PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
ABBREVIATED BUS ACCIDENT REPORT

1. CASE: 8997
2. PROPERTY NAME: MTA NYCT
3a. ACCIDENT TYPE: Multiple Injury
3b. Accident Severity Index: 0.7
4a. DATE: June 24, 2006
4b. TIME: 2:53 pm
5. ACCIDENT LOCATION: 120th Avenue at 231st Street
6. TOWN/CITY/BOROUGH: Queens
7. SUMMONS: None
8. BUS NUMBER: 9266
8a. YEAR: 1996
8b. MAKE: RTS
9. NUMBER OF INJURIES: 5
10. FATALITIES: 0
11. HOURS OF SERVICE: 8 hrs and 34 min in last 24 hrs/50 hrs and 23 min in last 7 days
12. SYNOPSIS:

On June 24, 2006, at approximately 2:53 pm MTA New York City Transit (NYCT) bus #9266 traveling eastbound on 120th Avenue entered the intersection with 231st Street. At that time an auto moving from the bus driver’s left to right, failed to obey a stop sign and entered the same intersection. The front of the auto struck the left front of the bus. The bus was redirected to the right by the impact, mounted a sidewalk, struck a lamp post, and came to final rest against a house. One bus passenger, the bus driver, the auto driver and two occupants from the home claimed various injuries, were transported to local hospitals, treated and released. The bus, the auto and the house sustained extensive damage. NYC Police responded to the accident and no summonses were issued.

In the vicinity of the accident site, 120th Avenue is a 50 foot wide, two-way road divided by a full barrier yellow pavement marking, accommodating one eastbound and one westbound travel lane. The crossroad, 231st Street, is a 30 foot wide, two-way road with no pavement marking accommodating one northbound and one southbound travel lane. Both roadways are straight, level and asphalt paved. Parking is permitted at the curbs. At the time of the accident it was daylight, the weather was rainy and the pavement was wet and slippery. The posted area speed limit is 30 mph. There are no traffic controls on 120th Avenue, however, the traffic on 231st Street is controlled by stop signs for both directions.

Bus #9266 is a 1996 RTS transit type bus with a seating capacity of 40 passengers. A review of the bus records indicated that Preventive Maintenance Inspections (PMI) are performed at Jamaica Depot at regular 3,500 mile intervals, with the most recent completed on May 18, 2006. The bus had traveled 2,062 miles at the time of the accident. A post accident inspection of bus #9266 was conducted by the Public Transportation Safety Board (PTSB) staff in conjunction with NYCT personnel on June 27, 2006. No defects were found that would be considered as causative factors in this accident. The decelerometer test were not performed on the braking systems due to the extensive structural damage to the bus.

The bus driver was hired by the MTA NYCT on August 5, 1996, and completed the standard “New Bus Operator Training Program”. A review of the bus 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 revealed no collision accidents for the last three years. A post accident drug and alcohol test administered to the bus driver 6 hours and 53 minutes after the accident was negative. The delay in administering the drug and alcohol test was due to the bus driver being transported to a local hospital and treated.

In an interview with the PTSB staff the bus driver indicated that he was driving the bus eastbound on 120th Avenue, approaching the intersection with 231st Street at an approximate rate of speed of 5-10 mph, covering the brake pedal with his foot, when an auto moving at a high speed ran a stop sign and entered the intersection. The front of the auto struck the left front side of the bus. The bus driver stated that he does not remember if and when he applied the brakes, however, the impact redirected the bus into the house.

The NYPD report indicates that bus passengers aboard concurred with the bus driver’s statement.

The investigation showed that according to the location of debris from the impact, the final rest positions of the bus and the auto, the bus driver’s statement and the data from the bus’s Electronic Control Module (ECM) the bus was approaching the intersection with a speed of 40 mph. The auto traveling from the bus driver’s left to right failed to stop for a stop sign and yield the right of way to the bus. The front of the auto struck the left front of the bus causing the bus to mount a curb, strike a light pole and come to final rest against the house.

The Public Transportation Safety Board staff finds that the most probable cause of the accident was the failure of the auto driver to stop his auto for the stop sign and yield the right of way to the bus.

Contributing to the accident was the bus driver who drove the bus above the speed limit and failed to utilize his training in defensive driving techniques while driving through an intersection.

The MTA NYCT reviewed the accident on September 11, 2006, and found it to be preventable. The bus driver was issued a dismissal which was modified to a 30 day suspension to be served as a suspension for 10 days while working full time without pay upon his return to work. The bus driver was retrained, his performance was evaluated as satisfactory and he was returned to passenger service.

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

INVESTIGATOR: M. Palanker

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CHIEF, ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION SECTION  DATE

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DIRECTOR, PCSB, NYSDOT  DATE