



Early Buzz on Congestion Pricing

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As we have discussed on this page many times (and the [old site](#)), Congestion Pricing for the Manhattan Central Business district is probably the single best policy improvement that would help NYC prepare for peak oil, as it would reduce the city's dependence on cars and encourage more people to carpool, bike or take mass transit. Many folks have mentioned that a new mandate for the mayor may give him more political capital to do some of the things that are more politically sensitive, best put in the NY Times on Wednesday morning "[Bloomberg Unleashed](#)"

Today's NY Times article on [congestion pricing](#) set off a new round of discussion in the media of congestion pricing that unfortunately ended with a comment from Bloomberg that Congestion Pricing is not the agenda for his second term. Frankly, it's going to be an uphill political battle to build support for congestion pricing since most people view it as a nuisance tax.

The NY Times article noted in particular that the backers of congestion pricing go well beyond environmental groups:

It is an idea that has been successful in London, and is now being whispered in the ears of City Hall officials after months of behind-the-scenes work by the [Partnership for New York City](#), the city's major business association: congestion pricing.

Congestion pricing is the focus of a nine-month study by the Partnership, a group with great influence at City Hall, and participants have provided the first rough outlines of how such a plan might work.

But Bloomberg's press secretary was quoted in the article as saying:

"Although we're always open to ideas from the business community, this isn't on the mayor's second-term agenda," said Edward Skyler, a spokesman for the mayor.

I just saw the evening news report on this, which had Bloomberg basically saying the same thing himself. They also asked people in traffic whether they supported the idea - no surprise it didn't get much support. They'd rather have the traffic than pay a toll.

I have some thoughts on how to build a more successful campaign for congestion pricing which I will post later this weekend. But I think two important points need to be emphasized.

1. This is about improving access to the city for necessary traffic **only during peak hours** eliminating unnecessary traffic that makes it harder for business to be transacted in the central business district.

2. The money collected should be earmarked to pay for the upkeep of the bridges and roads, which now is subsidized by the 80% of New Yorkers who don't own cars. In fact most of the cars that use the bridges are from Long Island and Connecticut.

For more specific information on the different options for congestion pricing and the expected impact on traffic see this report by the [Regional Plan Association](#)



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