



Webster Avenue Select Bus Service Community Advisory Committee Meeting #4 Summary

Thursday November 29, 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, November 29, 2012, The New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT) and MTA New York City Transit (NYCT), held the fourth Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting for the Webster Avenue Select Bus Service (SBS) project at The New York Botanical Garden. Thirteen CAC members attended the meeting (see attached list of organizations).

Eric Beaton, Director of Transit Development for NYCDOT, introduced himself and led the introductions of the CAC members and project team present. Ted Orosz, Director of Long Range Bus Planning for NYCT, then presented an overview of the background and purpose of the project, outlined the goals and outreach process, and summarized the overall progress of the project. Mr. Orosz presented the conceptual design for the Bx41 SBS and a typical SBS station location featuring an offset bus lane, highlighting the benefits of the design and its amenities. Taylor Reiss, NYCDOT Project Manager, then presented the results of the traffic analysis for the project. Ms. Reiss discussed how the analysis was conducted and explained how Level of Service (LOS) is used as a measure of vehicle delay. Ms. Reiss then compared the existing LOS at key intersections along the corridor with the projected LOS after SBS is implemented. Ms. Reiss then discussed proposed traffic improvements at the Cross Bronx Expressway, East Tremont Avenue, East Fordham Road, and East Gun Hill Road.

Following a brief break for question and answers from CAC members, Mr. Orosz presented the proposed bus service plan for the Bx41 SBS and other routes in the area. Mr. Orosz discussed the pros and cons of the NYCT proposal to move the current limited stop at East 180th Street to East 183rd Street. In addition to the introduction of SBS on the Bx41, the Bx55 Limited will be renamed the Bx15 Limited and provide limited-stop service between The Hub and Fordham Plaza along Third Avenue and local service between West Harlem and The Hub. The Bx15 Local will provide all-stop service between The Hub and Fordham Plaza along Third Avenue. Mr. Orosz pointed out that improvements could be made to the routing of the Bx34 by allowing it to utilize the bus lanes on Webster Avenue instead of Bainbridge and Valentine Avenues, which are narrow streets. He also presented the details of how a proposed SBS service would work between Webster Avenue and LaGuardia Airport, a recommendation which came from the LaGuardia Alternatives Analysis Study.

Mr. Beaton presented the next steps for the project, which include a Public Open House in early January.

A copy of the presentation can be downloaded at: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/brt/downloads/pdf/2012-11-sbs-webster-cac4.pdf>

There were two segments for formal questions and answers, one following the presentation of traffic analysis and one following the presentation of the bus service plan. Project team staff also held informal discussions with CAC members after the formal meeting was completed.

Traffic Analysis Discussion

Will there be any dedicated bus treatments on East Gun Hill Road? Will they be coordinated with the necessary traffic movements for entrances and exits to the Bronx River Parkway?

There will be no dedicated bus lane on East Gun Hill Road, but there will be other treatments such as signal optimization to make the intersection of Webster Avenue and East Gun Hill Road function more efficiently.

The conversion of Ittner Place to one-way traffic is good idea. How will the dedicated bus signal near the Cross Bronx Expressway work?

The dedicated bus signal proposed for southbound buses at E 176th St will allow the bus to move through the intersection a few seconds ahead of regular vehicular traffic. This will help keep the bus from getting stuck in an otherwise heavily-congested area.

What will be the impact of banning left turns from Webster Avenue onto East Fordham Road?

The proposed traffic improvements include banning left turns from East Fordham Road onto Webster Avenue, not from Webster Avenue onto East Fordham Road. Prohibiting these turns will improve intersection efficiency by eliminating one signal phase and giving more signal time to Webster Avenue. It will also reduce conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians, especially in the south crosswalk, which has very heavy pedestrian volumes. The diverted westbound left turns would be rerouted via Washington Avenue and East 189th Street; the diverted eastbound left turns would be rerouted via East 188th Street.

Bus Service Plan Discussion

How will Bx15 riders get north of East Fordham Road if the route will now terminate at Fordham Plaza?

Riders would have to transfer to the Bx41 on Webster Avenue. The number of current Third Avenue bus riders who continue north of East Fordham Road on the Bx55 is not a large number, fewer than 300 riders a day.

What is the logic behind moving the Bx41 SBS stop from East 180th Street to East 183rd Street?

Moving the stop to East 183rd Street would create more even spacing between stops and create a more direct walking route to St. Barnabas Hospital. The main reason to keep the East 180th Street stop would be for its connection to the Bx36, though there is also a connection at East Tremont Avenue. This idea is proposed and still open for further discussion.

Moving the stop to East 183rd Street would create a two-fare situation for many riders who want to connect to the Bx36 to St. Barnabas Hospital. The walk from Webster Avenue would be difficult for seniors.

The location of the stop in that area will continue to be looked at. We do not foresee a circumstance where a Bx41 customer would be forced to make a second transfer in this general neighborhood.

It would be good if the Bx41 service through The Hub to East 138th Street were restored.

Due to the heavy congestion at The Hub it is very difficult to run high-frequency bus routes through The Hub to other locations. The proposed LaGuardia Airport service from Fordham Plaza, however, would continue south of the Hub to East 138th Street.

Will there be articulated buses on the local Bx41 route?

Yes, the Bx41 local service will continue to have articulated buses.

Have there been reported instances of vandalism of SBS fare collection machines?

There has been some, but vandalism was less than expected since off-board fare collection machines were implemented on the Bx12 SBS.

The Bx34 serves a population with limited access to transit, please do not reroute it.

The Bx34 would not be eliminated, but rather improved and possibly re-routed. Improvements could include possibly making East 197th and East 198th Streets into one-way streets to improve circulation.

How is the ridership for the Bx34?

For a route of its length and purpose, the Bx34 has good ridership numbers.

Attendees:

- Community Board 3
- Community Board 5 (2 participants)
- Community Board 6
- Community Board 7 (3 participants)
- Fordham Road BID
- Bedford-Mosholu Community Association
- NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign
- Councilmember Oliver Koppell's Office
- Assembly member Eric Stevenson's Office
- Senator Gustavo Rivera's Office