At approximately 3:17pm, Rochester-Genesee Regional Transportation Authority (RGRTA) bus #706 was traveling eastbound on Lexington Ave in the curb lane approaching the intersection of Mt. Read Blvd. The bus operator stopped for a red traffic light. (The traffic light cycled several times for the cross traffic and didn’t turn green for the bus). The bus operator decided to proceed through the red traffic light and was struck on the right side of the bus by an auto traveling northbound (1993 red Chevrolet). The bus operator secured the bus, checked on the passengers, and called radio control for assistance. The bus operator, 8 passengers, and the driver of the auto claimed injuries and were transported to various area hospitals treated and released. The Rochester PD, FD and an RGRTA supervisor responded to the scene. The bus operator received one uniform traffic ticket under V&TL 1111(d)(1) (Passed red light).

In the vicinity of the accident site, Lexington Ave. is a slightly inclined roadway with four lanes of travel (two eastbound and two westbound) divided by a raised median. This is a moderate to heavily traveled roadway, asphalt paved, with residential homes and business on both north and south sides. At the time of the accident it was daylight, raining and the pavement was wet. The posted area speed limit is 30 mph.

Bus #706 is a Gillig forty-foot transit type bus with a seating capacity for thirty-eight passengers. A review of the bus records showed that Preventive Maintenance Inspections are performed at regular 6,000 mile intervals or 90 days in accordance with the RGRTA System Safety Program Plan and the manufacturer’s recommended service intervals. The most recent (PMI) was completed on July 28, 2006 and the bus had traveled 5,625 miles at the time of the accident. There were no safety or recurring defects noted in the 45 days prior to the accident. A post accident inspection was performed on October 2, 2006 and no defects were found which could be considered a causative factor in the accident. Decelerometer tests were performed on the braking systems and showed stopping distances that met the RGRTA adopted standards for passenger vehicles of NYS DOT Regulations (Title 17 of NYCRR, Article 3, Part 720).
The bus operator was hired on July 21, 2003 after completing the standard new bus operator training program. A review of the bus operator's Department of Motor Vehicle records for the last three years showed no suspensions or violations. New York State Vehicle & Traffic Law, Article 19-A records were found in-order and up-to-date. A review of the operator’s RGRTA record for the past three years revealed one preventable accident (8/14/2006-reprimand) and one non-preventable (6/19/2006-bus fire). Post accident drug and alcohol test was administered to the bus operator 1 hour and 35 minutes after the accident the results were negative.

In an interview with the PTSB staff the bus operator stated he was traveling eastbound on Lexington Ave approaching the intersection of Mt Read Blvd when the traffic light turned red. The bus operator stated he was standing at the red light for approximately 10 minutes and the light did not cycle to green. The bus operator said he decided to go through the red traffic light at approximately 10 mph when a auto (1993 red Chevrolet) struck the right side of the bus. Then operator stated that he secured the bus, checked on the passengers and determined that there were no serious injuries. The bus operator stated going through the intersection was a bad decision on his part.

The Public Transportation Safety Board staff finds that the most probable cause of the bus accident was the failure of the bus operator to adhere to defensive driving skills and his training.

RGRTA reviewed the accident on October 3, 2006 and found the collision to be preventable. On October 10, 2006 the bus operator was terminated.

Based on the actions taken by RGRTA in this case, the Public Transportation Safety Board staff makes no further recommendations.

INVESTIGATOR: M. F. Gluskin

CHIEF, ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION SECTION

DIRECTOR, PCSB, NYS DOT