



CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 10
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June 5, 2015

Dear Commissioner Margaret Forgione:

Thank you for attending the January and April CB10 meetings of our Transportation Committee and for updating us on the progress of the M60 SBS on 125th Street.

As was discussed at the meeting, we have summarized the main concerns of the Committee members and of the public so that they may be addressed as you implement the M60 SBS:

1. Left turn bans on 125th Street

There are concerns that left turn bans on 125th Street will result in increased traffic on 124th Street and 126th Street, as drivers would re-route to those streets in order to make left turns onto the Avenues. DOT should consider restricting left-turn bans only during peak hours.

It is also unclear how re-routing eastbound traffic to 124th Street would work around Marcus Garvey Park, as the traffic runs westbound on 124th Street between 5th Avenue and Lenox Avenue.

Cross-town traffic is further complicated by Morningside Park, St. Nicholas Park, and Jackie Robinson Park, which make cross-town traffic impossible on many streets and by the flow of cars to/from the bridges over the Harlem River between 125th Street and 155th Street.

For these reasons, we ask that before instituting any left turn bans on 125th Street, DOT conduct a comprehensive traffic study of CB 10.

2. Bus lane width

Existing traffic lanes are often too narrow for the buses to fit, and as a result buses often take up more than one lane. Before DOT moves forward with the designation of any bus lanes, it should analyze the street width to see what possibilities exist for accommodating lanes for different uses such as buses, parking, loading/unloading, and traffic.

3. Enforcement

Any rearrangement of lanes for different purposes needs to be accompanied by proper enforcement. For example, greater enforcement is needed to prevent loading/unloading off-hours and in non-designated areas, as well as against double parking. Bus lane implementing should be accompanied by appropriate and verifiable enforcement to make them a success.

4. Access for the disabled and the elderly

Disabled and/or elderly passengers now have to pay twice if they consume a transfer from an uptown/downtown bus to a local cross-town bus before boarding the M60 SBS. Fares should be restructured in order not to penalize passengers with reduced mobility.

5. Fare payment

Passengers with no fare cannot pay for their fare on the bus or at the bus stop, and must instead walk to the nearest subway station. The time that passengers with no fare must add to their trip to purchase their fare is contrary to the intent of a faster, more efficient bus -and encourages fare-baiting.

Passengers should be able to purchase their fare at the kiosks, and kiosks should be available at every stop.

6. ADA Issues

Addressing the user experience: 125th SBS corridor to address any ADA or mobility challenges in the physical space (streets and sidewalks; car/ bus lanes as well as inside of the actual buses. This has been mentioned from the abled as well as none abled communities

- [Example: Bus drivers are competing for bus lane and car lane space when trying to pull up to the curb and adjust the ramp to accommodate the wheel chair user: Nicholas/125th street stop is dangerous due to the construction...most of the time the bus driver does not pull up to the curb so a disabled person has to be in the street in order to get on the bus...not safe at all.
- [Testimonial: driver unwilling to accommodate your request to provide the wheel chair ramp when you were boarding the bus until you reminded him of your ADA rights versus your Civil Rights.(Making the community aware of their rights is also vital to this discussion).
- [Bus user experience inside the vehicle i.e.is it the best location that wheelchairs be able to only be stationed in the front of the bus? Are luggage racks spaced out properly and do the buses have enough on the M60 to accommodate the airport users?

Regarding the M60 and disabled riders, in talking to disabled staff, colleagues, community members; almost everyone said while riding in the front is ok they would also welcome the option of where to sit front or in the back.

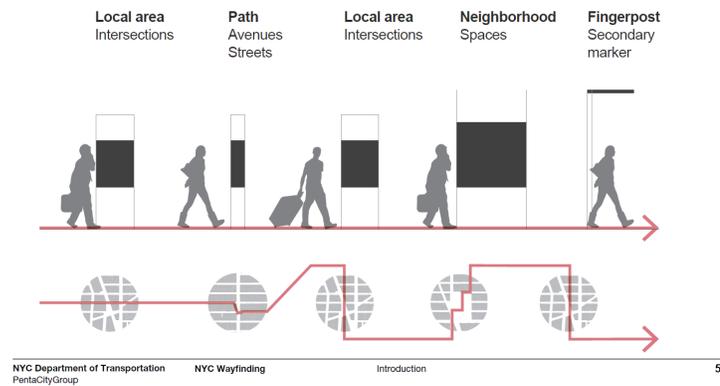
Additionally, a bus could be virtually empty for non disabled riders but considered full for those who use chairs once the allotted two slots are occupied.

- [Off board fare payment system and the location of the kiosks relative to the wheelchair user
Placement of the payment kiosk; the back of the individual is to the curb and not that of the stores (this is done at some intervals along the SBS M15 route), safety concern for those who are blind/disabled. The disabled need to be able to pay from the store side not the side facing traffic.

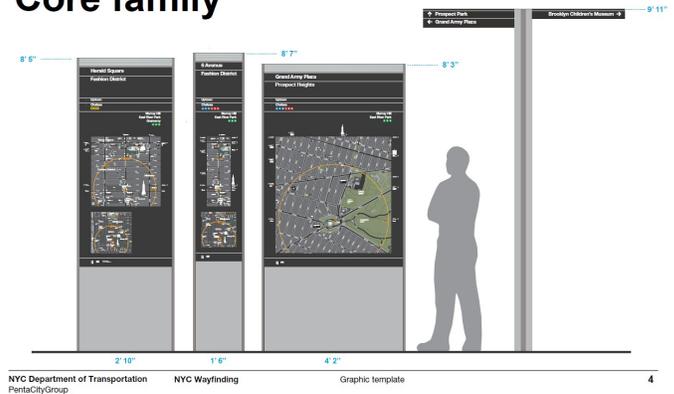
Wayfinding Station Design

....so the pedestrian wayfinding station...is this accessible for people with low vision? People who are blind? Is it large print? Is there an audio version for those who are blind so they can access the information? Is the height accessible for an individual in a chair? If I use the example in front of Harlem Hospital, the answer is no to all of the above. Also, attached is the Furniture Chapter from the NYCDOT streets design manual.

Strategy



Core family



SELECT BUS SERVICE ON SBS M60 125TH STREET RESPONSES TO COMMUNITY INPUT

Community Comment	NYCDOT/MTA NYC Transit Response From January and April Transportation Meetings	Recommendation
<p>Male Attendee: I didn't realize the only way to pay off board was with the metro card. We had credit cards, we had coins but dispensing the ticket was very difficult to navigate. I thought it would be a lot easier if it just accepted a credit card.</p>	<p>The M60 is a particular problem that it's going to continue in some way that you'll always have travelers coming from anywhere in the city or across the world. The machines we have now have as much capability that we can put out on the street right now. But, in a few years, something you might see when we move beyond having a metro card (credit card capability). We're creeping towards a new kind of fare payment and we're hoping to have something like that where you can use credit cards.</p>	<p>Off Board Payment Training and Education. Notify the community about upgrades to the off board payment system via a public workshop or walk thru. I think we might be looking into this for five, 10, 15 years down the line, maybe we should have credit card payment, maybe we should have that on the bus anyway but we're not there yet.</p>
<p>Female Attendee: I take the M60 and it's a late bus, because it's always packed, with the ticket. It does move quickly. But in the future, do you see a bus going to Kennedy airport? From Harlem I leave from Harlem.</p>	<p>Rob Thompson: To Kennedy Airport, there are a couple of ways to get there by train. It would be really hard for a bus to beat those speeds of the A train plus the air train. I don't know if we would be able to have a bus from Harlem to JFK.</p>	
<p>Male Attendee: Everyone's getting on the bus and I've got my ticket, and the doors close in my face. I'm banging on the door and the bus pulls off. This is just something I would like to bring to your attention.</p>	<p>The M60 has increased in frequency over the years. It's started out at every half hour a few years ago. We keep adding more and more and people keep piling on. We do keep monitoring and checking. There's going to be times when there's more people that want to get on the bus than can fit on the bus. We'll take this back and schedule</p>	<p>Bus Driver / Operator sensitivity training about the rights of users.</p>
<p>Male Attendee: Getting on the bus, especially during rush hours, while the buses are moving faster, you're still over capacity, so I'd like to ask you whether we can get these buses running more frequently, maybe every three to five minutes. We're kind of hanging out of the doorways and standing on top of luggage to get from A to B.</p>		<p>Additional Service By Time Of Day: Increased frequency of buses especially during rush hours. Wheelchair users, stroller and patrons are competing for space with luggage. Look into the design of the buses to space out where wheel chairs, luggage and strollers can be placed.</p>
<p>Male Attendee: Most of the time for about four or five hours it's over capacity where the conditions are not safe and people are trying to force their way on the bus. So we need to get that to about every three minutes at least. If not, five.</p>	<p>We'll let the people who monitor know this.</p>	<p>Scheduled timing changes</p>

<p>Male Attendee: Are there plans to put in the timing in all the stops? I realize it's in some, but not in all of them.</p>	<p>Aaron: Live travelling -- the next bus--? Again, it's not every single stop along the entire M60 route because there are some stops in Queens that have very low ridership. But the stops on 125th Street would sort of be the first priority when we roll those out. This year, I don't know the exact time frame at this point. But we're going to have a two of these on the street to very quickly having dozens around the city and I don't know exactly where.</p>	<p>Bus time stations/ live travel time information</p>
<p>Male Attendee: I took the bus a few times to LaGuardia and from the leg of where you do have the bus lane. It was very slow. People were fighting over one lane on a main thoroughfare; it's going to just create congestion. I found that lane from LaGuardia to Lenox Avenue and I measured the time from both directions. It seemed slower than it was before.</p>		
<p>Julius Tajiddin: From about, 120th to 106th, and Amsterdam down to 106th, there are no machines. People are getting a free ride and they'll get on from Saint Nicholas and they'll try and go to maybe Madison and they get caught. But someone on the other end of the line got on, didn't pay. No marshals- it's the same distance. It's sort of discriminatory. Verified by the Independent Living Center.</p>	<p>Rob Thompson Heading towards the end of the line. I think there's a machine at least at 120th and Amsterdam. Part of this is that on a lot of the select bus routes when we have a situation where the very end of the line there is very few people travelling from the next to last stop to the last stop, we might say, "Well, there's no point in putting a machine that costs thousands of dollars out there on the street to make these five people pay, when those resources are better diverted elsewhere. We do the counts. So, we'll know. Not on every single bus. But overall if it becomes a pattern - you have a crowd of people getting on and 120th Street and riding down town, we'll start to learn about it. We have fare machines on select Bus service routes all over the city. It's just a general policy. We enforce all of them.</p>	<p>More marshals or more machines equally distributed.</p>
<p>Martin Baez: I couldn't use my MasterCard on the machine. I had to go out of my way to get money to buy a ticket. I take the M2, and then I have to take the 100, the 101 or whichever goes to Lenox. I have to take 3 buses if I'm coming from 135th street and Seventh Avenue. This is a point as relates to paying more because of a disability.</p>	<p>Marcus Book MTA NYC Transit: Actually, seniors and persons with disabilities have a reduced fare metro card. So it's not a double dip. On 125th street we do have three other bus routes that can be used on 125th Street. It's true that those buses don't go to LaGuardia Airport, but if you're going across town Manhattan you have basically more other service.</p>	<p>There are only 100 accessible stations in NYC. Without more accessible train stations other option for obtaining a metro card are critical. Is there any way to cap payment for multiple transfers for the ADA and senior communities? You need machines at all bus stops. You should check them regularly, because sometimes they're inactive. And as you know, when they're inactive, you can't pay your fare.</p>
<p>Martin Baez and Female attendee SBS M60 needs a local component. In the Bronx on Fordham Road, there's the SBS 12 as well as the local 12 bus, BX12. So could you address why we don't have both down here? We only have the SBS 60 and not in addition to the local? This is not a crosstown issue.</p>	<p>Aaron: A big focus of why we chose to do the M60 for SBS a couple of years back was because nearly 90% of the trips are cross town trips. We did not do this primarily for the airport</p>	<p>Stagger the bus schedule - look at making a special local M60 maybe once an hour.</p>
<p>Julius: The Global Gateway Alliance Survey that was done about the fastest route going to the airport? They put the M60 as the slowest.</p>		

<p>Martin Baez: If I have luggage, I have to constantly rearrange and carry it on my lap because they constantly fall.</p>		<p>Bus design should allow for multiple locations to place luggage. Bus redesign is needed to allot for boarding either from multiple entrances or to better distribute luggage and wheelchairs so to address bunching at the front entrance of the busses.</p>
<p>Martin Baez Now you have more people in these designated bus stops, so it creates a safety issue for people with disabilities and for people who are using walkers. Some users are very insensitive to people with needs; in the wheel chair, using the walker, and using crutches. Wheelchair users must wait for another bus to arrive because of crowding at bus stops. Wheelchairs users are only allowed to access at the front of the bus and must compete with other users for space at stops and bus shelters.</p>		<p>Wheelchair users should be allowed sidewalk area and boarding priority. Inventory of sidewalks needing upgrades near stops and senior centers to prevent trips, falls and obstructions should maintain.</p>
<p>Most riders crowd the entrance to the bus.</p>		<p>Wheelchair users should be allowed sidewalk area and boarding priority. Widely market the Mobility Management Resource Guide. And the July 15, 2015 Access to Independence 2015 A Transportation Expo.</p>
<p>Martin Wallace: Less than 24% of people in Manhattan own a car and yet, we accommodate in a huge way, drivers that make managing our public transit system so difficult. The fact that the SBS has to compete with traffic is already a problem. Other countries, who have the express buses, don't compete with traffic. They have dedicated lanes. For now, we're accommodating automobiles; we're accommodating other traffic letting them compete. I also would like to find out if there's a way to work more closely with people who have disabilities to find a way to make these connections work better, and hope that you'll be willing to work to see where those failures are and fix them because it really is a hardship.</p>	<p>Rob Thompson MTA NYC Transit Operation Buses: M60 SBS route travel times down between 11% and 14% so that's pretty successful along the entire route. Department of Transportation has been looking at traffic speeds, using taxi speeds as sort of a way to get that, because all taxis have a GPS. What we'll be doing next is doing a little more monitoring , looking more at the parking activity on the Department of Transportation side, more on the traffic volumes</p>	
<p>Barbara Askins from 125th Street Business District (BID): For Central Harlem, was not trying to address transportation cars versus walkers. We were looking for a way to address the congestion problem on 125th Street, whether it was the M60 or whatever and we did not succeed in getting DOT to take a comprehensive look at the</p>	<p>CB10 would like to join with NYCDOT and other community stakeholders to develop a Comprehensive Plan for all traffic in the Central Harlem community.</p>	

<p>traffic patterns on 125th Street. Request for a comprehensive traffic congestion study. My operation is out there from seven to seven and we've observed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are still double parking cars • Still problems with delivery of the truck and emergency vehicles and when that happens, it blocks the lanes. • Arcadia, the large buses, are too large to stay in the bus lanes; the drivers have a problem staying in there and when they're pulling away from the curb, they obstruct the passing lane. • The bus lanes are too narrow, because they're not staying in the lanes. • Cars turning left and right obstruct the bus lane far too often. • When letting the disabled off, the maneuver trying to come around, so it's causing the bus driver to enter into the other bus lane. • Some of the elderly or tourists still don't understand how to pay before they get on, which causes congestion at the front door and some insistent riders. • Construction is still going on, on 125th street and it blocks the bus lane. • People are avoiding 125th street. That affects business, We're surveying. We want DOT to come back and speak directly to the businesses. • Red Lobster doesn't go all the way through, so all their deliveries have to be at the front. Each and every block is different, so you can't make a blanket statement about what's happening in Central Harlem. • We wanted to find a way to make it work and we're still trying to find a way to make it work. We didn't get people to work with us to find a way to make it work for us in the central core. And that's what we're still looking for, is a way to make it work. 		
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Sincerely,

Hon. Maria Garcia, Chair of Transportation
Hon. Daniel Land Parcerisas, Vice-Chair Transportation

Cc: Transportation Committee_Vision Zero Taskforce
Community Boards 9, 11 & 12
Manhattan Borough President's Office
Christina Curry, Executive Director, Harlem Independent Living Center
Barbara Askins, President & CEO, 125th Street BID
Congressman Rangel
Senators Bill Perkins
Councilmember Inez Dickens
Assemblyman Keith Wright
Assemblyman Herman Farrell