

# Environmental Silver Lining to CNY 2021

Written by: Austin Lim

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Chinese New Year (CNY) is probably the biggest and most important annual festival for the Chinese communities. Similar to other festivals celebrated in Malaysia, family members who stay out of the town will go back to home for a gathering or reunion. If one were to choose only one day of the 2-week long CNY festival to go home, it would be the CNY's eve for the reunion dinner. Hence, the roads are usually chock-a-block with traffic during the preceding days.

According to *PLUS Malaysia*, approximately 1.7 million of vehicles ply the PLUS expressway everyday. For CNY 2020, the number of vehicles on road was estimated to be approximately 2 million, which is 18% higher than a usual day. PLUS Malaysia also did additional preparations in advance to help people to have a smooth, comfortable and safe journey among which includes issuing a travel time advisory (TTA) to help Malaysians plan their travel accordingly.

DAILY NUMBER OF VEHICLES ON PLUS EXPRESSWAY  
(IN MILLIONS)

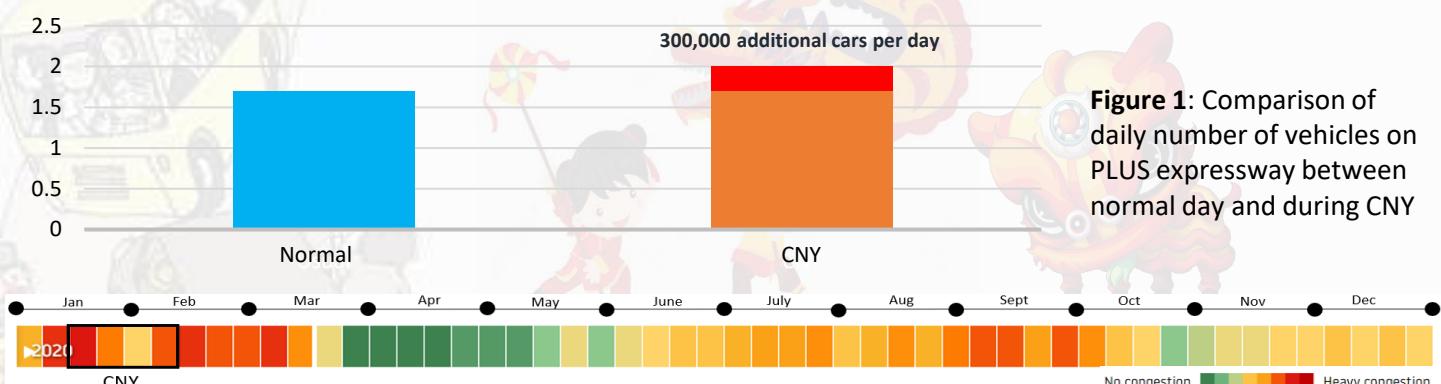
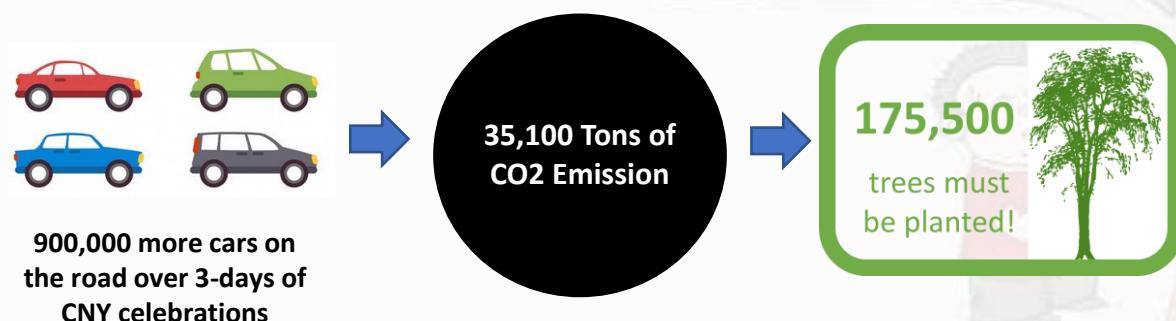


Figure 2: Tracking of traffic in 2020

According to study by *ASEAN-German Technical Cooperation*, transportation sector in Malaysia accounts for approximately 35% of total energy consumed nationally, and produces nearly 50 million metric tons (Mt) of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) per year. Cars account for about 59% of overall CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from transport while freight and motorcycles are responsible for 27% and 11%, respectively.

Few days ago, Malaysia's government had announced that the MCO, that was slated to end on February 4, is extended until February 18. This extension did not come as a surprise as the daily number of cases are still in 4-digit range. According to National Unity Ministry, reunion dinners are permitted among family members living within 10 km travel distance only, without crossing district or state boundaries.

Due to Covid-19 travel restrictions banning interstate travel, the increased daily highway traffic over the CNY celebration is unlikely to happen. Using data from PLUS Malaysia for 2020, as compared to the traffic on a usual day, the additional cars on road during 3-day CNY period would have contributed an extra 35,100 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>. If a tree is required to offset 0.2 ton of CO<sub>2</sub>, about **175,500 of trees** would have been needed to offset the carbon emitted by the additional cars on road.



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