

Russell Squire
Chair

Will Brightbill
District Manager



505 Park Avenue, Suite 620
New York, N.Y. 10022-1106
(212) 758-4340
(212) 758-4616 (Fax)
www.cb8m.com – Website
info@cb8m.com – E-Mail

**The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan
Congestion Pricing Task Force**
Tuesday, November 22, 2022, 6:30 PM
Conducted Remotely on Zoom

Minutes

Present: Mohit Agrawal, Michele Birnbaum, Alida Camp, Ed Hartzog, Sahar Husain, Craig Lader, John McClement, Judy Schneider, Cos Spagnoletti

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 PM.

Item 1: Updates on the Central Business District Tolling Program since the October 6, 2022 Task Force Meeting

Since the October 6th Task Force meeting, there have been no official announcements or actions involving Congestion Pricing. One of the Co-Chairs noted the company that was awarded the contract for installing and operating the infrastructure that will be used for congestion pricing is TransCore.

Item 2: Identification of policy recommendations to City and State agencies regarding parking issues pertaining to Congestion Pricing

In response to discussions at previous Task Force meetings it was decided that addressing the potential congestion pricing impacts related to parking should be a focus of the discussion. One of the co-chairs began with a synopsis of the findings from the Environmental Assessment (EA) regarding congestion pricing. While it did find that congestion pricing implementation may result in an increase in parking demand by subway stations, commuter rail stations and park and ride facilities outside the Central Business District (CBD), including near the 60th Street toll zone boundary, it further found that the increase would not be large enough to result in any overall adverse impacts and that it would result in a reduction in parking demand in the CBD itself. Specifically, it stated:

- There is potential that the CBD Tolling Alternative would increase parking demand immediately outside the Manhattan CBD in the neighborhoods just north of the Manhattan CBD boundary at 60th Street (the Upper East Side and Upper West Side);
- Modeling shows that the number of cars on each of the avenues immediately north of 60th Street would decrease under all tolling scenarios, and thus there would not be an increase in parking demand in those neighborhoods;
- If an increase in demand were to occur just north of the 60th Street Manhattan CBD boundary, that demand would be accommodated either by the existing off-street parking spaces where available or—if there were capacity constraints—through upward adjustments in parking fees. These factors would likely offset potential changes in parking behavior resulting from CBD Tolling.
- Members of the public have expressed concern that after implementation, taxi and for-hire vehicle (FHV) drop-offs would increase just north of 60th Street and demand for the existing, limited supply of on-street parking north of 60th Street could increase, as people seek to avoid crossing the Manhattan CBD boundary in a vehicle and paying the toll. However, this is unlikely to occur given the difficulty in finding an available parking space in this area. If any increase in parking demand or taxi/FHV drop-offs does occur in this area, it would likely decrease over time as people adjust their travel patterns to account for the toll.

- Particularly for those driving their personal vehicles, the complexity and wasted time associated with finding parking in this area would likely deter long-term shifts to parking just north of the 60th Street Manhattan CBD boundary. Any increase in demand for on-street parking would not affect most neighborhood residents, who are not likely to rely on on-street parking for their regular parking needs. It should be noted that ready access to on-street parking spaces is not a defining feature of neighborhood character in this area, and any limited changes to on-street parking availability that may occur as a result of Project implementation would therefore not have the potential to affect neighborhood character.
- Between 60th and 65th Streets, there are 3,865 spaces in 34 parking facilities are located east of Central Park, which under typical conditions are at 70 to 80 percent occupancy.
- It is unlikely that new off-street parking capacity would be added just north of 60th Street because the area is built-out and lacks available sites, and a decades-long trend toward lower parking demand combined with high real estate values in this area further suggest that new parking garages would not be developed.
- In areas immediately south of 60th Street, the CBD Tolling Alternative could reduce local demand for off-street parking, which is a prominent land use in the area.
- Neighborhood residents who live on one side of the Manhattan CBD boundary and park on the other, and who elect not to switch to a parking space on the same side of the Manhattan CBD boundary, would need to pay the toll each time they drive to their residence; this could add complexity to certain activities for those individual residents, such as dropping off purchases at a residence after a shopping trip. However, as noted, most residents do not have vehicles, and among those who do, most do not drive their vehicles in connection with shopping trips in this way.
- New York City zoning does not require most developments in the 60th Street Manhattan CBD boundary study area to include off-street parking, and CEQR guidance generally does not consider project parking shortfalls in the 60th Street Manhattan CBD boundary study area to constitute an adverse impact due to the wide availability of transit and other alternative modes of transportation.
- Because new parking garages are not likely to be developed in the place of existing uses, there would be no change in the mixed-use nature, established land use patterns, and high development densities
- Any redevelopment of existing parking garages could also benefit neighborhood character by introducing more active uses and higher densities that are more aligned with the defining features of the area's neighborhood character.

In contrast to the EA's findings, most speakers were very skeptical that congestion pricing would not present challenges to those seeking parking in Community District 8, especially in the area just north of 60th Street, and questioned the veracity of the EA. There were numerous speakers who mentioned multiple garages in the lower 60s that have recently closed or been redeveloped, (which would reduce the number of available spaces from the approximately 3,800 reported in the EA. Other speakers noted that there are garages in the district are at capacity across the entire district. One member noted that there is at least one garage in which drivers would enter on one side of the toll zone boundary and exit on the other side, which would subject those vehicles to the congestion fee. There was concern expressed about the EA's findings that parking demand in garages would likely be managed by facilities raising prices, since it was noted that garages are already very expensive. There was concern that charging higher prices to residents to manage congestion arising from congestion pricing would be unfair to the residents. The resolution that the Task Force voted on attempted to address these issues.

Multiple attendees provided comments supportive of the concept of residential parking permits, especially near the 60th Street toll zone boundary, as they believe that it would mitigate the potential issue of drivers seeking to avoid paying the congestion fee. There were also some attendees who were apprehensive towards the idea, as there was concern that people who work in the district and live elsewhere, as is common for the staff of residential buildings, teachers, contractors, and small business owners would be most adversely impacted, and the challenges of how to address situations such as people to reside in the district with vehicles registered elsewhere or with driver's licenses from other jurisdictions. It was also noted that although the current NYCDOT commissioner has expressed past support for residential parking permits, NYCDOT has previously suggested that it would be very challenging from an administrative perspective to develop and implement such a program.

There were also some speakers who reiterated points made at previous Task Force meetings in regards to their opposition to Congestion Pricing, what some see as the regressive nature of the policy and how fees that may be up to \$23 may have to be raised further in future years, concerns about MTA accountability and the potential for

revenues to be misspent, unintended consequences that may result, and general questioning of the EA's findings and the policies that are in the law that authorizes congestion pricing. There was some discussion of whether it would be beneficial to perform an independent survey of residents of Community District 8 to determine their views on Congestion Pricing. Some speakers questioned whether anyone will pay attention to CB8 resolutions, and whether the Task Force's efforts as expressed in resolutions are going to have any impact.

There were also comments about potential parking issues on east 86 and 72 street, where there are express subway stops and the Q which goes directly to the west side.

The following resolution was then put forward:

WHEREAS; New York State established a Central Business District Tolling Program, enacted into law in the FY 2020 New York State Budget; and

WHEREAS; the Congestion Pricing Environmental Assessment acknowledges that there may be some increase in parking demands immediately north of the toll zone boundary; and

WHEREAS; residents of Community District 8 have concerns that parking demand near subways and in other areas within Community District 8, particularly near express subway stops; and

WHEREAS; the Congestion Pricing Environmental Assessment further found that increases in parking demand Community District 8 would be accommodated by existing off-street parking, and through upward adjustments to parking garage fees if capacity constraints were to occur; and

WHEREAS; there has been a recent reduction in the number of garage parking spaces in Community District 8, especially in the lower East 60s, due to facilities being sold, torn down, or being converted to other uses; and

WHEREAS; the Congestion Pricing Environmental Assessment noted that it was unlikely that new garages would be built north of 60th Street due to a lack of available sites and a decades long trend toward lower parking demand; and

WHEREAS; residents of Community District 8 have expressed concern that there will be an influx of new vehicles seeking parking both in the immediate area north of the 60th Street toll boundary and near subway stations throughout the Upper East Side; and

WHEREAS; there are existing parking facilities with one-way entrances and exits that would make it impossible to avoid crossing the toll zone boundary;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Community Board 8 Manhattan supports the following policies to address issues related to parking that will result from implementation of congestion pricing:

1. The MTA and/or NYCDOT should annually measure and report to CB8 the number of street and garage spots, the number of vehicles registered to addresses, and the prices of monthly garage spaces on each of the following sets of blocks: 60th to 69th Street, 70th to 79th Streets, 80th to 89th Streets and 90th to 96th Streets;
2. If for any set of blocks monthly garage rates increase by more than the citywide average, or if the ratio of vehicles registered compared to garage spots increases, then the MTA shall present solutions to improve parking availability that do not rely on further increases to monthly garage price rates;
3. The MTA shall present exemptions from the congestion fee for individuals that enter parking garages that have entrances on one side of the toll zone boundary and exit onto the other side of the toll zone boundary.

Yes (7): Agrawal, Camp, Husein, Lader, McClement, Schneider, Spagnoletti

No (1): Birnbaum

Abstain (1): Hartzog

Items 3: Next Steps

The co-chairs of the Task Force announced that the focus areas to be discussed at the next meeting (at a date to be determined) would be the following:

- Identification of policy recommendations to City and State agencies regarding matters pertaining to Congestion Pricing's impact on Community District 8 near the toll zone boundary (between 59th and 66th Streets).
- Identification of policy recommendations related to the MTA transparency, accountability and oversight in regards to Congestion Pricing operations, use of revenues generated, and administration by TransCore.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:53PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Alida Camp & Craig Lader, Co-Chairs