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NYCTRC Testimony at the Manhattan Borough President's Public hearing on congestion pricing's impact on Manhattanites March 21, 2019

Good afternoon, my name is Ellyn Shannon and I am the Associate Director of the New York City Transit Riders Council. We were created by the New York State Legislature in 1981, as the voice of MTA riders. I've also been a resident of Manhattan for 38 years.

It's unfortunate but true, Manhattan has become a parking lot for emergency vehicles, delivery trucks, cars, taxis and buses. But we finally have a real solution on the table that can get New Yorkers moving again and the time has come to take action. We have an opportunity to advance as a vibrant city, or we can go backwards. If Congestion Pricing is not enacted, that's where we'll be headed. Of course, many questions remain unanswered, which adds tremendous anxiety to such a big change.

I'd like to talk about what we believe congestion pricing will do for Manhattan. First and foremost, it will get people moving, faster and more reliably to their destinations.

Specifically, congestion pricing will:

1. Dramatically increase surface travel time speeds and reliability:
 - Large midtown bottlenecks occur from the Queensborough Bridge traffic. This congestion nightmare ties up at a minimum 14 bus lines.
 - Large lower Manhattan bottlenecks also occur from the Williamsburg, Manhattan and Brooklyn bridges. Bringing travel speeds to a standstill and ties up 10 bus lines. This will also improve.
 - And by improving these bottlenecks and getting more people out of cars and onto subways and buses, northern Manhattan bus service will also improve.
2. Adding \$15 billion to the MTA's Capital Program, means there will be a critical financial infusion into NYC Transit's *Fast Forward* plan, about 40% of what is still needed.
Fast Forward means:
 - Signal upgrades for faster and more reliability across all subway lines.
 - Extending the 2nd Ave Subway to 125th St. in Harlem
 - New escalators and elevators that people of all backgrounds rely on
 - Over 180 fully accessible stations in 10 years
 - 3,000 new subway cars for added service and reducing crowds.

Last year the Transit Riders Council passed a resolution in support of Congestion Pricing which includes the need for a "lock box". The lock box is to ensure that the revenue raised will benefit public transportation with no diversion to other purposes.

The Council also feels strongly that it is important to provide discounts for the disabled and medical visits which are vital to many! We strongly support Congestion Pricing, and want to be sure these items are included in the plan.