

Corey Bearak Remarks at Long Island Smart Growth Working Group
July 19, 2016, Sustainability Institute at Molloy College, East Farmingdale, NY

When discussion comes to the MTA capital plan, we often need to watch out for those who try to couple the need to finance the plan – and fund public transit in general, with ideological schemes to increase costs for drivers – drivers already pay registration fee and surcharges, gas tax and sales tax on repairs and purchases. Those folks just want to prevent driving without regard for economic impacts.

Interesting too, NYC Council member I. Daneek Miller, who before his election, led one of the MTA bus unions, decries what he calls transportation deserts in parts of Queens where folks lack adequate public transit options; Long Islanders certainly know those places in Nassau and Suffolk.

Until last month, the ideological driven effort to toll the East River Bridges – Congestion Pricing under former Mayor Bloomberg; now repackaged as the Move New York Fare Plan promoted by Gridlock Sam, only enjoyed some Assembly sponsors; last month Staten Island Senator Andrew Lanza decided to sponsor a Senate bill with a reduced toll for Staten Islanders; they would pay \$3.04 one way instead of the current \$5.54.

Evidently the Senator must have had some trouble passing Math. With bridges free, his constituent pay only \$5.54 to go to Manhattan and return to their island. With the Senator's plan, they constituent pay to enter and leave Manhattan – \$5 each way plus the Verrazano Bridge toll, \$13.04. Compare that to \$5.54.

We still think most Senators and Assembly members and the Governor get it when it comes to the toll-tax scheme. The current MTA plans got done without new financing schemes.

I know many here still smart over the payroll tall. I am involved with the Queens Chamber of Commerce which opposes tolls on free bridges as bad for small business. I am also a Senior Advisor for the Coalition Keep NYC (Congestion Tax) Free which led the way against the Bloomberg and Ravitch schemes and points out the unfair nature of the Move NY scheme. We pointed out how the older plans and needs more fairly including getting resourcing New York City to provide its fair share of funding; one example is to increase the grossly below market fees to close NYC streets for private construction; current fees make rent control look pricey.

We will continue to keep you and your leadership informed. Thank you.