

MIN-4382 SmartTrip

9 February 2024

Out of Scope

NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA) response:

Late last year, Tauranga City Council (TCC) released its draft Long-term Plan (LTP) for public consultation. As a part of the LTP, the Council sought feedback on whether to “work with Waka Kotahi and Government to further investigate SmartTrip [variable road pricing], through a business case investigation”.

NZTA supports TCC in its investigations to explore potential road pricing options, while not specifically endorsing ‘SmartTrip’. NZTA made a written submission as a part of the consultation process and requested to be heard. Katie Mayes, National Manager Planning, will speak to our submission at the public hearings on 12 February 2024.

Our objective in making a submission is to support the city and sub-region to keep exploring the roles that economic tools can play to maximise value of transport networks and services and mitigate whole-of-life costs.

Key messages for road-pricing

Our biggest cities and increasingly our smaller cities and towns are being slowed down by congestion, which is costing us all time and money.

New rules being considered by the government would enable local councils to use some form of local pricing to help unclog our roads, make journeys more reliable, and make our cities better places to live.

Local pricing means billing motorists to use roads at peak travel times – and faced with a “fee for service” drivers may choose alternative travel modes, or different times of day and locations or even defer a trip. It is a way to reduce congestion on roads, particularly at peak times, and reduce transport emissions as well.

Pricing is just one part of the solution, along with continued investment in transport networks and services which includes roads, public transport and options for people to safely walk and cycle. We also need to look at things like parking and the use of our road space and making sure that we are making the most of what we have so everyone can get to where they are going easily.

The Ministry of Transport is leading work on the new legislation and alongside NZTA would have a role in running any schemes that are set up. Auckland Council and Auckland Transport have set up a project team to investigate what road pricing might look like in Auckland.

There is a lot to consider about introducing road pricing, so it is valuable to start early to prepare for any legislation that may be enacted. This includes the varying impacts that it could have on different members of our community who use the transport network in different ways. We can learn from overseas examples like London and Singapore about how to design schemes that both reduce congestion and treat people fairly.

Schemes generate revenue which needs to be considered. Overseas the money has been reinvested back into local communities, providing them with more options for travel like better public transport.

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