

Auckland Time of Use Charging programme update

Congestion is a real problem in Auckland with real life consequences. It creates stress on commuters, business, productivity, the environment and our quality of life.

The time we spend sitting in traffic is time we're not working, learning or spending time with whanau. It costs us valuable minutes and dollars.

As Auckland continues to grow, our congestion problem is only projected to get worse.

Time of Use Charging would charge people a fee to use certain roads at peak times to ease excessive congestion. Auckland Council and Auckland Transport are investigating what a scheme could look like in the future.

Time of Use Charging is part of a tool kit to tackle congestion. It could be part of the solution to provide Aucklanders with a network of transport choices that work together to move us around. For example, rapid transit projects like the City Rail Link and the Eastern Busway, as well as smarter, more dynamic use of our road space.

Time of Use Charging programme

In 2023, Auckland Council and Auckland Transport created a joint programme team to study Time of Use Charging as a potential tool to reduce congestion and improve network productivity.

The foundation for the programme's initial work are outputs from a 2020 project (The Congestion Question), led by the Ministry of Transport, that studied multiple Auckland-based options and mapped a path forward for implementation.

Technical work to-date has provided an initial assessment of network, social, economic and

practical impacts of a long-list of options. All with an overarching lens of understanding how effective, fair, simple and feasible a scheme can be. This work informed the Auckland Council Group submission on Government's draft legislation and has also enabled the narrowing of potential scheme options for further consideration.

The programme team have also started to engage with mana whenua, key stakeholders and the public to inform investigation and planning.

What has the team looked at?

The programme team has investigated several elements that need to fit together to shape a potential scheme. This includes:

- ➔ **Policy settings to support a scheme.**
Such as mitigations, pricing and other transport measures needed to maximise the benefits and minimise the impacts of Time of Use Charging.
- ➔ **Assessment of potential locations.**
This includes previously recommended option areas in the city centre and central isthmus corridors, as well as other highly congested areas.
- ➔ **Technology requirements.**
- ➔ **Operating models to plan, deliver and manage a scheme.**
- ➔ A current snapshot of the **cost of Auckland's congestion** has also been developed to better understand the extent of the problem.

The study has not yet considered price levels or times of day for charging.



What have we learned so far?

Work throughout 2024 and 2025 has unlocked the following insights:

- ➔ Congestion is a significant issue that needs to be addressed. By 2026, congestion will cost us \$2.6 billion a year - factoring the cost of lost time, as well as impacts like reduced business investment and consumer spending.
- ➔ Time of Use Charging can provide significant congestion reduction and time savings benefits. With an average reduction in travel time across Auckland of 13,900 hours per day.
- ➔ There are trade-offs to explore related to the scale of a scheme. Larger schemes can have a greater impact but are more complex. Medium scale schemes provide good benefits but may create network and acceptability challenges. Smaller schemes have less congestion benefits but can be simpler.
- ➔ Time of Use Charging is a package of elements that need to work together. This includes a charging location, the price charged, additional transport measures that complement a scheme, and potential targeted mitigations.
- ➔ Mode shift to public transport is more limited for schemes that charge outside the city centre, reflecting the fact that public transport serves the city centre well. Public transport alternatives are particularly important to stakeholders and the public.
- ➔ Some of the options studied saw significant traffic diversion, even as overall regional congestion decreased. Charging on both the motorways and local roads in the same area is typically needed to minimise diversion impacts.
- ➔ A charge should be set at the minimum level to achieve the congestion reduction goals.
- ➔ Revenue should be reinvested in enhancing the benefits, and minimising the impact, of a scheme.
- ➔ Complementary measures, mitigations and revenue allocation have been critical to the public success of international schemes.

What's next?

In the near term, the programme team will continue to further assess key aspects of scheme design.

Before any plan moves forward in Auckland, Parliament needs to approve legislation to set the framework for Time of Use Charging across the country. That is currently in progress.

After a law is passed, Auckland Council will decide if they wish to pursue Time of Use Charging and what next steps will be undertaken. This will depend on the governance and approvals requirements included in the final legislation.

As the pathway becomes clearer, Aucklanders will be engaged to discuss any plans.

