



Alleviating Urban Traffic Congestion (CESifo Book Series)

Richard Arnott

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In 2000, the average driver in US metropolitan areas endured 27 hours of traffic delays, a rise from 7 hours in 1980. In many other countries, traffic delays are considerably worse than in the United States, and in developing countries urban traffic congestion is increasing with alarming rapidity. For fifty years, economists have been advocating congestion pricing as the way to deal with urban traffic congestion; but today, even after some successes, congestion pricing is encountering considerable political resistance. The authors of *Alleviating Urban Traffic Congestion* advocate active consideration of more microscopic policies that attack the problem at the scale at which actual policy decisions are made. Microscopic models, rather than macroscopic models that are too simplified and too aggregated, they argue, will lead to the analysis of a wider and more creative range of policies, at least some of which should work well and be politically acceptable. After developing the themes of the book, the authors illustrate them by examining some areas of urban transport policy that have been neglected by the macroscopic approach. These include downtown parking policy, the encouragement of bicycling, the staggering of work hours by dominant employers, and the use by medium-sized cities of a "multimode" ticket that charges cars entering the city center a toll equal to the transit fare. The reorientation of urban transport analysis that they advocate will by no means eliminate traffic delays but should speed up the adoption of a richer, more flexible, and ultimately more effective set of policies to alleviate urban traffic congestion.



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