SAVE THE DATE!

62nd CTRF Annual Conference
Montreal, QC, June 6 – 9, 2027

We look forward to welcoming you back to Montreal for another CTRF Conference!

A favourite city for many Canadians, Montreal combines a cosmopolitan vibe with a major transportation hub and old world charm. The Conference will be held at the **École de technologie supérieure (ETS)**, complimented by events at other locations throughout downtown. We invite you to discover more on what Montreal offers at Tourisme Montreal.

The theme for the conference – **Connecting Transport Research and Practice to Address Canada's Emerging Challenges** – highlights the importance of linking research to practice, and ensuring practice informs research.

The Call for Papers and Posters for Montreal is now open. Abstracts are due by **November 1, 2026**. Full details on submissions are available on the CTRF website.

In the meantime, please send any ideas and suggestions for the Conference plenaries, workshops and other events to the CTRF Conference planning team:

- Prof. Catherine Morency, VP Meetings: cmorency@polymtl.ca
- Dr. Martin Trepanier, VP Program: mtrepanier@polymtl.ca



President's Message



As I reflect on the past year, I am incredibly proud of what our CTRF community has accomplished together. Our annual conference in Halifax was a tremendous success, bringing together researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and industry leaders from across Canada and beyond for thoughtful discussions on the future of transportation. The quality of the presentations, papers, panels, and networking opportunities reinforced what makes CTRF so special: our unique ability to connect research and practice in support of better transportation outcomes.

The Halifax conference also demonstrated the strength of our organization. It showcased the dedication of our volunteers, conference organizers, sponsors, Board members, and participants who continue to invest their time in making CTRF the leading forum for transportation in Canada. To everyone who contributed, thank you.

As we look ahead, our Board has established several priorities to strengthen CTRF and position it for future growth.

- A key focus will be expanding our membership base. We want to increase the value, impact and influence of CTRF.
- We are strengthening our research mandate through the launch of a new Vice President, Research role. This will help us better understand emerging research needs, support our paper review processes, and assess opportunities to further contribute to Canada's transportation research ecosystem.
- We are also investing in enhanced communications and marketing through updates to our website, newsletter, refreshed collateral, and expanded outreach efforts.
- Finally, we remain focused on ensuring CTRF's long-term financial sustainability through thoughtful conference pricing, careful cost management, and increased sponsorship support.

The year ahead is an exciting one for CTRF. I look forward to working with our Board members as we continue to grow our impact and strengthen our community. Planning is already underway for our 2027 Annual Conference in Montreal. Stay tuned for more details in the months ahead.

Regards,
Adrian Lightstone
President, CTRF

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, MAY 24-27, 2026

61ST CTRF CONFERENCE SUMMARY

The 61st CTRF Conference, under the theme **"Mobilizing our future: Transport innovations for a stronger Canada"** took place at the Four Points Sheraton Hotel in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Over 150 delegates gathered to share research, network and re-connect with peers, colleagues and friends.

The Conference Program included:

- Expert plenaries on transportation innovation and ports & maritime supply chains
- Presentation and discussion of over 85 Research Papers
- Workshops and Technical Research Committee meetings
- A Young Professionals Panel (for the first time!)
- Technical tours at local transportation and infrastructure planning sites
- The Annual Bison Debate, Conference Dinner, Awards Luncheon, and more...



Group Photo at the Bison Debate

There are many people to thank who contributed to the success of the Conference, including the delegates, authors, keynote speakers, moderators, panelists, presenters, session chairs, debaters, sponsors, and in particular the Organizing Committee led by **Dr. Ahsan Habib** (CTRF VP Meetings) from DalTRAC, **Sarah Harlley** (CTRF VP Program) from CPCS, and a team of Volunteers from DalTRAC / Dalhousie University.



Halifax Conference Organizing Committee and Volunteers

61ST CTRF CONFERENCE

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CONFERENCE OPENING REMARKS

Report by: Jim Frost

Conference delegates were welcomed by **The Honourable Fred Tilley, Minister of Public Works, Government of Nova Scotia** and **Andy Fillmore, Mayor of Halifax Regional Municipality**.

Both highlighted initiatives underway in Nova Scotia and Halifax in particular to improve mobility.



Hon. Fred Tilley
Minister of Public Works, NS



Andy Filmore
Mayor of Halifax Regional Municipality

Minister Tilley opened his remarks by highlighting how congestion costs time, money and inconvenience, and Nova Scotia is dedicated to long term and integrated transportation planning to deal with congestion. In 2025, the Joint Regional Transportation Agency, now Link Nova Scotia (LinkNS) released its Strategic Plan for the Halifax Region, with 39 recommendations to improve transportation and mobility, including movement of people and goods. LinkNS now encompasses the whole province bringing together other levels of government, as well as research institutes such as DalTRAC. Among the current areas under consideration for implementation are High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes, message boards on highways to improve traffic flow, intermunicipal transit and commuter rail, and improvements to the core street network on the Halifax Peninsula.

Mayor Andy Fillmore is a Harvard-educated planner by profession and served as a Halifax MP in the House of Commons from 2015 to 2024, before becoming mayor of the city in 2024. In his view, transportation is never abstract; it's about "function". Recent growth in Halifax, which resulted in the population increasing from 390,000 in 2011 to 517,000 in 2025, has exposed weaknesses in overall infrastructure, but especially transportation. Halifax has the third worst traffic in Canada after Toronto and Vancouver. A key challenge is that there are only three roads and two bridges to get on or off the Halifax Peninsula, where most employment is located. The implementation of the regional transportation plan is critical, given that the Halifax region accounts 60% of the provincial population and 93% of GDP growth in over the past 10 years. Mayor Fillmore believes Bus Rapid Transit, increased Active Transportation, and eventually commuter rail could be important parts of the long-term transportation solutions for the region.





PLENARY 1: MOBILIZING OUR FUTURE: TRANSPORT INNOVATIONS FOR A STRONGER CANADA

Report by: Jim Frost



Adrian Lightstone
Partner, CPCS

Adrian Lightstone, CTRF President, moderated this opening plenary on the importance of transport innovations for a stronger Canada. Each panelist spoke about their views on key aspects of a successful transportation system in Canada.



Dr. Mary Brooks, C.M.
Professor Emeritus
Dalhousie University

Dr. Mary Brooks stated that without trade, there is no wealth, and recent global events have resulted in much uncertainty. Critically, she encouraged the audience to consider where major chokepoints are located and who controls the ports in their vicinity. Dr. Brooks cautioned against privatizing Canada's major ports and pointed to the airports model instead.



Dave Reage
Executive Director,
Infrastructure
& Transportation, Halifax
Regional Minucipality

Mr. Dave Reage, from the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), referred to the newly revised Integrated Mobility Plan, which considered all modes of urban transport and changed how the municipality does business. There are four core pillars and key principals: 1) complete communities; 2) move people; 3) manage congestion; 4) integrate solutions. The Rapid Transit Strategy focusses on Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and 3 ferry routes. Goods movement is also a major focus, with the Windsor Street Exchange project mentioned. The project will cost $180M and involves HRM, the province, the federal government, CN, Halifax Port Authority and others. It includes a rail shuttle between the south end terminal and Fairview Cove, which will remove 75% of trucks from downtown city streets.



Dr. Ahsan Habib
DalTRAC Laboratory/
Dalhousie University

Dr. Ahsan Habib, from DalTRAC Laboratory and Dalhousie University, spoke about the impact of the pandemic on housing, transportation and climate. The transportation system needs to move more people as we grow. The affordable housing crisis means we need to have better transportation solutions, while "return to work" edicts have reversed some previously achieved climate benefits. One issue that concerns DalTRAC is Halifax's targeted growth of another 50%, which is resulting in the municipality spreading out. Land use and transportation planning are sometimes mismatched. There is, however, potential for Transit-Oriented Development at the new ferry terminal in Bedford, but this is not (yet) part of the concept.

TECHNICAL TOURS



We kicked off the technical tours afternoon with a fantastic demonstration from the Canadian Coast Guard Search & Rescue team! Delegates then had the option for six tours to join.



Irving Shipyard



Waterfront Tour



Cosgwell Interchange



Spring Garden Road Planning



Halifax Transit Ferry



DalTRAC Living Laboratory

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS PANEL

BUILDING CAREERS THROUGH CURIOSITY, CONNECTIONS AND CONTINUOUS LEARNING

Report by: Yu Sui

The Halifax Conference marked the first ever Young Professionals Panel, bringing together early-career professionals from the public service, consulting and academia to discuss career development, mentorship, and the future of Canada's transportation sector. Moderated by **Alistair Bell of CPCS**, the session featured **Alexi Katsanis from Link Nova Scotia**, **Sonya Sula from InterVISTAS Consulting**, and **Asif Anik from Dalhousie University**.

- The panel discussed the importance of professional relationships. While technical skills remain essential, all panelists emphasized that networking, mentorship, and communication are often what helps create long-term career opportunities. Building meaningful connections allows young professionals to gain exposure to different perspectives, seek guidance, and better understand how their work contributes to larger transportation systems.
- The panel also highlighted the interdisciplinary nature of transportation. Today's transportation challenges extend beyond engineering and infrastructure planning and increasingly require collaboration among planners, economists, policy analysts, data scientists, and industry practitioners. The speakers emphasized that learning agility, critical thinking, and the ability to communicate research findings effectively are highly transferable skills that enable professionals to move across sectors and adapt to evolving responsibilities.
- Looking ahead, the panel identified several trends they felt would shape the transportation sector over the coming decade. Governance and institutional coordination, digitalization of passenger experiences, artificial intelligence, climate change, housing affordability, regional accessibility, and traffic congestion were all identified as areas requiring continued attention. The discussion emphasized that emerging technologies, particularly AI and big data analytics, should be viewed not as solutions in themselves, but as tools that can support better decision-making and more resilient transportation systems.
- In an increasingly complex and rapidly evolving industry, professional growth depends not only on what you know, but also on your willingness to remain curious, engage with others, and continuously adapt to new challenges and opportunities.







PLENARY 2: PORTS AND THE FUTURE OF CANADA'S SUPPLY CHAIN RESILIENCE

Report by: Mark Hemmes



Jim Frost
MariNova Consulting



David Thomas
The Pier / Port Halifax



Mike Snow
Irving Shipbuilding



Levi Morrison
COVE



Thomas Puestow
National Research Council

This panel on "Ports and the Future of Canada's Supply Chain Resilience", moderated by Jim Frost, covered a wide range of issues and opportunities facing Canada's maritime sector.

Panelists began by discussing how infrastructure and digitization investment require ports to make long term investments – as long as 50 years – to stay ahead of growth. Suppliers for shipbuilding are spread across the country and the globe. They are looking to increase the level of purely Canadian suppliers with the goal of 100%. Halifax is also well suited to be a supply point for Northern supply as well as coast guard and defense support.

There is a need to gain access to qualified people as well as support the workforce, such as more marine engineers and architects. There is also a need for better research sharing.

Turning to the current situation on the east coast, it was noted that it is driven more by the events in the Red Sea and the Strait of Hormuz than any other challenges, adding as many as 10 days of sailing are added to transit times and causing delays of container ships. This impacts the planning of port operations. Add to this is the ever-increasing size of container ships, which leaves Halifax as the only deep-water Canadian port on the east coast capable of handling the new generation of vessels.

These issues drive the necessity of supply chain visibility through greater data integration. These macro-economic challenges have the effect of stagnating investment and make managing the changing trends more difficult. There is a need to address climate change and study the changes in sea levels and ice conditions.

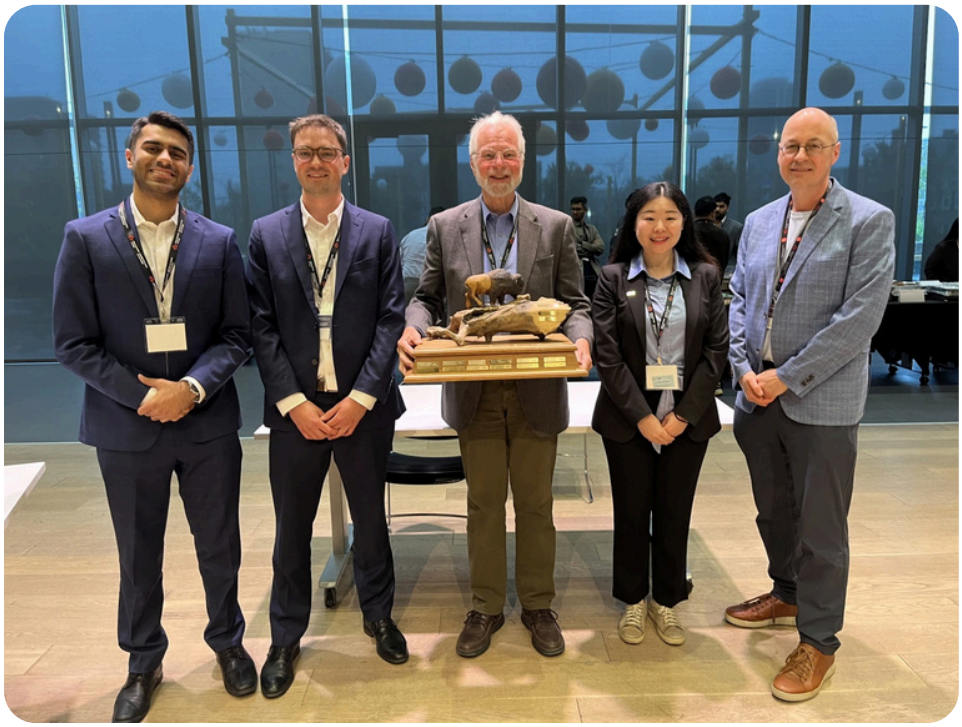
Advantages the Port of Halifax has include its proximity to the many academic institutions on the Canadian and US eastern seaboard that can feed the research needs and requirements of the many of defense, marine and supply chain companies operating in the region. It is recognized as the best connected mid-sized city in North America due to its proximity to European and US markets.

Panelists emphasized that there is a need for support from Governments to: improve infrastructure, particularly in the first and last mile delivery in cities; increase investment in climate change related issues; and invest in digitization and improved data streams. It was also stated that Canada should continue to focus on increasing our domestic capacity and capabilities. Examples of this were the use of Canadian steel wherever possible, increased research in marine technology, and cyber security. This also provides an opportunity to further support Arctic development and security.

In closing, the advice the panel gave to the young people attending the conference was to focus on specialized skills such as data analytics, cyber security, supply chain management and standards, and the development of new systems and the use of artificial intelligence to solve complex problems.



Bison Debate 2026



From left to right: Sameer Esmail (InterVistas), Alistair Bell (CPCS), moderator Dr. Barry Prentice (University of Manitoba), Bobin Wang (Université Laval) and Prof. Martin Trepanier (Polytechnique Montreal)

The Bison Debate is one of the most enjoyable and popular events at the CTRF Annual Conference. Started in 1996, the debate pits two 2-member teams against each other to argue on a timely, provocative issue in the transportation sector. The final jury is made up of Conference attendees!

This year's Bison Debate pitted incumbent Professor Martin Trepanier (Polytechnique Montreal) and Bobin Wang (Université Laval) against Alistair Bell (CPCS) and Sameer Esmail (Intervistas) in a ferocious debate on the following resolution "**This house resolves that Canada's supply chains are more vulnerable today than they were a decade ago"**. Both teams argued with facts, insight and wit, moderated as always by the skilled Dr. Barry Prentice (University of Manitoba).

Congratulations to Martin Trepanier and Bobin Wang who came out on top!







POSTER SESSION

Report by: Yu Sui



The Poster Session provides researchers with an opportunity to stand alongside their poster and discuss findings with peers and colleagues. Posters showcased the breadth and interdisciplinary nature of contemporary transportation research in Canada, spanning freight transportation and network resilience to safety risk management, travel behaviour, and advanced analytical methodologies.

- Several presentations focused on transportation system resilience and disruption management. Research examining the impacts of the 2022 Ambassador Bridge blockade and the 2021 British Columbia floods demonstrated how major disruptions can alter freight movements and expose vulnerabilities within critical transportation corridors. Other studies explored railway delay propagation and bottleneck identification, emphasizing the importance of improving network reliability and preparedness in increasingly uncertain operating environments.

- Freight transportation and supply chain analysis also featured prominently. Posters investigated urban freight trip generation, the environmental impacts of delivery operations, and the implications of geopolitical trade barriers on Canadian supply chains. These studies highlighted the growing need for data-driven approaches that can support evidence-based planning and enhance the resilience and efficiency of freight systems.

- Safety and risk assessment represented another significant theme of the session. Presentations addressed rail safety practices, platform-train interface risks, transportation considerations associated with small modular reactors, and the use of crowdsourced traffic data to better understand network performance. Collectively, these studies demonstrated the increasing importance of integrating operational data, risk analysis, and emerging technologies into transportation decision-making.

- The session also illustrated the expanding role of behavioural research and advanced analytics within transportation studies. Topics such as travel choices across different stages of life, healthcare-related mobility, mental health among commercial airline pilots, and deep learning approaches for multimodal demand prediction reflected the sector's growing recognition that transportation challenges are simultaneously technical, behavioural, and societal in nature.

Poster discussions reinforced the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration, methodological innovation, and knowledge sharing in developing transportation systems that are resilient, efficient, safe, and responsive to emerging challenges.

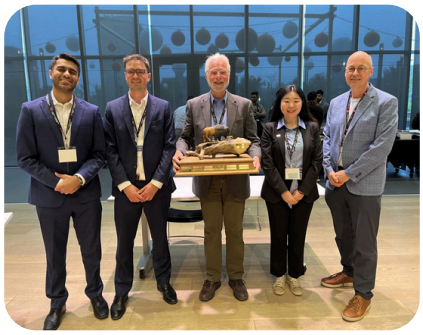
MORE CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS...

President's Reception





Bison Debate


Annual Dinner Cruise through Halifax Harbour





Research Paper Presentations





SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

Since 1988, CTRF has been proud to offer competitively awarded scholarships to graduate students pursuing studies in the transportation and logistics sector.

Congratulations to our 2026 / 2027 Scholarship winners!



Frédéric Cournoyer
University of Toronto
"Assessment of opportunities and barriers to accessibility-based urban planning"



Yi Xiong
McMaster University
"Low-Carbon Regional Logistics Planning and Optimization for Sustainable Transportation Systems in Canada"



Pubudu Kapurubandarage
University of Calgary
"Probabilistic Nature of Drivers' Behaviour in Pedestrian Interactions with Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS)"



Seyed Mostafa Saneii
University of Toronto
"Development of an integrated framework to accelerate electrification of Canada's freight corridors"

Generously sponsored by: Transport Canada / Transports Canada

Interested in applying for a CTRF Scholarship?

Check out the opportunities for Students on the CTRF website https://ctrf.ca/students/

RESEARCH PAPER AWARDS

Congratulations to our 2026 Paper Winners!
Photos showcase award winners with CTRF President Adrian Lightstone

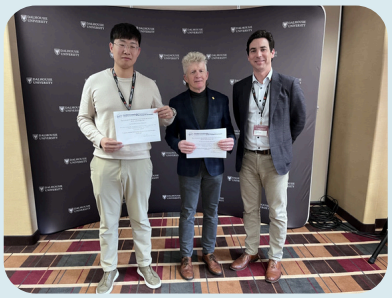
First Place "Ron Rice Award for the Best Conference Paper"
PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF AN AI-BASED VEHICLE CLASSIFICATION CAMERA UNDER VARYING ILLUMINATION AND WEATHER CONDITIONS

- Babak Mehran, University of Manitoba (pictured)
- Janak Kharel, University of Manitoba
- Phani Kumar Patnala, University of Manitoba
- Alex Rogers, University of Manitoba
- Jonathan D. Regehr, University of Manitoba



Second Place
CANADIAN RAILWAY PERFORMANCE: RECENT TRENDS AND EMERGING CHALLENGES

- Yu Sui, Statistics Canada
- Lawrence McKeown, Statistics Canada



Third place
ASTRA: A BEHAVIOURALLY RICH HYBRID TRANSFORMER-LSTM ENGINE FOR JOINT DAILY ACTIVITY GENERATION AND SCHEDULING

- Mostaq Ahmed, University of British Columbia
- Mahmudur Rahman Fatmi, University of British Columbia



Interested in submitting a Paper or Poster for 2027?

Check out our website, follow us on LinkedIn, or join our mailing list anytime for news and updates: https://ctrf.ca/mailing-list/

Student Support Prize Winners with CTRF President



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Canadian Transportation Research Forum