

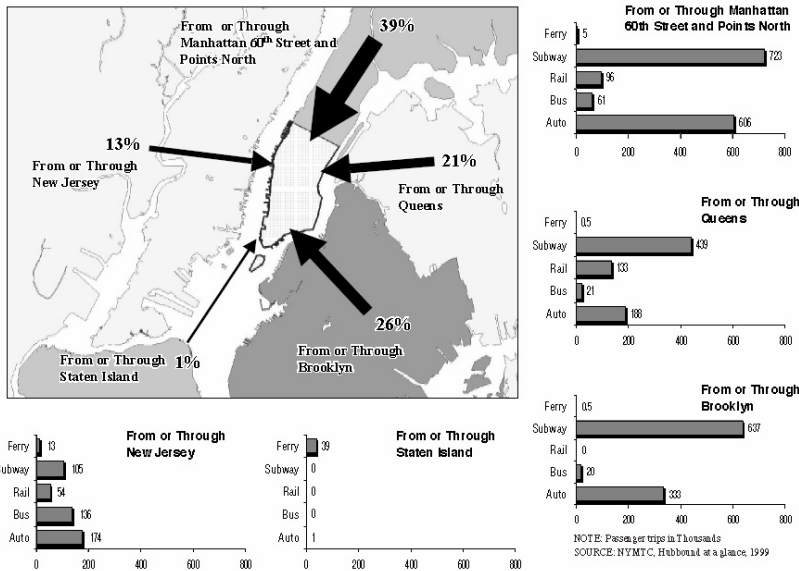


Where Should We Try Congestion Pricing First?

Posted by [Glenn](#) on December 11, 2006 - 9:39pm in [The Oil Drum: Local](#)

Topic: [Policy/Politics](#)

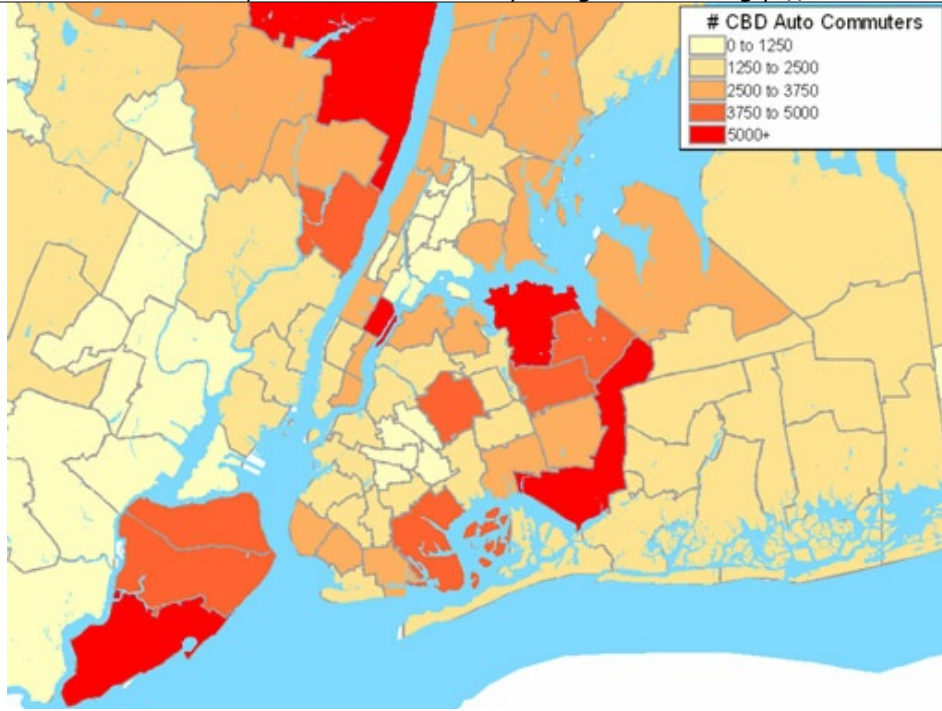
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With all the talk about congestion pricing that's going on in New York the last couple of weeks, momentum is building to do something other than continue to talk about it. And from the first reactions of the political establishment, you can break down the reaction to basically Manhattanites favoring the idea and folks from Queens, Brooklyn and Staten Island opposing it.

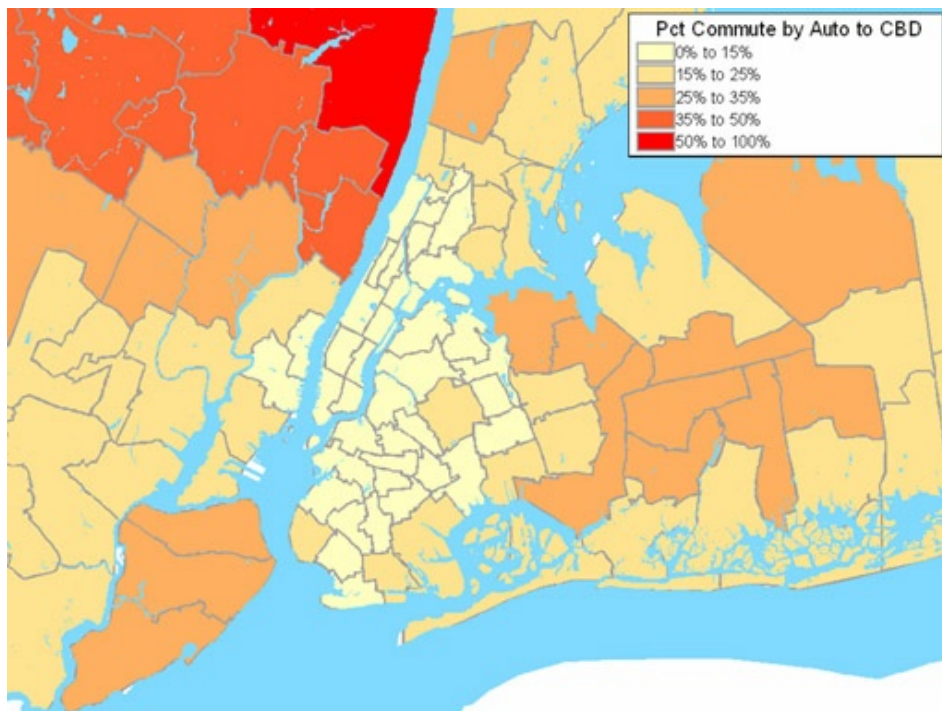
But based on the chart above, 39% of the total number of people and 606,000 people by car entering the Central business district enter through 60th Street from either the Upper East or Upper West Sides. This includes the all the traffic that enters the CBD from Northern Manhattan, the Bronx, Westchester/Rockland Counties, Northern New Jersey (GW Bridge) and Connecticut.

What if that's where we start with Congestion Pricing? What would the political landscape look like if we just started with all vehicles going over the strip line at 60th street going south in the morning and north in the afternoon / evening?



Just based on pure numbers of drivers in NYC, you might expect opposition to come from mostly from the Upper East Side, and certain sections of the more suburban northern Bronx. At the state level there might be some opposition from Westchester and Rockland Counties. And while there might be objections from New Jersey residents, it is not clear where in the political process they would have a say.

Within the city itself though, of the communities that would be most directly impacted the community that has the highest number of commute-by-car residents (Upper East Side) also has the most viable transit alternatives by subway, commuter rail or bus. And those communities bear the brunt of auto commuters that simply use their roads as thoroughfares to get to the Central Business District and therefore stand the most to gain in traffic congestion reduction.



Then if we look at the simple percentages we see that almost all of the affected areas in NYC have

less than 15% commuting by car with just a few northern Bronx areas with a higher than 15%. But again, they have transit alternatives to the CBD and would greatly benefit from having reduced traffic in their area.

Politically, starting with the 60th Street strip-line makes sense, since Manhattan is desperate for traffic relief, the Bronx seems fairly ambivalent if not an advocate for Congestion Pricing and the critics in Queens, Brooklyn and Staten Island would be neutralized by not having this affect them.

If successful, this congestion pricing experiment may spread to the other entrances to the CBD, but not necessarily. There may be other mechanisms to reduce traffic volume in those areas that are more politically viable, such as expanding bus rapid transit, charging higher rates for on-street parking in midtown and reducing the number of city employees that have official placards for their cars.

It's time for Manhattan and the Bronx to lead on this issue as two boroughs that are most distressed by the constant flow of polluting and noisy automobiles flowing through their densely populated areas.



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