

Transporting
People in
Québec:

SUMMARY

BETTER CHOICES FOR CITIZENS

QUÉBEC POLICY RESPECTING PUBLIC TRANSIT




BRILLER
PARMI LES MEILLEURS

Québec 

SUMMARY

The government has published the new Québec Policy respecting Public Transit, which is entitled **Better Choices for Citizens**. This policy is closely related to the introduction of sustainable development, in light of the economic, environmental, and social repercussions connected with the use and accessibility of public transit.

OBJECTIVE

With this new policy, the government is targeting a global objective: to **increase the use of public transit across Québec in both urban areas and rural areas**.

- The government intends to **increase mass transit ridership by 8%** by 2012.
- This increase will allow mass transit systems to **increase their market share** in relation to other modes of transporting people.

In order to attain this objective, the government will build on modern and effective mass transit systems, on a public transit ridership rate that is already significant in comparison with the rest of Canada, and on urban traffic that compares favourably with what has been observed in the rest of North America.

Despite an encouraging outlook, the situation remains fragile, and the government must work with its partners to introduce a number of initiatives aimed at increasing the use of public transit throughout Québec.

SELECTED WAYS AND MEANS

To this end, the government is implementing four series of measures:

- The government intends to **delegate the efforts required of each stakeholder in an equitable manner**. Municipalities will continue to be primarily responsible for mass transit systems. The government has affirmed its role as a coordinator and overseer, by assuming the major portion of the costs associated with the development and maintenance of infrastructures and equipment – costs that will easily attain \$8 billion over the next decade – according to the estimates that were presented by the authorities who are responsible for organizing public transit.

In its new policy, the government has specified the responsibilities of each of the partners, as well as its expectations with respect to the contribution from the federal government. The new policy includes initiatives that strive to improve equity in the Montréal region.

- The use of public transit entails the **improvement of services offered to the population**. In order to achieve this, the authorities who are responsible for organizing public transit will be directly encouraged to improve the offer and the quality of services for users, and to encourage the public to increase their use of public transit through direct assistance for the improvement of services. Each year, the government will mobilize \$130 million from the Fund that has been put into place under the Action Plan on Climate Change for this purpose. Fiscal measures will encourage employers and workers to increase their use of public transit. The government will pay particular attention to the security and safety of mass transit systems.
- Initiatives are planned to **modernize and develop infrastructures and equipment**. The effort to renew infrastructures and equipment is already underway, with the injection of more than \$2 billion in investments over the past decade, and a minimum of \$4.6 billion in necessary investments slated for the next ten years. However, it is essential to look even further ahead, which is why mass transit financial assistance programs have been set up for the benefit of the authorities who are responsible for organizing mass transit systems, specifically with the introduction of the Programme d'aide aux immobilisations en transport en commun, which is sponsored by the Société de financement des infrastructures locales; and the improvement of the Programme d'aide gouvernementale au transport collectif des personnes.
- The Québec Policy respecting Public Transit does not restrict the government to simply supporting public transit. It is also supporting **other alternatives to the automobile**. This facet of the new policy is aimed specifically at less populous municipalities, Regional County Municipalities, and regional conferences of elected officials, where alternatives to the automobile are not readily available, intraregional transportation by coach, the accessibility of coaches and taxis for individuals with reduced mobility, public institutions, companies, industrial parks where promising initiatives must be encouraged, and traveling by foot and by bicycle. The government is also focusing on improving the energy efficiency of road transportation for people.

The items listed in this policy are summarized in the two tables that appear at the end of this document.

ANTICIPATED RESULTS

The Québec Policy respecting Public Transit focuses on the quality of services offered to the population. The measures that are put into place should translate into a 16% increase in the supply of transit services offered, which in turn should make it possible to achieve the 8% targeted increase in use, because users will benefit from increased frequency, a more comprehensive schedule, and more routes.

Now that the new Québec Policy respecting Public Transit is in place, the government is anticipating results that may be quantifiable in some cases.

- As mentioned when the government objective was formulated, the policy has a very specific target in terms of the use of mass transit systems: the addition of 40 million trips to the approximately 510 million trips that are currently taken on public transit every year in Québec. This number is meaningful in that it corresponds to the number of trips taken on the Réseau de transport de la Capitale each year in the Québec City agglomeration.

It is realistic to believe that this level of use will materialize before the end of the fifth year, which is 2012. Therefore, it will be possible to increase the modal share of mass transit compared with the use of the automobile in Québec's leading cities. There are obviously variables that may affect this evolution, such as the relatively rapid increase in the cost of fuel and user fares.

At the end of this period, an evaluation of the results that have been attained will be carried out in order to identify corrections that should be made. A new target will then be established for the next five-year period.

- This policy will have a significant impact on energy consumption, and on the emission of pollutants and greenhouse gases. In fact, modal transportation that favours mass transit would represent a net reduction of approximately 28 million litres of fuel in Québec, which corresponds to the equivalent of 14,000 vehicles per year. The net result in terms of energy savings would represent 80,000 fewer tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions compared with what is currently anticipated.
- The new Québec Policy respecting Public Transit will also have a positive impact on road congestion. In fact, according to ministère des Transports estimates, the addition of 40 million trips using public transit should translate into 34 million fewer vehicle trips in urban regions. It is estimated that this number represents approximately 1.8% of all automobile trips in all urban areas involved. Furthermore, according to a recent ministère des Transports study on the costs associated with congestion in the Montréal region, it is estimated that this reduction will generate annual savings of \$44 million in terms of the costs incurred by traffic problems alone.

A POLICY FOR ALL QUÉBECERS

The Québec Policy respecting Public Transit is ambitious. It will benefit all Québecers, helping to improve the lives of citizens in urban areas and in rural areas, while at the same time serving as a foundation for upcoming generations.

- By 2012, the use of public transit is expected to increase significantly, which will have an immediate effect on greenhouse gas emissions, road congestion, and atmospheric pollution in cities, along with reducing our dependency on imported fuel.
- The government has clearly outlined the responsibilities of each stakeholder in terms of public transit, by carefully defining the roles and responsibilities in large urban areas, while respecting its orientations in terms of local and regional autonomy.
- The Québec Policy respecting Public Transit identifies the financial means that are required in order to attain the stated objectives. The government is engaged in initiatives that have been awaited by all Québecers with a view to ensuring the necessary replacement of equipment and infrastructures and overseeing the improvement of customer services.
- The Québec Policy respecting Public Transit involves the entire territory of Québec. The government is introducing the necessary support in order to develop alternatives to individual automobile trips in municipalities with smaller populations, and in all regions of Québec.
- The government is reaffirming its willingness to make public transit systems accessible to individuals with reduced mobility and those who are in wheelchairs.

Over the years, Québec has introduced transit services that are efficient, effective, and widely accessible. In many respects, the results already place Québec at the forefront in comparison with the rest of Canada.

We must build on these assets, and go even further as we increase the scope of public transit.

With its new Québec Policy respecting Public Transit, the government is offering its citizens a choice that will benefit the entire community, by improving quality of life and making a significant contribution to the sustainable development of Québec.

Québec Policy respecting Public Transit

Objective:
To increase the use of public transit across Québec

Target:
Increase the use of public transit by 8% by 2012 (increase the annual number of trips using public transit by 40 million).
Attaining this target will allow public transit to increase its market share compared with other modes of transporting people.

Selected ways and means

1
Delegate the efforts required of each stakeholder in an equitable manner

Municipalities: they continue to be primarily responsible

- Financial responsibility for operating costs
- Financing in addition to government financing with respect to capital assets

Authorities responsible for organizing public transit: deliver efficient and effective services

The government: coordinate and accompany

Users: main beneficiaries, who must assume their share of costs

Motorists: beneficiaries, who must also assume their share

Employers: facilitating beneficiaries

The federal government: a new partner

The Montréal region: equity must be improved

Appointment of a sponsor and financial proposal expected from the CMM by September 30, 2006

Governance of authorities responsible for organizing transit

- Openness of the government
- Important to avoid across-the-board measures

2
Improve services offered to the population

Direct financial assistance for improving services

- \$130 million per year to improve the services offered to the population
- Budget envelope dedicated to public transit from the Green Fund under the auspices of the Plan d'action sur les changements climatiques
- Payment of an equivalent financial contribution by municipalities
- Signing of performance agreements between the government, municipalities, and authorities responsible for organizing public transit

Fiscal measures aimed at promoting public transit

- Mass transit passes
 - Reimbursement of the tax on diesel fuel
- New initiatives to reinforce the security and safety of mass transit systems**

3
Modernize and develop infrastructures and equipment

Reinforcement of government assistance for capital assets

- The Programme d'aide aux immobilisations en transport en commun, sponsored by the Société de financement des infrastructures locales du Québec
- The Programme d'aide gouvernementale au transport collectif des personnes

Enhancement of the Programme d'aide gouvernementale au transport collectif des personnes

- An "innovation" component
- New eligible expenses
- A three-year financial framework
- Eligibility of municipalities with fewer than 20,000 residents
- Access to transit for individuals with reduced mobility

4
Support other alternatives to the automobile

Municipalities with smaller populations

- Enhancement of the Programme d'aide gouvernementale au transport collectif en milieu rural
- Motivation to turn over regional responsibility for the coordination of public transit in rural areas to regional conferences of elected officials

Intraregional coach transit and the accessibility of coaches and taxis

- Financial support for regional connections
- Specific support for transporting individuals with reduced mobility

Initiatives from public institutions, companies, and industrial parks

- Encourage travel by foot and bicycle
- Improve the energy efficiency of transporting people by road

Québec Policy respecting Public Transit

Better Choices for Citizens

Summary table of measures

Series of measures	Measures	Main beneficiaries
<p>Allocation of a budget envelope dedicated to the development of public transit from the Green Fund (\$130 million per year)</p>	<p>Improve the supply of mass transit services (frequency, number of routes, schedule, etc.)</p> <p>Government assistance program for public transit in rural areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased assistance for Regional County Municipalities • Addition of a CRÉ component • Addition of an intraregional coach transit component <p>Subsidy program to adapt taxis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved program • Addition of coach adaptation <p>Encourage travel by foot and bicycle, as well as local initiatives</p> <p>Introduce support initiatives launched by public institutions, companies, and industrial parks</p> <p>Launch an assistance program for technological innovation in terms of energy efficiency</p> <p>Addition of an innovation component</p> <p>Make new equipment eligible</p> <p>Make municipalities with less than 20,000 residents eligible</p> <p>Société de financement des infrastructures locales du Québec (504 \$million/5 years)¹</p> <p>Introduce a trust (total of \$117 million over 3 years)²</p> <p>Provide government assistance of between \$4.6 billion and \$8 billion over the next decade according to various investment scenarios</p> <p>Make the pass deductible for the employer (200%)</p> <p>Make this benefit non-taxable for employees</p> <p>Make tax on diesel fuel fully refundable</p>	<p>Users, authorities responsible for organizing transit, Agence métropolitaine de transport</p> <p>Users, municipalities with smaller populations</p> <p>Individuals with disabilities, taxis, and coaches</p> <p>Cyclists, pedestrians, municipalities, authorities responsible for organizing transit</p> <p>Employees, employers</p> <p>Authorities responsible for organizing transit, coach operators</p> <p>Authorities responsible for organizing transit</p> <p>Authorities responsible for organizing transit</p> <p>Less populous municipalities</p> <p>Authorities responsible for organizing transit</p> <p>Authorities responsible for organizing transit, Agence métropolitaine de transport</p> <p>Mass transit corporations, Agence métropolitaine de transport</p> <p>Users</p> <p>Authorities responsible for organizing transit</p>
<p>Enhancement of the Programme d'aide gouvernementale au transport collectif des personnes (Government Assistance Program for Public Transit) (\$30 million per year)</p>		
<p>Reinforced assistance for capital assets</p>		
<p>Fiscal measures</p>		

¹ \$411 million from the federal government, \$93 million from the Québec government.

² Announced in the last federal budget.

Source: *Ministère des Transports du Québec*

June 2006

