

# GPI News

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GPI Atlantic's Annual General Meeting:  
Saturday, March 31, 2007  
3:30 to 5 pm, location  
TBA  
Save the Date!

## GPI Atlantic launches fundraising drive . . .

For the last 10 years, GPI Atlantic has been working hard to measure what is truly important to people. The Genuine Progress Index gives confirmation in numbers to what we already know in our hearts; that there is a value to volunteer work, good health, and clean air; and a cost to pollution and crime.

We have published over 60 reports on the components of the Genuine Progress Index, and the remaining components of the GPI will be completed in the next year. Working with all levels of government, NGOs, businesses, and others, we have seen our research effect real change in policy.

Even with these considerable successes, **we know that GPI Atlantic is still**

**at only 10% of its potential impact and reach.**

Without core funding we have been unable to devote the necessary resources to the education, communication and outreach required to really see the GPI integrated into decision-making processes.

To make sure that the completion of the final components of the GPI and the GPI Headline Indicators fully realize the potential of this culmination of 10 years of work, we need to be starting our advance communications and outreach work.

We have already begun this process. But we cannot fully implement our plans with existing and limited project-based funding. For

the completion and release of these reports to be successful in reaching a wide audience, ***we need your help.***

We don't usually think of research as an agent of change. But all of us at GPI Atlantic see our mission as a profound social revolution to ensure that the real values we hold in common as Canadians make their way into public debate and affect the way we make policy.

Your donation and support will help us to achieve these goals, and to build a better world for today and for our children. Please consider making a donation today by filling out the form on the back page.

Thanks for your support!

## . . . and Outreach to supporters and volunteers

GPI Atlantic is embarking on an expansion of its work with members and supporters.

Improved communications and outreach activities are the first steps in broadening public awareness of the Genuine Progress Index.

Part of this outreach is to recruit the volunteers who will be the heart of GPI Atlantic's efforts to realize the full potential impact and reach of our work.

The GPI Atlantic website will soon have added content outlining what is needed to help GPI Atlantic reach a wider audience. The new site content will include specific details on how volunteers can help with this work.

We also plan to have a forum for people to comment on and discuss GPI Atlantic's research and work.

But don't wait for the updated website to be finished before getting involved.

*In fact, we need help now!*

We are recruiting volunteers, people who want to help get the GPI message out by writing opinion pieces, working on our communications strategy, or working on the website or a blog; and people to do administrative work, like data entry and filing.

In the next few months, we hope to find a volunteer Volunteer Coordinator to help

organize and manage this work.

People helping and participating where they can is what will broaden the reach and impact of the Genuine Progress Index.

**If you can help with any of this work, contact:**

Ken Summers  
Outreach Coordinator  
902-229-1289  
ksummers@gpiatlantic.org

## International work — GPI Atlantic around the world

GPI Atlantic is a recognized leader in indicator and quality of life research, not only nationally here in Canada, but also internationally. Over the past several years, GPI Atlantic has expanded its work, in response to several requests, to include more international advising in a number of different places, including Bhutan and New Zealand.



In the spring of 2006, GPI Atlantic's Executive Director, Dr. Ronald Col-

man, visited New Zealand for the third time. As in previous visits in 2003 and 2004, in 2006 Dr. Colman gave a number of public presentations and conducted workshops for local and national levels of govern-

ment.

The 2006 trip built upon the report Dr. Colman prepared in 2004 for the New Zealand Ministry for Social Development to titled, "*The Nova Scotia Genuine Progress Index – Insights for New Zealand*". This report included recommended next steps for New Zealand in developing progress indicators.

In 2006, Dr. Colman and GPI Atlantic researcher Mike Pennock both spent time in Bhutan, working with researchers at the Centre for Bhutan Studies on the development of their new Gross National Happiness (GNH) survey and index.

In 1972, the King of Bhutan proclaimed that "Gross National Happiness is more important than

Gross National Product" for the Bhutanese, and he launched his country on a unique development path that sought to balance environmental conservation with economic development, cultural promotion, and good governance.

The development of a formal set of GNH indicators in Bhutan began in earnest in early 2006. GPI Atlantic has been working with the Centre for Bhutan Studies since 2003 on preliminary research and preparations for this work and has provided and continues to provide ongoing support in the selection of indicators to measure GNH, and the development of a national GNH survey and database.

Bhutan plans to launch its GNH indicators in 2008.

## GPI engages with youth, hosts workshops

In January 2007, GPI Atlantic hosted two youth-oriented workshops with the support of the Nova Scotia Canada Volunteerism Initiative Network.

The first workshop focused on film and media awareness. Participants learned the fundamentals of filmmaking and editing, and produced their own short film. They also covered basic media awareness and critical thinking about media sources.

The second workshop focused on the skills needed to write effective fund-

ing proposals. Participants learned strategies for identifying funders and helpful hints and tips on preparing proposals.

These workshops are part of GPI Atlantic's ongoing commitment to working with young people. Begun by Youth Program Director Gwen Colman as part of the *Re-Thinking Development* Conference

*GPI Atlantic has been working with an inspiring group of young people to build leadership now and for the future.*

GPI Atlantic organized in June 2005, GPI Atlantic has since been working with an inspiring group of young people to build leadership both now and for the future, and would eventually like to train young people in the research methods needed to sustain the GPI over time.

For more information, please contact Gwen Colman, GPI Atlantic Youth Program Director, [gwen@gpiatlantic.org](mailto:gwen@gpiatlantic.org).

## GPI Atlantic in the news

Below is a list of recent media coverage GPI Atlantic has received. The release of The GPI Transportation Accounts received major press this fall, including both print and radio news. GPI Atlantic has also been quoted in a number of other articles.

Our website ([www.gpiatlantic.org/media.htm](http://www.gpiatlantic.org/media.htm)) contains links to all of the media coverage that mentions

GPI Atlantic. New articles are posted as they are published. If you see an article that mentions GPI Atlantic, please send it to our attention!

January 25, 2007, Affordable energy must be on table interveners say, The Chronicle-Herald

January 19, 2007, Big drop in ATV sales reported, The Daily News

At least 10 articles covering the release of The GPI Transportation Accounts (see the full list of [Transportation Clips](#) online).

November 25, 2006, [GPI tests way we think about progress](#), The Chronicle-Herald

November 23, 2006, [Green energy, bigger bill](#), The Chronicle-Herald

# Transportation: the most costly item for Nova Scotian households

The largest cost for Nova Scotian households is not health, housing, food, or even shelter, but transportation. And the cost of transportation is rising relentlessly. But the full extent of that rising cost is not visible to households, according to a new, 560-page report released November 29, 2006 by GPI Atlantic.

*The GPI Transportation Accounts: Sustainable Transportation for Nova Scotia* is the most detailed, comprehensive, and rigorous analysis of transportation indicators ever

conducted for Nova Scotia. The study found that Nova Scotia relies overwhelmingly and increasingly on highway transportation to move both passengers and freight. It estimates that in 2002, the true cost of road transportation in Nova Scotia was at least \$6.4 billion, the first time that total cost has been calculated for Nova Scotia.

The full cost of road transportation includes both direct costs that the consumer or user pays, and also a range of invisible costs that are either paid indirectly (for example, through taxes, higher prices, or increased health costs), or are not counted in the market economy (for example, the long-term costs of greenhouse gas and air pollutant emissions).

“The average Nova Scotian spends about \$3,036 a year directly on costs such as vehicle ownership and operation, transit fares, and parking – and incurs an additional \$4,562 in indirect economic and environmental costs,” explained GPI Atlantic Executive Director Ronald Colman, Ph.D. “As consumers, we don’t see the indirect costs.”

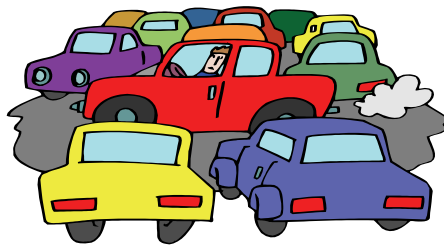
“For example, Halifax homeowners pay hundreds of dollars annually in property and income taxes that provide roads, parking, traffic patrols, and provincial and federal services

related to transportation.” Other indirect costs include the health and environmental costs of vehicle emissions, “free” parking, transport-related water pollution, the value of the land devoted to roads and parking lots, uncompensated accident and crash costs, and there’s even a cost to congestion.

“We pay these kinds of costs indirectly through taxes and higher consumer prices, and also by imposing environmental costs on

future generations,” notes Dr. Colman. “So we don’t connect those costs with our transportation choices. If we did, we might make quite different choices.”

The GPI Atlantic study is designed to assess Nova Scotia’s transportation system in terms of its sustainability. The analysis shows that Nova Scotia’s transportation system, with its heavy reliance on roads both for passengers and freight, is not sustainable. Between 1990 and 2002, passenger travel increased by 5.2% and truck freight traffic by 66%. Greenhouse gas emissions from heavy-duty trucks increased by 54%, and emissions from light-duty gasoline trucks, including SUVs and minivans, jumped by more than 60%. Off-road vehicle emissions rose by 68%.



In fact, of the 20 key indicators of sustainable transportation examined by GPI Atlantic, 13 were pointing in the wrong direction, away from sustainability. A few indicators, includ-

ing air pollution, crashes involving dangerous goods, and recycling rates, showed signs of improvement. But most indicators were deteriorating, including transportation expenditures, accessibility, truck freight reliance, and energy efficiency.

Some of the key problems identified in the GPI Atlantic report stem from “sprawl” – rapid low-density suburban and ex-urban development that increases automobile dependence and results in longer commutes.

The report’s co-author, Todd Litman, Executive Director of the Victoria Transport Policy Institute, noted that alternative policies in land use and transportation could give Nova Scotians more travel options and a variety of other benefits by encouraging ride-sharing, public transit, telecommuting, walking, and cycling.

“That’s known as ‘smart growth,’” said Mr. Litman. “Smart growth communities reduce real transportation costs to consumers and society when all costs are taken into account.” Such communities have shops, schools, work-places and high-quality public transit all within convenient walking distance. These kinds of communities result in lower transportation costs and enhance public health and safety.

“Our report shows that the transport market is distorted because so many of the costs of road transportation are externalized and concealed,” Mr. Litman notes. “But many of those distortions can be corrected using Win-Win solutions.”

“We can lower taxes on employment and instead charge users directly for using roads and parking facilities and for imposing pollution costs, and we can convert registration fees and insurance premiums to distance-based fees,” he says. “At the same time we can improve walking and cycling conditions and public transit services. This will reduce municipal costs,

**In 2002, the true cost of road transportation in Nova Scotia was at least \$6.4 billion.**

## GPIATLANTIC'S QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

535 Indian Point Rd.  
Glen Haven, NS  
B3Z 2T5  
Canada

Phone: 902-489-2524  
Fax: 902-405-1221  
E-mail: [info@gpiatlantic.org](mailto:info@gpiatlantic.org)

GPI Atlantic, in partnership with the Atkinson Charitable Foundation, also produces a colour tabloid magazine called *Reality Check: The Canadian Review of Wellbeing*. If you become a member of GPI Atlantic, you will receive a free hard copy of Reality Check.

This magazine is also accessible online, at [www.gpiatlantic.org/realitycheck/index.htm](http://www.gpiatlantic.org/realitycheck/index.htm)

GPI Atlantic's **vision** is that decisions made by governments, businesses and other organizations in Nova Scotia, Canada, and around the world, are based on criteria that properly value social, economic and environmental assets.

GPI Atlantic's **mission** is to conduct research on the Genuine Progress Index, which measures environmental, economic and social progress and wealth, and to assist leaders in business, government and communities in using the GPI perspective in their decision-making.

For more information about GPI Atlantic:

Clare Levin  
Managing Director  
902-489-2524  
[clevin@gpiatlantic.org](mailto:clevin@gpiatlantic.org)

[www.gpiatlantic.org](http://www.gpiatlantic.org)

## Transportation: the most costly item for Nova Scotian households — continued

traffic congestion, energy consumption, and pollution – and at the same time we'll improve public health, reduce urban sprawl, save consumers money, and improve mobility options for non-drivers.”

Mr. Litman notes that these pricing reforms are not a tax grab for government, but simply a shift in the way we pay for transportation. Motorists who continue their current mileage will pay the same as they do now, on average, but those who reduce their mileage will receive financial rewards. These reforms will end up costing Nova Scotians less, not more,

than at present.

“Improving the diversity and efficiency of our transportation system prepares our communities for the future,” says Mr. Litman. “The improvements address the needs of an aging population, reduce the economic risks from rising fuel prices and climate change, support economic development, and allow individual consumers to choose the lifestyles

they prefer.

“These strategies don't require heavy-handed government intervention, and they provide many benefits to consumers and society. It's just classical market economics that simply matches prices to the full costs of production – which leads to a more efficient and equitable market economy. There really is no reason not to do it.”

*Improving the diversity  
and efficiency of our  
transportation system  
prepares our communities  
for the future*

## Make a Donation

You can make a donation to GPI Atlantic by faxing (902-405-1221) or mailing us this form, or donate online, using the CanadaHelps button located on the right side of our website, [www.gpiatlantic.org](http://www.gpiatlantic.org). Please make cheque payable to GPI Atlantic or complete credit card information below.

Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle: Visa / MC / Amex Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_