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Monday, December 8, 2008

Letters Editor
Newsday

To the editor:

Newsday correctly notes that Ravitch Commission offered no recipes to address reform at the MTA as part of the plan to address MTA's financing shortfall (Editorial: "MTA report doesn't get at the root problem," Sunday, December 7, 2008). Newsday also notes the problems with some of the revenue includes tolls and payroll taxes in the commission scheme. Newsday also needs to note that the Ravitch plan disappointingly lets Albany and City Hall off the hook. In contrast, we urge Long Islanders and elected officials to look at our coalition [plan](http://keepnycfree.com/media/files/2008-10-15_Recommendations_MTA_Financing.pdf) (http://keepnycfree.com/media/files/2008-10-15_Recommendations_MTA_Financing.pdf) which makes both the State and the City step up to the plate.

The imposition of tolls on the currently free East River and Harlem Rivers bridge crossings essentially recycles the inequitable, unfair and inefficient congestion tax that disproportionately hit outerborough and Long Island residents. Both the congestion tax and this new re-packaged son of the congestion tax scheme would take \$2 for administration for every \$3 for transit. Newsday noted its uncertain political prospects, perhaps recalling that the Assembly correctly shunned the parent scheme earlier this year.

We identify specific revenues that empower the city and the state to fund this core responsibility. This includes a modest \$0.04 state gasoline levy (\$255 million), a vehicle registration fee increase (\$250 million) which the editorial supports at the higher level subsequently proposed by the City Comptroller William Thompson, increased fines for illegal parking (\$75 million), higher parking meter rates (\$50 million) and more realistic (city) fees for the use of street space by construction contractors and utilities (\$500 million).

Other initiatives raise significant funds to support mass transit, including a non-resident income tax that apportions its proceeds between City and suburban transit projects (\$1.8 billion) and a modest real property tax surcharge on real estate development that benefits from mass transit (\$741 million).

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Sincerely,

Corey Bearak
Policy Advisor
Keep NYC Free

Read the editorial at: newsday.com/news/opinion/ny-vpmta075954332dec07,0,3776872.story