

**SSSP 2023-2024 Montréal, Québec Canada  
Local Arrangement Committee (LAC) Report  
Anick Desrosiers, Chair**

**Final Report**  
**Submitted on June 28th, 2024**

**The members of the SSSP 2023-2024 LAC are:**

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We also had exchanges and received valuable ideas, support and guidance from other SSSP members that have a connection with Tiotia'ke/Montréal. We would like to thank them all and especially Colin Hasting, Eric Mykhalovskiy and Jayne Malenfant.

Anick Desrosiers worked directly with Michele Koontz and President Mary Bernstein as Chair of the Local Arrangements Committee. Both provided invaluable guidance and recommendations as I navigated this process. As such, she would like to thank them both for their patience and support.

Here is a breakdown of the tasks we were in charge of and how they were completed.

Véronic Lapalme and Anick Desrosiers wrote the «Welcome to the City of Tiotia'ke/Montréal» essay which included information on cultural venues, art, museums, theatres, neighborhoods, historical sites, where to eat, places to shop, hang out spots, free things to do, and special events.

Amanda Keller wrote the «Graduate Student Welcome to the City» overview. Overviews were submitted 03/04/2024.

Anick Desrosiers contacted all tour companies that were providing guided tours in English to inquire about content, prices and conditions. We ended up working more closely with l'Autre Montréal, because they had a strong focus on social justice and are providing good conditions for their experienced and skilled guides. We developed with them two accessible tours in English: “the Other Old Montreal” is an exploration of Montréal between Place d’Arme and Chinatown, that will go into the social, religious and cultural diversity of the old town, with an accent on first nations, the first French “engagés” and women, the immigrant population and the enslaved people. “The Village and Pride: LGBTQ+ History and Realities” will focus on the history, challenges and future of one of Montreal’s focal points when it comes to sheltering LGBTQ+ people and coming together to fight for their rights.

On the side, we also worked on developing a tour focussing on answers to homelessness in Montreal and contacted Architecture sans Frontières Québec and local allies to develop a walking tour on hostile architecture and on community initiatives. We finally secured the choice of the SSSP with l'Autre Montreal after Dr. Mary Bernstein’s approval.

The LAC then inquired about how to better reach the faculty and students at local universities and submitted names and contact information for the Local Universities Directory, focussing on Montreal and adjacent university department that may have interest in SSSP work. We submitted a list on October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

We were also active to look for a recipient for the Indigenous Peoples’ Social Justice Award. We reached out to our communities to have a larger sight of the local initiatives and how they are received by the community. We then submitted a shortlist of organisations to the eyes of our Tiotia’ke/Montreal academic contacts and to Indigenous local elders for feedback. We came into agreement that the [Project Iskwew/the Iskwew Project](#), an initiative of the [Native Women’s Shelter of Montreal](#) presented a unique and important mission that was important to the community and deserved more recognition. We were particularly moved by Iskwew’s approach of direct support for individuals, fostering urgent action and advocacy for practice and policy change within settler colonial State systems, undertaking research and knowledge mobilization, and the fostering of Indigenous-led spaces of education and community-building. No members of the LAC are affiliated with this organization. We submitted the recommendation to SSSP on March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024.

Anick Desrosiers and Véronic Lapalme wrote the Press Releases to announce the SSSP coming to Montreal and submitted it to the SSSP on June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

## **Future Recommendations**

Montreal, as many other cities, is composed of a delicate blend of communities and languages with complex relations and a strong heritage of colonialism, with consequences that are still actual. It's a delicate matter as an organisation to really understand and acknowledge the struggles of the people on the territories where we gather and to adapt to local realities. We believe SSSP could do more in taking a stand for social justice in these contexts and make it that the role of the LAC could be anchored more in adapting to our local realities, with flexibility and possibilities to do so. That however may require to change some of our ways to do things, with the hope that the additional effort will not stop us from going where there may be more tensions and sensitive matters to be leaders in doing things in an evolving manner.

### **General action items:**

- Think about creating and holding a deeply respectful space for local Indigenous communities by including and valuing Indigenous elders in the opening of SSSP and in other key moments of our gathering, while taking care to not tokenize people.
- Being aware of power dynamics and language matters on territories we gather on and be open to think about ways to be inclusive for academics, students and community members in all official languages when relevant.
- Plan a session for local initiative, research and communities.
- Create a special fund to encourage local participation to the SSSP meeting and facilitating membership.

### **Specific actions items for tours:**

- Create opportunities for local members to share a more intimate experience of their city.
- Plan guided tours outside of session times.
- Raise the amount permitted for the participation to local tour guide while developing ways to keep our focus on accessibility, so we can also respect the people who provide the services and offer predictability and fair wages.

In solidarity,

Anick Desrosiers, LAC Chair, 2023-2024