SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION

The Canadian Context

INTRODUCTION

Transportation has always been critical to the development and growth of Canada and the Canadian economy. As a vast trade-dependent and modern country with a challenging climate and rugged terrain, Canada must be able to rely on a sustainable transportation system—one that is safe, efficient, and environmentally friendly.

In Canada, we believe that sustainable transportation can be advanced by integrating economic, social, and environmental considerations into decisions affecting transportation activity. Economically, we need a transportation system that is efficient and competitive. Socially, our transportation system must be safe and accessible. In addition, we need a transportation system that respects the natural environment. It is not always easy to balance these three considerations—sometimes there are trade-offs, but there are also win-win-win situations. The challenge is to make informed decisions so that we can enjoy the best possible transportation system.

Sustainable transportation requires action by all Canadians. Government needs to work with industry, individuals, and other stakeholders to raise awareness and promote a transportation system that is sustainable. An array of specific programs and actions are already being undertaken to make Canada's transportation system more sustainable and to encourage Canadians to make more sustainable choices. The issues, however, are complex and challenging, and much remains to be done.

Canada recognizes that sustainable transportation is a goal that is international in scope and must be pursued together with other nations. There is much that we can learn from the rest of the world in the area of sustainable transportation, but there is also much that Canada can offer.

This monograph describes the state of transportation in Canada as it relates to sustainable development. Reflecting recent developments in sustainable transportation, it discusses the nature of the challenges we face and what we are doing to address them.