

<http://queenspress.com/de-blasio-and-miller-upset-over-congestion-pricing/>

## De Blasio and Miller Upset Over Congestion Pricing

Posted on August 18, 2017

BY TRONE DOWD

As the summer fallout over the New York City subway system continues, Gov. Andrew Cuomo has implied that a controversial state proposal may be in the works.



*I. Danee Miller slammed Gov. Andrew Cuomo's plan to instate congestion pricing in the city. Andrew Cuomo photo by Bruce Adler*

The governor has indicated that he is considering the implementation of congestion pricing for drivers entering Manhattan as a means of assisting the city's transit system with its economic and infrastructural woes.

Congestion price would essentially tax commuters in order to use the city's most crowded borough.

"Congestion pricing is an idea whose time has come," Cuomo said.

This is not the first time such an idea has been proposed by a New York elected official. Mayor Michael Bloomberg had previously suggested the concept 10 years ago. Under Bloomberg's plan, drivers entering the busiest sections of Manhattan during peak hours would have to pay an \$8 fee. He said that the money raised would go towards repairing the aging transit infrastructure.

But Bloomberg's proposal was rejected by representatives in Albany. Cuomo claims to have researched that previous attempt. And while the governor's updated version would have the same goal in mind, he said that his office is looking into a way to improve the concept to be more economically friendly for commuters.

“We have been going through the problems with the old plan and trying to come up with an updated and frankly better congestion pricing plan,” he said.

**Councilman I. Daneek Miller (D-St. Albans) criticized the idea in a statement he released on Monday.**

**“The MTA must not charge those living in transportation deserts to subsidize those who already enjoy access to the subway system, especially those who live in luxury in Manhattan,” Miller said.**

**He argued that for areas such as his council district, commuters would be punished for the MTA’s inability to provide sufficient transit options.**

**“No matter how you cut it, [it] will be a regressive tax that hurts working families,” Miller said. “Plus, those residents who will pay the new tolls will not realize any benefits and these increased costs will hurt our local businesses. Better ways exist and make sense to resource the MTA to not only pay for needed repairs, but also increase access and make the entire system more accessible and equitable for the entire city—and I and my colleagues will continue to advocate for these reforms.”**

Mayor Bill de Blasio’s office appeared to echo Miller’s stance on the hypothetical plan.

“The mayor has put forth a clear plan, which many New Yorkers have embraced—to ask the wealthiest one percent to chip in a few extra dollars to establish a new, long-term funding stream for subways and buses,” Finan said in a statement provided to the PRESS of Southeast Queens. “Other revenue generating ideas should be accompanied by a similarly detailed plan before they can be evaluated on the merits.”

Finan said that, for now, the mayor is waiting to see the governor’s plan.

“We’ll review any serious and viable proposal the governor puts forward,” Finan said. “In the meantime, the governor should immediately return the half-billion dollars the state diverted from the MTA.”

Tensions between the city and state regarding New York City’s subway system have continued to build. Cuomo and de Blasio—who has argued that city-provided funds have been repeatedly misused—have shifted blame back and forth on whether the city or state was responsible for the transit system.