

Woodhaven & Cross Bay Boulevards

Design Workshop Meeting Summary | June 25, 2014



The New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT) and the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) hosted the second Woodhaven/ Cross Bay Boulevards Select Bus Service (SBS) public workshop on June 25, 2014 from 7 - 9 PM at P.S. 306 Queens. The goal of this workshop was to gather design input for the implementation of SBS along the corridor. 54 participants attended the workshop which included a presentation, an interactive break-out session about street designs and bus stops, and a question and answer session.

1) Presentation on the outreach process and short- and long-term bus improvements.

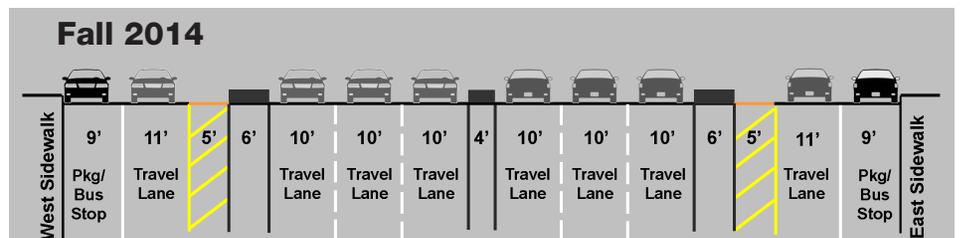
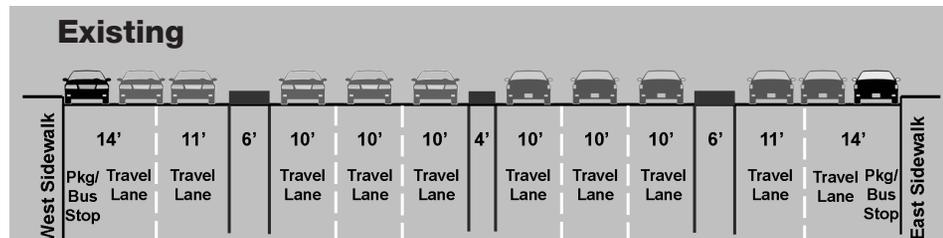
The workshop began with a brief presentation from the New York City Department of Transportation that provided a recap of the first workshop, an overview of the 2014 implementation of bus lanes and safety improvements, and an introduction to long-term plans for implementing Select Bus Service.

Implementation of the short-term recommendations, which resulted from the 2008 NYCDOT Congested Corridors Study, will begin in the fall of 2014 and will include offset bus lanes between Eliot and Metropolitan Avenues, reducing congestion by eliminating the need for general traffic to merge at the overpass south of Metropolitan Avenue, and curbside bus lanes between 101 and Plattwood Avenues, allowing buses to reach subway connections faster without removing travel lanes.

Additionally, the service roads between Park Lane South and Rockaway Boulevard will be striped with paint to create one travel lane and one parking lane, compared to the existing conditions of one travel lane, one very narrow travel lane, and one parking lane. The reorganization of the service roads will improve safety for drivers, by avoiding the side swipes associated with the narrow travel lanes, and by providing painted pedestrian refuges at key crosswalks.



Existing: Woodhaven Boulevard and 90 Av



Long-term planning for Select Bus Service includes a community input process that is comprised of a Community Advisory Committee, public workshops, and meetings with Community Boards and community stakeholders/institutions. Through discussion with and input from the community, the project planning team will develop a plan that looks at all potential changes, focusing on faster bus service while maintaining appropriate traffic flow for local and through drivers. focusing on faster bus service, safer streets for all. [Download the full presentation \(pdf\)](#).

Following the presentation, some community members expressed concerns about the project, asking how Select Bus Service was determined for the corridor and why the project team is not studying the reactivation of the Rockaway Beach Rail Line instead of Select Bus Service.

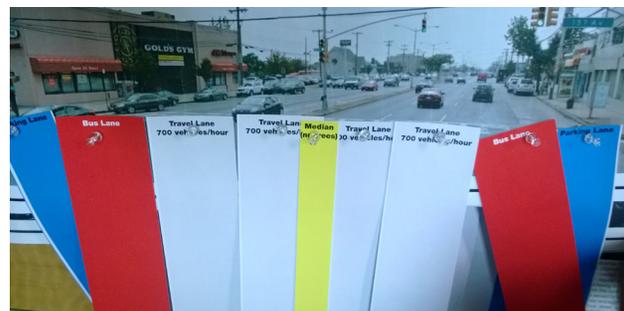
The project manager shared that Select Bus Service was recommended as part of the Congested Corridors Study, which began in 2008 and consisted of five years of public outreach to determine ways to reduce congestion and improve safety along Woodhaven Boulevard. The NYCDOT and MTA Bus does not have a position against or in favor of the reactivation of the rail line or other proposed uses of the right-of-way, and does not believe that Select Bus Service would preclude any project on the rail right-of-way, but that this project is focused on improving Woodhaven Boulevard for more than 30,000 riders that currently travel along the corridor by bus, as well as for all residents and travelers that need a street that is safer and easier to navigate.

2) “Design puzzle” exercise where participants created diagrams of various intersections along the corridor using pieces that represented different street and SBS features.

Workshop attendees were placed in groups at six tables for a design exercise. Participants chose one of four posters, each with an image of a different section of the corridor: 1) Woodhaven Blvd and Metropolitan Av, 2) Woodhaven Blvd and Park Lane South, 3) Woodhaven and 101 Av, and 4) Cross Bay Blvd and 157 St. Each table had various pieces to represent different street design elements including general travel lanes, bus lanes, turn lanes, parking lanes, bike lanes, medians, bus boarding platforms, curb extensions, off-board fare machines, bus shelters, and trees.



Ex. at Woodhaven Boulevard and Park Lane South



Ex. at Cross Bay Boulevard and 157th Street



Ex. at Woodhaven Boulevard and Metropolitan Avenue

Working in groups or individually, participants were able to use the pieces to create different configurations showing what kinds of street designs they believe are most important for Woodhaven Boulevard. Participants then shared and engaged in a group discussion about their configurations, and what they would mean for Select Bus Service, corridor safety, and traffic flow.

Of the 33 different configurations that were created, 28 included either a median, offset, or curbside bus lane. Many of the participants that included bus lanes mentioned that they wanted to speed up the slow buses on the corridor but did not want to have an adverse effect on car traffic. Some of the participants who preferred having bus lanes in the median of the roadway felt that this design would be less disruptive to parking and to businesses. The median bus lane suggestions sparked some questions and concerns from participants about how left turns would be handled, whether left-door boarding would be implemented, and how safety would be addressed as passengers would need to cross over traffic to reach the medians and may do so unsafely trying to catch the bus before it pulled away. Some participants also felt that a median would improve safety since passengers would only have to cross half of the wide street when they got off of the bus.

Other suggestions included offset bus lanes with parking at the curb, curbside bus lanes with parking separating the bus lane from general traffic, and curbside bus lanes only during rush-hour with parking permitted at the curb at all other times. One participant who chose curbside bus lanes only during rush-hour felt that this configuration would offer the best access to subway connections during peak times, but would allow for general travel during other times, benefiting all users.

Several of the participants who did not include bus lanes favored speeding up cars, and were opposed to Select Bus Service, but supported an increase in local bus service. Some participants felt that “bus lanes would make the corridor unlivable,” and that things should be kept as they are. [Download a slideshow of all of the configurations \(pdf\).](#)

For many participants, maintaining **parking and loading** was of major concern. There was an expressed need to make sure that deliveries to local business were accommodated and that there were places for patrons and residents to park. Two participants shared concerns about loading and parking between Eliot and Furmanville Avenues, and suggested that further conversations be had with the business owners to determine their loading needs. Many participants also shared general frustrations about double parking and desired more enforcement by the police.

Safety along the corridor was raised as a major concern and participants felt that safety measures should be paramount in any future plans for the corridor. Many participants stated that the crossing times should be lengthened to allow people enough time to cross the street and that pedestrian access should be a major focus of future projects. Some participants also stated that medians with trees would make crossing the street safer and more comfortable. There were also concerns stated about traffic flow and cars switching back and forth between lanes. Several participants felt that maintaining consistent traffic flow and improving signage would help alleviate congestion and improve safety.

Lastly, many participants shared a desire for **enhanced stations**, a topic that was also brought up in the first public workshop. Bus shelters were very popular and many felt that they should be at every stop along the corridor, along with additional benches. Another

Of the 33 different configurations that were created by meeting attendees:

15 included curbside or offset bus lanes

13 included center median bus lanes

5 included no bus lanes

8 included bike lanes

30 included parking

18 included left and/or right turn lanes

suggestion was that there be a human presence, such as a newsstand or customer service booth.

3) Discussion of the current stop locations along the corridor and how they may or may not be adjusted for Select Bus Service.

The final exercise began with a presentation of factors that are considered when determining bus stop locations such as distance apart, proximity to dense housing areas, employment areas, shopping centers, and schools, and places where various routes intersect. Next, participants were able to look at a map of the corridor with all of the Q11/21 Local and Q52/53 LTD stops along with their respective ridership numbers and annotate it with comments on existing stops and propose ideas for bus stop improvements.

In general, participants were happy with the existing limited stops and wanted to make sure that any changes due to Select Bus Service did not result in a decrease in local service. There were various suggestions regarding the termini of the Q52 and Q53. Multiple participants suggested extending the Q52/Q53 further east and west into the Rockaways, and one person suggested extending the Q52 to the Rego Park shopping center on the northern end. Another participant suggested extending the route to LaGuardia Airport. Many stop-specific comments and suggestions were made including the following:

- Relocate Hoffman Dr stop due to heavy congestion in the area
- Add a stop at Beach 108 St to provide access to the ferry entrance
- Ensure that there is a SBS stop at Wildlife Refuge
- Add a stop at W 3 Rd to serve major employment center
- Add a stop at 165 Av to serve people fishing on the bridge
- Add stop at 101 Av to connect to the Q8
- Have only one SBS stop in Howard Beach
- Remove stops at 159, 162, and 149 Av
- Ridership is higher at Beach 116 St because it's harder to board elsewhere



4) Questions and answers

The workshop concluded with a question and answer segment in which participants were able to ask about both 2014 street improvements and about plans for long-term Select Bus Service improvements.

How were offset bus lanes between Eliot and Metropolitan Avenues decided upon for fall 2014 implementation?

As part of the Congested Corridor Study, DOT noted that this area, with four travel lanes in each direction, has bottlenecks at the north end where Woodhaven narrows to three lanes in each direction under the LIRR Main Line, and at the south end where Woodhaven narrows

to three lanes in each direction over the LIRR Montauk Branch. Because traffic spreads out in the wider area, there is congestion and potentially unsafe merging at either end. Designating one of the four lanes in the wider area for buses and right turns will result in more smooth and safe traffic flow, and will also discourage speeding at times and locations where there is excess roadway capacity. While traffic should not be affected, buses should be able to bypass the lines of traffic approaching the bottlenecks, providing faster and more reliable service for bus passengers.

Will there be a reduction in local service if Select Bus Service is implemented?

Local service will continue to be provided if or when recommendations of the Select Bus Service study are implemented. All bus service is based on the ridership of the individual route and will be adjusted accordingly. If more people take the local, service frequency will increase. If fewer people choose to ride the local bus, service frequency will decrease. On other SBS routes, overall corridor ridership has increased, and so the total amount of bus service on the corridor has also increased.

What will be the days and hours of operation of the bus lanes that are being implemented this fall?

The offset bus lanes being implemented this year between Eliot and Metropolitan Avenues will be in operation Monday-Friday from 7am to 7pm.

The curbside bus lanes being implemented near Liberty Avenue will be painted on the southbound lanes between 101st Avenue and Rockaway Boulevard, and northbound between Plattwood and Liberty Avenues. For both the southbound and northbound bus lanes in this area, the bus lane on the last block approaching Liberty Avenue and Rockaway Boulevard will be in effect from 7 AM to 7 PM, while the lanes on the blocks farther from Liberty/Rockaway will be in effect from 7-10 AM and 4-7 PM. Parking will be allowed when the bus lanes are not in effect, and passenger drop-offs are allowed at all times.

How will right turns be handled where there are curbside bus lanes?

Unless otherwise restricted, vehicles are required to enter the bus lane to make right turns onto the next city street, or to any curb cut within 200 feet of the point of entry. To make a right turn from a bus lane, safely enter the bus lane toward the end of the block from which you are turning.

With an offset bus lane, there are some locations where there is a curbside right turn lane before an intersection. Drivers should merge through the bus lane and use the curbside lane to make their turn, so that they do not block the bus.

How will left turns be handled if there is a median busway?

The project will carefully study how left turns would function if there is a median busway. Left turns would need to have their own signal phase while the busway has a red light and vice versa so that they do not conflict with one another. In many locations, left turns are currently prohibited along Woodhaven Boulevard, and the study will look at whether these restrictions are in the best places for traffic flow and safety.

Will you be able to use the same ticket for all SBS routes that are implemented?

All transfer policies are the same for Select Bus Service as they are for other bus-to-bus, bus-to-subway or subway-to-bus policies. To transfer from one SBS to another, dip your MetroCard into the machine to receive a ticket. If a free transfer is available the machine will read “Transfer OK” and print the ticket.

Will the portion of Woodhaven where it is only three lanes wide in each direction include bus lanes?

This level of detail has not been determined yet, and will be looked at as part of the long-term study for Select Bus Service. Considerations will include maintaining traffic flow, as well as the overall safety of the street.

Are there plans to reduce the speed limit on Woodhaven/Cross Bay Boulevards?

In order to reduce the number of fatalities on the City’s streets in the Mayor’s Vision Zero initiative, legislation has been passed by the New York State legislature to allow the City to reduce the default speed limit to 25 miles per hour. Woodhaven and Cross Bay Boulevards could be considered for possible reductions in posted speed limits.

How will traffic bottlenecks be managed where the roadway narrows as a result of Select Bus Service?

Maintaining a continuous number of travel lanes where conditions allow (as with the area between Eliot and Metropolitan Avenues) will eliminate certain bottleneck conditions. In other cases, better coordinating traffic signals, restricting left turns or adjusting parking regulations may be feasible, depending on conditions at the location.

What is the expected time savings that Select Bus Service will produce for bus commuters?

On other Select Bus Service routes, travel time has been reduced by 15-20%, and we hope to achieve similar gains for Woodhaven and Cross Bay Boulevards.



The feedback gathered in this meeting and others will frame the next steps in the project planning. Over the summer the NYCDOT and MTA will begin working on design iterations for the corridor and continue to engage with the community, integrating new feedback along the way. Additional meetings and open houses will take place this fall to share project advancements and solicit more feedback. Please check the project website, www.nyc.gov/brt, or contact Krystin Hence at brt@dot.nyc.gov with any comments or questions.