

Community Board 8 (The Bronx) opposes City Congestion Tax scheme Joins Queens Community Boards 6, 7, 8, 11 and 13

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The RIVERDALE PRESS

Printed From The Riverdale Press 2007-12-20

Board 8 votes 'no' to mayor's congestion plan

By Manny Grossman

After tiptoeing around the issue for months, Community Board 8 passed a formal resolution opposing Mayor Michael Bloomberg's controversial congestion pricing plan.

So far only two other community boards in the city - boards 8 and 11 in Queens - have formally come out against the traffic plan.

The Board 8 resolution, introduced by members Julie Reyes and Bill Stone, was raised at the Dec. 11 full board meeting. The board was in the process of debating another resolution on the congestion plan which outlines the community's concerns, but didn't take a stand one way or another.

"Listening to the discussion prior to the [first] motion, I sensed the board was in opposition to congestion pricing, so I made the motion," said Mr. Stone, who is on the board's traffic and transportation committee.

Although Mr. Stone crafted the language of the motion, Ms. Reyes lit the spark. Before the vote was taken on the original resolution, Ms. Reyes was adamant that the board take a position. "I wanted us to be on record either way," she later said, adding, "We're a community board that takes a stand on issues. I just feel it's our duty to give our voice to important issues."

The resolution opposing the mayor's plan passed by a vote of 14 to 6, with two abstentions. Board 8 Chairman Tony Cassino was one of the six who voted against the motion.

The other resolution, which also easily passed, lists some negative impacts the plan may have on the community. Some of the concerns raised are the possibility that the neighborhood will become a parking lot for commuters seeking to avoid the charge by driving downtown, and the possibility that fee will increase soon after the plan is enacted. In London, the fee doubled from \$10 to \$20 two years after it was implemented.

Both resolutions will be forwarded to the New York City Traffic Congestion Mitigation

Commission, the body charged with studying the mayor's plan and looking for ways to reduce traffic congestion.

The commission has floated some alternatives to the mayor's plan, including starting the congestion zone at 60th Street, instead of 86th Street, as the current proposal states.

The New York Post reported on Tuesday that Mr. Bloomberg said he is open to suggestions as long as the plan reduces traffic, raises revenue for the city and meets federal government guidelines.