



October 22, 2019

Re: M35 in East Harlem/Uptown Grand Central

Dear Carey King:

I am writing to follow-up on our last meeting and your recent letter regarding the M35 bus route, and in particular, the 125th St. and Lexington stop.

During this meeting, we discussed accessibility concerns about this stop as well as congestion issues near the stop. In follow-up discussions, we have also heard the concern about frequency of service on the M35. As mentioned in our meeting, under NYC Transit President Byford's Fast Forward plan, improving bus service is a top priority. The first borough-wide network redesign, of the Staten Island Express Bus network, was implemented in August 2018 and has shown noticeable improvements in bus speeds, reliability, and customer satisfaction. Community engagement is a critical component of the network redesign processes, two of which are currently underway in the Bronx and Queens. For more information about the bus redesigns and how to get involved, please visit: https://new.mta.info/system_modernization/Bus_Network.

During the network redesigns, NYC Transit seeks input from customers on key decision criteria such as:

1. Coverage vs. Frequency: Bus service can be spread out on more routes with lower frequency or concentrated with higher frequency on core routes.
2. Simple, Direct Routes vs. Complex, Indirect Routes: Simple Routes may involve longer walks, but shorter wait times and faster trips, while Complex Routes may involve a shorter walk, but longer waits and slower trips.
3. More Stops vs. Fewer Stops: With more stops, customers face shorter walks, but longer bus rides and less reliable service, while with fewer stops customers may have slightly longer walks, but shorter bus rides and more reliable service.

These decision criteria will apply when we begin the redesign of the Manhattan bus network. Currently, the M35 is scheduled to run every 10 to 12 minutes during weekdays and every 20-25 minutes on nights and weekends. This service frequency is based on our regular evaluation of ridership numbers throughout the year. If there are specific times throughout the day that you feel require more service to serve local employers, please let us know and our Operations Planning team will take a closer look. We regularly consider service changes based on customer feedback, traffic data and analyses, on-the-ground information from employees, and coordination

with NYCDOT and NYPD as we look to shorten bus travel times, and increase reliability and frequency for the largest number of customers.

We have considered your request to move the stop on Lexington Avenue at East 125th Street, which has been at its present location for more than 40 years, and serves as a key intermodal transfer point for those traveling to and from Randall's Island. After evaluating the current location and all nearby alternatives, the current location remains optimal for both customers and bus operations. At every bus to subway transfer location, it is always our goal to place bus stops as close to the subway as possible. The current location meets this criterion, as the stop is immediately adjacent to a subway station entrance and across the street from elevator access to the station.

Furthermore, NYC Transit's department of Operations Planning reviewed the following alternative bus stop locations:

- 126th Street between 3rd Avenue and Lexington Avenue
- Lexington Avenue between 126th Street and 125th Street (north side of the block)
- Lexington Avenue between 125th Street and 124th Street

Relocation to any of these locations is not operationally feasible or optimal for customers. These locations each present operational and safety concerns for buses, motorists, and pedestrians. Furthermore, some of these stops do not provide a direct connection to cross-town buses or the subway. Our Operations Planning team also evaluated the option of discontinuing the stop on entirely. It was determined that this would be a disservice to many of our customers with disabilities, who use this stop as a key transfer point to the subway.

While we remain open to new ideas, NYC Transit does not recommend that the M35 route or the current bus stop at the northwest corner of 125th Street and Lexington Avenue be changed at this time. Should you have any further questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best Regards,



Alex Elegudin
Senior Advisor, Systemwide Accessibility

CC:

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