For almost half a decade, transportation policy in the United States has prioritized mobility. Congestion relief has dominated the public discourse about the effectiveness of transportation. Transportation business and management strategies have tended to follow this lead, taking as a given that the objective of transportation policy is to prioritize or even optimize vehicle mobility. Calculations of the opportunity costs associated with time spent in traffic have been repeatedly deployed to support the construction of additional freeways to relieve congestion.

Recently, there have been signs that after fifty years of mobility considerations governing almost all transportation decisions, the tide is beginning to turn. The new emphasis on Sustainable Communities by the US DOT, HUD and EPA that focuses on issues of transportation and sustainability is one sign of the first tentative steps being taken to reframe transportation in a broader context. Some have pointed out that the concept of sustainability, as it is current posed, is still somewhat nebulous. While true, the fact remains that this discussion of sustainability signals an important change in focus at the federal level. To advance this movement, we need better and more consistent approaches to measuring the broader impacts that are implied by the terms sustainability and livability. Such methodologies would allow us to effectively assess the extent to which transportation is serving society’s real interests, over and above considerations relating to vehicle mobility. Accordingly, this special issue will bring together a series of papers directed towards the transportation business and management community that will present state-of-the-art work being done on valuing transportation through a sustainability lens. We welcome both theoretical and empirical studies that cover a wide geographic base.

Specific topic areas include but are not limited to the following: Cost-benefit analyses of transportation projects grounded in a sustainability framework; the derivation and application of sustainability indicators for transportation, with particular emphasis on the implications of more effective measures for the management of transportation by practicing planners and managers; willingness-to-pay for the non-mobility-related aspects of transportation projects; innovative ways to fund transportation infrastructure; measuring urban resilience from a transportation perspective; and innovative methods to quantify transportation equity.