

Plan d'aou - a new Urban Village

Plan d'aou

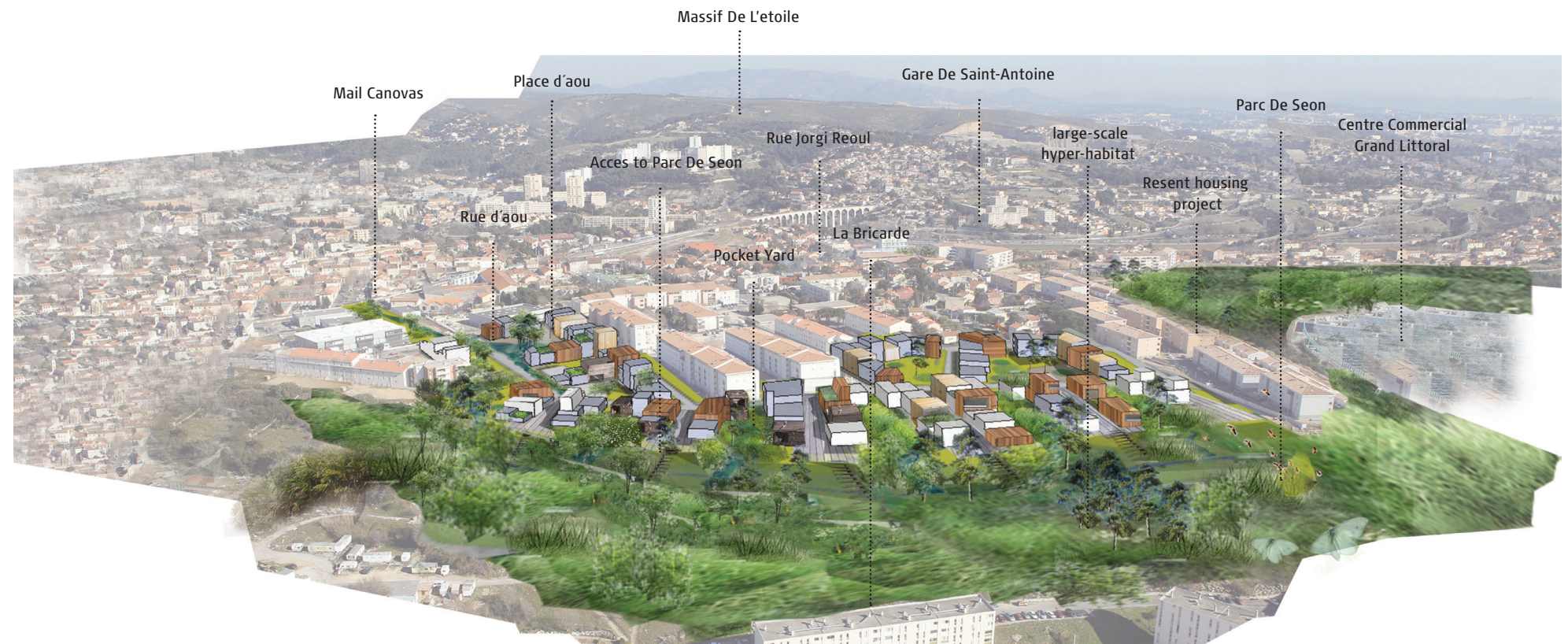
The Masterplan proposes a rethinking of the traditional historic French Village. Known worldwide of its community buildings abilities as well as its celebration of the natural setting. These two components are intergrated in the proposal in predominantly two ways:

- The focus on community building via the creation of a seires of different community spaces and sub spaces providing the individual with social choices.
- The celebration of the secluded nature of the site through framed evocative views and vistas. The topological plateau creates an urban island, surrounded by both green and city fabric. This unique situation is indeed worth preserving yet connections are nessesary for facilitation of human behavior and well-being thus the connections are all carefully chosen and designed with high urban quality.

Adaptability

The masterplan proposes a socially adaptable 'crumble' structure in which housing units are small but joined up this way allowing for flexible and adaptable use over time. The 'crumble' structure also allow for exposure of both private, semi-private, semi-public and public spheres, this way providing the neighborhood with a socially resilient spatial framework, e.g. 24 hour residents such as seniors or people outside of the labor force vs. the busy career couple working at the hospital.

The main concept of the proposed masterplan is thinking in terms of types of infrastructure: social, human, community, ecological, economic etc.



The village offers a unique place to live since it is based on small development parcels. It is full of diversity and fine detailing that often is missing in new developments. Living in this urban village does not mean living in high rises instead it is the critical mass that has enabled a high density. This neighbourhood brings a hole new meaning to life in the suburb.

The streets are in a human scale and all residents seems to know their neighbours. I often stop at the local bakery and bump into mine.

The other great thing is that I am close to my family. My grandmother has just relocated to the next door block and my parents are still in their villa across from Rue Jorgi Reoul.

Lilou , art student 21 about living in Plan d'Aou



Creating a livable, sustainable and adaptable infrastructure

Existing conditions on the site dictate a sensitive and sensible masperplan approach. The typography creates an urban plateau onto which the site sits rather uneasy and disconnected to the surrounding context. The main concept is therefore to 1: create a distinct site identity 2: create livable egdes and public space networks connections to the surrounding urban fabric.

Community Infrastructure

A community is not merely one big group, but rather consists of agglomerations of smaller groupings of sub-communities that together compose a holostic and strong community. The project proposal masterplan respects this natural human behavior. The proposal celebrates human behaviour in all its many form and shapes. Focus is on LeFebvres 'Everydayness of the Everyday.' It is about making every day enjoyable inkluding ordinary nessesary activities such as shopping, taking the bus, sending the kids to school as enjoyalbe as possible.

Human infrastructure

The masterplan introduces a socio-spatial Hierachy of Publicness (public spaces and community facilities) developed on the base of a de Certeauian intuitive way-finding approach to public space: users will find their way around, based on the spatial characteristics of the area rather than signs or google maps. This neighbourhood is a neighborhood for the human body and the social human. The top of the Hierachy of Publicness is Place d'aou: the super-public neighborhood space. Then a variety of semi-public community facilities and finally the small semi-private sub-community spaces.

Social Infrastructure

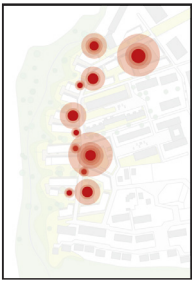
The site combines multiple users, thus introducing a high-negotialbe neighborhood. Spatial negotiation is essential for civilized urban culture. We belive in 1:1 democracy which is reflected in the development of the multifamily home unit. These private units are dispersed along a spine of semi-public spaces, allowing for the development of a keen sense of urban culture making every situation negotiable and thus adaptable for the differences of the indiviual, various codes of conducts and changes of time.

People Mobility Infrastructure

The masterplan propose a fine-grained network of traffical co-existence. Pedestrians, bicyclists, bus and train passengers and drivers are all welcome and respected. However pedestrian priority and speed restrictions are key elements in ensuring that all users feel safe and welcome.

Ecological Infrastructure

The masterplan proposes an eco-sensitive sustainability approach, where resilience is not just about survival of all species but rather the enjoyalbe co-existance of all. Therefore an overlapping ecological infrastructure is proposed. Water-, Green Corridor- and Canopy-habitat is overlayed the Human Habitat, this way mediating the coexistence and generating a true everyday bio-diversity e.g. lush and maintenance-low planting schemes facilitate on-site rainwater treatment and green roofs.



Medium homeunits
Large homeunits
Small homeunits

Pedestrian traffic
Vehicle traffic



Community Network

Rue d'Aou

This full public livable street functions as the Neighborhood Spine. Life from the community enclaves spill out here. The street holds on-surface parking layed out in a social parking grid, this way facilitating social interaction and playing children via the parked cars acting as spatial buffers rather than presenting a potential danger. Even parking is about co-existence.

Social Infrastructure along Rue d'Aou

The distribution of the units along the Neighborhood Spine allow for individual preferences such as the private calm units along the green Bluff, the bustling liveliness of the super social units in the center or the small single/couples units close to the Spine and the connectivity to the surrounding city fabric. This way the many different preferences of the individual is respected and catered to.

Human Infrastructure along Rue d'Aou

The masterplan supports living edge border-conditions rather than strict boundaries. No fences separate the different spaces, rather these are created via changes and shifts in the facade, plantings and through user appropriation, making for a hyper-flexible and adaptable spatial framework. This spatial framework allow for more traditional housing units to co-exist with the proposed super-family units, wich multifamily structures such as 2 or 3 generations living within close proximity of each other.



The masterplan has been developed through dialogue, in consultation and partnership with the local community which lead to the possibility of keeping the local character but develop Plan d'Aou into the current, vibrant multicultural, activity centre.

Early temporary projects kick-started the process and is still on going. The greatest success was moving the build edge closer to the streets, and improving the sidewalks. It gave Plan d'Aou a more urban feeling and brought out many new possibilities of creating life in the streets.

More and more visitors from other parts of the City has started to find their way to Plan d'Aou and the retailers have never been happier than today.

Pierre, council officer, 25, about the development of Plan d'Aou



The Alleys

Semi-public passages connecting two or more enclaves this way facilitating smaller more private sub-communities within the larger community. The Alleys are directly linked to the main community spine.

Ecological Infrastructure

On-site rainwater treatment takes the form of a small semi-open water channel funneling throughout the entire site, leading storm water safely away from the residential units into the wilderness of the Bluff Habitat. The character of the channels vary from strict paved channels to permeable bioswales that in addition to rain water treatment also provide automatic pocket garden watering.

Community Infrastructure

Each sub-community enclave is provided with a common house with shared fitness-, kitchen- and gathering space. All community alleys are framed by open facades allowing for natural surveillance via eyes on the street.

Visual Infrastructure

Each alley ends in a distinct framed view celebrating the natural setting e.g. the breathtaking view of the sea and sky, the super-lush Bluff this way providing a visual infrastructure between the neighborhood and the surroundings.



The Yards

A semi-public semi-open courtyard framing and facilitating the smaller sub-community of the enclave. Within the care for the collective there is a build-in respect for the individual choice. However important the physical comfort of the build environment is, the social comfort can not be underestimated, therefore the internal layout of the enclave allow for both super-social, social and individual units.

Ecological Infrastructure

Each unit is provided with an individual pocket garden immediately adjacent to a larger enclave shared sub-community garden. This garden is not a manicured picturesque garden, rather it is a lush usable high-performance garden, with underground water systems and adequate sun and shade exposure for the purpose of either urban gardening, social interaction or whatever the enclave democratically decides.

Habitat Infrastructure

The masterplan proposes a generous approach to the concept of habitat, including both animal and human habitat. The proposal allow for a spatial facilitation of high bio-diversity border-zones allowing for all species to thrive in respectful co-existence. For example:
-Seniors have the choice of living in the calmer units overlooking the green Bluff
- Families have the choice of living in the more social units close to the community spine, facilitating easy access.



The Bluff

The proposal envision the green lush Bluff as an in the future connecting to other green spaces throughout the city and possibly the region. Green habitat corridors are crucial for the survival and well-being of many smaller animal species. Creating regional hyper-habitats will be a major concern of the future, why not start at Plan d’aou.

Habitat Infrastructure

This XL scale hyper-habitat as a first mover show case of how to create minimal maintenance but maximum performance habitat space. This space will be wild, untamed with unpaved gravel pathways and sitting plateaus allowing for human exploration but on wildlife terms.

Ecological Infrastructure

The planting scheme will allow for storm-water runoff to be lead here and rather than producing destructive situation here water impact will have a constructive ecological function. The space will also introduce butterfly and bee habitat, essential for urban gardening.

Visual Infrastructure

Via the semi-public community alleys resident can access the Bluff via a plateau with unhindered views and comfortable seating. The Bluff is accessible via stairways and pathways.



I moved here 2 years ago and was attracted by the atmosphere in combination with the attractive green space throughout Plan d’Aou. It’s important for me to be active. My lifestyle involves long working hours so it helps a lot to live close to sport facilities and green space.

Me and my girlfriend normally use the Parc de Séon for taking a run in the morning, and because it is connected into the larger green plan for the city, its even possible to train for a Marathon.

When I get into the teenage mood, I grab my board and go for a skate a the local skater park in Mail Canovas. It’s a fantastic place that attracts so many young people.

Plan d’Aou also have great playgrounds and playscapes for children all ages right next to were they live. So one day when I have kids I imagine them play-ing with other kids just outside my door.

Louis, business manager, 27 about green spaces in Plan d’Aou



Community Everydayness

Place d'Aou

This main public space in the neighborhood is a social high performance space; usable, flexible, resilient and adaptable. Place d'Aou facilitates Life. In all its shapes and sizes from the Annual Community Events to the weekly Markets, to a 10 minute game between two children waiting for the parents to finish the shopping. This space is a schematic space, an urban angora typology. The overall multi-usability of the space never dictates use but rather hints or inspires it, this way supporting creative self-expression as well as supporting community cultural development and social capital. This place is far from a traditional bourgeois square, rather the proposal envision this space as the neighborhood 'living room'.

Socio-ecological Infrastructure

The masterplan proposes a considerable expansion of the tree canopy coverage of the neighborhood with the intention to both increase bird habitat as well as provide a better micro-climate at street level. The overall iconography of Place d'Aou is the traditional town tree or town well. As a archetypical gathering space through centuries. This modern reinterpretation allow for a high-detailed, eco-sensitive sensory experience. : As the birds nest in the high positioned birdhouses in the generous deciduous canopies casting soft flickering lacelike shadows across the wooden paving. The cross-cut wood pavers will bleach slightly in the sunny areas creating, as time goes by, a clear light greyish color variation of the wood-characteristica, whereas the shady area will be dominated by rich medium brown wood-characteristica.



I remember how it used to be in Plan d'Aou twenty years ago. I didn't feel safe at all. But improvements to the public spaces is great. It's a pleasure to walk down the centre and into the squares and parks. It feels a lot safer too. I don't worry when my grandchild goes out to meet her friends. At night the streets have activity spilling out from local restaurants and bars, and the lighting is very good so I tend to walk home when I get of work and leave North Hospital. On Saturdays I take a big circular walk around Plan d'Aou and tie it in with meeting my friends for a chat, in one of the cafés on Place d'Aou and doing my weekly shopping in the local grosseri store as well.

Marie, nurse, 62 about public spaces in Plan d'Aou



Adaptable Light

In place solar panel light fixtures create a low-intensity multiple-light-source lighting scheme, facilitating social interaction. This is a place lit for people and the human eye, providing soft contrast between light and shade maximizing visibility for safety reasons and simultaneously minimizing lighting pollution of the adjacent residential units.

Adaptable Paving

The paving of the square is cross-cut wood. A high-sustainable paver, but also a changeable one. Since the life expectancy of the individual wood-pavers are approx. 30 years. Meaning that in 30 years, in sync with the changing aesthetic preferences of a neighborhood, the paving should be replaced. This way not just allowing for, but in fact encouraging change and adaptability. In specific places the cross-cut wood pavers are lifted up by 45 cm to provide informal seating, and in other areas the height varies creating informal play and exercise facilities, this way subtly sub-dividing and sub-functionalizing the square.

Adaptable Water

Water flow throughout the square in separate channels providing an intricate stream-pattern in the rainy seasons, whereas in the sunny dry seasons the channels function as geometric cuts, this way celebrating natural seasonal change. When the water enters the communities the channels soften up becoming lush green bioswales.

Adaptable Homes

The masterplan proposes a democratic housing structure where each individual is catered for via personal choice. Choice and the possibility of spatial negotiation are crucial to spatial associative democracy. E.g. the introduction of the temporary homes where the unit size indicates a phase between single and family facilitating changes in ways of life, rather than limiting them. An adaptable neighborhood is a changeable one. Social capital is facilitated through community workshops and gear pavilions that support and promote local in-house activities. A community center functions as a social epicenter from where resources, energy and smiles filter out through the communities.

- Short-term housing
- Elderly housing
- DIY workshops
- Young businesses
- Community centre/space

