

Bike paths for everyone—except children

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While the network of bike paths spanning greater Montreal, Longueuil, and Laval more than doubled in size between 1991 and 2016, accessibility has not improved for children, according to a study by INRS researchers published in the *Journal of Transport Geography*.

Why? According to the researchers, cycling network growth has been mainly in the central neighbourhoods of Montreal and areas of Longueuil and Laval with lower concentrations of [children](#). Other factors identified by researchers include an aging population and the fact that children under 14 "rarely have input into city planning."

The study concludes with the warning that "is all the more important to target children, as we also know that child cyclists have greater chances to understand the benefits associated with bicycling once adult." These benefits include positive health impacts and reduced congestion and air and noise pollution.

Other highlights

The team of student researcher Maxime Houde (principal author) and INRS professors Philippe Apparicio and Anne-Marie Séguin studied archival maps, census data, and spatial analysis methods. Unlike studies conducted in other parts of the world, researchers found that low-income people enjoyed better accessibility to the bike path network than other groups. But this accessibility was better 25 years ago than it is today, despite network growth. The study found that network expansion has benefited other population groups such as seniors and recent immigrants.

The research team also identified a number of urban areas that are underserved in terms of cycling infrastructure. The study also highlights the inadequacy of connections between different sections of the bike path network, which are necessary to ensure smooth and safe movement throughout a [network](#) that has become denser primarily in gentrified neighbourhoods.

More information: Maxime Houde et al, A ride for whom: Has cycling network expansion reduced inequities in accessibility in Montreal, Canada?, *Journal of Transport Geography* (2018). [DOI](#):

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