**LAVAL**

Press release

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MIT's Senseable City Lab and the city of Laval explore novel experiences in the “park of the future”

Ville de Laval, December 09, 2020 — The city of Laval and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Senseable City Lab (SCL) announce the publication of the *Senseable City Guide to Laval*, a compendium of six bold preliminary concepts from graduate-level students of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology exploring novel experiences with regard to the “park of the future”. The publication is an initial step of a 3-year research collaboration between the SCL and city of Laval as part of the latter's ongoing work to develop a human-centered, innovative and resilient downtown area.

The graduate students were tasked with imagining new experiences in the future park of the Carré Laval, a former quarry located in Laval's downtown area, to be transformed into a mixed-use innovation district. In this context, the park is explored as a space at the junction of work and leisure, as researchers conceive novel experiences that will attract people from all walks of life. “The park of the future is a place where digital technologies augment the physical space to enable novel work and leisure experiences,” explained Simone Mora, Senior Post Doc within SCL.

In the spring of 2020, several Laval stakeholders and residents took part in meetings with SCL researchers to help the graduate students hone their thoughts on what 21st-century park use in Laval could become. “The park of the future is first and foremost an accessible and innovative public space. What we are striving for is, above all, to use audacity and technology to offer richer and more meaningful human experiences. The ***Senseable City Guide to Laval*** is a starting point in this regard,” mentioned Stéphane Boyer, Vice-Chairman of the Executive Committee City Councillor for the Duvernay–Pont-Viau district. Laval will therefore invite residents, stakeholders and technology partners to become actively involved in an exciting and inclusive public process in which people will want to take part.

“We are very happy to be working with the city of Laval to start imagining together the future of public spaces as hubs for innovation,” stated Carlo Ratti, Director of the MIT Senseable City Lab. “Feedback loops and participative processes are crucial for designing the city of tomorrow. We look forward to engaging in further discussions with Laval's local communities.”

Senseable City Guide to Laval

“The work presented is a collection of visions and experiences that leverage digital technologies to create new types of human interactions and enhance existing social dynamics in public spaces,” stated Ricardo Alvarez, a Post Doc Fellow within SCL. The

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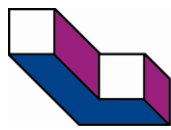
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publication of the *Senseable City Guide* is an initial step in this research project that will continue into 2022.

Here is a brief outline of the concepts found in the Guide:

- **Activating Surface** imagines a park in which physical devices and interactive surfaces, such as holographs and lights, facilitate social interaction, exercise and the exploration of the park's spaces.
- **Infinite Memories** harnesses technologies to provide sculptural elements, including a Laser Etch Pod, to foster the creation and sharing of enduring memories among the park's users.
- **Fora** capitalizes on the park's role as an agora, a space where residents come together to engage with each other in dialogue and conversation using "internet of things" (IoT) architecture alongside park furniture, such as chairs and side-tables.
- **iTable** envisions park tables that serve the everyday role of a place to engage and talk and share a meal, but can be flipped to reveal an electronic ink board to share creativity and ideation.
- **MinecARft** exploits an array of technologies to stimulate quests, crafting and comments. An AR app will allow the park's users to create elements and interact with each other and each other's works.
- **FOODPRINT** reaches out to Laval's vital role as an island which has grown food for centuries and proposes social food spaces that connect people with farms, food supply and each other while using the park.

About the city of Laval

Laval is Québec's 3rd largest city, with a population of over 430,000. It also has one of the fast demographic growth rates in the province. Together with its partners, the city of Laval is actively planning its downtown core to ensure it becomes a vital hub and a chosen cultural destination: a place in which to comfortably live, study, work and enjoy leisure time. The City has an ambitious plan to transform a former quarry in the heart of the downtown area into a 21st-century, human-centered innovation district surrounding a park with a lake.

About The Senseable City Lab

MIT's Senseable City Lab is a cutting-edge multidisciplinary research group of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology that deploys the combined knowledge of designers, planners, engineers, physicists, biologists and social scientists to develop critical new approaches to learn about cities "so that cities can learn about us".

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