



Queens Civic Congress

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Testimony to the NYC Traffic Congestion Mitigation Commission

Presented by Jim Trent, Queens Civic Congress Transportation chair
York College, Queens, NY
October 30, 2007

Thank you for the opportunity to present the concerns of Queens residents to the NYC Traffic Congestion Mitigation Commission. My name is Jim Trent and I serve as Treasurer and Transportation Committee chair for the [Queens Civic Congress](#), an umbrella organization of more than 110 neighborhood based civic organizations representing property owners, including those owning coops and condos, and tenants who reside in every part of Queens County.

The Queens Civic Congress opposes the Congestion Tax. Our Queens Civic Congress [Platform](#), CIVIC 2030, quite succinctly advocates:

Maintain free use of all non-TBTA East River and Harlem River bridges for all city residents, and oppose any plan or scheme to impose a tax, fee or toll on vehicles to enter Manhattan such as the "fee" proposed by the Mayor as part of "PlaNYC".

As our past-president Sean Walsh wrote in our September newsletter, "The federal grant and the state legislation require any alternative to the congestion tax reduce congestion in Manhattan south of 86th Street by a mere 6.3 percent. Sound, cost-efficient and effective measures that reduce congestion without any reliance on the costly congestion tax scheme exist."

The Queens Civic Congress calls on City Hall to promote measures that address congestion, funds for mass transit and most importantly, increase bus and subway service — not the pittance thrown as a bone to our borough to support the congestion tax scheme which merely remains a scheme to establish East River Tolls on the free crossings.

To assist City Hall and the commission in regard to the needs of our borough, the Queens Civic Congress attaches a list of projects and programmatic measures to improve our borough's mass transit. These include:

- Re-route the F along with the E through the 53rd Street tunnel.
- Restore G service to Forest Hills
- Run the V trains instead through the 63rd Street Tunnel as a Broadway express
- Reconfigure Queens bus routes, many of which were laid out more than a half century ago.

- Extend local LIRR service in Queens.
- Operate buses that use non-polluting fuels and easily convert to ultra clean fuel-cell technology.
- Establish point to point north-south bus service, currently non-existent; this includes extending the Q79 bus in eastern Queens south across the city line to the LIRR.

The above and other Queens Civic Congress transit improvement proposals should attract more riders and thus reduce congestion.

With revenue sources remaining a concern, the Queens Civic Congress again refers the commission and City Hall and our legislators to our platform. The Queens Civic Congress Real Property Tax Reform Initiative would “Capture billions of dollars in lost real estate tax revenue based on illegal uses and improper property classifications.” The platform includes a [recommendation](#) to “Reform the City's personal income tax through a surcharge on (New York State Adjusted Gross) incomes over \$200,000.” Nearly 90% of \$1.3 billion gets raised from those who earn over \$1,000,000; more information on these measures may be found on our QueensCivicCongress.org website. Another proposal developed in the context of City Hall unprecedented 2002 property tax hike would raise a similar amount for the City and generate hundreds of millions of dollars for the suburbs served by the MTA through a [non-resident income tax](#). Please refer to our website for further information.

In conclusion, the more New Yorkers learn about congestion pricing, the more they see how rotten it is to tax New Yorkers to address Midtown and downtown Manhattan traffic when better ways exist. New Yorkers consider the congestion price scheme a regressive tax and want to hear about any and all alternatives before getting hit with another expense they cannot afford. The members of the Traffic Congestion Mitigation Commission owe New Yorkers a fiduciary duty to examine all traffic mitigation alternatives and give each and every proposal a fair and proper hearing.

Queens Civic Congress Members

Association of Old Forest Hills ♦ Auburndale Improvement Association ♦ Bayside Civic Database ♦ Bayside Clear-Spring Council ♦ Bayside Hills Civic Association ♦ Bayswater Civic Association ♦ Bay Terrace Community Alliance, Inc. ♦ Bellaire-BellVill Civic Association ♦ Belle Harbor Property Owners Association ♦ Bellerose Commonwealth Civic Association ♦ Bellerose Hillside Civic Association ♦ Bell Park Manor Terrace Community Council ♦ Bowne Park Civic Association ♦ Briarwood Community Association ♦ Cambria Heights Civic Association ♦ Cherry Robinson Homeowners ♦ Civic Association of Utopia Estates ♦ C.O.M.E.T. (Communities of Maspeth-Elmhurst Together) ♦ Concerned Citizens of Laurelton ♦ Cornucopia Society ♦ Creedmoor Civic Association ♦ Deerfield Area Association ♦ Doug-Bay Manor Civic Association ♦ Douglas Manor Association ♦ Douglaston Civic Association ♦ Dutch Kills Civic Assn. of Long Island City ♦ East Flushing Civic Association ♦ Federated Block Associations of Laurelton ♦ Federation of Civic Associations of Southeast Queens ♦ Floral Park Community Council ♦ Flushing Heights Civic Association ♦ Flushing on the Hill Taxpayers Association ♦ Forest Hills Chamber of Commerce ♦ Forest Hills Crescents Association ♦ Forest Hills-Van Court Association ♦ Fresh Meadows Homeowners Association ♦ Georgetown Mews ♦ Glendale Civic Association of Queens ♦ Glen Oaks Village Owners, Inc. ♦ Greater Astoria Historical Society ♦ Greater Whitestone Taxpayers Civic Association ♦ Harding Heights Civic Association ♦ Hillcrest Estates Civic Association ♦ Hilltop Village Co-Op #1 ♦ Hilltop Village Co-Op #2 ♦ Hilltop Village Co-Op #3 ♦ Hilltop Village Co-Op #4 ♦ Hollis 11423 Block Association ♦ Hollis Hills Civic Association ♦ Holliswood Civic Association ♦ Hollis Park Gardens Civic Association ♦ Holly Civic Association ♦ Hunters Point Community Coalition ♦ Hyde Park Gardens Cooperative ♦ Jackson Heights Beautification Group ♦ Jamaica Estates Association ♦ Jamaica Hill Community Association ♦ Juniper Park Civic Association ♦ Kew Gardens Civic Association ♦ Kew Gardens Hills Homeowners Association ♦ Kissena Park Civic Association ♦ Little Neck Bay Civic Association ♦ Little Neck Pines ♦ Malba Civic Association ♦ Meadowlark Gardens Owners ♦ Middle Village Maspeth Civic Association ♦ Middle Village Property Owners Association ♦ Mitchell Linden Civic Association ♦ Neponsit Property Owners Association ♦ Newtown Civic Association ♦ North Bellerose Civic Association ♦ North Flushing Civic Association ♦ North Hills Estates Civic Association ♦ Northwest Clearview Homeowners Association ♦ Norwood Civic Association ♦ Oakland Terrace/ Gardens Community Council ♦ Off Broadway Homeowners Association ♦ Our Neighborhood Improvement Association ♦ Parkway Village Historical Society ♦ Queensboro Hill Neighborhood Association ♦ Queens Colony Civic Association ♦ Queens Community Civic Corp. ♦ Queens Village Civic Association ♦ Ramblersville-Hawtree Civic Association ♦ Richmond Hill Historical Society ♦ Ridgewood Property Owners and Civic Association ♦ Rockaway Park Homeowners/ Residents ♦ Rocky Hill Civic Association ♦ Rosedale Civic Association ♦ Royal Ranch Association. ♦ Southeast Queens Concerned Neighbors ♦ South Ozone Park West Civic Association ♦ Springfield/Rosedale Community Action Association ♦ Station Road Civic Assoc. of Auburndale ♦ Sunnyside Gardens/Harrison Place Homeowners ♦ Surrey Estates Civic Association ♦ Union Turnpike Merchants Association ♦ United Forties Civic Association ♦ United Neighbors Civic Association ♦ Waldheim Neighborhood Association ♦ Wayanda Civic Association ♦ West Cunningham Park Civic Association ♦ Westmoreland Association ♦ Woodside Community Council

Attachment A: Transit Improvements that should attract more riders and thus reduce congestion:

From Queens Civic Congress Platform:

Q1) Provide Queens commuters a more clean, comfortable, dependable and speedy trip to and from work. Apply Metropolitan Transportation Authority budget to increase mass transit service.

Q2) Restore pre-existing E, F (operating through the 53rd Street tunnel), G (to Forest Hills) & R service routes and run the V trains instead through the 63rd Street Tunnel as a Broadway express until the opening of the Second Avenue line, when the V trains will eventually enter the Second Avenue Subway upon its completion.

Q3) Call on The Long Island Rail Road to increase marketing of its service to Queens residents, review prospects for re-use of abandoned and underused service lines in Queens and must complete a marketing study before recommending or implementing any further station closings in Queens.

Q4) Call on MTA New York City Transit and the N.Y.C. Department of Transportation to reconfigure Queens bus routes, many of which were laid out more than a half century ago, to reflect changing residential, commercial, business, cultural and industrial needs.

Q5) Establish Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) systems, especially serving areas without adequate mass transit service, particularly western and south Queens.

Q6) Operate buses that use non-polluting fuels, and replace non-compliant buses on an expedited basis.

Q7) Create new and revise, where applicable, existing bus routes to provide one-seat cross-borough surface transit.

Q8) Introduce point-to-point bus service to improve north/south bus service in Queens and between any other locations where it would improve bus service. [See note 9 below]

Q9) Implement off-hour discounts -- variable pricing -- for travelers and truckers in order to relieve prime travel time delay on existing tolled Port Authority and MTA tunnel and bridge crossings based on time of a day use.

Q10) Maintain free use of all non-TBTA East River and Harlem River bridges for all city residents, and oppose any plan or scheme to impose a tax, fee or toll on vehicles to enter Manhattan such as the "fee" proposed by the Mayor as part of "PlaNYC".

Q11) Create safe cycling routes to encourage less reliance on fossil-fueled vehicles and to enhance the quality of life of Queens citizens. Implement routes only with advance review and notification to communities.

Also:

Q12) Extend Q79 bus southern terminus to the LIRR station in the Village of Floral Park.

Q13) Provide Express bus service along Rockaway Boulevard and Atlantic Avenue from the Eastern end of Rockaway Boulevard to Flatbush and Atlantic Avenues. This Bus will provide access to central Brooklyn with major connections to other parts of both Boroughs. This will cut down on the traffic which includes people going to attend games at the Arena that is being built now. Many major arteries cross this Avenue and Boulevard. (from South Ozone Park Civic Association West)

AND:

The list collected by the Office of the Queens Borough President.