

# Findings from the 2013 McGill Commuter Survey

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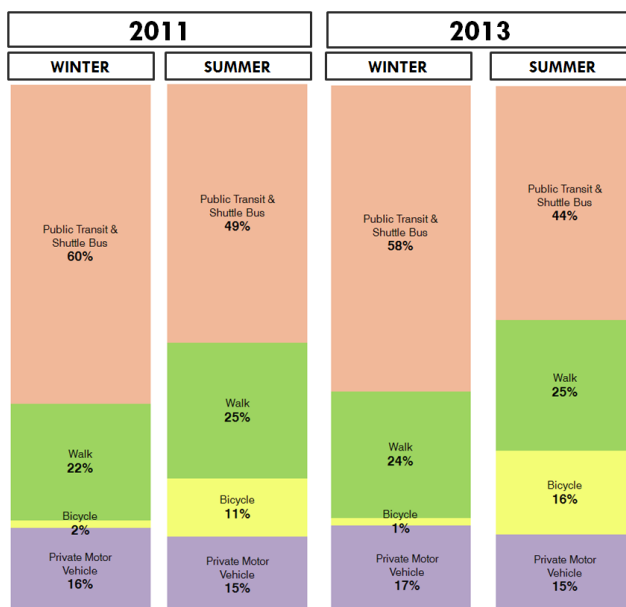
McGill University contributes significantly to the transportation network and commutes of the Montreal region. The results of the 2013 McGill Transportation Survey have been compiled for analysis in order to examine commuting behaviour patterns of the McGill community.

## Response Rate

A total of 20,851 survey invitation emails were sent out to McGill students, faculty and staff. 6,609 responses were received, yielding a survey response rate of 31.7%. After extensive data cleaning, the final sample size is 5,610 responses. 48.7% are students, and 51.3% are employees (faculty and staff).

## Mode Split

The 2013 commuting mode split among the sampled McGill affiliates as compared to 2011 is as follows:



Active transport and public transit combined (sustainable forms of transportation) comprise 83% of transportation to and from McGill in the winter, and 85% in the summer. These totals are similar to those of 2011 (84% and 85% respectively). The most important difference between both years is the 5% increase in cycling as an alternative to public transit. Seasonality has a considerable influence on the mode split: Cold-snowy weather drastically decreases bicycle use and increases public transit usage. The number of motorists and pedestrians, however, remains relatively constant. Also, motor vehicle use accounts for a higher proportion of trips made to Macdonald campus, whilst public transit and cycling is more prevalent to the downtown campus.

## Demographic Mode Split

Students use active transportation the most. However, 20% of men cycle versus 10% of women. Higher income levels, older age and higher university status generally implies increased private motor vehicle usage to the detriment of public transit. Active transportation modes are consistent across most income, status and age groups, yet are always highest among members of the lowest and youngest groups.

## Encouraging the use of sustainable transportation

Encouraging the uptake of sustainable modes of transportation by the McGill population requires a nuanced understanding of people's opinions on different modes of transportation, the barriers discouraging them from using these modes, their perceptions of safety from traffic, crime, and bicycle theft, as well as their own suggestions for how to encourage sustainable transport to and from McGill.

## Satisfaction

Active transportation users (pedestrians and cyclists) feel the most energized and least stressed after their commute. They also see more to their commute than just arriving at their destination and regard their commutes as more time consistent than for other mode users. Inconsistent trip time and lengthy wait times are by far the highest of concerns for users of the intercampus shuttle. For metro and bus users, lengthy and inconsistent trip times are important issues as well. Crime is of some concern for metro users and pedestrians.

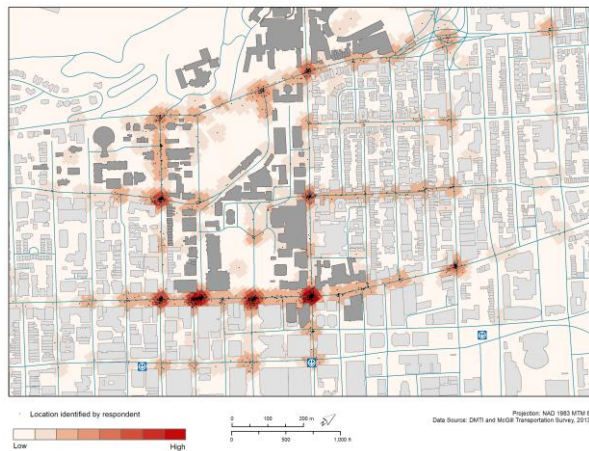
## Opinions, Intentions and Barriers

All mode-users would like to walk and cycle more, especially motorists with regard to the former. Motorists along with cyclists have the most polarized points of view on multiple levels, yet there is consensus among all mode users that investment in public transportation is a priority. As for barriers, the lack of available bicycle parking on campus inhibits a considerable portion of respondents from cycling as a way to commute to McGill. Safety from traffic while cycling is also a prominent barrier. Finally, many respondents do not drive to McGill because of the lack of car parking.

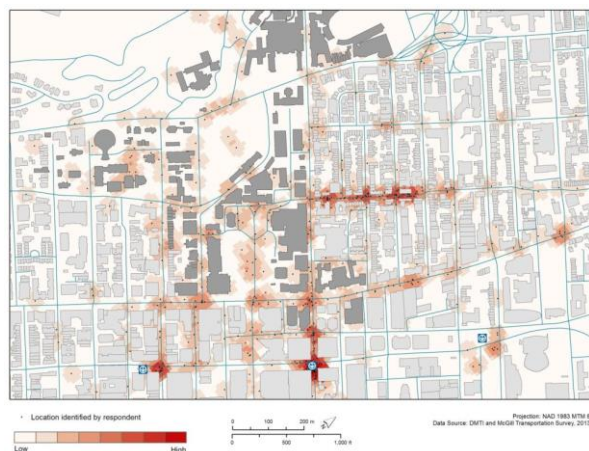
## Safety from traffic, crime, and bicycle theft

The two following maps present point density analyses of respondents' perceptions of dangerous locations in terms of traffic and crime. Several intersections and corridors clearly emerge as problematic (in red).

Regarding traffic, the main reason given by respondents for feeling unsafe is the interaction between motorists and non-motorists, (cars, pedestrians and cyclists) indicating the need to harmonize different street users at busy intersections such as Sherbrooke and University or Sherbrooke and McTavish.



For crime (see below), locations tend to concentrate around Peel and McGill metro stations. The Milton St. corridor is also frequently mentioned. The majority of comments targeted the presence, behaviour, or actions of strangers in the street, and elements of the built environment such as inadequate lighting and isolation as the cause of feeling unsafe.



## Respondents' suggestions and comments

Respondents provided varied suggestions as to how to generally encourage sustainable transportation to and from McGill. Several that were made in 2011 were reiterated in 2013.

- Reduce transit fares through an agreement with local transit service providers or extend discount rates to students over 25 years old.
- Improve public transit services and infrastructure, especially connectivity and overall reliability. More flexible nonstandard hours, especially for commuter trains.
- Increase bicycle parking capacity and discourage additional automobile parking.
- Improve bicycle safety and address theft on campus.
- Improve cycling services and infrastructure, especially maintenance during winter.
- Find a better solution to the cycling dismount policy on campus (e.g. designated lanes)
- Improve pedestrian infrastructure, provide adequate lighting, and ensure increased pedestrian security through signage at specific intersections.
- Increase shuttle frequency and capacity to overcome long wait times and overcrowding while providing adequate shelter at bus stops and heating in the buses.
- Increase safety and use of sustainable transportation through awareness and education that also address urban social issues such as homelessness.

## Conclusions

The 2013 Commuter Survey Report seeks to highlight possible paths of actions that McGill University can take to foster the use of active and public transportation to and from both the Downtown and Macdonald campuses. Many of the aforementioned suggestions are actions that reside in the University's power and could increase the McGill community's sense of safety and security, ease, and desire to use sustainable modes of transportation. Finally, the educational and awareness component are also key to this process.