

QPTC Response to: DOT's

Woodhaven / Cross Bay Boulevards

Q52/53 Select Bus Service

Frequently Asked Questions

February 12, 2016

Ver. 1.0

Traffic with a bus lane



Maintenance of Staten Island Bus Lane

How Woodhaven Blvd will look in a year

Report prepared by the Queens Public Transportation Committee (QPTC) <http://QPTC.org>

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This document is available on the internet at: <http://www.qptc.org/rebutal.html>

Future revisions will be available on our website.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter of Transmittal to Elected Officials and Corridor Users.....	v
Executive Summary.....	1
Introduction.....	4
Changes Made Thus Far to DOT's Plan and Vagueness in the Plan.....	6
Analysis of Some of DOT's Responses to FAQ's.....	6
DOT Page 3 Bus Travel Times.....	6
DOT Pages 4 and 5 Enforcement.....	6
DOT Page 6 Bus Service.....	8
DOT Page 7 Transfers and Bus Stops.....	9
DOT Pages 8 and 9 Concepts.....	11
DOT Page 10 Concepts, Alternatives, and Bus Schedules	12
DOT Page 11 Construction Timetable.....	13
DOT Page 12 Project Cost and Follow-up.....	14
DOT Page 13 Camera Enforcement	15
DOT Page 14 Hours of Operation, Emergency Response, Lane Maintenance, Effect on Traffic, and Street Safety.....	16
DOT Page 15 Speed Limit and Street Safety.....	18
DOT Page 16 Buses Passing at Bus Stops.....	20
DOT Page 17 Corridor Statistics	20
DOT Page 18 Roadway Use.....	21
DOT Page 20 Computer Modeling, Effect on Traffic, and Modal Switch.....	22
DOT Page 21 Left Turn Bans.....	24
Questions That Still Have Not Been Answered.....	26
Conclusions.....	28

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL TO ELECTED OFFICIALS AND CORRIDOR USERS

To All Concerned:

The Queens Public Transit Committee advocates improved transportation for Queens. That includes advocating for all modes of transit. Where improved travel options for some conflict with the needs of others, our position is for the improvements benefitting the greatest number of users. Improved safety is also one of our concerns. Our Website <http://QPTC.org> describes our position in detail.

The linchpin of our proposed transportation improvements is the reactivation of the inactive Rockaway Beach line (now referred to as QueensRail™) stretching from Rego Park to Woodhaven only a few blocks to the east of Woodhaven Boulevard. It is unconscionable that a so-called transportation improvement plan for Woodhaven and Cross Bay Boulevards neglects to study the options available by repurposing the former Rockaway Beach Line although state funding is available for such a study.

The NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) did not seriously consider any other transportation improvement alternatives to the Woodhaven Corridor, although Commissioner Trottenberg proclaimed SBS is the best alternative. http://www.qchron.com/editions/queenswide/sbs-is-the-transportation-alternative-queens-needs/article_2e17c929-ad24-5cc7-9f54-734575422713.html They only considered the three concepts that were shown to the communities at a series of meetings and workshops held in 2014 and 2015. Those concepts are: Concept 1: Service Road Offset Bus Lanes; Concept 2: Main Roadway Offset Bus Lanes; and Concept 3: Bus Lanes along the center median. Concept 2 was chosen. We refuted her claims here: <http://rockawaytimes.com/2016/02/11/ideas-for-smarter-transportation-select-bus-service-is-a-bad-idea-trottenberg-vs-rosen/>

Queens definitely needs better transportation. There is no doubt about that. However, DOT has failed to provide clear and convincing evidence that Select Bus Service (SBS) or Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) will provide better transportation. Instead, they have relied on general statements that it has to work because it works in other cities around the world. DOT says that supporters claim to have gathered over 7,000 petition signatures to prove the public wants SBS. But we dispute that.

Signers of those petitions were merely promised “better bus service”. Who would not be in favor of “better” bus service? Some also were promised an SBS route connecting Rockaway with LaGuardia Airport, a proposal made by the Pratt Institute and not by DOT and the MTA who are proposing SBS/BRT on Woodhaven and Cross Bay Boulevards. Those petition signatures are meaningless.

What is not meaningless are real concerns raised by community boards and local business and block associations who have gathered valid petition signatures. These concerns have only been addressed by

QPTC Response to DOT's Woodhaven / Cross Bay Boulevards Q52/53 Select Bus Service Frequently Asked Questions

DOT's delaying the project to better fine tune it. DOT stated at Community Advisory Meeting #5 that they have no intention of abandoning the plan altogether because failure is just not a possibility since all their past projects have been successful. Again, no proof exists that is the case. It is sheer arrogance and untrue. One example may suffice. Medians along Fort Hamilton Parkway in Brooklyn several years ago had to be demolished shortly after they were installed.

Mayor de Blasio recently issued a directive to DOT Commissioner Polly Trottenberg that community desires must not override pedestrian safety as determined by the city. This in effect gives DOT a license to the city to institute BRT on Woodhaven and Cross Bay Boulevards as planned under his "Complete Streets" Program although communities believe Option 2, the one that was chosen will make the roadway less safe, not more safe, for pedestrians. This is most troublesome.

Also, DOT assumes that it will receive substantial federal funding for this project. In fact, federal funding may be denied because citywide DOT refuses to comply with the U.S. Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices. And to the extent that it certifies that it is in compliance, the certifying official risks prosecution under 18 U.S. Code 1001.

Therefore, we ask you to read this report in its entirety and then decide if DOT has properly answered the questions that were posed to them and to take appropriate action to ensure that whatever is proposed provides a real transportation and safety improvement for Queens and is economically justified as being the best choice.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report discusses the changes DOT has made to its original plan, an analysis of some of DOT's responses to what they call "Frequently Asked Questions," and a description of questions they still have not answered. About half the questions asked were addressed and many questions were not answered satisfactorily.

Below is DOT's definition for Select Bus Service:

"Select Bus Service (SBS) is New York City's version of Bus Rapid Transit: an improved bus service that offers fast, frequent, and reliable service on high-ridership bus routes. Completed in much less time and at much lower cost than subways—which take years to construct and require expensive up-front infrastructure and equipment—Select Bus Service offers a more immediate improvement to New York City's transit network benefitting the entire city through improved mobility, cleaner air, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and reduced congestion."

- The Department of Transportation (DOT), however is not proposing SBS for much of the corridor. They are proposing a version of SBS that is at least ten times more expensive. They claim it is Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), but it only includes a few elements of BRT. DOT has not answered the question what additional benefits we will be getting for the additional expense.
- DOT states that SBS or BRT can be completed in less time and at a lower cost than subways. However, constructing a subway line under Woodhaven Boulevard is not a realistic alternative.
- DOT completely ignores reactivating an existing rail line, a few blocks to the east (now called QueensRail™) which should have been considered as an alternative.
- DOT started considering SBS/BRT on Woodhaven in 2012 as part of their eight-year study of the Woodhaven Boulevard Congested Corridors Study. SBS/BRT is not scheduled for completion until approximately 2022. That is not quick when compared to how long it would take to rebuild and reactivate the existing rail line which could be accomplished in the same amount of time if funding were available and the city was committed to it. It is inaccurate that BRT is a short range solution while reactivating the rail line is long term.
- Implementing Bus Rapid Transit without considering realistic alternatives is irresponsible and jeopardizes reuse of the existing railroad right of way.
 - DOT ignored three basic rules of such studies including the "Do Nothing" alternative; to clearly state their objective; and to explain how the chosen alternative addresses this

objective. Is the objective to "Do Something"? To implement SBS/BRT to improve travel times for everyone or only for bus riders? Finally, the third fundamental rule of such studies is to include all feasible alternatives. Again, DOT fails here.

- Another criticism we have is the lack of distinction between the terms SBS and BRT. In their document which supposedly answers "frequently asked questions", DOT still does not distinguish between the terms. The former was originally estimated to cost only \$15 to 20 million to implement and their current plan is estimated at \$231 million.
http://www.fta.dot.gov/documents/NY_Woodhaven_Blvd_SBS_Profile_and_Map.pdf
- DOT switched plans using a bait and switch after once communities showed interest in their original plan.
- In their dismissal of the Rockaway Beach Line on Page 22, DOT states the rail line is not in competition with BRT on Woodhaven Boulevard when it definitely is since there is limited federal funding available.
- DOT misunderstands the word "corridor". In planning circles, a transportation corridor is an area connecting major transportation origins and destinations. That would mean when considering connecting the neighborhoods such as Rego Park and Woodhaven, you consider all transportation options, not just a single roadway (Woodhaven / Cross Bay) as DOT has done. Similarly, the Northeast Corridor between Boston and Washington DC, does not refer solely to I-95, but to all available transportation routes including Amtrak.
 - DOT's failure to understand such a basic transportation concept, casts doubt on their ability to perform a competent transportation study. Their failure to even use spell check for a document in preparation for over a year by misspelling the word "glossary" as "glossery" in big bold print and more than once in their version 1.0, shows you the quality of their work. It makes you wonder how many other shortcuts DOT took when performing their analysis.
- DOT claims SBS will result in improved mobility and cleaner air without any documentation. They have not projected how many will switch modes from car to bus so that traffic will be reduced so as to improve air quality. They still have not answered our question #27 what they consider a reasonable travel speed by automobile to be.
- DOT claims SBS will reduce bus rush hour travel times by as much as 30 minutes (or up to 35 percent) between Rockaway Park and Woodside, which they claim is currently as much as 90 minutes, but scheduled at 65 minutes. Under SBS, those continuing to Penn Station in Manhattan

via the LIRR would arrive there in another 15 minutes for a total trip time of 75 minutes. By comparison, a similar trip to Penn Station using QueensRail™ would take under 50 minutes (16 minutes via subway from Rockaway Park to Howard Beach plus 30 minutes via QueensRail™ and the LIRR) or a 33 percent trip-time savings over SBS.

- SBS was first presented to communities as an “alternative” and soon became a given. Communities were never asked what they believed the transportation problems are or what solutions they envision. (In fact, DOT had already applied for federal SBS funding prior to the first community meeting which was stacked with representatives from the Riders’ Alliance and Transportation Alternatives.)
- SBS was presented as a cost efficient quick fix to transportation problems without DOT telling the complete story. Only the positives of SBS were presented with all negatives omitted.
- SBS was originally presented as a plan to speed bus service independent of Vision Zero which lowered speed limits on the Boulevard. When asked how buses are supposed to travel faster when the speed limit was lowered, DOT responded that lowering the speed limit was part of Vision Zero which was independent of the SBS plan.
- The BRT plan is now being presented as being part of the Complete Streets Program which includes Vision Zero. This shift in focus shows that DOT cannot be trusted.
- DOT has exaggerated the dangers to pedestrians and insisting without any proof that BRT would have saved lives that were lost.
- Shifting the focus of the project midstream was intentionally done to confuse when DOT realized they could not justify the projected time savings. How can travel speeds be increased when road capacity and speed limits are reduced and may be reduced further if lanes are narrowed (which is under consideration)? That can only occur if there is massive switch in modes from the car to the bus which is not projected.
- Residents believe that Option 2 chosen by DOT which includes boarding on pedestrian islands instead of at the curb will be detrimental to pedestrian safety. Woodhaven was the last community in the city to have snow removed after the blizzard of January 2016. Many side streets were impassable for at least three days. What assurances are there that these median islands will be cleared of snow or that fare kiosks will be accessible during and after major snowstorms? How will the street be made safer if bus riders are forced to wait for buses in the bus lane of the main roadway?

INTRODUCTION

After waiting well over a year for responses to some questions asked of DOT the QPTC has finally received answers to only about two-thirds of its 60 questions in a document released in mid-December 2015 entitled "Frequently Asked Questions". DOT's document can be found at <http://www.qptc.org/dotresp.html>. Some of the answers merely sideswipe the questions by not providing direct answers. Any question DOT did not want to respond to was not considered a frequently asked question. Just one example. How many times do we have to ask for 24-hour traffic counts for it to be frequent enough?

We will state the changes DOT has made to their plan and then review what has and what has not been answered.

CHANGES MADE THUS FAR TO DOT'S PLAN AND VAGUENESS IN THE PLAN

Most importantly DOT is no longer proposing Concept 2 (main roadway offset bus lanes) as their total solution. They have entertained the possibility that part of the plan may include SBS instead of BRT or may involve no special treatment at all. The vagueness of the plan also causes much concern.

On Cross Bay Boulevard for example, DOT has left open the possibility of curbside bus lanes, offset bus lanes, or no bus lanes at all. They have not clarified whether designated left turn lanes will or will not be eliminated or if lanes will be narrowed to accommodate bus lanes. Each distinction is extremely important and each needs to be justified with traffic counts. For example, if left turn lanes are eliminated, we need to know what the reduction in traffic speeds will be, the length of all proposed detours and extra time those detours will take, the numbers of vehicles affected.

If lanes are narrowed, we need to know how large tractor-trailers will be accommodated since they currently occupy virtually the entire existing lane as this picture shows.

Since the plan includes replacing standard buses with longer articulated ones, we need to know the numbers of parking spaces to be eliminated. If there will be curbside bus lanes, we also need to know how many parking spaces will be eliminated under that concept. DOT has raised more questions by their vagueness, than they have answered.

A major part of the SBS / BRT plan was the elimination of 23 left turns on Woodhaven and another four on Cross Bay. A few of those proposed left turn restrictions have now been rescinded, but DOT did



A tractor trailer on Cross Bay Blvd currently occupies virtually the entire lane.

not specifically list which ones as if they had never been proposed to be taken away, so we will tell you what they are.

The left turns that DOT previously proposed to take away and decided to rescind are Furmanville Av (NB), Rockaway Blvd (NB), Yellowstone Blvd (SB), and 81 Rd (SB). We do not know if designated left turn lanes will be provided or not.

The total number of left turn restrictions, therefore, has been reduced from 23 to 19. Of the five locations DOT previously listed as where left turns presently banned which will now be allowed are: (Cooper Ave (NB), 85 Rd (NB) 86 Rd (SB), 103 Ave (NB) and (SB), Cooper Ave NB is no longer listed. It appears that DOT has replaced the left turn on Cooper with a left turn on Furmanville instead, an additional distance of one mile for vehicles to travel just to make a left turn. Furmanville is also a residential street, which DOT apparently will now make a truck route.

Also, they have changed their mind about turning the narrow residential Trotting Course Lane into a two-way street to replace the current southbound left turn from Woodhaven into Metropolitan Avenue and allowing a left turn southbound onto Trotting Course Lane.

DOT stated at Community Advisory Meeting #5 that the left turn restrictions will be implemented in phases, several at a time, or they will be tested individually or in groups. If a few are tested at a time and the individual effect is minimal, it does not necessarily follow that the cumulative impact will not be great and the project can proceed as planned after some minimal testing.

ANALYSIS OF SOME OF DOT'S RESPONSES TO FAQ'S

(DOT statements are in *italics*.)

DOT Page 3

How has SBS improved bus travel times?

DOT states that bus travel times have improved by between 19 and 23% on implemented routes.

This statement is misleading at best. First year assessments, the only information provided by the MTA and DOT, shows bus travel speeds on the Bx12 implemented in 2007 between the first and last stops decreased by 20%; Bx41 between 19 and 23%; M15 between 15 and 18%; and S79 by 20%. Some of this data is as much as seven years old and may not be valid today. No information has been made available for the other four SBS routes. So to make a general statement about all SBS routes when data is only available for half of those routes is incorrect. And there is no information on what happens after the first year.

Further, reduction in bus travel speeds is not an indication of passenger travel time-savings which are not as dramatic and should be the real goal of improving bus transportation. Although percentage travel time savings remain the same for passengers traveling part of the route rather than from the first to last stop, the actual savings in minutes for the average passenger trip of 2.3 miles only amounts to between one and six minutes, which in most cases is less than if one just missed a bus. Your likelihood of missing an SBS bus is greater than with other buses. That is due to the requirement to pay before boarding and instructions by the MTA for bus operators not to wait for passengers to complete purchase of their payment receipts. Those are needed even if you have an unlimited MetroCard.

Increases in walking times to and from buses to stops spaced between a half mile or a mile apart can more than wipe out these savings and there is no data available regarding actual passenger trip time savings. This is why the benefits of SBS have been exaggerated.

DOT Page 4

What if I can't obtain a ticket or have some other problem?

This is a greater problem than the MTA admits to. All fare machines at a bus stop have been reported to be out of service for as long as a month. The MTA's advice to board a bus and get off at the next stop requires that you wait for the following SBS bus since bus operators have been instructed to maintain their schedule and not wait for you to obtain your receipt.

http://web.mta.info/mta/planning/sbs/SBS_MachineOutageAlerts.htm. Fare machines are out of service

even on the Q44, the newest SBS route. <http://www.ny1.com/nyc/all-boroughs/transit/2016/02/10/select-bus-service-riders-in-the-bronx-and-queens-deal-with-broken-ticketing-machines.html>.

When this happens, your entire time-savings will be wiped out. Getting off the bus and getting on the next one may also be extremely inconvenient if you are carrying heavy packages, or have a full shopping cart or a baby carriage.

Also, there have been reports of passengers being prosecuted for boarding when the machines are not working. An agent may board before a passenger has a chance to get off at the next stop to obtain a ticket.

DOT Page 5

How effective is the fare inspection in limiting fare evasion and free-riders?

The MTA claims a 48 to 80% reduction in fare evasion but offers no further details. If this number is correct then why has 2014 B44 SBS and local ridership declined in 2014 by twice the borough average? The local which has a worse frequency, shorter route and a lower bus capacity since it uses standard length buses (whereas the SBS uses articulated buses) has more paid ridership than the SBS. How does that by any means spell success? Could this be the reason why no first year or second year assessment has been issued for that route, so as to not jeopardize the SBS program?

What are the initial and ongoing costs for Select Bus Service, including enforcement?

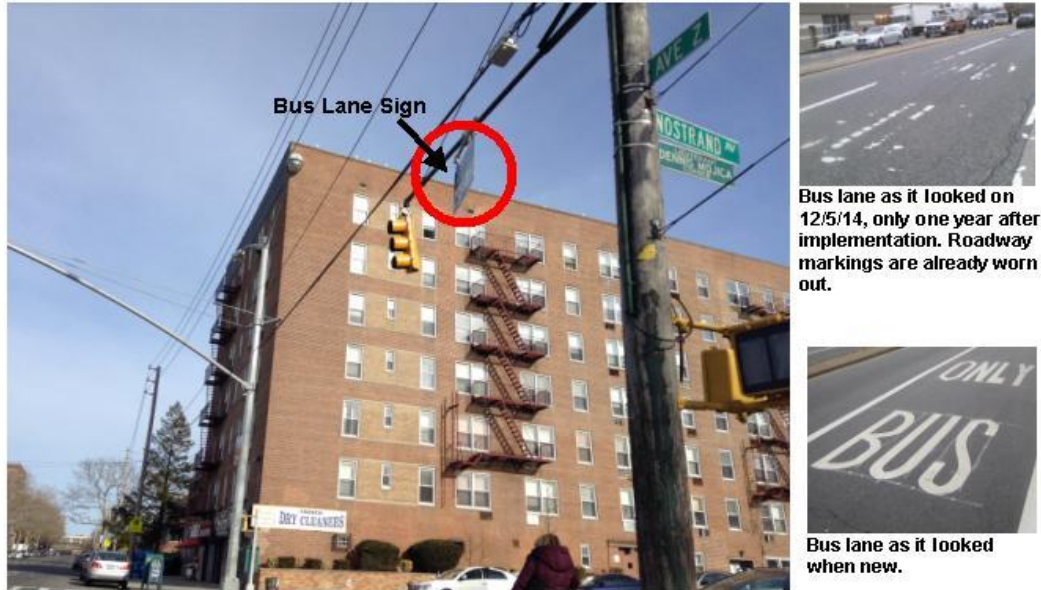
DOT conveniently avoids answering this question entirely by stating that costs vary by route. Bus travel time-savings also vary by route but that did not prevent them from providing a range between 19 and 23 percent.

Initial costs for SBS vary from \$6 million for a short route to \$15 to \$20 million for a longer route. Also if the more expensive BRT is instituted as proposed, the cost escalates to \$231 million or more. BRT includes full street reconstruction including the destruction and replanting of hundreds of mature trees, which DOT has conveniently failed to mention.

There are also increased operating costs according to past staff summaries of several million dollars per year for SBS routes. That means the additional ongoing costs for the eight routes in operation are roughly at least \$15 million per year, which may not include maintenance of fare machines since they are under warranty for the first few years, or the cost to repaint the street pavement, which in some cases need to be refreshed every six months. On the B44 in Brooklyn, not only was the pavement thoroughly worn out within a year it took DOT a full year to renew it. Signage is also inadequate.

Enforcement is the greatest ongoing cost according to the MTA's New York City Transit's Operations Planning.

Miss the bus lane sign and the roadway markings and you could face a fine of at least \$115



This is how the bus lane sign appears to drivers making a right turn from Avenue Z into Nostrand Avenue. Signs are only placed on the corners so you will not see another one until the following intersection.

DOT Page 6

How often will the Q52 SBS and Q53 SBS operate?

DOT states that initially the schedules will be similar but service is based on actual customer usage. This “actual customer usage” is called Service Planning Guidelines which are based on bus crowding levels and a minimum 30-minute headway except for overnight when it is 60 minutes on most routes. Note that overnight subway headways are every 20 minutes. Since no projection regarding increased ridership from those switching from other modes, such as a private car to the bus, we can assume similar or slightly increased ridership. However, since articulated buses, which are eventually planned for these routes, increase bus capacity, service levels are likely to decrease unless there is an unlikely 50% increase in ridership since these buses hold 50% more passengers. Decreased bus frequency also reduces the benefits of SBS.

How much faster will the SBS operate compared to existing Limited service?

DOT states that buses will travel 25 to 35% faster than the Limited based on their modeling which they have refused to release any details about. You know the old saying “garbage in – garbage out” which is

often the case for models that have not been well calibrated. Even if true, these time savings would only apply to rush hours. During the off-peak buses are already traveling at their maximum speeds and would save little additional time that result from the off-board fare payment, not from the exclusive bus lanes proposed 24/7. In fact, off-peak buses are now traveling slower as a result due to the decrease in the speed limit from 35 or 40 mph to 30 mph. So when compared to bus speeds prior to the speed limit reduction, even the travel time savings would be less than projected. In private conversations, DOT admitted they do not expect much bus travel time-savings during the off-peak.

DOT Page 7

If I need a local bus to access the SBS, could I still transfer from the SBS to take another bus or train for the same fare? If not, why is it allowed between the S78, the S79, and the R train in Bay Ridge?

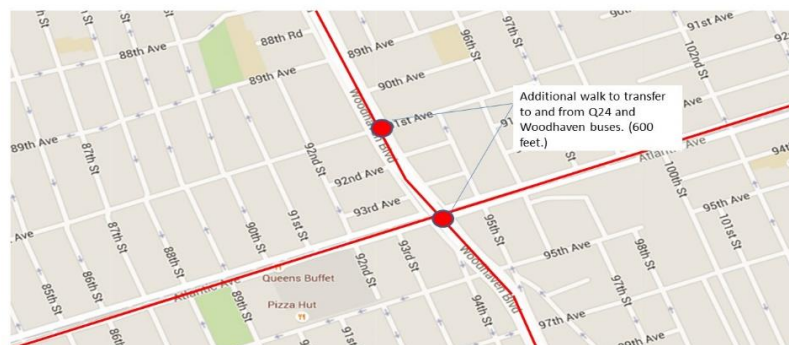
No...The Q52/Q53 is expected to have very few bus stop consolidations compared to the current limited stop service, and no connections that cannot reasonably made with one transfer.

Not true. As the next response details, some will experience significant increased walking distances. If someone wants to take a local bus to the SBS, it would cost them an extra fare if they are already making another transfer, which many are doing, so their only realistic choice is to walk further. Saying that all connections can be reasonably made with one fare is just not true. For example, any current Q11 passenger boarding in Old Howard Beach wanting to avail themselves of the faster Q52 or Q53 will have to pay double fare to transfer to at least six crosstown Queens bus routes or the Queens Boulevard subway. They should be able to use the faster SBS without a fare penalty.

What stops are being removed as part of Q52/Q53 SBS service?

...include Atlantic Avenue [Q24] (relocated to 91st Ave) ...These stops will continue to be served by local bus routes and will be within 500 to 1,100 feet of a proposed Q52/53 SBS bus stop.

Map below shows additional walk at Atlantic Avenue.



Five pairs of bus stops are being eliminated without any analysis presented as to bus stop usage. In the summertime Beach 98th Street, proposed for elimination is heavily utilized. The narrow sidewalk at the remaining Beach 96th Street stop will become overloaded. The elimination of the Beach 101 and Beach 105 stops will be an inconvenience to many by requiring an additional walk of 400 to 600 feet in addition to their current walk of up to 600 feet. In Broad Channel the additional walk will be as much as 1,200 feet.

This will be especially inconvenient during inclement weather and for beachgoers in the summertime lugging their beach gear. Rockaway beach usage has surged this past year breaking all records. At a time when we are trying to encourage use of mass transit, walking further to bus stops has the opposite effect and negates the bus travel time-savings resulting from SBS.

Elimination of these bus stops will also hurt local businesses that depend on them especially ones on the boardwalk as beachgoers choose other parts of the beach instead, further overcrowding them. Beach 116 Street already is overcrowded with lines for the bus already numbering in the hundreds on a beach day on the weekend. Elimination of Rockaway bus stops will cause the line to wrap itself around the block. A responsible analysis would have included existing and projected numbers of bus passengers using the current and proposed bus stops. This was not done. These stops were chosen for elimination purely to save the expense of installing additional fare machines.

How are Q52/Q53 bus stops changing in the Rockaways?

Currently, the Q53 bus stops in the Rockaways are spaced very closely, many as close as every 1-2 blocks, and because of this the buses currently travel relatively slowly through this area.

This is an incorrect statement. The closest stops are two blocks apart (500 feet) in one single case, the Beach 96th and Beach 98th Street stops. All other stops are spaced between 750 and 2,000 feet apart, not 250 to 500 feet apart as DOT alleges. If they can't even correctly measure bus stop distances, how many other mistakes are they making?

Input provided at the public workshops is being used to plan the final bus stop locations.

Untrue. At the Rockaway workshop when the bus stop location eliminations were first announced, it met with universal opposition. Yet DOT ignored all the opposition and still proposes to eliminate needed bus stops.

As part of SBS, will a new stop be included at N and S Conduit Avenues to connect to the B15 to Brooklyn / JFK Airport?

No.

This is a small example of what is wrong with SBS planning. The desire is to encourage those who are driving to use the bus, specifically the SBS, which is supposedly faster. The truth is other than the Q24, the B15 is the only east-west bus route that enters any portion of central Brooklyn. By not providing a transfer, which could be provided if the B15 would leave the main roadway, no connection is provided to East New York, Brownsville and Bedford-Stuyvesant. A connection with the B15 would allow this connection with two buses, thereby increasing employment opportunities.

There are also no plans for the proposed B82 or B6 SBS to be extended to Cross Bay Boulevard, Aqueduct, or JFK Airport to greatly improve connections to create an SBS network rather than individual non-connecting routes. That greatly limits the benefit of SBS. Those who drive do so specifically because of necessary time-consuming multiple bus and/or train connections especially during the off-peak hours. Reducing the numbers of required transfers also would encourage switching from the private car to the bus.

DOT Page 8

Will local buses be allowed to use the bus lanes along Woodhaven and Cross Bay Boulevard?

This is contradictory to what was stated at Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting #5. Since buses will use the center roadway, the three feet pedestrian islands will have to be widened for safety purposes. This will be accomplished by removing space from the service roads and in the short term will only be done at proposed SBS stops. That means that until bus stops are widened at every intersection as proposed under the longer capital program plan, local buses will continue to use the service roads. This means that lanes will be taken from motorists to accommodate only a little more than half the buses.

DOT Page 9

What types of concepts were considered for this project?

DOT states that only Concepts 1, 2, and 3 were considered for this project.

This is exactly what is wrong with the planning process. All three concepts listed involved SBS and exclusive bus lanes operating 24/7, which was the only option considered in this plan. Residents and businesses were never solicited for their opinions regarding how they think bus service should be improved. There is no shortage of ideas, for example, zone express bus service where buses from the Rockaways would operate non-stop between Liberty Avenue and Queens Center and other SBS buses would begin and terminate operation at Liberty Avenue and operate to Queens Center. Another is a busway along the former Rockaway Beach Line or reactivating it as a rail line. A new bus route could also be provided between the new portion of Howard Beach and the Howard Beach subway station.

Other local and express bus route extensions, reroute, or service changes are also possible to improve mass transit.

None of these options were considered. When anyone of these options were mentioned at any of the workshops, they were all summarily dismissed as being outside the scope of the study. When asked what if the communities are opposed to SBS, the answer that was given was that it was only one option being considered and that nothing has been cast in concrete. DOT's response to this question that only three options were under consideration and their response at the recent Woodhaven Resident's Block Association Meeting that SBS was going to be implemented regardless of any community concerns proves DOT is not trustworthy and has lied outright to the communities.

How did you decide on the chosen concept for main road bus lanes (Concept 2)?

DOT is trying to change history. They state that Concept 1 was proposed where the roadway is not wide enough to accommodate Concept 2. They initially proposed Concept 2 for the entire corridor not realizing it was not wide enough. They also state that Concept 2 was decided in conjunction with the MTA and the feedback from the communities at the workshops and Community Advisory Committee meetings. There were no votes taken at any of the meetings where the communities favored Concept 2. It was solely decided by DOT and the MTA. In fact, several communities are specifically opposed to bus stops in the median separating the main and service roadways, a feature of Concept 2.

DOT Page 10

What are the benefits of Concept 2 compared to the current design of Woodhaven Blvd?

The boulevard design separates local and through traffic and improves the experience for both.

In order for this to be a true statement, two thirds of the non-bus traffic would have to be through traffic and one-third local traffic. DOT also states that the service roads will be "calmed" which means that traffic will be moving slower than it is now. Therefore, if through traffic uses the service road, their trips will be slowed.

DOT has submitted no evidence that only two thirds of Woodhaven Boulevard's non-bus traffic is through traffic. Most likely the percentage of non-bus traffic travelling on Woodhaven for more than two or three blocks is far greater than two-thirds. Therefore the main roadway will be overloaded causing through traffic to use the service road. That cannot possibly "improve the experience for both."

Was the deactivated Rockaway Beach Line considered as a possible alternative to the Woodhaven/Cross Bay Boulevard Select Bus Service project?

DOT sidesteps the question by not giving a direct yes or no answer. Instead they state that reusing the rail line is not in competition with SBS and the driving force behind Woodhaven SBS is Mayor deBlasio's Vision Zero program aimed at reducing all arterials to local street status by reducing speeds. That goal is in direct opposition to the goal of speeding bus service. Lower speed limits can in no way speed bus service.

The statement that the rail line is not in competition with Woodhaven SBS is untrue. If DOT were proposing traditional SBS costing \$15 to \$20 million, it might be true. That was their initial plan presented at the community meetings and workshops. DOT then did a bait and switch to BRT costing \$231 million, much of it coming from federal funding. This is in comparison to the estimated \$500-700 million for the QueensRail™ proposal which does not include a new trestle over Jamaica Bay and would benefit at least three times as many people as SBS according to the recent Queens College Study.

<http://qptc.org/Rockaway%20Beach%20Branch%20Community%20Impact%20Study.pdf>

If this plan is implemented, the chances that additional federal funding for the rail line would be forthcoming would be slim to none. The truth therefore is that Woodhaven BRT as proposed is in direct competition for reusing the rail line for rail or as a busway as proposed by the Woodhaven Residents' Block Association.

If buses are regularly significantly delayed during the rush hours due to traffic, why isn't that delay reflected in the bus's running time which should reflect actual road conditions and wouldn't having realistic running times improve service?

Here again DOT contradicts itself. They previously stated that buses are significantly delayed during the peak hours necessitating the need for exclusive bus lanes. Now they state that schedules could not be readjusted to account for these delays, as schedules should do, because traffic conditions are too variable and vary from day to day. So is traffic a serious everyday problem or just an intermittent one where exclusive bus lanes may not be warranted? It can't be both, but DOT's reasoning shifts depending on which way the wind is blowing.

DOT Page 11

How long will construction take and when will construction take place?

DOT initially stated one year and later increased that to eighteen months, not to even mention that every DOT and MTA time projection for capital projects were never completed on or near schedule. So realistically we are talking of two to three years of nightmare traffic from construction. Even if

construction was staged, it is sure to affect the entire corridor for a very long time. That time frame has now even been lengthened as DOT has decided to first implement short-term solutions before starting on the long-term capital project. So Woodhaven will be in turmoil from 2017 to approximately 2022. What effect will that have on local businesses? Just ask all the businesses on Second Avenue that could not hold on long enough until the subway will be completed.

DOT conveniently avoids answering this question also by not providing any time frame.

DOT Page 12

How much will this project cost? Is it cost effective?

Another non-response with no dollar figure given. DOT is hiding the fact that this project will cost at least \$231 million as well as millions extra each year in additional operating costs for enforcement and renewing the roadway. They have proposed the same benefits for a \$20 million initial cost and a \$231 million project. In theory the BRT proposal, which costs over ten times the SBS proposal should provide ten times the benefit. Where is their cost benefit analysis that shows the more expensive alternative is cost effective?

Instead of answering the question directly they point out that traffic crashes in New York City cost it \$4.29 billion annually. A nice statistic, but totally irrelevant because the subject being discussed is Woodhaven Boulevard, not New York City and nowhere has it even been proven that Bus Rapid Transit would have any effect on traffic crashes.

Will there be any follow-up after the first year assessment? If not, why not? Don't circumstances change over time?

No problem here with DOT's reply, However, none of that data collected after the first year of operation for existing SBS routes has been shared and the only changes made on existing routes after implementation are changes that should have been incorporated initially at implementation.

DOT is saying in effect trust us because we know what we are doing. Their inconsistencies, misleading statements, avoidance in answering questions and lies have not merited our trust.

Why should we trust that the analyses are thorough and accurate when the agency is too lazy to even use spell check for a document they have been preparing for eight months. The word is "Glossary" not "Glossery" which they misspelled more than once in as well as transposing the letters in the word "December" (in Version 1.0). They promised us clearer street and parking signs and delivered signs with smaller print that is more difficult to read and do not replace faded street signs for as long as five years.

So why should we believe them when they state roadway markings will be replaced when they wear out?



The signs on Woodhaven Boulevard indicating that right turns are permitted in bus lanes cannot be easily read when traveling faster than about 10 miles per hour and are confusing to motorists. How is someone supposed to know that is a sign does not say right turns from the bus lane are allowed, that they are allowed on the following block when there is no additional signage?



DOT Page 13

How does bus lane camera enforcement work?

DOT states that the video footage is first reviewed by DOT employees to confirm that a violation has occurred. If so, how can it be explained that at least one individual received a photo summons merely by crossing a bus lane when pulling out of a parking space on First Avenue?

Will cars waiting in a bus lane for a car to pull out so they can park be subject to receiving a summons of \$115?

The answer is yes. As any New Yorker can tell you with parking at a premium in many areas, the only way to find a parking space is to wait for one momentarily when you see someone entering his car who is about to pull out of the space. If you choose not to wait for it someone else will making it unfeasible to circle around the block and occupy the parking spot several minutes later. So anyone engaging in this practice risks a huge fine. Therefore, such strict enforcement of bus lanes will harm local businesses. It is also inconsistent with stopping to pick-up and discharge passengers which is allowed according to DOT and may even take longer.

DOT Page 14

During what hours will the bus lanes be in effect?

DOT has not shown the need for exclusive bus lanes in operation 24/7 when buses are rarely delayed by traffic during the off-peak. Consistency is not a good enough reason. DOT has many intersections where left turns are banned only during certain hours when it is necessary. This is no different.

How will bus lanes affect emergency responders?

DOT's response that emergency response times will be improved fails to consider the frequent possibility that both travel lanes in the main roadway will be hopelessly clogged with traffic. An emergency vehicle traveling in the bus lane will have to get around buses stopped to pick up and discharge passengers or buses stopped at red signals. In the latter situation, buses will either have to cautiously force their way through the intersection with traffic proceeding on the perpendicular street in order for the emergency vehicle to pass. If a bus is in the midst of picking up or discharging passengers, either the emergency vehicle has to wait for the bus to finish, the bus driver has to skip the bus stop and not stop for the next half mile necessitating disembarking passengers to miss their stop and pay an additional fare to take the next SBS bus back in the reverse direction, causing severe inconvenience to bus passengers.

The only other alternative if the emergency vehicle cannot force its way into one of the two other travel lanes and cross both of them to enter the opposing travel lane would be to jump the pedestrian island and cross over into the service road. This may not be possible where trees will be planted on those islands. On highways, the travel lanes are sufficiently wide enough for vehicles to move to the side to temporarily create an additional travel lane for emergency vehicles. The proposed lanes on Woodhaven and Cross Bay Boulevards will be too narrow to permit this.

Options 1 and 3 did not have these severe disadvantages because they easily would have permitted emergency vehicles to enter the opposing traffic lane which is what they do now.

How will the bus lanes be maintained?

DOT states that bus lane markings will be refurbished regularly as they wear out. Why should we believe them when they have allowed bus lanes to virtually wear out completely and remain that way on Nostrand Avenue in Brooklyn and on Hylan Boulevard on Staten Island for as long as a year before refurbishing them.



Hylan Boulevard

How will bus lanes affect traffic operations?

It is interesting to note that nowhere in any of the DOT documentation does the phrase appear stating that a general traffic lane will be converted into a bus only lane. They only state that a bus lane will be created (out of thin air?) or that three travel lanes will remain. They do not state that the three travel lanes will not be contiguous where there are service roads preventing free access between the three. They also never address the possibility of an accident ever blocking one or both travel lanes. If that is the case, are cars supposed to not move until the roadway reopens? Physical barriers being proposed will prevent entry into the bus lane to circumvent stalled cars or ones involved in an accident.

They only state traffic flow will be better organized minimizing conflicts between buses and other vehicles. If more than two-thirds of the traffic is through traffic, some through traffic will use the slower service road where the third travel lane is located or else use parallel residential streets where they will speed to make up for lost time jeopardizing safety, not improving it.

DOT justifies bus lanes 24/7 by stating that more than 30 buses per hour operate during the peak hours in each direction. During the peak hours between 7 and 10 AM, there is an average of 36 buses per hour operating northbound which may partially justify the need for exclusive bus lanes. However, during the off-peak, this number drops off. On Sunday evening between 9 and 10 PM, the number drops to 10 per hour or one bus every 6 minutes. Why do we need an exclusive bus lane for one bus once every six minutes?

Do exclusive bus lanes really make sense when buses are operating every 30 minutes late at night or every 15 minutes during the evening hours?

Between 1 and 6 AM, a bus operates only on the Q53 at one bus per hour. DOT's rationale is that traffic is so light that three through lanes are not needed anyway. How often have you seen the Belt Parkway jammed after midnight? It happens quite frequently. Eliminating a travel lane on Woodhaven Boulevard during the off-peak will ensure that cars can never reach a speed greater than 20 mph due to traffic with an average speed of less than 15 mph at all times increasing auto trip times by five minutes for thousands of trips, while bus passengers do not benefit at all from these bus lanes. How does that make any sense? According to DOT, it is for consistency, and not to punish motorists for not riding a bus operating only once every hour. Where are DOT's overnight traffic counts and proof that trip times will not be lengthened? They are again asking us to just trust them.

What are the safety statistics for Woodhaven Boulevard and Cross Bay Boulevard?

According to DOT, Woodhaven ranks within the top ten percent of dangerous streets in New York City. Let us examine how DOT arrived at that conclusion and the role safety plays in this SBS/BRT project.

SBS was initially proposed in New York City in 2003 with the first route implemented in 2007. The original purpose was solely to speed bus travel. When actual bus speeds did not increase as much as city officials hoped for because of inadequate enforcement of bus lane violations, the focus shifted to SBS being part of the Vision Zero program to make streets safer. The number of pedestrians killed each year along the Woodhaven Boulevard Corridor averages about 4 or less than one fatality every mile each year. That does not sound “dangerous” enough, so statistics are now aggregated into five year periods and those seriously injured are also considered to bring the total up to 195 people which sounds much more “dangerous.”

Woodhaven and Cross Bay Boulevards are arterial roadways which are inherently more dangerous than one-way residential roadways carrying far fewer vehicles which comprise the bulk of city streets. Yet the city unfairly treats all roads equally by concluding 51 percent of pedestrian injuries occur on 6 percent of the streets. A fair analysis would compare Woodhaven Boulevard to other arterials and not to extra narrow one lane streets.

The city's solution to make arterials safer is to lower their speed limits to 25 mph, effectively converting them into local streets and eliminating arterial roadways as a class altogether. This totally ignores the needs of those having inadequate public transit or expressways in their neighborhoods.

No one is saying that the city should not prioritize street safety. Dangerous intersections need to be redesigned accordingly, not an entire vital transportation corridor to reduce road capacity and travel speeds. The rationale to reduce road capacity would be viable if many automobile drivers would switch to the bus with the institution of SBS, but DOT is not projecting that will occur.

DOT Page 15

What is the speed limit on Woodhaven Boulevard and Cross Bay Boulevard?

DOT states there are no current plans to further reduce the speed limits on Woodhaven and Cross Bay. They do not rule out future speed reductions if lanes are narrowed from their current widths which is one of the alternatives proposed for Cross Bay Boulevard and the northern portion of Woodhaven Boulevard under the capital construction alternative. If either comes to pass, speed limits will further be lowered to 25 mph in those sections, and might be lowered for the entire corridor to maintain “consistency” as DOT puts it. So although there may be no current plans to change this regulation, plans can easily change, so their response is a bit wishy-washy.

How will this design make the corridor safer for pedestrians?

DOT talks about making this corridor safer for pedestrians but has not demonstrated pedestrian dangers throughout the entire corridor warranting a severe street design, nor has it not shown high numbers of pedestrians crossing at each intersection would warrant pedestrian refuge islands at every intersection.

They claim they will install high visibility crosswalks. No problem with that. However, if DOT cared so much about pedestrians why is it that existing crosswalks all over the city including those on Woodhaven Boulevard are not restriped until they have thoroughly worn out? What assurances do we have that these high visibility crosswalks will remain high visibility for any long period of time after their initial installation? DOT has not maintained bus lane markings and crosswalks; so why should this promise be any different?

Bus stop stations on pedestrian islands necessitate thousands of additional pedestrian crossings each day. Each additional crossing increases the likelihood of injury and death. Bus passengers rushing to catch a bus may not look out carefully for vehicles increasing the number of conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles. Similarly, anxious drivers stuck in traffic and late will be less careful in looking out for pedestrians, will also increase the likelihood of more injuries and deaths.

How can that possibly make the street safer as DOT contends? This concern has been repeatedly raised by local communities and dismissed by DOT as not being a concern.

How will this design make the corridor safer for general traffic?

The restriping of the wider portions of the service roads to provide consistency under the Congested Corridors Study, has not improved traffic flow by eliminating merges as DOT contends. It forced turning vehicles to wait in the same line as vehicles going straight increasing congestion, not reducing it. It has also not improved safety because anxious drivers tired of constantly being stuck in traffic do not abide by these striped zones and cause more accidents. Just ask the residents and drivers. DOT does not have all the answers as they would like everyone to believe.

Also, in order to widen existing pedestrian islands to make them safe for bus passengers to get on and off buses, the service roads will have to be narrowed making it more difficult for large trucks to turn into them at farside bus stops. If bus stations are nearside, it will be more difficult for trucks to make right turns from the service road. How often do we presently see large trucks mounting the sidewalk in order to make a turn? What if a truck mounts the island where the bus station is located? DOT cannot merely assert that the proposed design is safer and not more dangerous. They have to prove that it is safer and properly address community concerns. These islands also will have to be cleared of snow during winter months. Can we trust DOT to do this?

DOT Page 16

How will one bus pass another at a bus stop?

DOT states that where bus bays are not provided on the main roadway, buses will pass stopped buses by entering one of the two general traffic lanes. As with emergency vehicles, when those lanes are jam packed which will occur often, buses will not be able to fight their way into the general traffic lanes. As a result, SBS and express buses will get stuck behind local buses at every bus stop until the traffic clears up. That could significantly delay buses, perhaps even greater than they are currently delayed. Option 2 is the worst of the three designs considered by DOT.

DOT Page 17

How many bus trips are made along Woodhaven and Cross Bay Boulevard each day?

The number provided is 31,588. That includes every single bus trip. Remember that not all bus passengers are on the buses at the same time and that is the number for both directions. It also includes those on charter and casino buses.

How many vehicles currently use Woodhaven and Cross Bay Boulevard?

The numbers of vehicles using Woodhaven Boulevard passing selected key intersections averages about 30,000 daily in each direction. No reason is given why intersections north of Union Turnpike are not shown. Could that be where the peak is, perhaps 40,000 vehicles or more daily?

However, bus passengers are not shown as passing a specific point. A total number of 30,000 daily bus passengers are counted. Total vehicular trips are not shown. So DOT is really comparing apples and oranges. To convert the average of 30,000 vehicles passing a specific point, we have to make some assumptions. Since 35,000 vehicles pass Union Turnpike northbound and another 29,000 southbound we know there are at least 64,000 vehicles passing that point.

It would be unrealistic to assume that all 50,000 vehicles passing 157th Avenue are also passing Union Turnpike. Realistically probably less than half of them are also passing Union Turnpike or points north. So at least 90,000 daily vehicles would be a realistic number using the Woodhaven/Cross Bay Corridor.

Assuming each vehicle carries an average of 1.6 passengers, that brings the total number of people in motorized vehicles to 144,000, as compared to the 30,000 riding buses. If we do not count those using private buses to access casinos, that number shrinks further.

It is also a fact that traffic volumes on Woodhaven vary by season, with the fewest vehicles traveling during the summer months and the highest number between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day. Since

DOT does not tell us which months these counts were taken, the number of those using motorized vehicles other than buses could be as high as 150,000. Even by assuming all 30,000 bus riders would be helped by SBS, which is not the case, five times as many people would probably have their travel times increased by more time than SBS riders would save.

Looking at it another way, before the bus lane restrictions, Woodhaven Boulevard had 4 travel lanes in each direction (8 lanes). The "rush hour" actually extends for at least a two-hour period in both morning and evening (4 hours). Traffic engineering data typically estimates that a heavily travelled road will carry 2,000 vehicles per hour and the average vehicle will have 1.6 occupants. Thus over 100,000 people (8 lanes * 4 hours * 2,000 vehicles * 1.6 occupants) are disadvantaged by the DOT plan during rush hours alone. Actually, considerably more since this assumes that the same people are traveling from one end of the corridor to the other and we know there is significant turnover throughout the corridor, and that does not even include non-rush hours. According to this scenario, the number of daily users of motorized vehicles other than buses could easily exceed 200,000.

So to sum up, when comparing apples to apples, we have 30,000 bus passengers (many of whom could be using the bus for a short distance just to access a subway), and over 200,000 in motor vehicles who are likely traveling longer than the 2.3 average distance for local buses. So the percentage of roadway users in motor vehicles other than buses account for nearly 87 percent of the people using the roadway.

DOT Page 18

How many pedestrians are crossing the street at intersections where you will be constructing pedestrian islands?

Let us just examine DOT's numbers for the intersection of Metropolitan Avenue and Woodhaven Boulevard, discussed above where road capacity will be reduced by 40% so that it will be easier to cross Woodhaven Boulevard at this point. If we just focus on the north and south crosswalks across Woodhaven Boulevard, we have a peak hour total of 73 + 54 pedestrians or 127. Assuming the traffic signal is green for 60 seconds, once every three minutes, accounting for the turn phase signals, we have 15 pedestrian traffic cycles in an hour. Dividing the 127 equally by 15, there are 8.5 people crossing Woodhaven at each traffic cycle or approximately four or five pedestrians in each crosswalk during each traffic cycle. And that is the peak hour. At other times we can assume perhaps five pedestrians in each both crosswalks, or two or three in each crosswalk.

Absent accident data at that intersection, how can DOT justify the expense of creating pedestrian and median islands, sidewalk extensions and eliminating left turns? Let us assume a conservative 20 vehicles per lane per minute for a three- minute period, which includes one complete traffic cycle. There are eight through lanes on Woodhaven and four more on Metropolitan. So in three minutes we have 160

cars on Woodhaven and 80 cars on Metropolitan. Adding in 20 turning vehicles for each 30 second turning cycle, for each street, we have 40 additional vehicles or a total of 200 vehicles being inconvenienced. Assuming 1.6 passengers per vehicle, that translates into 320 drivers and passengers inconvenienced in each four-minute period during the peak hour or 4,800 during the peak hour inconvenienced just at this single intersection as compared to 127 pedestrians who will benefit by these pedestrian and refuge islands. How can that be justified without specific accident data at that intersection?

Why do buses get their own lane if there are fewer buses on the road than cars?

One has to ask why Myrtle Avenue was chosen as the typical business location along Woodhaven Boulevard when there are only a handful of business there? Jamaica Avenue or Liberty Avenue would have been more typical commercial areas. Could DOT have cherry picked the data to fit into their pre-determined conclusions? Even if true, rush hour data does not justify bus lanes 24/7.

DOT is cutting the capacity of through travel lanes by 50 percent for motorists from four to two, if you exclude the local service lanes that DOT says they will be "calming" and therefore will not be suitable for long distance through travel.

Looking at a specific intersection like Metropolitan Avenue where there were four through lanes and two turning lanes in each direction for a total of twelve lanes, DOT is proposing only six lanes for vehicles other than buses. This is also a road capacity reduction of 50 percent. when only 13 percent of roadway users are bus passengers. How can this possibly not increase traffic congestion and air pollution?

DOT justifies the reduction in through travel lanes as allowing traffic to move more smoothly by reducing bottlenecks by having a roadway that is consistently three lanes in each direction instead of varying between three and four. In order for their hypothesis to be true, one third of the traffic would have to be local traffic traveling under a half mile. Where are their numbers to show that is the case? If through traffic is forced onto the service roads or onto slower parallel residential streets as will most likely happen, travel speeds and trip times would have to increase and not decrease, as DOT contends.

According to residents, the newly installed bus lanes already have added between 20 and 45 minutes to existing trips. DOT's statistics will not be available for a year.

DOT Page 20

How did you model traffic conditions to show how the project might affect road use?

Again, DOT is asking us to trust them that they did the modeling correctly without revealing any of the model results. If they did a "No build" model, how did the results compare with the "Build Model" and

what type of improvements did the "Build Model" show over the "No Build" Model? Was the "Build Model" in fact superior? If so, how much did traffic speeds improve and by how much was travel time reduced? These are basic questions that need answers.

DOT states in SBS corridors, they have seen small decreases in traffic volumes. How were those measured? In Staten Island they measured the number of vehicles passing a specific point which also showed increased travel times. It stands to reason that if a road is more congested, fewer vehicles will be able to pass a specific point, it does not necessarily indicate lower traffic demand which is what lower traffic volumes implies.

If the traffic is so severe during rush hours as to significantly delay buses, won't the reduction of a travel lane for general traffic make those delays for cars even worse?

In the past ten years, new bus lanes have been introduced on many streets with high traffic volumes in all five boroughs, and the results have consistently shown that there have been no major decreases in traffic speeds as a result.

However, in most cases the analysis was limited to the roadway being changed without any analysis to parallel roadways. For example, the introduction of bus lanes on First and Second Avenue in Manhattan did not measure changes in traffic volumes on Third Avenue or York Avenue. So although decreases in travel speeds may have been minor on the streets affected, there may have been greater speed decreases on parallel roadways in an effort by drivers to keep moving and shifting their driving routes.

Notice DOT did not say their experience has been an improvement in driving speeds, yet that is what they are predicting along Woodhaven Boulevard without any basis. "Just trust us."

How will the Woodhaven Boulevard SBS project encourage drivers to leave their cars at home and switch to the bus when some of the drivers using Woodhaven Boulevard are making trips from places like South Brooklyn and would require many transfers?

The proposed design dedicates approximately 25 percent (1 travel lane) to buses – the remaining 75% of roadway space (3 travel lanes) are available for use by other vehicles, including private cars, so people who need to make trips not well served by transit can continue to do so.

DOT does not state that SBS will encourage drivers to switch to buses resulting in fewer cars on the road. Therefore, there is no justification to reducing roadway capacity for vehicles other than buses 24/7. DOT says it is allowing 75 percent of the road space for vehicles other than buses and claims that should be sufficient. Again they are lumping the slow service road used primarily for right turns and those looking for parking or just having left a parking space with the two through lanes when much more than two thirds of the traffic is through traffic.

Our analysis also showed that 83 percent of the people were vehicles other than buses. And if you look at vehicles only, about 95 percent of the vehicles on the road are not buses. Three travel lanes are just insufficient and that is justified by the fact that on the portion of Woodhaven Boulevard between Rockaway Boulevard and Jamaica Avenue, virtually all left turns are currently banned so as to have four moving traffic lanes because left turns would effectively remove one of those lanes.

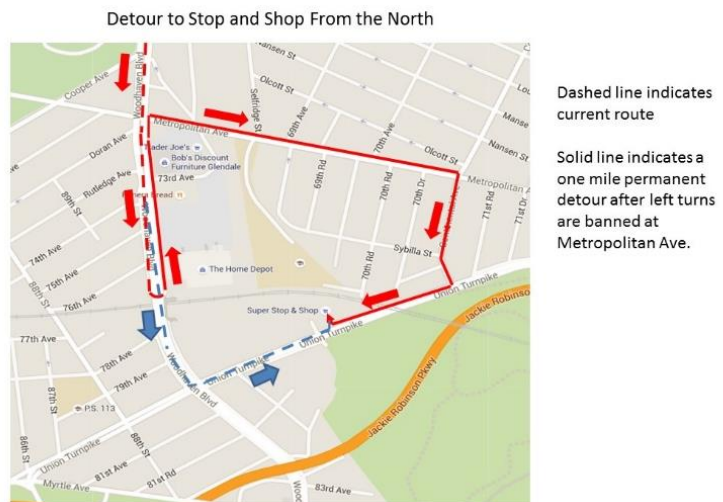
Three lanes are now deemed insufficient to handle the existing traffic which is why there are four lanes in each direction. So what is changing for DOT to conclude that in the future only two through lanes and one local lane will be sufficient?

DOT Page 21

At what intersections will left turns be restricted as part of this project?

DOT originally proposed banning 23 left turning movements along Woodhaven Boulevard and additional dedicated left turn lanes along Cross Bay Boulevard. At each meeting they only revealing three or four of those turning restrictions to deliberately give misleading impressions. One had to attend all meetings to get a complete list of all locations or else happen to catch one local newspaper article that listed all of them. Now for the first time are making the list public all in one place. Only 19 turns are listed since they quietly have added back turns previously proposed for elimination such as the northbound turn from Woodhaven Boulevard in Furmanville Avenue which is replacing the former proposed new left turn onto Cooper Avenue.

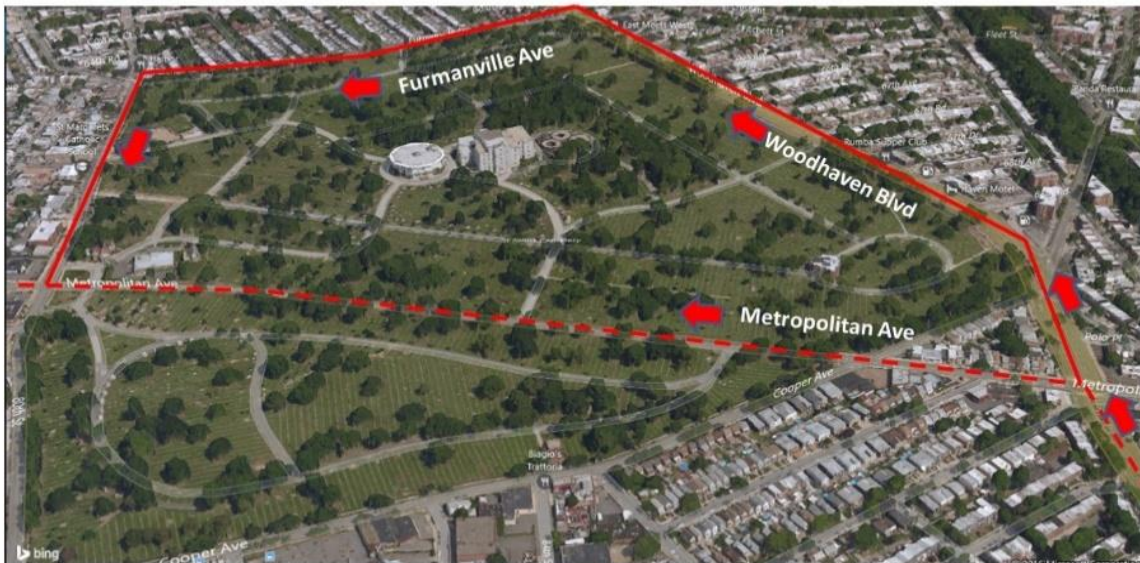
Much community opposition has been raised with this part of the plan, particularly banning the left turn onto Jamaica Avenue. Banning of other left turns will also cause major convenience to motorists adding as much as 20 minutes and an extra mile to their trips. There also will be overflow from the provided left turn queue lanes where left turns will still be allowed. That will temporarily reduce the road to a single moving through travel lane from the current four travel lanes (a 75% temporary reduction in roadway capacity). Below is a map showing the route drivers must take to access Stop and Shop on Union Turnpike with a proposed left turn ban in the southbound direction.



Apparently, DOT also had second thoughts about turning the narrow residential Trotting Course Lane into a two-way truck route by adding a southbound left turn near Yellowstone Boulevard into Trotting Course Lane to replace southbound banned left turns at Metropolitan Avenue.

In the northbound direction, vehicles desiring to make a left turn at Metropolitan will have to make it at Furmanville Avenue instead and travel all around St. Johns Cemetery. According to DOT, that will speed traffic.

Solid red line shows a one-mile permanent detour needed to make a left turn onto Metropolitan Avenue.



QPTC QUESTIONS THAT STILL HAVE NOT BEEN ADEQUATELY ADDRESSED

(from the 60 Questions that were asked in April, 2015)

At least 20 questions have not been responded to.

1. Is there anyone who will be hurt by SBS?

DOT seems to indicate the answer is no. The fact is that no major change can help everyone.

2. Shouldn't you be comparing the time saved by bus passengers with the time lost by automobiles and trucks.

DOT indicates that all traffic will move faster.

7. How many parking spaces will be lost to accommodate the longer buses?

8. What are the initial costs to provide SBS enforcement?

9. What are the ongoing costs for enforcement and maintenance?

10. Shouldn't we be getting ten times the benefit with a plan that costs ten times as much (comparing the initial SBS proposal for \$20 million to the more expensive \$231 million BRT?)

11. Why is the official MTA policy for local bus operators not to accept an SBS receipts?

19. How do you figure bus travel times will be reduced by up to 35%?

21. Can you show us how SBS has improved reliability on other routes?

22. How much time will buses save during the off-peak due to exclusive bus lanes?

27. What do you consider a reasonable speed to be for cars since you maintain a reasonable speed will be maintained.

29. Why won't taxis or access-a-ride vehicles be allowed in bus lanes?

35. How far will cars and trucks have travel out of their way because of the left turn ban at Metropolitan Avenue?

36. Who will be measuring the increase in air pollution caused by cars traveling extra distances because of the left turn bans?

37-39. Aren't left turns banned now between Jamaica Avenue and Rockaway Boulevard because the road is now over capacity and if so, how could one less lane for general travel not increase traffic congestion?

DOT seems to indicate that other factors come into play like double parking and merging but doesn't explain how that applies specifically to this question.

41. What is the number of weekend bus passengers who use Woodhaven Boulevard?

42. What is the average trip length for bus passengers? Wouldn't you need to know this to project average bus passenger travel time-savings?

43. What is the number of weekday and weekend travelers who use cars and trucks?

DOT only provided the number of weekday vehicles at selected points, not the total number of passengers using those vehicles as they did with weekday bus riders.

44. What is the average trip length for cars using the corridor?

45-47. What are the origins and destinations of auto drivers using the corridor? (This would be needed to estimate the reduction in auto traffic as a result of SBS.)

57. Do you intend to make any changes in the Traffic Adjudication Bureau to make it fairer?

CONCLUSIONS

Any plan has advantages and disadvantages. Some are always helped and some are hurt. That is just a fact of life. The goal of any improvement project is to do more good than harm. This is measured by the numbers minutes saved times the numbers of people affected. Transportation projects need to consider the needs of all users of the roadway.

DOT has only considered the needs of bus passengers and pedestrians and has virtually ignored the needs of those using automobiles, trucks, motorcycles and cars for hire. In their FAQ document addressed in this report, DOT continues to maintain that everyone benefits from Select Bus Rapid Transit and Select Bus Service and that there are no downsides to either.

They allege without any proof that traffic will move better for all contradicting the fact that traffic has already significantly slowed for non-bus traffic in Rego Park since the introduction of exclusive bus lanes instituted as part of the Congested Corridors Study. They allege the road will be safer, although many communities believe that passenger boarding from pedestrian islands will be jeopardize safety.

They have arrogantly stated that failure is just not possible because they are so competent and at the same time failed to even perform a basic spell check of their initial publicly release document supposedly answering frequently asked questions. In addition to inaccurately measuring street widths in their initial documents.

They continue not to distinguish between a relatively modest SBS proposal originally estimated at between \$15 and \$20 million and a much more expensive BRT proposal costing \$231 million. The latter involves complete street reconstruction and the destruction of hundreds of trees and replanting them which DOT does not think important enough to even mention.

Originally presented as a public transportation project, DOT now casts this project as being under Mayor deBlasio's Complete Streets Program and part of Vision Zero as its driving force with improved street safety being the major objective. It seems that every time the wind direction changes, so does DOT's story. Yet we are asked to believe them on faith that this project will work.

Queens needs better transportation without hurting those who have to drive because they live in an area with poor public transportation. SBS or BRT will not change that. Excluding pedestrians and bicyclists, motorists account for over 80 percent of Woodhaven /Cross Bay Boulevards users. Their needs must not be ignored and an SBS plan must not punish them. If DOT insists on SBS, we have asked the commissioner to totally abandon their BRT proposal and instead consider the following:

That the exclusive bus lanes should also be used by cars for hire and access-a-ride vehicles and High Occupancy vehicles (HOVs). That exclusive bus lanes be in effect during rush hours only in the peak

direction only. On Woodhaven, that would be between 7 and 10 AM, and between 3 and 7 PM. If DOT does not believe it can be properly enforced to include HOVs, then curbside exclusive bus lanes should be opted for instead with parking banned when the lanes are in effect.

Since it is not possible to please everyone, in order for buses to move more quickly during the rush hours, parking for several hours on one side of the street needs to be sacrificed to install curbside lanes. This will ensure that average traffic speeds do not dramatically drop adding 20, 30, 45 or more minutes to motorist's trips under DOT's plan which includes banning of left turns.

DOT insists against all logic that traffic speeds will improve and trip times will be shortened for all under their plan, even though an extra mile is added to many trips just to make a left turn. DOT still will not tell us what they consider to be "a reasonable speed" when they state that automobiles will be able to move at a reasonable speed.

An initial response was received that DOT will consider this proposal, but no further response has been received in the past four months from the Queens DOT Transportation Commissioner as promised. We also have asked that DOT embarks on a study considering the entire corridor, not only a single roadway. That includes all possible uses for the abandoned Rockaway Beach Line.

Mayor de Blasio recently directed DOT Commissioner Polly Trottenberg that community desires must not override pedestrian safety as determined by the city. This in effect gives DOT a license for the city to institute BRT on Woodhaven and Cross Bay Boulevards as it is planned under his "Complete Streets" Program although communities believe Option 2 as chosen by the city will make the roadway less safe, not more safe for pedestrians. This is most troublesome.

DOT has failed to mention ongoing problems with existing SBS routes such as broken fare machines that are not repaired for weeks even on its newest routes such as the Q44. <http://www.ny1.com/nyc/all-boroughs/transit/2016/02/10/select-bus-service-riders-in-the-bronx-and-queens-deal-with-broken-ticketing-machines.html>. This is the future for Woodhaven Boulevard.

QueensRail™ has been called by some an unrealistic alternative because the cost would be prohibitive and take too long to build. Yet it would cost only three times as much as DOT's proposal and would help three times as many people without hurting anyone as SBS/BRT would do. It would cost about a third of the cost of Mayor deBlasio's proposed waterfront streetcar which was put together in only six months. That timeframe included building a coalition for its support.

QueensRail™ is a proposal that makes sense having additional economic advantages that BRT does not have and would improve development opportunities as the streetcar plan would. All it takes is the political will to do it.