



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**

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**JEAN-DANIEL NOLAND**  
Chair

**ROBERT J. BENFATTO, JR., ESQ.**  
District Manager

July 26, 2007

Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver  
250 Broadway, Suite 2307  
New York, NY 10007

Senate Majority Leader Joe Bruno  
368 Broadway  
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

Re: Congestion Pricing

Manhattan Community Board #4 strongly supports the creation and implementation of a congestion pricing program in midtown and lower Manhattan. We believe such a program will be an important component to meet the projected transportation needs of the city in coming years and can reduce some of the negative affects of traffic on the city's physical and economic health. Specifically, Manhattan Community Board #4 is pleased that both Assembly Bill A9362 and Senate Bill S6420 were passed to establish a commission to study congestion pricing and provide a plan for state consideration previous to March 31, 2008 to reduce average vehicle miles traveled in lower Manhattan by at least 6.3%.

New York City's transportation systems are stressed right to the breaking point. NYC's roads and transit are 19<sup>th</sup> Century systems ill equipped for a 21<sup>st</sup> Century city. The city's mass transit system has not had been significantly upgraded in over 50 years. To make matters worse, experts agree that in the next 25 years New York City will continue to grow, and will add an additional 1,000,000 new residents.

Congestion Pricing has proven an effective method for reducing traffic, improving travel time, improving air quality, and creating additional revenue for mass transit in other cities, like London, Singapore, and Stockholm. We therefore strongly encourage the Senate and Assembly to implement the creation of the 17-member commission and hope it will include in its mandate the creation of a congestion pricing system. We urge our elected officials to consult with Community Boards on potential Commission nominees and to keep us involved and informed throughout the process.

We also urge the state and city to proceed, in advance of the work of the Commission, with many of the improvements that are a part of the Mayor's proposed PlaNYC that will improve traffic conditions and enable congestion pricing to be successful.

These include:

- ❑ Enabling Traffic Enforcement Agents (TEA's) to write "blocking the box" tickets and increase the number of TEA's;
- ❑ Create additional dedicated bus lanes, including on 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Avenues, and enforce their exclusive use;
- ❑ Enable traffic light timing to be adapted to changing traffic conditions;
- ❑ Continued growth in the number and safety of bike lanes;
- ❑ Increased ferry service;
- ❑ Prevention of abuse of City employee auto placards; and
- ❑ Investigate, in conjunction with the Port Authority, the installation of High Occupancy Vehicle car lanes and encouraging more efficient truck usage and evening deliveries.

We appreciate that the Mayor's plan for congestion pricing included both the prioritization and the creation of an additional funding mechanism for several major capital items including the 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue subway, Access to the Region's Core, additional Bus Rapid Transit routes, subway improvements to meet a "state of good repair" goal, and the #7 line subway extension. Most importantly, for our Community Board, is the inclusion of \$650 million for an Express Bus Lane in the Lincoln Tunnel and building a new Port Authority Bus Garage. This bus garage, which Community Board #4 is already on record supporting, would enable 100% of the Port Authority Buses that access the Lincoln Tunnel to do so without using the Manhattan street grid. It will also provide a portion of the parking needed for the 390 additional buses the city expects it will need to place in service for currently underserved neighborhoods to be able to begin a congestion- pricing program. We also request that such a garage be designed to enable private service commuter and tourist vans to use it on a fee basis.

We understand that creating the major capital budget items delineated above are dependent on the dedication of the net revenue from congestion pricing, estimated to begin at approximately \$380 million per year, as well as additional annual city and state appropriations. We encourage the new Commission to ensure these funding streams and capital priorities are maintained.

While we are disappointed that the State to did not approve legislation to initiate the Mayor's pilot program for congestion pricing, we hope that the extra time and discussion enabled through the creation of the Commission will provide for the consideration of the some of our Community Board's concerns with the initial proposal including:

- ❑ Since the proposed congestion pricing fee in the Mayor's plan was \$8/car and \$21/truck (\$7 for fuel efficient trucks) minus existing tolls, the "net" congestion fee for commuters from the West will likely be \$3 or \$2 per day (less than \$1,000/year) and thus a far less incentive to use mass transit than those currently using the toll-less Brooklyn, Queens and Bronx bridge crossings. We are thus concerned that there will be minimum impact on the Lincoln Tunnel, the commuter crossing in our community board area;
- ❑ We are also concerned about the potential regressive nature of the above mentioned "net" fee and encourage the Commission and city to investigate methods for providing abatements to very low-income residents who are in neighborhoods ill served by mass transit;

- ❑ We feel the charge for residents traveling within or leaving the congestion-pricing district should be discussed and vetted fully with affected Community Boards. We also encourage discussion on how the waiver for permitting alternate side auto moving be fully discussed and vetted with affected Community Boards;
- ❑ We feel vehicles for nonprofit agencies that provide meals and other vital services should be exempted from the fee;
- ❑ The proposed parking regulations in the Hudson Yard's rezoning requires additional parking spaces that greatly exceeds standards in the surrounding central business district and go against the goals of congestion pricing. We urge the city to reconsider those parking provisions for Hudson Yards rezoning in light of the goals of PlaNYC and for reducing congestion in Manhattan.

Once again, Community Board #4 supports a comprehensive traffic mitigation program, including a congestion pricing plan and look forward to working with the state and city towards its expeditious implementation.

Sincerely,



Jean-Daniel Noland  
Chair  
Manhattan Community  
Board No. 4



Jay Marcus  
Co-Chair  
Transportation Planning  
Committee



Christine Berthet  
Co-Chair  
Transportation Planning  
Committee

cc: City Council Member Christine C. Quinn  
Borough President Scott M. Springer  
State Senator Tom Duane and Liz Krueger  
Assembly member Richard Gottfried, Deborah J. Glick and Linda Rosenthal  
DOT Commissioner Janette Sadik-Khan