



Big Bang Approach to Sustainable NYC?

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[Update: [Streetsblog](#) has [published the entire report](#) as of May 2006. It should be interesting. Please read it and write in your comments.]

Many folks in the sustainable development, alternative transportation, environmental and Jane Jacobs Urbanist camps have been arguing for a range of incremental steps to put New York back on the right track after decades of car oriented development plans. And lately, while there has been little fanfare or public recognition of this, little things have been happening around the city, but this might be just a taste of what's to come if [an article in the New York Observer](#) is correct that the Administration is thinking of taking a more ambitious long range plan that puts all of these ideas into a complete package of sustainable development policy.

hat tip [Streetsblog](#)

From the article, there is a good history of what has been done to date:

Mayor Bloomberg announced the plan during his State of the City address this winter, describing it as a "sweeping interagency, five-borough Strategic Land Use Plan, focusing particularly on housing, transportation, energy and infrastructure" that would come out in April. In May, with still no plan in sight, he told the League of Conservation Voters that "encouraging sustainability is at the heart of the work."

But the document is already four months overdue, and now has no deadline, delayed both by the complexity of the task and by the changing personnel in the upper echelons of the Mayor's office, according to individuals close to the process. And when it is completed, it will likely be up to a new administration to determine whether the plan becomes one of Mr. Bloomberg's most significant legacies, or just a dusty old PDF file that dies when the Mayor leaves office three and a half years from now.

"It's certainly very complex," Mr. Doctoroff said. "I can't give you a timeline. **It's certainly turned out to be more ambitious than expected.**" **Mr. Doctoroff wouldn't say anything about what was in the report.**

"Obviously, there are going to be lots of ideas out there and we will get plenty of input from the public before anything is decided," he told The Observer.

And at the heart of this, would be tackling traffic congestion and automobile dependent lifestyles through congestion pricing:

Business groups are particularly keen to get the pro-business Mayor to take a stand

against traffic and are watching for his lead. The Partnership for New York City, a policy-setting group of the city's top corporate executives, has been working on a congestion-pricing study for more than a year but has yet to release it. (The man who brought the idea to Britain, Robert Kiley, a former M.T.A. chairman, was president of the Partnership before becoming head of Transport for London.)

In June, Kathy Wylde, the president and chief executive of the Partnership, wrote an op-ed in The New York Sun that shied away from a direct endorsement of the idea, but came very close, saying, "Cities around the world are finding the political will to do something about [traffic congestion], and New York will likely have to do the same if we are to maintain our competitive advantage."

Mr. Bloomberg has already taken steps to bring the Department of Transportation in line with Mr. Doctoroff's plan. In January the Mayor transferred the D.O.T. into Mr. Doctoroff's portfolio, and the department later created a new office of strategic planning, which is now hiring several staffers.

This has been most evident in the transformation at the DOT concerning bike lanes, particularly following the [departure of the former cycling Director](#) who left frustrated at the lack of progress. Now, when the DOT wants to install a bike lane, they treat it not as an optional piece of roadway improvement, but [as a necessary safety feature](#), like crosswalks for pedestrians.

Combine this with the new solid waste management plan which will establish a [new independent recycling office](#) that transfers waste transportation from trucks to much more energy efficient barges, and you have the makings of a true environmental success story taking shape in NYC.

But we here at The Oil Drum will wait for the actual report and look forward to vetting it when it is released.



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