



## Community Board 12 - Manhattan Washington Heights & Inwood

530 West 166<sup>th</sup> St. 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, New York, NY 10032  
Phone: (212) 568-8500, Fax: (212) 740-8197

Richard R. Lewis, Chairperson  
Ebenezer Smith, District Manager

February 13, 2019

**\*CORRECTED\***

Hon. Andy Byford  
President MTA New York City Transit  
2 Broadway  
New York, NY 10004

Hon. Fernando Ferrer  
Acting Chairman  
2 Broadway  
New York, NY 10004

### Re: **Resolution in Support of Sustainable Financing of MTA Transit Plan**

Dear President Byford & Chairman Ferrer:

At the General Meeting on Tuesday, January 22, 2019, with a vote of 17 in favor, 14 opposed, 5 abstentions, 3 not voting due to conflict of interest, the Traffic & Transportation Committee recommendations supporting congestion pricing as the core of the financing plan of Fast Forward; and supporting a transit financing failed. As a result, Community Board 12 Manhattan, passed a resolution **opposing** the New York City Department of Transportation's position to implement the Sustainable Financing of MTA Transit Plan as proposed.

**Whereas:** The NYC Transit system has increasingly been unable to serve its riders: trains are overcrowded and arrive late, and service interruptions are common. Facilities and infrastructure are in many cases antiquated or in disrepair. The system - described by the MTA as in a "state of emergency" - is in crisis and riders throughout the system are suffering; and

**Whereas:** Congestion levels on NYC streets have slowed traffic flow to a crawl, not only in the Central Business District (CBD) but increasingly in other areas as well. In recent years, NYC has gone from the 5th-most congested city in the U.S. to the 2nd-most. The many hours lost in peak-hour congestion translate into significant economic costs which are borne by commuters and the City; and

**Whereas:** There is little equity in bridge tolls: tolls are high on bridges in the outer parts of NYC where transit options are minimal — while there are no tolls on bridges into Manhattan's CBD, where transit options are plentiful and gridlock is worst. More than a million car and truck trips are made daily over the four East River bridges, for free, a phenomenon known as "Bridge Shopping"; and

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**Whereas:** Transit infrastructure is antiquated and deteriorating. Antiquated subway signal system is the root cause of many of the subway's delays and service interruptions, and exacerbates overcrowding; and

**Whereas:** The transportation system, including roads and bridges, is chronically underfunded, and there is not a dedicated, long-term funding stream for the critical and necessary investments to maintain and modernize mass transit, roads and bridges. The MTA has incurred more and more debt to fund operations and capital budgets, the burden of which transit riders have increasingly shouldered via far increases; and

**Whereas:** Riders cannot abide further fare increases; and

**Whereas:** MTA NYC Transit's Fast Forward Plan is a widely-supported plan to turnaround and transform mass transit. Fast Forward focuses on four priorities of subways, bus network, accessibility and workforce culture. Fast Forward is estimated to cost \$35-\$39 billion, much of which is not currently funded; and

**Whereas:** For a number of years, various congestion-pricing proposals have been made to address the congestion problem in New York City, and its environmental and economic impacts. In other global cities congestion pricing has improved air quality and reduced traffic congestion / increase average speeds; and

**Whereas:** Fixing the subways, getting buses moving, and reducing the burden of high fares and tolls is relevant to all New York City residents, but particularly those of CB12: CB12 is not an affluent district; fare increases and high absolute tolls and fares are painful. CB12's location relatively far from Midtown, Downtown and Brooklyn makes CB12 residents particularly reliant on subway and bus service; and CB12's many drivers are dependent on the higher priced toll bridges - RFK, Whitestone and Throgs Neck - and the also tolled Henry Hudson bridge; and

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**Whereas:** Move NY is a 2015 regional transportation plan with congestion pricing as the centerpiece for a sustainable, dedicated source of revenues to fund the transportation system. Its key components are *congestion pricing* for entry to Manhattan's CBD below 60<sup>th</sup> Street, *toll equity*, which tolls the four East River bridges and reduces tolls on the other MTA bridges, and *lock-boxed and bonded revenues*. Move NY allocated \$12 billion bonded revenues across 1) subway and bus network improvements, 2) the MTA capital plan, 3) New York City roads and bridges and 4) a local monies for each community district to have input on; and

**Whereas:** Move NY had broad support from the major dailies, riders advocacy groups, trucking and transportation workers unions, three boroughs' Chambers of Commerce, and the Regional Plan Association; and

**Whereas:** Congestion pricing and Move NY legislation met political opposition from suburban drivers and some Queens and Brooklyn representatives loathe to give up free East River crossings, and did not have the Governor's support. Move NY legislation introduced in 2017 and 2018 did not pass; and

**Whereas:** In October 2017, Governor Cuomo created the Fix NYC Advisory Panel to address the severe traffic congestion in Manhattan's CBD and to identify sources of revenue to help fix the subway system. In January 2018, the Panel recommended a phased implementation of congestion pricing that would wait for MTA investment in transportation alternatives and improvements in the subway system to be made, before implementation of congestion pricing first with taxis and FHV's, then non-commercial vehicles.

**Whereas:** Despite the NYC Transit system in crisis, the recent threat of fare increase, the absence of financing for the MTA's Fast Forward Plan, a newly comprised NYS Senate and now support of Governor Cuomo or political will to move forward rapidly; now therefore, be it

**Resolved:** CB12 Manhattan urges its elected representatives in the NYS legislature as well as in the City Council and Mayor's office, not to support congestion pricing as the core of the financing plan of Fast Forward and that congestion pricing not be implemented so soon; be it further

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**Resolved:** CB12 Manhattan urges its elected representatives in the NYS legislature, and the City Council and Mayor's office, not to support a transit financing plan that includes the key elements of Move NY: congestion pricing in the CBD; toll equity among the East River Bridges and MTA tunnels and bridges; and lock-boxed and bonded revenues. Bonded revenues should not be allocated to include the categories contemplated by Move NY, as they would not prevent further fare increases and even reducing fares.

Sincerely,



Richard R. Lewis  
Chairperson

cc: Edward Pincar, DOT Manhattan Borough Commissioner  
Hon. Andrew Cuomo, Governor  
Hon. Bill de Blasio, Mayor  
Hon. Public Advocate  
Hon. Scott M. Stringer, Comptroller  
Hon. Adriano Espaillat, Congressman  
Hon. Brian Benjamin, State Senator  
Hon. Robert Jackson, State Senator  
Hon. Al Taylor, Assembly Member  
Hon. Carmen De La Rosa, Assembly Member  
Hon. Ydanis Rodriguez, Council Member  
Hon. Mark Levine, Council Member