Montréal Gateway Corridor 3.0: A Comprehensive Guide Towards Creative Infrastructure

19th Century (Railways introduced)

20th Century (Highways introduced)

Montréal Gateway Corridor 1.0

Montréal Gateway Corridor 2.0
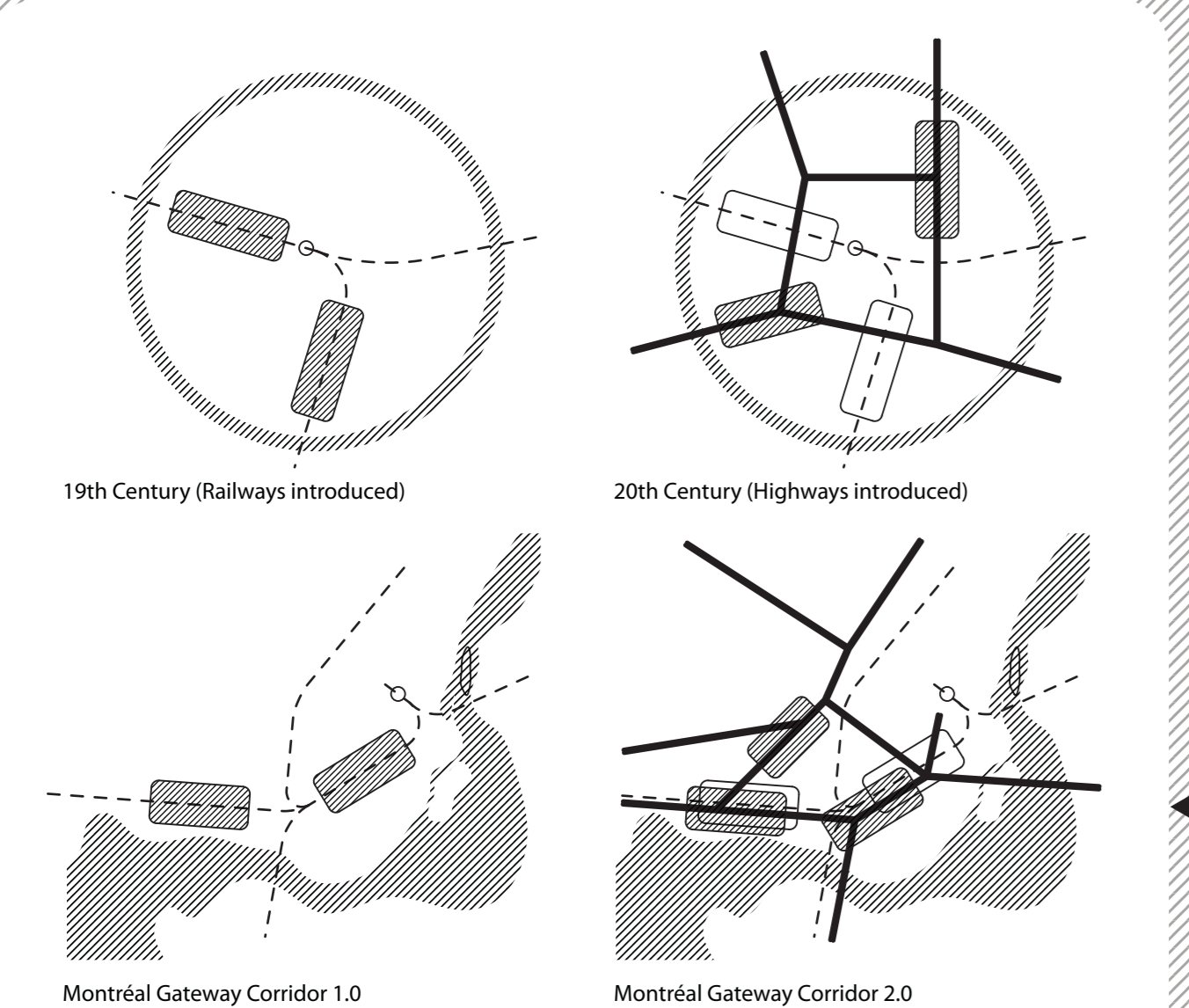
Different infrastructural and industrial systems usually lead to different urban schemes. The late 19th century scheme formed by railway does not overlap with later highway-oriented 20th century patterns. Additionally, after the way of transport and infrastructure shifts, huge amount of wasteland usually appears.

But Montréal "corridor area" is a special case. The old industrial facilities were mostly replaced by logistic areas of late 20th century. The most important urban highway followed existing train truck. Looking from the contemporary perspective, this could be seen as almost visionary act of urban recycle (although probably not planned). The infrastructure and city fabric have evolved continuously side by side with the economic changes.

Nowadays, when even the 20th century economical scheme is getting out of date, the insecurity about future development is popping up. In the tradition of "subconscious" visionary urban strategy the city of Montréal should ask for more than just emblematic representation or iconic impression. The area is ready for new act of "urban recycle".

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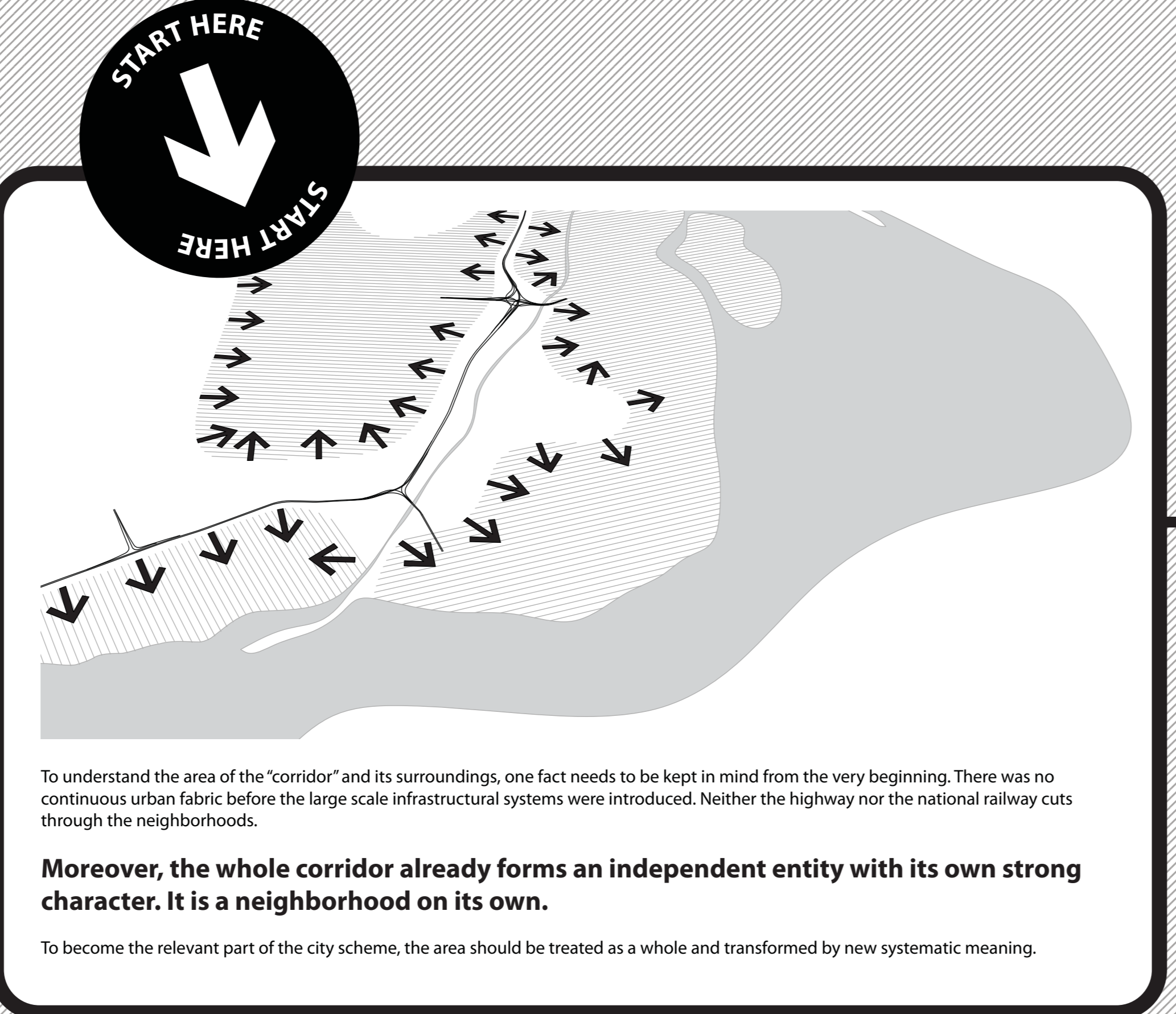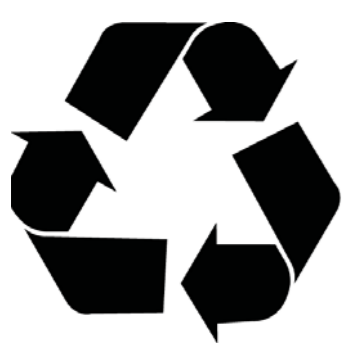
To understand the area of the "corridor" and its surroundings, one fact needs to be kept in mind from the very beginning. There was no continuous urban fabric before the large scale infrastructural systems were introduced. Neither the highway nor the national railway cuts through the neighborhoods.

Moreover, the whole corridor already forms an independent entity with its own strong character. It is a neighborhood on its own.
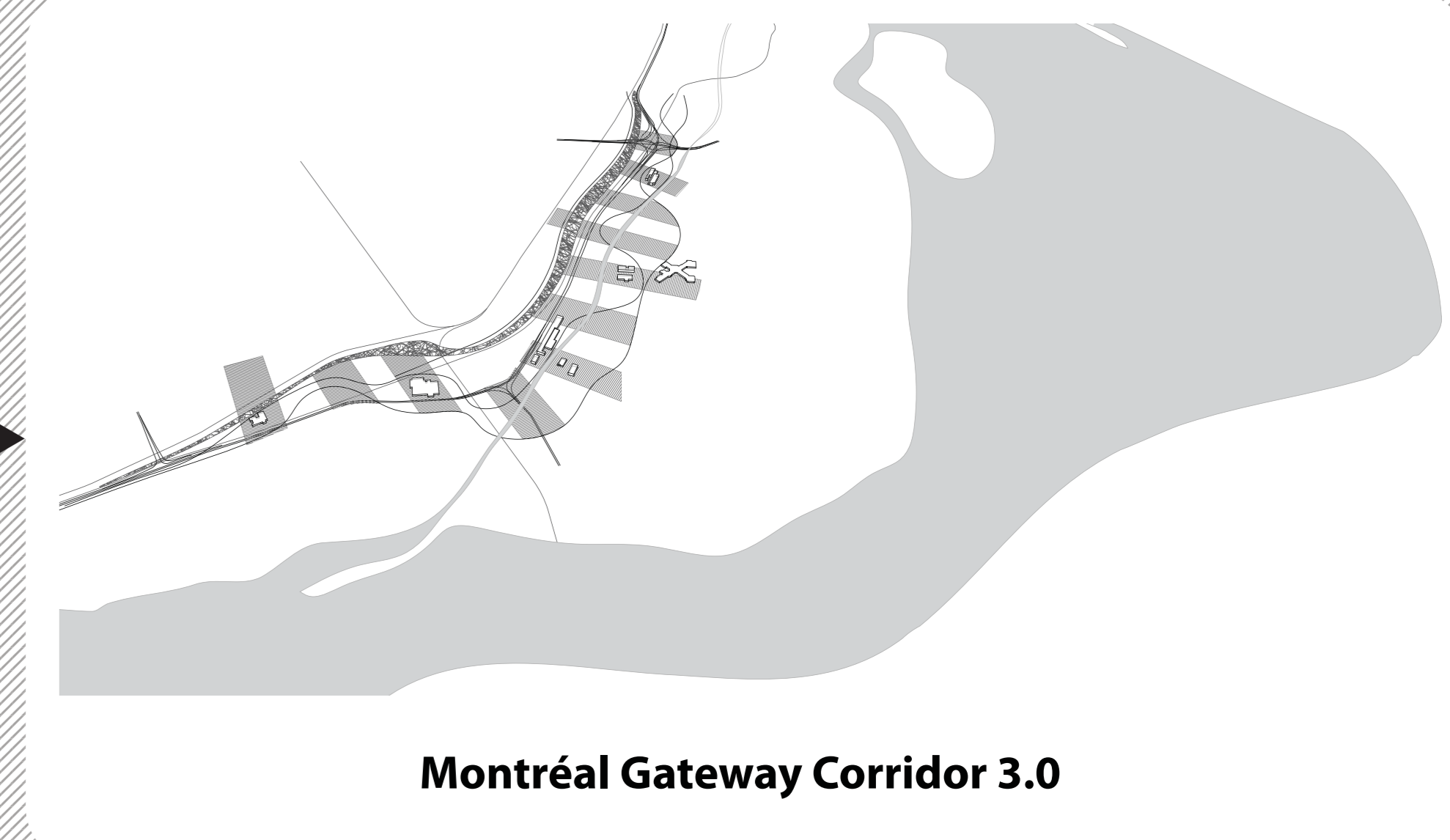
To become the relevant part of the city scheme, the area should be treated as a whole and transformed by new systematic meaning.

The gap in urban fabric leading south-west form the downtown Montréal is much deeper embedded in overall city layout than only as a consequence of large-scale infrastructure. The scheme of the corridor is actually much older than the infrastructure itself. The whole layout of Montréal is formed by one key feature: topography.

Represented by continuous edge of the plateau, it guides the corridor from Saint-Pierre towards the city centre.

To make the relation between corridor area and surrounding neighborhoods as well as the whole city clear and readable these original landscape characteristics needs to be correctly articulated and highlighted.

Montréal Gateway Corridor 3.0

See also:
Parc de la-Trinitat, Barcelona, Spain
Henry Hudson Parkway, New York, USA
Museum Insel Hombroich, Neuss, Germany
Moll de la Fusta, Barcelona, Spain
Emscherpark, Ruhrland, Germany
Potteries Thinkbelt, Staffordshire, England
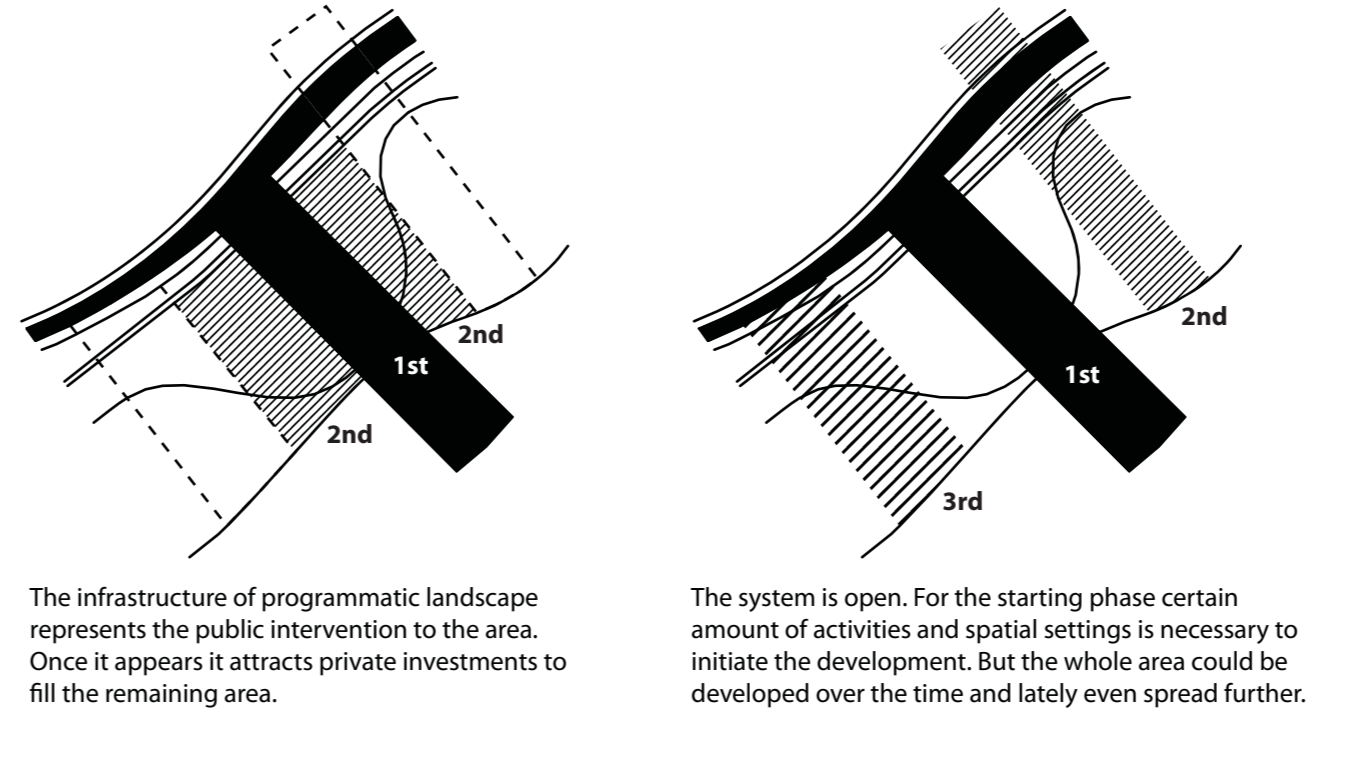**Agronica**

Post-modern society has turned urban fabric back into the mixed use environment. Public space has become again a multipurpose space, providing traffic as well as social events. Large scale infrastructure seems to remain only mono-functional system, usually considered as an element lacking relation with its surroundings. To make it fit within the city we need to reframe the understanding of city itself.

The city cannot be perceived only as urban fabric anymore. It is more complex environment, which contains both urban and non-urban conditions in wide range of scales.

Cultural landscape, represented by agricultural patterns has been always understood as spatial as well as mental framework for non-urban environment.

Using it as a reference, we can accommodate programs of various scales including infrastructure in one coherent setting. New kind of mixed-use landscape appears.

The infrastructure of programmatic landscape represents the public intervention to the area. Once it appears it attracts private investments to fill the remaining area.

The system is open. For the starting phase certain amount of activities and spatial settings is necessary to initiate the development. But the whole area could be developed over the time and lately even spread further.

Programmatic Landscape for Montréal [equals] Infrastructure for Creative City

Programs used might include, but are not limited to:

The Flows
Highway
Roads
Bike/ped paths
Channel
Railway
Tramway
Bio-corridors

The Setting
Agriculture
Wi-Fi Meadows
Production Forest
Grassland
Orchards
Vineyards
Plazas
Water Bodies

The Nodes
Coworking spaces
Workshops
Educatorium, Library
Congress and Meeting Facilities
Catering facilities
Exhibition and Conventions Centre
Sports Fields
Circus
Campsites
Lookout Tower w/ Transmission Facilities
Power substations, Energy Distribution Facilities

The Setting
The Flows
The Nodes

What is spatial representation for creative industry and its sufficient infrastructural system? Rather than another big shift in terms of transport, more sophisticated and gentle development is needed. We are not ready to skip highway or train truck. The individual as well as collective mobility is still necessary. The infrastructure for creative-city is much more comprehensive. Spontaneous contact, eventfulness, relaxation, wide range of supporting programs at various scale – those are basic needs for creative industries.
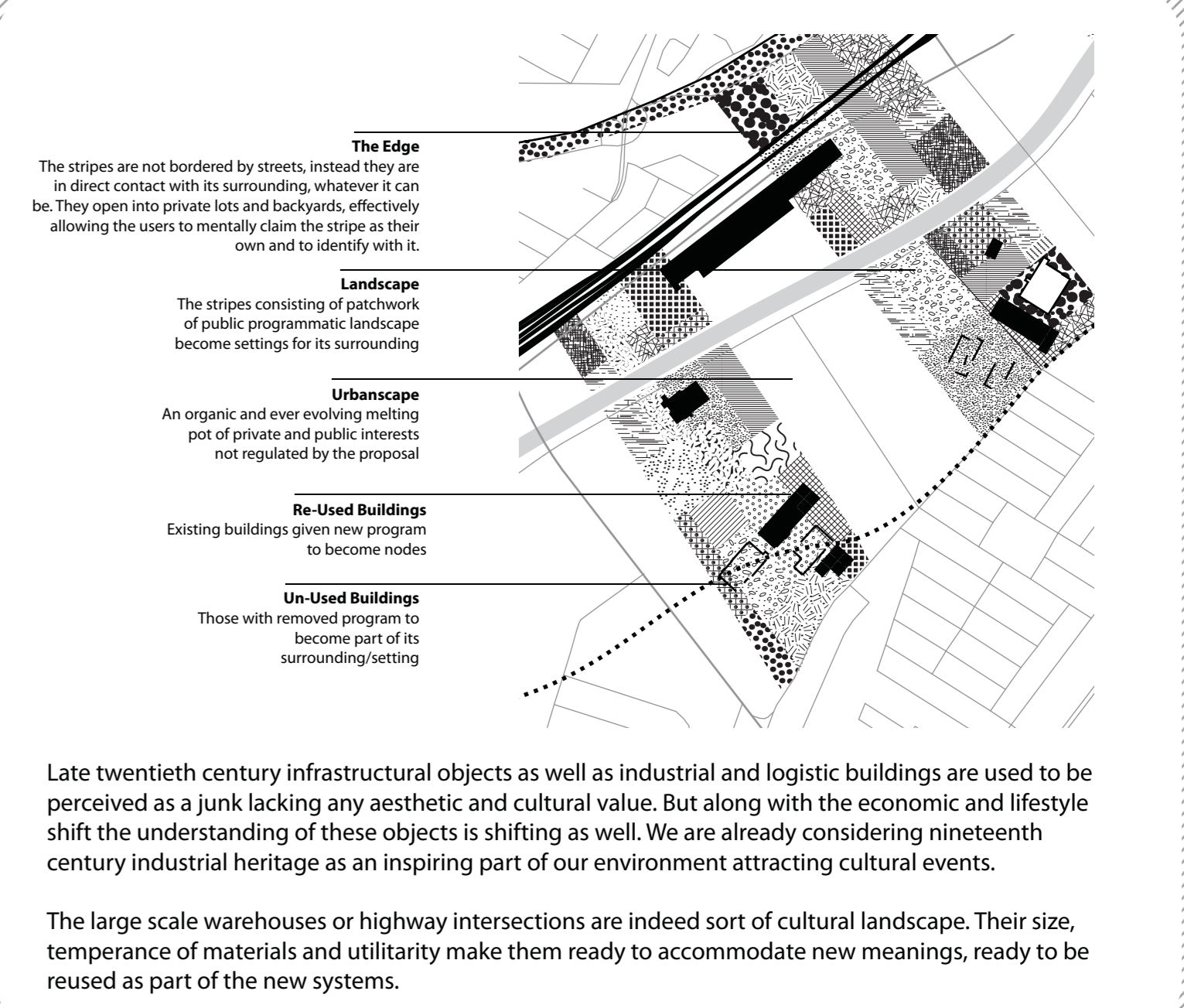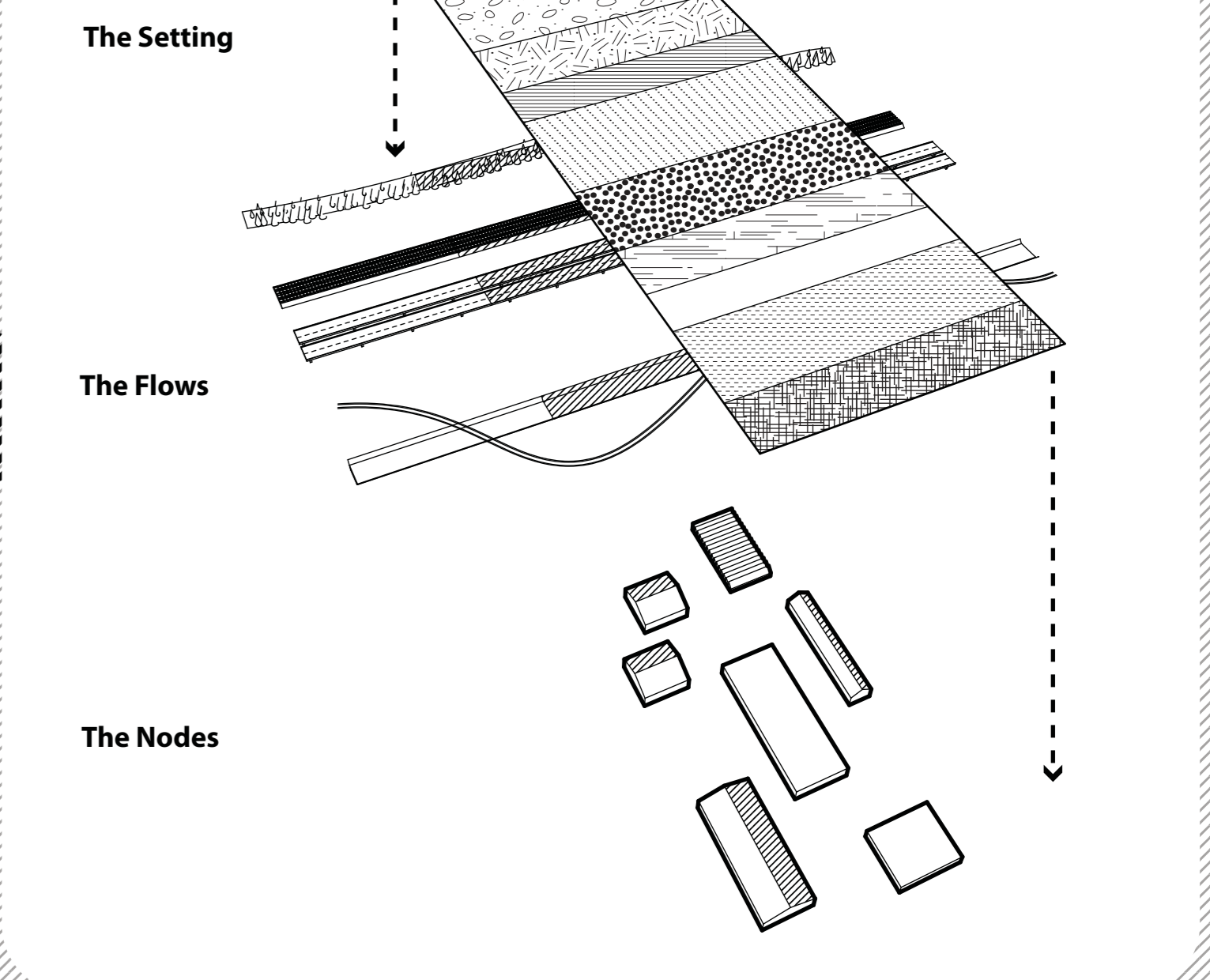
In fact, the quality of environment in general is the basic resource.

Considering this, landscape in itself immediately becomes infrastructure.

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The Free Encyclopedia

The creative industries refers to a range of economic activities which are concerned with the generation or exploitation of knowledge and information. They may variously also be referred to as the cultural industries (especially in Europe (Hesmondhalgh 2002, p. 14)) or the creative economy (Howkins 2001).
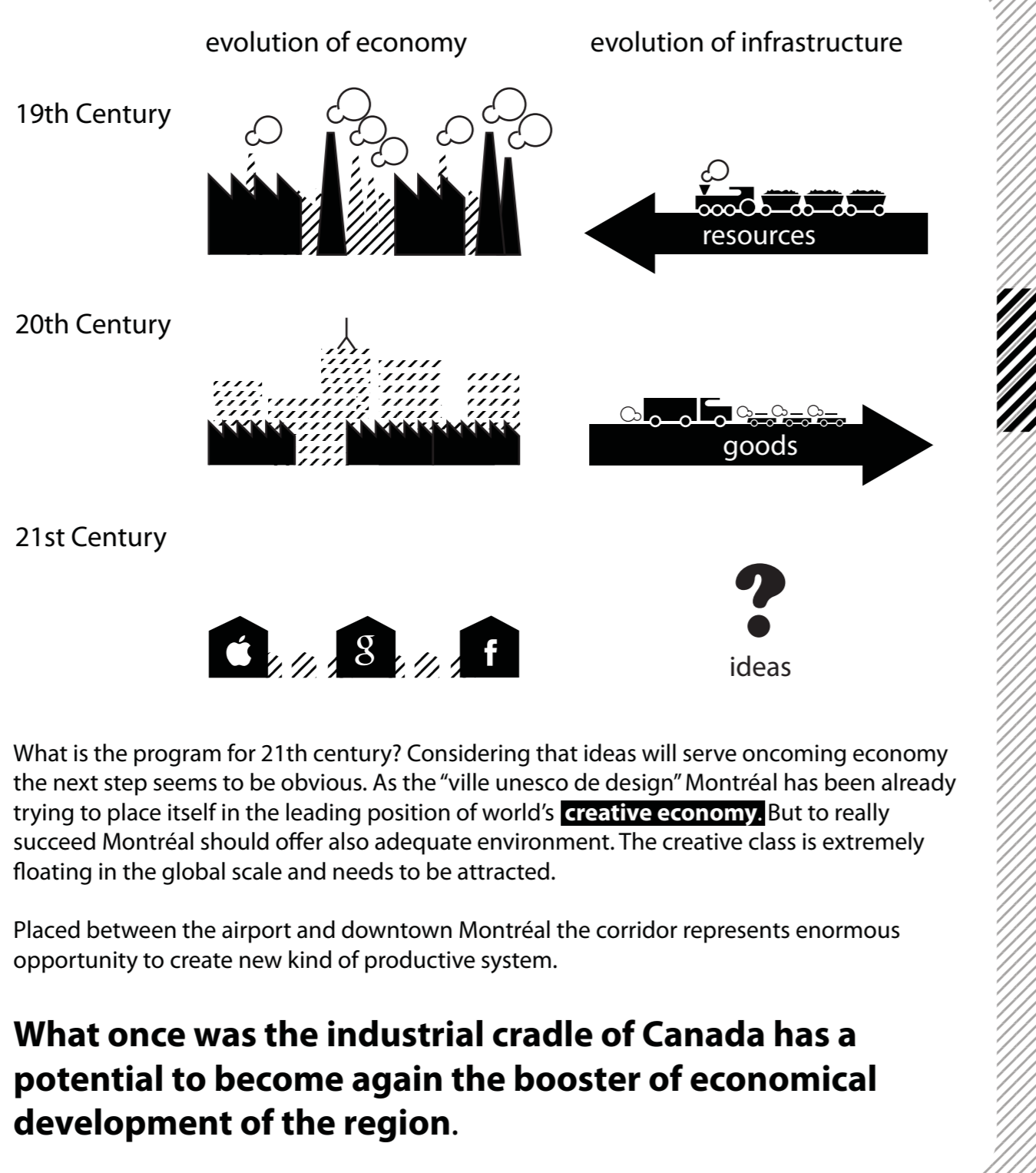
(...)

Various definitions on what activities to include in the creative industries have been suggested (DCMS 2001, p. 04)(Hesmondhalgh 2002, p. 12)(Howkins 2001, pp. 88–117)(UNCTAD 2008, pp. 11–12) and even the name itself is a contested issue - there being significant differences and overlap between the terms 'creative industries', 'cultural industries' and 'creative economy' (Hesmondhalgh 2002, pp. 11–14)(UNCTAD 2008, p. 12).

Lash and Urry suggest that each of the creative industries has an 'irreducible core' concerned with "the exchange of finance for rights in intellectual property" (Lash & Urry 1994, p. 117). This echoes the UK Government Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) definition which describes the creative industries as:

"those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property" (DCMS 2001, p. 04)

The current DCMS definition recognises eleven creative sectors, down from fourteen in their 2001 document. They are:

Advertising
Architecture
Arts and antique markets
Crafts
Design (see also communication design)
Designer Fashion
Film, video and photography
Software, computer games and electronic publishing
Music and the visual and performing arts.
Publishing
Television
Radio (DCMS 2006)

evolution of economy / evolution of infrastructure

19th Century

resources

20th Century

goods

21st Century

ideas

What is the program for 21th century? Considering that ideas will serve oncoming economy the next step seems to be obvious. As the "ville unesco de design" Montréal has been already trying to place itself in the leading position of world's creative economy. But to really succeed Montréal should offer also adequate environment. The creative class is extremely floating in the global scale and needs to be attracted.

Placed between the airport and downtown Montréal the corridor represents enormous opportunity to create new kind of productive system.

What once was the industrial cradle of Canada has a potential to become again the booster of economical development of the region.

On-site Needs for the Creative Industries

The Access
physical accessibility
visibility and communication with customers
branding/
information access

The Setting
views and the identity of place
exploitation of surrounding
eventfulness
spontaneous contact
possibility for employees to get away
landscape office

The Services
power and energies
shopping
catering
conferencing and exhibiting
relaxation
guest housing
education
culture

The Edge
The stripes are not bordered by streets, instead they are in direct contact with its surrounding, whatever it can be. They open into private lots and backyards, effectively allowing the users to mentally claim the stripe to lower own and to identify with it.

Landscape
The stripes consisting of patchwork of public programmatic landscape become settings for its surrounding.

Unbanscape
An organic and ever evolving melting pot of private and public interests not regulated by the proposal

Re-Used Buildings
Existing buildings given new program to become part of its surrounding/setting

Un-Used Buildings
Those with removed program to become part of its surrounding/setting

Late twentieth century infrastructural objects as well as industrial and logistic buildings are used to be perceived as a junk lacking any aesthetic and cultural value. But along with the economic and lifestyle shift the understanding of these objects is shifting as well. We are already considering nineteenth century industrial heritage as an inspiring part of our environment attracting cultural events.

The large scale warehouses or highway intersections are indeed sort of cultural landscape. Their size, temperance of materials and utilitarity make them ready to accommodate new meanings, ready to be reused as part of the new systems.

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