

What NY Transit Needs From D.C.

Notice after blurting out some words one goes from White House to regional portfolio. Whether a connection or not, only time will tell. Unfortunately, what once was a catch all term now – thanks to the efforts of NYC toll-taxers and their supporters, becomes synonymous with tolling free bridges that represent extensions of local streets connecting Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx (and Staten Island through either Brooklyn and sometimes Queens) to the island of Manhattan. As a result, those policies that might make sense to address congestion issues where they need to be addressed, may just need a new name. Clearly, the former BP supported – tolling unlike his predecessor who sought to remove those barriers for city residents. What really makes sense would have been to call the City and State out for chronic underfunding, to note how New York mass transit (throw in the entire state for that matter) moves such an overwhelming proportion of the nation's straphangers and his (former) office is seeking mechanisms to resource this important service. And finally, to note the disparity in funding for highways and the unfairness in the current formulas that bar urban area such as New York to tap federal transit support for operations – which in the current environment could address the currently slated bus and subway service cuts and eliminations.

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White House: Congestion Pricing On The Table

The Obama administration's efforts to stop sprawl and make cities livable might include new rail lines, water commuting and—possibly—using tolls to fight traffic and pollution.

By [Jarrett Murphy](#)

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Jarrett Murphy/City Limits

Adolfo Carrión, director of the White House Office of Urban Affairs, says the Obama administration wants to see more infrastructure in and between America's cities. A seamless commute through three states. A one-seat ride from mid-Manhattan to the airports. A quick rail link to Boston or Washington. Those are possible components of the Obama administration's vision for the New York metropolitan region, according to a top White House aide.

"I think this President gets it," Adolfo Carrión, the director of the [White House Office of Urban Policy](#) told a luncheon crowd in a Waldorf-Astoria ballroom on Friday.

Carrión told attendees of the [Regional Plan Association's](#) annual regional assembly, "There is a set of conditions here—a strong necessity for innovation," pointing to the increasing percentage of Americans who live in metro areas that, Carrión said, "have been allowed to spread unsustainably." (*City Limits* was a media sponsor of the RPA event.)

Carrión's White House post was created by Mr. Obama to coordinate the work of more than a dozen federal agencies with portfolios that affect urban life. Before going to Washington, Carrión was a New York City Councilman and Bronx borough president.

"[Mr. Obama] charged us with developing a set of broad national goals" around land use, infrastructure and "creating neighborhoods that are rich with opportunity," Carrión said.

What that could mean for New York, Carrión said, includes "a seamless commute" in the tri-state area, "a direct connection to airports from the central business district," a "real high-speed rail link" between Boston and Washington (Carrión, who had ridden the Amtrak Acela to the event, observed wryly that it didn't really qualify as "high-speed") and "generous zoning around transit

hubs" to encourage density.

Carrión also said the administration would consider traffic control measures like encouraging bicycle use, water transport, "and maybe even—dare I say it?—congestion pricing," a reference to the [toll proposal](#) that Mayor Bloomberg championed but the state legislature quashed in 2008.

Thirteen months into his job, Carrión has been criticized for [a lack of visibility](#). Carrión said Friday that he'd been to Atlanta, New Orleans and Boston this week promoting the president's urban vision.

The U.S. population is expected to increase by 120 million over the next 40 years, creating a demand for 200 billion square feet of housing space—mainly in urban areas, he said.

The urbanization challenges facing the U.S. mirror those worldwide: Today, about half the world population [lives in cities](#). By 2050, up to three-quarters will.