

# Backgrounder

- This year's Green Mobility Capital Grants Program is building on the success of last year's pilot. In 2007/2008, \$138,000 was awarded to nine projects throughout the province, which leveraged a total of \$650,000. In 2008/2009, up to \$160,000 will be available. These grants foster local innovation and allow community groups to act as catalysts for more sustainable transportation options in rural areas and towns.
- The transportation sector – moving people and goods – accounts for 27% of Nova Scotia's greenhouse gas emissions.
- Viable transportation options and smart community planning are important in reducing emissions from the transportation sector.
- The NS Department of Energy and Conserve NS have provided capital grants to transit initiatives, such as Metro Transit's development of the MetroLink service and purchase of hybrid diesel vehicles, and Cape Breton Transit's university hub.
- When transit investments are made, Nova Scotians respond. For example, Metro Transit's MetroLink rapid transit service was expected to reach capacity in three months. Instead, it reached capacity within one week. More importantly, of the passengers 22% formerly drove alone to work.
- Built environments that directly encourage walking and cycling are necessary to increase levels of physical activity. Currently, 50% of Nova Scotians do not get enough physical activity for health benefits. This trend may be worsening: the physical activity levels of grade 11 boys and girls decreased from 13% to 10% and from 7% to 0.6%, respectively, between 2001 and 2005.
- The way cities and towns are designed directly impacts how much energy is used. In communities where opportunities to work, shop, and play are within walking or bussing distance, citizens choose to leave their cars at home – or not buy a car at all. But, according to GPI Atlantic, Nova Scotia's urban density diminished by 36% between 1971 and 1996 – one of the sharpest declines in the country.
- Approximately 30% of Nova Scotians do not drive, including seniors, youth and persons with physical challenges. Lack of viable transportation options is a barrier to employment, education and access to social opportunities.