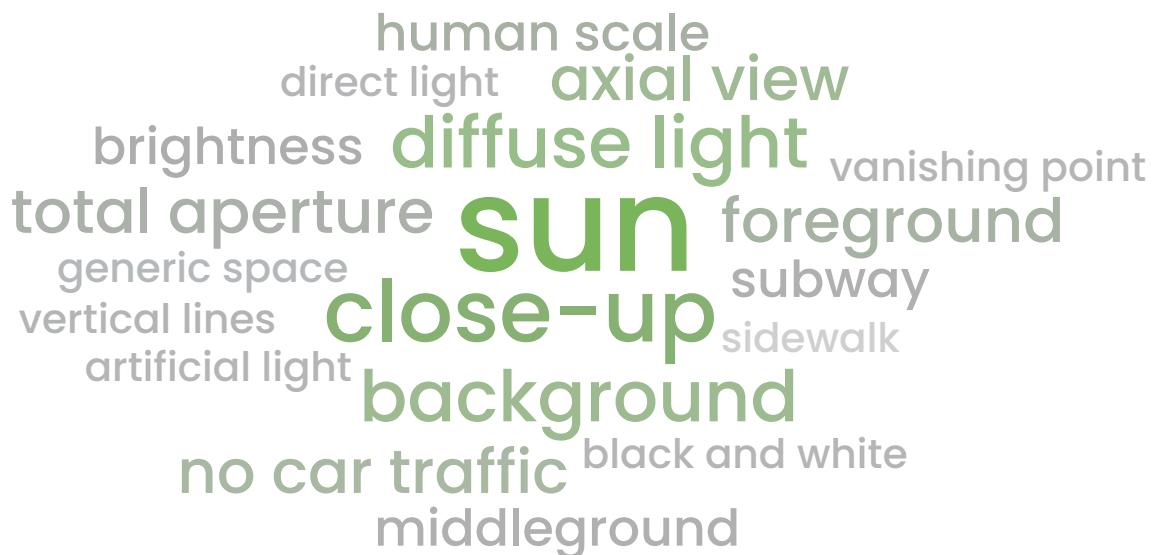
- analyzing the images (visual composition, urban context and attributes, human presence, atmosphere and feeling, sensation, evocation) through the independent points of view of three expert researchers, followed by a pooling of results to present only one interpretative view of the photographic frames. This landscape reading grid presents the content of the photographic frames (composition and interpretation) with a descriptive and sensitive investigation: [5.1 – Landscape reading of the photographic views](#)
- utilizing a conceptual model of the urban landscape to interpret the landscape experience from the lockdown photo frames: [5.2 – Interpretation of the landscape experience](#)

5.1 – Landscape reading of the photographic views

The results of the landscape reading are successively broken down into five (5) characterization themes (presented below as word clouds) of the main elements in a descriptive (visual composition, urban context, human presence) and sensitive (atmosphere, feeling/evocation) analysis of each photographic shot.

Visual composition

Visual analysis reveals the importance of natural lighting. The luminosity of the **sun** stands out as a notable element in photographic compositions. However, this prevalence of the sun isn't necessarily synonymous with bright or outdoor scenes. Luminosity is also associated with **diffuse light** and sometimes with **direct light**, even **artificial light**. It also translates into **brightness**. The **close-ups** of the visual field appears as the second dominant element of the analyzed frames. It is opposed to the depth of the visual field, the **background**. The **axial views**, for their part, are connected to transportation routes.



Contexts and urban attributes

The **subway**, the **street** and the **sidewalk** are the three physical elements most frequently identified in the set of photographs. As far as the **subway** is concerned, the photographers' interest seems to be oriented as much towards scenes in the **stations** as inside the **cars**. The **street** photographs, for their part, showed **empty streets** facing **no car traffic**. **Sidewalks**, although mentioned fairly often, were seldom characterized by a qualifier, and if so, as "**narrow**." These photographs also capture building **facades** seen from the various traffic lanes and from street **intersections**. Finally, **downtown** Montreal was the preferred urban sector in the set of photographs.



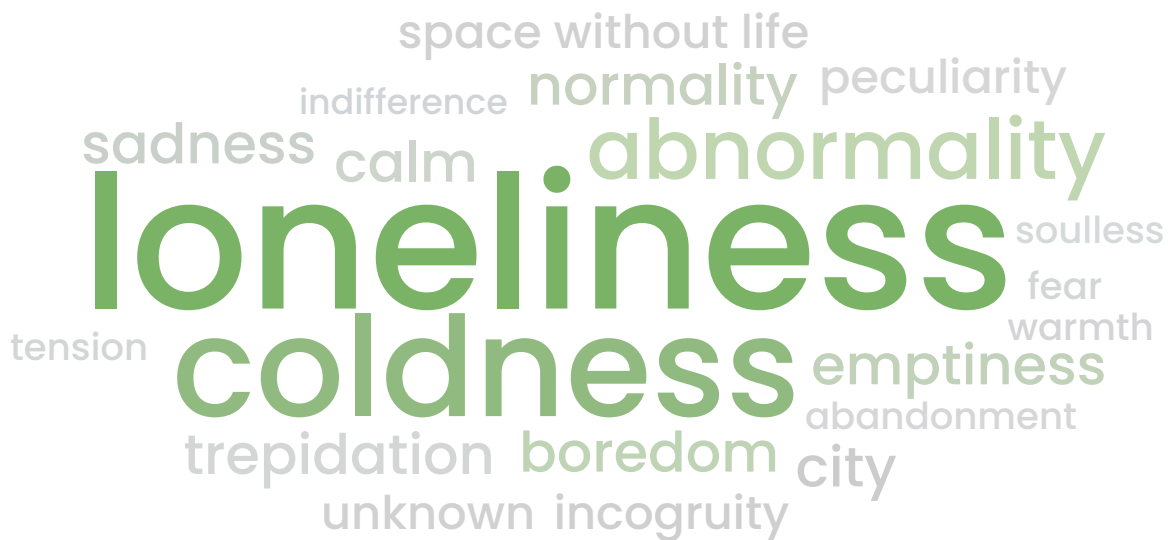
Human presence in framing

The photographers most often presented the human subject **alone**, in other words, not in a group and only **one** person in a frame. The figure of the **pedestrian** predominated in the pictures analyzed. The human presence noted is found in the **foreground** and **middleground** on the **sidewalk**. However, a non-negligible proportion of the images collected are devoid of human presence (**absence**).



Atmosphere

A **cold**, uncomfortable atmosphere characterizes most of the captured scenes, with some even appearing **arid** and **deserted**. This palette of qualifiers is likely based in part on the harsh winter weather of the period depicted, a factor encountered annually by Montrealers. The repetition of the adjectives of the atmosphere, such as **lifeless**, **frozen**, **calm** and **monotonous**, refers to the immobility of the city during the lockdown period.



Feeling/evocation

The main feelings evoked by the photographs are **loneliness**, **coldness** and **emptiness**. However, these feelings and the ambience noted above don't seem to relate solely to the context of the health crisis but also to the meteorological one. Indeed, the analyses reveal a tension between the **abnormality** of certain scenes and the **normality** suggested by other images. A feeling of **strangeness** and **anxiety** also prevails. At the same time, this new somewhat **calmer** city can be seen to sow **boredom** and **indifference** among the observers.

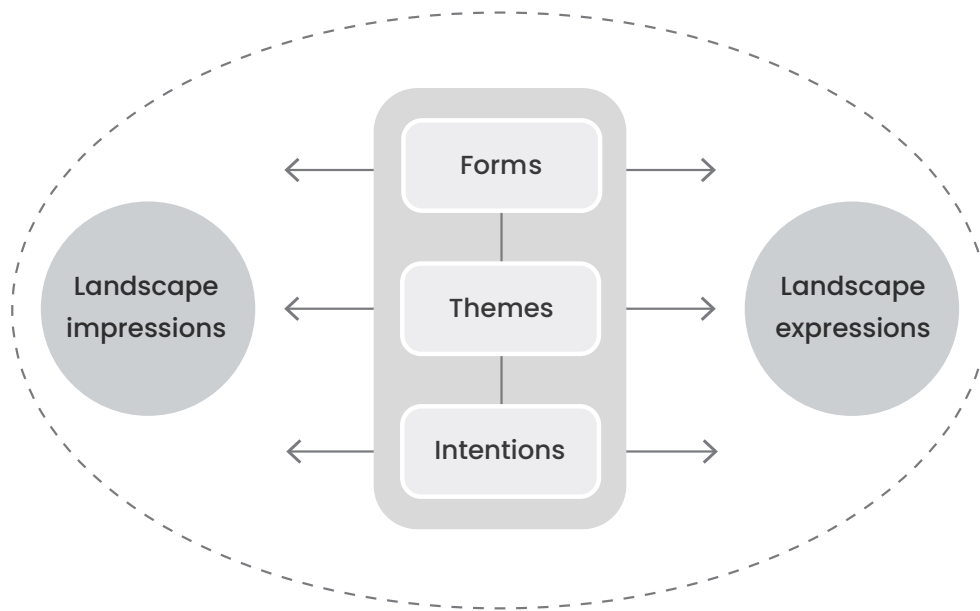


5.2 – Interpretation of the landscape experience

Following the interpretation of the photographic framing of Montreal photographers during the lockdown, we transposed this interpretation into a diagram to qualify the notion of the urban landscape and to capture its particularity in a period of lockdown. The aim was to identify the meaning given to people's experience of the city and its public spaces. For this, we examined the elements (or attributes) that predominate in photographers' landscape experience. Drawing on the schematization of the concept of urban landscape (Poullaouec-Gonidec, P. and S. Paquette, 2005, "Les paysages de l'urbain," in *Paysages en perspective*, Les presses de l'Université de Montréal, p. 275-318), what are the landscape forms, the themes supported and the intentions evoked in the reading of the photographers' frames? Moreover, what are the landscape expressions and impressions that emerge from these views of the city in lockdown mode? And more broadly, in what way has lockdown contributed to the invention of a way of looking at the city?

The answers to these questions are stated in the form of a diagram presented below.

Photographic views



Landscape forms

In the selected photographic sampling, the landscape forms target the subway, the street, the sidewalks, or the intersections, in other words, the spaces of urban mobility. They mainly expose two of Montreal's identity places, downtown (business district) and Old Montreal (historical district). These landscape forms are framed in an axial manner and highlight the city's interiority.

Supported themes

The interpretation of the photographic images focused on the aesthetic experience of the urban landscape as manifested, for example, in the importance of light and backlight effects and the raw ambience (in black/white and saturated colour) of a northern city's off-season period (winter/spring). The dramatic aspect of the experience is accentuated by the incongruity of certain urban situations (e.g., shopping malls and public parks without human presence).

Evoked intentions

All the photographic contents seem to reveal a clear intention on the part of the photographers, namely that of communicating the singularities of an urban lockdown. The photographs unveil the abnormal aspects of a daily urban living environment (deserted public spaces) in terms of social behaviour (human loneliness and fleeting appearance of users). They also present a monotonous quietness that creates a little-known perception of urban landscapes.

Landscape expressions

The photographic subjects mainly present the urban spaces of proximity, such as those of local service streets, architectural facades and neighbourhoods. Views of its proximity landscapes are fragmentary (foreground and middle ground of street corners, residential facades, rows of architectural facades). These fragmentary frames communicate cold, arid, deserted and lifeless aesthetic atmospheres—figures which nonetheless reveal the “sublime” aspects of the city.

Landscape impressions

One of the characteristic features of this photographic interpretation is undoubtedly the impression of urban solitude that constitutes the prevalent figure of Montreal’s landscape. The photographers’ gaze isn’t interested in global perspectives of the urban landscape, the visible landscape being neither panoramic nor dominant. The views are those of a stroll on the “ground floor.” By this fact, the photographic frames demonstrate the importance of urban interiority during the lockdown. The impression of withdrawal seems to be the key figure of the urban landscape.

6 — Concluding elements

The reflection conducted under the title Montréal/Landscape in Lockdown (COVID-19) is based on two main inputs: a media review and a review of press and professional photographs.

The first part of the analysis made it possible to discern the importance of issues related to lifestyles and urban planning, to characterize and spatialize public and social concerns about public space, and to identify the dominant words used to describe the Montreal population involved during the lockdown of COVID-19. Moreover, the analysis reveals a marked interest in public space. The street and the public park are the two main attributes of the urban landscape. Also, the emergence of new attributes, namely the health corridor and safe active lanes, has marked the development of Montreal's urban space. These attributes refer to the issue of Montreal's mobility during this health crisis, where the slowdown in automobile flows, generated by working from home and the difficult management of public transit, favoured "soft mobility" (also dubbed "slow mobility" by the media) among Montrealers. Cycling and walking have rapidly gained in popularity in Montreal and the municipality seems to have seized on this health crisis to expand its network of bicycle paths. Moreover, the qualifier most often used to describe "Homo urbanus montréalais" is the pedestrian. This confirms the interest in soft mobility and especially the importance of living in outdoor public space in this period of health crisis. The street and the neighbourhood park prove to be the antidotes to Montreal's lockdown, thus demonstrating the relevance of the local landscape. However, the media review has also raised many concerns about Montreal's homeless population and the problems of living and welcoming them in public spaces. These places seem to have adapted with the implementation of day centres, emergency shelters and drop-in centres.

The second part of the analysis covered the landscape reading of the photographic glances, in other words, the visual framing of the Montreal public space captured by photographers. The majority of urban photographs throughout history have reported the lively, warm and active character of public spaces. In times of lockdown, urban animation is exempt from Montreal photographic framing. The city is no longer alive.

The urban reveals a simple (and sometimes majestic) architectural and urban scenery without actors. Despite the strong presence of light, photographers have portrayed Montreal as a solitary, cold and frozen city. This reading is all the more marked as Montreal's lockdown took place in a northern and arid in-between season (winter/spring). However, the interpretation of these photographic frames unveiled sublime, ennobled expressions of the city in lockdown mode. For example, the COVID-19 health crisis demonstrated the strength and singularity of Montreal's architecture (of passageways and building facades) and underground spaces under the harsh light of natural and artificial lighting. In this way, the lockdown transcended the beauty in the city, insofar as it eclipsed the expected views and reassuring, familiar urban ambience of life, colour and warmth. This photographic interpretation also brought back the landscape expressions and impressions where the view of the nearby space is fragmentary. It has closed in on itself and is imbued with solitude.

To conclude, this reflection presented a comprehensive portrait of the Montreal urban landscape in lockdown mode within the limits of a media review that could only be partial in the face of the experience of a population and a society in health crisis. It offers an overview. Moreover, this research was confronted with the constraints of a lockdown from March 13 to May 16, 2020. Direct observation in the field (photographic tagging, interviews, etc.) would undoubtedly have enriched some findings.

However, this investigation will have highlighted the main social and political concerns of urbanity in lockdown. It gave us clues to initiate new reflections and actions on the city. In this way, it leads us to question the impact of urban lockdown and the viability of COVID-19's post-lockdown measures in Montreal's public spaces, which seem to be moving towards a post-hygienic era. How can we promote and make nature and the great outdoors in the city accessible to all? How can we reinvent public and private living space (transitory or not)? Or the street, sidewalks, parks, playgrounds, housing, businesses, workplaces, neighbourhoods? How should the downtown area be rethought to maintain its social, cultural and economic vitality? How do we redevelop meeting and gathering places to safeguard culture in the city? What will be the contours of a caring urban conviviality? And more broadly, how will we reconsider the sustainable future of cities in the face of the converging challenges (health, environmental, social, etc.) they face at the beginning of this century?

The outlines of the aftermath of the COVID-19 lockdown remain very unclear despite the motivated commitment of public authorities and the creativity of architects and urban designers to adapt the city and propose healthy and safe transitory living spaces in Montreal and elsewhere. However, as the many international debates and forums on post-lockdown (spring/summer 2020) have shown, questions about the future of cities after this global health crisis are still being asked and require a real step backwards. Territorial actors, the public and city experts need to reflect on the issue.