

Good evening. I am New York City Council Majority Whip Selvena Brooks-Powers. I chair the City Council's Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and I represent District 31, which includes parts of Southeast Queens and the eastern end of the Rockaway Peninsula.

I want to acknowledge what Chair Lieber said in his op-ed yesterday: that a principal goal of congestion pricing is to improve transportation equity. I recognize that congestion pricing can reduce traffic in the CBD and establish a major new funding stream for transit projects throughout the city.

But I also know that tolling stands to impact people living in outer-borough neighborhoods, including members of my community who would prefer *not* to drive. Many do so because they lack *access* to reliable, affordable transit. I note that upgrades to our transit network do not happen overnight—at the city level, for example, the NYC DOT built just 5 miles of a mandated 30 protected bus lanes last year.

So I urge the MTA to work to minimize the impact of tolling on marginalized communities. Failing to center equity will harm vulnerable New Yorkers in communities citywide.

Those traveling into the City by car to receive care in the CBD's crucial medical facilities should be exempted from tolling. The CBD contains some of the City's largest and most important hospitals, like H+H Bellevue and NYU Langone. The MTA should ensure those receiving care from these facilities—those going to an oncologist, for example—aren't tolled as well.

I stand with the City's taxi and for-hire-vehicle drivers and call for the MTA to minimize the impact of tolling on drivers. I also echo the calls of medallion taxi drivers, who seek a **full exemption** from the charge for taxi trips.

The money the MTA collects from congestion pricing **must** be distributed equitably. The MTA should invest in reliability and transit access in outer borough communities underserved by the existing network, *especially* as it becomes more expensive for residents to drive into Manhattan.

We intend to monitor the effects of congestion pricing and the MTA's use of the funds generated by the program. We urge the MTA to be transparent about how the program works and to center equity in the months and years to come. Thank you.