



Bringing quality to life

The contribution of the public transport
sector to sustainable development -
Summary of report

Bringing quality to life -

The contribution of the public transport sector to sustainable development

Sustainable Development has evolved from one grounded in environmental concerns to being a key business issue. Only twenty years ago the term sustainable development simply did not exist; yet the provision of service and contributing to public good have always been prerequisites for successful public transport, and economic performance cannot be dislocated from the other two.

The UITP report 'Bringing Quality to Life' demonstrates that engaging in **sustainable development** is not only critical to environmental protection and social equity, but also makes good business sense. Indeed if economic development is not to be compromised, Sustainable Development must be properly addressed. Here transport in all its forms plays an undeniably important role. With our increasingly urban life style, the benefits public transport brings to a community must be more valued. The full report 'Bringing Quality to Life' illustrates the commitment of the sector to this issue with examples from signatories of the UITP charter of Sustainable Development is available in English, French, German and Spanish via the UITP web site www.uitp.com.

The global market place is changing.

Increased liberalisation, deregulation and privatisation have modified traditional approaches to trade and service provision. These trends must now be reconciled with social, ecological and cultural criteria to establish a new global arena for balancing business interests and the public good.

Increased interest and public awareness all over the world means that governments and industry must address:

- Environmental concerns, such as climate change, energy and the depletion of natural resources;
- Human health and risks from widespread exposure to pollution and other air-borne toxic substances;
- Socio-economic disquiet, population growth, demographic changes and the displacement of traditional life styles.

UITP, as the international representative of the public transport sector, took the lead in 2003 and launched the charter on Sustainable Development at its 55th World Congress. UITP members are asked to become signatories and make a voluntary, measurable commitment to integrate sustainable development principles into their organisations.

The UITP Charter on Sustainable Development requires that signatories report on their environmental, social and economic performance within their own organisations.

Today more than 100 organisations have done so and this partnership allows UITP to collect best practises and results, demonstrating how public transport ¹ contributes to sustainable development. The report '**Bringing Quality to Life**' sets out these achievements and is one of three major reports prepared for the 56th UITP World Congress (2005) ².



UITP Charter Signatories recognise that there are new skills needed to respond to these international business challenges. This document summarises some of those challenges and responses. More details and specific Charter Signatory achievements are available on the UITP website : www.uitp.com.

1 Public transport, also called public transit, usually does not include air transport, international or intercity transport services.

2 Bringing Quality to Life is one of three reports and part of the Rome Manifesto. The other two reports are Public Transport 2020 and Mobility in Cities, the update of the Millennium Cities Database (MCDB).



Sustainable Development is about integrating social equity, environmental justice and economic growth.

Social progress which recognises the needs of everyone.

Everyone should share in the benefits of increased prosperity and a clean and safe environment. Action needs to be taken to improve access to services, tackle social exclusion, and reduce the harm to health caused by poverty, poor housing, unemployment and pollution.

Effective protection of the environment. More decisive actions by governments and civil society is needed to limit environment threats and to protect human health and safety from hazards such as poor air quality and toxic chemicals; and to protect things which people need or value, such as wildlife, landscapes and historic buildings.

Prudent use of natural resources. This does not mean denying the use of non-renewable resources, but making sure that they are used efficiently and that alternatives are developed to replace them in due course.

Maintain high and stable levels of economic growth and employment, so that everyone can share in high living standards and greater job opportunities. In today's rapidly changing world most countries rely on trade and businesses must provide high quality services and goods at the right price to prosper. To achieve this, workforces must be equipped with proper education and skills and there must be an infrastructure to support them.

Urban areas are centres of economic development and wealth creation; they cannot perform efficiently without robust public transport networks.

A global set of challenges ³

The following six goals can be considered as a framework for the basis of a global initiative to make the world's transport systems sustainable:

- Limit greenhouse gas emissions from transport to levels that will not endanger the climate;
- Address and reduce traffic congestion;
- Significantly reduce the number of road transport related deaths and injuries;
- Narrow the mobility divides between levels of society and the richest and poorest countries;
- Improve mobility opportunities for all levels of society giving access to primary services of health, education and employment;
- Reduce conventional emissions and transport related noise so that they do not constitute a significant concern to public health anywhere in the world.

Setting global challenges in context

No metropolitan area anywhere in the world is performing efficiently today without public transport. Individual transport can only function as a complement to collective public transport in these areas. Therefore, **public transport is a cornerstone of sustainable urban mobility** and an integral part of global sustainable development.

Limit greenhouse gas emissions from transport

Climate change is one of the most important and difficult challenges facing the world today. It is a problem that can only be tackled if governments and industry work together. Greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) from transport globally are increasing and reductions in GHG emissions from transport requires more efforts as **technology improvements are offset by the sheer increase in traffic.**

Mitigating environmental damage

Environmental damage is the most difficult damage to put right. **Air quality, climate change and energy are possibly the key environmental issues of the century.** Air borne particulates are extremely dangerous to human health, in particular to young children and the aged. Asthma attacks, respiratory diseases, heart attacks, and premature death are among the most serious public health problems – and all are strongly linked to emissions from all transport.

Technology exists today to clean up emissions from engines, and with cleaner fuels, most of the adverse health impacts can be prevented. However, this is still a major challenge for developing countries, where the vehicle fleet is often highly polluting and unleaded fuel or low (or ultralow) sulphur diesel is not yet available. In addition, the maintenance cycles of many road vehicles are not optimal, allowing them to pollute more than they should. Retrofitting buses with soot or particulate filters is simply not an option for many countries due to costs.

³ These values are similar to the 7 objectives published in Mobility 2030, the results of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development's sustainable mobility project.

More and faster progress in environmental protection can be made if we used today's technologies better and introduced them more quickly. Particulate filters for buses reduce local pollution to acceptable levels, targets for CO₂, NOx, SOx emissions are now feasible with smaller engines and other improvements.

Balancing energy use

Energy consumption has more than doubled in the last thirty years and 95% of transport relies on fossil fuels. This is not likely to change in the short or medium term, as almost all the projected growth in fossil fuel use will come from transport. Energy efficiency is therefore a key challenge for the whole sector.

Energy efficiency per passenger transported by collective public transport is already high, and would be improved if even more people choose to use it.



Using a wide variety of energies spreads the risks of unstable supplies. Charter signatories have the cleanest fleets and use the latest technologies where these are feasibly possible.

Tramway, metros and trolley buses use electric energy which is almost emission free in operations. Some signatories have committed to the provision of a high percentage of services using electric energy. Urban rail and electric vehicles are low or zero emission but it still remains for governments to provide electricity using renewable technologies to bring the total environmental footprint down.

Energy for bus fleets is spread over several types of fuels, with CNG, LPG or diesel mixes used for the majority of bus operations. Several charter signatories are using biofuel to cut emissions and lower local pollution levels to a minimum. Solar energy is being used to supplement the national grid provision in many transport installations.

Sustainable development in practise



Over 100 UITP members representing public and private operators, organising authorities, services and the manufacturing industry have signed the UITP charter on sustainable development, committing to making sustainable development a strategic objective.

Public transport organisations are showing leadership. The charter commitment includes the provision of information on increasing awareness about sustainable development and the importance of actions to protect the environment. Many signatories make extra efforts beyond legal compliance to ensure that all employees and staff have access to training on sustainable development or environmental protection.

This includes monitoring that all staff and employees are:

- aware of their organisations' strategy on sustainable development
- receive regular training on the environmental aspect of their daily job requirements
- are able to contribute to their organisation by making suggestions for improvement in management or production processes
- and that these actions are reported on as part of the social pillar of implementing sustainable development.

Recognising the links between sustainable development and competitive advantage in the market place elevates it to an issue of strategic importance.

Implementing sustainable development is the logical outcome of evolving industry practise, such as environmental stewardship, pollution prevention, waste minimisation, cost effective process improvements and high performance design. Many areas of business benefit strongly from engaging in sustainable activities and this can be measured in both financial and non-financial methods, often called '**triple bottom line**' (economic, social and environmental) reporting.

Key skill sets for tomorrow's organisations

Sustainable development is a journey rather than a destination and is based on a new, different set of skills. Key elements for successfully implementing sustainable development principles are solid leadership and good governance. It is also vital to communicate this topic throughout an organisation, and all full charter signatories are asked to demonstrate how they communicate that sustainable development is a strategic goal of the organisation. New and non-traditional competencies and skills need to be fostered within public transport organisations and institutions.

Commonly recognised new imperatives are:

- Reputation management
- Risk management
- Stakeholder engagement
- Employee motivation and satisfaction
- Innovation and learning
- Access to capital
- Financial, environmental and social accountability, transparency and performance

UITP charter signatories are developing a better understanding of the risks and opportunities using sustainable development as a template. These are summarised as follows:

Risks

People	Performance	Compliance	Increased costs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Damage to customer relations▪ Staff retention and motivation▪ Poor reputation with 'neighbours'	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Delays to projects▪ Delays to service▪ Loss of environmental advantage and preference	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Legislation▪ Sound environmental management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Fines and compensation▪ Cost of clean-up▪ Loss of political reputation and funding▪ Increased insurance▪ Financial rating

Opportunities

Reduce Costs	Avoid Risks	Create Opportunities	Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Reduce cost of compliance▪ Reduce raw materials and waste▪ Reduce energy use	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Assure licence to operate▪ Avoid commercial liabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Develop cheaper and better methods of operation▪ Develop new ways of working with partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Improve stakeholder relationships▪ Enhance reputation as responsible custodian for mass transit▪ Attract resources: people, investment

Making it happen – Measurement and reporting

Effective management of organisations depend on the successful application of core values into everyday practises. Reporting also brings increased transparency and accountability to key stakeholders providing a sound basis for dialogue and engagement with them. These stakeholders can be both internal such as employees, staff and suppliers and external such as customers, the local community, investors, regulators and other decision makers. Sustainability reporting illustrates the readiness of an organisation to address pressing but difficult issues and is a tool to bring more focus to the organisation itself and encourage innovation and continuous improvement, stimulating leading edge thinking and performance.

All Full signatories to the UITP regularly report on their environmental, economic and social performance. More information can be found in the report 'Bringing Quality to Life' or in the best practises that are available via UITP's electronic database Mobi +.

The capacity for changing present habits of consumption and mobility.

World Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has trebled in the last 30 years yet income inequalities persist. However, there are signs that GDP, the principle and most widely accepted indicator of economic health and activity may not be the best judge of real sustainability. For example, the level of happiness in the USA, a country with one of the highest GDP's world wide has not grown in parallel with increased earnings.

Bringing change

Most economies are still programmed for growth. Growing populations, rising life expectancy, more information, higher investment, more products and consequently many politicians place growth at the centre of policy development, stimulating consumption and production.

UITP
rue Sainte-Marie 6
B-1080 Brussels
Belgium

Tel: + 32 2 673 61 00
Fax: + 32 2 660 10 72
info@uitp.com
www.uitp.com

More incentives to change habits are vital and this also means individual efforts from all citizens.

The importance of motorised private transport is over estimated and the possibility to reduce is underestimated ...

Despite shortcomings and the unparalleled flexibility and freedom a car might bring, public transport provides an essential service for present day urban mobility. Public transport is outperforming other motorised modes today; in terms of energy efficiency and land use per passenger transported.

The report 'Bringing Quality to Life' shows that there are real efforts being made in the sector to increase performance and to ensure that public transport is in a position to be an excellent complement to other modes, allowing a range of choices for citizens to enjoy a high quality of life, in a safe and healthy environment.

Public transport is vital for future development. There has been much debate on decoupling transport and economic growth, yet this can only be done if external effects are factored into the transport model. The highest costs being the negative environmental and social effects and these are also the most difficult to put right.

Governments must bring in policies and measures as greater incentives are needed to change present habits. This applies to the developed and the developing world where today there is little incentive not to choose 'car-based' mobility models.

UITP, as the representative of the sector and its charter signatories make the following recommendations to enhance the environment for sustainable development and call on politicians and decision-makers to:

- Promote modal shift towards public transport, the safest and most environmentally-friendly mode for urban and regional mobility;
- Manage energy use by increasing the use of energy efficient public transport, both surface based and underground;
- Acknowledge and work with transport actors to recognise the useful contribution public transport makes to reducing national levels of CO₂, GHG emissions and local pollutants;
- Recognise the contribution of public transport in social cohesion and local economies, and
- Work with all mobility players to help increase the public awareness about the excellent environmental, social and economic aspects and good safety record of public transport.

In particular they should:

- Review energy and transport policies to allocate more investment to increasing ridership on public transport all over the world;
- Give priority and dedicated lanes to public transport thereby increasing its reliability, convenience and operating effectiveness;
- Promote design and land use development encouraging the safe use of all sustainable modes, connecting public transport seamlessly with walking and cycling;
- Set and enforce area wide speed restrictions and traffic calming measures;
- Increase awareness about road safety and high standards of training for drivers of all types of vehicles;
- Strongly enforce parking policies as a simple tool to change behaviour.