

Commute travel time savings and accessibility improvements from the REM (first phase)

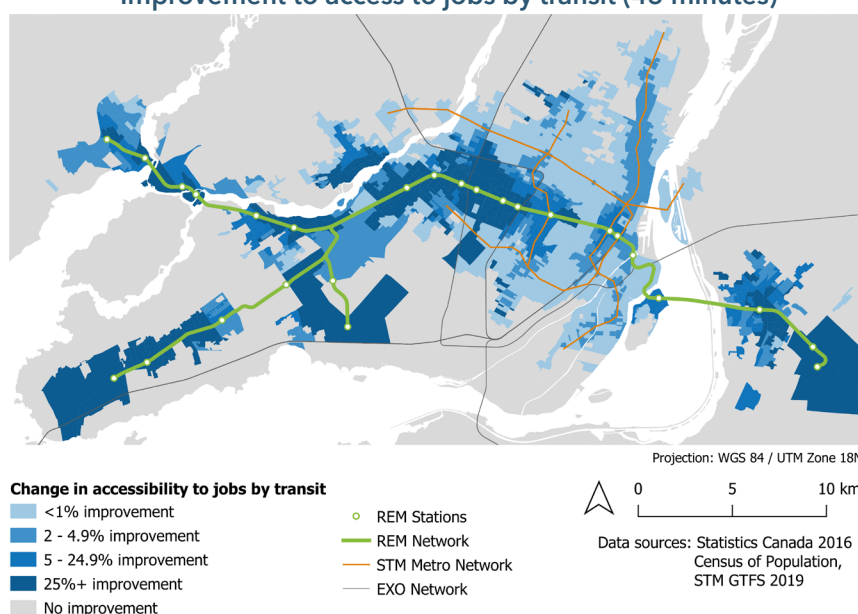
The Issue

The Réseau Express Métropolitain (REM) is a new rapid light-rail system under construction in Montreal, with operations planned to begin in 2022. Significant investments in the metropolitan transport system like the REM can offer benefits throughout the region in the forms of improved access to opportunity and travel time savings for existing work trips. Based on the 2019 public transport network adding the first phase of the REM and using data from the 2018 origin-destination survey and the 2016 census, we examined how these benefits are distributed across the region and across socio-economic groups.

Findings

- Travel time savings and accessibility benefits are concentrated within 2km of the new REM network. Areas close to the Metro system also experience accessibility gains.
- On average, higher income households benefit more from commute travel time savings due to the REM than lower income ones.
- High and low income areas benefit more from REM-generated accessibility improvements than middle-income areas.
- The north branch of the REM will have the greatest impact on travel time savings: commuters near Deux Montagnes station will experience a 20% improvement in travel times.
- 68.6% of the CMM population will not experience accessibility improvements due to the REM.
- 89.6% of commuters will not experience travel time savings on existing commutes due to the REM.

Improvement to access to jobs by transit (45 minutes)



Travel time savings and accessibility improvements by income group

Household income	Average travel time savings	Average accessibility improvement
Under \$30K	1.32%	14.30%
\$30K to \$60K	1.54%	6.99%
\$60K to \$90K	1.33%	6.53%
\$90K to \$120K	1.39%	3.95%
\$120K and above	2.21%	15.90%

Note: Bus network adjustments following the inauguration of the REM are not included in these calculations.

Policy Recommendations

- » **Plan for bus and active transport connectivity to improve regional benefits of the REM.** Improving access to stations will expand the proportion of the population that benefits from accessibility and travel time improvements due to the REM.
- » **Plan network adjustments and future rapid transit investments through an equity lens.** On its own, the REM imparts disproportionate benefits on higher income areas and families. Network adjustments can connect low-income areas to the REM and promote equitable development of regional transport.