November 20, 2006

Mr. Laurence G. Reuter, President
MTA New York City Transit
2 Broadway
New York, NY 10004

RE: PTSB CASE #8777

Dear Mr. Reuter:

The Public Transportation Safety Board received notice of a multiple injury bus accident involving the MTA New York City Transit, which occurred on 6th Avenue at Spring Street, Manhattan, NY, on January 2, 2006.

Based on a review of the enclosed Abbreviated Report, no further action is necessary.

Sincerely,

John F. Guinan
Executive Director
Public Transportation Safety Board.

Enclosure
At approximately 11:05 a.m., MTA New York City Transit (NYCT) bus #2127 was traveling in the #3 travel lane, northbound on 6th Avenue to the rear of another NYCT bus (#2194). Bus #2194 suddenly applied the brakes and stopped due to being cut off by a taxi cab. Bus driver of bus #2127 applied the brakes, however, the front of his bus struck the rear of bus #2194. Eleven passengers from the following bus claimed various injuries. Five of them were transported to local hospitals, treated and released. The rest six passengers were treated and released at the scene. Bus #2127 sustained moderate damage with slight damage to bus #2194. The NYC Police responded to the accident and no summonses were issued.

In the vicinity of the accident site, Sixth Avenue is a 74 foot wide, one way road, accommodating four northbound travel lanes and two parking lanes. The roadway is straight, level and asphalt paved. Parking is permitted at the curbs. At the time of the accident it was daylight, the weather was clear and the pavement was dry. The posted area speed limit is 30 mph. The traffic at the intersection is controlled by four traffic signals.

Bus #2127 is a 1999 MCI coach type bus with a seating capacity of 53 passengers. A review of the bus records indicated that Preventive Maintenance Inspections (PMI) are performed at Yukon Depot at regular 6,000 mile intervals, and the most recent was completed on December 2, 2005. The bus had traveled 2,241 miles at the time of the accident. A post accident inspection of bus #2127 was conducted by the Public Transportation Safety Board (PTSB) staff in conjunction with NYCT staff on January 3, 2006 and no defects were found that would be considered causative factors in this accident. Decelerometer tests were performed on the 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 September 30, 1985 and he had completed the standard "New Bus Operator Training Program". A review of the driver’s Department of Motor Vehicles records showed no violations or suspensions. New York State Vehicle & Traffic Law, Article 19-A records were complete and up-to-date.
A review of the driver’s MTA NYCT record for the last three years revealed five non-preventable collision accidents. A post accident drug and alcohol test administered to the bus driver 4 hours and 40 minutes after the accident was negative. The delay in administering the alcohol test was due to the bus driver being detained for the purpose of investigation.

In an interview with the PTSB staff, the driver of bus #2127 indicated that he was driving the bus in the #3 travel lane northbound on 6th Avenue to the rear of bus #2194 with an approximate speed of 5 mph. He stated that the bus was approximately 10 feet behind when bus #2194 suddenly applied the brakes. The bus driver of the following bus applied the brakes, however, the front of bus #2127 struck the rear of bus #2194.

In an interview with the PTSB staff, the driver of bus #2194 indicated that he was traveling in the #3 travel lane northbound on 6th Avenue with an approximate speed of 15 mph, when a taxi moved from left to right, entering the path of bus. He applied the brakes and stopped the bus making no contact with the taxi. Then he felt an impact to the rear of his bus.

The investigation showed that according to the bus #2127 skid marks, the final rest positions of both buses, the statements of both bus drivers, and performed analysis, it is most likely that bus #2127 traveling with a minimum initial speed of 12 mph was following too closely to bus #2194.

The Public Transportation Safety Board staff finds that the most probable cause of this accident was the failure of the bus driver to adhere to his training by failing to establish and maintain a safe following distance behind the vehicle immediately in front of the bus.

The MTA NYCT reviewed the accident on January 6, 2006, and found it to be preventable. The bus driver was issued a ten day suspension, which he accepted. The bus driver was retrained, his performance was evaluated as satisfactory and he was returned to passenger service.

Based on the action taken by the MTA NYCT regarding this accident, the Public Transportation Safety Board staff makes no recommendations.

INVESTIGATOR: Mikhail Palanker

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CHIEF, ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION SECTION         DATE

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DIRECTOR, PCSB, NYS DOT               DATE