

EMBARGOED UNTIL 1 a.m. ON MONDAY 27 NOVEMBER 2006

**INDEPENDENT TRANSPORT COMMISSION
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON**
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**ROAD CHARGING COULD JUSTIFY AND FINANCE ROAD TUNNELS
NEW IMPERIAL COLLEGE RESEARCH SHOWS**

- Pay-as-you-drive road charging would reduce congestion and reinforce the business case for investing in some new roads – including tunnels.
- Investing charging revenues in better bus and rail services, though equally important, was not part of this research.
- In some congested suburbs and city fringes, the revenues from road pricing could, by making it affordable to put some roads in tunnels, reduce traffic noise, ugliness and the dividing of communities.
- The strongest case for new roads would be within and around the suburbs of such conurbations as Greater Manchester, the West Midlands and Greater London, and of cities ranging in size from Nottingham and Leicester to Lincoln and Cambridge.
- On country roads creating more traffic capacity would rarely be justified.

Sir Patrick Brown, Chairman of the Commission* said, ‘We are not advocating the building of new roads. But our research does show a strong business case for using road charging to cut congestion and build roads – some of them in tunnels. Better bus and rail services will, of course, be needed too.’

Notes for Editors

SOURCES This statement is based on ‘Road Charging and Road Investment’ an ITC policy analysis report published today (27 November). The underlying technical research is reported in ‘Investing in Roads: Pricing, Costs and New Capacity’, by Christopher Archer and Professor Stephen Glaister of Imperial College, London. Both reports are at: www.trg.soton.ac.uk/itc/roadchargingandinvestment

* **ITC** The Independent Transport Commission, with 13 Members, is the only non-aligned transport, land use and environment think tank in Britain. It was set up in 1999. Its financial support comes from grant giving trusts and commercial companies.

The ITC has been working on road user charging with Professor Stephen Glaister of Imperial College since 2001. In 2003 the ITC showed the effects of a national scheme of road charges on traffic volumes and speeds throughout England. This threw light on the extent of suburban traffic congestion. Last May, following the extension of the Glaister/Graham model to cover Scotland and Wales, the Commission showed how people living in the country would have cheaper driving if the money collected by road charging was kept at the same level as existing motoring taxes.

PUBLIC POLICY The Government committed itself to introducing road user charging in the 2004 Transport White Paper. Since then it has created a Transport Innovation Fund and in 2005 began to finance research into local road pricing schemes in Tyne & Wear, Durham, Greater Manchester, Shrewsbury, the West Midlands. Bristol & Bath, and Cambridge. Further research grants were recently announced for all these authorities except Bristol & Bath plus the East Midlands, Norwich and Reading.

SUBURBAN TRAFFIC SPEEDS ARE FALLING

	1975	2005
Outer London AM peak	19 mph	16 mph
Outer London daytime off-peak	26	21
Outer London PM peak	21	18

Source: Transport Statistics GB 2005, Department for Transport.

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