

BACKGROUND

PlaNYC, an ambitious and innovative set of city-wide programs to ensure a sustainable, vibrant future for New York City, aims to **reduce the city's carbon emissions by 30% by 2030** by, in part, implementing a congestion pricing program in the Central Business District (CBD) of Manhattan. The recommended plan, as put forward by the New York City Traffic Mitigation Commission, would impose a daily fee of \$8 for cars and \$21 for trucks entering Manhattan below 60th Street. Charging drivers within the city's CBD would raise almost \$500 million dollars each year, which is anticipated to be dedicated to mass transit improvements.

Communities throughout the five boroughs are working to **ensure that congestion pricing's benefits are broadly distributed** and that no areas are disproportionately affected by the potential negative impacts that could arise. **Northern Manhattan communities** have raised concerns about **three potential impacts**. First, they are concerned that commuters will opt to **"park-and-ride" near major transit hubs**. Second, there is concern that the expected increase in transit riders will **overwhelm an already crowded transit system**. Finally, community members are concerned that **increased bus service will add to the existing environmental burdens of Northern Manhattan**.



BENEFITS OF CONGESTION PRICING

Traffic Benefits

Congestion pricing is expected to reduce traffic both within and outside the CBD by eliminating more than 100,000 auto trips taken into Manhattan each day. Northern Manhattan specifically is expected to see a 3.8% reduction in vehicle miles traveled, and a 20.9% reduction in traffic jams north of 86th Street. These reductions will result in fewer vehicles that could idle, potentially decreasing emissions and benefiting the health of residents. The city as a whole will also see economic benefits, both from the revenue generated for transit and by re-

couping some of the \$13 billion dollars lost each year as a result of traffic congestion.

Transit Benefits

The revenue raised by congestion pricing will create short- and long-term capital improvements for New York City transit. Short-term improvements include the implementation of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service and creating express bus lanes on the East River bridges and in the Lincoln Tunnel. Long-term improvements include creating LIRR East Side Access, MetroNorth Penn Station Access, and the Second Avenue Subway.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

Potential Traffic and Parking Impacts

On-street park-and-ride activity is unlikely to increase after the creation of a congestion pricing zone. Parking availability in Northern Manhattan is scarce – occupancy rates are as high as 93% throughout Harlem. This scarcity of spaces is likely to discourage on-street park-and-ride behavior by commuters.¹

The price differential between lower and upper Manhattan parking lots may encourage commuters to park-and-ride in Northern Manhattan lots. This is only likely to be an incentive for commuters who are not getting free or compensated parking from their employers.

Potential Transit Impacts

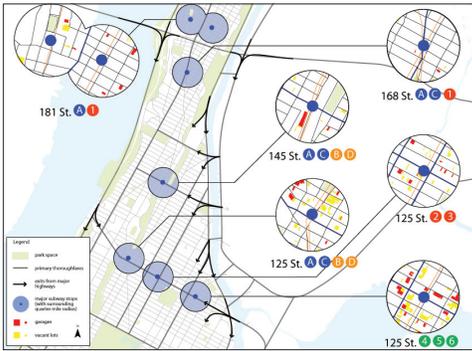
The expected 1.5% increase in transit use is likely to place additional strain on overcrowded lines. Most Northern Manhattan subways are already near or past capacity.² Crowding on those lines is expected to increase as more commuters transfer to transit before entering Manhattan or the CBD.

Additional crowding on subway lines could affect service operation and ease of commute. Local impacts may also occur from the short-term transit improvements (such as expanded bus service) created to respond to this crowding. Yet, both these impacts are likely to happen with or without congestion pricing. Revenue raised from a congestion pricing plan would enable the MTA to respond to and mitigate these impacts.

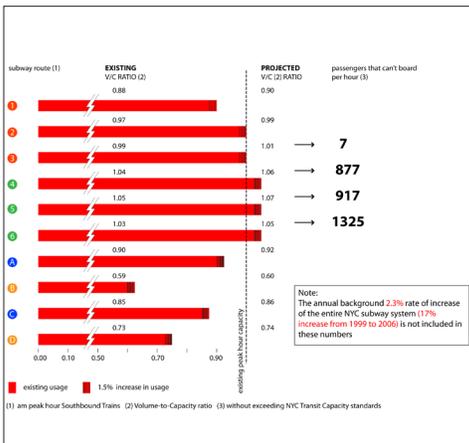
1) 125th Street Corridor Rezoning and Related Actions, New York City Department of City Planning, 2007

2) New York City Transit

POTENTIAL TRAFFIC AND PARKING IMPACTS



POTENTIAL TRANSIT IMPACTS



On-Street Parking

Park-and-ride activity is unlikely to impact on-street parking availability, as Northern Manhattan neighborhoods already have high rates of on-street occupancy rates, ranging from 91 – 93% all day long.⁴ These high occupancy rates make it difficult for local residents to find a space and will likely discourage commuters from looking for on-street spots to park-and-ride.

Off-Street Parking

At an average of \$238/month, parking rates

in Northern Manhattan are less than half the cost in the CBD and Upper East and West Side.⁵ The cheap price of parking in this area could encourage park-and-ride behavior. Low space availability could discourage this behavior, but could also create demand for currently vacant lots to be converted into private parking lots. Regulatory hurdles are likely to slow vacant lot development and the city could enact measures to ensure that over-development of private lots does not occur in potential park-and-ride areas.

Subway Crowding

Capacity on most Northern Manhattan subway routes is already near or past capacity. The 4, 5 and 6 lines are at 100% capacity at 110th Street, while most other routes operate at more than 85% capacity.⁶ A significant increase in passengers on these lines will worsen crowding and service conditions. Some mitigation measures have already been planned to ease crowding and ensure service continues operating effectively. These measures include both short- and long-term system improvements, including easing transit demand and crowding on the east side of Manhattan through creating the

Second Avenue Subway and implementing BRT service.

Service Expansion

Long-term improvement and expansion projects will ease subway crowding and create better commutes for Northern Manhattan residents. The extended time these projects take to complete necessitate short-term improvements to answer immediate increases in demand. Short-term improvement projects could create problems of their own, such as new bus depots and further environmental burdens from expanded bus service.

RECOMMENDED MITIGATION MEASURES

Recommended by WE ACT

1. Regulate Parking Lot Expansions and Construction

The city could use zoning measures to restrict parking lot expansion.

2. Expand BRT Service and Add Key Arterial Streets to the Congestion Corridors Program

BRT service could be expanded further throughout each of the boroughs. Including currently congested streets, like 125th Street, in the Congestion Corridors Program would be the first step to easing congestion and improving quality of life in these areas.

3. Guarantee equitable distribution of new bus depots throughout Manhattan

The MTA should guarantee that new buses will not be housed in already over-burdened Northern Manhattan neighborhoods. It should guarantee that any new depots are equitably distributed throughout the city. The MTA should also use green building practices in the construction and renovation of bus depots.

4. Find new operating funds for the MTA

The City and State could commit to fully funding the MTA capital plan and closing the current \$9.3 billion dollar funding gap.

5. Create alternatives to relieve current congestion on the west side subway lines

Over the past seven years, usage of the 1, 2 and 3 lines has increased at nearly twice the pace of the rest of the system. The MTA could dedicate expansion and improvement projects to answer this demand and alleviate current crowding on these lines.

4) 125th Street Corridor Rezoning and Related Actions, New York City Department of City Planning, 2007

5) Parking source: www.bestparking.com

6) New York City Transit

Recommended by the Commission or City Agencies

1. Implement a City-Wide Monitoring Program

City-wide concern about the impacts of congestion pricing could be eased by a monitoring program implemented prior to and during congestion pricing. Monitoring could document impacts within the CBD and in surrounding neighborhoods, as well as provide dedicated funds to mitigate any documented impacts. The program should include oversight by community boards and local community-based organizations.

2. Create a “lockbox” for Congestion Pricing Revenue

This will ensure that this revenue is used to fund short- and long-term transit improvements

3. Offer a Residential Parking Permit Program

This program could discourage on-street park-and-ride activity.

4. Expand Suburban Park & Ride Facilities

This could discourage commuters from driving in NYC.