



Statement by Theodore W. Kheel,  
Chairman, Nurture New York's Nature  
To the New York City Traffic Mitigation Commission  
January 16, 2008

A month ago, I sent each of you a copy of a Mini-Report called: *A Bolder Plan: Balancing Free Transit and Congestion Pricing in New York City*. The Mini-Report was a preliminary summary of the results of a study commissioned by Nurture New York's Nature, a foundation that I chair. Next week, our final report will be released.

In our Mini-Report, we lay out a plan that would eliminate—now and forever—all fares on bus, subway and rail travel within New York City, while imposing a stiff \$16 charge on car travel.

The goal of this Commission is to determine how to mitigate traffic in New York City. If you see fit to adopt our plan, *traffic will fall by fully one quarter* in the Central Business District, and by nearly a tenth city wide. According to our analysis, New Yorkers would save a staggering \$4 billion in recovered productivity (time that would otherwise have been spent languishing in traffic) and another \$2 billion in savings associated with reduced pollution, fewer auto crashes and lower insurance costs.

On January 10, you issued a report discussing several possible plans to mitigate traffic in New York, including Mayor Bloomberg's. **Not one of those plans includes fare relief for mass transit commuters.** Yet it can be conclusively shown that fare relief mitigates traffic, just as fare increases contribute to it.

For more than half a century, I have worked to focus New Yorkers' attention on the fact that car travel and mass transit are two halves of a whole—you can't consider one without the other.

Every plan you have under consideration, other than ours, ignores that principle. They are pricing plans for cars, with no pricing relief for mass transit. They ignore half the equation.

The plan we have submitted avoids that mistake, and has a resulting impact on traffic that is *well over twice as great as any of the alternative plans*. Soon you will make final recommendations. I urge you to adopt the bolder plan we have presented you, or to at least begin working in the direction we propose.

We need to get past the gridlock in our thinking that focuses solely on cars, We need to restore balance to our transportation system.