

Keep NYC Free

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Voice of the People
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Many questions and issues remain regarding the congestion pricing scheme passed last year (“Write congestion rules in broad daylight,” Daily News Be My Guest Op-ed, January 4, 2020). One involves transparency in the implementation of this toll-tax scheme. Thus, we applaud the chair and executive director of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA for pressing the need for transparency in the appointment of members and meetings of the Traffic Mobility Review Board (TMRB). This unelected body will set the toll-tax rates and “award” exemptions to the toll-tax scheme. Importantly, and needing some clarification, the transit advocates note the six member panel makes its recommendation next November AFTER Election Day; that needs to change. The public ought to know the deal before they vote to elect/ re-elect members of the State Senate and State Assembly. After all, it impact our pocketbooks! The public needs to know where candidates – incumbents and challengers – stand on any recommendations the panel makes on setting the toll-tax and exempting anyone from this cost. Delaying these important decisions that impact our pocketbooks and quality of life until AFTER we go to the polls next November deprives New Yorkers from being informed of a candidates's stance on congestion pricing and its details.

Sincerely,

Joshua Bienstock
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Write congestion rules in broad daylight

BE OUR GUEST

BY LISA DAGLIAN AND ANDREW ALBERT

January 4, 2020

In less than a year, and decades after it was first introduced, New York City will become the first metropolis in the United States to implement congestion pricing. Yet no one knows what it will cost to enter the zone, south of 60th St. in Manhattan, whether all drivers will be charged the same, who will be exempt, whether it will be a one- or two-way toll — or who will make those important decisions.

It's time to bring these questions and others to the forefront and begin the public discussions that will be instrumental to congestion pricing's success. Although final recommendations won't come to the MTA Board until November 2020, drivers, riders, walkers, bikers, skaters and skeptics alike need to be part of the conversation.

Unfortunately, a panel with the power to write most the rules is set to do so in secret, with incredibly limited public input. That's a recipe for disaster.

Under the law, a six-member panel called the Traffic Mobility Review Board (TMRB) is slated to set the pricing structure.

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Another burning question is how exemptions, if any, will be structured. A [wide range of groups](#), from low-income people to [police officers](#), are already clamoring to be carved out. Allowing too many people to drive into the Central Business District for free is counterproductive and exactly the wrong thing to do.

The bare minimum we should expect is that exemptions are proposed and approved in broad daylight, not in backroom deals.

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Daglian is executive director of and Albert is chair of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA, as well as an MTA Board member.

Read entire guest op-ed at http://enewspaper.nydailynews.com/infinity/article_share.aspx?guid=e19a8729-d2f8-4227-bfe1-32299e3648ae