CITY BUILDERS ASSOCIATION
RŌPŪ HANGANGA TĀONE

POLICY RECORD

Time of use charging in Auckland: the record

Three schemes, not one toll. Who pays, where the money can legally go, what happens outside the line, and the option that fits the city.

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OUR POSITION

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City centre first. Motorway charging later, and separately consulted.

The charged city-centre trip has a rail alternative. Core motorway charging is a different instrument with no rapid transit replacing the through-trip. This page is the record; the written paper is AP-18, sent on 12 November 2026 and not lodged.

1 **Option A first**, or Option B if hospital access, Gillies Avenue and the SH16 diversion issues can be resolved.

2 **Engagement is not section 65E.** The engagement has no statutory weight; formal consultation comes only if a scheme is initiated.

3 **No charge until an Order in Council.** Local boards do not get a vote.

4 **The charge stops at the line; its effects do not.** Parking, property, operators, trades and port charges all feel it.

$2.6b
Council's congestion cost a year by 2026, an economy-wide model
Section 01

3.5%
Morning peak trips that pay under Option A
Section 02

2030–31
Likely go-live if a charge is approved
Section 01

11 Dec 2026
Feedback on Options A, B and C closes
About this record

WHAT A SUBMISSION CAN FORCE

Split the options, fix the boundary in the Order, and make sections 65ZD and 65ZB cover the streets and residents at the edge. The full list of asks that survive the statute is in section 10.

Policy record, Checked 15 November 2026. City Builders Association Limited, Rōpū Hanganga Tāone. Contact: Mark Pervan, Founder and Director.

About this record

Three schemes, not one toll. Who pays, where the money can legally go, what happens outside the line, and the option that fits the city. This page is the record. The written paper, AP-18, was sent on 12 November 2026 and is not lodged.

Latest (17 Nov 2026): North Shore Ward Councillor John Gillon has called for the public feedback to include a fourth option to reject time of use charging altogether (RNZ [31]). This is a councillor's view, not a council decision. Feedback on Options A, B and C remains open until 11 December 2026.

Applies to · Auckland Council · Auckland Transport · NZTA · Minister of Transport · scheme board

Checked 15 November 2026. City Builders Association Limited, NZBN 9429053649225. City Builders Association sent its written paper on time of use charging on 12 November 2026 to timeofusecharging@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz, with the PDF attached. No receipt or reference number had been given as of 12 November 2026, so the paper is recorded as sent, not lodged. This page is the record, not the lodged submission; the written paper is AP-18.

01 Finding

City centre first. Motorway charging later, and separately consulted.

The charged city-centre trip has a rail alternative. CRL opened in 2026. A charge, if approved, is an early-2028 council decision, then the Minister, then several years of build. Go-live about 2030 or 2031. [6, 10] Net revenue on that cordon is described as limited. [9, 29] Core motorway charging is a different instrument. No rapid transit replaces a Harbour Bridge to Point Chevalier or Mt Wellington through-trip, which is why the Association's position is Option A first, or Option B if hospital access, Gillies Avenue and the SH16 diversion issues can be resolved, with core motorway charging as a later and separately consulted change. The Act does not require the alternative to exist first. [1, 30]

Council's congestion cost is $2.6 billion a year by 2026: lost personal time, reduced business investment, lower consumer spending. The same papers put lost time at 29 million hours a year, about 66 hours for a regular peak commuter. [4, 7] That is an economy-wide model, not a household bill. The AA has said the figure is low because it excludes the buffer people already add to trip planning, vehicle running costs, crashes and emissions. [10]

The Congestion Question, in 2020, already separated the instruments. It recommended the city-centre cordon and strategic corridors be taken forward separately, centre first, because the cordon is small, lower risk, and the centre had the best public-transport alternative. [25] The 2026 shortlist put a motorway charge on the same engagement menu. That is a later stage.

02 The three options

Endorsed 25 August 2026. Engagement is not section 65E.

The Transport and Infrastructure Delivery Committee endorsed three options for public engagement.[6] That engagement opened on 11 November 2026 and closes on 11 December 2026.[29] Councillor John Watson criticised it for having no explicit "no charge" option.[8] The engagement has no statutory weight. It is not the section 65E consultation, which comes only if a scheme is initiated after the Act commences on 18 November 2026.[1]

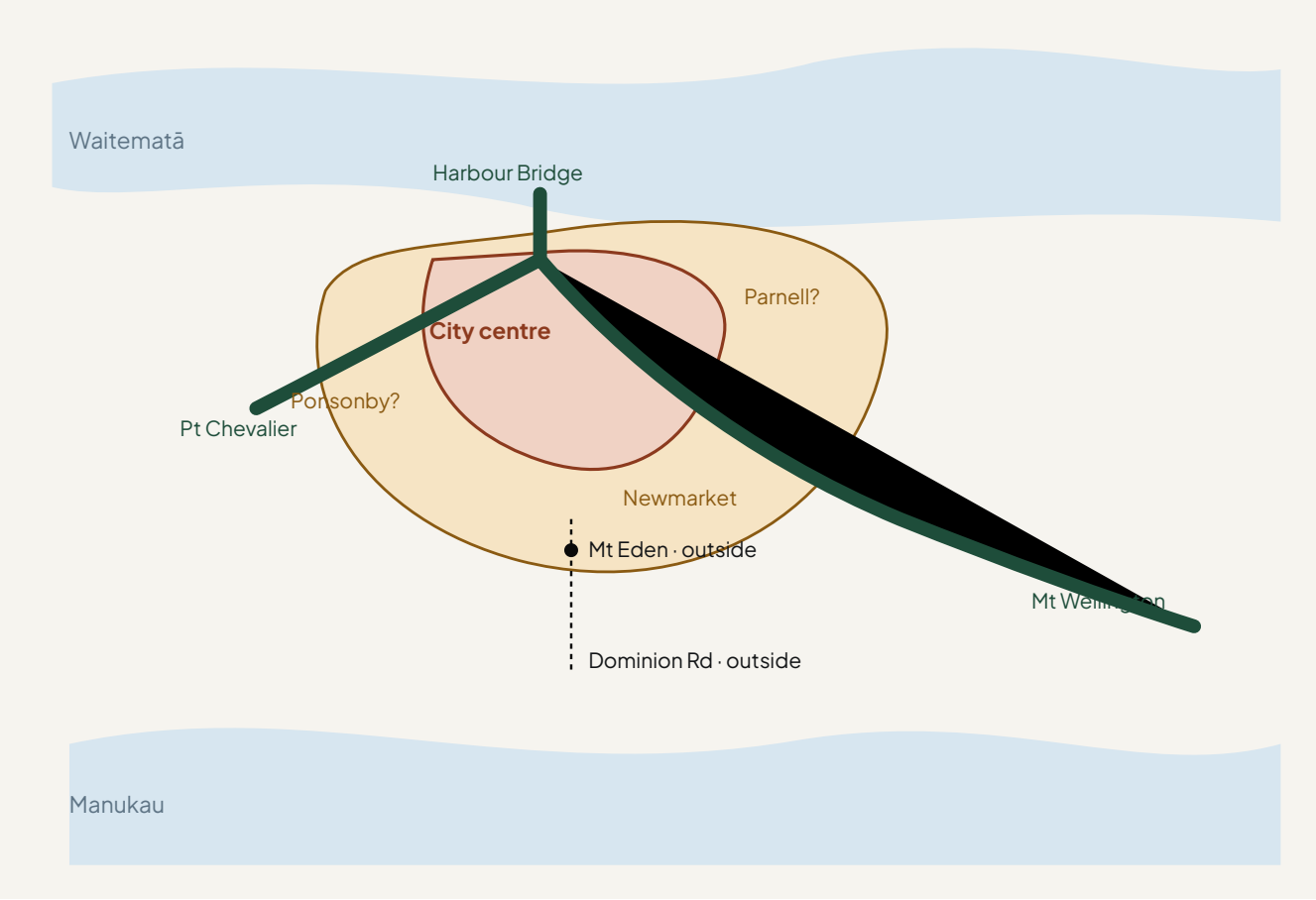
Option	Where	Likely charge	Who is touched	Modelled results, November 2026
Option A: City Centre Cordon	Charged when crossing into the cordon in the morning peak and leaving in the afternoon peak. Trips within the cordon and trips on the main motorways are not charged.	Lower likely charge. Council modelled the three options on example charges of $2 to $7, with a maximum around the middle of that range. No charge has been set.[29]	Around 3.5% of morning peak trips pay. About 31,500 residents inside a centre cordon.[5, 29]	Congestion down around 4% across the isthmus and lower North Shore. Around 2.5 minutes average saving for drivers who pay. Around 28% of drivers who do not pay still get a faster trip. Public transport ridership around +3%. Economic benefit of $3.40 for every dollar invested. Limited net revenue.[29]
Option B: City Fringe	Option A plus the inner fringe: Newmarket, Newton, Eden Terrace and Grafton, and it includes Auckland Hospital. Ponsonby and Parnell are not settled.	Moderate likely charge.[29]	Around 5.5% of morning peak trips pay. About 42,000 residents in the earlier fringe count.[5, 29]	Congestion down around 6%. Around 4 minutes average saving for drivers who pay. Around 33% of drivers who do not pay still get a faster trip. Public transport ridership around +5%. Economic benefit of $3.70 for every dollar invested. Modest net revenue.[29]
Option C: City Centre and Motorways	The city centre cordon plus core motorway points in the peak direction: the Harbour Bridge toward Point Chevalier, and toward Mt Wellington. A Coast commuter can pay both legs.[8]	Likely moderate charge to ensure affordability, with the option of a higher charge on the motorways.[29]	Around 8.5% of morning peak trips pay.[29]	Congestion down around 28%. Around 7 minutes average saving per trip, and up to 10 minutes on longer motorway trips. Around 29% of drivers who do not pay get a faster trip, and around 14% are slower because of diversion. Public transport ridership around +6%. Economic benefit of $4.10 for every dollar invested. Significant net revenue.[29]

No charge has been set. Council says the three options were modelled on example charges of $2 to $7, and that the options being considered assume a maximum charge around the middle of that range.[29] Thirteen options were narrowed to six, then three. Schemes through school zones, or with weak alternatives, were dropped before this shortlist.[8] Earlier modelled results, including the 3.1%, 5.1% and 6.9% trip shares, have been replaced by the November 2026 figures in the last column.

03 Map

Schematic. Not a cadastral boundary.

Council has not published a legal line. Dominion Road, Mt Eden Village, Epsom and Greenlane sit outside the fringe as described in September 2026. They come inside only by a later variation under section 65L.[1]



Coral is the city centre. Sand is the possible fringe, with Parnell and Ponsonby unconfirmed. Green is the motorway charge, peak direction. The dashed line is Dominion Road, outside unless the Order is varied.

04 Who pays

Per crossing here. Once a day in London.

London is £18 if paid on the day, from 2 January 2026, up from £5 in 2003 and £15 from 2020. One payment covers the day.[15] In the engagement options a charge applies in the peak travel times, weekdays 7am to 10am and 3pm to 6pm, and a trip that stays inside the cordon is not charged.[29]

Person	Direct charge	What they actually lose or gain
Peak driver who keeps crossing	Illustrative $2 to $7 a crossing. Ten a week at $5 is about $2,300 a year.	Some minutes back. A 12-minute saving each way over 220 days is about 88 hours. It does not offset a slower door-to-door bus.
Driver who shifts off-peak	Zero, if the window is real.	Schedule. Shift workers often cannot move.
CBD rail user after CRL	Zero if they do not drive the cordon.	The trip the city centre option is built for. Council says CRL roughly doubles how many people can reach the city centre by public transport within 30 minutes.[7] Reported weekly boardings rose from about 325,000 to 528,000.[20]
Dominion Road trip, school run, van	Zero on Option A. Exposed on Option C if the motorway is the route.	No rapid-transit substitute for most of these trips. A wide exemption would erode the scheme.[5]
Resident inside a cordon	School run and supermarket at peak, unless a discount is written in.	About 31,500 in a centre cordon, 42,000 in the earlier fringe count. Not Mt Eden Village unless the line moves.
Shop on Dominion Road or Mt Eden Village	No charge on the shop.	No centre-level turnover figure has been published. That is a gap, not a proven loss.

05 Outside the zone

The charge stops. The park, the van and the shop do not.

Auckland Council has not published a parking model, a rent model, or a centre-level turnover model for this shortlist. The figures below are overseas results. They are not Auckland forecasts.

PARKING

The dodge is a free park one street past the gantry. London tightened enforcement outside the Western Extension so people would not park and walk in, and commuters waited outside for the window to close.[17] A city-centre cordon pushes that park onto Newton, Eden Terrace and Grafton. A fringe cordon that stops at Newmarket pushes it onto Mt Eden and the top of Dominion Road. A motorway charge does not create a walk-in park. It creates a crawl on the parallel arterial.

The remedy is not in the time-of-use Act. A residential parking zone is a resolution under the Vehicle Use and Parking Bylaw 2025, clauses 17 and 18. It can restrict who parks, charge a fee, and exempt a resident permit.[13] Scheme revenue funds it only if the section 65ZB agreement says so.

PROPERTY

Study	Result	What it does not prove
London Western Extension	Inside prices about 3.7% higher than homes within 1 km outside.	Not a gain for the street that received the diverted car.[17]
Gothenburg, 2013	Condominiums inside about 6% lower than the rest of the city.	Not a transfer to Dominion Road. A weak scheme can tax the inside without enriching the outside.[19]
Singapore ERP hike, November 2010	Retail inside about 19% lower relative to outside. Office and residential not significant.	A rate hike where a metro already existed. Not an Auckland introduction effect.[18]
TfL original-zone review	No strong overall property effect. Shops within 1 km of the edge marginally negative.	Not separated cleanly from the 2003 market.[24]

OPERATORS

Six peak jobs on an illustrative $5 is $30 before lunch. At $7 it is $42. London would have charged that van once. A work-vehicle exemption wide enough to cover the fleet would erode the scheme.[5] A daily cap has to be written into the scheme. Section 65J notifies the charge. It does not cap it.[1]

London and Stockholm found no significant retail hit overall. Stockholm shopping travel fell about 17% in the trial. Turnover did not, because shops stayed open after the window. The exception is the car-borne shop. Dominion Road is that shop only if its peak customer is a driver who can switch. That split has not been published. The fringe option includes Auckland Hospital.[8] Emergency vehicles are the one clear exempt class in the Act. Hospital workers, patients and afternoon clinics are not, unless the scheme says so.[1, 29]

Do not import ULEZ vacancy claims. That is an emissions charge. The footfall argument is contested. It is not evidence about this scheme. The Act pays no compensation for a lost park, a rent move, or a lost peak hour.

TAXIS, TRUCKS, TRADES

No class of these is exempt in the engagement options. Section 65Q is narrow: the Act provides for emergency vehicles, and for large passenger service vehicles exempted by Order in Council. Council's engagement material says mitigation is limited to daily caps, emergency exemptions and subsidised public transport.[1, 29] The draft

regulations, consulted to 25 June 2026, set ratios by road space, not by occupation.[27]

Who	Draft class	A peak day
Taxi or ride-hail	Passenger car. Ratio 1.0.	Each peak crossing is a charge unless a daily cap is written in. London black cabs are exempt. Private hire has paid since 2019, once a day.[15] Auckland has copied neither. The fare carries it.
Ute, van, tradesperson	Light goods under 3.5 tonnes. Ratio 1.0.	Six jobs is six charges. On an illustrative $5 that is $30 before lunch, and $42 at $7. A daily cap is the instrument. A trades exemption is not one of the Act's limited exemptions.
Truck, 3.5 tonnes or over	Medium and heavy goods. Proposed ratio 4.0.	On an illustrative $5 car charge that is $20 a crossing, and $28 at $7. Per crossing. Freight often cannot move off-peak. The cost goes into the delivery price.

Heavy buses were proposed at 2.0 in the same paper.[27] Whether large passenger service vehicles are exempted is settled by Order in Council, not by this engagement.[1]

PORT CHARGES ARE A SECOND BILL

Ports of Auckland already runs its own time-of-use access fee. Peak is Monday to Friday, 05:00 to 17:59, wider than the council window. Transporting New Zealand's tariff list, current as at 1 July 2026, puts the container booking fee at $180 a container in the peak and $115 off-peak. Multi-cargo is $145 and $95.[28] In May 2025 the port's chief executive, Roger Gray, told Newsroom the price had not moved trucks out of the peak, and that the peak fee was to rise to $230 in July 2026 and $350 in January 2027. The published list still shows $180. Treat the higher figures as the port's stated plan, not as a fee confirmed landed.[28]

Those are port gate fees. They are not the council scheme. Fergusson terminal sits on the city-centre waterfront. A cordon on the motorway ring charges the trip in. The motorway option charges the same truck again at Mt Wellington or the Harbour Bridge, at the 4.0 ratio if the draft stands. No port exemption is on the shortlist. The port's own fee already failed to shift the peak. A road charge on top is a second bill on the same trip.

06 Money

Legal waterfall, then a labelled estimate.

OurAuckland says receipts are for land transport to, from, within and around the scheme area.[7] The binding rule is section 65T. NZTA disburses. Establishment, operation, billing and monitoring come off first. The balance goes to land transport in the scheme region under the section 65ZB investment agreement.[1] Not rates. Not local-board money. Not parks. “Every dollar stays in our streets” is false unless the agreement says so. Council's engagement puts it the same way: operating costs first, then any balance prioritised for transport services and projects into and around the charge area.[29]

City centre low–high$11–51m

Fringe low–high$26–102m

Motorway low–high$55–246m

After operating cost, the city-centre scheme can be close to nothing in the early years. Only the motorway scheme leaves a residue that could fund a real service upgrade, and only toward the top of the range. Capital recovery of $5–20 million a year, from the old Congestion Question band of $46–580 million, can wipe the city-centre surplus. That band was flagged as a minimum. It is not the 2026 budget.[22]

METHOD, SO THE RANGE CAN BE CHECKED

- Morning peak trips inferred at 600,000–680,000, because the 2025 study treated about 26,000 charged trips as 4% of the peak.[5]
- Shares from the November 2026 engagement: around 3.5%, 5.5% and 8.5% of morning peak trips, widened in the low and high cases.[29]
- Afternoon return 60–100% of morning volume. Charge inside the published band. Charged weekdays 200, 230 or 250. Leakage 20%, 10% or 5% for exemptions and non-payment.
- London's first full year took £171.1 million and netted £90 million, so close to half went on running the scheme.[16]

Worked mid case, city centre: 640,000 × 3.5% = 22,400 morning crossings at an illustrative $3.50, afternoon at 85% of that volume and $2.50, times 230 days × 0.90 collection, about $26 million gross. Motorway mid case: 640,000 × 8.5% = 54,400 at an illustrative $5, plus 85% again in the afternoon peak, same days and collection, about $104 million gross.[23]

Census 2023 counted 539,490 Auckland households.[12] Spread the mid gross across all of them and the city-centre scheme is about $48 a household. That average is a trick. The payer of ten crossings a week at $5 pays about $2,300. Harbour Bridge volume is a ceiling check, not an input: 160,431 vehicles a day in 2024/25.[11] A fifth of that, one way, at $5 for 230 days, is about $35 million from the bridge alone.

07 Law

No charge until an Order in Council. Local boards do not get a vote.

The Land Transport Management (Time of Use Charging) Amendment Act 2025, No 64, was assented on 18 November 2025 and comes into force on 18 November 2026. It creates no Auckland scheme. No scheme until regulations are in place. Consultation on those closed 25 June 2026: vehicle-class ratios, and a proposed $70 infringement per unpaid trip. A conviction offence carries a fine up to $500. Regulations were not law on 8 October 2026.[1, 3]

Step	Section	What it requires
Initiation	65C	A local authority proposes an area. Scheme board: council, NZTA, independent chair. Local boards are not members.
Proposal	65D, 65ZD	Scheme text and impact assessment. Diversion, retail, hospital access and resident trips belong here.
Consultation	65E	Public consultation in the region before the Minister sees it. The 11 November to 11 December 2026 engagement is not this step.[29]
Decision	65G, 65H	The Minister may recommend an Order in Council, or not. This is the legal stop.
Change	65L, 65J	A boundary or price change is a variation. A cap exists only if written into the Order. No referendum power.
Money	65T, 65ZB	Costs first. Balance to land transport in the scheme region, under the investment agreement.
Exempt classes	65Q	Non-payment is limited. The Act provides for emergency vehicles, and for large passenger service vehicles exempted by Order in Council. Council's FAQ says mitigation is limited to daily caps, emergency exemptions and subsidised public transport.[1, 29]
Oversight	65N, 65U	The Minister may direct, appoint a commissioner, or recommend termination. The Secretary must review.

There is no statutory test that public transport must exist first. That line was stakeholder feedback in the 2025 options work, not a precondition.[5]

08 Other cities

Two charged before a metro. Auckland matches neither.

Oslo in 1990 and Bergen in 1986 were toll rings to fund roads. Durham in 2002 and Valletta in 2007 were real charges, on one street and a walled capital. They are not size peers.

City	Scale	Transit on day one	Verdict
Singapore, June 1975	About 2.3 million. CBD zone.	Buses. Metro from 7 November 1987.	Only large-city charge-first case. Cars in restricted hours fell from 42,790 to about 11,363. Ownership was already rationed.[14]
Gothenburg, January 2013	City about 530,000. Region about 1 million.	Tram and bus. No metro. Tunnel unbuilt.	Charged to fund an unbuilt project. Target about €90 million. Year-one gross about €72 million. A 2014 vote went about 57% against; a later paper by the same researchers reports 55%. The tax stayed.[19]

City	Scale	Transit on day one	Verdict
London, 17 February 2003	About 7.3 million. Zone about 21 km².	Underground in place. About 300 extra buses. Crossrail in 2022.	Cart first for the charged trip. Entering traffic fell about 18% in year one.
Milan, 16 January 2012	City about 1.3 million. Metro area about 3 million. Zone 8.2 km².	Three metro lines, from 1964, 1969 and 1990. About 65,000 extra places at launch.	Cart first, plus a same-month capacity add.[21]
Stockholm, trial 2006	City about 1.3 million. County about 2 million.	Metro since 1950.	Cart first. Do not cite as charge-before-transit.
New York, 5 January 2025	City about 8.3 million. Metro about 20 million.	Subway in place.	Cart first. A repair charge.

Auckland region is about 1.7 million. Near Stockholm's county, above Gothenburg, under Milan's metro area, about a quarter of Greater London. Stockholm and Milan charged a dense core that already had a metro. Auckland is a low-density isthmus. Most motorway trips do not end in the core. A city-centre charge around 2030 is a thinner London. A motorway charge is a larger Gothenburg, without the project the charge was invented to pay for.

09 The fit

Option A first, rewritten to the rules that survived.

Begin with the city centre cordon, Option A. Option B only if hospital access, the Gillies Avenue and SH16 diversion issues can be resolved. Peak only. Daily cap at two crossings. Feeder buses to CRL stations named in the investment agreement before the first charge. Parking zones on Newton, Eden Terrace and Grafton before the cameras. A two-year review under section 65U. Core motorway charging, Option C, is a later and separately consulted change, and only once named, funded and operating rapid transit alternatives are in place.

Rule	Where it was proved	Auckland application
Start where the alternative exists	Congestion Question. London and Milan charged a core that already had a metro.	Option A only. CRL is open. It is not a metro. It is enough for a CBD trip, not a motorway through-trip.[25]
Peak only	Stockholm: no nights, Saturdays, Sundays or holidays. The trial capped a vehicle at SEK 60 a day; the current peak-season maximum is SEK 135.[26]	Morning entry, afternoon exit, as the engagement options are drawn. Do not fill the midday. A charge then is a tax, not a congestion tool.[29]
Cap, do not exempt the fleet	Stockholm's trial exempted nearly 30% of passages. London charges once.	Cap at two crossings or one daily amount. Do not exempt work vehicles.[5]
Service in the same month	London added about 300 buses. Milan added about 65,000 places.	Name the feeder increase in the section 65ZB agreement. Option A cannot fund a rapid-transit line.[21, 29]
Close park-and-walk first	London enforced parking outside the extension.	Bylaw zones on the boundary before the cameras, or do not switch them on.[13]
Trial, then a gate, not a fake referendum	Stockholm ran January–July 2006. Support moved from about a third to about two-thirds after people had used it. The Act has no referendum.	Use s 65U. Publish a kill-or-continue test at two years: peak speed, diversion counts on the boundary streets, net revenue, and bus punctuality. Extension onto motorways is a new s 65L variation, not a phase buried in the first Order.[1]
Price the queue, not the surplus	Gothenburg priced for €90 million, missed, and inside prices fell.	Keep the opening charge at the lower end of the range Council is testing. A rise is a section 65L variation after the review.[19, 29]

What does not fit. Singapore is the only large city that charged before a metro, and it did so on a car-ownership quota Auckland does not have. Copying the charge without the quota is the misuse. The fringe cordon is London's Western Extension in advance: it takes in the hospital, costs more, still returns modest net revenue, and London later removed its own extension.

10 What a submission can force

These asks survive the statute. A referendum cap does not.

- Split the options. A cordon crossing and a motorway crossing are different instruments, and the illustrative $3.50 and $7 are not set prices.
- On Option C only, ask that the funded alternative have a start date before go-live. Political condition. Not in section 65B. Say so.

- Fix the boundary in the Order. Any extension is a section 65L variation with fresh consultation.
- Section 65ZD must cover Dominion Road, Mt Eden Road, Manukau Road, centre retail, hospital access, and residents inside any cordon. Section 65ZB must fund the calming before go-live.
- Privacy: section 65ZL limits use of information collected for charging to charging and enforcement, subject to Privacy Act disclosure grounds. The Act sets no retention period. Ask for one, and for no secondary use, in the proposal.
- Do not promise a public vote to raise the cap. Parliament did not create one.

November's engagement can still say "none of these." It has no statutory weight. The weight is the governing-body decision to initiate, the scheme board's section 65E consultation, and the Minister under section 65G.

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EVIDENCE

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Checked 15 November 2026.

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34. Related answer on thecitybuilder.com: Is Auckland introducing congestion charging? https://thecitybuilder.com/answers/time-of-use-charging
35. Published version: Time of use charging in Auckland: the record, thecitybuilder.com. https://thecitybuilder.com/policy/congestion-charging

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