



CITY OF NEW YORK  
**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**  
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**Burt Lazarin**  
Chair

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District Manager

March 15, 2018

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

**Re: FIX NYC Report**

Dear Governor Cuomo,

Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) applauds your leadership in creating the Fix NYC Advisory Panel in October 2017, to focus on strategies to address the severe traffic congestion problems in Manhattan's Central Business District (CBD) and to identify sources of revenue to help fix the ailing subway system. We write to urge you to adopt without further delay the panel's recommendation to establish a zone pricing for taxis, vehicles for hire, trucks and private cars in the CBD of Manhattan and to include the Zone Pricing Infrastructure Installation in the 2019 State Budget. At its March 7th Full Board meeting, MCB4 voted unanimously in favor of these recommendations by a vote of 34 in favor, 0 against, 1 abstaining and 0 present but not eligible to vote.

Further, we strongly support the recommendation of the Fix NY report, to first invest in public transportation alternatives before implementing a zone pricing plan. An important part of the adoption of the panel's recommendations should be immediate improvements in the MTA's bus and subway system so persons giving up their automobile commute will have convenient available alternative transportation to Manhattan.

MCB4 is plagued by enormous volumes of private cars and trucks that pass through our streets and paralyze our business activity for hours every day. The effect on our residential community is massive: the air quality is the third worst in New York City. 75% of our residents commute by mass transit and the availability and reliability of such transit is critical to the functioning and well-being of our community.

The panel offered Zone Pricing to remedy the debilitating congestion that paralyzes Manhattan today and to provide a reliable flow of capital funding to keep our subway system technically current and in good working condition. In other large cities (London

and Singapore) such a solution has been successful at reducing congestion and bringing needed funding to mass transit.

An analysis of New York City commuters shows that the median income of households with vehicles is at least 100% higher than the one of households without vehicles (mass transit users)<sup>1</sup> and dispels the notion that such a plan is unfair. On the contrary, improving mass transit in its reach and reliability is critical to giving low-income citizens an equal chance to reach good jobs.

Recent reports highlighted that the MTA is not using its capital wisely and some fear that such an increase to its capital budget would not encourage the MTA to reform its procurement to get more mileage out of every dollar. We share this concern. Oversight mechanisms for efficient implementation of the MTA's capital and operating budgets are needed. In addition, we suggest that the revenue generated by the zone pricing be put in a lock box<sup>2</sup>, separate from both the State and the MTA budgets. The State and City comptrollers would be charged with approving project budgets and funds withdrawal, as well as auditing project expenses based on international benchmarks.

However, while Zone Pricing will help address MTA's long-term capital needs, we cannot wait to improve our mass transit system that is crumbling and outdated after years of politically-motivated negligence. Major repairs and upgrade to subway signals and implementation of protected bus lanes are critical to restore our transit reliability.

Further, according to the Fix NY report, international examples show that first investing in public transportation alternatives before implementing a zone pricing plan to reduce congestion is critical to the plan's success. These investments, once identified, will enhance the capacity of public transportation alternatives to accommodate those who may choose to leave their vehicles at home upon implementation of a pricing zone and will yield significant private economic benefit to surrounding properties and businesses.

We recommend that all means of financing be explored, including the Governor's budget proposal to authorize Tax Increment Financing for the MTA, the Mayor's proposal to impose a tax on the persons with the highest revenues in the city and other mechanisms like reducing the tax rate disparities between individual and multifamily homes.

We were supportive of the congestion pricing initiative led by Mayor Bloomberg in 2008. Ten years later, the situation on the ground has gotten much worse and no magic solution has emerged. With your leadership, this rational, fair and equitable solution is finally within reach. We urge you to take all necessary steps to make it happen during this budget cycle and put New York City on a sustainable track to success.

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<sup>1</sup> Tri-State Transportation Campaign [http://nyc.streetsblog.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/tri-state\\_car-free\\_full.jpg](http://nyc.streetsblog.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/tri-state_car-free_full.jpg)

<sup>2</sup> A revenue stream that is segregated physically and legally from the State and MTA general budgets so that it cannot be used for any other purpose than MTA projects linked to mass transportation.

Sincerely,



Burt Lazarin  
Chair  
Manhattan Community  
Board 4



Christine Berthet  
Co-Chair  
Transportation Planning  
Committee



Dale Corvino  
Co-Chair  
Transportation Planning  
Committee

cc: Hon. Jerry Nadler, U.S. Congress  
Hon. Brad Hoylman, New York State Senate  
Hon. Richard Gottfried, New York State Assembly  
Hon. Linda Rosenthal, New York State Assembly  
Hon. Bill de Blasio, New York City Mayor  
Hon. Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President  
Hon. Corey Johnson, Speaker, City Council  
Hon. Helen Rosenthal, City Council