1. CASE#: 8735
2. PROPERTY NAME: MTA NYCT
3a. ACCIDENT TYPE: Collision
3b. Accident Severity Index: 0.30
4a. DATE: November 22, 2005
4b. TIME: 6:34 p.m.
5. ACCIDENT LOCATION: Hillside Avenue at 175th Street
6. TOWN/CITY/BOROUGH: Queens, NY
7. SUMMONS: No
8a. YEAR: 1996
8b. MAKE: Nova/RTS
9. BUS NUMBER: 9288
10. FATALITIES: 0
11. HOURS OF SERVICE: 11 hr 45 min in last 24 hrs/40 hrs 36 min in last 7 days
12. SYNOPSIS:

At approximately 6:34 p.m., MTA New York City Transit (NYCT) bus #9288 was traveling east in the right lane on Hillside Avenue and approaching the intersection with 175th Street when an auto, traveling in the same direction to the left of the bus, attempted to turn right, entering into the path of the bus. The bus driver braked heavily but could not avoid colliding with the right side of the auto with the left front corner of the bus. Six of the 55 bus passengers claimed various minor injuries from the collision and were transported to a local hospital where they were all treated and released. Both vehicles sustained slight damage from the collision.

In the vicinity of the accident scene Hillside is a two-way east/west roadway divided by a median into three travel lanes in each direction. Parking is not permitted at the eastbound curb. One hundred Seventy Fifth Street is a two-way north/south roadway divided by a double yellow solid barrier marking into one travel lane in each direction. One Hundred Seventy Fifth Street ends at and forms a "T" type intersection with Hillside Avenue. Parking is permitted at both curbs. The intersection is controlled by a standard overhead traffic signal which, at the time of the accident investigation, was functioning as designed. Both roadways are asphalt paved, straight, level and in good condition. At the time of the accident it was dusk, the weather was overcast and the pavement was wet. The area speed limit is 30 mph.

Bus #9288 is a 1996 Nova/RTS transit type bus housed and maintained at the Queens Village Depot with a seating capacity of 40 passengers. A review of the bus records showed that Preventive Maintenance Inspections are performed at regular 3,500 mile intervals (±500 miles), the most recent was completed on October 31, 2005 and the bus had traveled 1,683 miles since then. There were no safety or recurring defects noted in the 45 days prior to the accident. A post accident inspection of the bus on November 23, 2005 found, other than damage associated to the collision (scrapes and scuff marks in the paint on the left corner of the front bumper), no defects that could be considered a causative factor in the accident. Decelerometer tests were performed on the bus' braking systems and showed stopping distances that met the MTA NYCT adopted standards for passenger vehicles of NYS DOT Regulations (Title 17 of NYCRR, Article 3, Part 720).

The bus driver was hired by the MTA NYCT on November 20, 1986 and completed the New Bus Operator Training Program. A review of the driver's Department of Motor Vehicles records for the past three years showed no violations, convictions or suspensions. NYS Vehicle & Traffic Law, Article 19-A records were reviewed and found to be complete, in-order and up-to-date. A review of
the driver's NYCT accident record for the past three years showed three preventable collision accidents (12/09/02-reprimand, 11/17/04-warning, 12/13/04-1 day suspension). Post accident drug and alcohol tests were performed upon his release from the accident scene, approximately 3 hours and 34 minutes from the time of the accident, and were negative.

In an interview the bus driver indicated that he was traveling east on Hillside Avenue in the right lane and approaching the intersection with 175th Street when an auto, overtaking the bus in the lane immediately to the left of the bus, suddenly turned right, trying to enter 175th Street, into the path of the bus. The bus driver also indicated that his speed at that time was about 10-15 mph. The driver further said that he braked heavily but could not avoid the collision.

The auto driver indicated that he was traveling on Hillside Avenue and turned right onto 175th Street where the bus hit him.

The MTA NYCT trains all bus drivers in defensive driving techniques for safely approaching and traversing intersections, statistically one of the most hazardous points on a bus driver’s route. These techniques include, but are not limited to, scanning for and recognizing potential hazards and anticipating the careless or illegal actions of other drivers.

Public Transportation Safety Board staff finds that the probable cause of the accident was the action of the auto driver who turned right from the center travel lane into the path of the bus. Contributing to the accident was the failure of the bus driver to utilize his defensive driving training by failing to identify the hazard presented by the auto overtaking the bus.

The bus driver reported to the MTA NYCT Training Center where, after the facts concerning the accident were reviewed, the accident was rated preventable. The bus driver’s driving skills were also evaluated, he was re-trained and it was recommended that he be returned to passenger service. The MTA NYCT Department of Buses held a disciplinary hearing where the accident was rated preventable. On February 14, 2006 the bus driver was assessed, and accepted, a 10 day suspension.

Based on the action taken by the MTA New York City Transit regarding this accident, the Public Transportation Safety Board staff makes no recommendation in this case.

INVESTIGATOR: Harry W. Gerham

CHIEF, ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION SECTION

DIRECTOR, PCSB, NYSDOT

1/22/07

22/Jan/07