

The Sun

Fidler Presents Alternative To Traffic Plan

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From the far reaches of southeastern Brooklyn, a City Council member whose district has no subway stops, Lewis Fidler, is mounting a one-man campaign against Mayor Bloomberg's congestion pricing proposal.

Mr. Fidler said he has been working since June on his [alternative](#) to Mr. Bloomberg's plan to charge drivers to enter parts of Manhattan. The council member's proposal calls for a .0033% regional payroll tax to be paid by businesses in the city and in four surrounding counties, the building of three new bridges, and a national campaign to promote zero emission hydrogen fuel cell vehicles.

He planned to present it at a Brooklyn hearing of the Congestion Pricing Commission last night.

Sounding like John Edwards during his "two Americas" speech, Mr. Fidler said congestion pricing stresses the city's economic differences and is morally wrong. "We don't just want to be a city of rich people and poor people," he said. "I don't think they thought it out as fully as they needed to."

Mr. Fidler said he is seeking the support of his colleagues on the council. The speaker of the City Council, Christine Quinn, has endorsed the mayor's plan.

Assemblyman Richard Brodsky, a Democrat of Westchester who sits on the commission studying congestion pricing, said Mr. Fidler's proposal "is exactly what this debate needs, which is a workable, bold concept that responds to the city's needs in ways that don't have the defects of the mayor's plan."

Mr. Brodsky, a critic of congestion pricing, said alternatives to the plan are surfacing because the momentum behind congestion pricing is fading.

The Campaign for New York's Future, a coalition of more than 140 organizations supporting congestion pricing, issued a statement yesterday saying that Mr. Fidler's plan is "no more realistic or timely" than those proposed by other defenders of the status quo. "This is yet another plan that would actually make driving into Manhattan easier; that would pin our hopes on financing schemes that are illusory; and would force us to wait around for magic hydrogen technology that nobody ... thinks is going to have a shot for decades," it said.