

# THE SECOND RIVER

We propose transforming Montreal's abandoned underground water infrastructure into a communal site for nocturnal immersion. Buried beneath the city, these historic brick tunnels once carried water and waste silently through the urban body. Our project reactivates this forgotten network as a second river: a flowing interior landscape where night swimming becomes a collective ritual of descent, flotation, and altered perception.

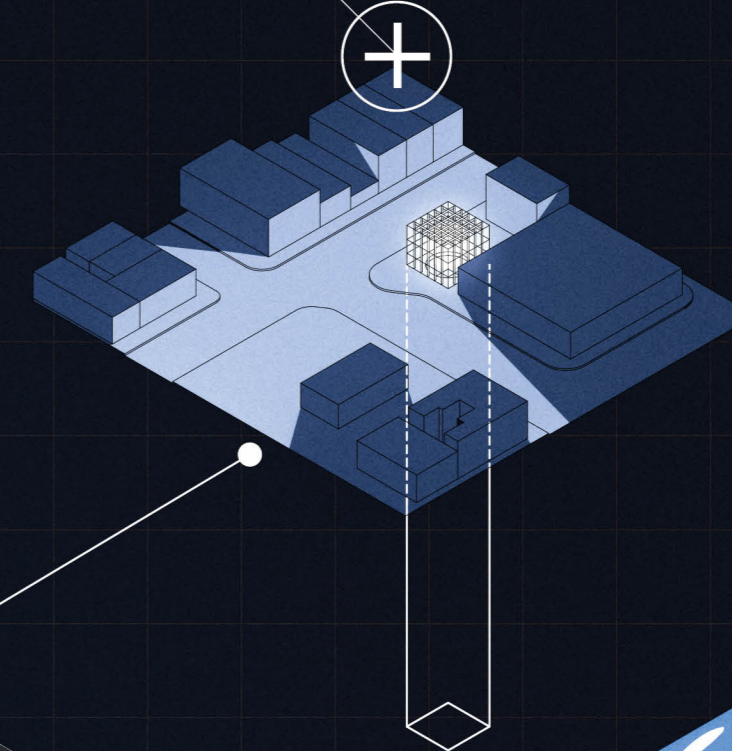
Water is drawn from the St. Lawrence River, filtered, and circulated through a sequence of slow-moving saltwater chambers embedded within the abandoned tunnels. In doing so, the project brings the sensory presence of the river into the city's buried interior, opening a hidden hydraulic world to public encounters. Multiple glass entry stations connect the street to the underground network, referencing the civic role of Montreal's metro stations as thresholds between distinct urban atmospheres. Each descent marks a shift in sound, humidity, temperature, and light.

Within the tunnels, the existing tactile interface is preserved and re-read through minimal intervention. Long corridors become floating canals. Larger chambers become sites of pause and collective stillness. Blue LED illumination traces the wet surfaces of the vaults, guiding movement while preserving darkness as a sensory condition. Sound is amplified through water, enclosure, and echo, allowing the submerged body to register the city through vibration and resonance rather than sight alone. The project also acknowledges the submerged ecologies of the underground, including species such as the mudpuppy, treating the network as shared habitat rather than a purely human retreat.

The project imagines collective flourishing through adaptive reuse, shared access to water, and the transformation of buried civic infrastructure into a restorative commons. It is situated on Indigenous lands and along waters whose histories precede the contemporary city, acknowledging layered histories of stewardship, displacement, and ongoing presence.

## Stations of Descent

Glass entry stations puncture the urban surface and connect the street to the submerged network below. Referencing the civic and atmospheric role of Montreal's metro stations, each descent marks a transition in light, sound, humidity, and perception as visitors move from the city above into the second river beneath it.



## Inaccessible Water Threshold

The St. Lawrence River serves as the project's primary inaccessible water threshold: a defining civic water body that remains distant, regulated, and difficult to inhabit directly. Filtered river water is drawn into the abandoned underground chambers, where it is recirculated as a slow-moving sequence of nocturnal bathing spaces beneath the city.



## Floating Passages

The passages form a continuous therapeutic journey through the underground. Reworked as narrow flotation corridors, they use darkness, resonance, enclosure, and the slow movement of water to suspend the body between movement and stillness. In drifting through them, visitors detach from the tempo of the city above and enter a more inward, immersive state of perception.

