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# Institutional “ urbanisme transitoire ” as an urban renaissance tool: a case study of Île de Nantes

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le 02/09/2019

à l'Ecole Nationale supérieure d'Architecture de Nantes

### ***Institutional Urbanisme Transitoire as an Urban Renaissance Tool***

*A case study of Île de Nantes*

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# Thanks

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## **To my parents**

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# Glossary

**Agronaute** - Île-de-Nantes urban farm

**AJOA** - Atelier Jacqueline Osty & associés, urban design and architecture firm, one of the project managers for Île-de-Nantes

**CHU** - *Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Nantes*, university hospital of Nantes

**Eaux Vives** - Non-profit offering assistance to the homeless, future occupants of the 5 Bridges building

**GPM** - *Grand Port Maritime*, French National Port System

**MIN** - *Marché d'Intérêt National*, former wholesale market for food and perishable products on Île-de-Nantes

**NM** - *Nantes Métropole*, the governing body of the City of Nantes

**Quand Même** - Urban design firm, one of the project managers for Île-de-Nantes

**SAMOA** - *Société d'aménagement Ouest-Atlantique*, urban planning society commissioned by the city of Nantes to re-develop Île-de-Nantes

**Schorter** - Claire Schorter architecture & urbanisme, urban design and architecture firm, one of the project managers for Île-de-Nantes

**SNCF** - *Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer français*, French National Railway Company

**WT2I** - What Time is I. T., project manager responsible for surveying and collecting citizen accounts, particularly for the "Îlotopia" project

## **Urbanisme Transitoire Institutionnel, un outil pour la renaissance urbaine**

Le cas de l'Île-de-Nantes

### **Résumé**

Les trous dans le tissu urbain laissés par le déclin de l'industrie révèlent un besoin de faire évoluer les méthodes de reconstruction de la métropole. Ces dernières devront être plus résilientes et plus flexibles que les opérations à grande échelle du passé dont on a pu observé les limites. Depuis le début des années 2000, les institutions s'inspirent de collectifs d'artistes ou d'initiatives citoyennes en intervenant localement et stratégiquement par une réappropriation de secteurs délaissés pour construire une ville capable d'évoluer avec ses populations et leurs nouveaux modes de vie. La désertification industrielle crée alors une opportunité pour les acteurs urbains et les habitants à travailler ensemble pour tester de nouveaux usages aux immeubles obsolètes et aux espaces urbains en friche. Ainsi les quartiers de la ville deviennent des laboratoires, et l'urbanisme porte moins sur un projet définitif mais sur un procédé évolutif.

Ce mémoire cherche à identifier les enjeux principaux de l'urbanisme transitoire en s'appuyant sur différentes études de cas mais surtout sur des observations personnelles lors de mon stage au sein de la Société d'aménagement Ouest-atlantique (SAMOA), chargée du re-développement de l'Île-de-Nantes à Nantes, France. La SAMOA par sa mission s'engage à relier le design transitoire des espaces urbains à des usages professionnels expérimentaux pour aider un ancien zone industriel à devenir un groupement des quartiers dynamiques et créer un nouveau pôle urbain.

Le cas de Nantes n'étant pas isolé, les recherches et applications de la SAMOA pour reconstruire l'Île-de-Nantes pourront ainsi fournir une référence pour d'autres villes

postindustrielles. Ce mémoire est donc présenté en anglais pour qu'il soit accessible aux acteurs urbains internationaux. Ce qui m'a amené à chercher l'équivalent en anglais du terme "Urbanisme transitoire" et son application qui focalise sur le procédé de transition. Il n'y avait qu'un seul document dans mes recherches qui utilisait la traduction au sens littéral *Transitory Urbanism*, mais son usage était plus philosophique que pratique. Par conséquent, j'ai choisi d'utiliser principalement le terme français "Urbanisme transitoire" dans ce mémoire pour discuter des méthodes appliquées par la SAMOA dans ce type d'urbanisme.

J'ai trouvé d'autres terminologies pour décrire des approches similaires, comme *Urban Acupuncture*, *Tactical Urbanism*, *Temporary Use* ou *bottom-up urban planning*. L'origine et la définition de chacun de ces concepts est légèrement différent mais leurs aspirations et celles de l'Urbanisme transitoire sont les mêmes : construire un environnement urbain durable par un design abordable, de petite échelle, d'initiative citoyenne et d'usage expérimental.

### **Mots clés**

villes postindustrielles, usages professionnels expérimentaux, initiatives citoyennes, design transitoire, Urbanisme transitoire institutionnelle, *Urban Acupuncture*, *Tactical Urbanism*, *Temporary Use*

### **Abstract**

The deterioration of industrial cities has left gaps in their urban fabric, revealing the necessity for change in urban planning methods. Urban planners could explore more adaptable and more resilient approaches than the large scale operations of the past whose limitations are now apparent. Since the early 2000s, institutions have taken cues from artists and citizen



initiatives, using scaled down interventions for strategic reuse of vacant and derelict spaces. These targeted projects may help to build a city capable of evolving with its population, and their shifting work and lifestyles. The vacuum left by the departure of manufacturing industries has created an opportunity for urban planners and residents to work together in order to test new methods of rebuilding. City neighborhoods act as laboratories, and urban planning is less about the final outcome than it is about an evolutive process.

This thesis seeks to identify the main objectives of transitory planning primarily through observations during my internship with the *Société d'aménagement Ouest-atlantique* (SAMOA), an organization tasked with the redevelopment of the post-industrial Île-de-Nantes in Nantes, France. The SAMOA takes advantage of its capacity to link provisional public space design to experimental professional uses in order to help the post-industrial zone become a cluster of dynamic neighborhoods and a new urban hub.

Nantes is not an isolated case, and the SAMOA's tests and experiences in rebuilding Île-de-Nantes can serve as a reference for other post-industrial cities. This thesis is presented in English to make it more accessible to urban stakeholders internationally. *Urbanisme transitoire*, or literally "Transitory Urbanism", emphasizes the process-based aspect of this new urbanism, which seeks to re-convert and recycle former industrial buildings or other outmoded structures, whilst simultaneously resurrecting the sectors where they are situated. Other terms I found that describe analogous approaches to urbanism include Urban Acupuncture, Tactical Urbanism, Temporary Use, Guerilla Urbanism or bottom-up urban planning. Though there are differences in the origin and precise definition of each term, their aspirations and those of *Urbanisme transitoire* are the same: allow more sustainable urban environments to evolve through small-scale, affordable design, citizen involvement and experimental uses.

## Key Words

post-industrial cities, experimental professional uses, community initiatives, provisional public space design, institutional *Urbanisme transitoire*, Urban Acupuncture, Tactical Urbanism, Temporary Use, bottom-up urban planning

# 1. Introduction

A multitude of terms for bottom-up transitional planning efforts have been gaining visibility since 2010. Cities worldwide are developing their own models of evolutive human-centric urban planning, where local governments, public organizations and private investors support or encourage citizens' involvement. The strategies adopted by cities vary, in order to find effective solutions tailored to each specific circumstance and experience. Typically, however, cities undertaking these strategies share the fundamental goals of accommodating diverse populations and moving towards environmental sustainability.

In March of 2018, the geography department of *École normale supérieure* in Paris and the Institute of Urban Planning for the Île-de-France region hosted a seminar titled "*Urbanisme transitoire : une nouvelle méthode pour fabriquer la ville ?*", exploring this so-called "new" method for planning urban growth. Global populations, however, have practiced community-driven design and temporary exploitation of abandoned spaces for generations. What has been building momentum since the early 2000s, however, is the application of this process by institutions, such as large non-profits, developers and local governments.

The act of labeling the movement, *Urbanisme transitoire*, brings it into being by admitting that it merits attention, according to Sébastien Chambe, director of the Institute for Urban Planning in the seminar proceedings, (Besnard et al., 2018). This label, which encompasses

temporary urban design and occupation of abandoned buildings, shows that when institutions adopt this approach as part of a larger plan, it has the capacity to shape the city and its neighborhoods long term.

The root “trans” in *transitoire*, or “transitory” in English, also has the intention of incorporating other technological, environmental and social transitions taking place as this form of urbanism evolves, (Besnard et al., 2018).

The French term *Urbanisme transitoire* is used throughout this thesis because similar concepts in English do not specify all three important elements of regular interim use of abandoned buildings, provisional public design components that generate activity and a long term timeline into which the former two fit, as catalysts for sustainable change. Applying the terminology used in the specific situation of Île-de-Nantes and the SAMOA, which depends on all three elements, can enrich the urban lexicon to which international urban stakeholders have access.

A crucial question being explored in the Île-de-Nantes case is: how can *Urbanisme transitoire*, through professional and cultural activity and small-scale design, act as leverage in process-based urban regeneration? The SAMOA acts on the hypothesis that the success of public space design depends on its continued use, and that professional activities in these zones can act as catalysts to draw the public and develop a new neighborhood dynamic. The role of these activities as activators of public space attributes a value to them beyond their economic profitability, which creates opportunities for experimental startups, cultural endeavours and non-profit organisations. The application of *Urbanisme transitoire* by the SAMOA has three principal objectives :

- To act as a placeholder for future development,
- To lay the groundwork for a sector’s future uses,

- And to generate activity and a neighborhood identity.

This thesis also explores the challenges created when the public begins to frequent formerly abandoned zones, especially when there is little budget to reconstruct these areas, as is the case in *Urbanisme transitoire*. If strategies for space activation are undertaken too early in the process, they may not be successful or they may pose potential risks, such as structural instability or no return on investments. When institutions like the SAMOA are at the head of such projects, they have considerable responsibility to ensure public safety and the legality of their actions, which can slow down completion of a project whose duration is already limited. The five key elements examined in this thesis that pose a challenge to *Urbanisme transitoire* are:

- Accessibility of neglected areas,
- Health and security of the people who occupy them,
- Restricted timeline of temporary projects,
- Limited cost that stakeholders are willing to pay due to low priority status given by city administration, property owners or investors,
- And the multiple stakeholders involved in each transitory action.

This thesis evaluates the potential to successfully apply the concept of *Urbanisme transitoire* in several current urban redevelopment projects on Île-de-Nantes. It is organized into several sections beginning with a brief presentation of literature review on temporary and transitory urban planning practices in several cities from the 1980s until now, followed by the presentation of the specifications of *Urbanisme transitoire*. Next is a short history of Île-de-Nantes and the creation of the SAMOA, the organization tasked with its redevelopment. This thesis will then examine several long-term Île-de-Nantes projects.

Finally, it will present an analysis of current short-term, transitory projects that support the master plan, and how they fulfill the objectives and manage the challenges.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Rehab-squatting

Though local governments have tried to tackle the regeneration of obsolete industrial zones, their large-scale, high-stakes and high-investment approaches, through the second half of the twentieth century, failed at renewing neighborhood life and dynamism. “The Kreuzberg neighbourhood [in Berlin] [...] incarnated both the mistakes of the local strategy of urban regeneration based on extensive demolition and new building, and the emergence of an alternative milieu in the areas of Berlin that had been neglected while awaiting rehabilitation,” (azozomox and Kuhn, 2018).

The waiting period for these bulky projects to be completed boosted the “rehab-squatting” movement in the 1980s in Berlin. Rehab-squatters moved into empty private or public buildings and immediately began renovating (azozomox and Kuhn, 2018). These citizen-based, small-scale initiatives not only prevented neighborhoods from sitting entirely vacant for long periods, but they also brought energy, creativity and craftsmanship.

In Berlin as in other cities, artists and creators are often linked with squatting because they need inexpensive studio or living space and they have a capacity to see value where others do not. As Terrin (2012) noted, “By virtue of the emotionally engaged, forward-looking and often critical way in which creators view their surroundings, they succeed in revealing the identity and true potential of an area. By the same token, their ability to inhabit a public or

private space and bring it to life with scant or limited resources at their disposal, enables them to invent new ways of living and to experiment with new methods of appropriating urban space.”

The SAMOA's use of abandoned warehouses reflects the rehab-squatting concept, where the process of renovation begins while they are occupied. On Île-de-Nantes, however, the occupation of these buildings is for professional purposes rather than residential ones. Immediate usage of the buildings before and during renovation reduces deterioration, keeping building temperatures warmer in cold weather among other benefits. The SAMOA aims to shape the long-term plan through the activities that inhabit these warehouses during the Île-de-Nantes regeneration process.

## **2.2. Guerilla Urbanism**

Temporary use of abandoned buildings and spaces by inhabitants can be a form of activism, an action meant to critique local governments who are falling short of meeting citizens' needs for work space or lodging. This was the case in Berlin, and other cities worldwide. “In Portland, Oregon, activists from the group City Repair painted street intersections in bright colors and patterns, and involved neighbors in converting them into neighborhood gathering places. In Taipei, citizens frustrated with rocketing housing costs staged a ‘sleep-in’ in the streets of the most expensive district in the city to protest the government inaction. In London, Space Hijackers, a group of self-proclaimed ‘anarchitects,’ has performed numerous acts of ‘spaces hijacking,’ from ‘Guerilla Benching’ – installing benches in empty public space - to the ‘Circle Line Party’ in London's Underground,” (Hou, 2010).

Artists often play a role in “space hijacking” as well, taking advantage of the urban canvas to tell a story or send a message. In Detroit, the Heidelberg Project is the reappropriation of a block of abandoned houses by artist Tyree Guyton, in which he tells the story of the city's

post-industrial abandonment while also bringing visitors back to the neighborhood to view his work, (Guyton, 1988).

As institutions strive to gather information from local populations and artists to better satisfy their needs, they look to these guerilla movements as indicators of what can be improved.

Paying attention to what citizens are already doing, in lieu of standardized surveys and questionnaires, offers a good indication of what the urban population would like to experience in the future.

### **2.3. Urban acupuncture**

Urban Acupuncture, a concept inspired by the Chinese medical practice, was coined by the Catalan architect Manuel de Solà and discussed in his 2008 book, A Matter of Things. He was critical of grandiose architectural projects and preferred to integrate small urban design elements into already dense areas of the city, (de Solà-Morales i Rubió, Frampton, and Ibelings, 2008).

His approach was further developed by Finnish architect Marco Casagrande in the article "Third Generation City":

*"Urban acupuncture is an urban environmentalism theory which combines urban design with traditional Chinese medical theory of acupuncture. This process uses small-scale interventions to transform the larger urban context. Sites are selected through an aggregate analysis of social, economic, and ecological factors, and developed through a dialogue between designers and the community. Acupuncture relieves stress in the body, urban acupuncture relieves stress in the environment. Urban acupuncture produces small-scale but socially catalytic interventions into the urban fabric."*

Casagrande believed that Urban Acupuncture was part of accomplishing the “Third Generation City”, which he defined as a city that experiences a post-industrial renaissance. He was particularly interested in the role of nature in the renewal process, “The way towards the Third Generation City is a process of becoming a learning and healing organization and to reconnect the urbanized collective conscious with nature,”(Casagrande, 2013).

Incorporating plants and greenspace to the mostly mineral Île-de-Nantes, and offering visual access to the river are important goals of the project managers AJOA, Schorter and Quand Même hired by the SAMOA.

During my internship, I observed the challenges of regaining a link to the river, when it requires colonizing long-neglected waterfront structures. I will discuss in detail these observations and how they shape the use of *Urbanisme transitoire* on Île-de-Nantes in Section 8.1.2.

#### **2.4. Temporary Use as a Tool for Urban Regeneration**

Urbact, a European initiative whose mission is to help cities integrate sustainability, economic well being, social equality and environment, explored temporary reuse of abandoned buildings in a 2015 project called Temporary Use as a Tool for Urban Regeneration (TUTUR). The objective stated by the project summary was, “the project would fall under objectives of sustainability and inclusiveness: reusing vacant plots in the city with the involvement and commitment of administration, local inhabitants and stakeholders would allow an economic growth without requiring new construction and therefore be respectful of the surrounding environment. [...] Implementation methodologies differ depending on ‘local context abilities’ . As far as the way concepts are going to be used depends on the planning system maturity/complexity and political openness of the receiving city,” (Urbact, 2015).



In 2018, Urbact continued the exploration of Temporary Use in *Refill*, (Jégou and Bonneau, 2018). The publication compiled cases of colonization of abandoned spaces and buildings for leisure or for professional use in a network of European cities, including Nantes, Amersfoort, Athens, Bremen, Cluj, Ghent, Helsinki, Ostrava, Poznan and Riga.

According to Jégou and Bonneau (2018), “Over the past few decades, many cities have experimented with finding temporary uses for abandoned or neglected spaces and buildings. Their experiences serve as a source of inspiration for innovation and change in other cities where temporary use can act as a driver and incubator for urban development.”

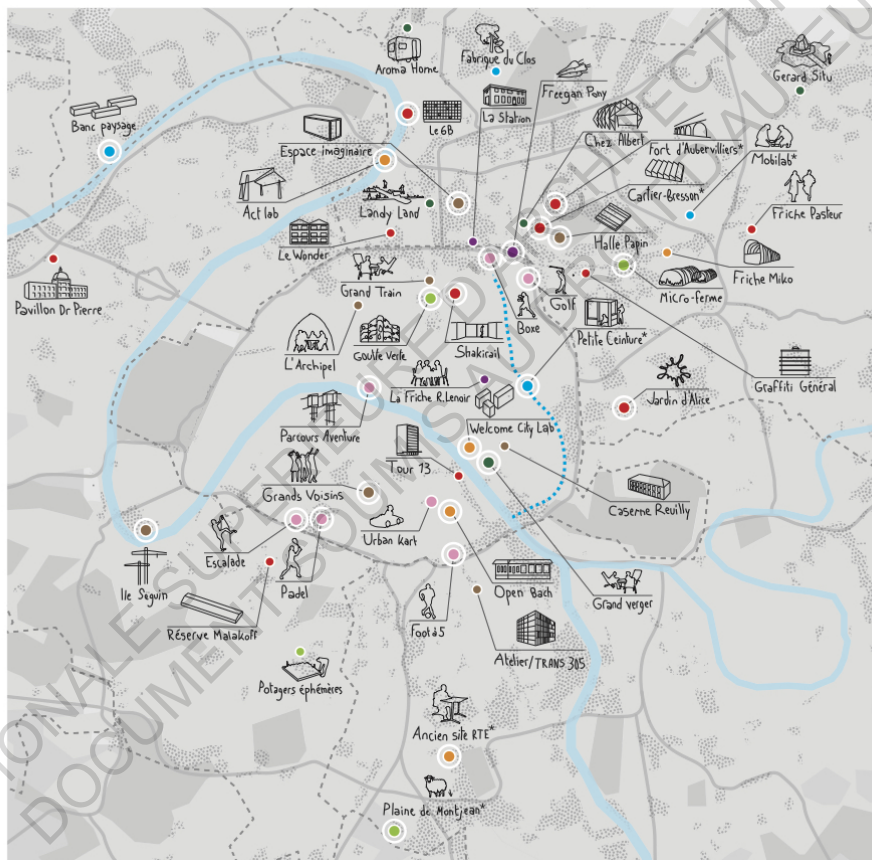
The temporary use of abandoned spaces in *Refill* was sometimes initiated by artists, community groups or cultural organisations, and supported by local government. Other times it was initiated by the local government, but relied heavily on the involvement of the community and small committed groups. Jégou and Bonneau (2018) examined each participating city separately to express the lack of a blanket formula for temporary use.

In searching for common factors of Temporary Use to develop its function as a tool for urban regeneration, Urbact found that standardized building regulations for such practices needed to be established by municipal administrations, sometimes requiring “legal creativity” in which urban planners reshaped local technical requirements, public access rules and security standards to suit non-traditional uses. Temporary Use also required mediation between all stakeholders including city administration, private owners, urban planners, residents and professionals, throughout the duration of the building’s occupation. In addition, they found that groups testing an activity through Temporary Use needed support and technical coaching to develop their long term potential more effectively, (Jégou and Bonneau, 2018).

In 2017, the Institute of Urban Planning for the Île-de-France performed a study on Temporary Use of abandoned buildings in Paris and other European cities called “Temporary

Urbanism: Planning Differently”. “Temporary Urbanism takes possession of empty buildings as well as urban development project areas or vacant land as part of either all-at-once multisite strategies or as part of one-site-at-a-time strategies,” (Diguët et al., 2017). Thinking globally about multiple abandoned sites could strengthen Temporary Use as a catalyst for activity in one neighborhood or multiple neighborhoods, creating potential for experimental uses. “The opening up of possibilities on such sites generates innovation, creativity and often mixed-uses,” (Diguët et al., 2017).

Temporary urbanism initiatives in the Paris Region since 2012



Categories of initiatives

- Art, culture, leisure
- Offices, workshop, crafts/production, fab lab
- Retail, catering, bar, club
- Park, garden, public space
- Agriculture, market gardening, kitchen garden, grazing
- Project activity area, construction site
- Sports space, playground
- Mixed-use
- Work in progress
- \* Scheme for supporting transitional urbanism projects in the Paris Region

Background map

- ⋯ Small belt railway line
- ▨ Development project (in progress and under review)
- Built-up urban area
- Rural area
- Woodland and open spaces
- ▭ Counties (départements)
- Main road network
- N 0 2,5 km
- © IAU IfU 2017  
source : IAU IfU - Wikimap projet, Mos

Source: Diguët, Cécile, Pauline Zeiger, and Alexandra Cocquière. 2017. “Temporary Urbanism: Planning Differently,” 6.

## 2.5. Tactical Urbanisme

Mike Lyndon (2012) used the term Tactical Urbanism to describe small-scale temporary urban design principally dedicated to recreational activities observed in New York, San Francisco, Portland and Dallas. Lyndon began using the term Tactical Urbanism to describe DIY (Do It Yourself) and bottom-up design initiatives during a retreat with a group called Next Generation of New Urbanism in Fall of 2010, when fellow urbanists encouraged him to schematize his observations.

Tactical Urbanism is, “a deliberate, phased approach to instigating change; the offering of local solutions for local planning challenges; short-term commitment and realistic expectations; low risks, with a possibility of high rewards; the development of social capital between citizens and the building of organizational capacity between public-private institutions, nonprofits and their constituents,” (Lyndon, 2012).

According to Lyndon, several small investments over time, as opposed to one large investment, could help save money in the long run. For example, spending \$30,000 on small scale, temporary design elements in the public space in order to test a larger project of 3 million dollars, could offer foresight into the high-stakes project's success or failure, (Lyndon, 2012).

One example is the 2008 pedestrianization of Times Square in New York City. The New York traffic commissioner Janette Sadik-Khan used Tactical Urbanism to test how automobile circulation would reroute when cars were no longer permitted, and how pedestrians would occupy the square. Street-paint denoted the new public space, and inexpensive lawn furniture provided a place to sit. The project demanded a very low investment in materials and labor and could be installed or removed quickly. When goals were met of public space

colonization without increased traffic jams, a higher investment made the pedestrian park permanent, (Sadik-Khan, 2016).



Left: Times Square, 2009, testing a traffic-free area. Courtesy brooklynvegan.com, source: cubanartnews.org, right: DON EMMERT/AFP/Getty Images, source: observer.com

## 2.6. Transitory Urbanism

“Transitory Urbanism,” the most literal translation of the French term *Urbanisme Transitoire*, is a term discussed by Manuel Bailo, Ph. D in his study “Public Catalyst” which examines the use of transience in order to activate public spaces, (Bailo Esteve, 2016). In his research, he argued that designing public spaces for transience augments their capacity to support urban transformation. He also described a loss of identity that can take place from urban spaces that sit empty, or do not experience habitual activity. “Transience and ordinary-ness are forgotten values in the design of the contemporary public space today – by capturing these values in design, we can stop this loss of identity,” (Bailo Esteve, 2016).

Bailo theorized that Transitory Urbanism is more effective when combined with a more permanent plan. “Throughout was a growing suspicion that contemporary public space shouldn’t be proposed only from transience. [...] It became clear that it was also necessary to analyze the public formal spaces in order to find the focus of the study of the public space. [...] This research analyzes formal projects and informal projects of the public space in parallel,” (Bailo Esteve, 2016). Transitory planning from an institutional perspective allows the use of both large financially intensive projects and affordable small-scale ones to work together to achieve an end goal.

Though Bailo's definition of Transitory Urbanism relates to *Urbanisme Transitoire*, it differs in the sense that it examined existing cases, while *Urbanisme Transitoire* describes actions and practical trials that urban planners perform within an real life urban laboratory.

## 3. Current State of Reflection and Knowledge

### 3.1. Urbanisme Transitoire

*Urbanisme transitoire* takes into account these flexible practices, combining Temporary Use through occupation of abandoned buildings in order to launch experimental businesses or cultural activities, Tactical Urbanism with small-scale and strategic public space design elements, and Guerilla Urbanism in providing platforms for citizens to express their needs in an effort towards real, bottom-up planning. *Urbanisme transitoire* also includes the strategies of Transitory Urbanism by fitting each transitory intervention into an adaptable and evolutive master plan in order to act as a public space catalyst. In the case of Île-de-Nantes, this long term plan is anticipated to last from 2003 to 2032, (Barré, 2019).

In addition to the above elements, the SAMOA and their consultants have observed one more useful aspect for *Urbanisme transitoire* to be a successful re-activation tool. Introducing a master-of-ceremonies of the public space could ensure that activity continues and develops over time. This enables a temporary or transitory occupant concerned with organizing regular events, or a group or individual dedicated to animating the public space, to prevent it from falling into disuse.

### 3.2. Institutional *Urbanisme Transitoire*

*Urbanisme transitoire* becomes institutional when it is used “as a professional approach, in some circumstances by a public collectivity, that act as a third party between multiple actors,” (Besnard, Langlois, and Levardon, ENS, 2018). Though the plan may be initiated by the local government, there is a collaborative effort in seeking out the needs and desires of the population, and ultimately empowering citizens.

Institutions could have a larger capacity than citizen initiatives to integrate *Urbanisme transitoire* into a long term plan because political will is often behind them.

## 4. Context - Île-de-Nantes

Île-de-Nantes, an island on the Loire river in the geographic center of Nantes, was built by manufacturing industries starting from the nineteenth century onwards. Like other industrial cities, manufacturing eventually went bankrupt or relocated. Following the definitive closing in 1987 of the shipyard in the West of Île-de-Nantes, which had been an important economic resource, the island suffered a period of disinvestment and desertion. The SAMOA was formed in 2003 by Nantes mayor Jean-Marc Ayrault (1989-2012), with the political objective of re-developing Île-de-Nantes, (“Histoire de l’île de Nantes”, 2019). The SAMOA was entrusted with the following three missions:

- Create a new metropolitan center to complement the adjacent historic center,
- Give the Loire River, which flows through Nantes surrounding the island, a more important role in the city and its public spaces,
- And build a city that is diverse in both population and activities (“Histoire de l’île de Nantes”, 2019).

Despite the void left by industry's departure, Île-de-Nante's location is strategic in its centrality and its proximity to the already dynamic historical center. Today, much development has occurred on the northern side of the island, with educational institutions, offices, bars and restaurants, and tourists attractions including the Elephant of "Les Machines de l'Île," a larger than life-size mechanical elephant that transports riders throughout the former shipyard area. Visitors ride the elephant for nine euros per ticket; one of the efforts by the development authority to attract the public, as well as make the space profitable.

For the last few years, the SAMOA's focus has been rebuilding the South-West of Île-de-Nantes and economically boosting the neighborhoods in the center of the island.

From the beginning, the SAMOA used *Urbanisme Transitoire* as an important tool, though its application was not initially a deliberate choice, according to Virginie Barré (2019), head of superstructure construction for the SAMOA. Rather, it rose from an opportunity to house the SAMOA's first offices in a 16,000 m<sup>2</sup> warehouse. Halles Alstom, originally a foundry for the shipyard (Cornec, 2011), thus became an incubator for the first innovative business cluster that the SAMOA would implement, (Barré, 2019).

"It was a shame to have all of this empty space and maintenance costs. At the time, we had collaborators who weren't afraid of a rudimentary space. Through this network and word of mouth, we started to fill office spaces with renters who were architects, landscapers and web designers, etc."(Barré, 2019).

One of the original renters of Halles Alstom was the architecture firm Fichtre, a firm whose objectives align with those of *Urbanisme transitoire* in their small scale and modular approach. "Since the early 2000s, Fichtre imagines and creates distinctive places tailor-made for non-professionals, libraries, public spaces, museums, hills, and more. The

originality of our approach is midway between art and craft, work of art and design,” (*Fichtre, Chronologiquement*, 2018). Fichtre is an example of how, as more traditional professions became users of nuts-and-bolts spaces, they maintained an association with artists, creative activists and non-profit organisations that first invested in abandoned parts of cities.

Also based out of Halles Alstom was Berthomieu Bissery Mingui Architects (BBM), a team of three architects, Jean-Louis Berthomieu, Laurent Bissery and Julien Mingui dedicated to sustainable development and low cost design. Their work began pursuing goals of sustainability before specific standards and regulations were set, an approach that corresponded to process-based urban design.

When Halles Alstom was ripe for a high-stakes project and ready for major construction to begin, the SAMOA moved to a new office. As the urban planners for Île-de-Nantes, they also took on the responsibility of finding new offices and workshops for Fichtre and BBM, which they found in an empty warehouse and former go-karting complex on the west side of the island. These two reconverted buildings became the Karting and Solilab business incubators which still exist today and host several new and start-up companies. According to David Polinière, head of development for the SAMOA, the two architecture firms moved into the Karting and Solilab as temporary occupants just after the SAMOA purchased the buildings in 2011 or 2012, as the master plan would not be ready for construction in the sector for about 15 years, (Polinière, 2019). Thus, the temporary use of buildings awaiting a transformation became part of the SAMOA's method for redeveloping Île-de-Nantes.

Over time, the SAMOA cumulated properties with the intention of using new business or experimental and cultural activity occupation to hold the sites while waiting for the global project to mature. Their intention was also to cultivate a flexible master plan that would allow for some of the activities to become a long term part of the Île-de-Nantes identity. “These professional activities may not have had a chance to develop otherwise, and the activities we

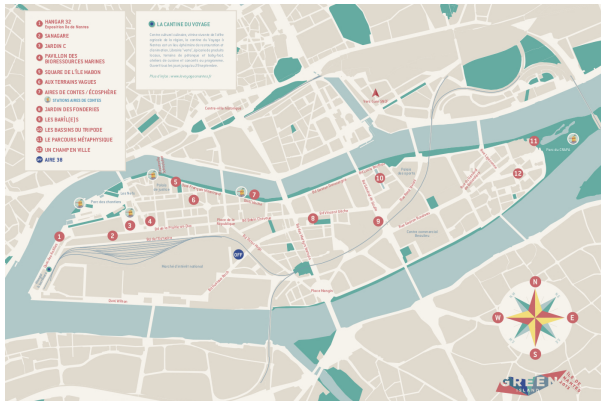


host influence the vision of the long term plan for the neighborhood by introducing certain subjects that we might not have thought of,” (Polinière, 2019).

One such example is a circus school that settled on Île-de-Nantes in 2012. The SAMOA had purchased a lot beside the Karting and Solilab which could host the circus tent for a duration of approximately five years. The circus school, now called Chapidock, could fit into the long term program for beyond the five year time limit, animating the parks that are part of the future plan for the West of Île-de-Nantes.

Another past project that shaped the SAMOA's approach to *Urbanisme transitoire* was a 2013 project called Green Island. Nantes had won a 2013 European Commission Green Capital award for twenty years of commitment to sustainability, creating an opportunity to seek further environmental innovation using urban space as a living laboratory. The SAMOA launched a call for proposals, seeking small-scale design projects that “envisioned new ways to take action in the public space,” (*Green Island - Île-de-Nantes, 2013*). Architecture collectives, student groups, artists and landscapers submitted proposals. The winning projects constituted twelve stations situated throughout the island, including a community garden, an art installation that presented microalgae cultures in an urban setting, and a dome shaped greenhouse constructed by neighborhood high school students and volunteers. “These allowed us to identify the local collectives, idea bearers and leaders in our network and our community. It also allowed us to identify the genuine needs, and let go of certain fantasies,” (Barré, 2019).

This technique of small installations, along with temporary use, has worked its way into the SAMOA's methodology for *Urbanisme transitoire*, capitalizing on discovered strengths of the population for the most successful outcomes.



Source: Lloyd, James. *Île de Nantes, Carnets de Déambulations - Parcours Green Island Du 15 Juin Au 28 Sept. 2013.*

In 2014, a SAMOA committee, known as *Quartier de la création*, dedicated to the development of creative and digital startups in a designated geographic sector of Île-de-Nantes, became the Creative Factory and broadened their field of work to include the whole island. The SAMOA became two clear branches, with the Creative Factory taking responsibility for economic and professional development, and the urban planning branch working on the built landscape, public spaces, and catalysts for activity in these spaces. Though both branches are part of *Société d'aménagement métropole Ouest-atlantique*, this thesis uses the title SAMOA to refer to the urban planning branch. The vast majority of the work I did in my internship was with the SAMOA, though they work together with the Creative Factory on many projects in order to maximize the potential for successful activation of the landscape.

## 5. Objectives of Institutional *Urbanisme Transitoire*

Through my observations with the SAMOA of ongoing projects, and my review of literature about bottom-up, process-based urban planning movements, I established three principal

objectives for institutional *Urbanisme transitoire* as part of a high-stakes long-term master plan.

## 5.1. Place holding

The first objective is place holding for future, large-scale construction projects, which will take place once the master plan has matured. Site accumulation from private or public owners happens over several years. In some instances, smaller lots must be bought and pieced together over time, and in other instances, a large terrain becomes available and must be purchased at once in order to insure its availability for future use by the purchaser.

On Île-de-Nantes, there is a large railroad owned by SNCF, the French National Railway Company, that the SAMOA plans to purchase after the railway changes routes in 2022, bypassing Île-de-Nantes. As part of their commitment to bring nature into the city, this land is plotted for a large park, *Parc des rails*, and some mixed use real estate projects. “When we buy the railroad property, we will be buying twenty to twenty-five hectares at once. The construction of *Parc des rails* and other real estate operations will be spread out over ten to fifteen years. Thus the questions of transitory management of this space arises,” according to David Polinière (2019).

The temporary use of these lots and others, will help prevent unauthorised populations from moving in, or will facilitate the eviction of such populations when and if necessary. In Nantes, such groups often include Romani travellers or other migrants. According to Virginie Barré (2019), alternative techniques used to prevent such populations from moving in are covering the terrain with holes and hills, making it impossible to park a trailer, a costly process that also makes the area inhospitable to pedestrians and businesses, or hiring a security agency which is very costly as well. Temporary users of these areas not only deter unwanted settlers, but they can also generate income. Even experimental activities, that may not make

a profit, prevent the SAMOA from losing money on the land that is not yet ripe for integration into the final plan.

Because the SAMOA cannot prevent unauthorized groups from settling in other privately owned adjacent vacant lots, an entity on the ground living side by side with unauthorised colonizing population allows them to form a rapport with the SAMOA, which is useful for both the unauthorized groups and the SAMOA in case eviction becomes inevitable. “This allows us to address notions of duration, and the progress of the urban project, and allows us to regulated less by force and more through discussion. This doesn’t mean that we are not occasionally obliged to call the CRS (French public security police), but it’s quite rare,” (Barré, 2019).

According to David Polinière, this relationship formed with unlawful squators occasionally has other benefits as well, as these groups can also act as place holders in preventing others from moving onto the land. “At the entry of a seven-hectare SNCF property, there was a small Romani camp that occupied a small piece of land. Because they didn’t get along with other Romani groups, their occupation there kept others from moving into the seven hectares behind them,” (Polinière, 2019).

*Urbanisme Transitoire* also acts as a placeholder in preventing further degradation of empty lots and buildings. Having a presence on site allows for heating during winter months and fewer negative effects of cold weather on the structure. It also allows for regular maintenance and faster reaction in the case of damage or breakage.

## **5.2. Preparation of the sector**

Low budget design and transitional occupation of urban spaces also creates an opportunity to begin preparing a sector in small steps for future building, taking into consideration safety, accessibility, infrastructure and energetic transitions.

When an institution takes on the legal responsibility for a site, it is important to ensure its safety before allowing the practice of professional activities in that location. Long before construction begins on a permanent project, preparation for its transitory occupation means safety diagnostics must be run. Toxic materials must be disposed of, structural solidity must be assured or reinforced, proper drainage of floodwaters and fluids must take place, and fire danger erased.

Using the approach of *Urbanisme transitoire*, planners can focus on low budget, small scale solutions to accomplish these safety obligations in small steps. Often they can test out uses that may become part of the permanent plan, levying the charges for necessary renovations in the form of rent from professionals who temporarily occupy the site.

However, this need to insure safety can also put a stumbling block in the way of transitory usage. If a diagnostic finds that safety renovations require too much time or financial investment, temporary occupation may be found counterproductive.

Often times, sites are left vacant because their location is not easily accessible, though improved accessibility is a major part of long term regeneration plans for previously industrial sectors. *Urbanisme transitoire* guides a reflection as to how to accomplish this goal from the early stages of a project. Provisional routes for pedestrians, bicycles and vehicles can be determined, and parking lots set, based on anticipated traffic flow in the future plan. The early colonization of a site through *Urbanisme transitoire* also allows urban planners to observe the actual quantity of travelers and commuters opting for certain routes before building permanent roads, bicycle paths and sidewalks. This early provisional infrastructure also enables intentions to be set for more environmentally friendly modes of transportation, changing the habits of the population over time.

### 5.3. Launch activity

*Urbanisme transitoire* can also launch activity that can continue to develop in preparation for maturity of the permanent plan. According to Pagano and Bowman (2000), "The reuse of vacant land and abandoned structures can represent an opportunity for the economic growth and recovery of a diverse range of urban areas. [...] vacant land remains a key competitive asset for implementing a number of economic development strategies: creating jobs, increasing tax revenue, improving transportation infrastructure, and attracting residents." Abandoned buildings can be used to group together professional activities that may not have formed a bond under more traditional circumstances, sparking future collaborations and new business clusters.

In addition to economic growth, *Urbanisme transitoire* can generate non-quantifiable benefits, bringing new energy to an area and beginning to build a neighborhood identity and spirit, or strengthening the existing one.

The digital age has also brought new possibilities for *Urbanisme transitoire*, turning the public space into a laboratory for testing out new technology, gathering user feedback, and creating a reason to publicize the previously underdeveloped sector and draw more activity.

## 6. Key challenges

During my internship with the SAMOA, I observed five key factors which posed challenges to successfully using *Urbanisme transitoire* for urban regeneration. In some cases, the challenges caused a transitory plan to become counterproductive or impossible to realise, while in other cases, they could also be a motor for creative solutions. The five challenges on which I chose to base my analysis of Île-de-Nantes could be an interesting basis for further research on the capacity of *Urbanisme transitoire* to revive other cities and neighborhoods.

## 6.1. Accessibility

As discussed earlier, limited accessibility of a site can be an obstacle for the success of *Urbanisme transitoire* as a tool for regeneration. Certain areas of a city are often left empty because they are difficult to reach, geographically spread out from other professional or commercial activity, or isolated by barriers such as large construction sites, highways or railroad tracks. In order to draw activity, it is useful for a sector to be convenient in terms of distance and travel time.

Sometimes the area is not difficult to reach, but may feel dangerous due to inadequate or unclear traffic signals, traffic speed, limited sidewalks, non-existent bike paths, or poor artificial lighting. Other times, the surrounding landscape is simply uninteresting to look at, deterring cyclists or pedestrians from travelling a route on a regular basis.

In addition, the lack of activity in a zone means it is not economically advantageous for public transportation to be brought into the area until there is potential for greater ridership, and parking may be sparse.

All of these challenges call for creative methods of drawing the public to difficult to reach places. This may affect the types of people that urban planners aim to attract and the types of activities that can function out of previously abandoned buildings.

## 6.2. Health and Security

Neglected areas can pose several safety concerns, such as those associated with unmaintained structures. Old wiring can carry electrocution or fire risks, and improper drainage can be a precondition for flooding. In addition, deteriorating structures may contain outdated toxic materials such as asbestos, while polluted soil in formerly industrial areas where construction is occurring may be exposed to the public.

These safety hazards must be cleared before the area can be occupied, which demands investment of time and money. The cost and benefit of transitory uses early in a project should be weighed. Experimental, low-cost techniques for assuring safety may not yet be satisfactory. These challenges posed by the health and safety of visitors could put *Urbanisme transitoire* on hold, or make it impossible to carry out.

Areas with few inhabitants and visitors also pose a risk of criminal activity, as there may be insufficient artificial lighting after dark, and few businesses to generate regular neighborhood interactions. However, *Urbanisme transitoire* may generate enough activity to draw more potential witnesses, make the cost of tactical artificial lighting worth while, and therefore make crime more risky.

*Urbanisme transitoire* is not just concerned with eliminating health hazards, but also with providing a sense of well-being through design and management of urban space. The SAMOA is striving to define what well-being, or *bien-être*, means in urban planning, and how to evaluate such a concept. Some aspects of well-being in urban settings are considered to be contact with nature, social links and physical activity, but this new concept to urban planning is still being investigate. This exploration is beyond the scope of this study, but would be worth exploring in the future through experimental process-based approaches.

### **6.3. Timeline**

Because *Urbanisme transitoire* is meant to fit into a long term, more permanent plan, the time allotted for transitory interventions is dependant on the higher stakes projects. Urban planners should have the capacity to react quickly in designing and realising projects with a potentially limited duration, and be able to adapt their plan to unforeseen circumstances.

In order for *Urbanisme transitoire* to act as a placeholder and prevent unauthorised groups from moving onto a site, the institution responsible for its redevelopment should aim to house



authorised occupants as soon as they have jurisdiction. However, city regulations can slow down the process because the legal framework often does not recognise experimental transitory projects, and awaiting authorisation to occupy a site can take longer than predicted. According to Brice Thomas, public space planning manager at the SAMOA, as the number of *Urbanisme transitoire* interventions increase, so does the efficiency of fixing case by case regulations, (Thomas, 2019).

In the cases of structural instability of abandoned buildings or areas, the time required to run diagnostics and make necessary repairs for the safety of public occupancy may fill the duration of their potential transitory use.

Other factors that can limit the duration of institutional transitory projects are the length of a contract with a project manager, and the length of the political mandate. The end of the non-renewable, eight year contract with the current design project manager for the SAMOA is in 2024. Projects not completed in that time may be put on hold or left unfinished. Because transitory projects can be realised in a shorter time than more permanent ones, the project manager is more likely to be able to see them through to completion. The elections in 2020 affect the timing of heavy construction because disruptive construction sites tend to inspire discontent among voters. If political will shifts, the urban plan could change or be cancelled.

#### **6.4. Cost**

One of the stipulations of *Urbanisme transitoire* is that it is low cost. Because transitory planning is temporary, it has less time to generate a profit. In addition, the potential to generate economic benefits is hard to predict due to its experimental nature.

The small budget places limitations, but also drives innovation in the recycling and reuse of old materials. Competent and open-minded professionals have a capacity to draw as much or more value than the necessary cost for safety standards, energy supply and accessibility.

Temporary occupants have the potential to generate land value, which can be leveraged for the maintenance and further repair the site.

## 6.5. Multiple stakeholders

In traditional top-down urban planning, the multiple stakeholders involved make it challenging to meet consensus and permit requirements, and the same holds true for transitory planning. The city, public entities, private owners and public or private investors must be involved. The many players, and the larger role of the community as an important stakeholder in *Urbanisme transitoire* can slow down the realisation of an already short-lasting project.

Approaches to *Urbanisme transitoire* push beyond traditional surveys to gather public opinion by harvesting creative ideas from the community. The SAMOA works with the project manager What Time is I. T. which employs in situ storytelling, dialogues and co production of public space prototypes to invite community members to express urban space needs and desires.

## 7. *Urbanisme transitoire* and urban renaissance on Île-de-Nantes

In striving for urban renaissance, we recognise the shortcomings of past strategies. "Urban renaissance is an ambitious aim for European cities, desiring not simply to invest in a better environment, but to be recreated as CIVITAS, places of civilisation. [...] Urban renaissance may be seen as a re-conquest of eternal values to lay the seeds for a better tomorrow. It is meant to bring back harmony to cities and make them more able not simply to adapt to change, but to meet the threefold challenges of sustainability, globalisation and social cohesion," (Mega, 2000).

Urban renaissance today entails new priorities beyond impressive architecture and economic growth. Adaptability, environmental sustainability and a feeling of social equality with the ever changing population demographics are important values that can be sought through *Urbanisme transitoire*.

The SAMOA aims to continue their application of institutional *Urbanisme transitoire* in shaping their long-term, high-investment plan for Île-de-Nantes. Through small, experimental steps combining practices of Tactical Urbanism and Temporary Use over time, the SAMOA strives for results that are adaptable to unforeseen future needs.

## 7.1. Île-de-Nantes Long Term Projects

The master plan for Île-de-Nantes involves several long term projects which *Urbanisme transitoire* is meant to compliment through its role as a placeholder, laying the groundwork for future uses while beginning to generate activity and build a neighborhood identity in advance.

### 7.1.1. The Hospital

The university hospital, *Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Nantes* (CHU) is scheduled to move in 2026 from its current location close to Nantes' historical center to a site in the South-West of Île-de-Nantes, where the *Marché d'Intérêt National* (MIN), a wholesale market for food and perishable products, was located until winter of 2019. The former MIN is on a fifteen hectare site, ten of which will go to the construction of the new hospital, according to David Polinière (2019). The remaining five hectares currently belong to the city of Nantes and the SAMOA. The buildings on the section of the MIN site that will host the hospital were demolished in Spring of 2019. What remains of the former MIN is currently being used by the SAMOA for *Urbanisme transitoire* as part of a multi-part project referred to as "Faites le parc." The plans for "Faites le parc" constantly evolve based on what structural diagnostics

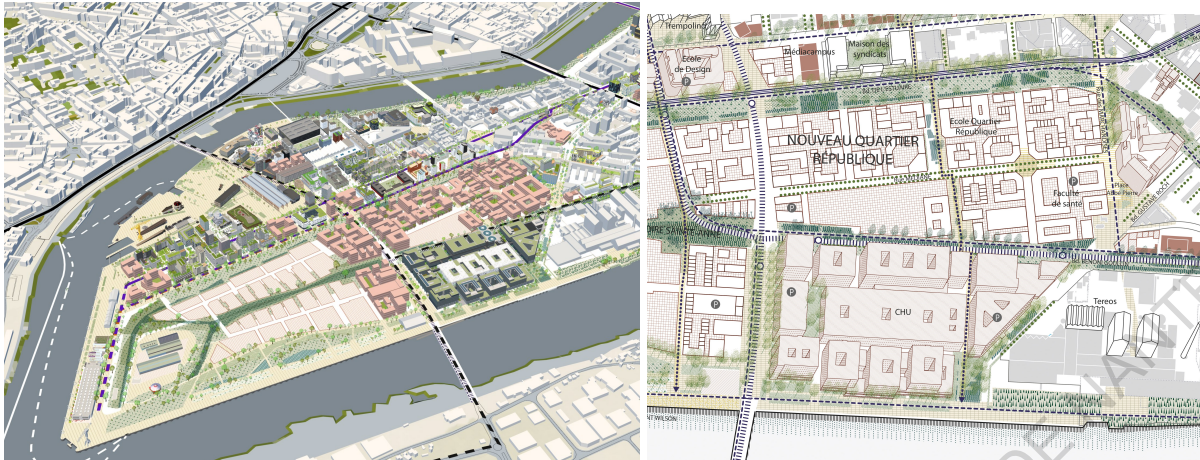
reveal about the area, and based on the experience of stakeholders throughout the period of transition and temporary use.



CHU, source: SAMOA. Perspective. Futur Centre Hospitalier Universitaire (CHU). Architectes \_ Art & Build, Pargade Architectes, Artelia, Signes Paysage. Maîtrise d'ouvrage\_ CHU de Nantes. Nantes (Loire-Atlantique) © Art & Build

### 7.1.2. New République neighborhood

The new hospital creates an opportunity to build a mixed-use neighborhood, and the land purchased from the former MIN and the SNCF offer more than 310,000 m<sup>2</sup> at ground level for the development of this long-term project. The new neighborhood, called République, will be designed by the SAMOA, their project managers and private promoters. The use of *Urbanisme transitoire* is intended to help prepare the zone for the arrival of this neighborhood. However, success of these transitional projects may also be affected by the noise, pollution and visual and geographic isolation created by the construction sites.



Left: 3D model. Nantes (Loire-Atlantique) 06\_2019 © MG design\_Samoa, right: Nouveau quartier République. Nantes (Loire-Atlantique) © Ajoa\_Schorter\_Samoa

**7.1.3. The Future Network of Parks**

In order to bring more nature onto Île-de-Nantes, AJOA and Schorter, the project managers working with the SAMOA to design the master plan, have chosen to create a network of green parks in the South-West of the island. One section will be located on the current railroad tracks, with another section along President Wilson Quay, and a third section in between.



Left: source: Google Maps 2019, right: *Les parcs de l'estuaire, Zac Sud-ouest*, Nantes (Loire-Atlantique) © Ajoa Schorter Samoa

“Faites le parc” is a term chosen to denote the transitory first steps of the creation of this park. The hope is that some pieces of the transitory project could become long term.

**7.1.4. The 5 Bridges building**

The Eaux Vives, a non-profit organization that provides overnight lodging and professional reinsertion programs for the homeless, will open an additional location in a new building called *5 Ponts*, or 5 Bridges, scheduled to open in summer of 2020, adjacent to the CHU site, (Eaux Vives, 2018). The unique feature of a rooftop urban farm will play a key role in reinsertion programs as a tool for teaching work skills, and raising awareness of agriculture and natural cycles.

There will also be an extension of this urban farm in the public space at ground level to provide enough land to become a productive farm, and to draw a mixture of people and activities.

#### **7.1.5. Street and public space redesign in République les-ponts**

In the center of Île-de-Nantes is an already dense residential neighborhood called République les-ponts (different from the future République neighborhood). I learned about the dynamic of this neighborhood by spending time there, through daily work at the SAMOA, as well as by talking with Stephane Juguet of What Time Is I.T., the consultant hired to work with neighborhood residents to assess their needs. On Biesse Street, the main axis of République les-ponts, there are several apartment buildings and street level businesses. However, there appears to be little street life, despite small parks, community gardens and squares along this axis. The SAMOA surmises that this lack of activity is due to the percentage of the street dedicated to automobile traffic, with little room for pedestrians or cyclists, making it unsafe and uncomfortable to spend time outside.

AJOA and Schorter are working on a street plan to calm the traffic, slow down automobiles and give more space to pedestrians. In addition, some of the parks will be redesigned to be more attractive to neighborhood residents and visitors.

### COUPE 3 - RUE PETITE BIESE / PLACE WATTIGNIES



N  
ech. 1/500e

AJOA / SCHORTER / MAgeo / RRA

Source: SAMOA

## 8. *Urbanisme transitoire* in preparation for the master plan

To investigate the hypothesis that *Urbanisme transitoire* is an effective tool in the renaissance of Île-de-Nantes, I will discuss four projects in progress during my internship with the SAMOA from February to August, 2019. The information gathered here comes from my daily interactions and observations at the SAMOA, my participation in “Faites le parc” and “Îlotopia”, internal documents, meetings and cited sources. I will evaluate each project based on the three objectives and five challenges discussed earlier.

### 8.1. “Faites le parc”

“Faites le parc” is the title attributed to a set of transitory projects in the South-West of Île-de-Nantes meant to prepare for the future urban park. The projects I worked on involved the reuse of the former MIN, specifically the former flower market, the President Wilson Quay and a large warehouse called Hangar 24. Throughout the six months at the SAMOA, some areas or buildings were excluded from the plan and others were added based on structural diagnostics.



Left- Parc métropolitain de Loire.Nantes (Loire-Atlantique) © Ajoa\_Schorter\_Samoa, source: SAMOA, right- Quai du Président Wilson. Nantes (Loire-Atlantique), source: SAMOA



### 8.1.1. *Marché d'Intérêt National (MIN)*

The occupation of the former MIN took place due to a need for an urban farming laboratory. The Agronaute, the farmers who will move to the roof of the 5 Bridges building in 2020 or 2021, needed a place to test methods of productivity. The Agronaute currently earns the majority of its income from education about farming in an urban setting, and food and drink sales of products not grown on the farm. Rather than demolishing all MIN buildings, which were purchased by the SAMOA, NM and the CHU in winter of 2019, in preparation for construction of the future hospital and République neighborhood, the SAMOA has decided to keep the former flower market and greenhouse section to host the Agronaute's efforts to shift their income generating activity towards farm production.



The Agronaute, source: SAMOA, Ferme urbaine Lagronaute. Nantes (Loire-Atlantique) 07\_2019 © Valéry Joncheray\_Samoa

#### 8.1.1.1. Objectives

##### 8.1.1.1.1. **Place holding**

The Agronaute acts as a placeholder in the MIN, assuring the upkeep of the site and preventing unauthorised squatters from moving in. In addition, the continued existence of the MIN allows the Agronaute to begin their activity in preparation for a higher stakes project.

The decision to keep the MIN for the Agronaute initiated a similar cycle to the one experienced in Halle Alstom. The urban farm is not able to occupy all 700 m<sup>2</sup> of the greenhouse and remaining MIN buildings, so in order to secure the large space, the SAMOA

and the Creative Factory have begun to implant other professional activities related to agriculture.

#### **8.1.1.1.2. Preparation of the sector**

Certain updates to the MIN and surrounding area are necessary to host the Agronaute, other activities and their visitors. The Agronaute has the intention of holding monthly events of up to a-thousand guests. Using inexpensive methods and recycled materials, such as signage and structures from the MIN site, the project manager Quand Même, also one of the businesses occupying the MIN, is working to create a visually attractive, safe and accessible environment in the MIN and on the adjoining street.

In addition, adjustments to electric installations, access to running water and plumbing must be made to be able to support the MIN activities. This could be an opportunity to test out renewable energy and other sustainable solutions.

These low budget changes can be built upon to incorporate sustainable energy, potentially becoming part of a permanent plan in the MIN should its occupation be deemed successful, or elsewhere on Île-de-Nantes.

#### **8.1.1.1.3. Activity launch**

The gathering of complementary professional activities working in the same space has potential to form a new business cluster. The SAMOA hopes that the links between these activities will outlast their occupation of the MIN. The extent to which temporary use occupants will feel attachment to that particular site, and their capacity to transfer the identity that they formed there to activate a new site is a question for future research. Antoine Devins, director of the Agronaute, does suggest that the Agronaute has been forming its identity based on the scale of the island, because their occupation of the MIN was scheduled as a transitional step from the beginning of the project, (Devins, 2019).

The occupants of the MIN tend to be young, optimistic and forward thinking groups. Antoine Devins (2019) is not concerned by the fact that the farm and the MIN will be at the center of the CHU and République construction sites for the next few years. He feels that the ten to fifteen minute walk from other commercial activity on the island is not a deterrent. "From the moment that we start to draw the public and people want to come, they will come. If they have to park along the sidewalk a little far away and walk, they will do it," (Devins, 2019).

#### 8.1.1.2. Challenges

##### 8.1.1.2.1. Accessibility:

Accessibility is a challenge for the activities in the MIN due to the surrounding construction. Provisional bike paths have been set up, but they are not easy to follow. There is little or no sidewalk leading up to the MIN, and parking is scarce. These obstacles can limit the types of people drawn to events and activities there. However, accessibility regulations, including regulations for the handicapped, must be met. Signage can be a low-cost way to help improve wayfinding and accessibility.

Some of the immediate obligations of the SAMOA are placing a safe pedestrian crosswalk, sufficient parking and fire truck access. A plan for provisional lighting is still in progress.

The SAMOA hopes to guide the MIN occupants in shaping their activities based on accessibility regulations, in order for them to find success despite the obstacles.



The MIN, source: SAMOA, Emprise Sncf. Site du futur Chu. Nantes (Loire-Atlantique) 07\_2016 © Valéry Joncheray\_Samoa

#### 8.1.1.2.2. Health and Security:

Many of the accessibility challenges overlap with safety hazards. The hard-to-see bike paths, missing sidewalks and limited crosswalks make fast traffic dangerous to pedestrians and cyclists. The goal of placing a parking lot on the same side of a fast moving street as the MIN could not be met due to barriers of managing a private adjacent lot. Parking was found on the opposite side of the street, making the placement of a pedestrian crosswalk an immediate priority.

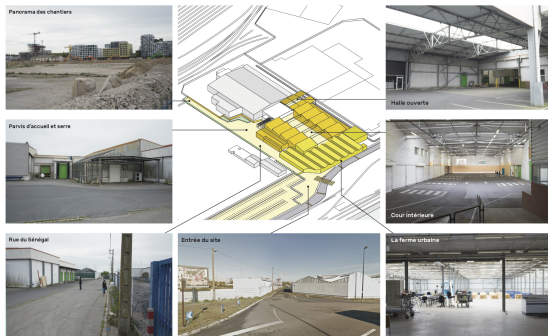
The notion of comfort and well-being in the MIN is more a matter of the energy the people who occupy it bring to the space than it is a question of design, though the consultant Quand Même is working with tactical design methods and reuse to help create an environment that draws visitors.

#### 8.1.1.2.3. Timeline:

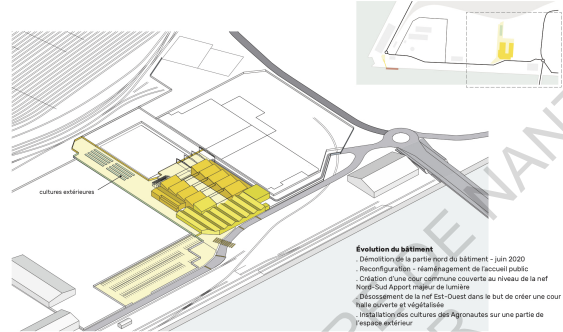
The delivery of 5 Bridges building will mark the end of the Agronaute's residency. Depending on the cluster formed by the other professional activities, the MIN's occupation may continue after the urban farm's departure. One of the strengths of *Urbanisme transitoire* in the MIN is

its capacity to help the plan evolve based on the success or failure of experimental uses of urban space and buildings.

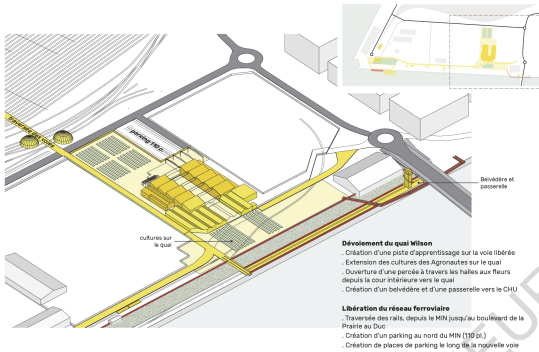
2019 \_ LE MIN \_ ÉTAT ACTUEL



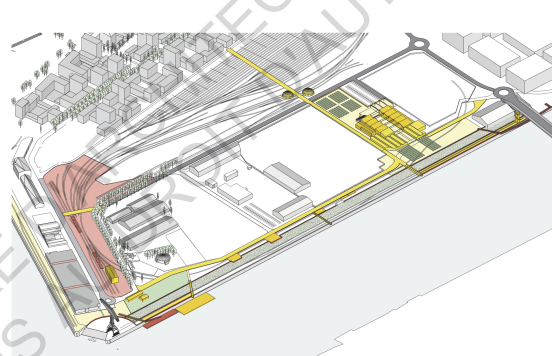
2020 \_ LE MIN \_ REQUALIFICATION



2022 \_ LE MIN \_ CONNECTION AVEC LE QUAI (ET LE NORD)



2023 \_ LE QUAI WILSON \_ VUE D'ENSEMBLE



Flower market and the west MIN, Source: SAMOA - Quand Même

#### 8.1.1.2.4. Cost:

The SAMOA's intention is that the Agronaute and other professional activities take on the cost of running the MIN, including electricity bills and other fees, in the form of rent paid to the SAMOA. The cost to these experimental activities remains comparatively low to the occupants, and the SAMOA will likely not be in deficit. The low level of investment for the transitory design of the MIN is a motor for creativity and innovation.

#### 8.1.1.2.5. Multiple stakeholders:

The occupation and design of the MIN and surrounding areas require the SAMOA and the Creative Factory to work together to build an ecosystem of complementary activities. NM is

also involved because the MIN sits on a public street on which the SAMOA hopes to realize transitory urban design.

Potential terrain for public parking is on private property, which would require negotiations with the owner in order to use it. The SAMOA has decided not to enter into these negotiations at this time, and to find space for parking elsewhere.

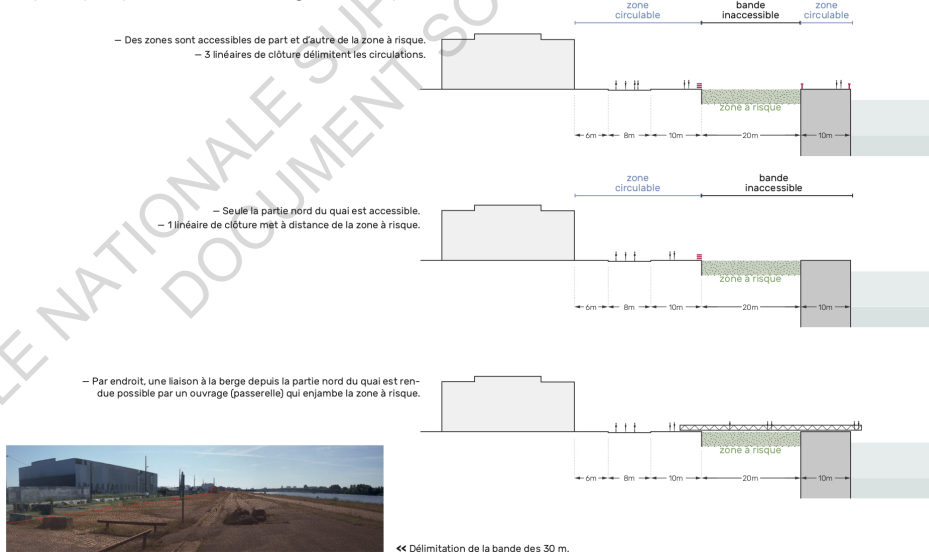
Finally, the occupants of the site are also important stakeholders whose needs must be met. Their satisfaction is crucial because the success of their activities could be one of the most important urban space catalysts.

### 8.1.2. President Wilson Quay

The master plan for Île-de-Nantes includes a large, riverfront park along President Wilson Quay, which is currently a concrete and cobblestone wharf with little foot traffic, and fast moving street.

#### LE QUAI WILSON \_ PRINCIPES D'AMÉNAGEMENTS \_ Faire avec un quai fragile

Coupes de principes des différentes configurations du quai :



Source: SAMOA, © Ajoa\_Schorter\_Samoa

### 8.1.2.1. Objectives

#### 8.1.2.1.1. Place holding

The SAMOA's initial goal was to use *Urbanisme transitoire* to begin prefiguration of the future park, turning design elements towards the river, and testing uses of the public space. At the time of writing this thesis, the President Wilson Quay project is on hold due to safety risks and cost barriers uncovered through diagnostics run on the structure of the quay.

#### 8.1.2.1.2. Preparation of the sector

A preliminary diagnostic of the quay found that it has been degraded by an internal erosion effect, in French called *effet de Renard*, caused by the pull of the river current drawing soil from underneath the concrete surface. This phenomenon has led to weakening of the quay in a fifteen-meter wide strip at about fifteen meters from the river's edge.

This challenge means that the initial plan of colonizing the quay through tactical design in order to draw the public has been questioned and must be amended. AJOA, Schorter and Quand Même have considered ways to design the public space along the quay which requires pedestrians to avoid the fifteen meter band while still allowing access to the view of the river. In meetings with the SAMOA, they have presented ideas that include reinforced pedestrian walkways crossing over the danger zone, signalization of danger through design or blocking access to the weakened section. No decision has yet been made as to how to manage the challenge, and how *Urbanisme transitoire* elements can begin to shape future management of the internal erosion effect.

#### 8.1.2.1.3. Activity launch

Due to the potential of erosion along the quay, launching activity in this area is on hold.

Because the MIN is near by, managing the circulation to the MIN may become a concern in the near future.

## 8.1.2.2. Challenges

### 8.1.2.2.1. Accessibility:

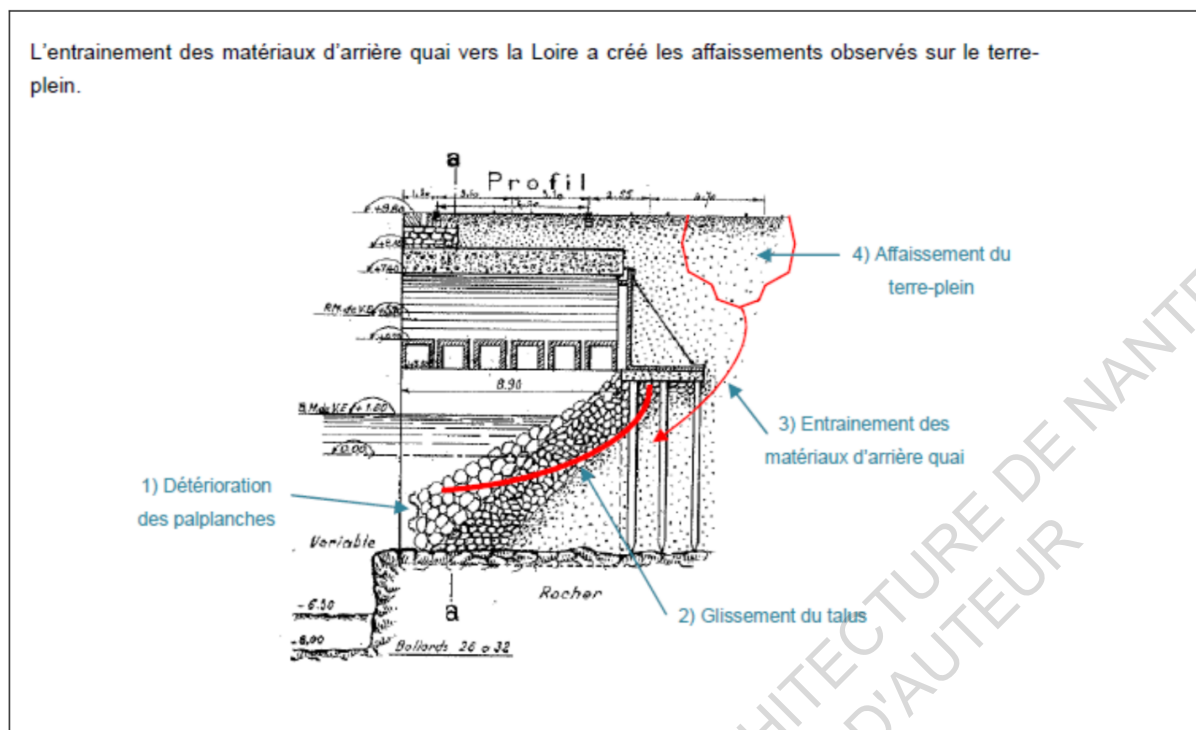
As with the MIN, there is little regular activity near the quay, besides the CHU construction site, and the République construction site in the near future. There are occasional cyclists and joggers that pass, but accessibility is not an issue at this point because the plan for the neighborhood is not yet mature for placing the public on the quay.

However, the lack of population colonizing the quay could pose a challenge for the Agronaute and other professional activities in the MIN, because it means that they will remain without any neighboring activity for the first couple years of their businesses.

### 8.1.2.2.2. Health and Security:

Security of quay is the main issue that has put the possibility of *Urbanisme transitoire* in this area on hold. Once the weakening of the quay was discovered in winter of 2019, after an initial transitory plan had been sketched, several meetings were held concerning how to handle urban planning on a quay that posed unknown sinkhole risks. It seems evident to the SAMOA that major reinforcement work must be done, but in order to determine the urgency of such costly construction, further diagnostics must be performed, augmenting the price of what was initially hoped to be a low-cost project.





Extrait du rapport de la société ARCADIS de juin 2013

Source: SAMOA, ARRO Ingenierie

Another safety issue worth mentioning because it involves a current event that took place on President Wilson Quay during my internship, is the lack of waterside barriers. Though the quay does not see regular activity, it is a venue for occasional “free parties”, free techno festivals with an atmosphere described as “underground” or unauthorised. During one of these parties in the summer of 2019, a conflict with the police pushed fourteen people into the river, one of whom died.

Because of issues like this one, consideration of how urban planners denote a danger zone to prevent people from accessing it is an important subject. Despite the challenges and apparent impossibility of *Urbanisme transitoire* on the quay at this time, the project managers have continued to discuss in meetings “poetic” (words of Jacqueline Osty of AJOA, 2019) and experimental ways of approaching the subject of danger zones. Pierre-Yves Péré of Quand Même has suggested a semi demolition of the quay, using destruction or degradation as a design element that also indicates danger to passers-by. The urban planning consultant

Bureau Olivier Caro has recommended kiosques or shipping containers blocking access to the danger zone, that also provide pop-up business potential and rooftop access for river views, (Bureau Olivier Caro, 2019).

#### LE QUAI WILSON \_ PRINCIPES D'AMÉNAGEMENTS \_ Faire avec un quai fragile



Source: © Ajoa\_Schorter\_Samoa

La création de zones chaotiques reflète l'esprit du lieu, accélère l'émergence végétale sous l'enrobé, et peut faciliter la mise à distance de zones à risque.



Source: © Ajoa\_Schorter\_Samoa

A subject for further investigation would be how design can prevent access to dangerous areas. To what extent does signalisation in the city represent an authority figure to be obeyed or willfully disobeyed, and how can design erase this divide between citizens and institutions responsible for urban planning?

#### 8.1.2.2.3. Timeline:

Some plans may not fit into a limited transitory timeline, as may be the case with President Wilson Quay. *Urbanisme transitoire* intended to draw activity to the quay can only be responsibly undertaken following further costly diagnostics or heavy construction to insure safety.

#### **8.1.2.2.4. Cost:**

A large investment in the quay is potentially premature due to the lack of certainty surrounding the potential of the waterfront to generate financial benefit at this stage. In a few years, only after completion of the CHU and the République neighborhood, the value of the waterfront will be more certain.

#### **8.1.2.2.5. Multiple stakeholders:**

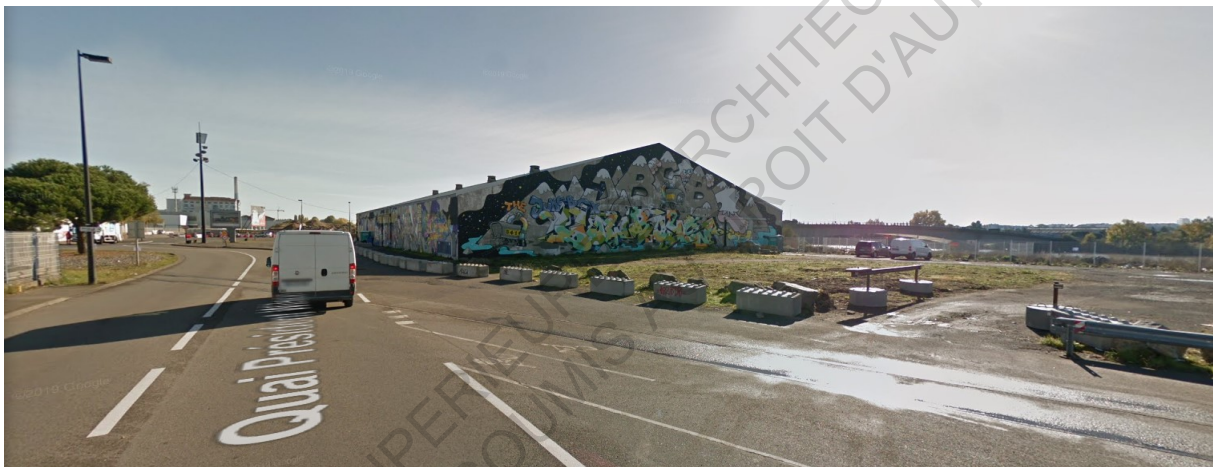
While the SAMOA has been charged by NM with the development of the South-West of Île-de-Nantes, including President Wilson Quay, the quay itself and most of the waterfront is owned by the *Grand Port Maritime* (GPM), the national port. The objectives of the SAMOA and the GPM in the redevelopment plan appear to be different and potentially contradictory. While the SAMOA's mission to pursue fair and ecological development targeted to inhabitants and workers, the GPM appears to emphasize tourism, with an incentive of providing a dock for cruise ships and logistic barges along the quay, so a consensus must be met.

The project managers are also an important stakeholder, as they hope to see some development on the south-western riverfront before the end of their contract. They are especially attached to the transitory plan, because it would allow them to see such development occur. As the risks of *Urbanisme transitoire* are revealed, the project managers are slow to adapt, because as was suggested on several occasions by the SAMOA, the

project managers must “*faire le deuil*” or “mourn” the loss of the transitory plan on the quay.  
Human attachment to a plan can create a material challenge to its evolution.

### 8.1.3. Hangar 24

Hangar 24 is the remaining section of a large warehouse, part of which was torn down to build an automobile bridge across the river. The will of NM and the SAMOA has been to preserve this remaining piece of industrial past and reconvert it into a dining hall, a concert venue, climbing gym or other fitting activity. However, the uncertainty of its structural stability may not make temporary occupation or reuse an option.

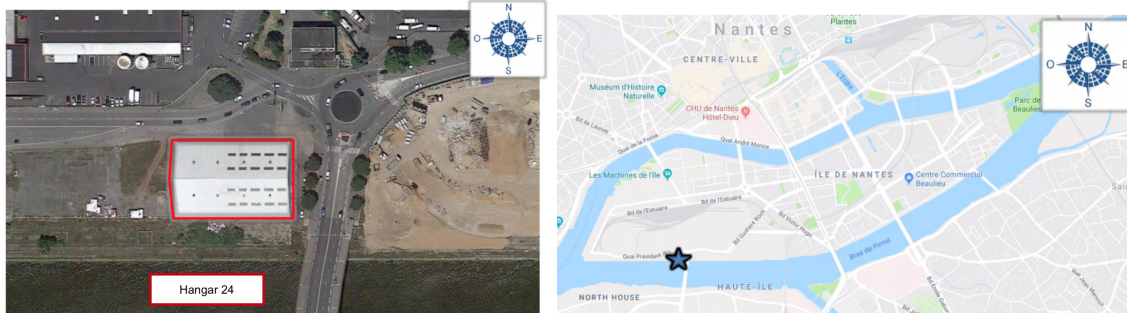


Hangar 24, source: Google Maps

#### 8.1.3.1. Objectives

##### 8.1.3.1.1. Place holding

The intention of the SAMOA and the project manager has been to find a temporary use for Hangar 24, to later incorporate it into the long term plan. But recent diagnostics have revealed that it may not be suitable for either.



Source: SAMOA, ARRO Ingenierie. 2019. "Diagnostic Technique Préalable Au Réemploi Du Hangar 24."

#### 8.1.3.1.2. Preparation of the sector

Temporarily occupying the warehouse filled a need of the SAMOA to provide an in situ exhibition space on the master plan of the South-West of Île-de-Nantes. Its temporary occupation would require electric and plumbing work, as well as renovations to meet security measures, removing outdated toxic materials and installing adequate fire exits. The exhibition space would also help inform Île-de-Nantes residents about construction progress of the CHU and République, and prepare them for changes to the neighborhood.

#### 8.1.3.1.3. Launch activity:

The exhibition space would also provide an opportunity to move additional activities into Hangar 24 meant to cater to the public. The warehouse would begin generating activity among construction workers, as they will be the majority population frequenting the South-West of the island for the next couple of years.

#### 8.1.3.2. Challenges

##### 8.1.3.2.1. Accessibility:

One of the advantages to occupying Hangar 24 is that it would add to the initially desired effect of generating activity in a new eco-system that would include the MIN and President Wilson Quay. The potential incapacity of the warehouse to host activity and the weakness of the quay leaves the occupants of the MIN on their own for the next few years. The decision to occupy the MIN was made before diagnostics on Hangar 24 and the quay had been

completed. The results of these diagnostics and decisions taken as a result may add challenges for the success of the Agronaute and other MIN activities.

#### **8.1.3.2.2. Health and Security:**

More important than the need to update fire exits and potentially remove toxic materials, the greatest safety concern is Hangar 24's location on the quay. Its foundation is within a seven meter distance from the weakened 15-meter wide zone. In the case of a sinkhole, whose probability is not well known, the collapse of the quay could pull the warehouse with it. This potential consequence and doubts surrounding the possibility that such events could occur has lead the SAMOA to cancel the temporary use of the warehouse and look for another exhibition location.

#### **8.1.3.2.3. Timeline:**

For the time being, Hangar 24 sits empty, awaiting consensus from all stakeholders.

#### **8.1.3.2.4. Cost:**

Re-utilisation of Hangar 24 depends on how much stakeholders are willing to invest in further structural diagnostics. This investment would likely be followed by more spending for re-informcement of the quay around the warehouse's foundation.

The willingness to invest would be affected by potential uses of the warehouse, their lifespan and their capacity for financial gain. At this point in the process, it appears that the most economical solution in the master plan is to tear down the warehouse.

#### **8.1.3.2.5. Multiple Stakeholders:**

Hangar 24 is currently the property of the GPM whose ultimate decision it will be to sell, demolish or renovate it. The SAMOA has made the decision not to include it in the transitory or long term plan, putting on hold negotiations with the GPM about the warehouse.

### 8.1.4. The Bovidia

The Bovidia is a building about eight-hundred meters east and inland from Hangar 24, and just east of the CHU site. The SAMOA purchased it from private owners in Spring of 2019 to incorporate it into the neighborhood plan. With the loss of the Hangar 24 as a temporary exhibition space, the Bovidia seems to be the next best option.



Source: SAMOA, Bd Benoni Goullin & Gustave Roch. Nantes (Loire-Atlantique) 04\_2010 © Jean-Dominique Billaud

#### 8.1.4.1. Objectives

##### 8.1.4.1.1. Place holding

Because the Bovidia building is aesthetically interesting and appears to be in good condition, is likely to be integrated into the transitory or long-term plan. Its temporary occupation will not only provide the SAMOA with an exhibition space that it lacks in Hangar 24, but it will also keep out unauthorised squatters and protect the building from deterioration while waiting for the master plan to mature.



The Bovida, source: Google Maps

#### 8.1.4.1.2. Preparation of the sector

The Bovida is in a more heavily frequented and well maintained location than the areas previously discussed, so not as much work appears to be necessary to prepare for the long term plan. However, the use of the Bovida was introduced shortly before the end of my internship, and diagnostics had not yet been completed.

#### 8.1.4.1.3. Launch activity

The SAMOA's occupation of the building as an exhibition space will not fill the entirety of the usable space, creating an opportunity for yet another cluster of professional activities.

#### 8.1.4.2. Challenges:

The Bovida is accessible by bus, bicycle and car, but will be affected by the neighboring CHU construction site. Still the accessibility challenges seem much less than for the MIN and other "Faites le parc" projects.

I am unaware of serious health and security issues in the Bovida, but as it is a more recent addition to the *Urbanisme transitoire* plan, the challenges had not yet been studied at the moment that I finished with my internship. More of a plan for the building and how it fits into



the neighborhood must be formed to evaluate how it is affected by timeline, cost and multiple stakeholders.

## 9. “Îlotopia” - Wattignies Place

The urban environment surrounding Wattignies Place is very different from the South-Western site of “Faites le parc.” The neighborhood in which the small Wattignies Place park is situated, République les-ponts, is densely populated with some commercial activity and nearby public transportation. “Îlotopia” is an effort to redesign the public space, including the park and surrounding streets, with the collaboration of the neighborhood community. Temporary prototypes of outdoor furniture have been tested with citizens in order to determine what will work the best permanently.



Left: Animation Îlotopia. Place Wattignies. Nantes 05\_2018 © Vincent Jacques, source: SAMOA, right: Bd Babin Chevaye. Intervention studio Katra pour Îlotopia. Nantes 09\_2018 © Jean-Dominique Billaud, source: SAMOA

### 9.1. Objectives

#### 9.1.1. Place holding

In the case of Wattignies Place, keeping out unauthorised squatters or preventing the degradation of the site is less of a concern than more deserted areas. The goal of “Îlotopia” is to bring people into a public space which is often empty, in order to initiate neighborhood interactions and spark a more dynamic streetlife.

### **9.1.2. Prepare the sector**

Working with the inhabitants and making a concerted effort to design the public space with their participation is thought to motivate them to feel more involved in the neighborhood. The hope is that this interactive method will also cause them to be more active in the public space. The project manager WT2I took a few seasons to plan events with neighborhood inhabitants, giving them opportunities to test out furniture prototypes and give their own ideas.

This process has brought about a visual theme for the neighborhood of blue and yellow signage and murals, a move which seems to influence residents' pride in neighborhood.

Part of the new design for République les-ponts has already been established, though consultations and interactions with the inhabitants will continue in order to better define a plan of action for Wattignies Place.

### **9.1.3. Launch activity**

In addition to the blue and yellow signage and events, the SAMOA intends to find an operator for a ground level commercial space they own across from Wattignies Place. The occupation of the space will be transitory with the potential to become long term, providing another possibility for an experimental or cultural activities. The rent may be far below market rate in exchange for the operator acting as a master-of-ceremonies over the public space, inciting neighborhood residents to form a habit of spending time in the park.



Inauguration Ilobox du collectif Iloptopia. Nantes 10\_2017 © Vincent Jacques, source: SAMOA

## 9.2. Challenges

### 9.2.1. Accessibility:

Though Wattignies Place is easily accessible for cyclists, automobiles, public transportation riders and pedestrians, construction on streets in République les-ponts will begin in Fall of 2019, about the same time the SAMOA hopes to place an operator in the ground-floor commercial space and begin testing new ways to animate the park. The challenge for *Urbanisme transitoire* is to make the area more hospitable, despite the surrounding construction.

### 9.2.2. Health and Security:

Besides the security concerns that arise near construction sites, creating more activity at Wattignies Place via an activity across the street is likely to bring more people into the street as well. The permanent street plan for the area will calm automobile traffic, but in the meantime, transitory design can be responsible for keeping pedestrians safe from automobiles.

### 9.2.3. Timeline:

Because République les-ponts is densely populated, many people are affected by construction in the area. Construction should begin and end before the 2020 elections, because public opinion seems to be least favorable in the middle of incomplete construction work. Beginning any work that may not be finished before election time must be put off until the elections are over. In the meantime, transitory interventions can give citizens a sense that the local government or other institutions are working to improve the neighborhood.

The timeline for the use of the commercial space across from Wattignies Place was affected by the duration of my internship, because I was responsible for writing and launching a call for proposals for its occupation. Because I had hoped to review the submitted proposals and help select a winner, I left little time for applicant to respond. When the SAMOA only received two undeveloped proposals, we decided to extend the deadline until after my internship, at which point I had to "*faire le deuil*" and let go of seeing the results of the project.

#### **9.2.4. Cost:**

The "Îlotopia" interventions at Wattignies Place are very low cost, using prototypes made from recycled materials such as an old bus or phone booth, and rely more on the commitment of the SAMOA and WT2I to infiltrate the neighborhood by getting to know residents and workers. Working with the local community and providing what they need has greater value in *Urbanisme transitoire* than a large financial investment.

#### **9.2.5. Multiple Stakeholders:**

The SAMOA and WT2I try to work for neighborhood residents and workers, and view them as important stakeholders in the *Urbanisme transitoire* of Wattignies Place. "Îlotopia" takes action based on the theory that the more implicated citizens feel in the creation of public space, the more they will continue to use it and care for it.

Once construction begins, navigating interactions between inhabitants and construction workers can become key in fostering neighborhood harmony. Ideally, the operator of the commercial space can play this mediator role.



Îlotopia commercial space. Source: SAMOA. Bodreau architectes, Maîtrise d'ouvrage- Boréale développement. Nantes 03\_2019 © Vincent Jacques

## 10. “Expérimentations”

The northern bank of Île-de-Nantes was the first zone to be redeveloped at the beginning of the 2000s. Its redesign and activation has proved successful, hosting numerous pedestrians, cyclists, rollerbladers and loungers, alongside university buildings, offices and bars. This has provided an opportunity for the SAMOA and the Creative Factory to test out new types of equipment and technology created by businesses in the Creative Factory’s network. The “Expérimentations” project is part of a larger program called *Quartier démonstrateur*, or Demonstrative Neighborhood, meant to take advantage of public space to expose and test new sustainable technologies. “Expérimentations” have included a solar power bicycle pump,

solar panel sidewalk, connected sidewalk lighting, and a bench that measures and communicates air quality through color coded lights.

## **10.1. Objectives**

### **10.1.1. Place holding and preparation of the sector**

Because the northern bank is already developed, place holding and sector preparation are not important factors. The dynamism of the sector offers the opportunity to test experimental equipment on the maximum number of users. The equipment being tested may prove potential for place holding and sector preparation in less developed areas in the future but their proper operation, durability and safety must be proven first.

### **10.1.2. Launch activity**

Each “Expérimentation” is a small-scale intervention that aims to have repercussions on the rest of the territory. According to Brice Thomas of the SAMOA, in charge of the “Expérimentations” project together with the Creative Factory, “The Creative Factory’s mission is to try to develop the territory through small actions,” (Thomas 2019). Part of what makes the small actions of “Expérimentations” far-reaching development tools is the opportunity they provide to communicate about new technology. It sends a message that Île-de-Nantes is dynamic, which has a potential to draw visitors from outside its borders, (Thomas 2019).

The “Expérimentations” project has also become a tool for bringing together several small businesses with compatible technologies in order to produce even more functional equipment, and new business clusters.



Top left: Bean Cloud, mobilier urbain conçu par Design9. © Design9. Top right: Expérimentation urbaine du balisage lumineux pour vélo. Olumio. 04\_2019 © Samoa. Bottom: Station de gonflage pour les vélos. 06\_2019 © Jean-Dominique Billaud. Source: SAMOA

## 10.2. Challenges

### 10.2.1. Accessibility:

Because each “Expérimentation” is small, it can be inserted easily in denser high-demand areas, which are already easily accessible and heavily frequented.

### 10.2.2. Health and Security:

The equipment must meet certain safety standards before installation in the public space, but because they use new technology, they may not fit into already established safety regulations. Through user feedback that can be gathered using smartphone applications, the safety of equipment and corresponding security standards can be established. If “Expérimentations” are deemed successful and functional through tests on the northern

bank, some, such as the connected artificial lighting, can be brought to more isolated areas, helping improve the safety of these sites.

### **10.2.3. Timeline:**

Local government and small businesses move at different paces, with local government progressing slowly while small businesses require fast reaction time. “At the beginning, the challenge was having a good command of the calendar. We wanted to put the first prototype in place in only three months. It ended up taking about six to eight months to succeed at installing it because it was the first time that we signed an agreement of this type and the local government needed to examine the project in detail to be reassured,” according to Brice Thomas (2019).

As the SAMOA and the Creative Factory puts each prototype in place, they get more efficient, using these experiences to establish a system for “Expérimentations” with the local government.

### **10.2.4. Cost:**

The SAMOA and the Creative Factory had no budget for “Expérimentations” at the beginning, but they did have control over the public space, offering manufacturers access to a true-to-life laboratory. In these circumstances, the manufacturing businesses funded the prototypes, but varying sources have funded the projects case by case.

### **10.2.5. Multiple stakeholders:**

The stakeholders involved in “Expérimentations” include manufacturers, local government, private or public investors, researchers and neighborhood residents. These multiple players influence the timeline and financial investments, according to Brice Thomas (2019), “One of the big concerns is respect for the timeline because if we (the SAMOA, the Creative Factory



and local government) take too much time, the manufacturer may no longer have the funds at the moment that we are ready to put their prototype in place.”

## 11. Soil Renaturation

The SAMOA is currently investigating using *Urbanisme transitoire* as a tool for soil renaturation and reuse in the construction of the future park network. The goal is to take advantage of currently vacant sites to transform inert soil from other Île-de-Nantes construction sites into fertile soil, (Hugues, 2019).



Landscape from excavated soil, 1994/1998 Parc des Saules Orly. Source: Sol Paysage

### 11.1.1. Objectives

#### 11.1.1.1. Place holding

The use of public space for renaturation can help denote areas of future development to passers-by, and areas where soil can be laid on top of the existing surface can provide temporary gardens.

#### 11.1.1.2. Preparation of the sector

In order to construct the future park network, the soil renaturation project manager Sol Paysage (2019) estimates a need for 100 000 m<sup>3</sup> of fertile soil. Because the need is so great, they are studying multiple sites on Île-de-Nantes for use as temporary gardens, on which the soil would be planted and later moved to the park area. However, the hope is that a percentage of the planting can take place on the zone that is already intended for the park, and can remain in place, (Hugues, 2019).

#### **11.1.1.3. Launch activity:**

Besides initiating the growth of plantlife, the renaturation of soil in the urban environment can provide a temporary park, inviting citizens to spend leisure and social time there.

### **11.1.2. Challenges**

#### **11.1.2.1. Accessibility:**

The accessibility of soil renaturation sites to the public is not an important factor, but areas that are heavily frequented can hold educational value for the public about the evolution of more environmentally friendly methods of planning.

#### **11.1.2.2. Health and Security:**

A percentage of the soil excavated on Île-de-Nantes is polluted and possibly hazardous to health, especially children. Because of the proximity of the public to potential soil renaturation tests in the framework of *Urbanisme transitoire*, only inert unpolluted soil can be set on the surface-level of public spaces.

#### **11.1.2.3. Timeline:**

According to Sol Paysage (2019), it takes between three months and three years to reconstitute fertile soil from degraded urban soil. After the first year, the soil can be planted but it takes a few more years to reacquire its biological nature.

#### 11.1.2.4. Cost:

The cost of soil renaturation and reuse on or close to the same site where it was excavated must be measured against the cost of the traditional method of disposing of excavated soil, and importing fertile soil from fields beyond the urban limits (Hugues, 2019). The SAMOA is willing to invest more in a new experimental method with fewer environmental consequences than traditional methods, but the costs and benefits must be weighed and evaluated.

#### 11.1.2.5. Actors:

Construction projects on Île-de-Nantes must adhere to the French environmental department's sites and polluted soil methodology (2017) which sets specific sanitation standards for soil and its future uses. This methodology classifies excavated earth as waste as soon as it leaves its operational site (Sol Paysage, 2019). This classification makes it difficult to reuse soil from one construction site on a different site. It's necessary to consolidate several smaller lots that would have been considered separate in order to classify them as one larger site. In order to maximise the capacity to reuse soil and take advantage of the circular economy, the SAMOA is working to classify all of Île-de-Nantes as one individual site on which soil can be moved around and managed globally.

## 12. Conclusion

The opportunity to test the use of *Urbanisme transitoire* that Île-de-Nantes provides can serve as an example for other post-industrial cities. The SAMOA has been able to try out transitory approaches in a variety of environments, from sectors like the South-West, devoid of commercial or cultural activity prior to the existence of the Agronaute, to République

les-ponts residential neighborhood, to the northern riverbank lively with students, workers and visitors. The geographical centrality of Île-de-Nantes is an advantage that not all post-industrial sectors have, but political will and institutional approaches to *Urbanisme transitoire* as part of a long term plan could still make it effective in place holding, preparing a sector and/or launching activity.

As observed while working with the SAMOA, the basic challenges to using *Urbanisme transitoire* are accessibility where there are limited roads and public transportation access, health and security due to little artificial lighting or risks of collapse, sinkholes or other structural dangers, limited timeline based on the schedule of a higher-stakes plan, limited financial investment for experimental projects, and managing the goals of multiple stakeholders. These challenges may prevent a project from succeeding, but they can also act as leverage for creative solutions. *Urbanisme transitoire* begs the question of how far to push an idea before putting it aside and starting over, or giving up on a transitory solution.

*Urbanisme transitoire* encompasses many experimental approaches and practices which may be found successful if they lead to a lasting result that continues to generate activity and interactions over time. The projects that I worked on are still in progress, and whether they will meet their goals is to be determined.

The occupation of the MIN or the Bovida examines the potential of *Urbanisme transitoire* to launch clusters of professional activity, and will reveal their ability to endure on Île-de-Nantes if they succeed at generating economic growth and increased property values. Future difficulties may occur for urban agriculture, craft or cultural activities unable to pay higher rents or taxes.

The exploration of *Urbanisme transitoire* on President Wilson Quay and Hangar 24 show that adaptability and readiness to consider other solutions are assets. Human attachment to a plan can be a valid barrier to adaptability.

“Îlotopia” demonstrates that low-risk and low-investment projects require a lot of initiative from urban planners to work together with inhabitants. Efforts to keep citizens involved in the public space are continuing, and enthusiasm of one or a few committed members of the public is an asset.

Finally, as shown through *Expérimentations*, the legal framework must be adapted to experimental and case by case approaches. The existence of a system that translates the language of urban planners to that of city regulators can save valuable time.

Despite the challenges, the experimental nature of *Urbanisme transitoire* allows a continued search for better solutions than what we currently rely on. A policy of openness to repeatedly readapting plans must continue over time due to unanticipated discoveries or events, and the unpredictability of the outcome.

## 13. Future Research Leads

The success of business clusters and their ability to generate economic growth can be studied through the continued observation of the grouping of professionals in the MIN during the transitory phase and neighborhood evolution in the South-West of Île-de-Nantes. If the neighborhood rises in value, as predicted, further research can be done on the capacity of these professional clusters to survive in the neighborhood as real estate and tax values increase. In addition, if these activities succeed in creating a neighborhood identity, we can examine if that identity shapes the character of the future neighborhood, or is erased.

The soil renaturation project is also a subject for further research. The renaturation of soil removed during construction and its reuse on site or nearby could reduce waste, and transportation distances and align with energetic transition principles. The current SAMOA study of this process could be an opportunity to observe how the reuse of soil and *Urbanisme transitoire* can function together to achieve common objectives.

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