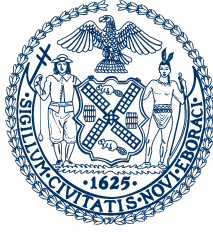


**KEITH POWERS**  
COUNCIL MEMBER, 4TH DISTRICT

**CARLINA RIVERA**  
COUNCIL MEMBER, 2ND DISTRICT



**THE COUNCIL OF THE  
CITY OF NEW YORK**

**ERIK BOTTCHER**  
COUNCIL MEMBER, 3RD DISTRICT  
**CHRISTOPHER MARTE**  
COUNCIL MEMBER, 1ST DISTRICT

March 7, 2024

Janno Lieber  
Chair and Chief Executive Officer  
Metropolitan Transportation Authority  
2 Broadway  
New York, NY 10004

Dear Chair Lieber:

We are writing to you today to discuss the upcoming implementation of the Central Business District Tolling Program later this spring. As representatives of residents who live below 60th street and in the heart of the Central Business District (CBD), the successful implementation of congestion pricing and a program that is equitable to our constituents is a top priority for us. We reiterate our support for the program's goals of generating significant revenue to improve New York City's transit infrastructure while reducing congestion in the CBD. As you review the comments, testimonies, and other input offered by stakeholders, we ask that the finalized regulations focus on addressing residents' concerns in the program's immediate impact area, including a residential discount program and allocating funds towards projects and programming to improve the Central Business District transportation network.

**Residential Program:**

As representatives for the Central Business District, we were disappointed that the recently proposed regulations in the November 2023 report excluded any reasonable relief for individuals living in the zone. As we discussed in our previous letter, constituents who reside within the CBD do not have the same flexibility to use or not to use their vehicle as individuals who live outside the zone - any use of a personal car will result in a charge based solely on the area of the city they live in. For many in the CBD, this additional toll significantly impacts their finances and cost of living. Any reasonable assessment of congestion pricing can acknowledge that certain individuals or families will need a vehicle.

We have often cited the London model as a guidepost for implementing congestion pricing because of its robust but fair regulations for residents. However, we do not need to look across the pond for a precedent-setting residential program that would provide more affordable means for those living below 60th Street. During the 2019 New York State Legislature session, the Governor and State elected representatives recognized that avenues should be made available to alleviate some of the burden on residents who use their vehicles in tolled areas. For example, Bronx and Queens residents who use the Henry Hudson Bridge and Cross Bay Bridge, respectively, and register for the resident rebate program with a valid New York Customer Service Center (NYCSC) E-ZPass account will be placed into the rebate program for those entry points into and out of the borough they live in. Relief, such as creating a Manhattan Congestion Residential Program modeled off the rebate or London residential reduction program, is a conceivable route the MTA could explore in its final regulations.

## Transit Improvement in the Central Business District:

We understand the program's necessity and how it aims to address its most crucial goal of generating approximately \$1 billion in revenue annually to address the aging transit infrastructure. Constituents in our districts have raised concerns about the current subway infrastructure being a realistic and reliable everyday option for commuting. In recent months, signal failures, train derailments, and elevator malfunctions throughout the transit infrastructure have highlighted the need to revamp the United States' most extensive transportation system. A change in their ability to traverse the City without guaranteeing improvement of the transportation network within the CBD - the area most significantly impacted by the implementation of congestion pricing - will leave an immense hardship for those now dependent on it.

The area below 60th Street is home to many of our transit hotspots, including Grand Central, Penn Station, Hudson Yards, Oculus Center, Union Square, and other essential transit venues that host thousands of commuters from surrounding boroughs and states. Additionally, this area has a vast, interconnected bus service that aims to serve thousands of New Yorkers on their daily commute. In recent years, it has become abundantly clear that investments and allocation of resources are essential to sustain the high standards of the trains and improve the efficiency of the bus system. With the implementation of congestion pricing in the spring, New York City Transit is given a once-in-a-generation opportunity to properly invest in system-wide improvements to make alternative forms of transportation an everyday option for residents in the CBD by improving bus and train frequency, infrastructure repairs, and increased accessibility for disabled persons. For commuters and residents alike, who rely on an efficient commuter rail system and our vast bus system to get to work, school, and medical appointments, using the revenue generated to address the Central Business District transit network first would go a long way in alleviating the growing pains during the shift away from their current methods of transportation.

We understand this program is the first in the United States, and the whole country is watching. Therefore, the MTA and its governing board must implement it correctly. A program that balances regulation that is fair to all New Yorkers and commuters while achieving its goals includes addressing the residents within the CBD and the current transit infrastructure. As you finalize the program, please don't hesitate to contact us to discuss this and work on a solution that works for everyone.

Sincerely,



Council Member Christopher Marte  
New York City Council, District 1



Council Member Carlina Rivera  
New York City Council, District 2



Council Member Erik Bottcher  
New York City Council, District 3



Council Member Keith Powers  
New York City Council, District 4