

## Let private sector build inlet toll bridge

BY GORDON GREEN, TIMES COLONIST NOVEMBER 13, 2011

Re: "Inlet toll bridge only Malahat solution," Nov. 5.

The writer has it exactly right. The Malahat has reached its physical limits, with no practical way to expand its capacity. The rest of the Island is growing rapidly. Traffic to and from the provincial capital will only increase, creating more fatalities and highway closures.

A bridge across the narrow portion of the Inlet at Squally Reach would have two advantages. First, it would cut the distance between downtown Victoria and Mill Bay by a third. Second, property expropriations would be minimal, as the roadbed on the Victoria side already exists. The new Willis Point Road, which leaves West Saanich Road just north of Prospect Lake, runs almost to the Inlet at Gowlland Tod Provincial Park, close to the presumed takeoff point.

To be sure, there will be engineering challenges. But the real problem is money, not technology. So let's turn to the private sector. Follow the course charted by the Guinness family, who built Vancouver's Lions Gate Bridge, or the developers of toll Highway 407 in Toronto. Incorporate a right of first refusal for government to repurchase the bridge at a future date, with an attractive minimum return for the original investors. "They will build."

Gordon Green  
North Saanich

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## Rail only solution to Malahat delays

BY JAMES GRAYSON, TIMES COLONIST NOVEMBER 10, 2011

Every workday, thousands of motor vehicles carry commuters over the Malahat, and once in a while, there is a serious crash. Any crash of any magnitude usually results in temporary closure for an extended period of time. It seems that any delay over 37 seconds is considered too long. Each delay usually brings forth a list of possible solutions.

Unfortunately, there is insufficient space to widen the present highway, there is no suitable new corridor reasonable close to the present highway, the idea of sitting on a crowded bus does not appeal to a lot of business commuters, having a ferry on standby in case it is needed is not economical, a bridge would have to clear-span the Saanich Inlet so as to protect the tidal flushing of the inlet and neither of the existing roads could handle the traffic to and from a four-lane bridge.

Most of the Malahat commuters drive to their workplace, park all day, and then drive home; the largest destinations are Dockyard and downtown Victoria. We should concern ourselves with moving these people. There is an abandoned rail line from Courtenay to downtown Victoria. Spend whatever is necessary to put several Dayliners on track from Duncan and beyond, across the new Johnson Street Bridge, at least as far as Wharf Street.

This would result in less pollution, less greenhouse gases, less personal stress at both ends of the day, less opportunity for highway crashes and less chance of excessive delays. The switch from car to train could be encouraged by the gradual and systematic reduction in dedicated vehicle parking spaces.

James Grayson  
Saanich

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