



Manhattan Community Boards Two, Four, Five and Six

June 21, 2024

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

MTA Board
MTA Board Room, 2 Broadway, 20th Floor
New York, NY 10004

Members: Andrew Albert, Jamey Barbas, Gerard Bringmann, Norman E. Brown, Samuel Chu, Michael Fleischer, Daniel Garodnick, Randolph Glucksman, Marc Herbst, David R. Jones, Meera Joshi, Blanca P. López, M.S., David S. Mack, Haeda B. Mihaltses, John-Ross Rizzo, John Samuelson, Lisa Sorin, Vincent Tessitore, Jr., Midori Valdivia, Neal Zuckerman.

Dear Hon. Governor Hochul and Members of the MTA Board of Directors:

We, the undersigned Community Boards that make up Manhattan's Central Business District ("CBD"), are writing in response to Governor Hochul's abrupt and unilateral decision to indefinitely suspend the implementation of the CBD Tolling program ("Congestion Pricing"), originally scheduled for June 30.

The stakes could not be higher: 900,000 vehicles enter the CBD daily, resulting in heavy congestion that contributes to higher levels of air and noise pollution, adversely affects public health, increases emergency response times, diminishes overall quality of life for residents and car and bus commuters, and incurs hundreds of millions in productivity losses annually (*see Exhibit A*).

NYC's transit infrastructure is in dire need of modernization and expansion, yet faces significant funding shortfalls. To meet transit needs, temporary state funds and piecemeal financial measures are unreliable and insufficient, often subject to political fluctuations and economic constraints. Without a

dedicated revenue source, the MTA struggles to maintain existing infrastructure and fund necessary improvements, leading to potential service cuts, fare increases, and further deterioration of the transit system. The [vast majority](#) of workers commuting to the CBD rely upon public transit.

Congestion Pricing is the culmination of decades of planning and legislative action dedicated to reducing the severe traffic congestion in Manhattan's CBD, improving air quality, reducing GHG emissions, and securing a critical source of funding for the MTA. Previous experience with projects that have been put on hold (e.g., Access to the Region's Core) illustrate that such delays greatly exacerbate the deteriorated conditions meant to be addressed - and that when those projects are eventually resumed, they're faced with much heavier damage and exorbitantly higher costs.

Furthermore, **the CBD Tolling Program is New York State law** – a unilateral “pause” with no plan for its implementation or how to address the financial hole resulting from this decision is poor governance, undermines the rule of law, and diminishes the citizenry’s confidence in the State and MTA’s ability to manage critical infrastructure projects and serve as reliable stewards of public funds.

Post-implementation, we fully expect that Congestion Pricing’s performance will be closely monitored and the program refined to address any deficiencies or inequities that arise, such as potential impacts on communities. However, after years of planning, hundreds of millions in investments, and commitments made to the vast majority of New Yorkers, commuters, and visitors who will benefit from this program, **the decision to indefinitely suspend the program is unconscionable, and must be immediately reversed**.

Towards that end, **we emphatically:**

1. **Urge Governor Hochul to adhere to existing state law and rescind her recent decision** to direct the MTA to indefinitely cease the implementation of Congestion Pricing and instead let it proceed;
2. **Call upon the MTA Board and NYS DOT Commissioner to exercise their independence and adhere to their fiduciary duty** to ensure the long-term financial stability and improvement of New York City’s transit system **by voting for and/or ensuring implementation of Congestion Pricing without delay;**
3. **Implore local, state, and federal officials to**
 - **Work toward the immediate implementation of Congestion Pricing;** and
 - **Oppose any alternative plan cobbled together haphazardly** to make up the budget shortfall in an unsustainable way.

Proposed alternatives - if any - must encompass not only the transit infrastructure funding component, but also all the permanent and far reaching benefits of Congestion Pricing (e.g., improved traffic flow, better air quality and health, decrease in GHG emissions, more equitable transit, increased street safety).

Sincerely,



Susan Kent,
Chair, Manhattan Community Board Two



Jessica Chait
Chair, Manhattan Community Board Four¹



Samir Lavingia
Chair, Manhattan Community Board Five



Sandra McKee
Chair, Manhattan Community Board Six

Cc: NYS DOT Commissioner Marie Therese Dominguez
State Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins
State Senators Brad Hoylman-Sigal, Liz Krueger, Kristen Gonzalez, Brian Kavanagh, Cordell
Cleare, Jose Serrano, and Robert Jackson
State Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie
Assembly Members Tony Simone, Alex Bores, Linda Rosenthal, Harvey Epstein, Deborah
Glick, Grace Lee, Charles Fall, Rebecca Seawright, Edward Gibbs, Daniel O'Donnell, Inez
Dickens, Al Taylor, and Manny De Los Santos
Secretary Pete Buttigieg, U.S. Department of Transportation
New York City Mayor Eric Adams
Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine
New York City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams
City Council Members

¹ Manhattan Community Board 4's approval of this letter is subject to ratification at its July 24th Full Board Meeting