Preface

Financing Infrastructure: Who Should Pay? is about who should pay for municipal infrastructure, with a particular emphasis on making the users pay. Much of the discussion to date has focused on asking federal and provincial governments to pay for municipal infrastructure and with some success. Few have suggested that the revenue for new infrastructure should mainly come from the people who benefit from the infrastructure. This book attempts to change that narrative by emphasizing the economic and other advantages of making users pay. The various chapters consider user-fee financing for infrastructure in general and for specific infrastructure (such as transit, water, and sewers) in selected jurisdictions in Canada, the United States, and Europe.

Earlier versions of most chapters were presented as papers at a conference of academics and practitioners organized by the Institute on Municipal Finance and Governance (IMFG) at the Munk School of Global Affairs at the University of Toronto in October 2016. IMFG is a think tank at the university that focuses on the fiscal and governance challenges facing large cities in Canada and around the world. It sparks and informs public debate through the publication of papers and books such as this one, and it engages the academic and policy communities through public events and round tables.

This book will be of interest to policy makers at all levels of government as well as the academic community and members of the public who are interested in understanding how to pay for the growing municipal infrastructure all agree is needed. It will help readers understand why charging user fees makes sense, how we should determine how much users should pay, and where charging is done well and where it can be improved. The book suggests some ways to convince politicians and the public of the importance of pricing infrastructure correctly.
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