



*Meeting of Forth Estuary Transport Authority
25 February 2011*

Traffic Figures 2010

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To provide members with an update on traffic figures from the Forth Road Bridge during the calendar year 2010.

2. Background

- 2.1 Prior to the abolition of tolls, northbound traffic figures were reported as recorded by the tolling system. These figures could be regarded as extremely accurate, having been audited and accounted for. However, this source of data has not been available since 11 February 2008.
- 2.2 Since the abolition of tolls, traffic figures from the Forth Road Bridge have been collected using data from the bridge's Weigh in Motion (WiM) station. Monthly traffic reports are now published on the FETA website, showing daily traffic northbound and southbound. All historical WiM station data has also been published, so that like for like comparisons can be made with traffic data from before 2008.

3. Main Report

- 3.1 There are gaps in the data provided by the WiM station during the years 2007, 2008 and 2009, due to mechanical failures of traffic counting equipment. Furthermore, weekend traffic during five months of 2007 was approximately 30% lower than normal due to resurfacing, and traffic in 2008 was affected by work to remodel the former toll plaza. For these reasons it has until now been difficult to draw firm conclusions from the data available since the abolition of tolls.
- 3.2 However, the bridge's WiM station was replaced in late 2009, and the new equipment has worked without problems since it was installed. We therefore now have a complete calendar year of traffic data from 2010, which can be meaningfully compared with 2006, the previous complete year of traffic data available.

- 3.3 The total number of vehicle crossings recorded during 2010 was 23,739,120, a decrease of 1.1% compared with 2006.
- 3.4 However, November and December 2010 saw the worst winter weather in the 46-year history of the Forth Road Bridge. Poor weather also caused disruption during January and February 2010. It is estimated that these exceptional conditions resulted in a reduction in traffic of at least 850,000 vehicle crossings during 2010.
- 3.5 If November and December figures are excluded from the comparison, this shows a rise in traffic of 1.95% between 2006 and 2010.
- 3.6 If January and February figures are also excluded from the comparison, this shows a rise in traffic of 3.6% between 2006 and 2010.
- 3.7 It should be borne in mind that traffic during these two years was measured using different WiM systems, so there will be some margin of error. The extent of this error is unknown, but it is likely to be small.
- 3.8 Figures from 2006 and 2010 are provided in full in Appendix A.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 It is recommended that members note the contents of this report.

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Chief Engineer and Bridgemaster

Appendices Appendix A – Forth Road Bridge Traffic Figures 2006 & 2010

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Background:
Papers:

Forth Road Bridge Traffic Figures 2006 & 2010

2006

Month	Northbound	Southbound	Total
January	890,715	919,878	1,810,593
February	889,702	913,196	1,802,898
March	983,506	1,014,867	1,998,373
April	974,076	1,013,492	1,987,568
May	1,032,875	1,070,331	2,103,206
June	980,278	1,015,366	1,995,644
July	1,028,521	1,066,863	2,095,384
August	1,089,400	1,133,824	2,223,224
September	1,009,413	1,052,849	2,062,262
October	1,024,941	1,066,175	2,091,116
November	974,137	1,005,940	1,980,077
December	914,269	939,614	1,853,883
Total	11,791,833	12,212,395	24,004,228

2010

Month	Northbound	Southbound	Total
January	817,402	816,175	1,633,577
February	899,053	873,337	1,772,390
March	1,028,950	1,025,570	2,054,520
April	1,016,896	1,021,638	2,038,534
May	1,089,907	1,076,395	2,166,302
June	1,089,038	1,091,486	2,180,524
July	1,120,453	1,110,482	2,230,935
August	1,156,101	1,121,207	2,277,308
September	1,068,618	1,044,178	2,112,796
October	1,072,124	1,023,716	2,095,840
November	930,443	895,736	1,826,179
December	703,261	646,954	1,350,215
Total	11,992,246	11,746,874	23,739,120

Full year comparison

2006 total Jan-Dec	24,004,228
2010 total Jan-Dec	23,739,120
Difference	-1.1%

Excluding exceptional winter weather

2006 total Jan-Oct	20,170,268
2010 total Jan-Oct	20,562,726
Difference	+1.95%
2006 total Mar-Oct	16,556,777
2010 total Mar-Oct	17,156,759
Difference	+3.6%

Notes:

- All traffic figures collected from Weigh in Motion (WIM) plate (not tolling figures)
- Comparison is with 2006 because of incomplete data in 2007, 2008 and 2009 due to mechanical failure of WiM plate