



Mobilizing the Region

News and opinion from the Tri-State Transportation Campaign

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Kheel Plan's Powerful Ideas Won't Fade From Public View

by Paul Murphy

Last month the Traffic Congestion Mitigation Commission selected the "alternative congestion pricing plan" (as described [here](#)) as its recommended traffic reduction plan for New York City, a vital step towards a more balanced and equitable regional transportation system. Unsurprisingly, the plan's entrance into the political landscape has sparked furious discussion.



Another plan which has received plenty of attention is long-time transit advocate Ted Kheel's [cordon tolling plan](#). The plan's central proposal — providing **free transit** by charging a \$16, 24-hour toll below 60th Street in Manhattan — is powerful enough that it has continued to resonate in the press almost a month after its unveiling.

The Kheel Plan would dedicate revenue from the toll to the MTA, allowing it to eliminate fares on NYC buses and subways, and for inner-city travel on commuter rail. Commercial vehicles would be charged \$32, and a combination of mini-meters and parking permits would aim to reduce trolling for parking. Like the plan endorsed by the Congestion Mitigation Commission, the tolled area would include the West Side Highway and FDR, there would be a surcharge on taxi trips, there would be no charge to drive within the toll area, and existing Port Authority and MTA tolls would be deducted from the cordon fee. Besides providing free transit, the Kheel Plan would reduce VMT below 60th Street by 28.4%, and citywide VMT by 8.9%. Annual MTA revenues would be \$460 million higher than under the status quo.

The plan's backbone is a rigorous analysis by environmental economist and TSTC board member Charlie Komanoff. The report provides remarkable transparency into how estimates of figures such as changes in ridership, revenue and traffic were arrived at. An interactive spreadsheet model, the "Balanced Transportation Analyzer," allows users to estimate the effect changing key variables has on the outcome.

The plan anticipates potential concerns. For example, without fares to pay, wouldn't subways become even more uncomfortably congested? According to Komanoff, because travel at the most congested times is least sensitive to changes in price, three-fourths of the increase in transit use will occur in off-peak periods. The increase in peak-period travel is tackled by setting aside hundreds of millions of dollars to retain and buy almost 400 new subway cars, as well as including in the model the capacity available on commuter trains, and the expected increase in bicycle ridership that would come with safer and less congested roads. What about keeping decorum in subways and buses — which would become freely accessible public space? The plan sees the potential to transfer less needed traffic police to the public transit system.

The Kheel Plan could not be described as anything other than bold. Its ideas, reinforced by the rigorous and transparent economic study which accompanies it, will likely live on and reenter the public imagination as NYC continues to discuss the need to move towards sustainability.

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February 13th, 2008 | Category: NYC Congestion Pricing, New York City, Transportation Funding

3 comments to Kheel Plan's Powerful Ideas Won't Fade From Public View

TOMSAIL

February 14, 2008 at 12:48 pm

TIME TO TAX THE BIG SPENDERS/USERS:

ENERGY CONSERVATION AND PAYING FOR OUR MASS TRANSIT SYSTEMS, ROADS, AND BRIDGES:

Realizing that there are millions of households that own two or more cars in America (THE BIG SPENDERS/USERS), it is time that these households start paying their fair share for their use of, and for the additional wear-and-tear that they inflict on, our roads, highways, and bridges.

If a household registers more than one vehicle, they should be assessed a significantly higher annual motor vehicle tax for each car registered after the first one.

This new policy would help to reduce the number of cars on the road, and to increase the funding needed to update and improve all of our transportation systems.

Additional ideas for improving our transportation systems can be found in the new book, "HOW TO LIVE WELL WITHOUT OWNING A CAR" by Chris Balish.

Jefferson Chase

February 16, 2008 at 5:53 am

Both Bloomberg's PlaNYC and Kheel's "Bolder Plan" would merely funnel more money into the hands of the very same people who created our present problems. And neither man has any credibility. For all these years, Bloomberg has done nothing to reduce the huge number of parking garages in Manhattan, not even those right next to transit stations, and his latest plan for Far West Side development calls for 20,000 new parking spaces. And every transit strike settlement Ted Kheel negotiated resulted in a fare increase. We riders will never get the transit service we want and the new subway lines we need from a Governor-appointed MTA board made up of real estate men, lawyers, bankers, and trucking company executives. Until we get a 3/4 rider majority on the MTA board, preferably elected as in San Francisco and Denver, New York's transit and traffic problems will never be solved.

[Build Your Own Toll and Transit Plan With the Balanced Transportation Analyzer](#) « Mobilizing the Region

July 23, 2009 at 10:18 am

[...] Plan has been covered on Streetsblog and here on MTR. The BTA itself has gotten less [...]

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- Off-board fare collection coming to 34th Street bus in NYC - has helped speed up buses on East Side <http://nydn.us/f8lFg5> about 3 days ago from TweetDeck
- CT Gov. Malloy interviewed candidate for ConnDOT commissioner in DC this morning - wonder who? <http://bit.ly/hCRsps> about 5 days ago from TweetDeck
- Good transpo leaders staying on. RT @CrainsNewYork: MTA's Jay Walder, Port Authority's Chris Ward keep jobs <http://cny.bz/fWKFTI> 02:56:23 PM January 24, 2011 from TweetDeck
- 8th Street Hudson-Bergen Light Rail (NJ) station to open end of January <http://bit.ly/gS6gJw> 04:19:05 PM January 20, 2011 from TweetDeck



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Hard Drive

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Virginia Bicycling Federation

Upcoming Events

February 3, - 10th Annual New Partners for Smart Growth Conference. *Westin Charlotte Hotel, 601 South College Street, Charlotte, North Carolina*

February 3, 8:30 am-1:00 pm NYU Rudin Center/Federal Highway Administration: "The Livability Summit: The Challenge Ahead". *NYU Kimmel Center (Rosenthal Pavilion), 60 Washington Square South, New York, NY 10012*

February 9, 9:00 am-11:00 am NJ Transit Board Meeting. *NJ Transit HQ, One Penn Plaza East, Ninth Floor, Newark, NJ*

February 15, 12:30 pm-1:30 pm Public Transportation Issues in NYC with Gene Russianoff. *Women's City Club of New York, 307 Seventh Avenue, Suite 1403 (between 27th and 28th Street)*

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Advocacy Links

- 1000 Friends of Connecticut Blog
- Bike Walk Alliance of Westchester & Putnam
- Brick City Bike Collective
- East Coast Greenway
- Empire State Future
- New Haven Safe Streets Coalition
- Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA
- Regional Plan Association

Blogroll

- Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia Blog
- Cap'n Transit Rides Again
- Connecticut Smart Growth
- CT Environmental Headlines
- Design New Haven
- EcoPolitics Daily
- Garden State Smart Growth (NJ Future)
- Half-Mile Circles (Reconnecting America)
- How We Drive
- Human Transit
- Road Warrior (Bergen Record)
- Second Avenue Sagas
- Sheridan Swap - SBRWA
- Smart Growth Around America
- Streetsblog
- Streetsblog LA
- Switchboard (NRDC)
- T4America Campaign Blog
- The Avenue (Brookings Metro Policy Program)
- The Transport Politic
- WalkBikeCT
- WalkBikeJersey
- Way2Go (Environmental Defense Fund)
- Wanted to the Fast Lane

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Mobilizing the Region is published by the staff of the Tri-State Transportation Campaign.

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