



# How can our built environment make us happy?



**PLATO** The world of universal ideas that hold the essential nature of things. Justice, truth, beauty and the theory of forms.

We started by asking this question.

Developing a sense of **belonging** to a community, feeling **comfortable** and not vulnerable, **engaging** with a greater good, **playing** and hanging out with friends, having **interactions** that we learn from, feeling a sense of **ownership** about something we've done, having a place to **escape** to, and enjoying a shared **identity** that comes from global and local experiences. These are **universal themes** everyone desires and needs.

Chances are if we give people ideas on how to achieve these notions—and provided they are **easy to understand**—they may spark a desire to stretch their domus beyond the boundaries of their house. In a **sharing economy** we don't need to design anything. It doesn't have to be aesthetic or have a particular style, because it's built by the people using the space. As a **grassroots** project, it will always be adapting to the residents.

This proposal aims to **make places meaningful**. Through local activities, **spaces become places**, with meanings. It's all about creating a place where notions of **good living** can thrive. Whether it's a lane, an unused school yard in the summer, an empty lot, or a green space, whatever it is, our modules can be applied anywhere in the city. This blueprint is meant to **inspire people to take agency** and **engage** in their community.

Our modules offer suggestions on how to convert and redefine spaces. People can start with one or two or mix them up—it doesn't matter—they will **grow organically**. The idea is to keep it simple, flexible and make it as easy and as unintimidating as possible. The focus will depend on **their decisions**.

So let's put the voyeurism back into neighbourhood watch, let's turn the writing on the wall into a historical narrative, let's know thy neighbour and create a place of memory, let's mark our turf and indulge our sense of belonging.

Thank you.



**ARISTOTLE** Engaging with universal ideas through the senses. Looks at life through realism, natural sciences, ethics, politics, matter and form.

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## OWNERSHIP

- Personalize a space
- Creatively mark the names of current and past residents
- Collages and murals
- Collective maintenance
- Donate stuff or time to your space

## PLAY

- Sports
- Painted pavement / chalk for hopscotch and ball games
- Walls used for ball games
- Boxes for board games and toys
- Homemade skating rink
- Surface for exercises, tai chi, stretching

## BELONGING

- Help a neighbour
- Collaborate on a project
- Hang clotheslines for artwork and notices
- Block parties
- Celebrate seasonal events and birthdays
- Discover the heritage

## ENGAGEMENT

- Seek out social clubs for seniors and youth and build each other up
- Engage with your environment
- Familiarize yourself with your neighbourhood's composting and recycling resources
- Start an ecological initiative
- Learn about being green

Examples of where to get resources

- Your local library
- Eco Quartier
- Montreal Urban Ecology Center
- La Remise: Bibliothèque d'outils
- Atwater Seed Library
- Santropol Roulant
- Jane's Walk Montreal
- Head & Hands

## COMFORT

- Accessibility and easy access
- Comfortable spaces for all ages
- Shaded areas, trees, umbrellas
- Unobstructed, safe walking area
- Accessible tables and chairs
- Space where young children and parents feel safe
- Garden boxes for spices, flowers or food
- Set up a network to engage with seniors

## INTERACTIONS

- Meet and Greet with newcomers to Canada and new people in the neighbourhood
- Skillsharing
- Workshops
- Garage sales
- Food and seed sharing
- Tables and chairs
- Share your shed
- BWYC (Bring what you can)

## ESCAPISM

- Private public-spaces
- Multiple entry points
- Music
- Introverted and extroverted spaces
- Reading area

## IDENTITY

- Time capsules
- Storytelling
- Dropbox for community stories
- Local wifi hotspot to listen to recorded stories
- Signs, banners, murals
- Make a sound installation