

Pavement or People?

Where will the 65,000 cars using Harbour Drive park? This question was posed to City Manager, Cyril Henderson, by Alderman Dave McKeen at a recent Council session.

After several seconds of embarrassed silence the gallery broke into laughter. This indicates the city has not fully studied all the questions concerning Harbour Drive.

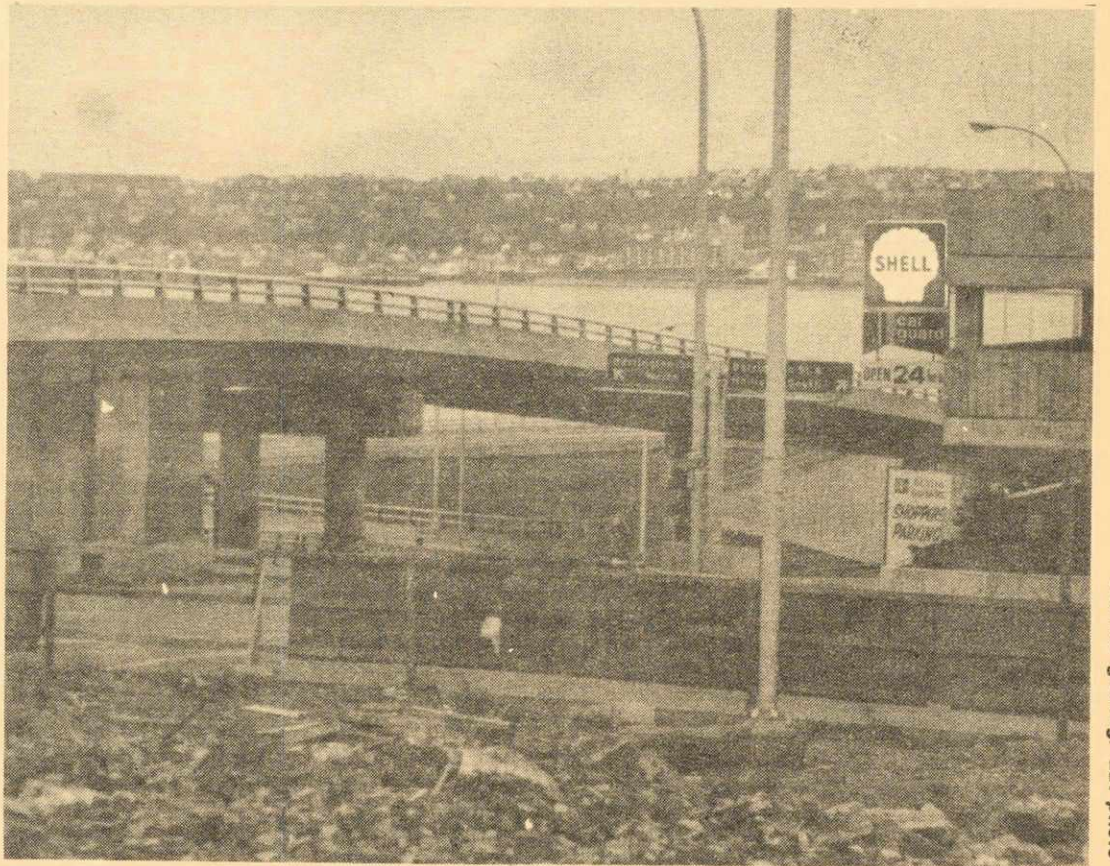
Before Phase 2 of Harbour Drive is initiated, some sort of cost-benefit analysis must be done.

Harbour Drive will cost \$40 million plus interest of \$4 million over a period of 20

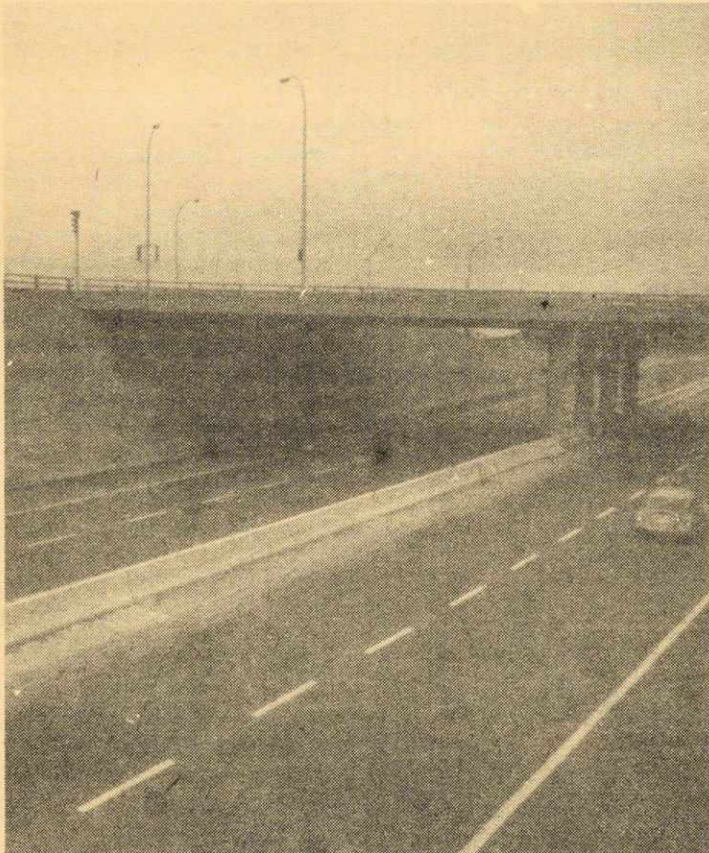
years; if 65,000 cars use it daily, the average cost per vehicle, per day will be about 50¢. If a car costs 14¢ a mile to operate, and travels about 10 miles each day, the car plus roads will cost at least \$2.00 per day.

This year, Halifax Transit, which served eight million commuters, operated with a deficit of \$500,000. Costing the taxpayer only approximately 10¢ per trip.

The entire Harbour Drive will take up at least 40 acres of (the Cogswell Street Interchange alone covers 5 acres) land, representing a loss of about



Charles Gosling/Dal photo



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\$500,000 each year in taxation. Is it really worth it? Considering this and environmental costs, aesthetic costs, displacement costs, et cetera.

Even if a cost-benefit analysis showed Harbour Drive was feasible, it should be opposed solely on the grounds that it will destroy the historic focal point of one of Canada's oldest cities. Harbour Drive is designed to shoot a six-lane along what is now Lower Water Street, through the Edward Cornwallis Park, and around across a proposed Arm Bridge to Spryfield. This would, ruin the

waterfront atmosphere which has the potential of being a New Orleans of the North if properly developed.

A Metropolitan Area Planning Committee report states that if Harbour Drive is continued to Spryfield, it will create pressure to build a third harbour crossing via George's Island to Dartmouth's Circumferential Drive. Since most people in the Spryfield area work in the key industrial area behind Dartmouth, according to the report, Halifax city could become merely a by-pass. For this privilege the taxpayer

would have to pay \$75 million (\$35 million for the bridge and \$40 million for Harbour Drive).

A less expensive system of transportation must be devised — one which will bring people, not cars, into the city. One alternative is a high-speed commuter train which utilizes the rail cuttings passing through the middle of Halifax. Another alternative is to use the money now allocated for Harbour Drive to develop housing and people-oriented facilities (parks, walkways) so that people can actually live downtown.

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Editor: Glenn Wanamaker 424-2507

Advertising and Business Manager:
Marg Bezanson 424-2507
General Calls: 424-2350
Room 334 — Student Union Building