

February 29, 2024

Metropolitan Transportation Authority
2 Broadway
New York, NY 10004

Subject: AIANY Support for the Central Business District Tolling Program

To Whom It May Concern,

American Institute of Architects New York writes to express our strong support for New York's Central Business District Tolling Program, otherwise known as congestion pricing, as a solution that is both necessary for commuters from the region who rely on public transit and a critical tool to reducing traffic congestion and emissions in our air.

In the NYC metropolitan area, congestion in the central business district creates untenable delays for emergency vehicles, buses, delivery vehicles, and drivers who have no other choice but to take cars and trucks into the zone. Chronic disinvestment in transit has meant an unreliable, inaccessible system that lurches from crisis to crisis.

Congestion pricing is a proven solution – seen in London, Stockholm, and Singapore – that would create a multi-billion-dollar investment to modernize and upgrade public transportation and lessen the burden of traffic congestion that would otherwise continue to undermine our economy and pollute our air. Congestion pricing is a win-win-win for the region that will fund public transit, reduce traffic congestion, and clean our air.

With less traffic and noise pollution from cars and trucks on streets during the day, we can reimagine urban spaces through the development of bike lanes, green spaces, and designated walking paths for pedestrians.

Additionally, congestion pricing is a valuable tool to reduce gridlock currently jamming our streets and blocking intersections, which will improve street safety, speed up emergency vehicle response times, and increase bus speeds; currently, bus speeds are among the slowest in the nation, rarely averaging above 9 MPH and averaging just 3.4 MPH in Midtown Manhattan.

Congestion pricing will help the overwhelming majority of New Yorkers who rely on public transit and help ensure we are building a more sustainable and equitable future. AIANY urges the MTA to quickly implement congestion pricing with limited exemptions.

Sincerely,
Jesse Lazar, Executive Director