

# New York City Introduces Congestion Pricing

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New York City is starting a program that will charge people money, or a toll, for driving in a super busy area called Lower Manhattan. This plan, known as "congestion pricing," is a first for any city in the United States.

The main idea of this program is to reduce the number vehicles that come into this area each day. Too many vehicles make this part of the city crowded and slow to get around. Also, all those cars and trucks create pollution.

Prices to drive in the area could be between \$9 and \$23 during the busiest times of the day. The city expects to start this program next spring.

When the city charges these tolls, it will get a lot of extra money which can be used to improve the city's buses and subways. This is really important because, after the Covid pandemic, fewer people have been using public transportation and it needs more money to get better and attract more riders.

But not everyone is happy with this plan. Some people, like taxi drivers, are worried they'll lose business because people might not want to pay extra to ride into Lower Manhattan. Also, people who live in far-off parts of the city or in New Jersey and have to drive to Lower Manhattan are upset. They feel this plan is unfair to them because they don't have good public transportation options to get to work or other places in Manhattan.

## Comprehension Questions:

1. Which group of people have concerns about the toll due to their work?
  - a) Bus drivers
  - b) Subway operators
  - c) Taxi drivers
  - d) Train conductors
2. What might be a possible impact for taxi drivers?
  - a) They might have more customers
  - b) They might have fewer customers
  - c) They might have to drive faster
  - d) They will use bicycles to avoid toll booths
3. Which of these statements is NOT true?
  - a) The city plans to charge between \$9 and \$23 during the busiest times
  - b) The plan will be implemented next spring
  - c) This "congestion pricing" plan has been used in many other American cities
  - d) The extra money from the tolls can be used to improve the city's buses and subways
4. What is one likely impact of the "congestion pricing" plan?
  - a) People will drive more often in Lower Manhattan
  - b) Air pollution in Manhattan will increase
  - c) Public transportation will become more expensive than taxis
  - d) The number of vehicles in Lower Manhattan will decrease



5. Why might some people be unhappy about the plan to charge tolls in Lower Manhattan?
- They do not use vehicles
  - They feel it is unfair because they lack good public transport options
  - They enjoy sitting in traffic for a long time
  - They think pollution in the city will increase
6. With the new plan, air quality in Lower Manhattan will probably \_\_\_\_\_.
- improve
  - get worse
  - deteriorate
  - stay the same
7. How does the city plan to use the money generated from the "congestion pricing" program?
- To build new parking lots in the city
  - To provide free car wash services in Manhattan
  - To construct more highways leading into Lower Manhattan
  - To improve the city's buses and subways
8. When do you think people will have to pay a toll?
- In the middle of the night
  - All the time
  - Never
  - During the busiest times
9. Why might the city need more money for its public transportation system?
- To compensate for fewer riders during the Covid pandemic and make improvements to attract more riders.
  - To make public transportation free for everyone
  - To pay for the new toll system in Lower Manhattan
  - To give lower taxi fares for residents of New Jersey
10. What is the main idea of the article?
- New York City is starting a program to charge tolls in Lower Manhattan
  - Lower Manhattan is a crowded part of the city
  - The city needs more money to improve public transportation
  - New Jersey residents and taxi drivers are unhappy about the new toll program

### **Speaking and Writing Activities:**

- Discuss these questions with a partner or a small group.
- Choose one topic and write a response to it. Show your writing to a classmate or teacher.

1. Discuss your thoughts on New York City's plan to charge a toll for driving in Lower Manhattan. Do you think this is a good idea or not? Why?
2. Think of the public transportation where you live now. How good is it? How could it be improved?
3. What other places in the world have bad traffic problems? Do you think a congestion pricing plan would work in those cities?

