

# Congestion Pricing: A Must for Public Health and New York's Environment

Transportation contributes more carbon pollution, a main driver of climate change, than any other sector in New York State.<sup>1</sup> By cutting traffic, congestion pricing has successfully reduced pollution and improved public health in other cities around the world. Reducing vehicle pollution would also help New York achieve its goals to combat climate change.

## New York Voters Want Climate Action Now

Climate change is already affecting communities across the state. Congestion pricing is an immediate step our state legislators can take to cut pollution and reduce the worsening effects of climate change – and it's exactly the kind of action voters want lawmakers to take:

- The majority of New York voters believe climate change is a very serious problem and will harm them personally.<sup>2</sup>
- Vast majorities of New York voters want the state to invest in transportation choices that reduce air pollution all across New York. This includes voters of every political party, every part of the state, every class and ethnicity.<sup>3</sup>

## Improving Public Health

Poor air quality leads to asthma, lung disease, and many other illnesses, especially for children and older people. It can result in higher doctor bills, more missed days of work and school, and can cut months off of our lives.<sup>4</sup>

NYC has the slowest moving streets of any U.S. city.<sup>5</sup> Vehicles in midtown Manhattan move at an average of 5 mph, just a little faster than walking.<sup>6</sup> With New York City's public transit system in crisis, more and more people are choosing to travel by car, which slows traffic and leads to more harmful air pollution.

- Stop-and-go traffic releases as much as three times the pollution of free-flowing traffic.<sup>7</sup>
- Over 2 million New Yorkers live or work within 500 feet of a congested roadway and face a higher risk of illness or disease including cancer and heart disease.<sup>8</sup>
- Air pollution can trigger asthma attacks.<sup>9</sup> In New York City, children under the age of four were more than two and a half times more likely to visit the emergency room because of asthma than children in the rest of the state.

<sup>1</sup> NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation, Mitigation of Climate Change <https://www.dec.ny.gov/energy/99223.html>

<sup>2</sup> TNC, New York Voter Views of Transportation and Climate Issues, <https://www.nature.org/content/dam/tnc/nature/en/documents/NewYorkTransportationResearchAnalysis.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ambient PM2.5 Reduces Global and Regional Life Expectancy <https://pubs.acs.org/doi/10.1021/acs.estlett.8b00360>

<sup>5</sup> INRIX Inc <http://inrix.com/press-releases/scorecard-2018-us/>

<sup>6</sup> New York City Mobility Report, NYC Dept. of Transportation <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/mobility-report-2018-print.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> EDF, All Choked Up, [https://www.edf.org/sites/default/files/6117\\_AllChokedUp\\_NYCTrafficandHealthReport.pdf](https://www.edf.org/sites/default/files/6117_AllChokedUp_NYCTrafficandHealthReport.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> EPA, ASTHMA AND OUTDOOR AIR POLLUTION <https://www3.epa.gov/airnow/asthma-flyer.pdf>

# A Win-Win Solution for All New Yorkers

Congestion pricing would cut air pollution, improve public health, and help address climate change, all while raising critical revenue to improve and modernize NYC's public transit system.

## ✔ Congestion pricing would bring numerous benefits to the state including:

- Improve the efficiency and speed of buses, cars, and trucks in Manhattan
- Reduce traffic in the central business zone by a predicted 20 percent
- Electrify the city's bus fleet and remove cancer-causing diesel buses from the road<sup>10</sup>
- Add travel options in transit "deserts" – neighborhoods without adequate public transit options – through improved bus service
- Clean the air and provide better health outcomes for children, adults, and seniors

## ✔ Other cities have seen significant benefits from congestion pricing:

- Singapore and London experienced 20-30 percent improvement in traffic speeds and 20-25 percent reduction in traffic volume in the congested zones.<sup>11</sup>
- In Stockholm, pollution decreased and the number of children going to the hospital because of asthma went down by nearly 50 percent.<sup>12</sup>

## ✔ Congestion pricing is also a matter of environmental justice and transit equity:

- Some neighborhoods have higher levels of air pollution.<sup>13</sup> These often include low-income communities or communities of color, which have historically suffered disproportionate effects of environmental pollution.
- Black and Latinx New Yorkers make up more than half of all public transit riders.
- Many communities of color or low incomes are in transit "deserts."
- Only two percent of working poor New Yorkers from the outer boroughs would be affected by the charge as part of their commutes, while the 58 percent who take transit would benefit greatly.<sup>14</sup>

**Our state lawmakers have a critical opportunity to bring numerous benefits to New York State including cleaner air, improved public health, and much-needed revenue to fix the city's public transit system. Fix Our Transit urges New York State legislators to include a comprehensive congestion pricing plan in this year's budget.**

<sup>10</sup> American Cancer Society, Diesel Exhaust & Cancer <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/cancer-causes/diesel-exhaust-and-cancer.html>

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Dept. of Transportation, Lessons Learned From International Experience in Congestion Pricing <https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/fhwahop08047/02summ.htm>

<sup>12</sup> NATIONAL BUREAU OF ECONOMIC RESEARCH, CONGESTION PRICING, AIR POLLUTION AND CHILDREN'S HEALTH <https://www.nber.org/papers/w24410.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> NYC Dept. of Health, The New York City Community Air Survey <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/environmental/comm-air-survey-08-16.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Community Service Society, CONGESTION PRICING - A CSS ANALYSIS, <HTTP://WWW.CSSNY.ORG/NEWS/ENTRY/CONGESTION-PRICING-CSS-ANALYSIS>

**FixOurTransit** 

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