

Aucklanders' views on alternative transport funding options

A research snapshot on the

- costs of congestion and
- acceptable funding solutions

July 2012

In an NZCID-commissioned survey, 1,061 adults living within Auckland Council boundaries were asked about:

- how and why they travel
- their use of the motorway system and its impacts on them and the organisations they work for
- feelings about tolling in general, and
- reactions to various options for funding the “four big projects” prioritised by the Auckland Council: the City Rail Link, an additional Waitemata Harbour crossing, the Auckland-Manukau Eastern transport Initiative (AMETI) and the East-West link between SH1 and SH20.

The Horizon Research Limited survey is weighted to represent the Auckland Council area population and has a maximum margin of error of +/- 3.1% overall.

OVERALL FINDINGS

- Tolling Auckland's motorway network is the only funding option surveyed with the majority support of Aucklanders
- Research on pricing indicates a toll at or near \$2 during peak week day travel periods has support
- Aucklanders are greatly concerned over the adverse impacts on them and business caused by traffic congestion: it is affecting 76 in every 100 drivers
- 70 in every 100 believe traffic congestion in future will worsen, and
- 2.8% of respondents only say authorities should “continue business-as-usual, things are operating well”.



TOLLS

Tolls are the only funding method surveyed attracting majority support, both in principle and for different prices charged for peak, inter-peak and off peak travel.

63.8% SUPPORT FOR TOLLS IN PRINCIPLE

In principle, do you think Auckland should have tolls on its motorways, varying in price and times at which they are charged, if this reduces congestion and helps fund major transport projects?



Tolling in principle was supported by 47% of those who use the motorway system twice a day or more.

This in-principle support arises following an explanation that:

- a range of options for tolling the motorways was being considered
- higher tolls in busy periods would incentivise commuters to drive at different times, use different routes, car pool, take public transport or walk or cycle
- this would reduce traffic on the motorways, meaning faster journeys for users of the tolled network, and
- tolls would also raise revenue for investment in new transport solutions including roads and public transport services.

PARTY VOTER SUPPORT

Voters for all main parties at the 2011 General Election support tolling in principle. This includes 66.8% of National voters, 56.3% Labour, 60.9% Green, 65.1% NZ First and 88.6% of ACT voters.

	Yes	No
ALL	64.10%	35.90%
ACT New Zealand	88.60%	11.40%
Chose not to vote	67.10%	32.90%
Conservative	73.20%	26.80%
Don't know or can't remember	63.50%	36.50%
Green Party	60.90%	39.10%
Labour Party	56.30%	43.70%
Mana	76.10%	23.90%
Mana Party	100%	
Maori Party	25.30%	74.70%
National Party	66.80%	33.20%
New Zealand First Party	65.10%	34.90%
Other party	36.50%	63.50%
United Future	51.80%	48.20%

SUPPORT ACROSS ALL INCOME GROUPS

Support for tolls in principle is not affected by household income. There is support across all household income bands, including those with middle and lower incomes. Support remains at 55% (compared with 64% overall) among households with incomes of \$30,000 to \$50,000 and is higher at 60% among households earning less than \$20,000 a year:

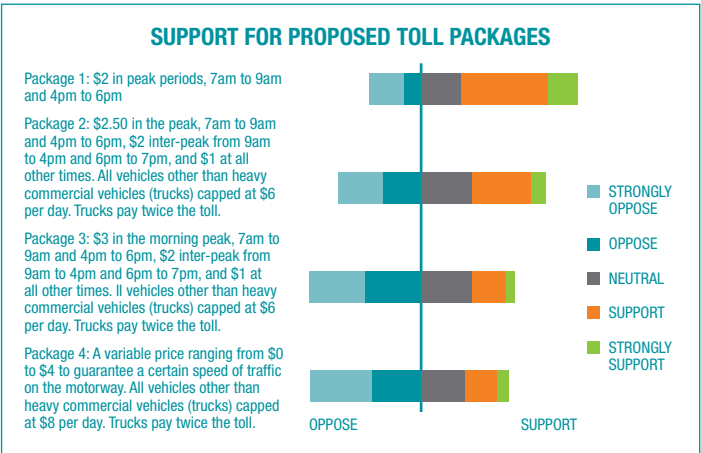
	Yes	No
ALL	64.10%	35.90%
HOUSEHOLD INCOME		
Less than \$20,000 per year	60.20%	39.80%
Between \$20,001 and \$30,000 per year	64.70%	35.30%
Between \$30,001 and \$50,000 per year	55%	45%
Between \$50,001 and \$70,000 per year	74.50%	25.50%
Between \$70,001 and \$100,000 per year	62.80%	37.20%
Between \$100,001 and \$150,000 per year	74.50%	25.50%
Between \$150,001 and \$200,000 per year	67.30%	32.70%
More than \$200,000 per year	68.50%	31.50%
Don't know/prefer not to say	59.60%	40.40%

TIME-OF-USE CHARGES

A majority of Aucklanders support a motorway network toll package which varies prices between peak, inter-peak and off-peak periods.

Of four pricing packages surveyed, the most supported by respondents overall was \$2 in peak periods (7am – 9am) and \$1.50 between 4pm and 6pm. This option attracted:

- 50.4% support, while
- 25.1% opposed
- 18% were neutral and
- 7.9% were not sure.



Those who use the motorway twice a day or more have a lower level of support for all the packages, particularly Package 3 and Package 4.



FUNDING THE ‘BIG FOUR’ COUNCIL PROJECTS

The Auckland Council has prioritised four major projects with a collective cost of around \$10 billion:

- the City Rail Link
- an additional Waitemata Harbour crossing
- the Auckland-Manukau Eastern Transport Initiative (AMETI) and the
- East-West link between SH1 and SH20.

Respondents were told that the Council did not have all the money it needed to pay for these projects and was considering a range of new funding mechanisms.

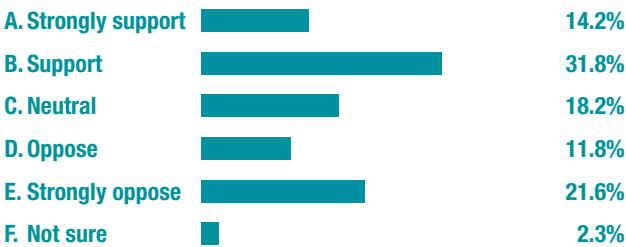
- 55.5% of respondents were aware that the Council had been investigating new ways to fund transport
- 44.5% were not.

MAJORITY FOR \$2 “AVERAGE” TOLL

Given a choice of increasing rates, fuel taxes, car park charges, an airport tax on international travellers, a charge on all traffic entering the CBD, and an average \$2 toll on the motorway network, the \$2 average toll was the only option attracting more support than opposition:

- 46% support a \$2 average toll
- 33.4% oppose
- 18% are neutral.

UP TO A \$2 “AVERAGE” TOLL ON THE MOTORWAY NETWORK



The highest level of support, 50%, came from Northern motorway users and the lowest, 27%, from South-Eastern Highway users. While not having majority support, this option should be seen as the most palatable of those presented in this study.

TOLL PRICES

“FAIR VALUE” CROSS-OVER PRICE POINTS

The travel times-based points at which tolls cross over from being “fair value” to “expensive” overall was:

- **\$0.76 in Off-Peak** for travel between 7pm and 7am
- **\$1.25 in Inter-Peak** for travel between 9am and 4pm
- **\$1.70 in Peak** traffic 7am to 9am and 4pm to 6pm

(Price tolerance varies according to frequency of motorway use: Less frequent cross over point \$2.70 at peak, 2 x per day users \$1.50)

CAPPING TOLLS EACH DAY

Among those who were prepared to pay and to whom it applied, the average maximum was \$4.75 per day for cars and vans and \$5.80 for heavy commercial vehicles. These levels apply regardless of the frequency with which respondents use the motorway system.

POSITIVE TOLLS EXPERIENCE

Aucklanders’ experiences of tolls they have paid in New Zealand and overseas are positive: only 15.7% of respondents had never paid a road toll and 67.9% felt the toll they had paid was value for money.

IMPACT ON BEHAVIOUR

The introduction of tolls will result in drivers changing their behaviour, depending on the toll price.

For example, respondents say that at a \$2 toll 16% would take public transport, 9.1% a free route, 7.9% car pool, 13.7% change travel time and 8.2% change where they live or work. Although stated preference can often differ from actual consumer behaviour, the research shows potential opportunities to influence transport mode and time of travel through introduction of variable price tolling.

A \$5 toll could result in significant behaviour change.

Toll amount	Take public transport	Take a free route	Car pool	Change time of travel	Change where I live or work
\$1	16.0%	22.2%	16.0%	13.7%	8.2%
\$2	6.6%	9.1%	7.9%	8.3%	3.9%
\$3	9.4%	19.3%	7.6%	13.3%	5.3%
\$4	9.9%	11.7%	6.9%	8.7%	2.4%
\$5	12.1%	13.0%	9.7%	9.9%	9.0%
\$6	3.3%	3.2%	2.9%	3.0%	1.9%
\$8	1.0%	0.6%	0.9%	1.3%	3.3%
More than \$8	2.0%	1.3%	1.7%	2.1%	4.9%
Would not choose this option regardless of the toll	39.6%	19.6%	46.3%	39.7%	61.0%

The survey also indicates that Aucklanders will need to see between 5 and 10 minute commuting time benefits in return for paying tolls.

Aucklanders are primarily travelling “for employment” and “shopping”. Driving is the dominant transport mode used for all journeys, with bus and rail use being mostly for employment. Comments suggest that destination, route, scheduling and frequency changes for bus transport (and, to some extent, rail) could have an impact on use.

More than half of the respondents travelled between 5km and 20km for their most frequent daily or weekly trip and a further 20% travel more than 20km. Only 20% travel 5 kilometres or less.

FOR YOUR MOST FREQUENT (DAILY/WEEKLY) TRIP, HOW FAR DO YOU TYPICALLY TRAVEL EACH WAY?



There is a significant level of motorway use with only 11% saying that they do not use the motorway system at some time. Trips per day average between 2.1 and 2.4, with peak trip numbers occurring on Saturdays and the lowest level on Sundays.

The level of use of the Auckland motorway system is an important consideration when looking at the survey results as it appears to have a role in acceptance of pricing mechanisms and pricing of tolling, and in perceptions of what needs to be done to improve Auckland’s transport system.

29% of respondents use the motorway once or more a day Monday to Friday and 23% do so on weekends. Horizon Research says overall responses on tolling of the motorway system, therefore, are dominated by less frequent users and non-users. Because of this, care needs to be taken in interpretation of “overall” figures in this survey.

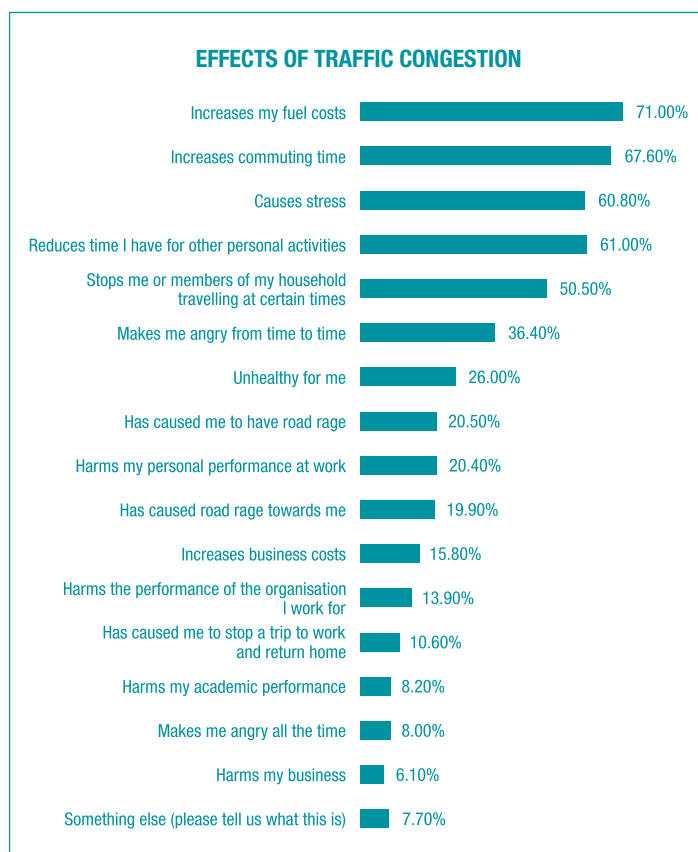
CONGESTION’S BIG TOLL ON PEOPLE AND BUSINESS

IMPACT OF CONGESTION – PERSONAL

Large numbers believe traffic congestion is getting worse (57.3%) and even more (70.9%) believe it will get worse in the future.

Only 24.2% say they are not affected personally by congestion. Greatest adverse impacts are increasing fuel costs (70.9%), longer commuting times (67.6%), reducing time for other activities (61%), causing stress (60.8%) and stopping respondents and members of their households from travelling at certain times (50.4%). Suffering from road rage, become enraged, and harm to their work performance is, in each case affecting about 20 in every 100 Auckland drivers. 8% say congesting is making them angry all the time.

IN WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING WAYS, IF ANY, ARE YOU AFFECTED BY TRAFFIC CONGESTION?



IMPACTS OF CONGESTION – ORGANISATION

30.1% say congestion is impacting badly to very badly on the organisations they work for, with another 45.7% reporting slight impact.

BUSINESS AS USUAL? ONLY 2.8% SAY YES

Just over half of respondents rated the Auckland transport system positively, with 25% rating it negatively.

However, overall, **only 2.8% of respondents say authorities should “continue business-as-usual, things are operating well”.**

Nearly all respondents think that there need to be improvements to Auckland’s transport system.

- better public transport pricing (70%)
- building of more public transport (56%)
- Building more road capacity is preferred by nearly 40% of respondents overall
- 55% of **frequent users** of the motorway system believe that more capacity is required.

For comment, please contact:

Stephen Selwood, Chief Executive NZCID. Phone +64 9 271 4445 or +64 21 791 209.

www.nzcid.org.nz

For more information, please contact:

Grant McInman, Manager, Horizon Research. Email: gmcinman@horizonresearch.co.nz. Phone 021 076 2040, or

Graeme Colman, Principal, Horizon Research. Email: gcolman@horizonresearch.co.nz. Phone: 021 84 85 76.

www.horizonpoll.co.nz