

Auckland City Centre Resident's Group

13 April 2021

CCRG Feedback (online) – Inquiry into congestion pricing in Auckland

Congestion charging is a proven method of managing constrained and over capacity valuable street space, currently almost exclusively occupied by single occupancy vehicles, (that are also getting larger and larger).

Given our climate emergency and climate targets we need to constrain this air-pollution causing traffic and reallocate space to active modes and clean mode public transport. A 2017 study estimated that tyre wear-and-tear accounts for between 5% and 10% of microplastics entering our oceans each year. Another estimate from the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources puts this figure at about 28%. - all these need to be reduced. Vehicle use and VKTs must be decreased if we are to achieve any climate targets - it's simply not enough to continue with business as usual.

Introduce Congestion Charging (CG) as soon as possible across Auckland, starting around the City Centre - an area particularly susceptible to congestion and very poor air quality - the worst black carbon in NZ is in the Queen St/Waihorotiu Valley. This will have the added benefit of enabling key parts of the widely consulted and agreed upon City Centre Masterplan - particularly the inspiring Access For Everyone and Zero Emissions Area components. Reductions in traffic will assist with and encourage more and more walking, cycling, and free up space for better bus functionality - dedicated bus lanes and so on.

The city centre has 42,000 residents - the densest concentration in NZ, we deserve a much better air quality, noise and safety environment than is currently offered by the streets almost completely given over to vehicles and their movement that is mostly prioritised over everything else. And when this traffic is congested - the situation is even worse. <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/aucklands-state-of-the-environment-queen-street-air-quality-worsening-concerns-over-water-quality-and-muddy-estuaries/6JJG6FGIFDJGTDFGZOFGINAABA/>

Although the majority of city centre residents do not own cars, we are certainly interested in any conditions for city centre CG regime in relation to city centre residents' movements in and out of the city centre and potential financial impacts on residents. Given that apartment living allows for a very significantly reduced carbon impact than living in the suburbs in a standalone house, this consideration should be factored in to any pricing arrangements.

Regards,
Adam Parkinson
Deputy Chair
Auckland City Centre Residents' Group