

You are receiving this e-mail from the Grosse Ile Bridge Company (GIBC) because you purchased a Bridge Pass, communicated with the GIBC about an issue, or subscribed on our web site. To ensure that you continue to receive the GIBC e-newsletter "The Connection," click to [confirm](#) your interest.

You may [unsubscribe](#) if you no longer wish to receive our emails.



Grosse Ile Bridge Company "The Connection" E-newsletter

"Keeping you connected to the facts"

May 7, 2007

Volume II Number 4

In This Issue

**Afternoon Rush Hour
Traffic Reports from the
GIBC
Toll Bridge Traffic
Flowing Smoothly After
Rough First Day: GIBC's
Preparedness Plan is
Working**

**"An Island business connecting Islanders since
1913"**

"The Connection" is an initiative of the [Grosse Ile Bridge Company](#) (GIBC) to keep Island residents and all customers of the Toll Bridge well informed about news and information from the GIBC -- especially important updates about the Wayne County Bridge closure period.

Quick Links

**Bridge Pass - "Save
Time & Money!"
Facts & Frequently
Asked Questions
Plan for the Wayne
County Bridge Closure
Period
GI Township Board's
Eminent Domain
Lawsuit Against the**

**Afternoon Rush Hour Traffic Reports from the
GIBC**

**Check Web Site for Reports Every 15 Minutes
Starting at 3:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. on Monday, May 7**

On Monday, May 7 starting during afternoon rush hour at 3:30 p.m., the GIBC will be providing reports on the [Toll Bridge Facts.com web site](#) about traffic flow every 15 minutes until 6:30 p.m. (the last report). We will report about the approximate end of the line for in-bound (east bound) traffic heading from Riverview to Grosse Ile.

Please understand that we are testing this concept, so

GIBC

Receive the GIBC's E-newsletters & Bulletins

Click here to join our e-mail list. Get connected!

we want to see how well it works on Monday before we commit to doing it every day. In this regard, if you use this information for your afternoon commute, please let us know how useful it was by e-mailing comments to karmazingibc@aol.com.

The GIBC is in planning stage of installing a web cam that will allow you to see the traffic line traveling to the toll plaza. We hope to have this capability in place soon. [CLICK HERE FOR THE MONDAY, MAY 7 AFTERNOON RUSH HOUR TRAFFIC REPORT](#)

Toll Bridge Traffic Flowing Smoothly After Rough First Day: GIBC's Preparedness Plan is Working *GIBC Asks Islanders for Their Continued Cooperation, Patience and Help*

Sunday, May 6, 2007

By [Greg Karmazin](#), Grosse Ile Bridge Company Director of Community and Government Relations

The GIBC was extremely disappointed about the long delays experienced by Islanders and all customers of the Toll Bridge on Wednesday, May 2 which was the first day of the Wayne County Bridge closure period. We especially regret the inconveniences suffered by drivers crossing the Toll Bridge in the afternoon rush hour and early evening. The GIBC agrees that those lengthy delays were unacceptable.

The good news, however, is that traffic flowed very well on Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday as increasing number of drivers are using the Bridge Pass and becoming more familiar with efficiently using the Toll Bridge. In addition, the main players in this situation -- GIBC, Grosse Ile, Riverview, and Wayne County -- are working much more cooperatively than ever before. We all have taken actions working together that have contributed to making traffic flow more smoothly.

GIBC Thanks Grosse Ile, Riverview, Trenton and Wyandotte Police and Fire Departments

The GIBC wishes to thank the police and fire departments of Grosse Ile, Riverview, Trenton and Wyandotte for their assistance on May 2. We especially want to express our gratitude to the police and fire departments of Riverview. Riverview Mayor Tim Durand and Riverview Fire Chief Tim Bosman could not have been more responsive and helpful on Wednesday.

Grosse Ile Police Chief Bill Barron and Grosse Ile Fire

Chief Duncan Murdock also did an outstanding job of helping the GIBC deal with a very challenging situation.

At this point, it is counter-productive to play the blame game about what happened on May 2. The GIBC accepts its share of the responsibility for improving traffic flow, and it's time to move forward. The GIBC is solely focused on permanently maintaining throughout the duration of the county bridge closure period the smooth traffic flow experienced on Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

GIBC's Plan for Smooth Traffic Flow is Now Working, Proposed Three Lane Toll Collection Backup Plan Unnecessary to Date

It is important to understand that the GIBC's plan enabled traffic to flow so smoothly on Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday that it was unnecessary to implement a backup plan to collect tolls in three in-bound lanes while running 15 minutes of alternating one-way traffic over the Toll Bridge. This backup plan was devised with the input of the GIBC, Grosse Ile, Riverview and Wayne County on Thursday morning during an emergency meeting of all communities that was hosted by county.

During the week-long closure of the Wayne County Bridge in October of 2004, the Riverview Police Department directed the GIBC to try collecting tolls at three in-bound lanes in order to make traffic flow faster. While this sounded like a good idea at first, in actuality the volume of traffic coming through the toll plaza ended up causing gridlock across the Toll Bridge and generally creating an unsafe situation.

The significant difference with the new three lane toll collection plan versus what was unsuccessfully tried in 2004 is that both lanes of traffic would flow across the bridge in one direction. In 2004, the three toll collection lanes funneled into one lane crossing the bridge.

Another new aspect of the three lane collection plan is that the Riverview Police Department agreed to place personnel in the toll plaza to direct traffic and the Grosse Ile Police Department agreed to handle some actions on the Island side of Bridge Rd. that they did not previously do.

While in theory this three lane collection plan may enable traffic to travel on to the Island faster in a situation where there is the type of extraordinary delays that happened on May 2, the GIBC is not confident that this alternative is a viable solution (even

though we are willing to try anything our community partners want if our plan doesn't work).

For example, the merge area between the toll plaza and the lanes on the Toll Bridge is relatively small and will easily jam unless a police officer and GIBC personnel carefully direct traffic. Also, the large volume of traffic going through three lanes will tend to fill up two lanes on the bridge. If an ambulance or other emergency vehicle had to leave the Island quickly, the police departments of Riverview and Grosse Ile would have to conduct precise coordination and traffic control to quickly clear traffic off of the Toll Bridge as well as Bridge Rd. leading to the toll plaza.

In addition, the GIBC has serious concerns about the increased risk of accidents resulting from two lines of heavy traffic traveling next to each other across a relatively narrow bridge and causeway to the Island. Even during the heavy traffic of May 2, the traffic crossing the bridge was not jammed in both directions. We are worried that some drivers may not be particularly comfortable in this type of pattern which requires them to drive in the north lane close to the river (i.e., it is completely untested and we don't know how well drivers will handle it).

Notwithstanding those worries, this three lane toll collection plan might be easier to manage if the GIBC is approved by Wayne County to widen the out-bound (west bound) county-owned section of Bridge Rd. from the toll plaza to Jefferson. The [GIBC's road widening plan](#) is currently pending within the Wayne County Permit Office. The GIBC is committed to paying 100% of the cost of this project. It is an interesting historical note to remember that Wayne County widened the in-bound (east bound) section of their road in preparation for the 1979 county bridge closure period - - that additional lane has served Islanders well for 28 years.

In any case, it is the GIBC's desire that it will be unnecessary to try this three lane toll collection plan because we do not see it as a sustainable solution to improving traffic flow given the amount of police assistance that may be required and it may well still cause the gridlock problems that we experienced in 2004 when it was unsuccessfully attempted. There is an absolute limit to the amount of traffic that can be safely funneled across the Toll Bridge even when both lanes run in one direction.

GIBC Working Together with Community Partners

To date, Wayne County has been highly responsive and cooperative with the GIBC on a wide range of issues -- we have a positive working relationship with the

county. We hope that the completion of the Bridge Rd. widening project will demonstrate how the GIBC can be a true partner with government in achieving a common goal for the public good.

It is simply false for anyone to claim that the GIBC does not get along with governmental entities. The GIBC hopes that its mutually respectful relationship with the county will serve as a model for how the Grosse Ile Township Board can re-establish a more cooperative and productive rapport with us.

That said, the GIBC is very willing to cooperate with Grosse Ile, Riverview and Wayne County to formulate a long-term, viable solution to improving traffic flow if the GIBC's [preparedness plan](#), which relies heavily on widespread adoption of the [Bridge Pass](#), does not work.

But, it really is our hope that this new spirit of cooperation between GIBC, Grosse Ile, Riverview and Wayne County will lead to a united effort to promote the use of the Bridge Pass. If municipal and county officials worked with the GIBC to urge individuals and businesses traveling to and from the Island on a regular basis to utilize the Bridge Pass, we believe it would be much more likely that our preparedness plan will succeed.

Bridge Pass Improvements Enable Toll Gates to be Up and Speed Traffic Flow

The GIBC achieved a major breakthrough on Thursday afternoon with the Bridge Pass. We made significant technical and procedural adjustments in the Bridge Pass system that now enable us to keep the gates for both lanes in the raised position during periods of heavy traffic flow.

The GIBC pursued this improvement in part because of a recommendation made by [Wayne County Commissioner Joe Palamara](#) at the emergency county meeting on Thursday morning. Commissioner Palamara asked me if it was possible to leave the toll gates in the up position in order to speed up traffic. I told him that the GIBC would do this if it was technically and procedurally possible.

On Friday afternoon, I called Commissioner Palamara to tell him the good news that we figured out how to implement his recommendation -- **the toll gates will now be in the up position during afternoon rush hour and other periods of heavy traffic flow.** The GIBC, however, cannot leave the gates up during times of low volume traffic because fast moving vehicles through the Bridge Pass lane create the potential for

an unsafe merge with the vehicles moving far slower out of the attended lane. In addition, traffic traveling through the toll plaza at high speeds creates a safety hazard for the GIBC's employees and customers.

This change in our control of the toll gates is one of the top reasons for the dramatic improvements in traffic flow that were sustained on Friday even though traffic counts were believed to increased significantly over Thursday. In addition, each day the number of Bridge Passes being used by vehicles crossing the Toll Bridge is growing substantially -- that is making a big difference.

Expect Monday Traffic Flow to be Heavier than Last Thursday and Friday

The GIBC does expect that the afternoon rush hour on **Monday will have longer delays** than the zero to 10 minute waits present on Thursday and Friday. We still, however, believe that our plan to rely on the Bridge Pass to safely speed up traffic flow will work. But, please allow yourself some extra time coming home on Monday during the afternoon rush hour. The GIBC will test on Monday the concept of posting updates on traffic flow and possible delays every 15 minutes on our Toll Bridge Facts.com web site. We are planning to soon establish a web cam to monitor traffic flow to the toll plaza.

As the GIBC had been pleading since fall of 2006 with people who regularly leave or visit the Island, using the **Bridge Pass is the single most important way** for all individuals to help to ensure that traffic flows as smoothly, quickly and safely as possible. It was certainly the case that the lower than expected utilization of the Bridge Pass during the afternoon rush hour on Wednesday did not help the situation.

What was Learned from the 2004 County Bridge Closure Experience

It is also important to consider the historical perspective about traffic flow during periods when the county bridge has been closed. As was the case during the week-long closure of the county bridge from Monday, October 4, 2004 to Sunday, October 10, 2004, the delays on the first day were the worst.

On Thursday, October 7, 2004, the GIBC processed more vehicles over the Toll Bridge than during any one of the first three days of the closure period that week yet there were no significant delays during the afternoon rush hour. It is worth noting that this improvement was achieved even though the Riverview Police Department was not directing traffic on this day.

Remember, back in 2004, the GIBC had just opened the toll plaza, but the Bridge Pass system was not yet in operation. The Bridge Pass system became functional in May of 2005. There is absolutely no question that the Bridge Pass makes traffic flow faster.

Bridge Pass is a Best Practice for Toll Collection

[Electronic toll collection](#) is the national best practice standard among toll roads and bridges. The GIBC is using state-of-the-art hardware and software (the same technology used throughout the University of Michigan's parking system as well as parking garages at Ford Field and the Renaissance Center).

If you don't understand how the Bridge Pass speeds traffic flow, please watch this twenty-second video of vehicles traveling through the toll plaza at approximately 6 p.m. on Friday -- the height of rush hour -- by [CLICKING HERE](#).

As you will see in this video clip, approximately seven vehicles passed through the toll plaza using the Bridge Pass in the same time period that it took for two vehicles to pay tolls in the attended lane (the Bridge Pass also works in the attended lane, but in this video, the vehicles were using tokens or cash to pay the toll).

A [still photo](#) was taken on Friday, May 4 at 5:56 p.m. - - about the same time the video was made -- that shows during the height of rush hour on Friday there was only a wait of a few minutes to go through the attended lane and vehicles flowed freely through the Bridge Pass lane.

Patience is a Virtue

Once again, please, [please have patience](#). The GIBC is doing everything possible to make the county bridge closure period go as well as possible. We only have incentives to make traffic flow quickly and safely.

There is no one on Grosse Ile who cares or knows more about the stewardship responsibilities for the Toll Bridge than GIBC Owner and President Paul Smoke.

GIBC Employees are Dedicated to Serving You

Please remember that the GIBC's employees are members of your community. They are hardworking, decent people who only want to help you get across the bridge. They do not own the bridge and are not making management decisions.

The GIBC was extremely saddened that on May 2 some

drivers chose to insult our dedicated employees. A number of drivers intentionally delayed traffic by making a payment that required a great deal of change or counting. One man refused to pay the user fee toll fare all together. In one isolated case, a motorist even physically assaulted a retiree working in the toll booth.

These unfortunate and counterproductive actions contributed to traffic delays on May 2. The vast majority of drivers exhibited Islanders' tradition of maintaining civility in the face of adversity, but a few caused a tremendous amount of problems for the many.

Making Complaints and Comments

If you've got a complaint about the GIBC, please do not stop in the toll plaza and talk to the toll attendants or the office manager in the trailer -- these actions slow down traffic flow and only make matters worse. It is not their job to handle and respond to complaints. I am the appropriate person to talk to about problems, suggestions and comments. I can be reached by e-mail at karmazingibc@aol.com.

I received hundreds of complaints, and many constructive suggestions too, by e-mail on Wednesday and Thursday (but only five e-mails on Friday -- three contained positive feedback. Zero feedback on Saturday and three e-mails on Sunday). I will answer everyone individually as soon as possible. In the meantime, please be assured that I have read all your e-mails -- even the ones that were particularly angry (I don't blame you, believe me, the entire GIBC team was frustrated and upset too).

May 2 is Not Going to Happen Again

I have talked to Paul Smoke about your comments and he fully appreciates the level of dissatisfaction on the Island about the events of May 2. The GIBC hears you loud and clear. There will not be another day like May 2.

Thank you for reading the Grosse Ile Bridge Company's e-newsletter "The Connection." If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me by e-mail at karmazingibc@aol.com

Sincerely,
Greg Karmazin
Director of Community and Government Relations

Email: [**karmazingibc@aol.com**](mailto:karmazingibc@aol.com)
Web: [**http://www.tollbridgefacts.com**](http://www.tollbridgefacts.com)

[Forward email](#)

✉ **SafeUnsubscribe®**

This email was sent to karmazingibc@aol.com, by karmazingibc@aol.com
[Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

Email Marketing by



Grosse Ile Bridge Company | P.O. Box 24 | Grosse Ile | MI | 48138