



COVID SIGNPOST 200 DAYS

REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE Québec



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INTRODUCTION

The **COVID Signpost 200** report presents a high level picture of how COVID is changing life in Canada's cities as of September 27, 2020, the 200-day mark. It draws on public health and survey data, research and thought-leader insights, building on the findings of **Signpost 100** released in June 2020.

This **Regional Perspective** is one of seven that dives deeper into how the trends and changes revealed in **Signpost 200** are playing out in different parts of the country, and what it means as we look ahead in a time of uncertainty and anxiety, but also of collective purpose in urban Canada.

QUÉBEC

22.6%
OF CANADA'S
POPULATION

46.8%
OF CANADA'S
COVID CASES

COVID DASHBOARD

Table 1: COVID Cases & Deaths, Region and Largest Cities¹

	Cases	Cases Per 100,000	Deaths	Deaths Per 100,000	Avg. Daily Cases, 1st 100 Days	Avg. Daily Cases, 2nd 100 Days
Canada	146,663	390.2	9,234	24.6	1,002	464
Québec	68,617	808.7	5,805	68.4	544	142
Montréal	31,670	1533.2	3,476	168.3	261	44
Québec City	3153	592.8	206	38.7	17	10

¹ Case and death data is based on locally reported public health and municipal reports, as of September 23, 2020. In cases where city cases and death counts are reported at a larger geography, the city's share has been calculated according to the city's share of the overall population of the larger unit.

A SELECTION OF KEY SIGNS

Table 2: Indicators of COVID Impacts²

	All expressed as %	Canada	Québec	Montréal	Québec City
How We Live	Household member has experienced COVID symptoms	11	10	11	8
	COVID has had a “major impact” on the household	22	17	20	14
	Rent / mortgage payments have been impacted	18	13	14	14
How We Move	Decline in transit ridership from pre-COVID	-62	-	-61	-64
	Transit users that would shift to cars if service is reduced/unavailable*	42	38	34	32
	People “strictly practicing” social distancing	38	38	41	29
How We Work	Unemployment rates (August)	10.9	9.6	11.8	6.3
	People reporting having experienced the loss of a job	17	16	19	18
	People reporting an impact on their personal earnings	23	18	22	15
How We Care	Households reporting a high impact on access to healthcare*	30	21	28	21
	“Very concerned” with children going back to school*	26	19	22	17
	Households reporting high mental health impacts	38	28	34	26
How We Manage	COVID has caused household financial hardship	25	21	22	21
	A positive outlook on Canada’s economic recovery	24	22	24	20
	Local/municipal government performing well in protecting against health risks	60	52	58	46

² Sources: Advanis survey of 90,000 Canadians during the COVID pandemic (with those marked with an asterisk reflecting survey data from June 2020); Statistics Canada data; and, TransitApp. City unemployment rates are for StatsCan CMA, with figures from the August Labour Force Survey (released September 4).

A REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE, AT 200 DAYS

By **Catherine Craig-St-Louis**, CUI Regional Lead for Québec

Here in Québec, [morale is wavering](#) as COVID cases have started spiking up again. You can almost *feel* the general COVID fatigue in the air, even though the on-the-ground situation differs from one community to another.

After the first wave, we observed a few bumps or particularities in the number of cases per day. First, mid-summer, a warning was issued to [younger people](#) who constituted an “important proportion of new cases each day.” Then, end-of-summer, the number of cases gradually went from a little under 100 cases per day, to [over 400](#) (for more data on the evolution of the situation, see [here](#)). Each time, the Government of Québec called for a stricter respect of social distancing measures.

We were already seeing some limits to the public’s acceptance of these measures. For example, recent anti-mask protests have taken place in [smaller](#) and [larger](#) communities. Some of these stricter health norms are [police-enforced](#), a potentially worrying proposition in the light of [recent protests](#) and [collective demands](#) on such topics as systemic racism. Both of these examples lead me to hope that this Fall offers a most-needed time for dialogue, leading to fundamental social changes.

On the urban front, we have seen a drop in the transit modal share, as well as a [rise in property sales outside of urban centers](#). As we observe, for example, that transit in densely populated cities around the world [hasn’t been a source of outbreak](#) and that there is [no correlation between density and infection rates](#), the need for further dialogue and education in our communities is urgent. Indeed, notwithstanding COVID, we still have other considerable challenges to face, including [housing](#), [homelessness](#) and [health system](#) crises, sprawl and climate change.

The new [Progressive regional alert and intervention system](#), which presents the level of pandemic alert for each region on a [map](#), might make the evolution of the COVID situation in Québec easier to track, and then tackle. Launched at the beginning of September, it has shown Montreal going from [green to yellow](#), and [then to orange](#) – alongside other regions like Chaudières-

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Appalaches and part of Capitale-Nationale (Québec city and region). However, tourism within Québec has been a hit this summer, [without the feared spike in cases](#) in the visited regions like Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine.

We will have to keep reinventing ourselves to offer secure and inclusive places and processes in our cities, during and beyond COVID. We need each other more than we ever have, and we need to communicate better than ever before. Although we're fatigued, and there are multiple battles waging, some **bright spots** have to be mentioned:

- We've brought the discussions [on active transportation](#) and [access to public and green spaces](#) to the forefront (issues we were already preoccupied with, and which the pandemic has underlined).
- After the [Panier bleu](#)'s launch in March, the provincial government's recently announced [Stratégie nationale d'achat d'aliments québécois](#) encourages public institutions to purchase local food products.
- Some main streets and city centers have fared well over the summer, and we're ready to exchange ideas and results regarding what to do next and how to do it (through [symposiums](#), on [committees](#), looking back on [actions that were taken](#)).
- Many are coming together to propose guidelines for a new normality (from the civil society-led [G15+](#) to the citizen-led [Front commun pour la transition énergétique](#)).
- We're [looking towards winter](#) and trying to make it a favorable outdoor season, reproducing experiments such as the [Lab'Hiver](#).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Based in Gatineau, **Catherine Craig-St-Louis** is an urban planner working for not-for-profits in Québec, interested in the social and collective aspects of urban life and centralities, including social acceptability of, and empowerment related to, urban transformations.



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