

Surprise (or is it)! Gridlock Again.

The latest news from London makes clear how much New York City (and State) residents owe the bold NYS Assembly Members and State Senators and 20 City Council Members who stood up to the onslaught of dollar-fed glossy mailings, commercials and more in support of the congestion tax (Might we ever learn the full tab?). This story from across the pond reports Transport for London conceding the return of gridlock just 5 ½ years after the February 2003 introduction of London's Congestion Charge (aka congestion tax). Keep NYC Free earlier exposed the revenue sham of London's traffic tax. When some misguided souls still want to impose this most unfair and inequitable of taxes, the public ought to know how the London scheme just simply failed. Keep NYC Congestion Tax Free proposed [Alternatives](#) to reduce traffic and congestion, and also raise substantial revenues and supports additional revenue [measures](#).

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2008/aug/06/congestioncharging.transport>
[guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk)

London gridlock at pre-congestion charge levels

- **TfL says capital's streets as congested as in 2002**
- **Mayor announces new measures to tackle tailbacks**
 - [Dan Milmo](#), transport correspondent
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The London congestion charge, the signature policy of the former mayor Ken Livingstone, is losing its battle against gridlock after Transport for London admitted the capital's streets are as congested as they were before the levy was introduced.

Pedestrians are expected to bear some of the consequences of the fightback against lengthening tailbacks, with pedestrian schemes facing the axe and experts calling for shorter crossing times at traffic lights. The London mayor, Boris Johnson, said this morning he would take action on roadworks and allow motorbikes in bus lanes in an effort to reverse the tide of congestion.

TfL's report today will give ample ammunition to opponents of the congestion charge, particularly those who criticised its extension to west London last year. It said gridlock in the congestion zone was as bad as it had been before February 2003, when the measure was first introduced, and there had been no improvement in the western zone since it was rolled out there.

Johnson said: "I have always thought that the congestion charge is a blunt instrument. It has proved successful in cutting traffic coming into London but on its own has not resolved the problem of congestion. Various works and schemes going on in the capital have also eroded its impact. I am therefore introducing a more comprehensive approach to easing congestion in London."

The mayor said he would use new powers to force utility companies to apply for permits before starting roadworks, and announced the scrapping of a plan to pedestrianise part of Parliament Square in Westminster. Traffic light signals will be "rephased" - or left on green or red for longer periods of time - to encourage smoother traffic flows.

Congestion charge backers, including senior TfL managers, argue that traffic would be even worse without the scheme, which levies fees on drivers entering central London between 7am and 6pm on weekdays.

Professor Stephen Glaister, a transport specialist at Imperial College London and a former TfL board member, said the report was "no surprise" because congestion had been inching back to 2002 levels for several years.

"Congestion would be a lot worse were it not for the charge," he said. "TfL needs to manage the roadworks better, which is plainly possible. Traffic lights can also be rephased by giving less green time to pedestrians and more to traffic."

According to TfL, cramped road space is the biggest congestion menace on London's streets. It said 70,000 fewer cars entered the original charging zone last year compared with 2002, with 30,000 fewer entering the western zone. But gridlock has increased because the reduction in road space has been even greater.

"Without the congestion charge the traffic problems in London would be much worse. However, as a result of other interventions such as utility and construction works, the reduction in road space has had a detrimental impact on congestion levels and is slowing traffic down," said Malcolm Murray-Clark, the TfL executive who introduced the scheme.