



The Centre for Sustainable Transportation    Le Centre pour un transport durable

Report on the Workshop held by the  
Centre for Sustainable Transportation  
in Halifax, Nova Scotia, on September 9, 2002<sup>†</sup>

## MOVING CANADA'S TRANSPORTATION TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY: THE LONGER VIEW

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction.....	1
2. The workshop .....	2
3. Breakout session discussions: responses to the 13 questions .....	2
4. Conclusions from the workshop discussions .....	4
5. Evaluations of the workshop.....	5
6. Concluding remarks .....	5

Appendix A. Workshop program

Appendix B. List of participants

Appendix C. Summaries of evaluation responses and comments

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## 1. Introduction

This workshop was the fourth and last in a series of workshops held by the Centre to stimulate discussion about a medium-term strategy for transportation in Canada, i.e., for the period 2010-2025. The Centre held these workshops for the following reasons:

- to stress that targets set in relation to the usual planning horizon of approximately 2010—perhaps linked to the Kyoto target for reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions—would not be ends in themselves but milestones on the way to sustainability, and that there could be profoundly difficult challenges to be faced after 2010;
- to provide further exploration of what should be done to move transport towards sustainability in the present decade, i.e., until 2010, particularly but not only through meeting Canada's Kyoto target for reductions in emissions of greenhouse gases as it may apply to transport;
- to identify actions that will be required during the period 2010-2025 to move transportation in Canada towards sustainability;
- to note implications of the 2010-2025 requirements for policy-making and practice during the period up to 2010.

The first workshop in the series was held in Vancouver on February 6, 2001. The second workshop was held in Brampton (near Toronto) on June 27, 2001. The third workshop was held in Montreal on November 8, 2001. The fourth and last workshop in this series was held in Halifax on September 9, 2002, and is the subject of this report. A report based on the results of all four workshops, and containing the Centre's recommendations in connection with the period 2010-2025, will be the main topic of Issue No. 8 of the Centre's *Sustainable Transportation Monitor*, to be available at the Centre's Web site (<http://www.cstctd.org>) in January 2003.

To stimulate and facilitate the discussions at the Halifax workshop, two papers prepared for the earlier workshops were updated and distributed to participants by e-mail before the event. One paper was entitled *Background Paper for a Post-Kyoto Transport Agenda*. It comprised 16 pages of text, 21 figures and tables, six pages of appendices, and 95 endnotes that provided references and supplementary information. The paper briefly reviewed transport trends in Canada, set out three scenarios for the period until 2010, and proposed ways in which the scenarios might be fulfilled. The purposes of this document were to provide participants with a common base of information, to describe alternatives for transportation in Canada for 2010, and to establish a simple target representing progress towards sustainability in 2025, i.e., a reduction in GHGs from transportation in Canada to 30 per cent below the 1990 level.

The three scenarios for 2010 set out in the *Background Paper* varied according to the extent to which Canada's Kyoto commitment to reduce GHG emissions to six per cent below 1990 levels would be met for transportation. Scenario A assumed attainment of the target, as it may apply to transportation. Scenario B assumed that GHG emissions from transport would be only halfway between the Kyoto target and the 2010 'business-as-usual' (BAU) level, i.e., they would be more than 30 per cent above the target (although substantially lower than the BAU level of more than 60 per cent above the target). Scenario C also assumed that the target would be met, but posited large increases in crude oil prices that would cause major reductions in transport activity and thus account for much of the targetted reduction in GHG emissions.

For all scenarios, the major instrument deployed by governments to secure reductions in GHG emissions during the period until 2010 would be new or tightened fuel-efficiency standards for

new vehicles complemented by measures to hasten fleet turnover and counter perverse effects of reduced fuel intensity.

The other paper was entitled *Draft Strategy for Transport in Canada for the Post-Kyoto Period*. It comprised 12 pages of text, one figure, and 41 endnotes. This paper began by stressing the importance of the present decade, which it was said in the paper must be the “turn-around” time for sustainability. It noted, as did the *Background Paper*, that sustainable transportation is much more than a matter of reducing GHG emissions. Nevertheless, reducing GHG emissions is a key feature of sustainability and its targets provide a convenient framework for discussing the issues.

The *Strategy Paper* continued by proposing that a form of market-based rationing could be the most effective instrument for meeting sustainability targets during the post-Kyoto period. Application of this instrument would be strongly supported by measures to change attitudes, reduce consumption of land, and enhance public transit. The paper concluded by noting some implications for the present decade and by posing 13 questions for consideration at the September 9 workshop.

## 2. The workshop

The workshop program is attached as Appendix A to this report. There were 38 participants at one time or another. They are listed in Appendix B. Of the participants, about 35 were present at the end of the event. After introductions and orientation, a slide presentation set the scene for the morning sessions of the three breakout group discussions that were the core feature of the workshop.

The slide presentation was designed to complement the *Background Paper* and *Strategy Paper*, with rather more attention being given to the need for sustainable transportation than to exposition of the scenarios and strategies proposed in the two papers.

During the breakout sessions, participants worked in the same two groups in the morning and in the afternoon. Each group had the same brief, which was to address the 13 questions set out at the end of the *Strategy Paper* and reproduced in the next section.

The breakout sessions were structured so that the morning sessions dealt more with the period until 2010 and the afternoon sessions dealt more with the period from 2010 to 2025.

A feature of the workshop was a pre-lunch presentation by representatives of Cyclists for Sustainability, who had bicycled across Canada promoting the need for sustainable transportation.

## 3. Breakout session discussions: responses to the 13 questions

What follows below are the 13 questions that were posed, listed with the composite responses of the breakout groups to each question. The responses are based on notes taken at the breakout sessions and at the plenary sessions at which rapporteurs made their reports. The groups differed in the extent to which they focused closely on providing answers to particular questions. Thus, some of the composite answers below reflect more the position(s) of one rather than the other group rather than both groups

1. Are the three scenarios for 2010 set out in the *Background Paper* reasonable?

Scenario A is not reasonable, because it could not be implemented in time. Scenario B may be unreasonable for the same reason. High oil prices could work if they happened earlier enough.

2. What other scenarios for 2010 should be considered?

The 'business-as-usual' scenario should be developed as a scare tactic.

3. Is the *Background Paper* correct to focus on new-vehicle fuel-efficiency improvements as the main means of reaching emissions targets for 2010?

There is a huge potential for fuel-efficiency improvements, but insufficient political leadership for timely realization of the potential.

4. Are the complementary measures proposed in the *Background Paper* appropriate (i.e., fuel-price increases, incentives for vehicle replacement, and improvements to existing transit services)?

They are appropriate, but there should be more of an emphasis on incentives. New or additional parking fees should be added to the list of measures.

5. Are the measures proposed in the *Strategy* document for the present decade in preparation for achieving results during the period 2010-2025 appropriate (i.e., changing public attitudes, reversing trends in land use, and redirecting transport investment)?

There should be an especially strong focus on changing public attitudes, on changing the way we live, and on questioning our assumption of entitlement to unrestrained mobility.

6. What else should be done before 2010?

The special needs of rural areas should be recognized. Data collection on transport should be improved. We need better knowledge about the real financial costs of our transport systems (i.e., estimate externalities, do full-cost accounting). Care should be taken to ensure that increased fuel efficiency does not result in increased transport activity.

7. Is the target for 2025 reasonable?

Only if at least Scenario B is achieved by 2010; otherwise not, unless oil prices truly rocket upwards. The impact on energy use of Canada's population growth should be given more consideration.

8. What other targets should be considered?

The key thing is to have real targets (i.e., ones relevant to the challenges), rather than particular targets. Perhaps there should be sub-targets for individual transport modes.

9. Is the *Strategy* document correct to focus on market-based fuel rationing as the main means of achieving the effects required during 2010-2025?

No. Rationing should be used as a last resort rather than as the key element of a strategy.

10. Are the complementary focuses in the *Strategy* document appropriate (i.e., changing public attitudes, reversing trends in land use, and redirecting transport investment)?

Yes, but these should be the key elements of the strategy, backed up by the threat and if necessary the use of rationing.

11. What else should be considered for 2010-2025?

More measures will likely be needed (e.g., taxes on vehicle use and on land). There should be some focus on developing and using alternative fuels, and on redevelopment of brownfield areas. Label vehicles as to their energy use.

12. Is the proposal in the *Strategy* document of not relying on unproven technology for the period after 2010 useful?

Yes, it's essential; but continue research and incorporate particular technology into the strategy as it becomes proven.

13. How can more concern about the future of transportation be stimulated; and how can relevant information be best disseminated?

Public opinion should be benchmarked so that the necessary changes are clear and can be worked on. There should be a focus on schools. Transport excess should be treated as a moral issue. Scare tactics may be required.

#### 4. Conclusions from the workshop discussions

Participants' views expressed in the workshop discussions, as they related to the scenarios and strategies in the *Background Paper* and *Strategy Paper*, can be briefly summarized as follows:

1. **Regarding targets:** Participants were skeptical as to whether even the less stringent target for 2010 (Scenario B) could be reached without a major increase in oil prices caused by world market conditions. The further reduction proposed for 2025 could be achieved only if at least the less stringent target 2010 were reached. The main challenge is lack of political leadership, even to realize the huge gains that could be made in vehicle fuel efficiency. Setting clear targets would be an important step.
2. **Regarding measures:** For the present decade, the focus on stricter fuel-efficiency standards may be inappropriate because of apparent lack of political leadership. Additional and new parking fees should be given more consideration, and the special needs of rural areas should be taken into account. Market-based rationing should not be the centrepiece of the post-2010 strategy, although it could be employed as a last resort. What are listed as 'complementary focuses' in the *Strategy Paper*—changing public attitudes, reversing trends in land use, and redirecting transport investment—should become the main focuses of the post-2010 strategy, backed up by the threat of rationing. As well, there should be some focus on developing and using alternative fuels, on redevelopment of brownfield areas, and on imposing additional taxes on land and vehicles. The strategy to not rely on unproven technology was strongly endorsed, but the vigorous search for technological solutions should continue.

## 5. Evaluations of the workshop

An evaluation form was distributed at the workshop; 26 participants responded. Of these, all indicated a ‘good’ or ‘very good’ rather than a ‘poor’ overall impression of the event. A compilation of all the responses to the questions in the evaluation form is attached as Appendix C.

There was particular praise for the overall organization of the event—including the structuring of the breakout sessions and the performance of facilitators and rapporteurs—and for the way in which the workshop generated ideas and discussion. There was appreciation of the previously circulated papers, the opening presentation, and the summaries of the workshop discussions made in the plenary sessions. Criticisms were fewer in number. The strongest concerned the lack of focus of some breakout groups on the questions that had been posed, the overly large number of questions to be answered in a short period of time, the absence of summaries of the previously circulated material, the lack of information about sectors other than transport and about how this workshop might make a contribution to policy development.

## 6. Concluding remarks

As in the case of the other three workshops in this series, the Halifax workshop was much appreciated by participants. The Centre appears to have helped meet a need across the country to engage in broad-ranging discussion of Canada’s longer-term transportation future.

The papers prepared for the workshop appear to have served their purpose in stimulating discussion. As in previous workshops in the series, there was strong criticism of aspects of the papers, notably the rationing proposal.

As did the previous workshops, the Halifax workshop illustrated the difficulties involved in articulating a longer-term agenda for transportation for Canada. These include the following:

- Skepticism as to whether appropriate actions will ever be taken, and whether any targets would ever be met.
- Belief that the general public may have little understanding of the actual or impending crisis, or, if there is recognition of a crisis, profound unwillingness to address it.
- Lack of acceptable measures capable of achieving the longer-term changes required for sustainability.

Thus, the Centre is taking on a major challenge in its quest to propose a strategy for the post-Kyoto period that is informed by the workshop discussions. As noted, the plan is to set out that strategy in the next issue of the *Sustainable Transportation Monitor* to be published early in 2003.

**Appendix A: Program for the September 9, 2002, workshop**



The Centre for Sustainable Transportation    Le Centre pour un transport durable

**MOVING CANADA'S TRANSPORTATION TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY: THE LONGER VIEW**

Monday September 9, 2002

Sackville Room, Delta Barrington Hotel, 1875 Barrington Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia

***Program***

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| 8:00 a.m.  | Registration and coffee   |
| 9:00 a.m.  | Introductions and Welcoming remarks: Brian T. Smith, Director of Solid Waste Resources, Halifax Regional Municipality and Director, The Centre for Sustainable Transportation, and others to be named |
| 9:05 a.m.  | Workshop orientation by Workshop Chair: Brian Taylor, Director of Transit Services, Halifax Regional Municipality   |
| 9:10 a.m.  | Review and discussion of <i>Background Paper</i> : Richard Gilbert, Director of Research, Centre for Sustainable Transportation   |
| 9:45 a.m.  | Refreshment break   |
| 10:00 a.m. | Start of first breakout sessions to discuss the scenarios and the policy options for the shorter term (until about the year 2010)   |
| 11:30 a.m. | Reports from morning breakout sessions, and plenary discussion of options for the shorter term  |
| 12:00 p.m. | Buffet luncheon . Keynote speaker to be confirmed.  |
| 1:00 p.m.  | Review and discussion of <i>Strategy Paper</i> : Richard Gilbert, Director of Research, Centre for Sustainable Transportation   |
| 1:30 p.m.  | Start of second breakout sessions to discuss the policy options for the longer term (until about the year 2025)   |
| 3:00 p.m.  | Refreshment break   |
| 3:15 p.m.  | Reports from the afternoon breakout sessions, and plenary discussion of options for the longer term   |
| 3:45 p.m.  | Conclusions, wrap-up, next steps  |

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September 9, 2002

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REPORT ON THE HALIFAX WORKSHOP HELD ON SEPTEMBER 9, 2002

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REPORT ON THE HALIFAX WORKSHOP HELD ON SEPTEMBER 9, 2002

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Appendix C: Responses to evaluation of in Halifax Workshop on Sustainable Transportation, September 9, 2002

Out of 44 registered participants, 26 completed and returned the evaluation sheet. A tabulation of their responses follows.

1. Overall impression of the workshop?  
Poor 0            Good 11            Very Good 15
  
2. Things that were done well.
  - a) Facilitation (9).
  - b) Overall opening session (11), particularly Richard's presentation.
  - c) Opening talk by Richard opened everyone's eyes as to how big this issue is.
  - d) Good rapporteur (2).
  - e) Meeting organization (7).
  - f) Pre-meeting documentation (7).
  - g) Having documents ahead of time.
  - h) Lots of first -hand information.
  - i) You saw this through. A formidable task. Congratulations
  - j) The pre-workshop materials were concise, informative and provided guides for information.
  - k) Very well organized. Time well managed and allocated.
  - l) The pace was good.
  - m) Good feedback and input opportunities.
  - n) The bicycle presentation was a useful addition.
  - o) Good hotel, rooms, meals, and services (2).
  - p) Good cross-section of government and industry representatives.
  - q) Led to interesting discussions.
  - r) The workshop idea itself.
  - s) Prepared questions to stimulate discussions.
  - t) Knowledgeable participants.
  - u) Breakouts were a good idea (4). Lots of discussion.
  - v) Good interaction with participants (3).
  - w) Setting the stage.
  
3. Things that were not done well.
  - a) No comments (12).
  - b) It was difficult to discuss complex issues with only a high level of knowledge of the issues.
  - c) A solid recapitulation of the background material and the options would have been useful.
  - d) A discussion on how transportation policy is developed would have been useful.
  - e) The questions were difficult. Not everyone had done the pre-workshop homework.
  - f) The background information was cumbersome.
  - g) A clearer understanding of the questions would have been useful.
  - h) There was slight confusion between Kyoto targets and CST targets.
  - i) Some people dominated the discussions.
  - j) Smaller breakout groups would have been better.
  - k) Greater clarification of the three scenarios would have been useful.

- l) There should have been more optimistic talk of action rather reasons why we can't meet the Kyoto target.
  - m) Add an extra day in future workshops of this nature.
  - n) More information could have been provided about demands by other sectors for energy.
  - o) A sharper focus on recommended actions would have been useful.
  - p) There was not enough time for discussions after workshop summaries.
  - q) The facilitator should not also be the recorder.
  - r) We needed more information at the outset as to how the workshop fits into the policy development process.
  - s) The presenter was often trying to steer the audience on some issues toward pre-determined outcomes.
  - t) The facilitator should have asked those who had not spoken if they had anything to say.
  - u) A lot was packed into one day.
  - v) All the information gathered appeared to be pie-in-the-sky stuff. We should have been told where this information is going, who will be using it, and for what purpose.
  - w) The discussions did not go into areas that would have allowed some creative thinking.
  - x) There was too much focus in the afternoon session on which target is reasonable. We need to plan what we are actually going to put into place. There was too much focus on education, which has not proven to be effective without strong policies.
4. What benefits did you expect to get from the workshop and were your expectations met?
- a) No comments (6)
  - b) I learned a lot in terms of content, dynamic, perspectives.
  - c) I have a new wealth of information that I didn't have before.
  - d) My expectations were met and exceeded (2).
  - e) My expectations were met (2).
  - f) This was a real eye-opener.
  - g) The networking was excellent.
  - h) I expected a broad overview of the subject and some ideas for local use. These were provided.
  - i) I have a better understanding of the issues that I will be able to pass on to others.
  - j) I enjoyed the chance for discussions.
  - k) I am now better informed as to the potential responses to Kyoto and the level of understanding of policy advisors.
  - l) I learned more about the specifics of target dates and challenges faced. Yes, it is a very complex issue. I am now committed to learning more about it and to continuing to work toward a solution.
  - m) I was enlightened on current trends, and enlightened as to what the government is doing at the local level. I met people with different perspectives.
  - n) The workshop gave me a good perspective on a complex issue.
  - o) I gained new knowledge.
  - p) I gained more contacts (2).
  - q) The audience was more conservative than I expected. Therefore, my expectations to have an exciting discussion about concrete initiatives that could lead us to meeting our commitment were not fulfilled.
  - r) I expected a lively discussion with varying opinions expressed. This happened.
  - s) I gained clearer understanding of the issues, and of the complexity of solutions (3).
  - t) There was a wide variety of view and opinions; my expectations were met (2).
  - u) I was able to see what is going on, and what options and plans are currently being considered in Canada and locally. Assuming that the documents we discussed contained the bulk of that information, then a strong yes.

## REPORT ON THE HALIFAX WORKSHOP HELD ON SEPTEMBER 9, 2002

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- v) I gained a sense of the current thinking of a number of organizations and their responses to inputs.
  - w) I experienced Information, networking, input to strategy formulation.
  - x) I wanted the latest figures on transportation in Canada. They were provided.
5. Other comments?
- a) Congratulations. Good luck. (2)
  - b) Well done.
  - c) Keep participants informed about CST, reports, web site.
  - d) In order for large-scale changes to occur, emphasis should be placed on changing underlying values, stressing community involvement, and policy education.
  - e) This was useful to our organization.
  - f) We seem to be getting bogged down on meeting projected targets. We need to move toward targets, with the idea that if we shoot for the moon and fall short, we will at least be among the stars. Let's roll.
  - g) Of participants, only eight were women and only five were under 30 years of age, with little racial or income diversity. The homogeneity of the audience weakened the discussions.
  - h) It is important that the Centre reaches out to as many groups as possible. Education is essential and takes a long time.
6. Which registration fee did you pay (\$20 for students; \$50 for others)? Was the fee reasonable?

There were no negative comments about the registration fee, just a few very positive comments.