

SAFE SYSTEM CASE STUDY

Congestion pricing in New York City

KEY TAKEAWAY: New York City is reducing injury risk by lowering exposure at scale through congestion pricing, which reshapes when and how people travel. By making driving less attractive in the target area, the city has reduced vehicle volumes and crash risk through a robust demand management strategy.

SAFETY LEVERS



New York City launched its congestion pricing program on Jan. 5, 2025. The program charges a fee for vehicles to enter Manhattan south of 60th Street, an area known as the Congestion Relief Zone. The size of the fee varies by vehicle type and time of day. The peak rate applies from 5 a.m. to 9 p.m. on weekdays and from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. on weekends. The fee is 75% lower at other times. Multiunit trucks and tour buses pay the highest rates. The program's aim is to reduce traffic in the zone and raise funds for public transit in the city.



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Instead of accommodating more vehicles ...

Expanding road capacity in response to present and projected vehicle traffic estimates

Adding vehicle lanes tends to induce driving demand. An increase in vehicles results in higher long-term maintenance obligations and costs, exacerbates air and noise pollution and increases the potential for conflicts, especially for people walking and biking.

... New York City reduced driving demand

Making public transit and active transportation the more practical choice

In a walkable city with robust public transit and bike lanes, a modest fee can nudge people to change their commuting routines.

Instead of forcing transit to compete for scarce funding ...

Relying solely on general revenues to fund transportation

When dollars are scarce, the majority of funding frequently gets directed to roadway expansion.

... New York City created a dedicated funding stream

Directing congestion pricing revenues to public transit improvements

Reinvesting the funds in multimodal travel options further supports the mode shift away from driving.

What levers did this intervention pull?

-  **PRIMARY:** The congestion pricing policy reduced **exposure** by reducing the number of vehicle trips during peak periods. It did so by making public transit use relatively more attractive and driving into the Congestion Relief Zone less attractive.
-  **SECONDARY:** In combination with city freight and curb management policies, congestion pricing reduced **severity** by encouraging shifts from heavier delivery vehicles that are subject to high congestion pricing fees toward smaller, lighter vehicles, including e-cargo bikes, for last-mile freight. Lower vehicle mass reduces kinetic energy in crashes, decreasing the potential for severe injuries.
-  **SECONDARY:** This policy reduced the **likelihood of crashes** by enabling street space to be repurposed for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Such infrastructure separates pedestrians and cyclists from motor vehicles, reducing opportunities for conflicts.

Severity and **likelihood of crashes** were further reduced in New York City by the widespread use of speed safety cameras and reinvestment in multimodal facilities and enhanced transit service.

State and local DOTs can reduce crash injuries by lowering one or more of the following

SAFETY LEVERS:

	EXPOSURE	how much people drive
	SEVERITY	how fast vehicles travel and how heavy they are
	LIKELIHOOD OF A CRASH	how often road users come into conflict

What were the results?

Six months after congestion pricing began, New York City's [Metropolitan Transportation Authority found](#):

- ✓ The number of vehicles entering the Congestion Relief Zone fell 11%. There was an 8.4% increase in pedestrian activity within the zone relative to 2024.
- ✓ Traffic delays were down 25% in the zone and 9% across the entire metropolitan region.
- ✓ MTA express buses were traveling 24% faster than in 2024.

Serious injuries fell more inside the zone than citywide during the first year, but it is not yet clear how much of these changes reflect congestion pricing versus broader citywide trends and ongoing safety efforts.

What else can be done?

- Dynamic pricing schemes:** Consider introducing dynamic pricing similar to Singapore's Electronic Road Pricing model, which adapts driver tolls according to time, location and real-time congestion conditions.
- Use revenue for engineering measures:** Leverage program revenues to systematically implement traffic calming near transit stops and stations as well as on additional high-priority corridors where legally permitted. In New York City, revenues must be dedicated to transit under state law, but other jurisdictions may have broader flexibility.
- Use revenue for safety operations:** Program revenues in other jurisdictions considering congestion pricing could also support the reallocation of travel lane space to transit and active travel modes, the unbundling of motor vehicle and active transportation networks, dynamic curb-space management (e.g., freight delivery windows, priced loading zones, commercial microhubs), and the equitable deployment of speed and red light safety cameras.
- Vehicle fleet policies:** Enact policies requiring city-owned and contracted fleets to meet pedestrian- and cyclist-safe front-end design standards; build on the city's existing intelligent speed assistance pilot program for fleets.