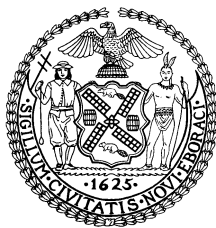


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**The City of New York
Manhattan Community Board 8
Transportation Committee**

Wednesday, March 1, 2017, 6:30 PM
New York Blood Center, 310 East 67th Street, Auditorium

Minutes

Present: Michele Birnbaum, Lori Bores, Daniel Dornbaum, A. Scott Falk, Ed Harzog, Craig Lader, David Menegon, Rita Popper, David Rosenstein, Barry Schneider, Tricia Shimamura, Charles Warren; Jordan Wouk (public member)

Excused: Sharon Pope

The meeting was called to order at 6:37 PM.

Item 1. Update on M79-SBS

Joe Chiaromonte of New York City Transit (NYCT), along with Julie Schipper and Alison Bullock on NYC Department of Transportation (DOT), made a joint presentation regarding the upcoming launch of Select Bus Service on the M79 route this spring. The agencies previously presented very preliminary M79-SBS plans in October 2016.

To recap: 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% (8-11% on the M86-SBS in its first year), 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.

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), and that issues with 79th Street include double-parking, lack of curb space for deliveries, and narrow lanes that don't properly accommodate buses and trucks.

The M79 route would be unchanged, except for 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. The west-side layover will also be moved further west, near Riverside Drive, to avoid issues with blocking the Broadway & 79th Street stop.

Extensive bus lane implementation would be difficult on 79th Street due to a relatively narrow streetscape as built, but the current iteration of M79-SBS plans presented includes a number of curbside bus queue-jump lanes, left-turn and right-turn bays, wide parking lanes, midday loading zones, and increased east-west signal time for crosstown traffic. The proposed streetscape includes a bus bulb to widen the sidewalk at the eastbound M79-SBS stop at Fifth Avenue, in front of the Ukrainian Institute (a location where the Committee has previously complained about inadequate sidewalk width for a bus stop); most other alterations involve changes to the lane markings. In response to questions about how they could widen travel and parking lanes on a "narrow" two-way street, DOT explained that the lane markings would vary at different places along 79th Street.

Several people expressed concern about the loss of parking and denied any need for loading zones on 79th Street, which they consider a residential street, although the photos presented by NYCT and DOT showed double-parked commercial and private vehicles.

Despite previous suggestions from CB8 that it would be helpful to split out rush hour M86-SBS statistics, rather than just 6 AM – 7 PM, to see how dramatically the M86-SBS has improved travel times, no further information was presented to the Committee. NYCT did state that they would present more data in response to a formal request.

Committee members noted that NYCT will need to provide adequate working ticket machines to serve the route's riders, and one raised the issue of how to present real-time bus arrival data in a way that will be easy to understand. It was once again noted that CB8 had 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.

Item 2. NYCT general review of bus and subway service.

Discussion focused primarily on bus operations rather than subways, particularly in reference to restoration of bus stops after the launch of Second Avenue Subway service. CB8 has not received a response to its request to locate the southbound M15 & M15-SBS stops between 85th & 86th Streets (rather than on the block north), and several people complained about drivers not knowing where they are supposed to stop now. In addition, there has been much frustration over the continuing failure to restore the 2nd Avenue crosstown M86-SBS stop, ostensibly due to power supply issues. (*Note: The M86-SBS stop for Second Avenue was finally restored the week after the meeting*). The uptown M101/M102/M103 stop previously located at 63rd & 3rd is being temporarily moved one block north due to building construction.

NYCT has not yet responded officially to CB8's resolution calling for a 72nd Street M15-SBS stop in both directions, but several elected officials who called for this received a letter saying this will not be added. Area residents remain deeply upset about this, and reiterated their need for an SBS stop at 72nd Street, as well as increased local service on the M15 (also recently requested by CB8).

As at multiple recent CB8 meetings, there were also many complaints about buses not pulling over to the curb at stops.

Item 3. A request to install a temporary bus stop on the SE corner of 83rd Street and East End Avenue. (Requested by the Brearley School).

Jo David of the Brearley School presented their request for a No Standing zone from 75 East End Avenue to the corner of East 83rd Street, from 7am to 5 pm, in order to accommodate Brearley school buses during the construction of a new addition, which would be finished in the fall of 2019. They also want curb extensions to help bus loading and unloading. The request was based on recommendations from the traffic consulting firm Sam Schwartz Engineering to improve the safety of the students who use the buses.

Ms. David indicated that the Board at 75 East End Avenue supported the request. A representative from 75 East End Avenue said they support the request if it is only temporary and during the school year. Some residents and Board members objected to the loss of parking and asked if the hours could be shortened. This request was laid over until next month.

Item 4. A request to add a "No Standing" sign at the intersection of East End Ave & 82nd Street.

A resident at 60 East End avenue presented a request to have a No Standing sign in front of their circular driveway. The reason for the request was that cars would park on the street and block the driveway. The Committee thought that there could be other ways of dealing with the problem and wanted to look further at the situation. This item was laid over until the next meeting where it will be first on the agenda, unless there are any joint items scheduled.

Item 5. A modification to a Revocable Consent for a Telecommunications conduit at East 69th Street and York Avenue. (Requested by DOT, Franchises, Concessions and Consents).

New York Presbyterian Hospital seeks a modification of an existing revocable consent for a chilled water manhole for a telecommunications conduit under York Avenue, south of East 69th Street. The Committee passed the following resolution by a unanimous vote:

WHEREAS New York Presbyterian Hospital seeks a modification of an existing revocable consent for a chilled water manhole under York Avenue, south of East 69th Street, for a telecommunications conduit; and

WHEREAS there were no objections presented;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Community Board 8M approves the request to modify this existing revocable consent as presented.

Approved, 11 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain, plus 1 Public Member Yes.

Yes (11+1): Birnbaum, Bores, Dornbaum, Falk, Lader, Menegon, Popper, Rosenstein, Schneider, Shimamura, Warren; Wouk (Public Member)

Item 6. Old Business.

There was no old business.

Item 7. New Business.

There was no new business.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:27 PM

Respectfully submitted,

A. Scott Falk & Charles Warren, Co-Chairs