



Webster Avenue Select Bus Service Community Advisory Committee Meeting #2 Summary

Wednesday May 2, 2012, 6:30-8:30pm
Icahn Charter Middle School Cafeteria
1506 Brook Avenue, Bronx, NY 10457

Executive Summary

On Wednesday, May 2, 2012, The New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT) and MTA New York City Transit (NYCT), held the second Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting for the Webster Avenue Select Bus Service (SBS) project at the Icahn Charter Middle School in the Bronx. The meeting was attended by 11 members of the CAC (see list of organizations on page 5).

Eric Beaton, Director of Transit Development for NYCDOT, introduced himself and led the introductions of the CAC members present. Mr. Beaton and Ted Orosz, Director of Long Range Bus Planning for NYCT, then presented a more detailed overview of the background and purpose of the project, outlined the goals and outreach process, and stated some of the already identified problems with bus service along Webster Avenue. The presentation summarized the feedback heard during the first CAC meeting in February 2012. The presentation also described the features of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Select Bus Service (SBS) and the results of the Bx12 SBS on Fordham Road. Data that has been collected along Webster Avenue and analyzed was shown. Lastly, a timeline of events through the completion of the study was provided to the CAC.

A copy of the presentation can be downloaded at:

http://www.nyc.gov/html/brt/downloads/pdf/201205_brt_webster_cac.pdf

The attendees broke out into two groups for a workshop activity. The first part of the workshop activity focused on discussing existing issues and concerns along the corridor, comparing the issues to data collected by the project team and discussing the future of the corridor, including the impacts of planned developments along the corridor on the transportation system. During the second segment of the workshop, the participants were shown three conceptual SBS running way design options (see Appendix on pages 6-9) and discussed the advantages and disadvantages of each option. Lastly, participants were given a series of bus service choices and had to decide which option they would prefer.

Workshop Discussions

Below is a summary of the discussions at both tables from the workshop.

Part I: Existing Conditions and Vision

Concerns:

- East Tremont Avenue and Webster Avenue is one of the most dangerous intersections on the corridor due to the high volume of traffic, buses, and school children. The right turn from East Tremont Avenue to southbound Webster Avenue is especially dangerous. The lanes in this area do not seem as wide as others.
- Fordham Road and Bedford Park Boulevard are the commercial and residential hubs on the northern portion of the corridor. Banning left-turns at Fordham Road should be considered to improve traffic flow.
- Very important to serve public housing at East 138th Street and 3rd Avenue. Bx41 bus service to East 138th Street needs to be restored.
- Congestion on Webster Avenue approaching the following streets:
 - Cross Bronx Expressway
 - E Tremont Road
 - E Fordham Road
 - E Gun Hill Road
 - Bedford Park Boulevard (livery cab stand often has double and triple parked cars)
- One travel lane is often lost to police parking at the 52nd Precinct on Webster Avenue at Mosholu Parkway
- Traffic slowed by mistimed lights between East 167th and East 170th Streets.
- Dangerous turn from East 178th Street to northbound Webster Avenue.
- Countdown clocks at intersections are often ignored by pedestrians.
- North of 204th Street, the primary traffic generators are trucks, auto body shops, and 18-wheelers making deliveries in the area.
- The following areas were mentioned by participants as places that pose a safety issue for pedestrians.
 - The Hub
 - East 161st Street (At times of Yankee Games)
 - Mosholu Parkway Parking Garage at the New York Botanical Garden

Vision/Future Development:

- Webster Avenue was recently rezoned between Fordham Road and Gun Hill Road.
- Plans for 100,000 square feet of commercial development near the New York Botanical Garden, including a hotel.
- Large residential developments are planned near the intersection of Webster Avenue and E Gun Hill Road. Additionally, another large development is possible at East 198th Street. A 140-unit development is slated for East 211th Street.
- New schools near 204th and 205th Streets. Need to accommodate school bus access at drop-off and pick-up times.
- Widened sidewalks and green medians could help support development.
- Improved access to transit would make development more desirable.

Part II: Conceptual Alignments

Below is a summary of the advantages and disadvantages discussion pertaining to the three conceptual SBS running way design options (the renderings can be found in the Appendix on pages 6-9).

Curbside Alignment:

Advantages:

- Maintains 2 travel lanes
- “Used to bus lane at the curb” – Familiar alignment to the community

Disadvantages:

- Loss of parking
- People walk in the bus lane in front of the bus
- High number of violators reduce effectiveness of the lanes

Offset Alignment:

Advantages:

- Easier for deliveries
- Possibility of neck downs and pedestrian islands
- No loss of parking
- People waiting for bus do not block sidewalk
- Better for buses than curbside
- Can add landscaping

Disadvantages:

- Only one lane of traffic in each direction
- Conflicts between buses and cars as cars move across the bus lane to park
- Right turns can be problematic because buses and cars share the lane close to the intersection.

Median Alignment:

Advantages:

- Median islands shorten crossing distance at bus stops
- Would be better in the snow as buses and cars are separated. Less chance for buses to get stuck behind car accidents.
- Faster buses
- People will be able to easily find the SBS bus stop
- Better for buses than curbside
- Can add greenery at stations

Disadvantages:

- Only one lane of traffic in each direction
- Seniors may not feel safe standing in the middle of the road
- Banned left turns at some intersections
- Safety concerns – people rushing to catch buses
- Loss of parking at stations
- Forces a choice between local and SBS rather than just catching the first bus to arrive

Part III: Rider Preferences

In order to examine the tradeoffs associated with various transit service options, participants were offered a series of three choices to state their preference. The results of the responses are shown in the table below.

Sheet	Scenario	Red Table	Blue Table	Total
A	Walk: 5 minutes, Wait: 5 minutes, Bus trip: 20 minutes	4	4	8
	Walk: 8 minutes, Wait: 5 minutes, Bus trip: 14 minutes	2	1	3
B	Walk: 8 minutes, Wait: 5 minutes, Bus trip: 14 minutes	2	4	6
	Walk: 3 minutes, Wait: 3 minutes, Bus trip: 26 minutes	4	1	5
C	Walk: 3 minutes, Wait: 3 minutes, Bus trip: 26 minutes	4	1	5
	Walk: 5 minutes, Wait: 5 minutes, Bus trip: 20 minutes	2	4	6

Participants at both tables agreed on the ‘medium’ scenario (five minutes walking, five minutes waiting, twenty minute trip) as the preferred option for Sheet A, while the preferences on both tables differed for Sheets B and C. Overall, participants preferred the ‘medium’ scenario over the other two scenarios, which offered a shorter bus trip time with a longer walk time or a shorter walk and wait time but longer bus trip time.

Part IV: Key Point Wrap-Up

Each table summarized their key points from workshop Parts I and II.

Blue Table:

Part I (Existing Conditions and Vision):

- Pedestrian safety (especially at the East Fordham Road and East Tremont Avenue intersections)
- Speeding – Need traffic calming and organizing of turning movements
- Serving new and existing commercial and residential nodes – transit dependent and mobility impaired

Part II (Conceptual Alignments):

- Balance buses, businesses and pedestrians – “Happy Medium”

Red Table:

Part I (Existing Conditions and Vision):

- Major intersections and rezonings

Part II (Conceptual Alignments):

- Curbside: Access to curb needs to be maintained
- Offset: Parking is maintained, but loss of a travel lane
- Median: Shorten crosswalks – need to consider needs of seniors, young children, etc.

Attendees

- Bronx Borough President’s Office
- Community Board 3
- Community Board 5
- Community Board 6 (2 participants)
- Community Board 7 (2 participants)
- Fordham Road BID
- Pratt Center, Community Division
- Councilmember Oliver Koppell’s Office
- Senator Gustavo Rivera’s Office

EXISTING CONDITIONS



Webster Avenue / East 167th Street



Webster Avenue / East 204th Street

OPTION 1 - CURBSIDE BUS LANES



Webster Avenue / East 167th Street



Webster Avenue / East 204th Street

OPTION 2 - OFFSET BUS LANES



Webster Avenue / East 167th Street



Webster Avenue / East 204th Street

OPTION 3 - MEDIAN BUS LANES



Webster Avenue / East 167th Street



Webster Avenue / East 204th Street