

# Special Report:

## Tolls Reduce Tunnel Traffic, But Where Did Everybody Go?

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**During the first week of tolling, traffic volumes decreased by over 20% at the Downtown and Midtown Tunnels, with much of this traffic shifting to Chesapeake.**

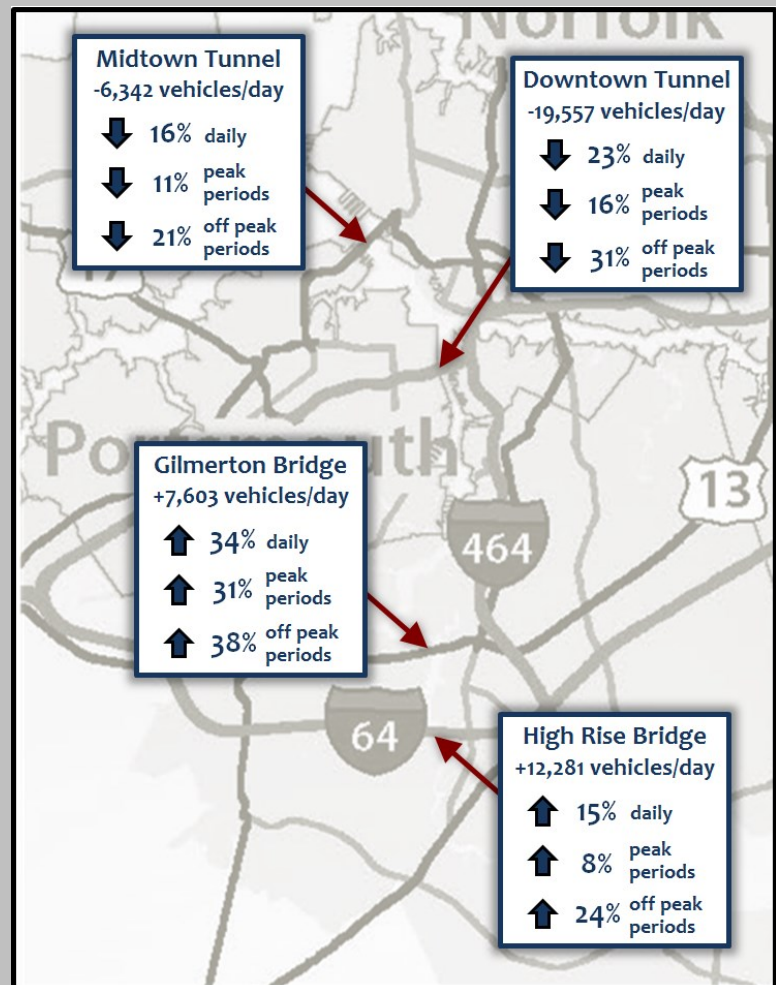
On February 1st, 2014, tolls were implemented at the Downtown and Midtown Tunnels. HRTPO staff analyzed the impact these tolls had on traffic volumes by comparing data from pre-tolled conditions with those conditions during the first week that tolls were collected.

Daily traffic volumes at the Downtown Tunnel decreased by nearly 20,000 vehicles per day (23%) after tolls were implemented. At the Midtown Tunnel, volumes decreased by 6,300 vehicles per day (16%). As would be expected, much of the traffic that previously used the Downtown and Midtown Tunnels diverted to the toll-free Gilmerton Bridge and I-64 High Rise Bridge. Daily traffic volumes increased by 7,600 vehicles per day (34%) at the Gilmerton Bridge and 12,300 vehicles per day (15%) at the High Rise Bridge after tolls were implemented.

During the peak travel periods (5-9 am and 3-7 pm), the volume decreases at the Downtown and Midtown Tunnels were 16% and 11% respectively. However, volume decreases were much higher outside of these peak travel periods. Off peak period volumes decreased 31% at the Downtown Tunnel and 21% at the Midtown Tunnel after tolls were implemented.

In Fall 2014, HRTPO will produce the *Discovering and Mitigating the Impact of Tolls at the Midtown and Downtown Tunnels* study. This study will document before and after conditions on roadways impacted by the newly implemented tolls and recommend improvements for intersections on diversion routes.

### Change in Traffic Volumes from Pre-Tolled Conditions (Second Week of January 2014\*) to Tolled Conditions (First Week of February 2014)



Source: HRTPO analysis of VDOT data.

\* - Snowy weather conditions occurred during the final two weeks of January 2014, so data from January 14th to January 16th was used in this analysis.