



Halifax needs new leader, not new bridge

By JIM MEEK

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COMMENTS

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Doyle wrote:

Complete agreement. To move massive amounts of people efficiently you need mass transit. Buses are not working because they share space with the same cars that are blocking the road and making buses slow and inefficient. We talk openly now about paving our rail cuts to make way for more trucks. Why don't we buy out the vacant railbed from CN, I believe it's called appropriation, and put a publicly funded railbed in place maintained by a tender to a private consortium and leased to private railways to compete with CN who obviously has forgotten we exist east of Montreal? We can have as part of that lease a provision to use the rails for commuter rail which bypasses congested roads and moves people faster and more efficiently. Sorry, guess that idea would make too much sense in our stuck in time backwards province....

MarkyMark wrote:

The proposals to A) widen Chebucto Road, B) pave the rail cut to the VIA station, and C) build a third crossing of the harbour to the rail cut are laughable.

Premier MacDonald and Mayor Kelly and our federal representative Minister MacKay are all pandering their rural or suburban constituents who demand such use (waste?) of tax dollars on asphalt.

Where is the vision gentlemen? Your bureaucrats are merely following your uniformed marching orders to pander to the automobile.

Yet, you fail to realize that the world is marching forward and the vision in 50 years time will not be personal transport as we have witnessed in the last 50 years. And it will not be in laying out increasingly scarce tax dollars on such infrastructure as roads.... which are reliant on ever-increasingly expensive liquid asphalt and valuable land.

What will be the future for Halifax and other medium and large cities in this nation and around the world lies in mass transit that does not rely upon roads.

Before oil was discovered, that 19th century technology of rail transport might prove to be the economic salvation for providing transportation in the 21st century. It uses less emissions and is fast and lower maintenance.

Without belabouring the short-sightedness of past federal and provincial and municipal governments in allowing rail lines to be abandoned and torn up and sold off, we as taxpayers might want to start demanding that our governments stop throwing good money after bad in repairing the countless potholes on our minor roads every spring. Return those minor roads back to gravel (which is more cheaply maintained) and focus the savings on fixing the major roads and investing in commuter and freight rail transport.

Building new roads is not the way to do it. That is 1960s wasteful asphalt politics (pave my road and you get my vote) - go to ANY rural or suburban constituency meeting of the Liberal, PC, or NDP parties and all you hear about is "roads, roads, roads". As if nothing else mattered to these residents who expect governments to willingly spend hundreds of millions in asphalt so they can drive their cars willy-nilly.

That's not fiscally or morally responsible governance that Canadians and Nova Scotians in particular expect. The pandering to the asphalt lobby is wasteful politicking at its worst.

johnfromhalifax wrote:

Nice one. Good sensible analysis of some serious silliness.

shodgson wrote:

Witty article. I totally agree that we need more focus put on the mass transit system. We need to connect all parts of HRM with revitalized public rail service (What would that cost in comparison to this billion dollar third bridge???), improved bus service... what would it cost to put in a metro subway line? Would that be under a billion?

kcovert wrote:

Before mass transit can be a serious player in Halifax, people need to get past the idea that everyone should live in a single-family dwelling. Transit needs high densities to work. In the suburbs, buses drive further with fewer passengers, and lose money. Also, it doesn't make sense to send a bus down every road, thus people don't use it because it isn't convenient. You need to get rid of subdivisions before you can get rid of cars.