

TOLLING FAQs

In 2015 two new electronic toll points will be operational on key routes in Tauranga - the Tauranga Eastern Link (TEL) and Route K.

These toll points will be 'single gantry, multi-lane free flow systems', the first of their kind in New Zealand.

How does the electronic tolling system work?

The system uses cameras and sensors with optical character recognition technology to capture an image of a vehicle's registration plate and assign the correct toll tariff, based on the size of the vehicle.

The electronic tolling system means motorists will not need to stop to pay the toll.

Motorists have been using the electronic toll system on the Northern Gateway Toll Road (NGTR), north of Auckland, since 2009, however technology has moved on since the dual-gantry on the NGTR was installed. The gantries in Tauranga are single gantries which span all of the lanes and have an exterior cladding.

All of the technical elements are housed inside the gantry cladding and in the technical shelter on the roadside. This results in a sleeker and more sophisticated design and it also means there is less potential for driver distraction when any maintenance work is carried out.

How much will the toll tariffs be?

Light vehicles using the TEL will pay \$2 and heavy vehicles \$5. The Route K toll tariff will be \$1.80 for light vehicles and \$4.80 for heavy vehicles after July 2015.

The prices reflect the different benefits of the individual roads for motorists and the underlying costs of constructing the roads.

How do I pay?

Payment of the toll tariff will be able to be made through a number of channels;

- Customers will be able to set up an account that will cover travel on all three roads, choosing to either automatically or manually top the account up when it gets to a low threshold.
- Commercial customers will be able to set up an account that will cover travel on all three roads where they are invoiced at the end of each month.
- Customers who would like to pay as they go will be able to pay online, via the 0800 number or at selected service stations.
- People will have five days to pay after travelling on a toll road, but if payment is not received an additional administration fee will be charged.
- E-tags will not be needed under this system as all activity is tracked through the vehicle's registration plate.

What is the benefit of tolling?

Tolling allows construction of roads to be bought forward. In the case of the TEL it meant construction was able to begin approximately 10 years earlier.

ROUTE K:

What is Route K?

Route K is a toll road through the Kopurererua Valley that creates a strategic link between State Highway 29 and the city. It removes around 5,000 vehicle trips a day from Cameron Road and Cambridge Road. This includes 1,000 heavy truck movements. The majority of these heavy truck trips are destined for the Port of Tauranga and Route K has allowed them to access the Port, and the Port to grow, without negatively affecting Tauranga's community and city centre. It is currently owned by Tauranga City Council but it will become a state highway in July this year and will be managed by the Transport Agency.

What was the construction cost?

The cost to construct Route K to Tauranga City Council was \$45.7m. This was to be fully repaid through a user pays system. On opening it was expected that the debt would be fully repaid by 2038.

What is the debt now?

The current debt is \$62 million, with expected debt on handover to be \$63.5 million. That debt was expected to peak at \$73 million in 2022.

How much will the toll tariff be?

After the Transport Agency takes over managing Route K in July 2015, the toll tariff will be \$1.80 for light vehicles and \$4.80 for heavy vehicles.

Why is Route K changing to a state highway?

Route K provides a strategic connection between SH29 and the Port of Tauranga, providing access to the majority of state highway traffic accessing the Port from the south and west. Currently Route K is the only remaining section of the local roading network which functions as a highway road that the Transport Agency does not control and operate.

It has been agreed that the Transport Agency will take over the ownership of the route and install an electronic toll collection system at no cost to Tauranga City Council mid-2015.

How will this affect my rates?

Rates will not be affected by changing Route K to a state highway. Route K is entirely user pays and since opening in 2003 it has never imposed costs on ratepayers and there are no plans to impose them in the future to repay the current debt.

I'm a Tauranga City Council account holder – how do I set up a new toll account?

In May you will be given details to contact the NZ Transport Agency and they will assist you with setting up your new account. You will be able to set up a new account online from mid-2015.

Why can't my details simply be transferred over from one organisation to another?

TCC and the Transport Agency take privacy of people's details very seriously. This means that one organisation cannot share the information with another. This does add complexity to the process but it is unavoidable.

Will toll tariffs increase?

Future tariffs and pricing structures will be governed by the Order in Council, and likely to increase at rate of inflation (CPI) from the time the road is converted to an electronic collection system.

TAURANGA EASTERN LINK:

What is the Tauranga Eastern Link Toll Road?

A 21km tolled motorway linking Tauranga City Centre, the Port and Mount Maunganui to State Highways 29 and 36 to the south west. It is an extension of Takitimu Drive (State Highway 2).

Will the whole road be tolled?

No, the section from Te Maunga to Domain Road will be an upgrade of the existing two-lane road to a four-lane highway and will not be tolled. The new section from Domain Road interchange to Paengaroa roundabout will be tolled.

What does the toll pay for?

The toll will help pay for the new section of the Tauranga Eastern Link that starts at Domain Road, Papamoa and finishes at Paengaroa.

How much will the toll tariff be?

The toll tariff will be \$2.00 for light vehicles and \$5.00 for heavy vehicles.

Will the toll increase over time?

Future tariffs and pricing structures will be governed by the Order in Council, and likely to increase at rate of inflation (CPI) using a base date of 2008 dollars.

How long will the road be tolled?

The toll needs to raise enough money to repay the debt and interest charges. As soon as these are repaid, the tolls will be removed. This is anticipated to be a maximum of 35 years after opening mid 2015.

How will the toll be collected?

The toll will be collected through an electronic tolling system. The system uses cameras and sensors with optical character recognition technology to capture an image of a vehicle's registration plate and assign the correct toll tariff, based on the size of the vehicle. Internationally, the trend of toll roads is to move to free-flow electronic collection. View the 3D tolling animation and see how free flow tolling works.

Where is the toll gantry?

The toll collection point will be between the Papamoa East interchange and the future Rangiora Business Park.

Will there be toll booths for us to stop and pay tolls?

No. The Tauranga Eastern Link will use a free-flow tolling system so road users will be able to travel the 23km journey without having to stop or slow down to pay a toll. A free-flow electronic toll system:

- Provides the easiest, most convenient and greatest time savings for customers and is consistent with the convenience and time saving benefits that the road itself provides.
- There are environmental and safety benefits of free-flow traffic compared with requiring traffic to stop to pay at toll at a booth.
- Internationally, the trend is to move to free-flow electronic collection and centralised collection processes.
- A centrally managed electronic collection system allows the greatest opportunity for capital investment and fixed operation costs to be spread over more projects.

Payment of the toll tariff will be able to be made through a number of channels; online, by account and via a cash payment option.

What if I don't want to pay a toll?

A free alternative route is available for those road users who do not wish to pay a toll. The existing state highway route through Te Puke would be the non-tolled free alternative.