On April 24, 2008, at approximately 5:25 pm, MTA Long Island Bus (MTA LIB) bus #456 traveling northbound on Greenwich Street was approaching the intersection with Jerusalem Avenue when the traffic signal turned red. Auto #1 moving in the same direction in front of the bus stopped for the red traffic signal. The bus driver stated that he was blinded by sun glare and failed to stop for the red traffic signal. Subsequently, the front of the bus struck the rear of auto #1. The impact pushed auto #1 into the intersection hitting auto #2 that was moving through the intersection. The drivers of auto #1 and auto #2, and five bus passengers claimed various injuries, were transported to local hospitals, treated and released. Nassau County Police responded to the accident and no summonses were issued. Bus #456 sustained slight damage with moderate damage to the autos.

In the vicinity of the accident site, Greenwich Street is a 44 foot wide, two-way road divided by a full barrier yellow pavement marking, accommodating two northbound and two southbound travel lanes. Jerusalem Avenue is a 58 foot wide, two-way road divided by a full barrier yellow pavement marking, accommodating two eastbound and two westbound travel lanes. Both roadways are straight, level and asphalt paved. Parking is permitted at the curbs. At the time of the accident it was daylight and the weather was dry and clear. The posted area speed limit is 35 mph. The traffic at the intersection is controlled by six traffic signals.

Bus #456 is a 2004 Orion CNG transit type bus with a seating capacity of 44 passengers. A review of the bus records indicated that Preventive Maintenance Inspections (PMI) at MTA LIB are performed at 6,000 mile intervals. The most recent was completed on April 1, 2008. The bus had traveled 2,146 miles at the time of the accident. There were no safety or recurring defects noted in the 45days prior to the accident. A post accident inspection of bus #456 was conducted by the Public Transportation Safety Board (PTSB) staff in conjunction with MTA LIB staff on April 25, 2008 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 LIB adopted standards for passenger vehicles of NYS DOT Regulations (Title 17 of NYCRR, Article 3, Part 720).

The bus driver was hired by MTA LIB on July 6, 1982, and completed the company’s new bus operator training program. A review of the bus driver’s NYS 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 LIB record revealed two preventable collision accidents, the first one on 06/28/05, resulting in a 3 day suspension, the second one on 01/28/08, resulting in a written warning (collision), and two non-preventable collision accidents within the last three years. A post accident drug and alcohol test administered to the bus driver 1 hour and 15 minutes after the accident was negative.

In an interview with the PTSB staff the bus driver indicated that he was traveling northbound on Greenwich Street when his vision became obstructed by a sun glare. At that time auto #1 traveling in the same direction to the front of bus stopped for a red traffic signal.

The investigation showed that according to the final rest of the vehicles involved in the collision, the location of debris from the impact, the bus driver’s and the other two drivers’ statements, it is most likely that the bus driver failed to identify vehicle #1 as a potential hazard and struck vehicle #1 in the rear bumper, pushing it into the intersection. At that time auto #2 traveling through the intersection on a green traffic signal was broadsided by auto #1.

The Public Transportation Safety Board staff finds that the most probable cause of the accident was the bus driver, who failed to maintain control of the bus and provide a proper following distance.

The MTA LIB reviewed the accident on April 29, 2008, and found it to be preventable. The bus driver was issued a 5 day suspension. The bus driver was retrained and returned to passenger service.

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

INVESTIGATOR: Mikhail Palanker