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Press Release

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NYC Transit

IMMEDIATE

### MTA Announces Public Hearing on Final Plan for MTA's Bronx Bus Network Redesign

*Proposed Final Plan Invests up to Additional \$2M in New Bronx Bus Network, Adds New Routes, Improves Service Frequency, Streamlines Circuitous Routes and Balances Stop Spacing to Speed up Rides*

*Express Bus Changes Postponed, Giving Riders an Opportunity to Vote with Their Feet by Utilizing Express Buses During Off-Peak Hours and Weekends*

*Public Hearing Follows Unprecedented Levels of Public Outreach, Multi-Agency Coordination and Extensive Feedback from Customers*

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) today announced that the date of the public hearing on the proposed final plan for the Bronx Bus Network Redesign will be on Thursday, Feb. 20, 2020. The public hearing precedes a vote by the MTA Board to implement the local bus service proposals in the redesign's final plan for implementation this September while continuing to refine the plan's express bus service proposals for implementation in 2021.

The public hearing schedule is scheduled from 6 to 8 p.m. on Feb. 20, 2020, at the Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse in the South Wing of the Lower Gallery. Registration is scheduled from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. This ADA-accessible location can be reached via the  subway lines at the 161 St-Yankee Stadium or 167 St stations, or via bus by the following routes: Bx1, Bx2 to Grand Concourse/E. 165<sup>th</sup> Street, Bx32 to Morris Avenue/E. 165<sup>th</sup> Street, Bx6 local or SBS and Bx13 to E. 161<sup>st</sup> Street/Sherman Avenue, or Bx35 to E. 167<sup>th</sup> Street/Grand Concourse.

"We now have a rock-solid plan to improve local bus service in the Bronx, so we must build on the momentum of the Bronx bus network redesign and push forward with making these proposals a reality," said **MTA NYC Transit President Andy Byford**. "Our customers are telling us that local bus service as it stands needs to be better, and I absolutely agree. We must keep moving forward for our Bronx customers."

"Our public outreach in the Bronx has been unprecedented, and it has yielded invaluable feedback that has pushed us to think differently about how our local and express buses serve the customers here," said **Craig Cipriano, Acting MTA Bus Company President and Senior Vice President for Buses of NYC Transit**. "We look forward to continuing that dialogue with express bus customers as we make adjustments to that portion of the redesign, which we will implement once we and our customers are satisfied with the results."

The final plan proposes up to \$2 million in additional investments in the Bronx local bus network, which have largely remained unchanged since they were converted from trolley lines nearly a century ago or absorbed from private bus lines that were consolidated into the MTA decades ago. It took into consideration the routes' performance, speed, ridership and reliability on key corridors, and how individual routes contribute to the larger network. Altogether, the proposed final plan establishes a new baseline of local bus service in the Bronx and a new foundation upon which the MTA can build as the borough continues to evolve and change. Once the redesign of the local bus network is implemented in fall 2020, the MTA will closely monitor service to ensure new levels are closely aligned with ridership and customer demand.

As bus customers adjust to the new local bus network redesign, the MTA will continue to refine the proposals for a new Bronx express bus network with the goal of implementation of those changes in 2021. The MTA has committed to working with local stakeholders on those proposals, and will provide an update at a later time.

The final plan was developed in collaboration with NYCDOT following unprecedented levels of public outreach with communities and coordination with transit advocates, including open houses, workshops, multiple community board meetings, in-person surveys, and community events. It also took into consideration customers' current commuting patterns and itinerary suggestions, and requests for more direct service, fewer bus stops and improved crosstown connections. NYC Transit also identified key corridors where NYCDOT street treatments and traffic signal improvements can be implemented to expand bus priority and better support sustainable, all-day bus service when ridership demand necessitates those adjustments.

#### PROPOSED FINAL PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

- **New local service:** Two new local routes, the Bx25 and M125, provide new connections and service to previously underserved neighborhoods.
- **More transfer points, frequency increase on major corridors:** The majority of customers who provided feedback wanted better connections to other buses or the subway system. The proposal aligns routes to provide new access points for customers, including route extensions to more neighborhoods, new connections to subway service in the Bronx, a new link between northern Co-op City to Bedford Park, and route simplifications

to bring customers to major corridors. Four routes will provide service to accessible subway stations. Frequency also will significantly increase on nine major corridors, which will be served by 10 routes.

- **Balanced stop spacing:** Both customers and transit advocates requested more balanced spacing between stops to speed up travel times. The average time it takes for a bus to re-enter traffic from a stop ranges from 20 seconds to more than 1 minute during peak hours. Bronx stops are currently an average of 882 feet apart – just over three city blocks. Stops in transit systems around the world range from 1,000 to 1,680 feet. The final plan proposes stop spacing of an average of 1,100 feet, resulting in a net reduction of 400 local/limited stops. In considering bus stop locations, NYC Transit considered factors such as stop usage, ridership, geography and impact to the community when making these operational decisions. Many retained stops serve high ridership areas such as retirement communities, hospitals or schools for which a stop removal would create a significant burden. Others provide transfers to subway stations or connections to different bus routes, or access to geographically challenging locations where hills would make walking difficult, particularly during inclement weather.
- **Proposals aligned with extensive Co-op City community feedback** led to enhancements and retained loop routing to preserve area service and frequency. Bx26 frequency will be split with new route Bx25, with current frequency levels maintained along Allerton Avenue. The Bx26 route will maintain its existing routing due to public recommendations.
- **Improved crosstown service in central Bronx**, which was the result of popular customer feedback. Three routes will receive more frequent service. Seven routes will be streamlined, rerouted to reduce duplicative service and to provide more direct service to subway stations, or extended to new coverage areas.
- **Select Bus Service (SBS) improvements and planning for the future:** The Bx6 SBS route will be streamlined and extended to bring SBS further east along Story Avenue into the Soundview section of the Bronx. SBS, which is New York City's version of Bus Rapid Transit, has proven to increase bus speeds by up to 20 percent while introducing customer-friendly features such as all-door boarding, off-board fare collection, improved signage and digital travel information. Approximately 9,400 current Bx5 customers will benefit from this extended Bx6 SBS route, which will also provide more direct access to major destinations and transfer points such as Yankee Stadium, the Bronx Courthouse, Borough Hall, and the Grand Concourse. The route will also serve upcoming developments such as the planned Hunts Point station for Metro-North Railroad, and a future residential development at 1125 Whitlock Avenue.
- **In collaboration with NYCDOT**, NYC Transit identified major corridors for bus priority projects to accompany the network redesign. These corridors were chosen based on criteria such as ridership demand, service reliability and speed, proposed new service levels, demographics and ease of implementation. NYCDOT will work with communities to refine details of these projects this winter, in order to start implementing these projects later this year, along with benches, real time information signs, and other passenger-focused improvements. The identified corridors are:
  - Pelham Parkway, Fordham Road, and West 207<sup>th</sup> Street, Eastchester Road to Broadway
  - Pelham Bay Park Station Area
  - Washington Bridge and West 181<sup>st</sup> Street, University Avenue to Broadway
  - East 149<sup>th</sup> Street, River Avenue to Southern Boulevard
  - L. Grant Highway, Cross Bronx Expressway to East 167<sup>th</sup> Street
  - University Avenue, Kingsbridge Road to Cross Bronx Expressway
  - Tremont Avenue, Sedgwick Avenue to Boston Road
  - East 167<sup>th</sup> and East 168<sup>th</sup> streets, Jerome to Franklin avenues
  - Story Avenue, Bronx River Avenue to White Plains Road
  - East Gun Hill Road, Bainbridge to Bartow avenues
- **Transit signal priority (TSP) and digital travel information:** NYC Transit and NYCDOT will continue to explore opportunities to install TSP at intersections and real-time passenger information (RTPI) signage at stops. NYC Transit will install TSP software on the entire fleet by next year.

## BACKGROUND

Under the Fast Forward plan to improve bus service, NYC Transit is redesigning the bus networks in every borough of New York City, starting with the Staten Island Express Bus Redesign that was implemented in August 2018, resulting in faster bus speeds, better reliability, and hundreds more trips during each week. The Bronx is the first borough to undergo a concurrent redesign of both the local and express routes. The MTA used customer feedback, traffic data and analyses, on-the-ground information from employees, and collaboration with NYCDOT and NYPD to find ways to shorten bus travel times, increasing reliability and frequency for the largest number of customers. Redesigns of the Queens and Brooklyn local and express bus networks are also underway.

## NEXT STEPS

NYC Transit has conducted unprecedented public outreach, including hosting its first-ever virtual open house to provide information on the proposed final plan for any members of the public who were unable to attend an outreach event or community meeting in person. Additionally, NYC Transit also hosted two Fast Forward Community Conversations, six workshops, nine open houses and 13 on-street outreach events at key bus locations in the Bronx and Upper Manhattan, 11 presentations to community boards in the Bronx and Manhattan, 64 social media posts, and digital signage at 200 subway stations systemwide. After the public hearing on Feb. 20, the MTA will review the feedback and comments received prior to submitting the proposed final plan for a review and vote by the MTA Board to implement the redesign later this fall.

## LEARN MORE

All public reports and presentations generated during the redesign process are posted online on a dedicated project website, which includes information on the Bronx bus network redesign, route-by-route proposals, and a future trip planning tool with proposed changes and schedules. Learn about the redesign at [new.mta.info/bronxbusedesign](https://new.mta.info/bronxbusedesign).

