



New York City Transit

January 9, 2017

Honorable Rebecca Seawright
New York State Assembly
1365 1st Avenue
New York, NY 10017

Re: Establish M15 SBS Stop at 72nd Street

Dear Assembly Member Seawright:

This is in response to your letter dated October 5, 2016 requesting that New York City Transit (NYCT) establish an M15 Select Bus Service (SBS) bus stop at 72nd Street. Your letter makes reference to a number of factors that you believe warrant siting an M15 SBS stop at 72nd Street, such as “infrequent local service, community support and the opening of the Second Avenue Subway.”

As you are aware, with the implementation of the M15 SBS, previous M15 LTD stops were eliminated at St Mark’s Place and East 72nd Street north of Houston Street. Several stops south of Houston Street were also eliminated. This was to follow the bus stop spacing policy of locating stops approximately every half-mile (or 10 Manhattan blocks). SBS utilizes subway-like spacing where intermediate stops can be reached by the local bus service. An SBS stop at 72nd Street would be only 5 blocks (or ¼ mile) from the closest stop at 67th Street. While there are some places with closer SBS stop spacing, when we have that situation it is to accommodate major destinations and/or very high customer demand.

Existing ridership at 72nd Street does not show a strong demand for M15 SBS service. Typical SBS stops are high activity stops, with total boarding and alighting generally averaging well over 1,000 weekday riders per day. Currently we estimate that the 72nd Street M15 local stop sees less than a third of typical SBS boarding and alighting activity, lower not just than typical SBS stops but also lower than other nearby local stops.

While the Second Avenue Subway will indeed introduce new ridership patterns along 1st and 2nd Avenues, we do not believe that it will create considerable demand for a M15 SBS at 72nd Street. With the M15 Local currently stopping at 72nd Street, continued analysis of SBS bus stop spacing on 1st and 2nd Avenues show that even when 2nd Avenue construction is complete, placement of an SBS stop at 72nd Street is not warranted by ridership. It remains our position that adding an SBS stop at 72nd Street will slow trips for all passengers riding through this segment of the M15 SBS route.

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The M15 local will continue to serve customers at 72nd Street. At the M15 SBS stops north of 72nd Street (96th and 86th Streets), a southbound customer will have a choice of boarding either the SBS or the subway, or transferring between the two. An SBS stop at 72nd Street would offer no additional transfers to or from the subway. Customers would have little to gain from transferring from the subway to the SBS at 72nd Street, or vice versa.

We will be monitoring ridership patterns closely after the new subway line begins service, and will observe if a significant number of people transfer between the M15 local and the subway at 72nd Street.

Regarding the frequency of the M15 local service compared to M15 SBS, scheduled SBS service is more frequent than M15 local service because NYC Transit buses are scheduled in accordance with MTA Board guidelines, and are based on passenger demand. Currently, M15 SBS service has significantly more ridership than the M15 local.

Your letter went on to cite an example of someone at 73rd St and York Avenue having over a half mile walk to get to the M15 SBS. However, from that location residents are already served by the M31 for north-south service, and by the M72 for east-west service to connect to multiple other bus routes, including the M15 local. Unlike many locations in the city without immediate access to bus service, York Avenue around 73rd Street has more than one bus route immediately available. From that location one can use the M31 to travel north-south, or ride the M72 to connect to other north-south routes. Lastly, we will continue to monitor service on M15 local bus operations and schedule adjustments will be made as necessary.

If you have further questions regarding this issue, please have a member of your staff contact Marcus Book, Assistant Director of Government and Community Relations, at (646) 252-2675.

Sincerely,



Veronique Hakim
President

cc: Darryl C. Irick
Peter Cafiero
Robert Marino