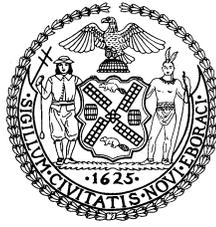


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**The City of New York**  
**Manhattan Community Board 8**  
**Transportation Committee**  
Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2016, 6:30 PM  
*Church of the Holy Trinity, Draesal Hall*  
316 East 88th Street

Minutes

*Present:* Michele Birnbaum, Sarah Chu, Daniel Dornbaum, A. Scott Falk, Craig Lader, David Menegon, Sharon Pope, Rita Popper, Charles Warren; Devin Gould (public member), Jordan Wouk (public member)

*Excused:* Tricia Shimamura

*Unexcused:* Lori Bores, Andrew Kalloch

The meeting was called to order at 6:38 PM.

City Councilmember Ben Kallos spoke in support of a request to add a 72nd Street stop for the M15-SBS (item 2).

**Item 1. Presentation of an update regarding the M86-SBS route launched in July 2015, and proposed Select Bus Service on the M79 route.**

Joe Chiaromonte of New York City Transit (NYCT) and Alison Bullock on NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) made a joint presentation regarding Select Bus Service on two crosstown routes: updates regarding the M86-SBS (introduced in 2015), and introducing future plans to upgrade the M79 route to SBS in 2017.

Select Bus Service is New York's version of bus rapid transit (BRT), "improved bus service that offers fast, frequent, and reliable service on high-ridership bus routes," using a variety of BRT features. Some of the BRT options used on certain SBS routes include:

- Off-board fare collection & all-door boarding
- Dedicated bus lanes & signal priority for buses
- Improved station amenities
- Real-time passenger information
- Pedestrian safety improvements

On the initial 11 SBS routes in New York City, bus speeds have increased 10-25%, ridership has increased 10% (in contrast to ridership decreases on other routes), and customer satisfaction ratings are 95%; in addition, SBS implementation has brought safer streets and a reduction in crashes.

Select Bus Service launched in July 2015 on the M86-SBS, which is now the busiest route per passenger mile in the entire city, carrying 25,000 passengers per day. The M86-SBS features "queue jump bus lanes" in three places, lane realignments, crosswalk upgrades, amenities at stations, off-board fare

collection, and all-door boarding. Travel times between 6 AM and 7 PM are 8-11% faster than prior to implementation. After ridership declines of 8% over the five prior years, ridership in the first eleven months of M86-SBS service showed an average of 7% growth over the prior-year baseline.

NYCT and DOT hope for similar results by upgrading the M79 to M79-SBS, and have the same goals as they had for the M86 upgrades: increased speed and reliability, improved pedestrian and traffic safety and flow, and enhancements to both customer experience and stations. Councilmember Kallos had asked for improvements to the M79 route, which carries over 18,000 passengers daily on a 2-mile route, was identified as a potential SBS route in the city's Phase 2 study of SBS, and which won the "Pokey Award" for the city's slowest crosstown route.

DOT is looking to address traffic and safety issues, including safety concerns at five individual 79th St. intersections: First Avenue, Second Avenue, Third Avenue, Lexington Avenue, and Broadway. Regarding traffic flow, the presenters noted that more than 50% of riders' time is spent delayed, crawling, or stopped (either at red lights or bus stops). Extensive bus lane implementation may be difficult on 79th Street due to a relatively narrow streetscape as built, but queue jumps at bus stations are an option.

There is no final proposal yet, but the initial plan would be for the M79 route to be unchanged, except for potentially removing one single stop on the west side: the eastbound stop at 81st Street & Amsterdam Ave., which has low usage, is relatively close to the preceding stop at 79th Street & Amsterdam, and lacks sufficient sidewalk width for the fare machines.

Current plans are to finalize the DOT's traffic analysis this fall, and to develop a street design and service plan. In addition, construction for off-board fare machines to begin in the fall. This winter, the draft plans would be presented to CB8 and CB7, before finalizing the plans for a spring 2017 launch.

During discussion, it was noted that CB8 passed a resolution in March 2015 asking DOT and NYCT to install SBS fare machines facing *away* from the curb, and we remain on record with that request. Some members of the public asked about whether it is the city's goal to have SBS on all crosstown buses, and in particular the M72; the response was that they city would like to implement SBS on many but not all crosstown routes, and there are no current plans to upgrade any additional Manhattan crosstown routes besides the M23 and M79. There were many comments about unreliability of the fare machines, and a suggestion that it might be helpful to provide instructions for what to do when the machines are out of service.

Multiple members of the Committee suggested DOT reexamine the flow of traffic and the functioning of the east-side queue jumps on the M86 route, particularly how a car has to keep changing lanes on 84th Street and how the westbound shift works for the bus on Fifth Avenue between 85th & 86th. There was also a report of continuing issues with crowding at the westbound stops at First and Second Avenues.

In response to a Board Member's inquiry about using temporary bus bulbs, DOT noted that the first temporary bus bulbs have just been installed in Brooklyn. Another Member suggested DOT include any proposed concrete bus pads in the presentation when they return to CB8. Members also suggested that it would be helpful to split out rush hour statistics, rather than just 6 AM – 7 PM, to see how dramatically the M86-SBS has improved travel times. No vote was taken, but DOT & NYCT should be returning soon when they have their M79-SBS plan ready to propose.

## **Item 2. Discussion of a request to add a 72nd Street stop for the M15-SBS route.**

Valerie Mason of the East 72nd Street Neighborhood Association presented a request to add a 72nd Street stop for the M15-SBS route in both directions, laying out the history of this issue and explaining why this is being pursued now. Prior to the launch of Select Bus Service on First and Second Avenue in 2010, the M15 Limited bus stopped at 72nd Street, but 72nd was not included as an SBS stop. Because of the

timing of Second Avenue Subway construction, which impacted local and SBS stops on Second Avenue, many members of the community were under the mistaken impression that the lack of a 72nd Street SBS stop was temporary and construction-related. Now that it has been clarified that this was an intentional and permanent change, E72NA and Councilmember Kallos's office have collected more than 2,400 petition signatures to request the addition of 72nd Street SBS stations on both First and Second Avenues, to restore non-local service for riders on the M15/M15-SBS corridor.

Marcus Book of NYCT explained the siting process for the M15-SBS stations, which led to certain former limited bus stops becoming local stops with no corresponding SBS station. (These included 72nd Street, 60th Street, and St. Mark's Place. 50th Street and 28th Street were planned to be local stops only, but those stops were added back before plans were finalized.) Mr. Book noted that there were limited resources for stations, and asked whether the community would want to give up another stop in exchange for 72nd Street.

The vast majority of comments were in support of the request. Several people expressed a need for connections to the M72 crosstown bus and the imminent 72nd Street Q train station, and some noted that the surrounding area has changed drastically since 2010. Many commenters complained about the infrequency and unreliability of local M15 service, which can lead to a self-perpetuating ridership decline. In addition, it may be too difficult for riders with mobility impairments to walk to the nearest M15-SBS station between 67th and 68th Street.

The Committee's comments generally favored the request, although some members expressed concerns about the impact an added stop could have on travel times for the M15-SBS, and noted that the 67th Street SBS station connects to the 69th Street entrances to the 72nd Street subway station and to the M66 crosstown bus (which overlaps with a portion of the M72 route).

The Committee passed two resolutions: to request a permanent M15-SBS stop at 72nd Street in both directions, and to increase local service on the M15 route.

**Resolution 2-A (M15-SBS Stop at 72nd Street)**

WHEREAS Select Bus Service replaced Limited Service on the M15 corridor in October 2010, but no SBS station replaced the M15 Limited stop at 72nd Street, eliminating a connection between the M72 and M15-SBS routes; and

WHEREAS since October 2010, the majority of the corridor's buses bypass 72nd Street, although no buses did so prior to October 2010; and

WHEREAS more than 2,400 people have signed a petition to request the addition of 72nd Street M15-SBS stations in both directions;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Community Board 8M urges New York City Transit and the NYC Department of Transportation to add 72nd St. M15-SBS stations on both First and Second Avenues; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Community Board 8M reiterates its request that NYCT and DOT install SBS fare-collection machines facing away from the curb at any new SBS stations within our district.

*Approved, 7 Yes, 0 No, 2 Abstain; plus Public Members voting 1 Yes and 1 Abstaining.*

*Yes (7+1):* Birnbaum Chu, Dornbaum, Menegon, Pope, Popper, Warren; Gould (Public Member)

*Abstain (2+1):* Falk, Lader; Wouk (Public Member)

**Resolution 2-B (M15 Local Service)**

WHEREAS current M15 local bus service is inadequate, unreliable, and vastly inferior to local service prior to the 2010 launch of the M15-SBS; and

WHEREAS the unreliability of M15 local service may discourage riders from use of this bus route, leading to a self-perpetuating ridership decline; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Community Board 8M asks New York City Transit to increase local M15 bus service for a period of at least six months, and measure the resulting change in ridership levels on the M15 local.

*Approved, 9 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain; plus 2 Public Members voting Yes.*

*Yes (9+2): Birnbaum, Chu, Dornbaum, Falk, Lader, Menegon, Pope, Popper, Warren; Gould & Wouk (Public Members)*

**Item 3. Continued discussion of a request for low-floor buses on the M66 (& M72).**

In May 2014, CB8 successfully requested that New York City Transit replace the older buses on the M31 bus route with new low-floor equipment that is easier to board; subsequently the Committee considered a similar request for the M66 bus, which also serves many of the same “hospital corridor” institutions as the M31 bus. New York City Transit has said that this is currently impossible due to low clearances at certain points on the Central Park Transverse roadways.

DOT provided a list of the height clearance restrictions on all of the transverse roadways, and the Committee then asked NYCT for information about their plans for future equipment replacement and a list of current equipment that can travel on these height-restricted routes. NYCT sent the following response:

Both the 2011 NOVA and 2011 New Flyer 40’ low floor clean diesel models are able to operate across the 65th Street Transverse, but are currently assigned to other routes throughout the city.

Our current plan is to replace the current 99 NOVA’s that are operating on the M66 in the summer/fall of 2018. They will be replaced with new 2018 buses from an upcoming bus contract that is currently starting the procurement process (all low-floor buses).

Right now the only buses that have height restrictions preventing adequate clearance through the 65th Street Transverse are hybrid and CNG buses (due to the enclosure for batteries or CNG tanks). Currently, there are no 40’ vehicles in our fleet that are model year 2000 or later that are not low-floor vehicles.

The following resolution was adopted by a unanimous vote:

**Resolution 3 (M66 & M72 Equipment)**

WHEREAS the M66, M72, and M31 bus routes serve the Upper East Side, which has an aging population, and in particular serves the hospital corridor known as “Bed Pan Alley,” with such institutions as NY-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, and Hospital for Special Surgery; and

WHEREAS the M66 and M72 also serve the Upper West Side and such institutions as Lincoln Center; and

WHEREAS the newer low-floor buses with front-door wheelchair access allow for much quicker loading of passengers in wheelchairs, and are also easier to board for children, the elderly, and riders with impaired mobility; and

WHEREAS reduced boarding time improves service reliability and decreases headways between buses; and

WHEREAS New York City Transit in 2014 responded quickly and positively to meet CB8M's request for low-floor buses with front-door wheelchair ramps on the M31 route; and

WHEREAS similar changes are needed on the M66 and M72 routes, which currently lack low-floor buses with front-door wheelchair ramps; and

WHEREAS NYCT plans to introduce new low-floor bus equipment on these routes in 2018, approximately two years away; and

WHEREAS the 2011 NOVA and 2011 New Flyer 40' low-floor clean diesel models are able to operate across the 65th Street Transverse, but are currently assigned to other routes throughout the city;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Community Board 8 Manhattan asks New York City Transit to replace as many of the older buses on the M66 & M72 routes as possible with the 2011 NOVA and 2011 New Flyer 40' low-floor clean diesel models that are able to operate across the 65th Street Transverse.

*Approved, 9 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain; plus 2 Public Members voting Yes.*

*Yes (9+2): Birnbaum, Chu, Dornbaum, Falk, Lader, Menegon, Pope, Popper, Warren; Gould & Wouk (Public Members)*

While on the topic of the M66 route, it was noted that buses during afternoon hospital shift changes and rush hours are persistently overcrowded, to the extent that riders may find it impossible to board multiple westbound M66 buses at York and First Avenue in a row. Members of the Committee asked NYCT to look at increasing service during those hours to meet the demand.

#### **Item 4. Request for a new crosswalk and stop sign at the intersection of East 78th Street and Cherokee Place.**

Mike Sikorski, a resident at the Cherokee co-op who has a 1-year old child, presented his request for a new crosswalk and stop sign at the intersection of 78th Street & Cherokee Place. This is a densely populated residential block with a busy park, a school, and a heavily trafficked bridge providing pedestrian and bicycle access to the East River Esplanade, and although there is no way to safely and legally cross 78th Street at Cherokee Place without walking all the way to York Avenue, many people cross at Cherokee anyway. Cars from the FDR Drive service road speed west on 78th Street, toward the traffic light at York Avenue.

The intersection of 78th & York is an unusual one, where two sets of one-way traffic flow toward each other in opposite directions as they approach York Avenue (a two-way street). Eastbound traffic from west of York and westbound traffic from east of York converge at this intersection, where all vehicles are required to turn either north or south, and where a pedestrian was killed in a motor-vehicle collision in January 2016.

Devin Gould, a public member of the Committee who had requested this item be discussed, seconded all of Mr. Sikorski's comments. Another area resident said there used to be a stop sign at that intersection years ago, and suggested speed bumps for this block as well.

The Committee passed two resolutions: to request a stop sign and crosswalk on 78th Street on the eastern side of the intersection with Cherokee Place; and to add speed bumps, school zone signage, and school zone pavement markings on this block.

**Resolution 5-A (Crosswalk & Stop Sign)**

WHEREAS East 78th Street between York Avenue and the FDR Drive is a densely populated residential block with a busy park, a school, and a heavily trafficked bridge providing pedestrian and bicycle access to the East River Esplanade; and

WHEREAS cars coming from the FDR Drive service road speed west on 78th Street, toward the traffic light at York Avenue; and

WHEREAS there is no way to safely and legally cross 78th Street at Cherokee Place, although many people cross there anyway instead of walking a block west to the intersection of York Avenue; and

WHEREAS the intersection of East 78th Street & York Avenue is unusual and dangerous, with two sets of one-way traffic flowing toward each other in opposite directions as they approach York Avenue (a two-way street), where all vehicles are required to turn either north or south, and where a pedestrian was killed in a motor-vehicle collision in January 2016; and

WHEREAS adding an east-facing stop sign and north-south crosswalk on the eastern side of the intersection of East 78th Street & Cherokee Place will improve pedestrian safety and introduce a legal north-south crossing at this intersection;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Community Board 8M strongly requests that the NYC Department of Transportation install an east-facing stop sign and a north-south crosswalk on the eastern side of the intersection of East 78th Street and Cherokee Place.

*Approved, 9 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain; plus 2 Public Members voting Yes.*

*Yes (9+2): Birnbaum, Chu, Dornbaum, Falk, Lader, Menegon, Pope, Popper, Warren; Gould & Wouk (Public Members)*

**Resolution 5-B (Speed bumps, school zone signage, and school zone pavement markings)**

WHEREAS East 78th Street between York Avenue and the FDR Drive is a densely populated residential block with a busy park, a school, and a heavily trafficked bridge providing pedestrian and bicycle access to the East River Esplanade; and

WHEREAS cars coming from the FDR Drive service road speed west on 78th Street, toward the traffic light at York Avenue; and

WHEREAS there is no way to safely and legally cross 78th Street at Cherokee Place, although many people cross there anyway instead of walking a block west to the intersection of York Avenue; and

WHEREAS the intersection of East 78th Street & York Avenue is unusual and dangerous, with two sets of one-way traffic flowing toward each other in opposite directions as they approach York Avenue (a two-way street), where all vehicles are required to turn either north or south, and where a pedestrian was killed in a motor-vehicle collision in January 2016; and

WHEREAS speed bumps, school zone signage, and school zone pavement markings should calm traffic and increase safety for all road users;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Community Board 8M strongly requests that the NYC Department of Transportation install one or more speed bumps on East 78th Street between York Avenue and the FDR Drive; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Community Board 8M strongly requests that the NYC DOT add school zone signage and school zone pavement markings on East 78th Street between York Avenue and the FDR Drive.

*Approved, 8 Yes, 0 No, 1 Abstain; plus 2 Public Members voting Yes.*

*Yes (8+2):* Chu, Dornbaum, Falk, Lader, Menegon, Pope, Popper, Warren; Gould & Wouk  
(Public Members)

*Abstain (1):* Birnbaum

**Item 6. Discussion of two recent senior pedestrian fatalities at 71st Street and Third Avenue.**

Two senior pedestrians were recently killed near the southwest corner of 71st Street and Third Avenue, only a few months apart, by drivers backing up:

- On Tuesday, May 10, 85-year-old Vincent Downing was killed in the crosswalk when a driver reportedly threw his car into reverse by mistake, crushing Mr. Downing against a parked moving truck.
- On Saturday, Sept. 17, an 83-year-old woman named Lee Strong was killed in the crosswalk by a driver who was reportedly traveling north through the intersection when he suddenly stopped to reverse into a parking space on the west side of Third Avenue.

These were just two of several pedestrian fatalities within the district so far in 2016, but these were added to the agenda due to their occurring at the same corner only four months apart. No NYPD representative was in attendance, and they had not been able to respond to an inquiry prior to the meeting; the Committee's DOT liaison also had to leave the meeting prior to this item. Given the lack of concrete information, the Committee will continue this discussion to an upcoming meeting, and attempt to gather more historical data regarding that intersection. In addition, we may discuss safety concerns at the next intersection to the north, 72nd Street and Third Avenue, which has previously been identified as a particular safety concern.

**Item 6. Old Business.**

There was no old business.

**Item 7. New Business.**

There was no old business.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
A. Scott Falk & Charles Warren, Co-Chairs