

February 9, 2018

The Honorable Carl E. Heastie
Speaker of the New York State Assembly
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Speaker Heastie:

The fundamental component of New York City's greatness is its density. The immensity of our hardworking and talented workforce drives our state, local, and national economy, our thriving arts and entertainment community, and our diversity. We -- a coalition of city developers and other real estate leaders -- are intimately familiar with the balance this density requires of planners and builders like us. High population density is only a virtue when huge crowds can live, work, shop, and travel comfortably. Critical to this is a robust transportation system, the primary way workers travel on a day-to-day basis. And Mr. Speaker, our transportation system is broken.

Streets across New York City are increasingly clogged with traffic. This results in buses that travel at walking speeds, sky-high taxi fares, and delayed deliveries. Our subway system is in a state of crisis. And hundreds of pedestrians and bicyclists are killed in traffic crashes every year.

We in the real estate industry see the impact of this breakdown in myriad ways. Our tenants and workers are increasingly enduring hardships as they struggle to move throughout their city. The city's quality of life is suffering. And while our economy remains strong, there are initial signs that might be changing. History has repeatedly proven that a city's fortunes rise and fall with its transit system.

It is absolutely critical to the long term economic and social health and sustainability of the city we love that we fix our transit system, end gridlock as we know it, and make our streets safer. To do this, **we implore you, Mr. Speaker, to strongly advocate for and pass the Fix NYC panel's congestion pricing proposal this session.**

The benefits of congestion pricing are clear: hundreds of millions of dollars, at least, for our beleaguered subway system. Cleaner air. Increased productivity. A more equitable city. And fewer driver, pedestrian, and bicyclist deaths -- when congestion pricing was implemented in London, total traffic crashes fell 40% and the bicycle crash rate fell 80%. Enacting congestion pricing now will situate you and New York as a national and international leader in conservation, equity, safety, and public health.

Politically, there's a reason that every city that has adopted a congestion pricing system has decided to keep it. Five years after Stockholm first began tolling drivers in the city center, public support for road pricing stood at nearly 70 percent, and above 50 percent even among drivers who were most often charged. And over the last 10 years, polling in New York City has consistently shown strong support for congestion pricing when toll funds are earmarked for mass transit improvement.

We know this legislative and public opinion fight won't be easy, but the complexity of planning for New York City's future requires bold action. We're proud to be part of a coalition of everyday transit users, safety advocates, and transportation, environmental, public health, business, and labor leaders who support this congestion pricing plan, and the elected leaders willing to fight for it.

Thank you for your continued leadership on this critical issue, Mr. Speaker.

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Rose Companies

Sara Willard
Workable City

David Kramer
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Normandy Real Estate Partners

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