

Sustainable Transportation— Definition and Pressure Points

Sustainable Transportation

In its 1987 report, *Our Common Future*, the World Commission on Environment and Development defined sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. In the transportation sector, this means that the transportation system, and transportation activity in general, must be sustainable on three counts—economic, environmental, and social. In practice, this means that governments, industry, and individuals must work together to integrate economic, social, and environmental considerations into decisions affecting transportation activity. A number of national and international organizations—for example, the Environment Directorate of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the Transportation Association of Canada, and the Canadian Centre for Sustainable Transportation—have interpreted sustainable transportation.

Social and economic considerations have long been part of transportation decision making. On the economic side, costs and services must continually be improved to remain competitive, and scarce public resources must be invested strategically to ensure the greatest impacts on improving our quality of life. On the social side, transportation safety remains a top priority for Canada, and we have been seeing promising results in recent years. In 1999, the number of

