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Public Space Leaders Say a Healthy City Depends on Better Public Transportation

Design Trust for Public Space’s Executive Director Matthew Clarke Speaks Out in Support of MTA Congestion Pricing Plan

New York, NY, — This week, hundreds of New Yorkers signed up to speak at the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA)’s first of six public hearings on their plan to implement congestion pricing in Manhattan, formally known as the Central Business District Tolling Program. The plan proposes a fee for vehicles entering parts of Manhattan in order to reduce traffic and help fund public transportation. The CBD Tolling Program would be the first-of-its-kind for the country.

Design Trust Executive Director Matthew Clarke submitted the following comment in support of the program:

“We already know the positive effects of congestion pricing. Cities around the world have used programs like these to improve the quality of life for residents by confronting traffic, upgrading public transportation, and boosting air quality.

In New York City, there is too much at stake to not act. The CBD program will not only mitigate the negative impacts of traffic, it will also directly impact the quality of our city's civic infrastructure, improving public transit and improving the livability of our streets and corridors.

People must be the priority. The CBD program is a critical step to transforming public infrastructure and empowering the millions of people who live here to access resources and work opportunities, and live healthier lives. The program must be implemented equitably to ensure that it delivers benefits specifically for vulnerable communities.

Sustainable, long-term investment in public transport is key to building a better New York. We need congestion pricing now.”

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The Design Trust for Public Space is a nationally recognized incubator that catalyzes change and transforms New York City’s shared civic spaces—streets, plazas, parks, public buildings, transportation, and housing developments—to create a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable city. Its innovative model brings together government agencies, community groups, and private-sector experts, utilizing cross-sector partnerships to deliver creative solutions that shape the city’s landscape.