



Carrots and Sticks on Traffic

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In New York City, one of the heights of futility is sitting in traffic, no matter if you are in a car, a bus or a taxi. But this week, there is some hope that the tide is turning in reducing traffic congestion through basic incentives that make mass transit more attractive and driving or taxi riding more expensive. While they have not been touted as the start of a cohesive plan to turn the tide against traffic, they may in retrospect be seen as an opening act in taming NYC traffic.

As Enrique Penalosa stated at the Borough President's Transportation Forum, "Transportation policy today means how to reduce car use".

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

First, the DOT [announced its planned routes for the BRT](#) will include one in each borough including the one closest to me - the M15. They also gave more details about the new system. The new buses will have their own dedicated lanes 24/7 and will be clearly marked to distinguish them from other traffic lanes. To help enforce these lanes, each bus will come equipped with a camera that will allow automated ticket collection. The new buses will be able to change a light signal ahead of them quicker. There will be bump outs to more quickly load and unload passengers.

While these BRT enhancements are a huge step forward in improving surface transportation, they stop quite a bit short of the types of BRTs that exist elsewhere with grade separated lanes and preboarding payment. No doubt there will be some testing out of new ideas and experimentation of what works with these first few lines before they are implemented around the rest of the city's congested streets

Taxis More Expensive

The Taxi Commission just [approved an increase](#) in the rate that accumulates while cabs are stuck in traffic from 20 cents a minute (\$12/hour) to 40 cents a minute (\$24/hour). This is expected to

increase the average fare collected by a dollar. They also raised the flat rate fare from JFK to Manhattan to \$45, adding even more incentive for people to take the Train to the Plane.

Congestion Pricing?

Lastly, in a move that only keen observers, [like those that Streetsblog would notice](#), Bob Kiley, architect of London's Congestion pricing scheme, is returning to NYC to work for an engineering firm linked with the Partnership for NYC's congestion pricing study.

Kiley is generally credited as being the architect of the system that reduced traffic congestion by 25 percent, eliminated 70 road casualties per year, cut carbon emissions by 16 percent, sped up buses by 46 percent, increased bicycling by 43 percent, and is raising over \$200 million dollars per year for mass transit, pedestrian and cyclist improvements in London, England.

Better Buses, less incentive to take cabs and personal automobiles. Sounds like a start to reducing car use.



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