

Traffic congestion in toronto tourism essay



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Transportation is crucial in any town or city. Toronto is no exception. In the past several years, population growth rate has been high. Transportation systems therefore need to be upgraded to accommodate this demand. Toronto has over the years been known to have two seasons which include winter and construction seasons. The construction period implies the time when there are many constructions while the winter period is a time when traffic congestion reduces drastically. This refers to the traffic congestion menace in Toronto. Construction related delays have been common in Toronto due to politicization. Municipal infrastructure needs to be maintained in Toronto and other cities in Canada. Toronto replenishes its roads twice before reconstruction after every 60 years. This makes most roads deplorable amidst heavy demand by commuters (Chowdhury, 2005). This high demand together with temporary capacity reductions emerges from road crashes and commuter work zones. This paper tries to address the traffic snarl up in Toronto with a view of finding a solution to this menace.

Problem Statement

Traffic related problems account for loss of seven to ten hours weekly for Torontians. These problems include traffic congestion and bad conditions of roads. . Traffic congestions in Toronto roads normally occur during the day and delays more passengers and goods than it delays used to be. It is reported that the average delay per peak traveler has moved from 15 hours in 1982 to 45 hours in 2002 each year (Buzzelli, 2001). Apparently, the figure has tripled within 20 years. It equates to the number of hours spent in working for the whole year. Traffic congestion is a paralyzing incident for the city and which gets worse day by day.

Torontonians spend approximately seven to ten hours a week in traffic due to traffic related problems (Sewell, 2009). Examples of these problems range from traffic congestion to bad road conditions. For some, seven to ten hours may be seen as an honor- a short time menace. To others, this is a soul-sucking grind. Traffic congestions in Toronto roads normally occur during the day and delays more passengers and goods than it delays used to be. It is reported that the average delay per peak traveler has moved from 15 hours in 1982 to 45 hours in 2002 each year (Buzzelli, 2001). Apparently, the figure has tripled within 20 years. It equates to the number of hours spent in working for the whole year. Traffic congestion is a paralyzing incident for the city and which gets worse day by day.

The traffic menace in the Toronto is rather a complex affair. Bicycles, cars, taxis, delivery trucks, buses, and pedestrians compete in using the same road at the same time. Standing traffic causes an increase in air and noise pollution. Bicycle lanes are placed in unfit locations that do not connect to other routes. This wastes money and space. The lanes are also unsafe to use. The change in traffic routes and failure to enforce rules for parking and stopping of vehicles are major causes of traffic congestion too. The removal of parking lanes has also caused an overall drop in revenue from business (Vigar, 2002).

High Economic costs of Toronto are attributed to traffic congestions. The hours lost by employees in traffic jams or waiting for arrival of delivery buses are raising eye brows. During these congestions, there is increased use of fuel. This loss can be approximated as \$2. 0 billion annually (Statistics Canada Paragraph 16). On average a typical commuter currently spends

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more than 79 minutes currently getting to and from their workplaces as compared to 68 hours in 1990s. Additionally, health effects related to congestion are on the increase. Research has revealed that each year, there are approximately 440 premature deaths and around 1, 700 other victims hospitalized in Toronto. These problems related to congestion are broad, big and complex and require great solutions to be eliminated permanently.

Reasons for Traffic Congestion in Toronto

Sharing of the road by motor cycles, bicycles, and all kinds of vehicles is a common characteristic in Toronto. Lanes for bicycles are placed on sidewalks and major thoroughfares. This makes pedestrians have difficulties in walking since bicycles occupy the sidewalks causing congestion. This also causes a reduction in parking and stopping spaces for cars in the city. Additionally, traffic and parking laws are not evenly enforced. The laws are effected on some vehicles but not on all road users this is a contributing factor to congestion, increased insurance costs and frayed tempers. Health problems and money wasted for gas and insurance are on the rise because of rise in traffic congestion (Mehr, 2005).

During the construction period, traffic congestion is always on the rise. Main roads are blocked which causes traffic jams on the remaining roads. These delays are terrible. Moreover, politicians have turned the afflictions of pedestrians into prominent issues that contribute to the unending construction related delays. City mayors have been blamed of bureaucratic incompetence by politicians. This incompetence is said to have brought endless construction related work. The complexities occasioned by the

aforementioned only hurts commuters. sub contractors involved during construction have failed to be coordinated which leads to delays too (White, 2009).

Commuters have a high demand in road usage. This high demand together with momentary capacity reduction is as a result of road crashes and commuter work zones. These aforementioned causes a high cost of travelling and makes it more frustrating for commuters. The road government organ, federal highway administration (FHWA) with a jurisdiction of administering construction has mentioned congestion as an issue demanding a high priority. Environmental stewardship also known as the agency's "vital few" are other key priority areas (Vigar, 2002).

Feasible Solutions to Traffic Congestion in Toronto

This public menace has a potential for improvement. The use of new construction technologies should see Toronto construct its roads quicker or ensure construction does not affect the movement of traffic. For example, lateral drilling machines which eliminate the need for contractors opening up the pavement could be employed. Deployment and development of technologies in the 21st century is also important. These technologies are known as intelligent transportation systems (ITS). this technology could be used to develop the agency's capability to manage transportation systems. On the other hand commercial carriers and travelers will have ability to make informed choices about when and how to travel. Road works done on parallel arteries should also be avoided. The kind of advanced planning should be standard practice for Toronto. There should be coordination in

road construction that should not restrict roadways during rush hour (Green, 2001).

Traffic congestion should not be taken as a normal state of affairs. Efforts taken into consideration traditionally should be reinforced in addition to focus of FHWA on development and promotion of transportation systems and overall management and operations. Good management and operations should not do away with the need to construct new roads and to add transit capacity appropriately. The management should make most out of existing infrastructure. Retaining an existing vehicle by owners during peak operating condition is better than buying a new one in the operational strategies could be cheaper in implementation than road construction projects. This could help in reduction of traffic congestions and causing a stretch in infrastructure performance (Fisher 1996).

Maintenance of municipal infrastructure in Toronto is an issue of great importance. There should be no less than 14 utilities including gas, hydro, phone and cable. These utilities should be used to replace aging equipment in Toronto streets. Despite all this, citizens of Toronto expect more and more from this city since it's their right having paid heavy taxes. These disruptions have been there but they are becoming people's centre of thought (Chowdhury, 2005).

There is need to maintain municipal infrastructure in Toronto and this remains a fact not just in Toronto but other Canadian cities as well. There should be no fewer than 14 utilities, which should include gas, phone, hydro and cable. All these utilities should be tearing up Toronto's streets to replace

other aging equipment. Despite all these, people expect more and more from the city since it is their right after having paid the required taxes to the government. These disruptions have been there but they are becoming the people's centre of thought (Mehr, 2005).

Taking the construction activities for 24hrs is another approach worth exploring. For example the reconstruction of the Gardiner in the 1990s. the metro council back then opted to pay the contractor a premium to ensure that he works 24hrs so that the construction would take a shorter time. Toronto city should aim at constructing ring roads and by-passes. Though these are not common in Toronto city and country side, this can increase the number of roads to cater for the increasing number of vehicles in the roads. Additionally, more super highways should be constructed in addition to the existing ones. This will ensure that they utilize more space upwards and this will enable motor cycles, bikes and cars use specific highways (Green, 2001).

Cars on the city centre should be banned; this should be done on busy days. A fee should be introduced for cars that enter the central business district. This will ensure that only public transport enter the city centre to ease the congestion. Private car owner who drive to work will park their cars at designated areas outside the city centre. They then board public transport to the city centre (Fisher, 1996).

Creation of multi storey car parks is also important. Highways in city centers will have car parks alongside main roads. Additionally, entrance roads should be wider than countryside roads. By doing this it will create room for car

parks. Rules and regulations should also be put in place to ensure that different vehicles are supposed to be parked (Chowdhury, 2005).

Synchronization of traffic signals is also important. These signals should be used by all road users including pedestrians. All those breaking the rules by not observing these lights should face certain penalties. Licensing of cyclists should be done by payment of a certain fee. They should also be designated bicycle lanes on the roads where they could cycle. Roads in Toronto are often utilized for rallies marathons and protests. These functions cause congestion and closing of roads which is of no necessity. These functions could utilize the sidewalks or other areas be sought for the same. Exhaust fumes emitted from vehicles during congestion causes air pollution. Car hooting on the other hand causes noise pollution. Hence, keeping traffic in motion at all times is of essence to reduce environmental pollution and save resources. In addition the government should establish policies that are channeled towards reduction of congestion on our roads. Enforcement of these laws should be strict with penalties for the breakers of the law (Fisher, 1996).

Conclusion

Traffic congestion in Toronto is a time bomb waiting to explode. This situation has been occasioned as a result of poor enforcement of transport laws. Politicking also is a major contributing factor to this menace causing delay in construction works. Roads in Toronto are dilapidated too since the city resurfaces its roads after every 60years. the use of Toronto roads for other functions such as rallies which necessitate their closure at those times.

Even though this problem seems difficult to solve there is room for improvement. Various solutions could go a long way in trying to solve this menace. New construction technologies need to be explored which will quicken the construction process. Creation of multi storey car parks is also should be considered. This will ensure that car parks are constructed along main roads. A fee should be introduced for drivers who enter the city centre. Commuters should be willing to use public transport to the city centre. Construction of bicycle lanes could help reduce congestion too. Although public transport is the solution to this menace, congestion can further be reduced by use of other means of transport. With the population estimated to increase by nearly 2.6 million, it is apparent that this problem will still persist since more than a million more cars will be added to the roads. Therefore the commuter time is expected to stretch and the economic cost of congestion doubling. Further the death toll is expected to rise due to traffic causes alongside increase in emissions. In addition the government should enact policies and enforce efficiently. The only way to prevent the city of Toronto from coming to a standstill is to force people out of their cars by pricing them off.