PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
ABBREVIATED BUS ACCIDENT REPORT

1. CASE#: 9478
2. PROPERTY NAME: MTA NYCT
3a. ACCIDENT TYPE: Angle Collision
3b. Accident Severity Index: 0.30
4a. DATE: May 19, 2007
4b. TIME: 2:00 p.m.
5. ACCIDENT LOCATION: St. Johns Place at Franklin Avenue
6. TOWN/CITY/BOROUGH: Brooklyn, NY
7. SUMMONS: No
8. BUS NUMBER: 8671
8a. YEAR: 1994
8b. MAKE: TMC/RTS-06
9. NUMBER OF INJURIES: 6
10. FATALITIES: 0
11. HOURS OF SERVICE: 3 hr 51 min in last 24 hrs/40 hrs 27 min in last 7 days
12. SYNOPSIS:
At approximately 2:00 p.m., MTA New York City Transit (NYCT) bus #8671 was exiting the area of the near side bus stop on St. Johns Place at the intersection with Franklin Avenue when a van, traveling in the same direction to the left of the bus, passed the moving bus, turned right and entered the path of the bus. The bus driver braked heavily but could not avoid colliding with the right rear (passenger) side of the van with the left front corner/bumper of the bus. As a result of the short stop/collision six of the 60 bus passengers claimed various minor injuries. Five of the injured bus passengers were transported to a local hospital where they were all released following treatment. The remaining injured bus passenger was treated at the scene and left the scene unassisted. Both vehicles sustained slight damage from the collision.

In the vicinity of the accident site St. Johns Place is a 34 foot wide one-way eastbound roadway divided by dashed white pavement markings into two travel lanes. Franklin Avenue is a 34 foot wide one-way single lane southbound roadway. Parking is allowed at both curbs of each roadway. The roadways are both asphalt paved, straight, level and in good condition. The intersection is controlled with standard traffic and pedestrian signals which, at the time of the accident investigation, were all functioning as designed. At the time of the accident it was daylight, the weather was clear and the pavement was dry. The area speed limit is 30 mph.

Bus #8671 is a 1994 TMC/RTS-06 transit type bus housed and maintained at the East New York Depot with a seating capacity of 40 passengers. A review of the bus records showed that Preventive Maintenance Inspections are performed at regular 4,000 mile intervals, the most recent was completed on July 17, 2007 and the bus had traveled 2,320 miles since then. There were no safety or recurring defects noted in the 45 days prior to the accident. Physical inspection of the bus on August 30, 2007 found no defects that could be considered a causative factor in the accident. The inspection showed minor collision damage to the left front bumper/corner of the bus. 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 February 28, 2000 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 or convictions. 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 no collision accidents. Post accident drug and alcohol tests performed on the bus driver upon his release from the accident scene, 3 hours and 40 minutes from the time of the accident, were negative.

In an interview the bus driver indicated that after servicing the near side bus stop on St. Johns place, from the right travel lane due to the bus stop being blocked, he proceeded to move forward toward the intersection with Franklin Avenue as the traffic signal was green. The driver indicated that as he was about to enter the intersection a van, traveling in the same direction to the left of the bus, abruptly turned right into the path of his bus. The bus driver stated that although he heavily applied the bus brakes he could not avoid colliding with the right rear of the van with the left front of the bus. The bus driver further indicated that he did not observe the van until it appeared in front of the bus.

The Public Transportation Safety Board (PTSB) staff by using data collected at the scene (rear wheel skid marks) and accepted accident reconstruction formulas calculated that the speed of the bus at the time of the accident was approximately 6 mph.

The MTA NYCT recognizes that exiting near side bus stops present a hazard because of their close proximity to the intersection. The main hazard is vehicles moving to the left of the bus often try to pass the bus as it begins to move from the bus stop and attempt to turn right across the path of the bus. Due to this fact the MTA NYCT attempts to avoid near side bus stops whenever possible and places particular emphasis in their training of bus drivers on techniques to safely service and depart these bus stops including, but not limited to, heavy use of the left side travel mirror (leaning into the mirror to get a bigger picture of traffic to the left of the bus) and anticipating the unsafe/illegal actions of other drivers. In this accident, by his own admission, the bus driver failed to adhere to his training by failing to observe the van prior to its driver turning into the path of his bus.

The PTSB staff finds that the probable cause of this accident was the van driver who turned right into the path of the bus from the left travel lane. Contributing to the accident was the failure of the bus driver to adhere to his training regarding servicing/exiting near side bus stops.

MTA NYCT Department of Buses, after reviewing the facts concerning the accident found the accident to be preventable. Due to this being the bus driver’s first non-major preventable accident no discipline was accessed to the bus driver. The bus driver’s driving skills were evaluated; the driver was retrained and returned to passenger service. In addition, the bus driver attended a Performance and Evaluation class on September 18, 2007

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