April 18, 2007

Mr. Howard Roberts Jr., President
MTA New York City Transit
2 Broadway
New York, NY 10004

RE: PTSB Case #8904

Dear Mr. Roberts:

The Public Transportation Safety Board received notice of a multiple injury bus accident involving the MTA New York City Transit, which occurred on East 180th Street between Bryant and Vyse Avenues, Bronx, NY, on April 10, 2006.

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

Sincerely,

Brian O. Rowback
Executive Director
Public Transportation Safety Board

Enclosure
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
ABBREVIATED BUS ACCIDENT REPORT

1. CASE#: 8904
2. PROPERTY NAME: MTA NYCT
3a. ACCIDENT TYPE: Angle Collision
3b. Accident Severity Index: 0.70
4a. DATE: April 10, 2006
4b. TIME: 9:05 a.m.
5. ACCIDENT LOCATION: E. 180th Street between Bryant and Vyse Avenues
6. TOWN/CITY/BOROUGH: Bronx, NY
7. SUMMONS: No
8. BUS NUMBER: 7725
8a. YEAR: 2004
8b. MAKE: Orion VII
9. NUMBER OF INJURIES: 5
10. FATALITIES: 0
11. HOURS OF SERVICE: 4 hr 19 min in last 24 hrs/48 hrs 12 min in last 7 days
12. SYNOPSIS:

At approximately 9:05 a.m., MTA New York City Transit (NYCT) bus #7725 was traveling east on E. 180th Street and approaching the intersection with Bryant Avenue when a van parked at the right curb abruptly, and without signaling, attempted a “U” turn in front of the bus. The bus driver braked and steered left but could not avoid colliding with the driver’s side of the van with the front of the bus. The bus driver, three of the 60 bus passengers and the van driver claimed various minor injuries and were transported to local hospitals where they were all treated and released. Both vehicles sustained extensive damage from the collision.

In the vicinity of the accident site, E. 180th Street is a 52 foot wide two-way east/west roadway divided by a solid double yellow barrier pavement marking into one travel lane in each direction. Parking is allowed at both curbs. The roadway is asphalt paved, with a slight downgrade in the direction of travel of the bus, and is in good condition. Bryant Avenue is a one-way south roadway that forms a “T” type intersection (controlled by a stop sign) with the northern side of E. 180th Street and played no part in the accident. At the time of the accident it was bright daylight, the weather was clear and the pavement was dry. The area speed limit is 30 mph.

Bus #7725 is a 2004 Orion VII compressed natural gas fueled low floor transit type bus housed and maintained at the West Farm Depot with a seating capacity of 38 passengers. A review of the bus records showed that Preventive Maintenance Inspections are performed at regular 3,000 mile intervals (±500 miles), the most recent was completed on March 29, 2006 and the bus had traveled 978 miles since then. A review of the bus records showed no safety or recurring defects in the 45 days prior to the accident. A post accident inspection of the bus on April 11, 2006 found no defects which could be considered a causative factor in the accident. Although the bus inspection showed extensive collision damage to the front of the bus it was deemed safe to perform decelerometer tests on the bus braking systems. The decelerometer tests 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 May 6, 2002 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 one preventable collision accident (07/22/04).
Post accident drug and alcohol tests performed on the bus driver upon his release from the hospital, 3 hours and 44 minutes from the time of the accident, were negative.

In an interview the bus driver indicated that he was traveling east on E. 180th Street and was nearing the intersection with Bryant Avenue when he observed exhaust coming from a van parked at the right curb, approximately 4-5 car lengths in front of the bus. The bus driver further indicated that he observed that the driver’s seat of the van was occupied so he sounded the horn to alert the van driver of his presence. The bus driver said that no sooner had he sounded the horn the van driver abruptly, without signaling, moved from the curb. Thinking that the van driver was going to continue straight the bus driver stated that he braked, but not heavily so as not to dump the bus passengers, and steered slightly to the left. The bus driver further stated that the van, instead of going straight, attempted a “U” turn and he was unable to avoid colliding with the van. The bus driver indicated that the speed of the bus when he first observed the van was approximately 10 mph.

Additional facts:
- Data collected from the accident scene showed that the collision occurred in the westbound travel lane of E. 180th Street. Additionally, the final rest position of the entire van and the front section of the bus was located in the westbound travel lane of E. 180th Street.
- Using data collected from the accident scene and accepted accident reconstruction formulas it was calculated that the minimum speed of the bus at the time of the collision was approximately 31 mph.
- The Electronic Control Module of the bus showed that the speed of the bus one second prior to braking was 32.5 mph.

The MTA NYCT, as part of their defensive driving training, trains all bus drivers to scan for potential hazards as they drive on their proscribed routes. Part of their training is to scan parked vehicles to look for indications (driver behind the wheel, exhaust vapors, etc) that the vehicle may move from the curb unexpectedly and to adjust the speed of the bus accordingly to be able to safely stop in case parked vehicles move from the curb into the path of the bus. In addition, standard defensive driver training for all types of vehicles recommends that a driver never cross the center of the roadway into opposing travel lanes due to the possibility of a much more serious head-on collision occurring.

Public Transportation Safety Board (PTSB) staff finds that the probable cause of this accident was shared equally by both the bus and van drivers. The bus driver by failing to adhere to his defensive driving training and by maintaining a speed such as to be able to react to the actions of other vehicles and the van driver by failing to signal his intentions prior to moving from the curb and by moving from the curb, attempting to perform a “U” turn, before it was safe to do so.

The bus driver reported to MTA NYCT Training Center where, after the facts surrounding the accident were reviewed, the accident was rated preventable. The bus driver’s driving skills were also evaluated, the driver was retrained and it was recommended that he be returned to customer service. On April 20 the MTA NYCT Department of Buses Depot management issued the bus driver a 10 day suspension, which was accepted by the bus driver.
Based on the action taken by the MTA New York City Transit regarding this driver, the Public Transportation Safety Board staff makes no recommendation in this case.

INVESTIGATOR: Harry W. Gerham

CHIEF, ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION SECTION

DATE

DIRECTOR, PCSB, NYSDOT

DATE