

KEEP NYC CONGESTION TAX FREE

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KEEP NYC CONGESTION TAX FREE OFFERS ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO TRAFFIC CONGESTION MITIGATION IN MANHATTAN CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

New [Report](#) calls for cost-effective, efficient, fair and practical alternatives to exceed guidelines

NEW YORK, October 12, 2007 -- From the day of Mayor Bloomberg's Earth Day controversial announcement in April 2007 proposing that the City establish a congestion pricing scheme on most private vehicles traveling below 86th Street in Manhattan, [Keep NYC Congestion Tax Free](#) has vigorously opposed and questioned the equity, efficiency and economic sense of this stalled plan. While the Mayor's proposal has called much-needed attention to the problem of traffic congestion and sparked a lively public discussion, the rigid all-or-nothing approach continues to make it unpopular and disproportionate to middle-class and working New Yorkers who live outside the proposed zones.

The [Alternatives Approaches](#) offered in the [Keep NYC Congestion Tax Free](#) plan more effectively target Manhattan's root causes of congestion while achieving a traffic volume reduction of 7-11 percent (above the City's targeted 6.3 percent) and realizes ways to generate hundreds of millions of dollars annually in new revenues for mass transit. The alternative approaches also satisfy the requirements to qualify for the federal anti-congestion funding, without the costly and elaborate infrastructure required for the city's congestion pricing scheme.

[Keep NYC Congestion Tax Free](#) proposes a cost-effective, efficient, fair and practical alternative [plan](#) that will address the problems posed by congestion in New York City and exceed the guidelines imposed by the Urban Partnership Agreement between the USDOT and New York City, New York State and the MTA. Key elements of this alternative [plan](#) include:

- Value pricing for curbside parking in the Manhattan CBD. Sharply reducing the number of "free" on-street parking spaces in commercial areas of Midtown and Lower Manhattan and increasing the price of on-street parking.

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- Major reform of the City’s system for issuing parking placards to City employees, and for regulating their use, in order to limit issuance of placards to those who need them for job-related purposes, end illegal parking by placard-holders, and encourage public employees to use mass transit.
- Greatly expanding the number of taxi stands in the Manhattan CBD, along with other measures to reduce the time cabbies spend cruising for passengers – a practice that by itself accounts for approximately 13 percent of all-vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in the CBD.
- Implementing variable pricing on existing tolled crossings serving the CBD and restoring two-way truck tolls on the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge. Increasing MTA and Port Authority bridge and tunnel tolls, incorporating variations in pricing by crossing and by time of day; and removing the existing incentive for trucks heading to New Jersey from Long Island, Queens and Brooklyn to travel via the Manhattan CBD by restoring two-way tolls on the Verrazano Bridge.
- Increasing fines for the types of parking violations that contribute most to congestion in the Manhattan CBD (double-parking, parking in bus stops or loading/unloading zones, etc.), coupled with more aggressive enforcement and legislation that strengthens the City’s ability to enforce existing rules against “blocking the box.”
- Reducing congestion caused by “black cars” and non-yellow for-hire vehicles through a targeted campaign against parking and other violations for these vehicles contribute to congestion; and exploring the feasibility of creating designated parking zones for these vehicles.
- Modernizing traffic signals in the Manhattan CBD, to enable NYCDOT to manage the flow of traffic more effectively through “real-time” adjustments to signal timing.
- Implementing 511, a travel information service that delivers traffic, transit and weather information directly to a telephone, cell phone or electronic device.

“Real and better alternatives exist to reduce traffic congestion more effectively and comprehensively without any need to implement a drastic plan which will disrupt the lives of many residents, senior citizens, working people and small businesses in our City,” said Walter McCaffrey, former City Council Member and lead spokesperson for the [Keep NYC Congestion Tax Free](#). “We urge the 17-members of the New York City Traffic Congestion Mitigation Commission to fully review these and all alternative approaches before making any recommendations that will adversely affect our mass transit system and residential neighborhoods.”

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According to the [report](#), the primary flaws in the City's congestion pricing scheme is that it indiscriminately taxes all vehicles, thus fails to focus on the root causes of traffic congestion, such as the unnecessary cruising of yellow-medallion taxis; the undervaluing of on-street parking and bridge and tunnel crossings during peak periods; the proliferation of black car services; an out-of-control City-issued parking placard and permit system; inadequate traffic enforcement; and the 10,000 trucks that enter Manhattan every day with no point of origin or destination.

The mitigation alternatives identified in the [Alternative Approaches](#) report could generate approximately \$428 to \$545 million, without major capital investments or increases in operating costs. (The proposed congestion pricing scheme will require a minimum investment of \$233.6 million and yearly operating costs of \$240 million. Approximately 40 cents out of every dollar charged for congestion pricing will be lost to operating overhead).

McCaffrey concluded, "There is no need to implement a drastic, costly plan with all of the strong solutions and innovative alternatives that have been promoted by many talented traffic experts and are well within our reach. An 'all-or-nothing' approach is a one-way street New Yorkers do not belong on."

For a full copy of the [Alternative Approaches](#) report, go to http://keepnycfree.com/reports/files/2007-10_Alternative_Approaches.pdf

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ABOUT [KEEP NYC CONGESTION TAX FREE](#)

[Keep NYC Congestion Tax Free](#) represents a diverse coalition of civic, business and labor organizations and businesses throughout New York City. We share a simple vision: to keep our city congestion tax free. Our members oppose the \$8 fee (\$21 for trucks) the Mayor proposes to impose on drivers entering Manhattan below 86th Street. Our members urge New Yorkers to deliver a simple message to our legislators: "Say no to the fee the Mayor wants to charge us to enter Manhattan." Many supporters and coalition members propose alternatives to the congestion tax that better address traffic issues in our entire city and provide new sources to support mass transit. For more information, visit keepnycfree.com.