



THE INSTITUTION  
OF HIGHWAYS &  
TRANSPORTATION

representing excellence in the  
**environment of transportation**

# IHT policy statement



*“Achieving an efficient and sustainable transport system is one of the defining issues of our time. This IHT Policy Statement presents our core values and principles which determine the policies needed to address transport.”*

Ronnie Porter, President 2002–2003

## Transport & lifestyle

Transport must support economic growth and regeneration which create greater prosperity and increased lifestyle choice. This increase in choice and spending power has been associated with a growth in demand for travel and in resultant transport congestion.

The Institution of Highways & Transportation (IHT) believes that **increased travel congestion can be decoupled from economic growth**. But we recognise that this will require, for many, the adoption of a different lifestyle that does not depend on economic activities at peripheral locations that are inaccessible by means other than the car. This implies that we must learn from international best practice in **accepting a higher density of housing**, firm control of development and **less reliance on the car** than at present. **Quality reliable public transport at an affordable price**, together with better facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, must be provided for the public to accept this lifestyle.

Nevertheless, because of the diverse nature of many journeys, we recognise that most transport will remain by car. **It is a priority that maintenance of our highway assets is properly**

**funded** and that **smarter network management** and **improved driver information services** are systematically introduced.

We welcomed the Government's Ten Year Transport Plan but believe that more capital finance, both public and private, needs to be provided to improve and maintain our transport infrastructure if the desired outcomes are to be achieved.



## Social & environmental objectives

Transport directly affects the quality of our lives and our environment. Transport professionals must strive to achieve the social and environmental objectives that most citizens seek. These include reducing transport vehicle emissions and energy use, mainly by encouraging new technologies that can meet the standards set by legislators.

We promote the adoption of design and construction practices, including **sustainable construction technology**, that make greater use of recycled materials and that reduce the impact of transport on the environment.



**“there is major scope for further reduction in road traffic casualties”**

Tackling social exclusion implies that transport and land use plans must ensure that access to social and employment opportunities, goods and services is available to all. Standards of design and maintenance of highway infrastructure, together with enforcement of speed controls and public safety education must reflect the Institution's belief that there is major scope for further reduction in road traffic casualties. This is essential if the condition and safety of highways are to be fit for purpose.

As the population grows older, transport provision must increasingly reflect the access needs of the elderly. Achieving this would promote social inclusion more widely.

## Urban transport

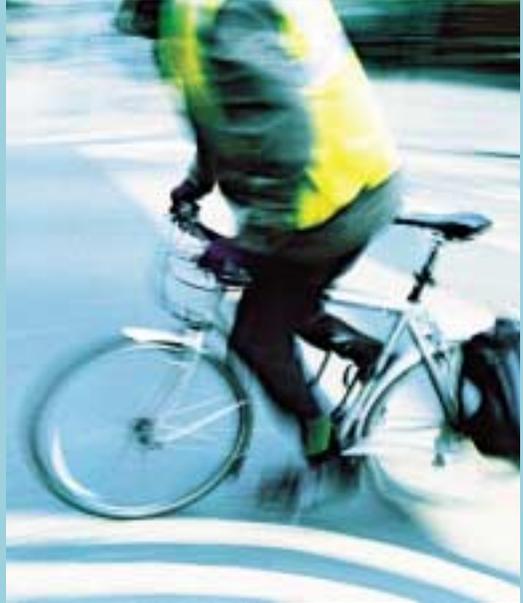
Many towns and cities suffer from transport congestion and the barriers to enjoyable living created by previous high-capacity highway solutions. The Institution's response is to call for plans and measures that place people's requirements for quality places to live and work ahead of the efficiency of vehicle movement. Plans and projects must also contribute directly to urban renaissance, be integrated with development planning and be developed in collaboration with other professionals in urban design.

All urban areas merit quality walk and cycle networks, but these are often lacking. More funding is required to produce better planning, design, construction and maintenance. There must be an accompanying focus on driver education to increase awareness of the needs of pedestrians and cyclists, particularly with respect to safety.

Local authorities should be given more powers and funds to facilitate improvements in public transport services and information; to provide better passenger facilities at interchanges and main destinations; and to reallocate road space to improve bus service reliability. The growing price differential between bus operating costs and the marginal cost of using a car needs to be reversed by fiscal measures. Government must **remove restrictions, created by rules of competition**, on the integration of bus, tram, train and taxi services where this is in the public interest, and co-ordinate the plans and objectives of transport stakeholders.

**“local authorities should be given more powers and funds to facilitate improvements in public transport services and information”**

The Institution believes that **demand management** will become an increasingly essential tool for urban transport planners and this needs Government support. Pricing mechanisms, such as parking management and tariffs, congestion charging and workplace parking charges, will have a primary role.



Well implemented Travel Plans have the potential to reduce car travel. Local authorities need a step-change increase in funding so that they can provide centres of excellence to assist employers in creating Travel Plans and the partnerships to make them more effective. The proper funding of school transport, with more realistic rules on eligibility, is another policy priority.

The desire of local politicians to maximise economic growth for their communities must be tempered by mechanisms that ensure local development plans and parking policies are consistent with regional and sub-regional plans and policies.

Highways provide space for buried pipes and cables which need maintenance and renewal. This must be achieved in ways that give much higher priority to the travelling public, amenities and to avoiding disruption.

## Inter-urban transport

It is vital that there is **greater investment in our rail network** so that it provides an attractive, affordable and reliable service for the growing number of passengers and for the growth in long-distance freight. A priority is to bring the existing infrastructure and rolling stock up to a standard fit for the 21st century. Funding from Government and the private sector must now be made available for new infrastructure and improvements in capacity. If not, even the reduced targets for rail passenger numbers, and reductions in the growth in road traffic, will not be achieved by the end of the decade.

Congestion continues to increase despite the recent move away from new road building. This has to be addressed. It will be necessary to invest in inter-urban roads by selectively improving capacity, either through actions to **reduce casualties and bottlenecks, roadway widening** where environmentally acceptable, or by **active traffic management** measures.



Demand restraint will also be necessary in certain cases by using measures such as road user charging, ramp metering and road space priority for high-occupancy vehicles.

**“it is vital that there is greater investment in our rail network”**

Freight traffic is a growing proportion of inter-urban transport and more of these freight vehicles are multi-axled, articulated trucks. The pivotal role of road freight in the economy must be recognised when setting priorities for the use of road space. But social and environmental problems can occur when these vehicles deliver in urban areas. The **freight industry** needs to be encouraged, by road pricing and appropriate traffic management controls, to make better **use of inter-urban roads over night** and to explore opportunities for transshipment centres on the edge of urban areas to enable on-going delivery by appropriate vehicles at appropriate times. **Transshipment centres**, with good access to transport networks, are needed to encourage freight movement by rail and water.

We will respond to the growing demand for air travel by pressing for **airports to be developed according to sustainable principles and to become public transport hubs**. Pricing mechanisms should encourage access to airports by public transport.

**“we support and promote closer and better working relationships between clients and providers”**

Encouraging the development of regional airports will reduce the demand for long distance travel by surface transport to main London airports.

## Rural transport

Rural populations suffer from a dependence on car travel with resultant social exclusion for those with restricted or no access to a car including the young, the elderly, the disabled and the economically disadvantaged. This must be addressed by **improved funding of public transport services**; these services need not be scheduled buses as there are many examples of innovative alternative provision using taxis and demand responsive forms of community transport. Further demonstration projects are needed.

Increasingly, the movement of goods in rural areas involves the use of larger vehicles often unsuitable for the roads. This presents a challenge, for both effective traffic management and for the maintenance of minor roads, which needs to be tackled. Goods and services must be accessible to the rural population. We believe that careful consideration is necessary to ensure that financial, social, educational and health-care services are distributed in rural areas rather than being located centrally where the provider's costs can be minimised. Pricing mechanisms and planning controls may be needed to achieve this.

## Procurement & finance

Many mechanisms are available for the procurement of transport infrastructure and services, and we support the greater emphasis being placed on excellence in procurement (Latham and Egan Reports). In particular, we support and promote closer and better working relationships between **clients and providers**, whether from the public or private sector.

Provision of new transport infrastructure needs to look increasingly at alternative and innovative forms of funding alongside conventional public sector funding. These alternatives include impact charges, added land values and the Private Finance Initiative. The Institution expects Government to select procurement strategies that on-going and independent research reviews show are appropriate, and give best value to transport users and to the nation.



## Effective delivery

Our members are in the business of delivering effective transport policies and plans, as well as transport infrastructure and maintenance for all surface modes of transport. We are closely involved in the planning, design, maintenance, operation and performance management of transport. The Institution promotes technical innovation and provides best practice guidance.

We are **addressing the shortage in transport planning and engineering skills** together with other professional institutions. We encourage our members to gain knowledge through recognition of the importance of life long learning.

**“we expect a long-term commitment to fund transport infrastructure, maintenance and services satisfactorily”**

We also encourage employers in all sectors and disciplines within the transport industry to put in place appropriate training schemes to enable our members to achieve their Continuing Professional Development targets. We provide opportunities for our members to achieve Chartered or Incorporated Engineer status and to attain National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) to demonstrate their competence in the workplace.

Industry needs to work smarter, to be more productive and to harness changes in technology. We **support**



**investment in specific and ‘blue-sky’ research activities**, and in spreading the results of this research.

From Government and local authorities, we expect a long-term commitment to fund transport infrastructure, maintenance and services satisfactorily, including creating the legislative and financial framework that will encourage the private sector to invest in transport and will encourage prompt and cost-effective implementation. IHT members will then provide the effective delivery of an improved transport provision that the public expects and deserves.

The Institution is already playing a significant part in the delivery process through a range of initiatives. In partnership with the Government and the transport industry, we aim to achieve much more and make the UK a better place to live and do business.

