

April 8, 2019

Rebecca Seawright



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Thank you for contacting our office to express your views on congestion pricing. We appreciate your comments and enduring interest in this important matter impacting on our community, the City, the region and beyond.

We are all very much aware of how the unreliable transit system causes us to miss or be late for appointments—including work and medical related as well as classes—causing lost wages, harmful stress and constant inconvenience. We also know that traffic gridlock interferes with emergency response, causes air pollution, and makes travel in Manhattan extremely difficult for drivers and pedestrians alike.

The good news is that the 2019-20 New York State budget for the first time seeks to address the modernization of the transit system and the problems associated with traffic congestion through the establishment of a Traffic Mobility Review Board.

The bad news is that there are many details unaddressed. These details have been delegated to this new Board. Bad news will only become good news if we organize accordingly and effectively to be sure that our voices are heard.

The Traffic Mobility Review Board will be making recommendations on the appropriate credits and exemptions that should be implemented with the start of a congestion pricing program, subject to the approval of the New York City Council. This includes, and is not limited to, exemptions and discounts for Manhattan residents, senior citizens, and our disabled neighbors. The Commission will be expected to address issues relating to bus service, vehicles for hire, parking policies, and more. Overall, the State estimates that \$15 billion will be raised, with 80% dedicated to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority capital budget, 10% to the Long Island Rail Road and 10% to Metro North.

The final plan will not go into effect before December 31, 2020 so there is ample time for public input, including public hearings. There are many questions that must be answered as this process unfolds. We are working with all of the elected officials and advocacy organizations in our community and beyond our district borders to assure the most positive results of this far reaching initiative. It will, by all accounts, significantly affect both transportation realities as well as the overall quality of life where we live.

We therefore welcome your continued interest and involvement in the weeks and months ahead. Thank you again for your support.

Sincerely,

REBECCA A. SEAWRIGHT



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