

# **NEW YORK POST**

## **TIGHT PARKING SPOT**

### **NO SPACE FOR CARS NEAR CONGEST ZONES**

**By PATRICK GALLAHUE Transit Reporter**

February 13, 2008 -- Park and ride? Dream on.

Concern that a plan to charge drivers \$8 to enter Manhattan below 60th Street would turn nearby neighborhoods into parking lots is likely unfounded - because there's almost nowhere to park, a recent city survey found.

"There is a concern about people trying to park in the areas near the [congestion-pricing] border and taking mass transit from that point," said Upper East Side Councilman Daniel Garodnick. "But anyone looking for parking on the Upper East Side will be sadly disappointed."

A Transportation Department survey of five neighborhoods - either immediately next to the zone or with rail facilities that could make them an attractive connection for commuters - found that 93 to 98 percent of the nonmetered spaces were taken on any given afternoon.

But even in the wee hours, there wasn't much more parking available, the agency found. Between 91 and 98 percent of the spaces were taken at 5:30 a.m.

The agency surveyed the Upper East Side, Harlem, Forest Hills, Long Island City and Prospect Heights/Fort Greene, in advance of the congestion-pricing debate to discuss parking conditions in areas that could be affected.

And the results showed that commuters would be left with slim pickings for parking.

For example, 98 percent of the nonmetered parking spaces surveyed on the Upper East Side were occupied at 2 p.m., 6 p.m. and 5:30 a.m.

"We do have an extraordinary traffic and congestion problem," Garodnick said.

Finding a space at a parking meter wasn't much easier.

The turnover for metered spaces in the surveyed areas averaged between 1.2 and 1.6 times per hour, depending on the neighborhood.

But anti-congestion pricing activists said the numbers were most alarming because they show that with nowhere else to go, commuters could end up heading to other residential areas that aren't as crowded to park their cars, a possibility Long Island City Councilman Eric Gioia called the "congestion creep."

"You can't have tens of thousands of cars parking all day long," he said.

Walter McCaffrey, of Keep NYC Congestion Tax Free, added, "[The other neighborhoods] will end up being the ones to deal with the parking problems."

Even with no available parking spaces, Brooklyn Councilman David Yassky feared, "If commuters see [the neighborhoods] as a park-and-ride opportunity, they'll just come in earlier."

But several lawmakers said the numbers should push the city to establish reserved parking spaces for local residents in the adjacent areas.

"We want to give residents all the necessary advantages to have first crack at parking," Garodnick said.

DOT Deputy Commissioner Bruce Schaller said the agency was still analyzing the numbers and hadn't committed to any policy proposals yet.

The congestion-pricing plan passed a panel appointed to study it last month. The plan now must be written into a bill and approved by the City Council and the state Legislature before March 31 to be eligible for federal transit funds.

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