

# Designing active suburban stations

## The Issue

Suburban areas are generally very car-centric and thus tend not to be conducive to walking which can hinder the ridership at newly built transit stations. However, results from a built environment audit conducted in Summer 2021 around stations of the Réseau Express Métropolitain (REM) found an exception to this trend: a suburban station built to encourage active travel. A case study approach was used to compare this station with another adjacent low-scoring station.

## Findings

- The well designed suburban station, Du Quartier, received an average score of 10.36 / 21 on the audit while the poorly designed station, Panama, received 4.39 / 21 and the average station score across the network was 5.90 /21.
- Du Quartier station has a bike path on 32% of its street - all of which are physically separated from car traffic - while Panama has none and the average for all REM stations is 15%.
- Du Quartier station has ample street lighting on 37% of its streets compared to 0% for Panama and 16% for all stations.
- Du Quartier station has a sidewalk buffer zone on both sides of the street 42% of the time and on one side 32% of the time compared to 16% and 9% respectively for all stations. Panama station had no streets with sidewalk buffers.
- The addition of a new overpass as well as the bidirectional access to the station from both sides of the highway allows Du Quartier station to have a larger service area than other newly built suburban stations.



Side-by-side comparison of Panama (left) and Du Quartier (right) stations

## Policy Recommendations

- » **Incorporate the built environment of the streets around new suburban transit stops in the station design.** Adding sidewalks with buffer zones, streetlights, bike paths and other micro-scale amenities can help promote active transportation to and from the stations and increase potential ridership.
- » **Increase pedestrian access and connectivity in newly created suburban stations.** Adding more pedestrian paths or overpasses would connect REM stations to a larger population within a walkable distance.