



Webster Avenue Select Bus Service Community Advisory Committee Meeting #3 Summary

Thursday September 27, 2012, 3:00-5:00pm
Garden Terrace Room Foyer at Abigail Kirsch
The New York Botanical Garden
2900 Southern Boulevard, Bronx, NY 10458

Executive Summary

On Thursday, September 27, 2012, The New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT) and MTA New York City Transit (NYCT), held the third Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting for the Webster Avenue Select Bus Service (SBS) project at The New York Botanical Garden. Twenty-two CAC members attended the meeting (see attached list of organizations).

Ted Orosz, Director of Long Range Bus Planning for NYCT, introduced himself and led the introductions of the CAC members present. Mr. Orosz and Eric Beaton, Director of Transit Development for NYCDOT, 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 previous CAC meetings and the Open House in May 2012. The presentation also described the features of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Select Bus Service (SBS) and the results of SBS in New York City. The presentations summarized the technical work that had been done to date as well and how the proposed corridor design – offset bus lanes - was selected. A typical SBS station location featuring an off-set bus lane was shown and the benefits of the design and its amenities were highlighted. After the small group discussions, a few slides were presented to highlight the data collected during a business survey conducted over the summer.

A copy of the presentation can be downloaded at:

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/brt/downloads/pdf/2012-09-webster-sbs-cac3.pdf>

After the presentation, the attendees broke out into three groups for a workshop activity. The first part of the workshop activity focused on discussing proposed SBS station locations, comparing them to the current Bx41 Limited stops. During the second segment of the workshop, the participants were shown conceptual designs for offset bus lanes on Webster Avenue, at E. 167th Street and at E. 204th Street, so they could evaluate the overall design in more detail and discuss the placement of improvements and amenities. Lastly, participants were shown three draft designs under consideration for more complex locations along Webster Avenue: E. Tremont Avenue, the Cross Bronx Expressway and at Fordham Road. These designs go beyond SBS treatments to solve larger issues that impact traffic and pedestrian circulation and look to reduce delays that impact bus service.

The workshop materials can be downloaded at:

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/brt/downloads/pdf/2012-09-webster-sbs-cac3-workshop.pdf>

Workshop Discussions

The following is a summary of the comments that were raised and discussed within the groups, as recorded by note takers at each table. *Italicized text illustrates responses from project staff given at the meeting.*

Part I: SBS Stop Locations

Comments and concerns over stop locations:

- Retain E. 180th Street SBS Stop:
 - Twin Parks Apartments has a large senior population
 - Long walk to proposed stop at E. 183rd Street
 - Transfer point to the crosstown Bx36 bus. *The Bx41 also intersects the Bx36 at E Tremont Avenue.*
 - Recent rezoning by NYCDCP could impact future SBS demand
- Concerns over transferring between local and SBS buses.
- Removal of the E. 189th Street Limited stop will work if pedestrian amenities are made to create better access to Fordham Road.
- E. Fordham Road – concerns over the location of the southbound stop. Evaluate moving to the north of the intersection of Webster Avenue and E. Fordham Road. Also, why were there two northbound stops previously?
- Gun Hill Road Terminal – in favor of a new terminal stop in the new intermodal terminal.

Part II: Conceptual Plans

Summary of comments made of the typical locations:

East 167th Street:

- Need to address delivery parking
- With only one travel lane, an accident could significantly slow traffic
- E. 167th Street – only one lane effectively travels through there now; will the bus lane be effective in reducing double parking?
- Medians may encourage jaywalking due to shorter crossings
- What type of plantings will be in the medians? Avoid trees that can impact sight lines or interfere with vehicles.

East 204th Street:

- Be aware of new development before planning stop locations
- Where will the Bx55 stop be located?
- Where will school buses stop?
- Are double length bus bulbs needed here? Are ridership counts used to determine the locations of those?
- People use the dead-end block of E. 204th Street (east of Webster Avenue), for access to the park and bicycle lane.
- Wherever parking is removed, NYCDOT should look to try and add more close by.

Other issues raised:

- Mosholu Parkway – is it too narrow under the overpass for a bus lane?
- Is the time savings of installing a bus lane (20%) worth the overall impact to traffic?
- Will emergency vehicles be able to use the bus lanes? *Emergency vehicles are allowed to use the bus lanes at all times.*
- E Gun Hill Road—high traffic area. Should speak with Community Board 12 on impacts.
- Will fare machines be inside or outside shelters? When they are inside the shelters it gets too crowded; however, when outside, the rain destroys the tickets. *SBS fare machines will be placed outside shelters to maintain seating in the shelters.*
- Can you also buy a MetroCard at an SBS fare machine? *No, SBS fare machines do not sell or refill MetroCards.*
- Will all stops have concrete bus pads? The red paint does not seem to stick well to the concrete pads; are there other options?
- Where will the funds come from to pay for SBS changes and improvements?

Part III: Designs Under Consideration

Cross Bronx Expressway:

- Northbound left turn jug handle is a good idea
- Creating additional turning space but maintaining through traffic is important
- Do not give drivers options – restrict turning movements to force use of jug handle
- Where will streets be resurfaced?
- Are you just moving the problem by building jug handle? Will this move the issue over to Park Avenue?

East Tremont Avenue:

- Worst intersection in the corridor
- Why not start from scratch and redesign whole intersection?
- There is already limited East/West connectivity in the Bronx - Is removing the southbound left-turn from Webster Avenue to E. Tremont Avenue a good idea?
- Will there be a crosswalk to Echo Park?
- Should look to install better signage where possible
- Curb extensions are good here
- Pedestrian signals will help
- Will there be a back-up due to the new signals and limited capacity to store cars at the light?

East Fordham Road:

- Rerouting formalizes what is already done by some today
- Banning left turns is great for pedestrians
- Do ridership numbers support removing the northbound stop at E. 189th Street?
- Could turns only be restricted during peak hours like in Manhattan?
- Heavy delivery area
- Suggestion to move southbound stop to E. 193rd Street and Webster Avenue because parking in the commercial area is very important.

Part IV: Key Point Wrap-Up

Each table summarized their key points from their discussions.

Green Table:

Part I (Station Locations):

- E. 183rd Street Stop vs. E. 180th Street Stop location
- Do transfers create a two- fare zone?

Part II (Conceptual Plans):

- Balance of traffic, curbside access and deliveries with bus lane

Part III (Designs Under Consideration):

- New patterns at the Cross Bronx Expressway seem to be an improvement
- Crossing E. Fordham Road will get easier

Red Table:

Part I (Station Locations):

- Talk to CB's about specific issues: CB 6 (E. 180th/E. 183rd Street), CB 12 (E. Gun Hill Road), NYCHA (E. 170th Street)

Part II (Conceptual Plans):

- Green medians would be good

Part III (Designs Under Consideration):

- Cross Bronx Expressway – Look into banning left turn at E. 175th Street
- E. Tremont Avenue – New pedestrian crossings are good; Banning southbound left-turn will impact east-west connectivity
- E. Fordham Road – Very important to improve pedestrian conditions; banning the Fordham left-turns and creating better pedestrian refuges would help.

Blue Table:

Part I (Station Locations):

- Is there room for bus lanes through the Mosholu Parkway area?

Part II (Conceptual Plans):

- Add parking where possible
- Shrubs are preferred over trees
- Should be able to buy MetroCards at stops

Part III (Designs Under Consideration):

- Cross Bronx Expressway – Will solution create more problems on service roads?
- E. Fordham Road – Need more consideration about bus stop locations – possible to move southbound SBS stop to E. 193rd Street

Attendees:

- Bronx Borough President's Office
- Community Board 3
- Community Board 5 (2 participants)
- Community Board 7 (2 participants)
- Fordham Road BID
- New York City Economic Development Corporation
- Bedford-Mosholu Community Association (2 participants)
- Transportation Alternatives (2 participants)
- Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA
- NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign
- NYPIRG Bronx Community College
- Tri-State Transportation Campaign
- Pratt Center for Community Development
- Councilmember Oliver Koppell's Office
- Assembly member Eric Stevenson's Office
- Senator Gustavo Rivera's Office
- Representative Jose Serrano's Office