

20 May 2021

Committee Secretariat
Transport and Infrastructure Committee
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

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SUBMISSION: INQUIRY INTO CONGESTION PRICING IN AUCKLAND 2021

The Greater East Tamaki Business Association Inc (GETBA) ('Association') welcomes the opportunity to make this Submission.

Greater East Tamaki Business Association Inc (GETBA)

GETBA is the Business Improvement District business association for the greater East Tamaki business precinct.

The East Tamaki business precinct is a major commercial industrial hub of 2,000+ businesses located close to the southern motorway, airport and port in the Manukau/Howick wards of Auckland generating:

- \$3 billion for the New Zealand economy each year
- \$19 million in rates
- 30,000+ jobs

Background

As a significant employment hub of 30,000 employees, GETBA's role is to advocate for the efficient movement of people and freight which is key to the ability of businesses to be productive and to attract and retain staff.

Many East Tamaki employees are currently unable to use public transport for their commute to work due to a lack of services and/or unfeasible costs/travel times.

This Submission will cover:

- (1) Summary of Member Feedback
- (2) Our priority
- (3) Recommendations
- (4) Conclusion

(1) Summary of Member Feedback

In response to a recent member survey regarding the Congestion Question:

- 90% of our members do not support the proposal to implement congestion charging
- 63% oppose the proposed area for congestion charging
- 80% did not agree with the pricing scheme commenting that there appears is virtually no "off peak" travel times in Auckland currently.

Should a congestion charge be implemented, our members raised two critical points that Auckland Transport must deliver on:

- 1) It is vital that Auckland Transport delivers on providing a more efficient and affordable public transport system. We also believe that consideration be given to reducing charging for public transport to encourage commuters to make permanent behavioral changes.
- 2) To ensure transparency, we ask that the projects and services being funded by a potential congestion charge are clearly identified in future Council Budgets.

(2) Our Priority

- Prior to any enforced change, AT must provide the necessary solutions to providing better public transport options

(3) Recommendations

- Transport modelling projections need to be updated in light of post-COVID travel demand patterns
- GETBA believes that further research needs to be conducted to ascertain whether there needs to be an increased differentiation between peak and off-peak prices.
- Sufficient consideration needs to be given to low-income households and how a congestion charge will affect people in lower socio-economic areas. As indicated in the social assessment, as a proportion, low-income households will spend more on congestion charges than higher income therefore mitigations in the form of subsidies/exemptions would have to be implemented.
- Overseas experience shows introducing trial periods is worthwhile to demonstrate the benefits to the private and freight sectors of road user charging.

(4) Conclusion

GETBA **opposes** the planned congestion charging, especially within the current environment, which sees insufficient services being provided.

We agree that congestion is getting worse and our businesses are struggling to move freight and people. We also agree that building more roads will not solely address the problem. Demand management of our existing network has to be a key solution, especially creating priority for freight and delivery movements, however alternative transport links must be addressed prior to implementing any congestion charge.

Finally, we ask the Council to carefully consider its approach to implementing an additional cost which will only place a further burden on businesses already struggling.

Yours sincerely,

Ruth White
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