

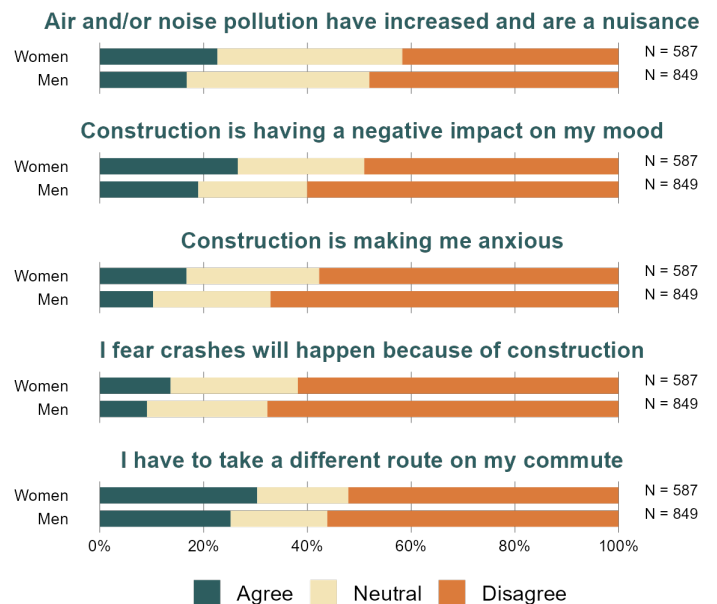
# Gendered Impacts of REM-related Construction

## The Issue

The construction of the Réseau express métropolitain (REM), a rapid light-rail network in Montréal, has been a significant undertaking since it began in 2018. It is crucial to identify how the impacts of such large development projects vary across societal groups, particularly in terms of gender. There is broad consensus that women have unique travel patterns and safety concerns, being disproportionately burdened with mobilities of care (including such activities as grocery shopping and escorting children or older adults). This policy brief examines the effects of REM-related construction on daily travel and wellbeing through the lens of gender, drawing from a bilingual survey conducted in the Montréal CMA in fall 2022. Based on these findings, we provide gender-informed policy recommendations to minimize disruptions associated with the development of major public transit infrastructure.

## Findings

- REM-related construction unequally impacted women's travel: 31% of women had to take a different route compared to 25% of men.
- Women were over 50% more likely than men to express concerns about potential construction-related crashes.
- 23% of women reported elevated pollution levels because of construction, compared to 17% of men.
- 17% of women experienced construction-related anxiety, compared to 10% of men.
- Women were 1.4x times as likely to experience a negative impact on their mood (27% of women, 19% of men).
- Women were consistently found to have lesser intentions to use the REM (8-9% less likely to use, as reported between 2019 and 2022).



Impact on Individuals with REM-related Construction Near their Homes, Schools, or Workplaces in 2022

## Summary

- Women were disproportionately affected by REM-related construction, requiring further analysis and consideration of wider gender inequities.

## Policy Recommendations

- » **Communicate hours of heavy construction noise** in advance and consider modifying schedules based on community feedback.
- » **Strengthen safety measures for active travellers and caregivers** (e.g., adequate lighting, clear signage, protective barriers, wide detour paths, ramps) and traffic calming measures (e.g., reduced speed zones, traffic control personnel) in construction zones.
- » **Prioritize accessibility metrics that consider locations of care activities** (e.g., grocery stores, pharmacies, medical facilities, daycares, and schools) when planning temporary closures and alternative routes.