



NYCTRC

NEW YORK CITY TRANSIT
RIDERS COUNCIL

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**Statement by Bradley Brashears, PCAC Planning Manager
Preparing for Congestion Pricing: Bus Redesigns
At the NYCT Committee Meeting
MTA Headquarters, 2 Broadway, New York, NY 10004
October 21, 2019**

Good morning board members, I'm Bradley Brashears representing the New York City Transit Riders Council (NYCTRC), and I am here today to call for crucial bus preparations for the arrival of congestion pricing.

Before London implemented its congestion pricing scheme in 2003, the city prepared its transit system to ensure attractive bus alternatives to driving. Over the course of three years, London added 300 buses to its fleet, introduced new routes, and increased frequencies on existing routes by adding dedicated bus lanes. As a result, bus service into the congestion zone increased by 27%, ridership increased by 37%, most of whom switched from driving.

Meanwhile, here we are heading into the last quarter of 2019, with a congestion pricing program expected to begin in 2021, less than two years away. City bus speeds remain some of the slowest in the country, averaging 8 mph.

However, we are hopeful with two important demonstration projects underway.

Manhattan's M15 bus lane camera program, has captured over 1,500 vehicles blocking bus lanes since October 7th. The 14th Street busway project has increased the route's ridership by 17%, while reducing travel times by 30% - saving riders over 5 minutes between Third and Eighth Avenues.

The City's capital budget contains partial funding for a two-mile protected bus lane pilot to begin in 2019. We would like to know where the project stands? It holds great opportunity within the bus redesign context.

At the same time the possibility of service cuts in the transition to congestion pricing is counter-productive to its success. An aggressive bus service program must compliment the bus redesigns and incorporate dedicated bus lanes, transit signal priority, and expanded bus lane camera enforcement. Our city buses must get well above that 8mph average, if we want to get people out of their cars, and onto our system, or congestion pricing will be a tough pill to swallow.

Thank you.