1. CASE#: 9992
2. PROPERTY NAME: MTA LIB
3a. ACCIDENT TYPE: Hit other in rear
3b. Accident Severity Index: 0.35
4a. DATE: November 11, 2008
4b. TIME: 9:20 a.m.
5. ACCIDENT LOCATION: Jericho Turnpike at Barwick Boulevard
6. TOWN/CITY/BOROUGH: Mineola, NY
7. SUMMONS: No
8. BUS NUMBER: 394
8a. YEAR: 2002
8b. MAKE: Orion V CNG
9. NUMBER OF INJURIES: 7
10. FATALITIES: 0
11. HOURS OF SERVICE: 5 hr 19 min in last 24 hrs/47 hrs 19 min in last 7 days
12. SYNOPSIS:
   At approximately 9:20 a.m., MTA Long Island Bus (LIB) bus #394 was traveling in the right travel lane eastbound on Jericho Turnpike when, after traversing the intersection with Barwick Boulevard, the bus driver, in the process of steering around a flatbed trailer parked at the curb, collided with the left rear of the trailer with the right front of the bus. The bus driver and six of the 10 bus passengers claimed various non-life threatening injuries and were transported to a local hospital where they were all released following treatment (three additional bus passengers did claim injury but refused treatment and left the scene unassisted). The bus sustained extensive and the trailer moderate damage from the collision.

   In the vicinity of the accident site Jericho Turnpike is a two-way east/west roadway divided into two travel lanes and a dedicated left turn lane in each direction. Metered parking is permitted at the curbs. Barwick Boulevard is a two-way north/south roadway that forms an offset type intersection with Jericho Turnpike. Parking is not permitted near the intersection. Both roadways are asphalt paved, straight and in good condition. The intersection is controlled by 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 roadway was dry. The area speed limit is 40 mph.

   Bus #394 is a 2002 Orion V compressed natural gas fueled transit type bus housed and maintained at the Mitchell Field Depot with a seating capacity of 45 passengers. A review of the bus records showed that Preventive Maintenance Inspections are performed at regular 6,000 mile intervals, the most recent was completed on October 22, 2008 and the bus had traveled 5,640 miles since then. There were no safety or recurring defects noted in the 45 days prior to the accident. Inspection of the bus on October 12, 2008 showed extensive collision damage to the right front section of the bus. However, inspection of the bus and static inspection of the bus braking systems found no defects that could be considered a factor in the accident. Due to the damage sustained in the collision, decelerometer tests could not be performed on the bus braking systems.
The bus driver was hired by MTA LIB on July 15, 1996 and successfully completed the LIB training program. A review of the driver’s NYS Department of Motor Vehicles record for the past three years showed no convictions but did show a Personal Injury Accident (transit bus) on 04/21/06. 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 LIB accident record for the past three years showed one non-preventable accident (03/31/08) and one preventable pedestrian knockdown accident (04/21/06-8 hours of classroom and behind the wheel retraining). Post accident drug and alcohol tests performed on the bus driver upon his release from the hospital, approximately 3 hours and 45 minutes from the time of the accident, were negative.

In an interview with the PTSB staff the bus driver indicated that just prior to the accident he was traveling east, at or below the posted 40 mph speed limit, in the right lane on Jericho Turnpike. The driver said that as he entered and began to travel through the intersection with Barwick Boulevard he observed a truck with a flatbed trailer parked at the curb on the other side of the intersection. The driver said that he slowed and moved to the left to pass by the trailer but said that he misjudged the clearance between the bus and the trailer and, subsequently, the right front of the bus collided with the left corner of the trailer. When questioned by the PTSB staff as to if any defect in the bus steering or brakes caused or contributed to the accident, the bus driver indicated that there was no problem with the bus – he just made a mistake and caused the accident.

The MTA LIB trains all bus drivers in techniques in safely traversing intersections. These techniques include, but are not limited to, reducing the speed of the bus, keeping the brake covered, scanning for potential hazards and always leaving time and room to maneuver and/or safely stop the bus.

The Public Transportation Safety Board staff finds that most probable cause of this accident was the failure of the bus driver to adhere to his training and provide proper clearance to pass the tractor/trailer.

The MTA Long Island Bus safety section reviewed the facts concerning this accident and rated it to be preventable on the part of the bus driver. The bus driver was assessed, accepted and served, a five day suspension. After serving the suspension the driver received two days of classroom and behind the wheel retraining after which it was recommended that he be returned to passenger service.

Based on the action taken by the MTA Long Island Bus 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