



NYC Congestion Plan Motorcycle Discount, thanks to Cheryl!!

New York City made history on Sunday, January 5, when it became the first U.S. city to implement a toll-based congestion pricing scheme in its central business district. The arrival of congestion pricing comes after a six-year fight between city and state governments and with labour unions, neighbouring states, and industry lobbyists, with many lobbying unsuccessfully for a carve-out. But one group did score a break: motorcycle riders.

Motorcyclists with E-ZPass transponders who ride into Manhattan between the Battery and Central Park will pay \$4.50 between the hours of 5 a.m. and 9 p.m. — a 50% reduction compared to the \$9 peak toll on cars. Entering the city at other times reduces that cost further, allowing them to roll through for \$1.05. Save for licensed NYC taxi cabs, individual ride-share vehicles, and certain for-hire commercial vehicles, no other licensed forms of transportation are getting a discount. Not even electric vehicles, which often receive breaks from congestion pricing plans in other parts of the world.

It wasn't necessarily going to be this way, Cheryl Stewart, founding member of the Sirens Women's Motorcycle Club and head of Riders Against Congestion, tells Road & Track.

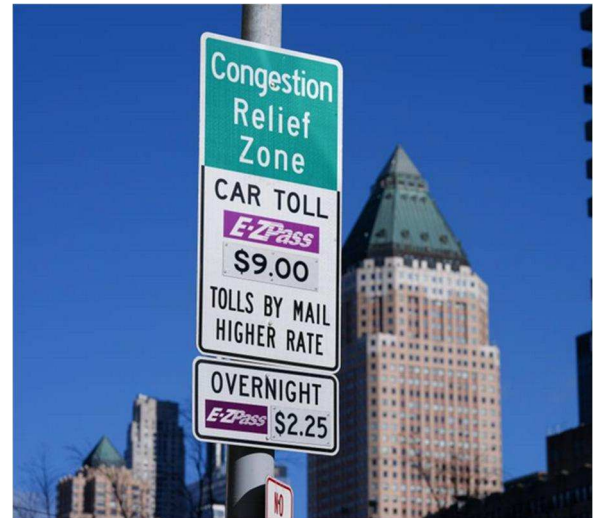
"We were going to be charged the same \$15 as a giant SUV or pickup truck," Stewart says. "We got to this point because so many of us worked so hard and — I have to say it — particularly me!"

Initial proposals had motorcyclists slated to pay the same as their four-wheeled road neighbours, a cost that was set to be as high as \$23 at one point. As a professional sculptor and longtime rider, the potential impact of congestion pricing was personal for Stewart. Living in Red Hook — a subway-free section of Brooklyn — made Stewart's commute to her workplaces (including Saturday Night Live's Midtown Manhattan studio) a real pain without her Yamaha FZ1, especially considering the knives and other equipment she sometimes brings.

"There are some places I had to be there every day at 6 a.m. In New Jersey, transportation doesn't even run at that time. There's a place on Staten Island I've been working and there simply isn't transportation there," Stewart, who says she's been working against congestion pricing since 2017, explains. "Not to mention, as a sculptor, I need to take my tools with me. I have knives and saws and all sorts of sharp tools that I'm not allowed to take on a subway."

"My only choice is, which form of private transportation will I take? My co-workers take their pickup trucks, and I take a motorcycle. Why would you not incentivize me?"

Read the rest of this article on Road & Track Magazine at <https://bit.ly/CongestionPlanMotorcycleDiscount>





XXXIII

Steampunk & Amethyst

MARCH 21-23, 2025

Our Full Weekend of Leather Fraternity and Festivities.

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Deadline Feb 21st for block



We Welcome our fellow clubs reps of the AMCC to the 205th AMCC Business Meeting March 22, 2025

Purchase tickets online securely with PayPal
See our website: www.liravensmc.org/events.php
Scan the QR Code to go to website:



Worthy Organisations #3

As we approach an incoming tyrannical government, protecting others from hate is important – especially when those being targeted are children. Each month until Trump is out of office, we shall focus upon a socially rewarding group that fights back in the face of tyranny. **GMHC one such group.**

GMHC (Gay Men's Health Crisis) is a New York City-based non-profit, volunteer-supported and community-based AIDS service organization whose mission statement is to "end the AIDS epidemic and uplift the lives of all affected" was founded in 1982



and is often billed as the world's oldest AIDS service organization and the nation's oldest HIV/AIDS service organization.

In early 1981, reports began surfacing in San Francisco and New York City that a rare form of cancer called Kaposi's sarcoma was affecting young gay men. In response, 80 men gathered in New York writer Larry Kramer's apartment on 11th August 1981 to discuss the issue of "gay cancer" and to begin organizing efforts to raise money for research.

In January 1982, Nathan Fain, Lawrence D. Mass, Paul Popham, Paul Rapoport and Edmund White again met with Larry Kramer

at his home and founded Gay Men's Health Crisis. GMHC took its name from the fact that the earliest men who fell victim to AIDS in the early 1980s were gay. The first meeting was held in the Church of St. Joseph in Greenwich Village. They organized the formal tax-exempt entity, which was incorporated on 30th June 1982. At the time, it was the largest volunteer AIDS organization in the world. Paul Popham was chosen as the president.

Larry Kramer wrote that by the time of McFarlane's death, "the GMHC is essentially what he started: crisis counselling, legal aid, volunteers, the buddy system, social workers" as part of an organization that serves more than 15,000 people affected by HIV and AIDS. In an interview with The New York Times after McFarlane's death in May 2009, Kramer described how "single-handedly Rodger took this struggling ragtag group of really frightened and mostly young men, found us an office and set up all the programs."

GMHC is still thriving and helping men, women, gay, bi and straight persons affected by HIV/AIDS.

See their services at <https://www.gmhc.org/>

New Leather Bar Opens in Washington DC!

Empire City MC and Spartan MC, the only all-riding gay motorcycle clubs east of the Mississippi, along with other gay leather clubs and GDIs were at the launch party of the brand-spanking new "District Eagle Bar" in Washington DC's Northeast area at 1357 U St NW 1357 U St NW, Washington, DC 20009 on Wednesday, 22nd January!



This two-floor bar with a variety of hallways, alcoves, washrooms, two bars, an ample coat/clothing check, and reasonable sound system that allows for conversation in places indoors is sure to be a hit in the Capitol Region and is long overdue, following the shuttering of the infamous D.C. Eagle (not affiliated with District Eagle).

Watch this space for upcoming events from all Motorcycle & Men's Clubs in the WDC area and beyond!

More photos and information at: <https://bit.ly/DistrictEagle>



“The Drag Queen Test” can help you decide where to travel in Trump’s America

By Jamie Valentino

Historically, drag queens have always had the power to check a bitch, so it’s no surprise they might play a key role in figuring out whether your city is LGBTQ-friendly! As Donald Trump, a 34 felony convicted sexual abuser and fraudster, regains control of America, queer travelers might reconsider which parts of the nation they feel comfortable visiting.



If Meta revising their hate speech guidelines to allow queerness to be equated to a mental disorder is any indication, bigotry breeds bigotry. But queer wanderlust lives on regardless of the party in the White House! According to urbanist and social entrepreneur Nicholas Lalla, you don’t need to read your next destination to filth to know if it’s safe. Dubbed “The Drag Queen Test,” he developed a framework for his new book *Reinventing the Heartland* to measure whether a city fosters true inclusion and creativity.

GayCities spoke with Lalla to explore why the state of drag queens in a city reflects if it’s a desirable place to visit. “I work with cities to build inclusive and resilient innovation economies,” he says. “The outcomes that I seek through my work are ultimately creating good paying jobs for a wide range of people and making sure that everybody has access to the skills and education and credentialing and venture capital and mentoring and other entrepreneurial support to participate and to thrive in today’s economy.”

Ironically, Lalla’s entrepreneurial calling emerged during the turbulent years of the first Trump presidency and the pandemic. “It kind of shattered my understanding of America,” he says. “I was living in my coastal elite bubble, unaware of the urban-rural fracture in the country—that too many people aren’t getting the jobs they need to pay their bills, raise their families, and support themselves. Add to that the political polarization.”

To merge entrepreneurship with inclusivity in the tech economy, he founded Tulsa Innovation Labs in 2020, an organization deploying over \$200 million in capital to drive growth in northeast Oklahoma. What does this have to do with drag queens, you might ask? Lalla is releasing his book to inspire rural cities to harness their resources and cultivate their versions of Silicon Valley.

“Research shows a correlation between economic prosperity and the concentration of queer communities, validating the broader theory that diverse and inclusive communities are key contributors to and indicators of economic vitality,” says Lalla.

As part of this approach, he encourages people to evaluate their city using “The Drag Queen Test,” which poses four simple questions.

1	Does your city or state have laws restricting drag queens? (If no, plus 1 point)
2	Does your city have drag brunches occurring on any given weekend? (If yes, plus 1 point)
3	Does your city have multiple bars or performance centers dedicated to the LGBTQ+ community? (If yes, plus 1 point)
4	Has your city sent a contestant to RuPaul’s Drag Race? (If yes, plus 1 point)

So, how did your city fare? Or better yet, dear reader with the queer travel bug, how does your next planned destination in the US measure up?

Lalla explains that it’s about much more than just drag queens. Areas with large gay populations tend to have a higher concentration of cultural assets. Think clubs, bars, restaurants, and theaters; all contribute to a place’s desirability. The “tolerance or open culture premium” reflects the inclusiveness of a community and its appeal.

In other words, more inclusive places mean that more people feel safe, and more [queer] people want to live there. “All of this together creates a cycle of asset building locally, as well as positive feedback loops that attract more investment and more people, which leads to urban development,” Lalla argues.

The author describes The Drag Queen Test as a fun piece of pop urbanism that addresses critical issues: every city should embrace its LGBTQ+ community as an integral part of its economic lifeblood and future. Despite one of the most divisive presidents in history preparing to take the helm of politics for a second term, city leaders still have the power to shape their legacies. Queer travelers, in turn, have the right to choose where they spend their dollars. “In the book, I argue that drag queens are economic actors who create jobs and that minoritized people, more broadly, must be recognized as important contributors to local economies,” says Lalla. “They need to be included.”

This story originally appeared in the GayCities newsletter: <https://www.gaycities.com/articles/newsletter/>

Washington DC - World Pride 2025



2025 marks the 50th Anniversary of Pride celebrations in Washington, DC! The Capital Pride Alliance is excited for Washington, DC to host WorldPride 2025 and share this momentous and exciting milestone with our international community.

WorldPride DC 2025 will feature a vibrant and innovative slate of events and cultural programs that will highlight the best that Washington, DC has to offer. From music to film, from the National Mall to Embassy Row, you will experience the world through Washington's multi-faceted and multi-cultural community. Come and celebrate with us May 17 – June 8, 2025!

The PRIDE MARCH will be 7th June 2025, permits or not! Interested bikers, kindly reach out to the Road Captain of the Spartan MC if you are interested in riding in the 2025 World Pride Parade. Here are some photos from last year's WDC Pride March:



The Last Word: A letter from the President of Empire City MC

Greetings Members of Empire City MC & Readers,

I am deeply honored to have been re-elected as your President for a second term. Your support and trust in my leadership mean the world to me, and I am excited to continue working with all of you to make our organization thrive.

This upcoming year promises to be filled with thrilling rides and engaging events that will bring our community even closer together. As always, our Open General Meetings will take place on the first Wednesday of each month from 20:00-21:00, and our Social Hours on the third Wednesday of each month from 20:00-21:00. These gatherings are not only essential for conducting business but also for fostering camaraderie and sharing our passion for motorcycling.

We have an incredible lineup of rides and events planned, starting with ECMC's Motorcycle Week in Hershey, PA, on May 24, 2025. This event is just the beginning of many adventures we will embark on together. Whether you are joining us for a ride or participating in one of our social events, there is something for everyone to enjoy. During 2024 we approached our riding events as an on-off events to accommodate as many peoples schedules as possible, for riders that could only do a portion of a ride or attend the entire ride all are welcome.

Our Vice President and Road Captain will continue to oversee the events and travel, ensuring that each ride is safe, enjoyable, and memorable. I encourage you to check our official online calendar regularly for updates and details on all upcoming activities. Bookmark our calendar at <http://calendar.EmpireCityMC.com> and join us for some amazing rides.

For those who wish to stay connected and engage in conversations with fellow bikers, our private 'Motorcyclists on Signal' group is the perfect platform. Additionally, you can chat with us on our social media at <https://mewe.com/join/empirecitymc>

I am committed to making this year even more successful than the last and to ensuring that every member feels valued and included. Thank you once again for your confidence in my leadership. Let's make this year unforgettable with exciting adventures and lasting friendships.

Ride safe and see you on the road!

IBH (In Brotherhood),
Gary Papouschek, President,
Empire City MC



ECMC SOCIAL HOURS & OPEN GENERAL MEETINGS: Empire City MC hosts two primary meetings monthly. Our Open General Meetings are on the FIRST WEDNESDAY of each month, 20:00-21:00. Our Social Hours are on the THIRD WEDNESDAY of each month, 20:00-21:00. All interested parties are welcomed, keeping in mind that our O.G.M. is a business meeting. You may join any of our conference calls by using Zoom Teleconference software and utilizing this link: <https://bit.ly/ECMC-MEET>

For even further information, in our organisation, the Vice President (vice-president@empirecitymc.com) is in charge of EVENTS the Road Captain (road-captain@empirecitymc.com) for RIDES (travel), president (president@empirecitymc.com) for meetings.

There are other events and rides in our official calendar! Be sure to bookmark our official calendar at <http://calendar.EmpireCityMC.com> and come along with us on some great rides! Our physical mailing address is: **Empire City MC, 10 W 15th St, Suite 609, New York, NY 10011-6821.**

Join the conversation! Chat with us and other bikers on our private 'Motorcyclists on Signal' group: <https://bit.ly/motonsig> - for membership information, <http://empirecitymc.com/membership.php> to view and download our constitution, bylaws and membership application. We're on social media at <https://mewe.com/join/empirecitymc> where you can chat with us.

Please send any articles, photos or letters to the editor at newsletter@EmpireCityMC.org



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