



IHIE

**INSTITUTE OF HIGHWAY
INCORPORATED ENGINEERS**

POLICY STATEMENT 8

RURAL ISSUES

IHIE recognises the particular problems in meeting transportation needs in rural areas:

Rural roads carry a diversity of traffic not found elsewhere: pedestrians, cyclists, horses, livestock, agricultural vehicles, large goods vehicles and general motor traffic all share the same road space.

- The dispersed population means that traditional public transport systems are unable to provide a practical alternative to the motor car in many cases.
- Transportation problems in rural communities hit the young and old hardest, particularly in terms of access to appropriate facilities.
- In many rural areas the motor car is the only practical means of transport.
- Small village shops are closing due to the development of out of town businesses.
- Agriculture and quarrying, which are predominantly sited in rural areas, generate a significant volume of large goods vehicle traffic, which often represents a greater proportion of the traffic flow than on other roads.
- Rural roads are predominantly old tracks with poor horizontal and vertical alignments, yet drivers often fail to take account of this when using them.
- Rural roads maintenance is often a low priority.
- The majority of traffic engineering developments in recent years have been concerned with urban or high-speed roads and are largely inappropriate for use on the rural road network.
- Accidents on rural roads tend to be scattered because of the low traffic flows yet conversely often represent a higher accident rate / thousand vehicle km.
- Access to the countryside for leisure purposes is increasing with the car being the preferred transport mode.

IHIE therefore believes that:

- The importance of the motor car to rural life must be recognised and, in seeking to generally reduce inappropriate use of motor vehicles, the particular needs of rural communities must be recognised and accommodated.
- Experience of innovative community and public transport schemes (e.g. post bus, community bus, variable route bus, community car sharing schemes, etc.) needs to receive a wider audience and resources should be made available to allow successful schemes to be duplicated elsewhere.
- Greater resources need to be specifically allocated to rural roads maintenance.

- Education of the motorist in the particular skills for driving on rural roads is required.
- Rural speed limits should be generally reduced to reflect the character of the roads and of the traffic using them.
- Further research and experiment is required into the development of traffic management techniques specifically for rural roads.
- Sustainable modes of transport must be developed and promoted for access to the countryside, particularly for leisure purposes.

To this end, IHIE will:

- ensure that rural issues are included where appropriate in symposia and courses;
- use its voice in the industry, and through involvement in national forums, to lobby for a specific allocation of funds for maintenance of rural roads;
- encourage sharing of successful techniques and initiatives for addressing rural transport initiatives among members, including use of the IHIE web site to promote discussion on rural issues.