

Grandchild of Congestion Tax?

So the Mayor flies via private Jet across the Atlantic stamping his own special [carbon footprint](#) along the way (and back of course) and announces far off in Copenhagen that the failed Congestion Tax would solve the budget problems of the MTA. During the previous month and the months that preceded November's "Main Event," anyone looking and listening neither saw nor heard any mention of a Congestion Tax from its booster-in-chief. Not even a whisper. One can only surmise the outcome last month if the Congestion Tax got uttered last summer and fall.

Now, all of a sudden, and after the election, talk about this failed, unsound, and inefficient tax comes back from its chief advocate. Further, for anyone to suggest that a toll tax would raise more revenue in a downturn than a payroll tax, one can only surmise a failure to look at MTA and PANYNJ bridge and tunnel toll data.

Of course, both congestion pricing and the payroll tax were supposed to be dedicated to meeting the MTA's capital needs. Instead we have the payroll tax used to cover reductions in City and State support and to cover the MTA's inefficiencies. Meanwhile the MTA's basic capital needs go unmet, and the limited capital that is available gets dumped into what many observers describe as essentially a series of vanity projects

Keep NYC Free will continue to work with its coalition members to outline the faults of the Congestion Tax and emphasize the need for intelligent [solutions](#).

Read/ view a series of linked articles and videos on the remarks made abroad on the next page.

<http://www.nydailynews.com/blogs/dailypolitics/2009/12/the-idea-that-wouldnt-die.html>

The Daily Politics

December 15, 2009 8:34 AM

The Idea That Wouldn't Die »

By Elizabeth Benjamin

Mayor Bloomberg this morning predicted that congestion pricing will likely return to the negotiating table in Albany as state lawmakers struggle to address yet another budget shortfall at the MTA.

Bloomberg's pay-to-drive proposal, a signature plank of his wide-ranging [PlaNYC 2030 initiative](#), was killed by the Legislature (mostly the Assembly) [in April 2008](#). But he has never really given up on the idea, and often mentions it when he's discussing environmental and/or transportation policies.

"I don't think that congestion pricing and those kinds of things are dead; more and more cities are doing it," Bloomberg said from Copenhagen during an interview with CNBC's "Squawk Box".

"And in fact while we did not get Albany to pass our bill to institute congestion pricing for the lower half of Manhattan, remember: One half of the Legislature, the Albany Assembly, they tried to pass a bill to put congestion pricing around all of Manhattan, and they couldn't get it done. The Senate didn't go along.

"But next time, come March, they're going to have to balance a budget, and I think any kind of revenue source is going to be on the table, and it may in fact still get done...You see all of the cutbacks in the MTA budget. The MTA has got to find another source. If we had done congestion pricing two years ago, perhaps they wouldn't be [in this situation](#)."

I believe "congestion pricing around all of Manhattan" refers to the bridge tolls initially included in the MTA bailout proposed by now-LG Richard Ravitch and also in Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver's "compromise" plan, but were [rejected by the Senate Democrats](#).

The cash-strapped authority's current budget hole is due to a combination of a \$143 million cut inflicted by the Legislature in its deficit reduction plan and a \$200 million [over-estimate by the state](#) of how much revenue would be generated by the controversial payroll tax included in the final bailout package.

Read more: http://www.nydailynews.com/blogs/dailypolitics/2009/12/the-idea-that-wouldnt-die.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+nydnrss%2Fblogs%2Fdailypolitics+%28Blogs%2FThe+Daily+Politics%29&utm_content=Twitter#ixzz0ZmTVlnIf

<http://www.observer.com/2009/politics/bloomberg-says-congestion-pricing-not-dead>

THE NEW YORK OBSERVER

Bloomberg Says Congestion Pricing Is Not Dead

By Azi Paybarah

December 15, 2009 | 10:55 a.m.

At the Copenhagen Climate Summit, as he watched New York State legislators grapple with budget cutbacks, Michael Bloomberg tried reviving a failed green initiative that could put money back into the local economy: congestion pricing.

"I don't think congestion pricing, or those kind of things, are dead," he said on CNBC this morning. "One-half of the legislature, the Albany Assembly, they tried to pass a bill to put congestion pricing around all of Manhattan and they couldn't get it done. The Senate didn't go along. Next time, come March, they're going to have to balance a budget and I think any kind of revenue source will be on the table."

Bloomberg also defended using a private jet to get to Copenhagen, saying [the criticism](#) "is somebody trying to be cute. A small amount of pollution gets me here." He added, "What we all have to do is only use them when they make sense."

The official video from CNBC is [here](#). The unofficial, hand-held video of the interview from some bystander, is [here](#).

[Bloomberg was also on WNYC's The Takeaway](#) this morning, talking about the climate talks in Copenhagen.

<http://www.thetakeaway.org/stories/2009/dec/15/bloomberg-climate-talks-copenhagen/#transcript>

climate change copenhagen environment green technology mayor
New York Mayor Bloomberg at Climate Talks in Copenhagen
By John Hockenberry, Celeste Headlee
Guest: Michael Bloomberg
Tuesday, December 15 2009

New York City Mayor **Michael Bloomberg** is in Copenhagen this week to take part in the Climate Summit for Mayors. Last week, the Mayor passed his [Greener, Greater, Buildings Plan](#), and this week he hopes to inspire leaders from other cities to follow suit. With cities around the

world producing more than 80 percent of global carbon dioxide emissions, changes in urban systems can have green effects globally. We speak with Bloomberg from Copenhagen. (click through for [the full interview transcript](#))

Transcript

JOHN HOCKENBERRY: Is all environmentalism local? Can local political activism on environmental issues combat global warming? Michael Bloomberg says yes, to a point. Mayor Bloomberg, welcome to the program.

MICHAEL BLOOMBERG: Thank you for having me. It's a little bit chilly in Copenhagen but probably a little bit chilly there in New York as well.

JOHN HOCKENBERRY: Actually it's a little bit warm here but it'll cool down tomorrow, but enough about the weather. Let's talk about what you've said on a number of occasions. I can recall a speech you gave back in 2008 where you said the United States needs to lead by example to have an impact on global warming. Do you think we're doing that, and how is that reflected in your work at the climate change conference?

MICHAEL BLOOMBERG: Well I think it's cities that are going to lead national governments to do something and I think national governments have to help each other. And America has always been a country that sets the standard for the whole world and leads by example and so it is incumbent on our federal government to do something. But it's the cities where the mayors have to make sure their economies aren't choked by congestion, it's the cities where the mayors have to make sure that the public doesn't have to breathe the pollutants in the air into their lungs. And so yes we have to lead by example, but even if nobody pays attention elsewhere, I think we have an obligation to do something and the ability to do something. In New York, we just passed a green buildings bill, which will require for example landlords to post what the energy uses in their buildings are on the internet. Then tenants that might want to locate into those buildings, or buyers or lenders for those buildings can see whether those buildings are energy efficient. In the end, all these things help ourselves.

JOHN HOCKENBERRY: Mayor Bloomberg, one of the issues is political and when you came into office nearly a decade ago you really put a moratorium on the recycling program in New York and refocused it and brought it back. First of all, you were criticized for doing that...

MICHAEL BLOOMBERG: With everything you can always do it better and times change and you should look at new ways of doing it. But you also have to be realistic in terms of the economy and jobs and what society can afford, and so for example if recycling is not the best use of your dollars to improve the environment, do something else for a while. If recycling the way we did it in the past is not economically viable but there is other ways to make it economically viable, there's no harm in changing that. And I've always thought that if you really want to make change you have to bring things back to people's self-interest today. So for example we all care about housing and jobs. My house, my job. And that's fine, that's what we should be doing. If people can understand for example that if they were to change the light bulbs in their house or their apartment, they would reduce their energy bills overnight, if they were to paint the roofs of their houses or their apartments white, they would reduce their energy bills dramatically

overnight, then they'll do that, and there are longer-term, more global benefits. But in the end, a company's going to do what's in the interest of its shareholders. So if you can show the company that they can save money by being more ecologically friendly or if they can recruit a better workforce, it has a lot of benefits in doing it short-term. And then I'll take the long-term stuff, that's great, that's the way we really have to do it, but the ways we're going to get it done is to make people understand short-term, local and right in their own backyard, in their own house, they can make the world better.

JOHN HOCKENBERRY: You know we've been hearing voices from around the world all week long as Copenhagen has been taking place and young children in India were commenting on this program yesterday about how the United States has an unfair amount of carbon that it puts into the environment purely by virtue of its luxury and standard of living. Are you vulnerable as a mayor of New York on that?

MICHAEL BLOOMBERG: I don't know if Americans are a bad example. New York City, for example, is one of the greenest cities in the world per capita because of our density and because more people walk and take mass transit than virtually any place else. And most of our pollutants come from buildings and not from transportation. But regardless, we should sit here and not worry about what anybody else is doing, we should make our part, to make our world--particularly the world we live in--better. And it is clearly true that more developed countries in some sense use more energy and therefore are more polluting, but that doesn't mean less-developed countries should aspire to be as big polluters as we are. In fact, they have an opportunity to get the development in a much more efficient way. So what we have to do is, yes India has to develop and yes India wants for its people the same things we want for us. But while we're trying to bring our use of carbon products and pollution down, as they develop their economy they should try not to raise it. And we'll both wind up in a great place.

CELESTE HEADLEE: Mayor, we've seen the agreements in Copenhagen get stalled by some pretty complicated issues between countries and we've seen states like California bypassing Copenhagen altogether to get some environmental agreements. Which is more effective? Do you think in the end cities and states are going to have to bypass this international political stage?

MICHAEL BLOOMBERG: Well I've always believed whether it's change in the environment, or controlling all of the big issues that face us, most of them are issues where in the end it's the cities and city governments that make the difference. And that's partly because the Mayors are closer to the people day-in and day-out. You know I take the subway every day, I hear what peoples' concerns are, I walk the streets, I shake hands with anybody and everybody, and as you move up to the state and then the federal government level, they are--and maybe for security reasons or a variety of other things--more removed from the day-in, day-out interests of the people. The reason that Mayors typically don't move on to higher offices is they have to make decisions. The public looks at them and says, 'I want that garbage cleaned up and I want it done efficiently. I want to reduce my energy bill in my apartment or my house today.' And those are done much more at the city level and that's why mayors are much more of an operations kind of person whereas governors and presidents tend to be much more legislative kinds of functioning offices in the executive branch.

JOHN HOCKENBERRY: Well I'll come at one more time in this sort of 'lead by example' idea. Does that mean you're going to fly commercial home from Copenhagen Mr. Mayor? The way you use private jets and...

MICHAEL BLOOMBERG: No, I'm taking a bunch of people. And you know the small carbon footprint the plane generates for getting the opportunity to come here and get lots of cities to follow New York's lead and for New York to learn from other cities, you know a lot of what we do in New York City, we learn from others, for example here in the city hall in Copenhagen, and our new program to close Broadway and Times Square and Herald Square and reduce traffic accidents and pedestrian accidents dramatically, which has improved traffic and certainly helped tourism and business in the area, that came from ideas that we find here in Copenhagen.

JOHN HOCKENBERRY: All right, well, thanks so much for joining us Mayor Bloomberg. Mike Bloomberg with the vagabond shoes is the Mayor of New York and he's at the Climate talks in Copenhagen.

http://www.nypost.com/p/news/local/manhattan/mike_and_dave_in_gear_for_new_tolls_W8xD BzOPIDslcrutCT1MJ

New York Post Updated: Wed., Dec. 16, 2009, 4:30 PM home
Mike and Dave in gear for new tolls

By DAVID SEIFMAN, CARL CAMPANILE and TOM NAMAKO

Last Updated: 4:30 PM, December 16, 2009

Posted: 5:24 AM, December 16, 2009

Choke on this, drivers.

Mayor Bloomberg and Gov. Paterson both still want to charge drivers to go into Manhattan -- and they each said yesterday those fees would have saved the MTA from its massive 2010 budget hole.

"I don't think congestion pricing or those kinds of things are dead," the mayor said in Copenhagen, Denmark, where he was attending a global-climate summit, in reference to a plan to charge drivers \$8 to go below 86th Street on weekdays.

Today, the MTA board will vote to close a \$343 million budget gap in 2010, brought on by cuts in state funding and fat raises to transit workers.

As a result, MTA brass is considering shuttering the W and Z lines, eliminating free student MetroCards and cutting back Access-A-Ride service for the disabled.

Paterson, who earlier this year proposed \$5 fees for the Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queensboro and Williamsburg Bridges, said he couldn't understand why New York City lawmakers were "up there defending the automobile owners" when tolls tanked in the Senate earlier this year.

"Those are the revenues that are now missing. That was in the original plan," he said.

Bloomberg recalled how congestion pricing was shot down in 2008.

"But next time, come March, they're going to have to balance a budget and I think any kind of revenue source is going to be on the table and in fact it may still get done," Bloomberg said.

http://ny1.com/1-all-boroughs-news-content/top_stories/110536/bloomberg--congestion-pricing-may-resurface

2/15/2009 08:53 PM

Bloomberg Hints At Return Of Congestion Pricing

By: NY1 News



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While speaking to reporters Tuesday at the environmental summit in Copenhagen, Mayor Michael Bloomberg said it may just be a matter of time before his controversial congestion pricing plan resurfaces.

The plan would have charged drivers a hefty fee to enter Manhattan below 60th Street during the day.

"Come March, they're going to have to balance a budget, and I think any kind of revenue source is going to be on the table, and in fact it may still get done," Bloomberg said.

"They've now put park benches in the middle of Times Square, reduced Broadway traffic up and down town from four lanes down to one or two. And lower Broadway down to one lane. So he's created congestion," said Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver.

The state legislature would have to sign off on any congestion pricing plan. More than 18 months ago, they failed to bring it to a vote.

http://www.nydailynews.com/ny_local/2009/12/15/2009-12-15_mayor_bloomberg_predicts_that_mta_funding_crisis_will_lead_to_congestion_pricing.html?r=ny_local&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+nydrss%2Fny_local+%28NY+Local%29



Mayor Bloomberg predicts that MTA funding crisis will lead to congestion pricing, bridge tolls

BY [Adam Lisberg](#)

DAILY NEWS CITY HALL BUREAU CHIEF

Tuesday, December 15th 2009, 6:21 PM



Tama/Getty

The MTA is in a \$700 million budget hole and Mayor Bloomberg says Albany could decide to implement congestion pricing or bridge tolls to help ease the financial burden.

Read more: http://www.nydailynews.com/ny_local/2009/12/15/2009-12-15_mayor_bloomberg_predicts_that_mta_funding_crisis_will_lead_to_congestion_pricing.html?r=ny_local&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+nydrss%2Fny_local+%28NY+Local%29#ixzz0ZtMEdBOq

[COPENHAGEN](#) - The [MTA](#)'s funding crisis could lead to some form of congestion pricing or [Manhattan](#) bridge tolls as soon as springtime, [Mayor Bloomberg](#) predicted Tuesday.

"I don't think that congestion pricing and those kinds of things are dead," Bloomberg told [CNBC](#) as part of a day of appearances touting [New York](#)'s efforts to use less energy.

Bloomberg's controversial idea to charge \$8 to drive into Manhattan below 60th St. died in the Assembly last year, and a plan for tolls on every Manhattan bridge was scuttled in the Senate this year.

But with the MTA facing an unexpected budget hole of up to \$700 million, Bloomberg said, the revenue from a toll could be irresistible to [Albany](#) lawmakers - while also cutting traffic and pollution in Manhattan.

"Come March, they're going to have to balance a budget, and I think any kind of revenue source is going to be on the table, and it may in fact still get done," Bloomberg said. "If we had done congestion pricing two years ago, perhaps they wouldn't be in this situation."

[London](#), [Stockholm](#) and other cities pioneered the idea of charging drivers to enter a central city, and Bloomberg overcame outer-borough resistance to ram his plan through the City Council last

year.

The idea remains unpopular in many parts of the city, though, and Bloomberg was careful later to distance himself from any new push for congestion pricing.

"Whether you see it in New York or not, I'll leave it up to the state legislature," he told a group of American mayors later at the [United Nations](#) summit.

"Perhaps it's an idea whose time has come."

http://nymag.com/daily/intel/2009/12/congestion_pricing_may_make_an.html

Congestion Pricing May Make an Unwelcome Return

- 12/15/09 at 11:30 PM
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Photo: Getty Images

In an appearance on CNBC today, Mayor Bloomberg said congestion pricing could make an unwelcome return this spring as the MTA tries to shore up its funding crisis. "Come March, they're going to have to balance a budget, and I think any kind of revenue source is going to be on the table, and it may in fact still get done," Bloomberg said. "If we had done congestion pricing two years ago, perhaps they wouldn't be in this situation." [[NYDN](#)]

By: [Adam K. Raymond](#)

Read more: [Congestion Pricing May Make an Unwelcome Return -- Daily Intel](#)
http://nymag.com/daily/intel/2009/12/congestion_pricing_may_make_an.html#comments#ixzz0ZtN0I8vq