

Woodhaven Boulevard Select Bus Service
New York City, New York
Small Starts Project Development
(Rating Assigned November 2019)

Summary Description	
Proposed Project:	Bus Rapid Transit 6.1 Miles, 11 Stations
Total Capital Cost (\$YOE):	\$258.84 Million
Section 5309 CIG Share (\$YOE):	\$97.17 Million (37.5%)
Annual Operating Cost (opening year 2029):	\$28.16 Million
Existing Corridor Ridership (Warranted):	30,600 Daily Linked Trips
Overall Project Rating:	Medium-High
Project Justification Rating:	Medium
Local Financial Commitment Rating:	High

Project Description: The New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT) proposes to implement bus rapid transit (called Select Bus Service or SBS locally) in the Woodhaven Boulevard corridor. The project includes dedicated lanes over much of the alignment, enhanced stations with passenger amenities, and roadway improvements for improved pedestrian and roadway user safety. The service is planned to operate in mixed traffic at the northern and southern ends of the alignment where streets are narrow. Service is to be provided with SBS-branded low-floor buses 24 hours a day, seven days a week, every five minutes during peak periods and every seven to 12 minutes during off-peak periods and weekends.

Project Purpose: NYCDOT believes that the project will provide faster, more reliable service in the corridor, while improving motorist and pedestrian safety. The project is intended to provide better connections to and between commuter rail, subway, long distance and local bus services in Queens, some of which serve John F. Kennedy International Airport.

Project Development History, Status and Next Steps: NYCDOT chose SBS as the locally preferred alternative in June 2010. It was subsequently included in the region's fiscally constrained long range transportation plan in September 2013. The project entered Small Starts Project Development in March 2015. NYCDOT completed the environmental review process with receipt of a Categorical Exclusion from FTA in July 2015. NYCDOT anticipates receipt of a Small Starts Grant Agreement in spring 2023, and the start of revenue service in 2029.

Significant Changes Since Last Evaluation (November 2018): The capital cost estimate increased from \$231.91 million to \$258.84 million due to increases in site-work, systems, professional services, and extension of the construction schedule from 2028 to 2029. The CIG funding request increased slightly from \$97.08 million to \$97.17 million, however, due to the overall cost increase, the CIG share decreased from 41.9 percent to 37.5 percent.

Locally Proposed Financial Plan

<u>Source of Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds (\$million)</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Federal: Section 5309 Small Starts	\$97.17	37.5%
State: New York State Department of Transportation State Omnibus and Transit Purpose Tax Revenues	\$33.30	12.9%
Local: NYCDOT General Obligation Bonds and Local Tax Revenues	\$128.37	49.6%
Total:	\$258.84	100.0%

NOTE: The financial plan reflected in this table has been developed by the project sponsor and does not reflect a commitment by DOT or FTA. The sum of the figures may differ from the total as listed due to rounding.

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LAND USE RATING: Medium

The land use rating reflects population density within one-half mile of proposed stations, employment served by the line, and the share of legally binding affordability restricted (LBAR) housing in the station areas compared to the share in the surrounding county.

- Average population density across all station areas is 25,100 persons per square mile, corresponding to a High rating by FTA benchmarks. A total of 41,800 jobs are served by the project, which rates Medium-Low. The median cost per day for parking in the nearest major commercial concentration to the project is \$16, rating Medium-High. The proportion of LBAR housing in the project corridor compared to the proportion in the county through which the project travels is 0.04, corresponding to a Low rating. However, the rating for this subfactor increases to a Medium-Low because over five percent of housing units in the county through which the project travels are LBAR.
- The project corridor is well-established and developed. In the north end, streets are narrow and there is a high concentration of retail activity. The remainder follows a very wide street with varied surrounding land use patterns including medium and high density residential, retail, and recreation.
- The corridor includes a full complement of pedestrian facilities including sidewalks, ADA accessible curb ramps, and pedestrian crossing signals. On-street parking is widely available in the corridor.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RATING: Medium-Low

Transit-Supportive Plans and Policies: Medium

- *Transit-Supportive Corridor Policies:* New York City's sustainability plan, OneNYC, encourages vibrant mixed-use communities that align public transit, housing, and jobs while offering residents access to essential retail and services. The NYC Street Design Manual includes guidelines and design treatments to improve safety, mobility and accessibility for all users. The City recently funded a number of road safety projects in the corridor.
- *Supportive Zoning Regulations Near Transit Stations:* Zoning in the corridor generally permits moderate to high residential densities according to FTA's benchmarks. Overlay districts in place along much of the project's street frontage allow commercial uses, some at high densities, in addition to residential uses. Parking requirements are low. Two recent rezonings in small portions of the corridor increased density, limited setbacks, and waived parking requirements for small uses.
- *Tools to Implement Land Use Policies:* The two recent rezonings in the corridor were undertaken through a community input process. Under New York City's comprehensive environmental quality review for new development, dense and transit-rich areas have a higher threshold before requiring transportation analysis, which can remove a barrier to development in these areas.

Performance and Impacts of Policies: Medium-Low

- *Performance of Land Use Policies:* A street-fronting one/two story bank was the only recent development noted in the corridor. Three nearby redevelopment projects suggest that new infill development in the area is following historical patterns of transit-friendly design principles.
- *Potential Impact of Transit Investment on Regional Land Use:* Most of the corridor has been built out. However, some vacant parcels in some of the station areas may be suitable for infill development. The two rezonings are expected to accommodate approximately 500 new residential units. Information was not provided regarding the economic health or market potential for development in the corridor.

Tools to Maintain or Increase Share of Affordable Housing: Medium-Low

- The mayor's housing plan calls for the construction and preservation of over 200,000 affordable units throughout New York City over the next decade, and over 50,000 units have been realized in the first two years of this plan. In 2016, the City adopted zoning amendments to make it easier to develop affordable and senior housing by allowing additional height and eliminating parking requirements. The City is implementing inclusionary housing requirements when rezonings occur, as well as pursuing additional funding and financing tools to support affordable housing development.

- No examples of recent affordable or mixed-income development in station areas were provided.

Project Map

Woodhaven Boulevard Select Bus Service Queens, NY

