



Peak period tolling study

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Peak period tolling study shows little impact on harbour bridges congestion

Dartmouth NS – Based on the results of an in-depth study, Halifax Harbour Bridges (HHB) has determined that, given current conditions, peak period tolling and one-way tolling on the harbour bridges would not noticeably assist in reducing traffic congestion at this time.

Substantial changes in demand would only occur with very significant increases in the price of bridge crossings. It also states that peak period tolling would not significantly reduce congestion without increased regional road capacity serving the Halifax peninsula and enhanced public transit.

In the absence of any other changes a 500 per cent increase in bridge tolls, from \$.60 (MACPASS) to \$3, would result in a reduction of traffic by only 15 percent. “While a 15 per cent decrease in traffic may seem like a considerable amount, bridge users would not notice any measurable difference,” explains Steve Snider, General Manager and CEO. “Bridge users are unlikely to shift either their route or their transportation mode. At this stage, the potential benefit of peak period tolling is not enough to justify the cost to our users.

Another key finding is that one-way tolling on the bridges across Halifax harbour would not manage peak demand. “It could in fact worsen congestion in the non-tolled direction and materially reduce revenue that is critical for bridge maintenance,” continues Snider.

The study looked at the viability of peak period and one-way tolling over the harbour bridges by examining bridge user behaviors and attitudes, traffic forecasts, regional road networks and public transit. “Peak period tolling is an option we wanted to study to see if it would reduce congestion and delay the need for a third harbour crossing,” explains Snider. “While it won’t result in measurable change at this time we will continue to work with stakeholders from the various levels of government and do what we can to reduce congestion.”

The study steering committee included representatives from HHB, HRM and the Provincial Department of Transportation, Infrastructure Renewal.

The executive summary from the study is available at www.hdbc.ca.

With annual traffic volume of more than 33 million crossings and annual revenue of more than \$24 million HHB’s mission is to provide safe, efficient and reliable passage at an appropriate cost.

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