



## **Expand horizons**

### **Voice of the people**

Sat. Mar 29 - 6:14 AM

#### **Re: "Tunnel or third bridge proposed" (March 26).**

First, when did the term HRM start meaning downtown Halifax? This week, I read and listened to stories about a couple of large projects costing major dollars, all for downtown Halifax.

This idea for another bridge or tunnel that could cost over a billion dollars doesn't seem to me to be coming from educated people.

There was a statement that the Cole Harbour area is growing fast, which will mean more people coming into downtown Halifax. Perhaps it's time that the educated people started looking at downtown Dartmouth. Building more office projects there would keep the traffic on the Dartmouth side and help the traffic on the Halifax side.

When it comes to a new trade centre, where are you going to put the new hotel rooms? I agree that the city needs to be able to host larger events, and that in itself would put Halifax on a higher level. But if you build it, and they come, they will need a place to stay. I think Halifax has around 3,500 rooms now. If you start building new complexes, that won't be enough.

Sid Fraser, Cherry Hill

### **Makes no sense**

It makes no sense at all to be discussing a third harbour crossing in the south end now. How about expanding the present Woodside ferry schedule to a full day instead? And then, after that, maybe a second Woodside ferry. The peninsula needs no more cars.

John Devlin, Dartmouth

### **Share the wealth**

A billion-dollar tunnel or a third bridge: Wonderful! All because the planners cannot organize improved and affordable public transit and the Halifax-Dartmouth Bridge Commission wants to expand its evil empire.

I can see infrastructure money from all sources being siphoned into Halifax for 20 years, while we in rural Nova Scotia have to contend with deplorable roads and hundred-year-old bridges that rattle and creak under the weight of a sub-compact.

Of course, the usual line is that all the people live in HRM, so that is where the money will do the most good.

I can imagine the disruption in Burnside and south-end Halifax when valuable land is expropriated for approaches. A tunnel would have to be deep, so I am guessing it would surface halfway across the peninsula, thus requiring the bulldozing of many expensive homes.

A billion-plus would go a long way to providing 21st-century, hydrogen-fuelled and inexpensive public transit on high-speed routes from free car parks established outside the city. Halifax could then boast of having more highrise office and residential buildings than parking garages.

Robert M. Tuttle, Pugwash

### **Focus on ferries**

The report on crossing the harbour in the future has holes in it you could drive a ferry through.

One focus of the report is the finite capacity of bridge service. The report fails to mention the harbour ferry service, even though thousands of downtown workers enjoy this method of crossing the harbour. There is extra capacity and more could be added as the need grows.

Ferry usage will increase if the bridge commission is allowed to drive up the demand for parking by putting more cars on the peninsula, or usage will increase if a plan is used that puts more people on the peninsula and fewer cars.

Kevin Pendergast, Dartmouth

### **Ill-conceived notion**

The public should not be surprised that HDBC staff and management would suggest that a new crossing is necessary, as it is their mandate to move vehicular traffic across the harbour, and not to develop or even consider innovative strategies to reduce traffic or develop thriving communities. It is in their own interests – both financial and operative – to propose new links.

The city and the province should consider ideas that will increase development around Alderney Landing, which is only a 15-minute ferry crossing away from Halifax's downtown core. Dartmouth does not need to be an extended suburb or feeder community to Halifax when the ferry can facilitate more crossings without any undue effects on either community or the environment. With a proper development strategy, both Halifax and Dartmouth can flourish as urban communities where people live, work and attend schools.

It is frightening that the HDBC, a provincial agency, is not accountable to the citizens who will be directly affected – through increased taxes, increased traffic and a ruined urban environment – by its "ideas" that are neither innovative nor ideal. Let's not get railroaded on such an ill-conceived notion as a third vehicular crossing. Harbour crossings in Halifax are a vital part of the city's development strategy, and must be considered at the municipal level, not in the offices of the bridge commission itself.

Michael Steeleworthy, Halifax

### **Put kids first**

Here we go again. Just when the Commonwealth Games bid has died, we have another billion-dollar endeavour: the bridge/Chunnel project. It appears that, in classic HRM fashion, the feasibility studies, the consultations, the community forums, etc., will now commence.

Meanwhile, all our rinks, many of which are in need of serious improvement as it is, will get a year older and even more in need of fixing up. The hockey, ringette and skating community hoped there would be a replacement for the Akerley rink by last fall. Now talk is for late 2009, at the earliest. So again next year, this dedicated group will carpool

their tired troops to arenas in and beyond HRM. They will take what increasingly scarce hours they can rent.

I fail to understand why we even contemplate these big-ticket, pie-in-the-sky projects when our basic infrastructure is so in need of improvement. We don't live in Calgary or Vancouver.

Why can't we just put the kids first? It's a lot cheaper and we get far more bang for the buck.

Alex MacEachern, Dartmouth

### **Flawed 'vision'**

Thank you to Roger Taylor for his March 26 column, expressing concern over the Halifax-Dartmouth Bridge Commission's scheme for another harbour bridge. This bridge "vision" is based on the assumption that the HRM's population projections in its regional plan are accurate, and this just isn't correct. Better for the province to re-examine these overestimated HRM growth projections before allowing the bridge commission to use them to create another useless, expensive "vision."

Mr. Taylor rightly suggests it may be time to examine whether there is a need for this bridge commission, and I agree. This bridge scheme is just another attempt to divert the Halifax voters' attention from the failure of the HRM entity to provide good government.

It is surely time for the provincial government to split up the HRM failure, or give way to those who understand that this HRM creature can't work for ordinary people. Replacing the HRM failure with manageable, realistic jurisdictions should be the priority for the provincial government, when a provincial election is so very imminent.

Peter Ewert, Halifax

### **What's the point?**

A consultant's report states that a new bridge or a tunnel from Dartmouth to peninsular Halifax is an urgent necessity. Am I hearing right? This is 2008; we need fewer polluting, gas-guzzling vehicles, not more.

Traffic density in downtown Halifax is already such that I avoid it if at all possible. What is the point of funnelling thousands more vehicles into this very limited space each day to increase the gridlock? Why not spend the money on really good high-speed public

transport (ferries, buses or trains) which would bring in the people, but leave their space-consuming vehicles parked in areas where there is more room for them?

Anne West, Halifax

### **Progressive plan!**

Re: "Tunnel or third bridge proposed" (March 26). What a fantastic idea! Many cities around the world are choosing to invest in public transit instead of encouraging the increased use of automobiles. Other cities are focusing their efforts on making their streets pedestrian-friendly. Well, in Halifax, we think for ourselves, dammit. As we've proven time and time again, we like to do things the good old-fashioned way. So yes, let's invite as many cars onto the peninsula as physically possible.

While we're at it, let's resurrect the plans for the Harbour Drive Expressway. Good thing we didn't level the Cogswell Interchange yet; we're going to need it. We may even have to tear down a heritage building or two to build new parking structures. But you know what? That's the price we have to pay for progress. And personally, I'm willing to breathe more polluted air if it means progress.

Brad Dykema, Halifax

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