



TRANSPORTING QUÉBEC TOWARDS MODERNITY

SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY POLICY - 2030

Regional Public Transit
Intervention Framework

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For more information, you can:

- dial 511 (in Québec) or 1-888-355-0511 (elsewhere in North America)
- visit the website of the ministère des Transports at www.transports.gouv.qc.ca.
- write to: Direction des communications
Ministère des Transports
500, boul. René-Lévesque Ouest, bureau 4.010
Montréal (Québec) H2Z 1W7

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1. Regional Public Transit in Québec

This document is an integral part of the Sustainable Mobility Policy to 2030. It presents an overall portrait of regional public transit in Québec, its issues and all measures related to the 2018-2023 Regional Public Transit Action Plan. The most promising and cross-sectional measures in this sectoral action plan also appear in the Sustainable Mobility Policy Comprehensive Action Plan.

The Regional Public Transit Intervention Framework is a key component of the Sustainable Mobility Policy vision: In 2030, Québec will be a North American leader in 21st-century sustainable and integrated mobility. In a territory planned with a view to sustainable mobility, it will have a high-performance, safe, connected and low-carbon transport ecosystem that contributes to Québec's prosperity and meets the needs of people and businesses.

Current situation

For regional public transit, the period between 2003 and 2007 was a time of experimentation, deployment and consolidation. In this period, rural public transit organizations tried to maximize the use of places available in various transit services: public transit, paratransit, school transit, transportation related to the health and social services network, intercity transportation, taxis, ridesharing, etc. They also improved and enhanced the service offer.

Since 2007, the main objectives have been the development and expansion of the public transit service offer. These objectives have been achieved:

- In 2007, 48 eligible organizations, mainly regional county municipalities (RCM), offered public transit services within their territories. That number has climbed to 77 in 2016, of a possible 94. This means that 82% of the organizations eligible for the Programme d'aide au développement de transport collectif (PADTC or public transit development assistance program) established services based on the resources available and the needs of the public.
- In 2007, 234,000 trips were made using regional public transit. In 2016, government assistance boosted that number to over 1.2 million trips, an increase of 58% over 2012, when there were only 778,041.

The development of these services varies considerably based on the territory and the priorities of the local authorities. Some eligible organizations develop a global, integrated regional vision that includes all public transit stakeholders. Conversely, others develop their services separately, based on needs related to specific requests (public, para, school, intercity, etc.). In these cases, the deployment of public transit services met specific needs rather than global planning based on supply and demand.

Intercity bus service, provided by private companies with permits from the Commission des transports du Québec (CTQ), is another crucial part of regional mobility. For several years, however, the intercity bus industry has been facing decreased traffic, which hurts the financial vitality of the companies and has repercussions on the services offered to the users. This trend can be explained by a combination of many factors: decrease in traffic and income, increase in operating costs, competition from ridesharing, particularly through digital platforms, an increase in car ownership rates and, in some regions, competition instead of complementarity from public transit arranged by the municipal authorities and funded through the PADTC.

The Importance of Regional Public Transit for Sustainable Mobility in Québec

In Québec, there are 1,032 municipalities with fewer than 10,000 inhabitants, accounting for nearly 25% of the population. The mobility issues faced by rural communities are very different from those experienced in urban environments. On one hand, there are few parking problems and little road congestion. On the other, the car ownership rates are higher due, in part, to a lack of other viable mobility options that can compare with private car ownership.

Rural areas of Québec are characterized by low demographic density and the dispersion of activities, which leads to longer trips to reach the work place or school, to do activities or to maintain social ties. The morphology of rural areas makes it almost mandatory to own a car.

In areas with low residential density, scattered activities, many trip generators, and specialized spaces, public transit service planning poses specific challenges. Cars are very hard to compete with in a territory with these features, and they are generally the preferred choice.

Some of the residents, such as younger people, older people and the underprivileged, are therefore at a disadvantage in terms of mobility. In general, in rural areas, mobility problems aggravate exclusion.

Improving the transportation conditions in rural areas is therefore necessary from the perspective of fairness and social participation. With the ageing population and increasing rural exodus of young people, it is essential to offer alternatives that will allow people without cars to access community services, including health and recreational services, as well as places of employment and education.

Sustainable mobility must also be seen as an opportunity to increase the appeal of rural areas. Whether the goal is to host new activities and new inhabitants or maintain a high-quality living environment, the level and accessibility of public transit is an important strategic vector in the development of these areas. Personal mobility must be considered as a fundamental condition to develop the area's appeal.

In rural territory, the question of mobility affects economic development and access to employment as well as social integration and equality of access to public services. It is a fundamental issue for regional development, which is a priority in the Sustainable Mobility Policy in all regions of Québec, particularly rural communities that are struggling with a loss of vitality, the exodus of young people and the ageing of the population. Public transit is an important lever for regional development as it enhances the appeal and competitiveness of the territory.

Roles of the Québec government, the municipal sector and private enterprise in regional transportation

> The Québec government

The Québec government sets legislation and regulation frameworks for the public transit sector, its safety and security. Division V.3 of the Transport Act (c. T-12) concerns the organization and management of municipal public transit services and defines the types of carriers authorized to offer such services under contract with a municipality (s. 48.19, Transport Act).

The Québec government has provided financial support for regional public transit through the PADTC since 2007. The financial aid program allows eligible municipal organizations to develop service offers to meet the various transportation needs of the public. Some kinds of funding under this program are also for intercity bus carriers, to support some of the more financially fragile intercity routes, in order to maintain the intercity mobility of the users.

Recently, the government highlighted the importance of regional public transit in the 2017-2018 Québec Economic Plan, and from 2017 to 2021, the PADTC has been granted additional funds of \$2 million a year to support regional public transit projects. Funding for regional public transit has risen from \$7 million in 2012 to \$12.8 million in 2017. The average amount of financial aid granted was \$132,000 in 2017, up from \$121,970 in 2016 and \$84,000 in 2012.

> Municipal sector

The home jurisdiction for the organization of rural public transit is the municipal authorities, principally RCM. They are responsible for planning, implementing, organizing and coordinating the services, and while they can entrust the management of these activities to a delegated body (e.g., paratransit organization or not-for-profit organization), they are still the principal transit partner of the Québec government. The RCM has to participate directly in the financing of public transit in its territory in order to receive financial aid from the government.

Many organizations have also sought to maximize the use of other available public transit services (mainly school transportation and paratransit). As a front-line player, the municipal sector holds a key role in planning regional mobility.

Public transit organized by the municipal sector must be offered through carriers authorized to do so under the Transport Act (c T-12), but it is the municipal sector that determines the services to offer (schedule, frequency, fares).

> Private enterprise

Intercity bus service in Québec is provided by private companies that receive no financial operating assistance from the government. These services must comply with the legislation and regulations in effect, which are enforced by the CTQ.

Trends and outlook to 2030

Trend 1: Expansion of regional public transit

The data provided in the operating reports of regional public transit organizations eligible for the PADTC reveal an increase in the number of service launches. The number of organizations taking advantage of financial aid for the operation and organization of rural public transit services increased significantly when the financial aid was rolled out from 2007 to 2010, but not much since then. This trend is expected to continue, since the vast majority of eligible organizations with mobility needs have already established their service offer (82%) and the others are in areas that are less conducive to the development of public transit services (very vast territory, very low population). Consequently, the number of trips taken has increased. This sustained growth should continue in the years ahead, particularly with the support of the Policy and the resources and means dedicated to the development and consolidation of the service offer.

Trend 2: Reduction in the offer of intercity bus services

Since 2013, the financial aid for intercity bus service under the PADTC has increased significantly to maintain struggling routes. It appears that the traditional model has difficulty responding to the changes and new realities that have cropped up in recent years (competition from ridesharing, particularly using digital platforms, increase in the household car ownership rates, increased demographic concentration around major centres). The financial problems experienced by some intercity bus companies have direct repercussions not just on local clients but on all the company's clients. Losses suffered on non-profitable routes must be compensated by general fare increases or service reductions. As these transportation services become more expensive, demand decreases, further accentuating the problem of non-profitability.

The precarious situation of intercity transportation is not limited to Québec. Elsewhere in Canada, provincial governments have faced similar experiences. A trend toward partial or total deregulation has been observed in several Canadian provinces, leading to a consolidation of the industry and the abandonment of unprofitable routes, sometimes taken over by other carriers that offer more modest services, the complete lack of service to some rural areas and an increase in the quality of services on profitable lines. In Québec, many routes to sparsely populated locations are at risk, and private carriers will probably concentrate on links to major urban centres, where demand is higher.

Trend 3: Governance involving many stakeholders

The accelerated development of public transit services has unveiled problems that make complementarity difficult and lead to a certain lack of territorial coherency. In different regions of Québec, public transit services have developed based on specific needs: paratransit, school transportation, intercity bus service, health care network transportation, taxi transportation, etc. In many cases, each mode is a separate entity, subject to different regulations. This parcelling out of competencies and responsibilities can lead to a lack of coherency in available choices. In a single territory, we therefore find:

- A high number of decision-makers sharing the responsibility for planning and implementing transportation services;
- Parallel use of services that increases the funding absorbed by the transportation budget;
- An increase in budgets that could support transportation from different government departments and allocated to multiple organizations;
- A patchwork of services that does not reflect the reality of trips taken, as transportation services

are managed in a fragmented territory.

Too many organizations are responsible for offering transportation services, often to the detriment of service quality and the sound management of public funds.

Trend 4: Ageing of the population

The population of Québec is getting older: those 65 and over, who represented just 16% of the population in 2011, will make up 21% in 2021. In rural areas, this phenomenon is accentuated by the departure of young people to urban centres. The ageing population has a decisive effect on public transit needs, and increases in rural and regional public transit needs are expected.

2. Sustainable Mobility Issues Related to Regional Public Transit

Issue 1: Governance, organization and planning of regional public transit services

The institutional framework for planning regional public transit services should develop the service offer, optimize services and improve complementarity across the entire territory. The current framework is unable to resolve problems related to service planning, coordination and complementarity. The service offer needs to be integrated and planned with the input of all mobility stakeholders.

The various modes of transportation form a complex network which cannot perform efficiently without complementarity and good coordination. It is therefore important to establish public transit services that adhere to a global territorial view. The institutional framework must be reinforced to allow it to achieve this objective.

Service planning should be organized in partnership with local players, but from the perspective of a global territorial view. Lack of coordination leads to the duplication of services and a lack of functional connections among the networks. A concerted approach and coordinated action must be at the heart of regional planning for public transit networks. The Sustainable Mobility Policy relies on this guideline.

Issue 2: Development of regional public transit

Since 2011, the PADTC has been renewed each year, which limits the development and planning of public transit services. Furthermore, the financing of services under the PADTC does not take territorial specificities into account (length of trips, density of the territory, etc.). The current model slows development and initiative in regions that want to offer users more services. The recipients often have to look for additional or alternative funding in order to be able to deploy the desired services.

Likewise, the legislative and regulatory framework for regional public transit no longer seems suitable for today's realities, and it is often depicted by beneficiaries as an obstacle to the development of new offers.

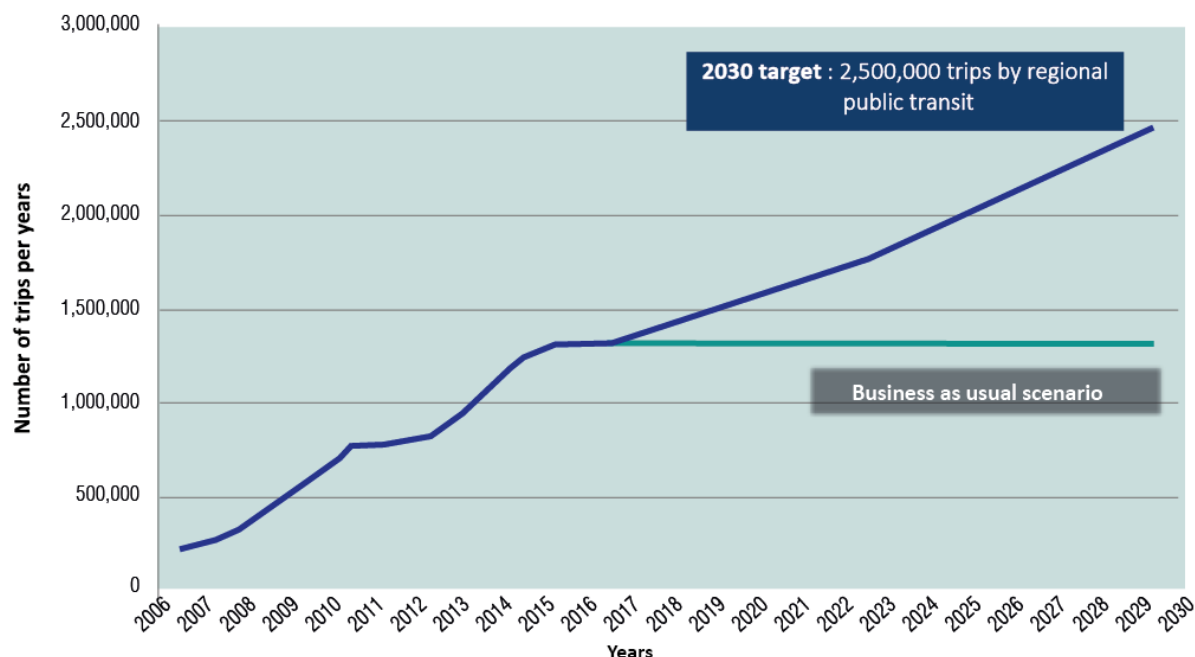
For the intercity bus service industry, in particular, a legislative and regulatory environment conducive to the development of regional public transit appears to be an essential factor for the vitality of the industry and the regions served.

3. 2018-2023 Regional Public Transit Action Plan

The regional public transit action plan is built around the issues defined and the various intervention priorities. The development of the service offer, improved planning, better financing and the enhancement of regional leadership are the key components of the action plan. The objective is to improve the mobility offer for the users.

With the Sustainable Mobility Policy, the government has set an ambitious objective for regional public transit. Overall, the government wants to increase the use and development of services to double the number of trips made using regional public transit by 2030, an increase in the order of 5% per year.

Figure 1: Use of regional public transit



Issue 1: Governance, organization and planning of regional public transit services

The government will support the development of a structuring regional public transit network that takes into account the potential contribution of every mode of transportation to maximize and optimize the service offer based on available resources.

INTERVENTION PRIORITY 1.1: SUPPORT FOR REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSIT

Organizations eligible for financial aid under the PADTC must optimize their services and their organization by developing a regional service vision in order to work together and improve the mobility offer for users.

It is crucial for transportation players to stop working in silos and focus on coordination and collaboration among the various public transit services within each region. Regional leadership is critical

for the development of this vision. The governance of regional public transit must be improved and implemented to reflect each particular territory.

Measure 1: Develop integrated sustainable mobility plans

With this new program, the MTMDET, in collaboration with the ministère des Affaires municipales et de l'Occupation du territoire (MAMOT), will offer financial assistance to municipalities for the development of integrated sustainable mobility plans in their territory. These plans will be complementary to the existing land use planning tools, which are the Metropolitan Land Use and Development Plans, the land use plans and the master plans. They will cover both passenger and freight transportation, taking all solutions and modes into consideration.

This program will include an envelope of \$50 million for the first five years. An amount of \$2.5 million is also already budgeted for support services for the production of plans and the preparation of guides and reviews of best sustainable mobility practices. These tools will be developed by the MAMOT in collaboration with the MTMDET.

Indicator: Number of plans adopted
Target: 100% of the RCM
Budget: \$2.5 million (current funds); \$50 million (additional funds)

Measure 2: Support the municipal sector in initiatives that combine the activities of eligible bodies

Outside the metropolitan areas of Montréal and Québec, Québec counts many organizations involved in passenger mobility in the regions, and there are too many overlaps. The government plans to support the municipal sector in initiatives with the aim of combining organizations to improve governance and regional planning. The goal is to make management of services more efficient and better integrated. The objective of the initiatives is to encourage regional autonomy, optimize available networks and empower elected officials and the municipal sector in matters of public transit. The parameters of the programs concerned will be reviewed to encourage the association of regional transit resources.

Indicator: Modification of existing programs
Target: Programs modified by 2020

Measure 3: Create regional roundtables that bring together the principal regional public transit stakeholders

Regional authorities must be established to bring together all the public transit stakeholders in each administrative region. The mandate of the concertation organism will be to develop a regional service vision and plan and to improve the mobility offer for users. The MTMDET wants to strengthen cooperation among the different local authorities engaged in service planning and management, but also draw on their experience.

Indicator: Number of active regional tables
Target: Creation of 10 regional tables by 2020
Budget: From PADTC budget envelope

Measure 4: Support the interconnection of regional public transit services

Regional public transit must embrace complementary action and provide the indispensable interconnections that allow for high-quality service, that is, connections among different modes and among different territories. The interconnection of local and regional public transit networks optimizes service for the users. It is achieved through the coordination and harmonization of existing local services across the region, for public, intercity, school and paratransit, resulting in an integrated service offer on the regional scale.

Indicator: Number of projects
Target: 10 projects by 2023
Budget: From PADTC budget envelope

INTERVENTION PRIORITY 1.2: OPTIMIZE THE MOBILITY OFFER

Regional public transit services have existed for some time, and the available resources can be optimized to offer more efficient mobility to the users. To this end, the government wants to support organizations in their efforts to optimize the mobility offer, integrate various public transit services and adapt the infrastructures to the needs of regional public transit.

Measure 5: Promote the creation of incentive parking in strategic locations

Rural and periurban areas face major difficulties in establishing services. The creation of incentive parking in strategic locations would enhance the appeal and use of public transit services. The principles underlying this measure target improved service intermodality. The parameters of the programs involved will be reviewed to promote this measure.

Indicator: Number of incentive parking spaces created
Target: 120 parking spaces
Budget: From existing programs

Measure 6: Consider integrated mobility plans in the design and financing of any transportation infrastructure project in Québec

Measure 6 adopts a management framework that will include this vision in all MTMDET road program projects. The municipalities will be called upon to do likewise.

Indicator: Number of projects analysed based on amended standards
Target: Framework developed by 2019

Measure 7: Establish a reference framework

To support the authorities responsible for regional public transit, a regional public transit reference framework will be established. This framework will define specific indicators to allow regional public transit authorities to achieve the development targets set in the Policy. The authorities will also be able to use this tool for comparison purposes, to improve their service offer and develop integrated mobility plans.

Indicator: Development of the reference framework

Target: Framework developed beginning in 2020

Issue 2: Development of regional public transit

The government will take action to foster the sustainable development of regional public transit. To this end, the existing PADTC will be adjusted to respond adequately to new regional realities, as will the legislative and regulatory framework for public transit.

INTERVENTION PRIORITY 2.1: SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF A STRUCTURING REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSIT NETWORK

The appeal of regional public transit must be increased to contribute to community revitalization. To achieve this, the regional public transit environment must be adapted to improve the versatility and vitality of the transport authorities and public transit businesses, including intercity carriers, in order to provide better services for the users.

Measure 8: Introduce the required legislative and regulatory amendments to improve the framework for regional public transit

The government will hold consultations to identify the legislative and regulatory amendments most relevant to the public transit sector, especially regarding intercity bus service. This will make the framework more flexible in order to facilitate the development of regional public transit in various regions of Québec.

Indicator: Legislative and regulatory proposals

Target: Regulatory framework improved by 2020

Measure 9: Improvement of the attractiveness of intercity bus service

The intercity bus network often is the backbone of regional public transit. To stimulate the expansion of this mode, encourage modal transfer and protect the long-term future of the industry, incentives to use intercity bus services could be offered, to increase the number of trips taken.

Indicator: Increase in intercity service capacity in the regions

Target: 10% increase in the regions by 2023

Budget: \$20 million over five years

INTERVENTION PRIORITY 2.2: ADJUST THE FINANCING MODEL FOR REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSIT

The ten-year-old financing model for regional public transit has reached its term, and it is time to establish solutions suitable for today's realities and the particular features of each territory, to ensure long-term, recurring financing for these services. The new model should support the vitality of the beneficiaries to help them improve their services based on local needs and specificities.

Measure 10: Expand the regional public transit budget

The budget of Part II of the PADTC is insufficient for the growing needs of eligible organizations to support the development of regional public transit services. The government will therefore increase the budget allotted to Part II of the PADTC.

Indicator: Increase in the budget allocated to regional public transit

Target: Budget increased by 2019

Budget: \$19 million over five years

Measure 11: Adjust government financial aid to offer assistance that is better suited to regional specificities

Programs will be reviewed to adjust financial assistance to regional specificities. Specific indicators and criteria will be developed, using the reference framework.

Indicator: Modification of PADTC terms and conditions

Target: Terms and conditions improved beginning in 2019

Measure 12: Create a multi-year envelope for the PADTC

To encourage better financial planning among organizations eligible for the PADTC and enhance service development, the government will create a multi-year budget envelope for regional public transit.

Indicator: Modification of PADTC terms and conditions

Target: Terms and conditions improved beginning in 2018

SUMMARY TABLE

Regional Public Transit Intervention Framework Issues, Intervention Priorities and Measures	Indicator	Target	Contribution to aspects of the Sustainable Mobility Policy					
			SMP aspect 1	SMP aspect 2	SMP aspect 3	SMP aspect 4	SMP aspect 5	Winning conditions
Issue 1: Governance, organization and planning of regional public transit services								
Intervention priority 1.1: Support for regional public transit								
Measure 1: Develop integrated sustainable mobility plans (MTMDET. MAMOT)	Number of plans adopted	100% of the RCM	X					
Measure 2: Support the municipal sector in initiatives that combine the activities of eligible bodies (MTMDET)	Amendments to existing programs	Programs modified by 2020						X
Measure 3: Create regional roundtables that bring together the principal regional public transit stakeholders (MTMDET)	Number of active regional tables	Creation of 10 regional tables by 2020						X
Measure 4: Support the interconnection of regional public transit services (MTMDET)	Number of projects	10 projects by 2023	X					
Intervention priority 1.2: Optimize the mobility offer								
Measure 5: Promote the creation of incentive parking in strategic locations (MTMDET)	Number of incentive parking spaces created	120 parking spaces			X			
Measure 6: Consider integrated mobility plans in the design and financing of any transportation infrastructure project in Québec (MTMDET)	Number of projects analysed based on amended standards	Framework developed by 2019			X			
Measure 7: Establish a reference framework for regional public transit (MTMDET)	Number of projects analysed based on amended standards	Framework developed beginning in 2020	X					

Regional Public Transit Intervention Framework Issues, Intervention Priorities and Measures	Indicator	Target	Contribution to aspects of the Sustainable Mobility Policy					
			SMP aspect 1	SMP aspect 2	SMP aspect 3	SMP aspect 4	SMP aspect 5	Winning conditions
ISSUE 2: DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSIT								
Intervention priority 2.1: Support the development of a structuring regional public transit network								
Measure 8: Introduce the required legislative and regulatory amendments to improve the framework for regional public transit (MTMDET)	Legislative and regulatory proposals	Regulatory framework improved by 2020	X					
Measure 9: Improvement of the attractiveness of intercity bus service (MTMDET)	Increase in intercity service capacity in the regions	10% increase in the regions by 2023	X					
Intervention priority 2.2: Adjust the financing model for regional public transit								
Measure 10: Expand the regional public transit budget (MTMDET)	Increase in the budget allocated to regional public transit	Budget increased by 2019	X					
Measure 11: Adjust government financial aid to offer assistance that is better suited to regional specificities (MTMDET)	Modification of PADTC terms and conditions	Terms and conditions improved beginning in 2019	X					
Measure 12: Create a multi-year envelope for the PADTC (MTMDET)	Modification of PADTC terms and conditions	Terms and conditions improved beginning in 2018	X					