

Dear Mayor and Council,

Subject: Implementing Congestion Traffic Pricing in Whistler

New York just did it. How about our little hamlet? I propose the implementation of congestion traffic pricing in Whistler while we continue to quietly lobby for a train from the city to Lillooet. As a resident and an advocate for sustainable development in our community, this concept would present an opportunity to address some of the pressing challenges we face regarding traffic management, environmental sustainability, and overall quality of life.

Whistler's popularity as a world-class resort destination has led to significant increases in vehicle traffic, particularly during peak times of travel. While this is a testament to the town's success, it has also resulted in congestion that negatively impacts residents, visitors, first responders and the environment. Implementing congestion pricing could provide several key benefits:

1. **Reducing Traffic Congestion:** By further encouraging visitors and residents to consider alternative transportation options or travel during off-peak hours, congestion pricing can help alleviate the gridlock that occurs during busy periods such as the great exodus after the mountain closes. This would improve the flow of traffic, reduce travel times, and enhance the overall experience of navigating Whistler for all of us.
2. **Promoting Sustainability:** Congestion pricing can serve as a powerful tool to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution by discouraging unnecessary vehicle use. Fewer cars on the road mean cleaner air, contributing to Whistler's commitment to environmental stewardship and preserving the natural beauty that attracts people to our town. The cost of cars idling both environmentally and economically is staggering.
3. **Encouraging Alternative Transportation:** Revenue generated from congestion pricing could be reinvested in enhancing public transportation, cycling infrastructure, and the valley trail expansions. This would provide residents and visitors with convenient, sustainable, and affordable alternatives to driving, further reducing our community's reliance on cars.
4. **Funding Infrastructure Improvements:** The funds raised through this program could support critical infrastructure projects, such as road maintenance, public transit expansions, and environmentally friendly initiatives that benefit the entire community.

I understand that implementing congestion pricing may raise concerns, particularly regarding equity and accessibility. To address these, I encourage Mayor and Council to design a system that includes:

- Free transit options for residents, low-income individuals, and workers who rely on vehicles for their livelihoods.
- Robust communication and education campaigns to inform the community about the program's goals and benefits.
- Flexible pricing models that reflect varying traffic patterns and prioritize fairness.

I also understand that the RMOW may be limited by its Charter as mandated by Victoria. So, what. Lobby and change it. By taking a proactive approach to managing traffic and environmental impact, Whistler has an opportunity to lead by example, demonstrating how small communities can implement innovative solutions to global challenges.

Thank you for considering this important initiative.

Sincerely,

Patrick Smyth

Address on file

Whistler BC. "Exceeding Nature"