



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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BURT LAZARIN
Chair

JESSE R. BODINE
District Manager

May 9, 2019

Elaine L. Chao
U.S. Secretary of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Hon. Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Patrick Foye
Chairman
Metropolitan Transportation Authority
2 Broadway
New York, NY 10004

Polly Trottenberg
Commissioner
NYC Department of Transportation
55 Water Street
New York, NY 10041

Re: Congestion Pricing

Dear Secretary Chao, Governor Cuomo, Chairman Foye, and Commissioner Trottenberg,

Manhattan Community District 4 (CD4) is inundated with traffic and has the third worst air quality in the City. For these reasons, Manhattan Community Board 4 (CB4) has long been a supporter of congestion pricing. We are pleased that the congestion pricing plan is included in the 2020 New York State budget approved by the legislature to fund the MTA capital plan and reduce congestion and emissions in the congestion zone. As many details remain to be ironed out, we are providing our input to this next phase of design and negotiation. At its May 1st Full Board meeting, CB4 voted by a vote of 36 in favor, 0 against, 3 abstaining, and 0 present but not eligible to vote to support the fundamental purpose of congestion pricing.

The plan as approved will provide to New York State \$15 billion in capital through bonding of toll revenue. An additional \$10 billion will come from internet sales tax and a mansion tax. These funds will be deposited in a lockbox to prevent any co-mingling with the general budget. As separately established in 2019, the congestion fees collected by taxis and for-hire vehicles generate \$450 million annually to fund the city contribution to the MTA. The new law provides a framework for implementation rather than details:

- Tolling will be collected from vehicles entering the zone below 60th Street (excluding FDR drive and Westside Highway);
- A 6-person Traffic Mobility Review Board appointed by the Mayor and the MTA – reporting to the MTA Chair – is established to work out the details of implementation (fee, exemptions, hours, peak rates). The review board includes one person named by the Mayor to represent the City, one each representing Long Island and Rockland County, and three more named by the MTA;
- The law provides for two exemptions: emergency vehicles and vehicles transporting persons with disabilities. It also gives a state tax abatement for tolls paid by residents of the zone who have less than \$60,000 in annual income;
- The law requires that the program generate \$15 billion total, which means that for every exemption it grants, the commission must find an alternate source of revenue, or increase the fee.

Congestion pricing will reduce the number of vehicles in the zone and its related benefits for all residents: 5.1% of workers in CD4 commute to work using a car, truck or a van¹ and these drivers are on average wealthier than transit riders. Both these drivers and the 94.9% of the community who use transit will derive significant benefits from congestion pricing.

These benefits include: A 20 % decrease in travel time for bus users, five days of commute time savings for car users annually², improved bus travel predictability; 40% reduction in crashes fatalities and injuries in the congestion zone³, which equals 71 fatalities and 17,029 injuries citywide in the next two years; 16% improvement in air quality⁴ and reduction in noise pollution.

MCB4 would support a future congestion plan on the following conditions:

- We do not support further exemptions that risk making the program ineffective. There are other ways to consider specific populations: for example, civil servants could be given free access to transit.
- Incremental fees should be collected based on the weight of vehicles and/or their level of emissions.
- We support surge pricing and encourage the commission to design the system so that congestion caused by the accumulation of outgoing vehicles leaving during peak hours is reduced. This has a disproportionate impact on neighborhoods near bridges and tunnels.

¹ American Community Survey – 2017

² February 2019 [Congestion Pricing Benefits – Save Lives, Save time](#)

³ 2014/2015 – Traffic Accidents and the London Congestion Charge – Department of Economics, Lancaster University Management School

⁴ November 2018- Balanced Transportation Analyzer (BTA) – Charles Komanoff

- We recommend that bus service be increased across the city and in particular in transit deserts, and that an education campaign be undertaken to encourage the use of public transit. Beyond adding more routes, the bus fleet should be significantly augmented and modernized: all electric buses with doors on both sides to facilitate the rapid roll-out of Select Bus Service and improve air quality. The deployment of electric buses should be a priority in neighborhoods with poor air quality, such as CD4.
- To reduce the congestion on the west side of Manhattan, it would be beneficial to set aside a portion of the proceeds to help fund a future subway extension to New Jersey (PATH or MTA), which would significantly reduce the number of cars and buses entering the City from New Jersey.
- We expect the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) to consult with Community Boards to best locate the gantries.

We look forward to DOT effectively using the space freed up by the reduction in traffic to install protected bus lanes on Eighth, Ninth, and Tenth Avenues and on 42nd Street; widen sidewalks on Eighth and Ninth Avenues; install bump-outs at each corner; install bike lanes on Tenth Avenue and crosstown in Midtown; and shared streets around parks and on some residential streets.

Sincerely,



Burt Lazarin
Chair
Manhattan Community Board 4



Christine Berthet
Co-Chair
Transportation Planning Committee



Dale Corvino
Co-Chair
Transportation Planning Committee

cc: Hon. Brad Hoylman, New York State Senate
Hon. Deborah Glick, New York State Assembly
Hon. Richard Gottfried, New York State Assembly
Hon. Corey Johnson, Speaker of the City Council
Hon. Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President