

# Espace citoyen des Confluents

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PRESS KIT





David Boyer

## Life as infrastructure

In Laval, the landscape restores a former petrochemical brownfield.

Where the ground once bore the signs of industrial use, water now runs freely, landforms direct its flow, trees refresh the air and biodiversity is reclaiming its place.

The project does more than simply occupy the land: it harnesses its ecological potential, drawing from its history as the starting point for a sustainable transformation.

Espace citoyen des Confluents is rooted in an integrated vision, where architecture and landscape were conceived together from the outset. In collaboration with the firm Cardin Julien, the team reimagined the site through a transdisciplinary lens—as a place for gathering, social connection, and engagement with nature.

Here, landscape architecture serves as an ecological, social, and climatic driver. It structures uses, captures stormwater, mitigates heat islands, and reconnects living systems. Designed to welcome life, the site supports wildlife habitats that gradually reoccupy the restored areas.

The landscape is not decorative: it is the backbone of the project. The living fabric becomes an essential, resilient, and profoundly human infrastructure.

## Project description

Espace citoyen des Confluents transforms a former industrial brownfield into a vibrant civic hub, where nature shapes community life over the long term. Today, a library, cultural spaces, and municipal services form a public complex crisscrossed with pathways, rest areas, and an active mobility network connecting neighbouring districts.

Inspired by the transformation process specific to the former petrochemical plant, the design engages the site in a reverse dynamic, recreating conditions that support environmental recovery. Situated at the intersection of Laval's Saint-François and Duvernay-Est districts, the project addresses two defining challenges: remedying a long-standing lack of local amenities while restoring the ecological capacity of a vulnerable territory.

Water forms the backbone of the design. A network of interconnected retention basins manages 100% of on-site stormwater and structures the flow of activity in the space. Visible and integrated into the pathway, this surface hydrology fosters the gradual establishment of a rich and resilient biodiversity.

More than 300 trees, wildlife corridors, and intentionally preserved spontaneous vegetation form an evolving ecosystem, offering residents the rare experience of a dense green space within an established urban setting. Here, nature becomes a living framework that shapes uses, social relations, and a sense of belonging.



Vincent Brillant



Ville de Laval Archives

## A site in need of repair

Once forested, and later converted to agricultural land, the site hosted a BASF petrochemical plant during the 1970s and 1980s, leaving a lasting mark on the land and the identity of the area. Following decontamination by the City of Laval, the site remained a degraded brownfield, a testament to profound industrial transformation.

Rather than erasing this history, the design strategy chose to root itself in it. Fertile clay soils, proximity to wetlands, and the site's natural capacity for water retention informed a regeneration-based approach.

The project gives form to an inhabited landscape, where ecological dynamics support both biodiversity and community life.



## When water becomes the backbone of the land

On site, hydrology becomes both a dynamic feature and a contemplative element. A network of permeable pathways, drainage trenches, and interconnected basins captures rain and runoff water, slowly directing it through the landscape.

These basins function as true wetlands, fostering wildlife habitats and promoting biodiversity. An overflow directs excess water to the municipal stormwater system only during heavy rainfall, preventing flooding.

The landforms shaped from the site's excavated material contribute to this hydrological strategy.

More than 300 trees across 25 species were planted, while brownfield vegetation and biological corridors set the conditions for a resilient ecosystem to emerge.

Even the parking lot is part of this approach. Its triangular shape reduces the mineral footprint and limits impervious surfaces. Sedimentation wells capture particles from the road runoff before the water enters the basin network. Over time, the tree canopy will grow to cover the space, mitigating heat islands and ensuring a progressive transition to the surrounding natural spaces.



From top to bottom:  
David Boyer  
Vincent Brilliant

## Experience and temporality

The project offers the rare experience of a forest-like landscape within an established urban context. A footbridge and two observation platforms provide access to the basins and the mature trees preserved on site, while birdhouses support wildlife activity. The sounds of water and wind gradually replace the hum of traffic.

The space is designed to evolve, to become wild. Its beauty is neither immediate nor unchanging. Each season transforms perceptions. The textures, vegetation layers, and microhabitats create a sensory experience that calms and slows, offering a moment of respite amid urban density and overstimulation.

## Disciplinary synergy

From the earliest phases, Projet Paysage and architecture firm Cardin Julien worked closely to design a civic space where architecture and landscape respond to one another through a truly transdisciplinary approach. This collaboration stems not from mere formal adjustments, but from a shared responsibility in shaping public spaces.

The building serves as a focal point, while the landscape guides movement and the rhythms of the site. Its bioclimatic orientation—aligned along an east-west axis to optimize passive solar gain—interacts with the layout of exterior pathways and the site's hydrological system. Openings, natural light, and outdoor spaces are coordinated to ensure a seamless continuity between interior and landscape.

Certified LEED v4 Gold, the project demonstrates how integrated design can give form to civic hubs that unite environmental performance, spatial quality, and a strong sense of place.



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## A territorial driver

Beyond public amenities, Espace citoyen des Confluents acts as an urban catalyst. Part of the City of Laval's 2035 Strategic vision, it contributes to the redevelopment of a long-isolated area, strengthening connections with surrounding neighbourhoods.

The project offers a model for territories in transformation: a landscape conceived as essential infrastructure, capable of regenerating the soil, supporting community life, and embedding urban development over the long term.

## Distinctive features

- Redevelopment of five acres at the heart of a 13-acre petrochemical brownfield
- Strategic green infrastructure
- Biological corridors and renaturalization
- Integrated stormwater management
- Reduction of heat islands
- Reuse of excavated materials to shape landforms
- Resilient, permeable parking lot
- Transdisciplinary design approach

## Material available

- [Selection of high-resolution photographs](#)
- [Project video](#) (credit: Pierre-Alexandre Guay)
- Plans and schematic diagrams upon request
- Additional information upon request

## Technical specifications

**Project name:** Espace citoyen des Confluents

**Location:** Laval, Québec

**Client:** City of Laval

**Site area:** 13 acres

**Scope of intervention:** 5 acres

**Landscape budget:** \$3 million CAD

**Opening:** Fall 2024

**Landscape architecture:** Projet Paysage

**Architecture:** Cardin Julien

**Engineering:** WSP

**Land Surveying:** Groupe SR

**Sustainability Consulting (LEED):**

Système Énergie TST

**General Contractor:** Geyser Group



Vincent Brilliant

## About Projet Paysage

[Projet Paysage](#) pushes the boundaries of landscape architecture, designing everyday spaces that foster community well-being. Founded in 1992, the firm imagines environments where human experience and inventive design converge. Across both urban and natural settings, Projet Paysage shapes landscapes across Québec through institutional, municipal, recreational and tourism, and real estate projects.

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