

REGION

NORTH SHORE AND SOUTH SHORE OF THE MONTREAL METROPOLITAN REGION

Topic Sheets

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The North Shore of the metropolitan region includes parts of the administrative regions of the Laurentians and Lanaudière, and has a total population of about 800 000¹. The Laurentian region, famous for its vast, wild territory with more than 9 000 lakes, is comprised of 83 municipalities and 2 Mohawk reserves (Doncaster and Kanesatake), on a total area of about 22 000 km². The region of Lanaudière, known for the richness of its soil, mildness of its climate and the vastness of its plains, is sometimes called by its nickname—the Région verte [green region]. Lanaudière is comprised of 53 municipalities and an Atikamekw reserve (Manawan) over an area of 13 500 km².

The South Shore of the metropolitan region includes part of the Montérégie administrative region, which has a population of about 645 000. This region, which owes its name to the Monteregian Hills adjacent to it, has 178 towns and two Mohawk reserves (Akwasasne and Kahnawake) over an area of about 11 000 km².

LAND TRANSPORTATION

The Quebec road network includes about 185 000 km of autoroutes, regional and national highways, streets, and local roads. There are also nearly 12 000 bridges, tunnels, support walls, culverts and other structures. The road system connects all the regions, but is concentrated mostly around the large population centres of Montreal and Quebec City.

In the metropolitan region, nearly 3.5 million trips are made daily. Nearly 40% of these trips are made from the North and South Shores to the island of Montreal. Throughout the metropolitan area, these trips are made by car (74%) or by shared transportation (22%).



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THE OLDEST: THE VICTORIA BRIDGE

The Victoria Bridge, constructed in 1854, was originally a tubular bridge but is now a bridge with a steel frame. It was the first to cross the St. Lawrence River between Montreal and Saint-Lambert on the South Shore. When built, it was the longest bridge of its era.



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THE BUSIEST THE CHAMPLAIN BRIDGE

The Champlain Bridge crosses the St. Lawrence River, connecting the island of Montreal to Brossard on the South Shore. It was constructed in 1962. It has a reserved bus lane going in the opposite direction of traffic during rush hour. Used daily by more than 800 buses, this reserved lane is a key element of the collective transportation system.

1. AQTIM. 2010. *Profil des organismes membres*. Available online: www.aqtim.qc.ca

2. Tourisme Laurentides. 2007. *Les Laurentides au Nord de Montréal*. Available online: www.laurentides.com



CIT & OMIT AND WHAT THEY OFFER: LET'S TRAVEL TOGETHER

Twelve organizations offer shared transportation in the South and North Shore regions of Montreal. Several of them share the name *Conseil intermunicipal de transport (CIT)*, while two municipal and intermunicipal transportation organizations, the *Organismes municipaux et intermunicipaux de transport (OMIT)* look after the towns of Saint-Jean and Sainte-Julie. To respond to the needs of citizens in these regions, both CIT and OMIT serve neighbouring towns. Also, most users travel from the suburbs to the cities of Montreal, Laval or Longueuil. Each of these organizations operate independently, but they coordinate their services, thanks to, among other things, the creation of l'association québécoise du transport intermunicipal et municipal (AQTIM).



Here are some examples of unique services offered on the North and South Shores of Montreal:

Young people enjoy a greater autonomy of movement thanks to the **Taxi 12-17** service. In Sainte-Julie, many places are accessible only by autoroute from residential zones. The service is offered at a low price and is organized to meet the needs and schedules of young people from 12-17, within a radius of 20 kilometers.

The **Trottibus**, sometimes called the pedibus or pedestrian bus, can be compared to a bus: a route with stops is scheduled morning and night, and many children gather in a group along the road to school; the difference is that the journey is made by foot. This usually happens as an initiative of the school administration and neighbourhood residents. Trottibuses are organized in some schools in Varennes and Châteauguay.

Are you familiar with the **Muséobus**? Since it gave up its career as a transporter of children to become a scientific museum, this funny school bus has moved from one schoolyard to another in Beloeil to help young people discover various scientific concepts. Its internet site: www.museobus.qc.ca

The **Vélo-bus** service exists in several cities to encourage cyclists to use shared transportation along with their bicycles. With bicycle racks installed on the front of the bus, it's possible to combine the two means of transportation in a single journey and to reach places inaccessible to shared transportation.

The **P'tit Train du Nord** linear park has given a second life to a railway track which helped developed tourism in the Laurentians from the 1920s to the 1940s. This park, 230 kilometers in length, is today the longest in Canada. As a railway transformed into a bike trail, this transportation corridor opens the door to visitors and fresh air enthusiasts!

The **Bécik Jaune**³ is an initiative of a Joliette youth centre in 2009. Secondary school students are given the responsibility of repairing bicycles donated by citizens, with the goal in mind of putting them back into circulation. The cities of Mascouche and Lavaltrie were inspired by this project and now the béciks jaunes are available there too.

The **Mon école, à pied à vélo!** program is an initiative of Vélo Québec. This program complements the Fondation Monique-Fitz-Back's "Transportation for a Better Life" program. It encourages the involvement of parents and school administrations in an education process which mobilizes us all to develop healthy modes of transportation respecting the environment. Find out about it!

Did you know that compared to walking, a bicycle is three to five times more efficient for the same energy exerted, and four times faster?⁴ When you compare the number of calories burned by riding a bicycle with those burned while driving a car, the difference is enormous: 100 calories will propel a cyclist 5 km, and the same number will move a car only 85 meters—which would choose?

3. Québec en forme. *Bécik jaune ou l'âme d'une communauté*.

www.quebecenforme.org/nos-actualites/archives/becik-jaune-ou-l-ame-d-une-communaute.aspx

4. Exploratorium. *Science of cycling*. Available online: www.exploratorium.edu/cycling/humanpower1.html

MARITIME TRANSPORTATION

FERRY FROM SOREL-TRACY TO SAINT-IGNACE-DE-LOYOLA

This ferry connects the village of Saint-Ignace-de-Loyola, near Berthierville, to the town of Sorel-Tracy. You can reach the archipelago islands of Lac Saint-Pierre in about ten minutes by bike, bus, car, even by foot!

Did you know that the only victory won by the Patriotes in 1837 was on the Chemin des Patriotes, which runs along the east shore of Richelieu River near Saint-Denis, followed two days later by their first defeat at Saint-Charles?

THE RICHELIEU RIVER

The Richelieu River was known earlier as the Masoliantekw, meaning “water where there is a lot of food” in Abenaki. It was frequently used by the Iroquois, Hurons and Algonquins. The river was a navigable route for the fur trade and for wars of conquest in the eighteenth century.

THE ASSOMPTION RIVER

This river used to be called the Outaragasipi, meaning “torturous”, because of the many twisted meanders in its course. In the municipality of Joliette, this river is transformed into a skating trail 9 km long when it freezes over, the longest in Quebec.

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

The first scheduled train in Canada was established in 1836. The first rails connected the station in Saint-Jean-d'Iberville to the station in de La Patrie, over a distance of about 24 kilometers. It took the train two hours to make this trip! Financial backers invested in this small segment of rail to connect navigation from the St. Lawrence River to Lake Champlain, in order to promote business between Montreal and New York⁵.

In total, six suburban train lines now run from the North and South Shores of the metropolitan region.



5. Éco-train Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu. *Le premier train...* Available online: www.eco-train.org/Train1836.pdf



...QUIZ...

- 1 • What is the distance in kilometers between your home and your school? Unless you take an airplane to school, be careful not to measure the distance as the crow flies!

As the crow flies” or “in a beeline” are idioms for the shortest distance between two points, measured as a straight line on a map. This route resembles the one taken by a bird or a bee, since once you’re in the air, nothing forces you to make a detour.

- 2 • What is the average walking speed of an eight year old child?

- 3 • How many minutes does it take to walk from your home to school?

- 4 • What is the daily exercise time recommended for a child of your age?

- 5 • Have you used the shared transportation system of your town or city? If so, where did you go and with whom?

- 6 • How many buses does your town or city transportation system own? What color are they?

- 7 • Other than buses, name two other shared transportation methods. Other than walking, name two other methods of active transportation.

- 8 • How do your parents travel to work? Is this a shared, active or solo transportation method? How long does it take your parents to travel between home and work?

- 9 • How long does it take your parents to travel to work from home?

- 10 • Have you visited the internet site of the company or organization which manages the shared transportation system of your town or city?

Answers.

Question 2: 4 km/h (source: Vélo-Québec. *Transports actifs*. Available online: www.velo.qc.ca).

Question 4: 60 minutes (source: Kino-Québec. 2011. *L'activité physique: le sport et les jeunes, Avis du comité scientifique de Kino-Québec*. Available online: www.kino-quebec.qc.ca. 104 p.)