



Case Study: London

In the 1960s the UK government pursued information on managing increasing congestion in London. In 1964 the Smeed Report, a feasibility study of area-wide congestion pricing, concluded congestion pricing would improve traffic conditions. Additional studies proposed congestion pricing throughout the 1970s - 1980s, yet Londoners did not find the idea publicly and politically acceptable at the time. However as public transit performance declined in the 1990s, another study in 1995 encouraging congestion pricing appealed to the city. In 1999 UK legislation enabled congestion pricing introduction and Mayor Ken Livingstone led the initiative for central London's pricing structure. Before congestion pricing was implemented 90% of London residents supported the program because of traffic conditions, travel times, and air pollution.¹

Since 2003, drivers traveling in an 8.5 square mile area of central London have been assessed a flat daily fee when driving within the designated zone on weekdays. Prior to adoption, funding for public transport was unreliable and congestion levels in central London were extremely high. Between 2002 and 2014 Transport for London data shows that car traffic entering central London fell by 39%. In 2017, the London Assembly Transport Committee conducted a survey of over 1,000 people to determine public opinion on traffic congestion and the congestion pricing program in London. The survey indicated most Londoners continue to support congestion pricing, but voice concerns on the daily price. The London Assembly found that 48% of their survey respondents supported the pricing program, but 54% of respondents said the price was too high.²



London Congestion Pricing Zone (Source: Transport for London)

What is Congestion Pricing?

Congestion pricing involves charging a fee to drive downtown during busy hours. It is one of the most effective tools we can use to get traffic moving, increase street safety, clean the air, and make our transportation system more equitable.

How To Get Involved

Please help guide us as we seek to make congestion pricing a tool to advance equity in San Francisco.

Contact Us

San Francisco County Transportation Authority
1455 Market Street, 22nd Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103

Project Manager:

Colin Dentel-Post, Senior Planner

Email the project team at

congestion-pricing@sfcta.org

Sign up for email updates or get more information at **sfcta.org/downtown**

CITATIONS

- 1 Tri-State Transportation Campaign – Road Pricing in London, Stockholm, and Singapore – January 2018
- 2 London Assembly – London Stalling: Reducing traffic congestion in London – January 2017
- 3 Transport for London Congestion Charge Discounts and Exemptions <https://tfl.gov.uk/modes/driving/congestion-charge/discounts-and-exemptions?intcmp=2133>
- 4 Ibid
- 5 The Conversation – London congestion charge: what worked, what didn't, what next, April 2019 <https://theconversation.com/london-congestion-charge-what-worked-what-didnt-what-next-92478>
- 6 Ibid



London's Congestion Pricing Program

Population:

7.3M 8.7M ↑ 19%
2003 2020 % change

Program Launch:

2003

Traffic:

↓ 30%

Greenhouse Gas Emissions:

↓ 12%

Annual Net Revenues:

£137M
(USD \$182.1 million)

Transit Ridership:

↑ 38%

Pricing:

£11.50
(USD \$15.05)

Flat fee to drive within
designated zone

Pricing Hours:

Monday - Friday
7am to 6pm

no charge between
Dec. 25 - Jan. 1

Discounts:

These require online registration with the Transport for London website and supporting documents.³

- Residential discount – a 90% discount on the congestion price
- Blue badge holders (disabled placard) – 100% discount
- Vehicles with 9+ seats – 100% discount
- Clean vehicle discount – 100% discount for vehicles meeting Euro standards
- Motor tricycles – 100% discount if the tricycle is one meter or less wide and 2 meters or less long.
- Roadside recovery vehicles – 100% discount

Key Findings

Most recently, the Mayor of London and London Assembly have reformed the congestion pricing structure to reflect modern concerns. The rise of ride-hailing vehicles has increased congestion in cities again. London's congestion pricing structure recently changed from exempting both taxis and ride-hailing vehicles to only exempting taxis. Trips by taxi and ride-hailing vehicles as the main mode of journeys increased by 9.8% between 2015 and 2016 alone – and 29.2% since 2000.⁵ Today, more than 18,000 different ride-hailing vehicles enter the congestion pricing zone each day, with peaks on Friday and Saturday nights.⁶ Going forward, the congestion price on ride-hailing vehicles will help reduce congestion issues within the designated zone.

What other cities can learn from London

Other cities should learn from London's efforts to periodically evaluate its congestion pricing. Reoccurring analysis to assess traffic patterns, greenhouse gas emissions, transit ridership, and annual net revenues help cities track the effectiveness of their programs and identify areas for adjustment and/or improvement.

Exemptions – no price:

These do not require registration with Transport for London if the vehicle is recorded at the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency.⁴

- Two-wheeled motorcycles, sidecars, and mopeds
- Emergency service vehicles
- Vehicles used by disabled people that are exempt from the Agency's vehicle tax and have a 'disabled' taxation class.
- Taxis