

**For the City of New York**, traffic congestion is an economic problem, costing billions annually in lost productivity; a health problem, contributing to childhood asthma rates that in some neighborhoods are four times the national average; and a quality-of-life problem, causing drivers to waste time stuck in bumper-to-bumper traffic. Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg has proposed a comprehensive transportation plan to ease congestion and expand mass transit options throughout the five boroughs – congestion pricing is central to the solution.

### What is Congestion Pricing?

Congestion pricing is the practice of charging drivers a user fee to enter the central business district during peak travel hours in order to reduce automobile use, thereby easing air pollution and traffic and encouraging commuters to take mass transit as an alternative. It has been an effective tool in cities around the world, including London and Singapore. Mayor Bloomberg has proposed that New York City adopt a three-year congestion pricing pilot project. Drivers would pay \$8 to enter Manhattan south of 86th Street weekdays between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. Large trucks would be charged \$21. Automobiles and trucks driving only within the zone would be charged \$4 and \$5.50 respectively. Travel along perimeter routes such as the FDR and West Side Highway would be exempt from the charge, as would taxis, livery cabs, buses, and emergency and handicap-licensed vehicles.

### How Does It Work?

Using E-Z Pass technology, drivers paying bridge and tunnel tolls to enter the zone would be credited the amount of their round-trip tolls that day, up to \$8. For instance, someone traveling through the Queens Midtown or Brooklyn Battery Tunnels, or over the Triborough Bridge, currently pays \$8 round-trip with E-Z Pass; under the new system, *these drivers would not pay any additional charges*. Nor would someone be charged for driving over the East River Bridges en route to the Holland or Lincoln Tunnel, the FDR Drive, West Side Highway, or any location north of 86th Street.

### Congestion Pricing: Benefits for All New Yorkers

**Improve public health.** Congestion pricing would improve public health by reducing car exhaust fumes and emissions, one of the main causes of asthma.

**Enhance quality of life.** Commuters often avoid tolls by speeding through neighborhood streets to get to Manhattan, resulting in more air pollution, traffic, and danger, especially for children. Congestion pricing would reduce this traffic and protect quality of life in our neighborhoods.

**Expand and improve mass transit.** The money collected through congestion pricing would raise about \$400 million every year, which would be used to create more subway, bus and express bus service and make other necessary transit improvements, including major transportation projects like five-borough bus rapid transit and a direct commuter link connecting Queens and Long Island to Grand Central Station via the LIRR.

**Decrease commute times.** It is estimated that congestion pricing would lead to a significant reduction in traffic, which would save drivers significant amounts of time each day. And commute times would decrease for those using mass transit as a result of the mass transit improvements congestion pricing would fund.

**Strengthen the economy.** Businesses would have to pay the charge, but reduced traffic congestion would increase their business, reduce fuel costs, and save time.

### Myths & Facts: Common Misconceptions about Congestion Pricing

**Myth:** A majority of non-Manhattan residents rely on their cars to commute to Manhattan.

**Fact:** Only 5% of commuters in Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island, and the Bronx commute to Manhattan by car – and of that number, only about one in six report that they drive because of inaccessible or inconvenient mass transit options.

**Myth:** Congestion pricing is a tax on the working class.

**Fact:** Among commuters who live beyond walking distance to a subway station, workers earning less than \$50,000 a year are three times as likely to take the bus, subway, or commuter rail to work than to drive. Therefore, the congestion fee would be paid mostly by those at the upper half of the income distribution, as well as by businesses.

**Myth:** Congestion pricing is a tax on people living outside of Manhattan.

**Fact:** About half of the congestion pricing fee would be paid by non-city residents, including commuters from New Jersey and the suburbs. The other half would be paid by city residents, including Manhattan residents who drive to work or use their cars on weekdays.

**Myth:** Congestion pricing would increase traffic in the areas outside the zone.

**Fact:** Analyses show that overall traffic would decrease in all five boroughs as a result of congestion pricing, because more people would opt for mass transit. The Mayor has also proposed the possibility of residential parking permits in some neighborhoods just outside the zone to prevent commuters from parking there.

### Supporters of Congestion Pricing

Citizens Budget Commission  
 NYC Central Labor Council  
 Transportation Alternatives  
 Partnership for NYC  
 American Cancer Society  
 Women's City Club of NY  
 Straphangers Campaign, NYPIRG  
 Natural Resources Defense Council  
 Citizens Committee for NYC  
 Council on the Environment NYC  
 Regional Plan Association  
 Sustainable Long Island

American Lung Assoc. of the City of NY  
 UPROSE  
 Environmental Defense  
 Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice  
 Drum Major Institute for Public Policy  
 Tri-State Transportation Campaign  
 American Institute of Architects, NY Chapter

American Planning Association  
 NY League of Conservation Voters  
 Long Island Progressive Coalition  
 Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance  
 WE ACT for Environmental Justice  
 The NYC Environmental Justice Alliance

**For more information on PlaNYC and congestion pricing, visit [www.nyc.gov](http://www.nyc.gov).**