

125th STREET

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT

TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

**Summary of December 3, 2012
Public Workshop 2**

January 2, 2013

Prepared for:

NYC Department of Transportation

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I. Introduction

The New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) and MTA New York City Transit (NYCT) conducted a Public Workshop on December 3, 2012 to hear about the critical issues impacting bus movement on 125th Street and to introduce the proposed M60 Select Bus Service on 125th Street.

Public Workshop Date, Location, and Time:

- Monday, December 3, 2012
The Alhambra Ballroom of NY
2116 Adam Clayton Powell Blvd.
New York, NY 10027
6 – 8 PM

Advertisements: The project team produced a meeting flyer, which was sent electronically to Community Boards, elected officials, and community organizations contacts, who were asked to distribute them to their constituents/members. Meeting notices were posted in NYCT buses operating along 125th Street, distributed to local businesses and advertised using DOT's Facebook and Twitter pages.

Attendees: A total of 47 individuals attended the Public Meeting, including representatives from businesses, Community Boards, community organizations, elected officials, local media, residents, and other interested citizens.

Representatives from the following organizations attended the workshop:

- 125th Street BID
- 56 E 126th St. LLC
- Alhambra Ballroom
- City College / University Transportation Research Center (UTRC)
- City Council Member Inez E. Dickens
- City Council Member Robert Jackson
- Community Board 9
- Community Board 10
- Community Board 11
- DNA Info
- Harlem Community Development Corporation
- Harlem Independent Living Center
- Harlem River Park Task Force
- Harlem Street Entrepreneurs
- Independence Residents Inc.
- Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer
- New York County DA's Office
- NYAM - Age-Friendly NYC
- NYCHA Grant Houses
- Preserve Harlem's Legacy
- State Senator Bill Perkins



- State Senator Jose Serrano
- Transportation Alternatives
- TWU Local100
- United Salem Church
- WE ACT for Environmental Justice

Format: Each facilitator presented a series of informational slides that served as the basis for discussion at each table.

The presentation reviewed data collected and analyzed, and the input received at the first Public Workshop that took place on September 19, 2012; introduced the selection of the M60 to upgrade to SBS Service with off-board fare collection, dedicated off-set bus lanes and other potential transportation improvements; and SBS amenities that could be implemented on 125th Street.

The presentation also included a look at some of the technical work that had been completed since the first workshop, including a merchant survey and parking analysis. Additionally, a “shopper survey”, which actually involves the surveying of people on the street—not just shoppers—and traffic analysis will be conducted in the coming months.

The full presentation can be found at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/brt/downloads/pdf/2012-12-sbs-125th-workshop-2.pdf>.

II. Summary of Comments

The following workshop discussion summary is organized into four subject areas:

- 1) Issue Identification
- 2) SBS Service and Amenities
- 3) Technical Analyses
- 4) Public Involvement

This summary covers discussions, statements, comments, and suggestions at all seven tables from the workshop.

Issue Identification

Many of the issues brought up confirmed the issues heard at the September workshop. The participants’ comments focused on issues relating to congestion, pedestrian safety, transit and parking. Transit issues included bus bunching, irregular service, disrespect shown by some individuals to disabled bus customers and bus routing. The focus of the parking discussion was double-parking. Double-parking is an issue along the corridor that brings a mixed reaction from participants. Some felt that there is too much double parking and it is the cause of many of the problems on the corridor. Other participants felt that more attention should be paid to other issues such as pedestrian safety. Points made and discussed at the table also included:



- Some bus customers, especially in the Lenox Avenue to Lexington Avenue section, do not treat disabled bus customers respectfully.
- The Lexington Avenue and 125th Street intersection is the generator of many of the corridor's problems. Some of the elderly try to avoid that intersection.
- Ban all turns at Lexington Avenue and 125th Street during peak periods to relieve congestion and improve pedestrian safety.
- Countdown clocks on pedestrian signals have increased pedestrian safety.
- Major pedestrian safety concerns exist on 125th St from Park Avenue to Third Avenue.
- Many people get off westbound buses to walk from Second Avenue to Lexington Avenue since they can walk faster than the bus travels.
- Banning left turns from 125th Street at Lenox Avenue has helped traffic move more efficiently.
- The economic resurgence of 125th Street has led to increased congestion.
- Taxis and car services pick up and drop off passengers in bus stops blocking buses from accessing the curb.
- Some participants felt that no matter what course of action was taken, traffic congestion would remain a stumbling block to improved bus service.
- Any changes on 125th Street will impact other streets.
- Bus bunching causes a lot of transit delays; this is especially bad in the winter as people waiting for the bus often have to deal with puddles and other weather related issues to access buses.
- A representative of Senator Perkins asserted in a prepared statement at the outset of the workshop that the project is about airport connections for the M60, not about 125th Street bus service.
- There were suggestions that the M60 SBS be implemented for a trial period.
- A suggestion was made for a "short line" M60 service that would not leave Manhattan; other participants felt this would be unfair to bus customers who go to and from Queens.
- M35 should be eliminated and the M100 extended to Randall's Island.
- M35 has a more detrimental impact on the intersection of Lexington Avenue and 125th Street than the other buses.
- Make the M101 an SBS route and extend the M102 to City Hall.
- All social services should be moved from the neighborhood to Randall's Island so shelter occupants can stay on the island.

Select Bus Service and Amenities

Many of the proposed SBS amenities were positively received. Many participants were already familiar with SBS service from taking it on other routes in Manhattan or the Bronx. While there was some skepticism of the effectiveness of off-set bus lanes due the already rampant double parking on the street, overall they were positively received. There were several requests for increased public education on off-board fare collection, with an emphasis on educating the public on the consequences of fare evasion.

The following is a summary of statements and comments:

- Many participants could see the benefits of off-set bus lanes to both buses and other vehicles.



- It is important that buses continue to stop right next to the curb, instead of in the offset lane. Project staff emphasized that all buses would continue to stop at the curb.
- Many participants embraced Traffic Signal Priority as a good idea for 125th Street.
- All door boarding was seen as a positive amenity to reduce the time it takes to load a bus.
- Many people felt that extensive public education on off-board fare collection was needed for both local residents and tourists, including education on how transfers work with SBS tickets. Participants suggested placing an emphasis on the penalties for not paying the fare to help ensure compliance.
- There was a suggestion to combine SBS signage with wayfinding signage to help tourists find local businesses and landmarks. Signage should be simple and more graphical than text based.
- There was a lot of interest around the topic of limited stops. Many participants saw the benefits of limited stops and felt they should be geared towards subway connections. Participants acknowledged that people could be upset if they could no longer use their current stop though.
- Concern was expressed that the extended bus stops would displace vendors.
- Increasing the length of bus stops will help with bus bunching.

Technical Analyses

Merchants Survey

- A participant stated that many shoppers who merchants thought were walking to businesses are probably coming from subways or buses.
- Questions were raised as to whether vendors were included in the merchant survey, and if not, whether vendors would be surveyed in the future.

Parking Analysis

- A participant suggested installing parking meters in unmetered sections of the corridor if they could improve the turnover rate. However, some participants felt that the parking fees along 125th Street are already too high.
- Commercial loading zones would be very helpful.
- More enforcement is needed by NYPD to help with turnover and double-parking.

Several participants stated they understood that parking regulations need to be overhauled in certain areas of 125th Street.

Public Outreach

All participants were asked how they heard about the workshop. This was done to gauge the effectiveness of the publicity strategy used to announce the meeting. A majority of participants heard about the meeting via the electronic flyer, either directly from NYCDOT or through forwards from members of the Community Advisory Committee (CAC). Emails were mentioned almost twice as often as the next most common answer, notices placed on the buses along the corridor. Due to variances between the recording methods by facilitators, exact figures are difficult to determine. The responses of the participants also showed that the CAC was effective in publicizing the meeting via electronic communication and through word of mouth.