THE FUTURE OF TRANSPORT IN AOTEAROA NZ:
WHO SHOULD PAY FOR WHAT?

Report on deliberative minipublics

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June 2023
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Acknowledgements

Deliberative processes succeed only through the input of many different voices, perspectives and expertise. Carla Hemmes from the Ministry of Transport was central to the planning and delivery of this project, as were Koi Tū communications and design experts Jill Rolston and Jillian Hildreth. We are grateful to Kyle Redman of newDemocracy Foundation for assistance with sortition and Campbell Guy from Auckland Council for providing randomised postal addresses for recruitment. We also thank subject matter experts Simon Kingham, Timothy Welch, Michael Roth and José Gonzalez who provided in-person answers to participant questions at the workshops, and to deliberation experts Simon Wright and John Pennington of Trust Democracy, for support throughout the process from the beginning of phase 1. The workshops could not have succeeded without our team of wonderful graduate student assistants – Julia Vajda de Albuquerque, Sophia Pi, Alex King, Tanya Smith, Lily Roling, Puspa Barua and Hannah McKenzie.
Executive summary

The transport system in New Zealand faces a number of significant challenges. The pressures of climate change, population increases, and changes to the way we live and work mean that reducing emissions, addressing congestion, and finding more sustainable and affordable transport options has never been more critical. This means we need to consider changes to transport system investment – what we pay for and how we pay for it – to ensure it meets our needs well into the future.

The existing funding model for transport infrastructure and services may not be sufficient for the investment required to implement change, or to keep pace with increasing costs of maintaining system resilience. In this context, alternative funding mechanisms and policy approaches must be explored. Choices on investment and revenue gathering mechanisms affect all New Zealanders, so it is critical to ensure that changes to the system align with public preferences and are supported by the public.

Te Mānatu Waka Ministry of Transport (MoT) has sought to understand the views of stakeholders and the public to help develop an acceptable funding model that supports the evolving needs of the transport system. This has involved testing some innovative approaches to inclusive public engagement. This report presents an analysis of a set of deliberative workshops that brought together broadly representative groups (minipublics) to discuss the complex decisions ahead.

The project asked the broad question “who should pay for what?” to support the future transport system. The aim was to understand what people want from the future transport system, and importantly, what they think is a fair way to achieve the desired outcome.

The ‘deliberative’ approach

The public is not always well-informed about complex policy areas such as transport planning and funding, even though some may hold strong opinions. To help ensure sound decision-making in this context, it is important to allow people to move from raw opinion to more reasoned judgement. The approaches used in this project aim to do this by providing participants with balanced and relevant information about the issues at hand and facilitating a respectful exchange of ideas as they worked through the challenges, benefits and trade-offs associated with various options.

The first phase of the project was an interactive wiki-survey using the Pol.is software tool. The process and results are described in the phase 1 report¹ and on the project website.² The opinions expressed in the phase 1 Pol.is exercise served to help frame the discussions in the deliberative workshops (minipublics) of phase 2. These workshops took place in four locations across New Zealand, involving randomly selected groups of about 30 participants that reflected the demographic makeup of each location. Each group met for a half-day Saturday session to deliberate on the issues, listen to each other’s perspectives and ask questions of experts.

² https://informedfutures.org/transport-system/
The recruitment process aimed at forming a heterogenous group that reflected the diverse demographics of the wider community. Participants were recruited through invitation letters sent to a total of 15,000 randomised postal addresses across the four workshop catchment areas. This was supplemented by social media advertising (community Facebook pages, LinkedIn and Twitter posts) and email outreach to stakeholder groups.

The overwhelming majority (>70%) of participants across all groups had not previously engaged in consultations. Their reasons for coming to the workshop varied from interest in the process, to the timing on a Saturday, and the importance of the transport issue. In each workshop, the deliberative process started with a discussion of values – asking ‘what matters most’ to the participants, in order to begin the process of finding common ground.

To help the groups come to grips with the issue, a brief overview was provided both in booklet form and in a set of simple presentation slides. This material covered the problem to be addressed (i.e. the pressures and need for change in how the transport system is funded), the current system for transport funding, data on NZ travel habits, and possible perspectives on funding and ‘fairness’.

The groups quickly moved from expressing individual perspectives to discussing what the transport system should focus on, carefully considering areas of agreement or disagreement.

The key messages for what the transport system should focus on were:

- **Public transport (PT).** Whether or not participants used PT themselves, they viewed it as a public good, and an obvious target of investment for the future. Overall, there was a common expectation that PT options should be subsidised by the government/local authority because of the way PT offsets environmental and congestion effects.
- **Urban planning and transit-oriented development.** Interest in the concept of urban planning as a key component of the transport system grew throughout the discussions.
- **Cycling and walking.** Once the groups understood the wider benefits of active transport (e.g. on congestion, health, emissions), and what is currently holding people back from using it as a transport mode, there was a significant interest in how to encourage more use.
- **Roads.** There was general support for measures that would assist in the shift away from a dependance on cars and a focus on roading. Over the course of discussions, attitudes shifted towards limiting the building of new roads in favour of an upkeep of the current road network, with the caveat that this should not disadvantage rural areas.
- **Rail.** There was common interest in rail as an option both for freight and rapid transit, and well as inter-city or inter-regional travel. It was recognised that this would need to be a central government investment and therefore coming largely from general taxes with some local share contribution.
- **Freight.** Participants recognised the importance of looking at alternatives to freight on roads, particularly in urban areas. Most were in favour of charging heavy trucks more for the damage that they cause on roads.
Discussion on funding was framed around three hypothetical perspectives to elicit views on acceptability and fairness. The perspectives were:

- User pays
- Pricing ‘external’ costs of transport choices
- Distribution of funding to achieve equity

Support was evident for all three perspectives, and views on which one should dominate were not extreme. In all workshops, there was least agreement with a simple ‘user pays’ perspective, and overall, most agreement with distribution of funding to achieve equity. Even when supporting a user-pays system, there was increasing acknowledgment that equity should be an important consideration in the system’s design.

Participants agreed that progressive taxes (i.e. income tax) were fairer than a user-pays system, which disadvantages people on lower incomes. There was some consensus around streamlining taxes and levies, as many felt that they were essentially being ‘taxed’ multiple times. This did not, however, negate support for pricing externalities, which was a more popular option than general taxation or targeted rates.

When discussing particular revenue tools and mechanisms, there was strong support for pricing the external costs of transport choices, in the form of ‘Road User Charges based on impacts,’ or congestion charging. There was also support for developer contributions and ‘value capture,’ though this was less well understood. There was no evidence of a particular mechanism being deeply unpopular.

People generally understood the use of incentives and disincentives, with many willing to pay more so that they could move around more freely/quickly. They could see the benefit of having the true costs of transport choices being transparent, though many struggled with how that could be done. Overall, most came to an understanding that if pricing tools could be administered in a transparent way, they would likely be effective and accepted.

**Reflections on the process**

The process was successful in enabling deliberation, and participants expressed appreciation for the opportunity. Bringing a range of ‘typical’ public perspectives together, the pilot workshops provided insights into how people approach and deliberate on the topic, as well as the type of information and framing that is most useful to them. This may help to guide a wider process by understanding how people work through the trade-offs and how exposure to different viewpoints can lead to finding common ground and viable solutions.

The questions raised in the workshops pointed to areas where people would benefit from more specific information and data that was not readily available to the facilitation team – for example, how ‘value-capture’ and ‘external cost’ calculations are made, and relative amounts spent on different transport options in different areas. Data on changing trends and impacts on households of different pricing mechanisms would be beneficial.
1. Introduction

The transport system in New Zealand is under pressure. As the population continues to increase (particularly in urban areas) and in the face of climate change, congestion and accessibility issues, there is a growing demand for provision of more – and different – transport infrastructure and services. The costs of maintaining the system’s resilience are increasing, while at the same time, the public revenues available for transport spending are becoming more uncertain. The same policies that aim to make the system more sustainable and resilient simultaneously make the current funding model less so.

Revenue sources for the National Land Transport Fund (NLTTF) won’t continue to grow in line with the level of investment needed as New Zealand moves to a zero-emission transport system. If vehicles travel comparatively fewer kilometres but spending goes up, large increases are needed to the amount collected from the remaining trips. Under current settings revenue for the NLTF will not continue to cover new investments beyond core road maintenance, operations and renewals, and current public transport operations.

And yet, there is much to do to improve the transport system so that it is fit for the future. Changes to the way we need and want to travel means we are faced with a complicated set of options that require difficult investment choices and trade-offs. In a time when the cost of living has reached crisis point for many, there is a need to improve access to low-cost transport alternatives while continuing to provide transport infrastructure that supports our changing social, cultural, environmental and economic circumstances, with a view to long-term resilience.

It is becoming increasingly clear that the current mix of funding, financing and revenue generation needs to change to meet the costs of large new infrastructure projects with wider intergenerational benefits. It is important to know how the public thinks these costs and benefits should be distributed, and what a “fair” funding system might look like.

In preparation for full consultation on the Future of the Transport Revenue System, Te Mānatu Waka Ministry of Transport (MoT) has taken some innovative steps to try to understand the different views of stakeholders and the public on these questions. They engaged Koi Tū: the Centre for Informed Futures at that University of Auckland to trial some state-of-the-art tools and techniques to support public consultation on the complex decisions ahead.

The project asked the broad question “who should pay for what?” to support the future transport system. This question reflects the fact that what people think is fair in terms of revenue generation depends on what they want the revenue to pay for, and what the future system will look like. This means asking about what we should invest in and why, what needs to change, and what funding mechanisms should support that. These are complex questions that require thoughtful consideration by the public to support government decision-making.

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2. Project outline

This project was initiated by MoT as part of a long-term programme of work to engage with communities, industries, and other stakeholders about the future of the revenue system. The critical issue is how to ensure that the system for generating land transport revenue is sufficient to sustain the needs of New Zealanders into the future, and that both the mechanisms to collect revenue and the outcomes it produces are accepted by the public as fair and effective. This includes understanding what people think about pricing tools to encourage sustainable travel behaviours and to discourage harmful travel modes.

Funding of the transport system is a complex policy area. Changes will be needed so that the system can meet future needs, and the decisions to be made will affect all New Zealanders in some way. Yet this is an area about which the public is generally not well informed, even though some may hold strong opinions. It is important to understand public preferences, so that the changes that are made are effectual and supported.

Indeed, engaging with the public and key stakeholders is an important stage in the policy development process. Typical consultations based on seeking responses to public discussion documents fail to reach a broad swath of the general public, even though policy changes will likely affect them. Polls and surveys are common tools to try to understand public sentiment but tend to represent raw opinions held before people work through an issue. These top-of-mind views can be unstable and sometimes misleading. To enhance public input into decision-making, it is important to allow the public to move from raw opinion to more considered judgement.

2.1. Phase 1: Polis online conversation

To better understand what an informed public would think about the question “who should pay for what?” this project began with an interactive online dialogue using the digital technology platform Pol.is. The intent of this phase was to identify areas of consensus and disagreement among different groups of transport system stakeholders.

Pol.is is an online engagement tool that enables large groups of people to take part in a dynamic and interactive process of idea generation, reflection, reason-giving, and feedback via the voting responses of others. The process is transparent, allowing participants to identify consensus groups and ideas as they form and change. Participants can collaborate and build upon each other’s answers in a collective and iterative process, allowing the development of a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the issues being explored. Unlike a typical survey, it is open to the emergence of unanticipated information.

The participants in the Pol.is conversation were mostly drawn from transportation stakeholder groups, and thus are unlikely to be representative of the New Zealand population as a whole. The participants were essentially ‘self-selected’ and comfortable engaging on transport issues via a digital platform. The opinions generated will therefore reflect a particular group of people.
The conversation generated three distinct opinion groups, with some overlapping areas of consensus. The details can be found on the project website and in the phase 1 report.

2.2. Phase 2: Deliberative workshops (minipublics)

The Pol.is exercise helped to frame the background material and discussion questions for a series of in-person workshops to pilot the deliberative engagement approach on this issue. The workshops involved randomised samples of the population, gathered through a two-step sortition process, or ‘civic lottery.’ Because the deliberating groups are descriptively representative of the wider public, they are often referred to as ‘minipublics.’

Each group met for a half-day Saturday session to deliberate on the issues, listen to each other’s perspectives and ask questions of experts. The workshops took place at four locations across New Zealand – North and South Auckland, Hamilton, and Christchurch during February and March 2023.

This report provides a descriptive analysis of the deliberative workshops.

3. The deliberative approach

The approach we have taken is based on the idea that the quality of decision-making can be improved when citizens have the opportunity to consider multiple perspectives and to deliberate and exchange ideas in a constructive and informed manner. Deliberative engagement differs from other forms of consultation in that it allows those involved to get closer to the issue at hand, through informed discussions involving diverse perspectives and lived experiences, and access to data and evidence. They attempt to address the usual limitations of insufficient information and time to reason through arguments.

Deliberative workshops (minipublics) are facilitated group discussions that provide an opportunity for social learning in microcosm. This is because they involve people who are descriptively representative of the community or population, interacting in a way that often leads to new understandings and insight among the group. Participants encounter a wide range of views, are prompted to explore their own, and are asked to consider why others have different views. This encourages participants to learn from each other, to form reasoned opinions, evaluate positions and reach informed decisions.

Bringing a range of ‘typical’ public perspectives together enables inferences to be made about how the wider population would think about, and potentially resolve the issue, given the chance to work together to find common ground. The workshops were intended as a pilot to understand how people might approach and deliberate on the transport funding issue, and what kind of information and framing was most useful. This may offer insight into how best to lead such learning processes on a larger scale.

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4 https://informedfutures.org/transport-system/
4. The workshop process

4.1. Recruitment and sortition

The recruitment process aimed at forming a heterogenous group in terms of social background, interests and knowledge, that reflected the diverse demographics of the wider community.

Registration for the workshops was open to members of the public, advertised via community Facebook pages, LinkedIn and Twitter posts and through invitation letters sent to a total of 15,000 randomised postal addresses across the four workshop catchment areas. Additional outreach occurred through contacting administrators of local government ‘peoples’ panels’ and via email to stakeholder groups, including the Automobile Association’s ‘AA Member Voices Panel.’ Participants were offered a $100 Prezzy card as a token of appreciation for giving up their time to the process.

We received a total of 759 expressions of interest from these methods. Thirty participants were selected for each workshop from the registration pools via a sortition algorithm that randomly assembled demographically representative groups based on data from the 2018 NZ Census. The final numbers of participants were between 24 and 26 people per minipublic.

The six demographic categories used for sortition were: gender, age, ethnicity, education, main means of travel and personal income. These categories were chosen so that the workshops included a range of transport users of differing ages, incomes, cultural and educational backgrounds who would have varying needs, options and preferences when it comes to transportation and its funding mechanisms.

Appendix 1 shows the demographic stratification tables used for sortition. The percentages are based on 2018 census data for the Auckland region, Hamilton City and Christchurch City.

4.2. Background materials

To help the groups come to grips with the issue, a brief overview was provided both in booklet form and in a set of simple presentation slides.

An illustrated 10-page plain-language booklet was prepared that included a short description of:

- The problem to be addressed – that is, the pressures and need for change in how the transport system is funded.
- Questions on values and principles, including outcomes expected from the Transport Outcomes Framework (TOF) as published in the 2021 Government Policy Statement on Land Transport.
- How the land transport system is currently funded

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6 Sortition was done using newDemocracy Foundation’s Stratified Random Selection Tool 
Data on NZ travel habits

Possible perspectives on funding
  - User pays
  - Pricing ‘external’ costs of transport choices
  - Distribution of funding to achieve equity

The participants received the booklet upon arrival at the workshop, but attention was not drawn there until the 2nd session when the issue was discussed in-depth and there was an opportunity for participants to ask questions of experts.

The last three pages of the booklet were presented in workbook format around the three perspectives, including the underlying principle, the potential funding mechanisms, and the considerations and trade-offs, followed by questions for discussion (Who benefits? Who pays? Who bears costs?) and space for note taking. Table 1 in section 5.3 outlines the three perspectives.

4.3. Facilitating the conversation

Warming up for deliberation

As a warm-up to the deliberation, participants were asked about their prior experience with community consultations.

- Q1: Do you usually take part in community consultations?

The overwhelming majority (>70%) of participants across all groups had not previously engaged in consultations, with about half of that group indicating “they had never been asked before.” They discussed their reasons for coming to the workshop as being interested in the process, the timing on a Saturday, and the importance of the transport issue. Many had specific issues they wished to discuss.

They were asked to move around the room to stand by posters representing different transport modes answering the questions:

- Q2: How did you get here?
- Q3: How do you normally get to work/education/activities?

The physical movement of people in the room served not only as an icebreaker but as a visualisation of the high use of private vehicles amongst the group. As expected, their answers aligned well with NZ census data on transport mode use.

Next the participants were briefed on the ground rules of deliberation, emphasizing that it is not a matter of ‘winning’ as in a debate. They were encouraged to listen to all perspectives and provide reasoning for their own, in ways that others might understand (even if they don’t agree). Everyone was encouraged to participate and share their own experiences and viewpoints.

Through the facilitation the participants were encouraged to bring hidden assumptions to the surface. The idea was to seek out common ground rather than highlight differences.
Conversation was encouraged in small mixed groups. Participants answered survey questions in real-time on the interactive presentation tool Mentimeter and placed comments on post-it notes or in writing on question sheets on the tables. This was followed by whole group discussion in the room.

**Getting into the issues**

Typical deliberations start with values – asking ‘what matters most’ to the participants, in order to begin the process of finding common ground. In this regard, we asked what each person and the group valued in the transport system, followed by a discussion of desired outcomes (which can be seen as values) expressed in the TOF.

This session focused on personal views and experiences that the participants brought to the room, before learning more about the issue.

- Q4: What are our values?

Participants were supportive of the TOF outcomes (inclusive access, healthy and safe people, environmental sustainability, economic prosperity, and resilience and security), rating all of them as important but consistently ranking economic prosperity as the lowest priority. At least one participant pointed out the lack of explicit mention of intergenerational equity in the TOF, which was a theme that developed throughout all of the workshops. When considering fairness, most participants were concerned with burdens left to future generations.

Thinking about the current state of the land transport system, they were asked:

- Q5: What comes to mind when you are asked about transportation in New Zealand?

Top of mind thoughts on the transport system generated word clouds dominated by words such as “inconvenient”; “delays”, “roading” “unreliable”; “hectic”; “inefficient”; “expensive”, “underfunded”, “outdated”, etc. (see below).
Deepening the conversation around participants’ own perceptions of the system, they were asked to rate how easy it was for them to get around and whether they would prefer to change their transport modes if they could.

To draw on their experiences they discussed the following:

- **Q6**: How easy is it to get to work/education/activities?
  
  The majority of participants answered that it was at least “somewhat easy” (if not “very easy”) to get where they needed to go in their day-to-day activities.

- **Q7**: Would you change the way you get to work/school activities if you could?
  
  This was discussed in small groups at the tables, with perspectives shared in the room. For most groups, an even larger majority indicated that they would or might change their transport modes if they could. This varied across the groups, with Christchurch participants being least likely to change their transport modes, whereas 87% of Auckland’s North Shore participants would consider changing modes.

- **Q8**: What would need to change for you to use a different form of transportation?
  
  This generated a range of views but common themes were:
  - Public transport needs to be more reliable, efficient, and easier to use (including apps for route finding and fare top-up)
  - Reduced traffic congestion.
  - Walkable city layout/ 20-minute city design/ transit-oriented development
  - Making cars a more expensive option than public transport
  - More/improved bikeways and safety

Figure. 1. Mentimeter word cloud (Auckland North workshop) – What comes to mind when you think about transport in NZ?
What would need to change for you to use a different form of transportation?

“If we had options, a lot of us would shift modes” (North Auckland)

 “[We would need] incentives for having public transport as an option… the loss of time and cost of public transport [would need to] outweigh the choice to use a car.” (South Auckland)

“Like to use car less. - buses close to home - regular schedule.” (Hamilton)

“High speed & efficient [on-time] commuter travel - could be rail or something.” (Christchurch)

“Safer light rail, community around transport stations with homes, shops, cafes, supermarkets.” (Christchurch)

“Disability options are too limited - limited car parks at the park&ride.” (North Auckland)

Continuing the deliberation around what would need to change, they were asked about what they perceived as the most significant problems with the transport system.

- Q9: What are the biggest problems with the system now?
- Q10: Is there anything we’ve missed in our discussion so far?

The main issues identified in the discussion mirrored the things that the groups thought needed to change – that is, insufficient public transport and traffic congestion, followed by urban form not promoting non-automobile transport. Many people expressed the view that cycling was too dangerous with the number of cars on the road and the lack of cycling infrastructure.

Some additional issues came up around public transport safety, road safety and parking issues. Costs (including time) were also seen as problems that prevented shifting modes from private vehicles.

Perceived problems with the system – safety issues

“Biking feels unsafe - more bike lanes.” (Christchurch)

“Physical environment - bus stops - shelters - locations - behavioural - aggression - safety - security.” (Christchurch)

“Cars causing motorbike/cycle accidents.” “Causing crashes/near misses/running red lights/parking in bike lanes/parking on foot paths/berms/driving in bus lanes.” (North Auckland)

“Lack of road use education and policing.” (North Auckland)
Q11: What do you think we need to invest in?

The participants were asked to discuss, and then rank potential areas for investment. Overall, public transport was the top-ranking priority for investment, followed by rail links and services and then walking and cycling infrastructure. The rankings varied by workshop location; for example, the prioritisation of transit-oriented development was considerably higher in Christchurch compared with other locations. Lowest priorities were road improvements and shared vehicles. An explanation that emerged around the latter was that this was already part of a market solution and so it required less government or public investment.

The results of the Mentimeter ranking for each minipublic is shown in Figure 2. This same question was asked again later in the session, after further learning and deliberation (see Figure 5).

![Figure 2. Mentimeter rankings in response to the question “What do you think we should invest in?” from the four workshops. This was top-of-mind thoughts before deliberation.](image)

Learning and questioning

After the first phase of listening to and reflecting on each other’s personal perspectives and experiences, the group was presented with information and data on the issue. At this point the tables were mixed so that the participants were interacting with different people in their small groups. Participants were encouraged to consider relevant facts and data, and to draw on the insights of subject matter experts in addition to their co-participants’ perspectives in order to make informed judgements. Each session had at least one subject matter expert present to field questions.
A short presentation drew attention to the issues presented in the booklet, supplemented by discussion of car dependency in New Zealand, and the need for reduction in emissions, congestion, and accessibility and equity aspects. Information on how the system is currently funded was provided, including more detail about how the revenue from different sources was used. Participants asked questions of the experts and the facilitators, and discussed their own perspectives again both in the room and at their tables.

Three perspectives on transport funding were briefly explained, and participants were asked about their first impressions of each. The voting was on a sliding scale (from strongly disagree to strongly agree), worded as follows:

- Q12: How much do you agree with the following statements?
  - The (current) ‘User Pays’ method is still a good system
  - The transport system should price in ‘external’ costs of transport choices
  - Distribution of funds should be based on achieving equity

In general, attitudes towards these perspectives were not extreme, and support was evident for all of them. In all workshops, there was least agreement with the ‘user pays’ perspective, and overall, most agreement with distribution of funding to achieve equity. Figure 3 shows results of the Mentimeter polls in each workshop.

After collecting first impressions and thoughts, the three perspectives were explained in detail, with opportunity for questions (directed to experts and facilitators) while table groups
discussed each one amongst themselves and then shared views with the wider group. They were directed to their workbooks, which outlined the perspectives as follows:

Table 1 – Perspectives for discussion – as presented in participants’ workbooks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspective 1: User pays</th>
<th>Underlying principle:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“You get what you pay for and pay for what you get.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Potential funding mechanisms:
- Tolls, Road user charges (RUC), Fuel excise duty (FED), Motor Vehicle registration (MVR) paid by motorists and used for funding roads.

Considerations and trade-offs:
- Do user charges actually cover all costs - are we “paying for what we get”?
- How well does this serve non-drivers?
- Revenue raised from individuals and their vehicle usage does not reflect the diversity of road users, their experience, or their ability to pay.
- The spending of public resources on one mode or group should reflect their travel demands (noting that some demand is currently unmet).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspective 2: Pricing “external” costs of transport choices</th>
<th>Underlying principle:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pricing captures all costs, including the negative consequences that travel choices have on others (congestion, emissions/pollution, road damage, crash risk, health costs).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Potential funding mechanisms:
- Fuel excise duty (FED), emissions pricing, variable RUC based on weight, emissions, distance travelled, congestion charging. General taxation to fund infrastructure that improves people’s health.

Considerations and trade-offs:
- Pricing can lead drivers to choose different modes of travel, such as carpooling, public transport, and bicycling/walking, or to telecommute.
- Benefits people who live near public transport and can choose another mode but disadvantages those who cannot choose alternatives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspective 3: Equitable distribution of funding</th>
<th>Underlying principle:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inclusivity, access and affordability. Funding distribution ensures access to disadvantage and underserved areas/groups so that everyone can reach essential services and activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Potential funding mechanisms:
- Taxpayer and ratepayer funding, value capture, developer contributions.

Considerations and trade-offs:
- Considers costs relative to incomes - discounts and exemptions for lower-income users.
- Encourages accessible and affordable transport modes and affordable housing in high accessibility neighbourhoods.
- Increases costs for some areas receiving benefits of new transport development.

A range of views emerged on these perspectives, as shown in the boxes below.

Thoughts on Perspective 1 (User Pays):

“People who have to live further away for more affordable housing are disadvantaged.” (Christchurch)

“Polluter pays rather than individuals, make it at a corporate responsibility.” (Hamilton)

“Is user pays a philosophy? Ultimately the population in general benefits from any roading improvement.” (Christchurch)

“If only people who use buses pay for them then buses would struggle to run.” (Hamilton)

“Charge car drivers or the road users who are effecting environment more, to make public transport free.” (South Auckland)
"Expectation' to park private car on public roads is strong - but is reasonable for them as user to pay for this.” (South Auckland)

"The majority benefit - private vehicles because if everything is user pays there isn’t enough to fund public transport. Or. Nobody benefits because only roads are funded & they become more congested. ” (South Auckland)

“People who have worked hard & have more shouldn’t be penalised for that - wealthy do get taxed more [already] - so any $ (money) used to balance out inequity is better to come from general taxes as that is collected based on means.” (Christchurch)

“User pays should be on a scale: with some areas who need more getting more of the funding.” (Christchurch)

“Impacts those with lower incomes + or those with no alternatives more.” (North Auckland)

"Bikes, scooters, walkers - contribute through rates. - More of these users frees up the roads.” (North Auckland)

“User pays is a simple way to be fair” (Hamilton)

**Thoughts on Perspective 2 (Pricing external costs):**

“High polluting vehicles should pay - high enough to induce behaviour change.” (North Auckland)

“Incentivise alternatives to individual car use while also charging for external costs.” (Hamilton)

“As a road user: all the taxes etc would force us to drive differently.” (South Auckland)

“Costs aren’t necessarily financial eg. cyclists are paying a personal cost of potential risk.” (South Auckland)

“Pricing externalities goes w/ (with) user pays - you’re getting the benefits... or else we have more congestion... etc. can’t please everyone.” (Hamilton)

“If we want to solve the transport problem, it has to be more expensive. E-bikes are more expensive than a car.” (Christchurch)

“Large cars are a safety issue for people outside the car. Safety ratings should reflect both.” (North Auckland)

“What about pollution and waste from electric car batteries [and toxic materials] - they should pay for this?” (Christchurch)

“How to measure people’s vehicle usage, accident risk, environmental impact? Need technology that tracks people - would create privacy issue.” (South Auckland)

“Heavy vehicles need to pay more for the damage they do - Roads not designed for them.” (Hamilton)

“Heavy vehicles should be taxed on profits - not outright or time on road. That way struggling business don’t go out of business.” (Hamilton)

“But the alternative options have to be in place before external taxes for costs are put in...” (Christchurch)

“Penalises lower-income people who can’t afford EVs (electric vehicles) or don’t have good access to public transport.” (North Auckland)
Thoughts on Perspective 3 (Equitable distribution of funding):

“Local funds should pay for things that benefit the local community.” (Hamilton)

“Support for low-income families to adjust to low-emissions travel options.” (North Auckland)

“Employer’s covering travel/costs - company vehicles + incentives.” (Christchurch)

“Rural ‘kids’ need cars... they don’t have other transport options - so shouldn’t have to carry costs for the whole system.” (South Auckland)

“External costs can provide the equity if priced correctly.” (North Auckland)

“Would value capture be for house value so being in a “richer” area would cost more.” (South Auckland)

“Value capture - does the folks who benefit actually pay? or are costs just passed on?” (Hamilton)

“Landowners should pay for their increase in land prices from major transport projects.” (Christchurch)

“Intergenerational equity - as a parent this is the legacy I [want] need to leave for the next generations.” (South Auckland)

“Areas in lower incomes HAVE to travel & will bear the costs of travel w/ (with) fewer options. They’re always underserved by PT (public transport).” (North Auckland)

“Increase % rates in inner city/well served suburbs.” (South Auckland)

“Funding should be based on pragmatic results, eg. build where its smart used, smoothest flow of traffic instead of it being based on equity.” (Hamilton)

Participants were asked again what they thought about the perspectives, and whether they had any different ideas of what should be invested in, answering:

- Q13: How much do you agree with the statements? (revisit of Q12 after learning and discussion)

It was clear that some attitudes shifted over the course of the discussion, though not in exactly the same way for every group. The trend was to shift further away from strict ‘user pays’ towards either equity-based outcomes or pricing for externalities. The change in voting in the Hamilton workshop provides an illustration (see Figure 4).

After reconsidering the fairness of the funding mechanisms under each perspective, the groups also reconsidered the mix of investment priorities.
Q14: What do you think we need to invest in? (revisit of Q11 after learning and discussion)

The discussion at tables and shared with the wider group demonstrated some modest shifts in thinking, moving investment in public transport more strongly to the highest priority position overall. Christchurch again stood out in its prioritisation of transit-oriented development, which moved from 2\textsuperscript{nd} to top ranking after deliberation. Figure 5 shows the rankings after deliberation. Some additional points raised are shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do you think we need to invest in?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Public transport &amp; rail link services. Reroute not rebuild.” (North Auckland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Investing in active transport is investing in public health.” (North Auckland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Coastal shipping for freight - from AKL (Auckland) to South Island – South is woefully underinvested.” (North Auckland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“City needs to become more walkable/bikeable.” (South Auckland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Cycle lanes [dedicated] &amp; walking lanes [safe/well lit] including over Harbour Bridge.” (South Auckland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Easier ways to get to public transport from home or work. Feeder services? Secure bike parking at bus stops.” (Hamilton)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“More public transport hubs.” (Hamilton)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Light rail to new developments - park n’ ride hubs.” (Christchurch)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Local shopping - small centres with transport.” (Christchurch)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Having had a chance to ask about and discuss various revenue sources and mechanisms, participants were asked to rate some of the current and potential mechanisms in terms of fairness:

- **Q15: How should we pay for it? – What mechanisms do you think are fair?**
  - Road User Charges based on distance travelled
  - Road User Charges based on impacts
  - Congestion charges
  - Fuel tax
  - Targeted rates
  - General taxes
  - Developer contributions
  - Other

Across all workshops there was strong support for ‘Road User Charges based on impacts,’ as well as for developer contributions. The former reflects the interest seen earlier in pricing the external costs of transport choices. There was no evidence of a particular mechanism being deeply unpopular. Figure 6 illustrates the levels of support demonstrated in the workshops for a range of options.
To deepen the conversation around fairness in transport funding, participants were directed again to their booklets to think about the principles underlying each approach/perspective and their related funding mechanisms. They were asked to consider the trade-offs of each, in small group discussions and sharing their views with the wider group.

The task was to think about each perspective in terms of: Who benefits? Who pays? And over what time period? This brought out questions and discussion of intergenerational equity and fairness. The group was also reminded to think about how much the focus had been on their own region and what their choices might mean for the rest of NZ.

To wrap up, there were table-based discussion to explore potential shifts in thinking. Some final thoughts are shown below, illustrating an expansion of long-term thinking among the groups.
Who benefits, who pays, and over what time frame?

“We all benefit and should all contribute. Those who benefit the most should pay the most.”
(Christchurch)

“We are seeing the largest wealth transfer in history - boomers need to pay for the wealth they have amassed while underfunding infrastructure now so future generations can benefit. Those who can, should.” (South Auckland).

“Developed infrastructure shouldn’t just ‘band-aid’ public issues, but should be developed with long-term use, ecological safety and benefits in mind.” (Hamilton)

“We can’t plan perfectly for future needs but we need to at least try. ‘Do no harm’ is responsible ‘parenting’ of future generations.” (Hamilton)

“Government’s Cost Benefit Analysis should be changed to include [the cost of] reliance on oil…if we continue with status quo, we’re strategically irresponsible and vulnerable.” (North Auckland)

5. Summary of findings

The minipublics should be viewed as ‘pilots’ for what a more extensive deliberative engagement might reveal. The groups were not asked or empowered to make decisions, rather to reflect on the issue of fairness from different perspectives to try to find areas of common ground. The findings are therefore descriptive and not a statistical representation of voting patterns.

5.1 What should the future transport system focus on?

Public transport
Public transport (PT) was one of the most covered topics throughout the discussions. Whether or not participants used PT themselves, they viewed it as a public good, and an obvious target of investment for the future.

There was a consensus that support for PT was needed, and that a pure user pays model would result in its further decline. There was also a good level of consensus around keeping fares affordable so that people would continue to use (or be encouraged to use) PT. While some called for free PT, others disagreed (some indicating that a Gold Card should be a concession and not free). Overall, there was a common expectation that PT options should be subsidised by the government/local authority because of the way PT offsets environmental and congestion effects. These funds could come from pricing of external costs (i.e. RUC based on impacts).

The most common issue with PT is that it is not reliable nor were there sufficient options in many places or near enough to peoples’ homes. If it is expected to be the major replacement for someone’s travel choices, there needs to be more trust in the system.
**Cycling and walking**

Once the groups understood the wider benefits of cycling (and walking), and what is currently holding people back from using it as a transport mode, there was a significant interest in how to encourage more active transport.

Investing in walking and cycling infrastructure tended to rank as a mid-level priority, below public transport, rail links and services, and transit-oriented development. Depending on the group, alternatives for freight sometimes ranked above cycling and walking as an investment priority.

Many thought that e-bikes should be subsidised to encourage more uptake.

**Rail**

There was a lot of interest in rail as an option both for freight and rapid transit, and well as inter-city or inter-regional travel. The discussion did not get into detail on this but it was recognised that this would need to be a central government investment and therefore coming largely from general taxes with some local share contribution.

**Roads**

Over the course of the deliberation, particularly after questions and discussions around ‘induced demand’, participants more strongly voiced the idea of limiting the building of new roads in favour of an upkeep of the current road network.

There was consensus that this should not disadvantage rural areas, and that small towns needed ring roads for freight (unless rail freight was to be developed further). However, generally there was support for measures that would assist in the shift away from cars and a focus on roading.

Tolling for roads that required high upkeep was seen as a fair solution. Many voiced the view that EVs should contribute to roads because they still contribute to congestion.

**Freight**

Discussion was limited on freight, but all groups recognised the importance of looking at alternatives to freight on roads, particularly in urban areas. Most were in favour of charging heavy trucks more for the damage that they cause on roads. While coastal shipping was not a central topic, there were several mentions that this should be considered more as an alternative.

**Urban planning and transit-oriented development**

Interest in the concept of urban planning as a key component of the transport system grew throughout the discussions.

Most groups agreed with the need for better planning for equitable transport outcomes, but this seemed to be a particular issue for the Christchurch minipublic. This perhaps reflects the outcomes of the post-earthquake rebuild reflecting a lack of planning for long-term future transport options and community design that did not further encourage car dependency.
5.2 How should transport be paid for in the future?

**User Pays**
The concept of ‘user pays’ is straightforward in theory, but not so much in practice, given that there are shortfalls in the amounts collected and the levels of funding needed for most aspects of the transport system.

The topic sparked good conversation, and there were different views. Over the course of the conversation, more people moved towards or acknowledged the position that equity should be an important consideration when designing a user-pays system. This reflected a growing understanding that user pays was potentially disadvantageous to lower-income groups and/or those with few alternatives to driving.

RUC was generally viewed as fair but should shift to have more emphasis on variable charging based on impacts – ie. fuel type and emissions, vehicle size and weight, and safety (to others) in addition to distance travelled. There was some support for variable charging based on ability to pay.

Most felt that EVs should be included in RUC, but as above, the rates should vary with regard to impacts (size, weight, fuel).

**Taxes**
There were quite mixed views on taxes. As discussions progressed there was a greater emphasis on equity, and concern about burdens on low-income and disadvantaged groups.

Progressive taxes (i.e. income tax) were thought of as fairer, and there was some consensus around streamlining taxes and levies, as many felt that there were essentially being ‘taxed’ multiple times. E.g.: “Put everything on the income tax - and it would be fairer - rather than sneaky smaller amounts across the fuel tax etc.”

This did not, however, negate support for pricing externalities, which was a more popular option than general taxation or targeted rates.

**Pricing tools**
People generally understand the use of incentives and disincentives, with many willing to pay more so that they could move around more freely/quickly. They could see the benefit of having the true costs of transport choices being transparent, though many struggled with how that could be done. Overall, most came to an understanding that if pricing tools could be administered in a transparent way, they would likely be effective and accepted.

5.3 Principles – What is fair?

**Intergenerational equity**
The idea of intergenerational equity generated considerable discussion. Participants recognised the long-term nature of funding, financing and investment decisions, and the impact they could have on future generations. This also tended to increase awareness of pricing external costs – in that this approach could drive positive behaviour change with long-term sustainability implications.
**Pricing to reflect true costs and impacts**
The deliberations reflected a general trend away from support for user pays, towards internalising the external ‘costs’ and impacts of the system into the way in which it is funded – that is, shifting focus from ‘user pays’ more towards ‘polluter pays.’

**Distribution of funding to promote equity**
There was strong consensus that the funding system should promote equity and better support underserved and disadvantaged groups. It should also promote intergenerational equity.

**User pays – with caveats**
User pays is still seen as a fair system, as long as it can be modified to reflect the true costs to the system. The groups acknowledged that user pays does not fully fund any of the modes for which it operates, and that relying predominantly on user pays is unfair to lower-income groups.

5.4 Areas of uncertainty and disagreement

The sessions were not long enough to bring the groups to full agreement on any one issue. This would require at least a full day or multiple days to generate clear consensus and recommendations.

While the general trends discussed above show a lean towards achieving equity (in access and investment as well as ability to pay), there were still some who felt that a user-pays system was the fairest, and that general taxes already support infrastructure development so there is an expectation that the system should work for them (“This is what I pay taxes for” - so should be able to use the transport system when + where I want - that’s fair.”)

6. Reflections on the process

It is important to emphasise that these short-format, small group deliberations were not empowered to make recommendations or necessarily derive a ‘consensus’ view. They are meant to help elucidate public thought patterns and decision-making processes around complex issues, when diverse groups are given a chance to listen to each other and develop more informed views.

For many people, there is little incentive to become well informed, and a belief that their voice or vote doesn’t have any effect. There are many demands on their time so they do not prioritise learning about complex policy issues. And yet the policy changes being addressed could have significant effects on their future. Deliberative methods can assist in this regard.

The opening questions brought out views on how the public is or is not engaged in important decisions that are being made on their behalf. The vast majority of participants had never before been engaged in public consultation, and yet most were very enthusiastic of the process by the end of each session, and happy to have been a part of it.
The process was successful in terms of enabling deliberation. Starting with a very diverse group of individuals sharing experiences and opinions, each minipublic quickly adopted a constructive, problem-solving approach, with participants treating each other as peers. Conversations were deliberative in the sense that they were thoughtful and characterized by learning from each other and from expert input, weighing the arguments pro and con, and discussing difficult choices and tradeoffs.

The materials developed for and produced by this process can help shape the language that will resonate with the public for future engagements. Understanding the concept of induced demand and the impact of space taken by different transport modes (and parking) was particularly important to help the deliberation evolve, as was learning about funding versus financing and its relationship to timeframes of investment and intergenerational equity. Participant (and public) understanding of these concepts would be enhanced by provision of accessible data and infographics.

The questions raised in the workshops pointed to areas where people would benefit from more specific information and data that was not readily available to the facilitation team – for example, how ‘value-capture’ and ‘external costs’ calculations are made, and relative amounts spent on different transport options in different areas. Data on changing trends and impacts on households of different pricing mechanisms would be beneficial.

The later sessions benefitted from knowing what kinds of information was requested at the earlier ones. This is typical of a deliberative assembly that takes place over multiple days, and in which participants themselves guide the types of inputs needed. A longer ‘citizens assembly’ process would give a chance for more in-depth learning and deliberation, as would be necessary if the intention is to elicit robust recommendations from the public.

In short processes such as this, it is most likely that contextual values are changed – rather than very deeply engrained values – though it is still possible to change the relative importance of different values. This was evident throughout all of the workshops. At the end the participants expressed surprise to have found so much common ground, and even where there are areas of continued disagreement, they report that they have a better understanding and increased respect for other points of view.

The quotes below demonstrate the generally buoyant feeling that was expressed at the end of each workshop, and provide a hopeful view about the worth of this type of engagement.
Reflections on the process

“Enjoyed the wide variety of folks involved in the process. I can see real value in the methodology.”
(Hamilton)

“I enjoyed the process and felt the different viewpoints of the participants were all given a fair and equal hearing.” (Hamilton)

“Was better than what I expected it to be😊😊 Thank you, appreciate the opportunity to contribute.”
(Hamilton)

“Wonderful, would do it again. Enjoyed hearing different opinions. And meeting new people.”
(Hamilton)

“It was a highly informative process. The real value was having experts available to answer questions and correct misunderstandings.” (South Auckland)

“It was really fun and informative to learn about different peoples opinions. I was happy to be able to input my own views on the transport system.” (South Auckland)

“It was good – there was a diverse group and it was educational for people who weren’t aware of how transport is funded in NZ.” (Christchurch)

“Allows more ideas to be shared. Discussion can change your perspective.” (Christchurch)

“I liked it and loved seeing and hearing other people’s perspectives and ideas.” (Christchurch)

“Quite informative and necessary for a dwindling system that simply put, requires immediate attention.” (Christchurch)

“Valuable. There was a good amount of time for discussion, and it was well paced.” (Christchurch)

“Valuable, inclusive, specific.” (Christchurch)

“Interesting and informative.” (Christchurch)

“Amazing! Council should do this.” (Christchurch)

“Been extremely interesting but think we only touched the tip of the iceberg on a complex topic.” (Christchurch)
Appendices

Appendix 1 – Stratification tables for recruitment


The column labelled “Target (%)” is the expected percentage for each demographic group based on the 2018 census data for the area.

The “Target out of 30” column shows the ideal numbers required for a perfect representative sample for a workshop size of 30 participants, based on percentages from the census data. The numbers are fed into the sortition tool to randomly select the sample.

The “Assembly (30 selected)” column shows the actual numbers for each demographic group for the 30 participants that the sortition tool selected.

The final column “Assembly (Final XX)” is the number of people that successfully contacted and who agreed to attend.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North Auckland</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Target (%)</th>
<th>Target out of 30</th>
<th>Assembly (30 selected)</th>
<th>Assembly (Final 24)</th>
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## Appendix 2 – Workshop run sheet

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<th>Activity</th>
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| Set-up                    | 8:00 - 9:00| Room Set up – 5-6 tables set with table numbers, question sheets, pens and post-it notes; Wi-Fi and Mentimeter code sheets  
- posters – travel choice (x7)  
- Tea/coffee available (from 8:45)                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Registration and Table Instructions | 9:00 - 9:15|  
- Participants welcomed; they will each have 2 table assignments for moving later in the process - move to assigned table #1 (change after morning tea)  
- Introduce to Mentimeter – how to get to it, test it out  
- KARAKIA  
- Introductions of team  
- Housekeeping/Health and Safety - bathrooms, exits, Wi-Fi, emergency procedures  
- Walk-through the programme and the process  
Administrator continues on the door when the session starts to bring in any latecomers.                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Introduction              | 9:15- 9:25 |  
- Introduction to the question – why are we here?  
- Q1: Do you usually take part in community consultations? – multiple choice by Mentimeter, table discussion on Why / why not  
- Serves as a “table icebreaker”  
- Welcome each person and then bring them into the conversation about the group’s previous experience with community consultations. Think of examples to talk about other than major consultations – e.g. schools, sports groups, church groups etc – how are you involved in conversations about public decision-making? Get them to talk amongst themselves and introduce to table mates |
| ICEBREAKER                | 9:25 – 9:35| (Participants walk around the room to posters - visualise which transport options get used, and is an icebreaker)  
- Q2: How did you get here?  
- Q3: How do you normally get to work/education/activities?  
- To be answered in Mentimeter when back at tables                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| About deliberation        | 9:35- 9:45 |  
- Complex Conversations Brief (talk – Anne)  
- Walk-through: How the workshop will support the group to appreciate and consider multiple perspectives. Stress the role of each person in the room in sharing their perspectives – all perspectives are valued and contribute to identifying future directions  
- Limitations of the process – this is a pilot; we will not have all the answers. We want to know more about what the public needs to know to answer these questions. A longer assembly would do this. What we learn will support MoT’s broader engagement in 2024  
- Principles of deliberation: what is most important –  
- DISCUSSION / Comments from participants  
  o Looking for solutions rather than focusing on problems  
  o What can we agree on?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
### Point to booklet and slide – GPS on land transport – Values in the transport system –
- Q4: What are our values? *Ranking values from GPS* Menti
- Q5: What comes to mind when you are asked about transportation in New Zealand? Menti – (Word cloud)

### Table Discussion
9:45-10:05
- Use the experience of the participants to highlight difficulties and potential changes for the transport system.
- Q6: How easy is it to get to work/education/activities? Menti
- Q7: Would you change the way you get to work/school/activities if you could? Menti
- Q8: What needs to change? Menti– open ended text
- Table discussion (Q on paper; post its ) + Menti–
  - What would you need to do to change?
  - What aspect of the transport system do you think needs to change?
- Q9: What are the biggest problems (ranking) Menti
- Q10: ANYTHING WE MISSED? – post-its and free-text Menti

### Defining the topic of deliberation – part 1
10:05-10:20
- Presentation of the Issue (Anne) – THE PROBLEM STATEMENT
- How we travel now (booklet) –
- Why are changes needed?
  - Climate change
  - Congestion
  - Inequity
- QUESTIONS ?? (experts)

### Quick question
10:20-10:25
- Q11: What do you think we need to invest in?
- Mentimeter – multiple choice

10:25 – 10:40
MORNING TEA – change to table #2 after

### Table discussion and group
10:40-10:50
- Revisit Q11 Mentimeter results
- Table discussion (Q on paper; post its ) then in room
- What do we agree on?
  Is this focusing on your local region? What do our choices mean for the rest of NZ?

### Defining the topic of deliberation – part 2
10:50 – 11:10
- How is the transport system funded now? (booklet and slide data)
- What are the equity issues?
- Allow participants to ask questions as they are being given data and Information
- Experts respond to the questions

### Perspectives – what is fair?
11:10 – 12:00
- Q12: 3 perspectives – what do you think on first impression (Mentimeter)
  - 3 perspectives explained
  - Table discussion (Q on paper; post its ) – THEN IN ROOM
- After each perspective, participants discuss the benefits and trade-offs, as well as their personal opinions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Group discussion: What do we agree on?</th>
<th>Final discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12:00 – 12:30</td>
<td>Bring participants back to the question they answered before about investment. They will now re-rank with the context of the group discussion. - Q14: What do you think we need to invest in? (revisit of Q11) - Q15: How should we pay for it - What mechanisms do we think are fair? - Q16: Who benefits, who pays, and over what time period? Table discussion (Q on paper; post its )</td>
<td>12:30 – 12:50 Table-based discussions to explore potential shifts in thinking. Reminder to discuss – How much has the focus been on their region? What do our choices mean for the rest of NZ? - What do you still need information on? - Q17: Mentimeter Survey – thoughts on the process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:50</td>
<td>CLOSE &amp; LUNCH</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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We engage with people and organisations focused on the long-term development of New Zealand, and on core issues where trustworthy and robust analysis can make a real difference.

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