

STREETSBLOG.ORG

Articles | Comments | Calendar | Submit Content | RSS



Friday, November 21, 2008

7 Comments

Kheel Planners: MTA Austerity a Recipe for Gridlock Hell

by Ben Fried on November 21, 2008

New Yorkers can expect more misery on the streets as well as underground if the MTA has to follow through on the [austerity measures it unveiled yesterday](#). The transportation analysts behind the [Kheel Plan](#) -- the congestion pricing variant that balances higher driver fees with free transit -- calculate that the likely combination of service cuts and higher fares and tolls will put tens of thousands more cars on the road:



Kheel's team reported these likely consequences from a combination of a 25% across-the-board subway-and-bus fare hike and proposed service cuts, along with a \$1.00 increase in MTA bridge and tunnel tolls:

- ▶ An additional 30,000 cars (a 4 percent increase) driven into the City's most congested streets
- ▶ A 6 percent drop in subway ridership and a 4 percent drop in bus ridership;
- ▶ A 4 percent decrease in already snail-paced traffic speeds

The figures derive from an updated version of the [Balanced Transportation Analyzer](#), the Kheel planners' number-crunching algorithm. The new BTA will be unveiled shortly, together with a revised Kheel Plan, "with time-varying tolls and subway fares sufficient to close the MTA deficit and fund vital expansions." That means the new plan will include the option to charge fares during peak times, spokesman Mark Hannah told Streetsblog. (Charles Komanoff [outlined the revisions on Streetsblog](#) this June.)

Free transit was not banded about much at the Ravitch Commission's [public hearings in September](#), but Kheel's team sees a window of opportunity in the next election. "Our major goal is to make our plan an issue in the 2009 campaign," Hannah said, noting that several electeds have reacted positively to the Kheel proposal. "It's a matter of, at this point, getting a champion."

Meanwhile, for all you wonks in the audience, follow the jump for more information on the methodology behind the projections.

- ▶ The team's findings conservatively reflect the expected reduction in car travel from a \$1.00 toll increase on MTA bridges and tunnels.
- ▶ The Kheel team assumed that the MTA's subway service cuts result in an average 6% increase in the duration of an average trip.
- ▶ The BTA assumes conservatively that only half of "disappeared" transit trips re-materialize as car trips; it also takes carpooling into account, so that each new trip in a car adds less than one new car to the roads.
- ▶ The BTA feeds back traffic increases to travel demand (i.e., road gridlock is somewhat self-limiting), thus producing a conservative estimate of the number of additional cars resulting from costlier and less-frequent transit service.
- ▶ The BTA includes conservative (low) assumptions of the effect of higher fares on subway use ("price-elasticities" of -0.09 for subway work trips, -0.234 for other subway trips).

Photo: [spectraversa/Flickr](#)

7 Comments | Last comment by [] [Leave a comment](#)

ibike
Do they predict a big boom in bicycling from high subway fares combined with service cuts and lots of very visible bicycling improvements? Seems likely.

November 21, 2008 at 1:11 pm [Link](#) # 1

rib
If this were happening in the summer, it would be a great time for a "go buy a bike" campaign. Winter's another story. I continue to bike, but needless to say the numbers of two wheelers dwindle as the temperature hangs below 50. As the temperature drops towards 30, questions of sanity arise.

November 21, 2008 at 1:19 pm [Link](#) # 2

Harlan
Fortunately, the Kheel model doesn't account for the crushing loss of jobs in Manhattan, meaning most of the people no longer taking the train in will be watching soaps all day rather than driving.

Also, I'm not sure that the Kheel model takes into account ownership of cars. Many people who commute to work don't even have the option of taking a car if fares increase, because they don't own a car. (Myself, for example.) In contrast, everyone who owns a car and lives near public transportation has the option of taking the subway. It's not a symmetrical elasticity.

So I'm not sure that the numbers are valid.

November 21, 2008 at 1:38 pm [Link](#) # 3

Timmy
Good points Harlan. Thousands of people are being fired

November 21, 2008 at 1:55 pm [Link](#) # 4

Streetsman
Whenever I start to feel insane for biking in below-freezing temperatures, I take a wander over to Copenhagen Cycle Chic and check out how those fashionable Danish folks do it: <http://www.copenhagencyclechic.com/> It gets a good deal colder there than it does here, but they still ride around in style.

Dressing to bike in cold weather doesn't have to be any different from dressing to walk in cold weather. And virtually every New Yorker is used to walking 30 minutes or more in below-freezing temperatures during holiday shopping season. In fact, biking isn't even as bad because the exercise warms you up. You just have to remember to cover your face.

November 21, 2008 at 3:47 pm [Link](#) # 5

Fendergal
I see many more people riding in cold weather than I did in years past. I connect this uptick with the transit strike, when it was bitterly cold (19 degrees, IIRC). I think a lot of people realized, hell, I can do this.

November 21, 2008 at 9:13 pm [Link](#) # 6

t
Gas prices are relatively low and subway fares will be high. That's a recipe for more cars on the road.

November 24, 2008 at 7:03 am [Link](#) # 7

[Leave a Comment](#)

Name (required)

Mail (required, not displayed)

Your URL

Your Comment

Subscribe to comments on this post.

[Post Your Comment](#)

Search Streetsblog New York City

Tips, comments, questions? [Contact us](#).

THANKS TO OUR SPONSOR

BICYCLE HABITAT

RELATED ARTICLES

- Kheel Plan 2 Seeks to Plug MTA Budget Gap
December 10, 2008 [21](#)
- Kheel Planners Detail Free Transit Proposal
January 25, 2008 [30](#)
- New Low-Cost Transit Plan From Team Kheel-Komanoff
January 9, 2009 [0](#)
- Kheel Plan: Double the Congestion Charge & Make Transit Free
December 18, 2007 [35](#)
- Kheel to Push Free Transit Pricing Plan in '09 Mayoral Race
April 21, 2008 [12](#)

Filed under: Charles Komanoff, Congestion Pricing, Kheel Plan, MTA, Ted Kheel, Traffic, Transit

[Email](#) [Print](#) [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [LinkedIn](#) [StumbleUpon](#)

WORD ON THE STREET

“Odds does not know the difference between a Categorical Exclusion and a Categorical Delusion.”

— Steven F

In response to "Odds: Bike Lanes Were Just to Grab Attention for Loosening Enviro Review"

DONATE NOW
Support your source for livable streets news and commentary.

[GIVE TO STREETSBLOG](#)

Thank you for supporting Streetsblog!

STREETSBLOG READER SURVEY

SB SURVEY We want to hear from you! Fill out our survey, and you could win a \$100 Amazon Gift Card.

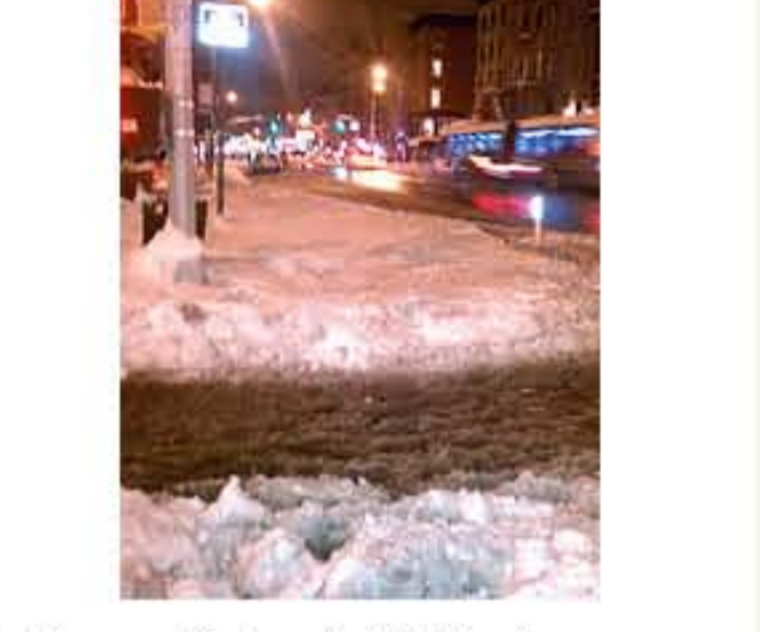
TWITTER UPDATES

- Reporters are ignoring New Yorkers who know the most about making streets safer for walking and biking: [#bikerenc](http://bit.ly/t0G0Mgh) 3 days ago
 - Time-saving off-board fare collection coming to 34th Street buses: <http://nydn.us/e7bg1b> Which crosstown route will be next, @MTAInsider? 4 days ago
 - In case there was any doubt, experts say enviro review for [#bikerenc](#) lanes is a dumb idea, unless you hate bike lanes <http://bit.ly/gYzmXe> 4 days ago
- More updates...

STREETSBLOG Network

- Top Stories**
- Indiana HB 1354 – Complete Streets [Urban Indy](#)
 - How to Density [The Bellows](#)
 - Sensenbrenner, While Attacking Federal Spending, Still Pushing Waukesha Water Earmark [The Political Environment](#)
 - 'Uh, Cars man! Whyyyyyy?': 'Portlandia' pokes fun at Portland bicyclists [Hard Drive](#)
 - Call for Changes in Central VA [Virginia Bicycling Federation](#)
- [ADD THIS WIDGET TO YOUR BLOG!](#)

EYES ON THE STREET



2nd Avenue bike lane @ 14th Street
The City Council got its wish -- bike lanes are unusable.

From: [dirtycrumbs](#) January 27, 2011

[Contribute to Streetsblog](#)

Email tips@streetsblog.org or send them anonymously. Tag your photos, links, and videos with "streetsblog".

[View all contributions](#)

Hot Topics | Recent Comments | Most Emailed

- Conflict-Hungry Press Ignoring New Yorkers With Street Safety Expertise**
[62](#) Comments
Latest by: Larry Littlefield, Yesterday at 3:44 PM
 - East Side Coalition Unveils Its Vision for Safer, Transit-Friendly Streets**
[50](#) Comments
Latest by: BicyclesOnly, Today at 1:04 PM
 - A Tale of Intimidation From the NYPD Bike Crackdown**
[86](#) Comments
Latest by: Mellow Yellow, January 26
 - Today's Headlines**
[29](#) Comments
Latest by: Jonathan, Today at 7:03 AM
 - Response to NYC Traffic Violence Rooted in Ignorance**
[47](#) Comments
Latest by: jen b, January 28
- All Comments [RSS](#)



VOLUNTEERS

Interested in volunteering at the next Livable Streets event or for our latest project?

Please contact us.

TRANSPORTATION CAMP

March 5-6, 2011, NYC | March 19-20, 2011, SF
transportationcamp.org

ABOUT STREETSBLOG

Streetsblog is a daily news source, online community and political mobilizer for the Livable Streets movement. We are part of a growing coalition of individuals and organizations in cities around the world working to transform our cities by reducing dependence on private automobiles and improving conditions for cyclists, pedestrians and transit riders.

- ▶ More about Streetsblog
- ▶ Who we are
- ▶ Comment moderation policy
- ▶ Contribute to Streetsblog
- ▶ Contact us

Streetsblog Founding Editor:
Aaron Naparstek

Publisher:
Mark Gorton

Streetfilms Director:
Clarence Eckerson

Streetsblog New York City

Editor:
Benjamin Fried

Reporter:
Noah Kazis

Contributors:
John Kaehny
Ethan Kent
Charles Komanoff
Alex Marshall

Streetsblog Capitol Hill:
Tanya Snyder

Streetsblog San Francisco:
Bryan Goebel

Streetsblog Los Angeles:
Damien Newton

Streetfilms:
Elizabeth Press
Robin Urban Smith

National Blog Network:
Angie Schmitt

Technology:
Nick Grossman
Chris Abraham
Evan Carter
Andy Cochran

Streetsblog is published by:
OpenPlans

ARCHIVED ARTICLES

Select Month [v](#)

CATEGORIES

Select Category [v](#)

SUBSCRIBE

To the [Streetsblog](#) RSS feed.

To daily [Streetsblog](#) email digests

Your email [Go](#)

COPYRIGHT NOTICE

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 United States License.

Author Login

A project of [OpenPlans](#)