

Making Bus Priority Work: Lessons Learned from New York City *(and maybe a few other places)*

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Who I Am

- Founding Director of Transit Development, NYCDOT
 - Startup of first two Select Bus Service (SBS) BRT routes
 - Multiple bus priority improvements
- Startup of two successful shuttle bus services
 - EZRide – Cambridge, MA
 - Philadelphia Navy Yard – Philadelphia, PA
- Currently manage Parsons Brinckerhoff's New England Planning/Environmental/Traffic group
- Managing bus priority projects in NJ and MA

Who I'm Not

- An expert in DC transit operations
- An expert in DC politics
- Here to tell you what to do in DC

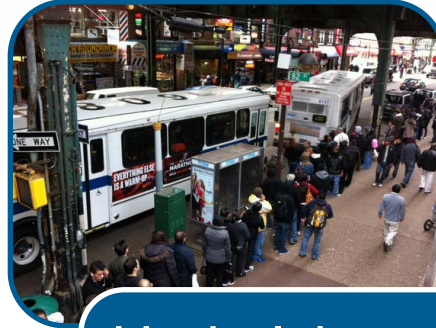


Common Problems on High Frequency Routes



Symptoms

- Bunched Buses
- Unreliable Service
- Slow Service
- Pass bys



Underlying Problems

- Excessive dwell times
- Buses stopped at signals
- Buses stuck in traffic
- Not enough service/recovery time



Solutions

- Flow from clearly identified problems
- Not based on a checklist

What I Did on My Spring Vacation



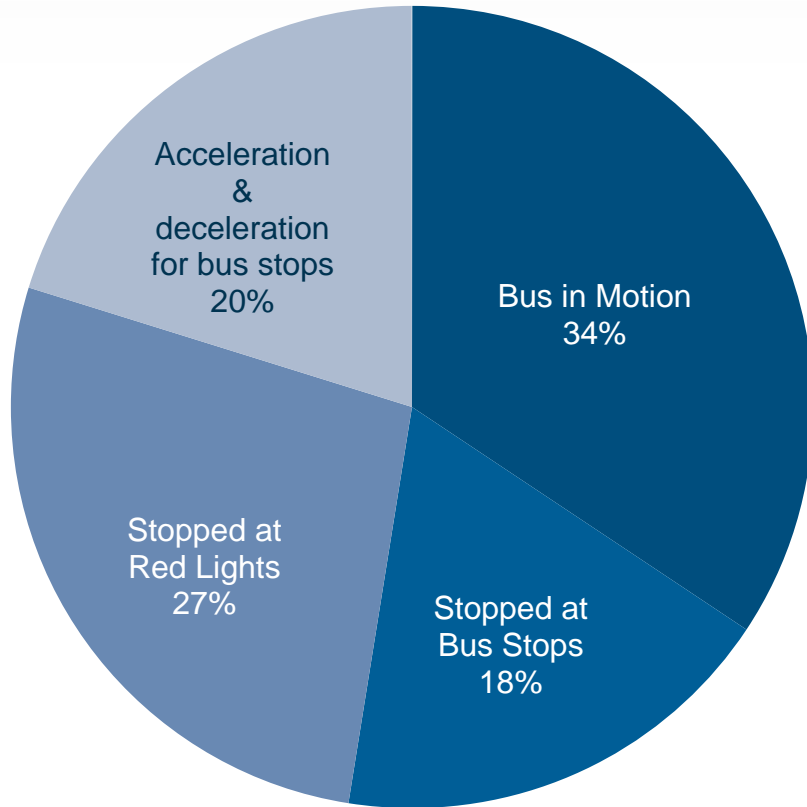
London



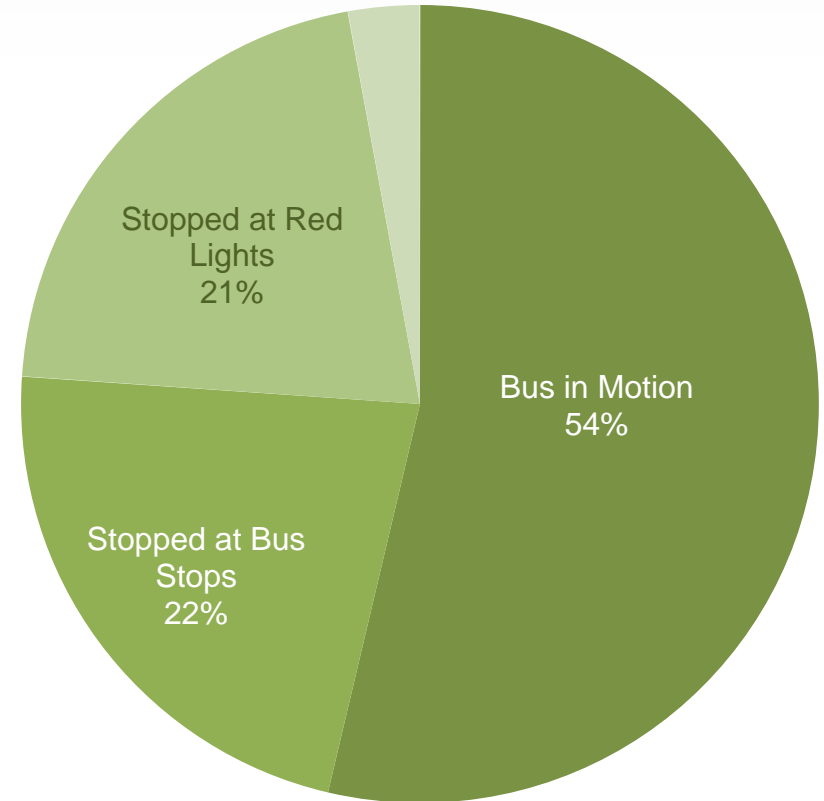
Barcelona

- Widespread and highly used bus priority
- Coordination with other modes

Diagnose the problem



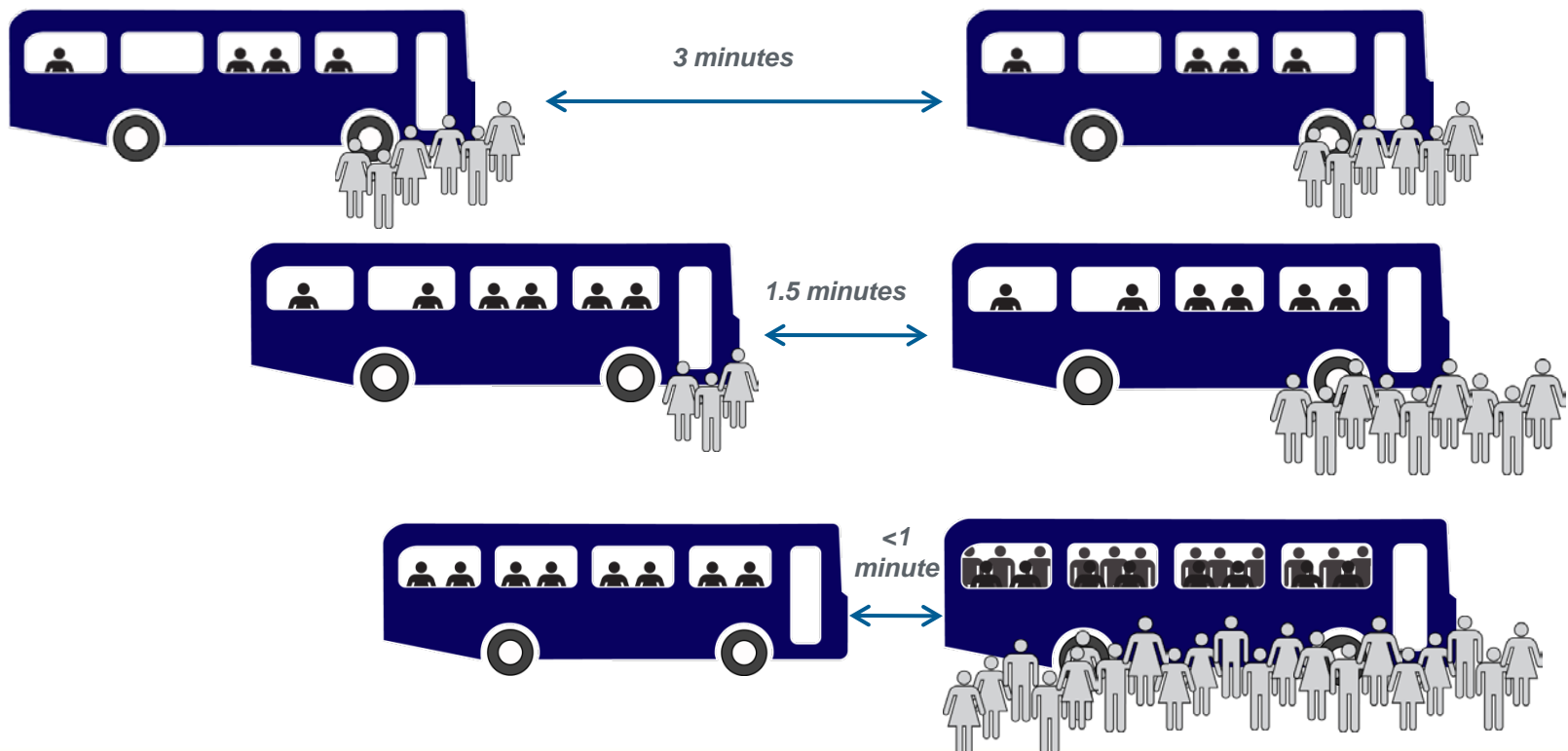
NJ TRANSIT Route 10 –
Kennedy Boulevard



MTA NYCT M15 –
First Avenue/Second Avenue

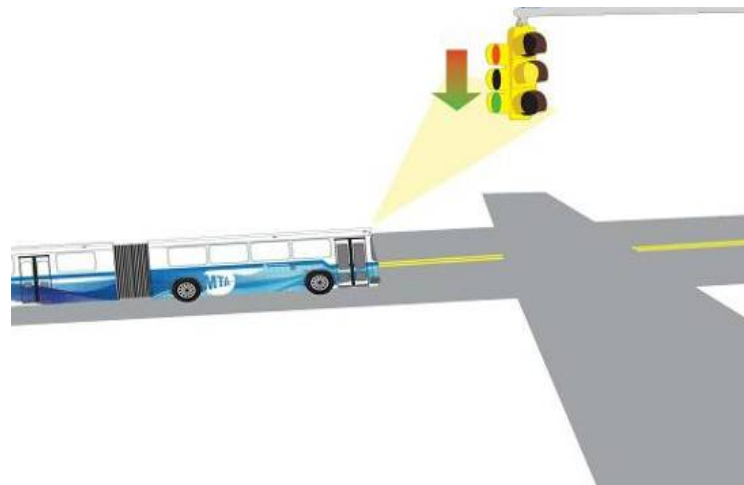
Is the problem stop dwell time?

- Fare prepayment / proof of payment
- Multiple door boarding – leverage smart cards
- Operating cost and revenue considerations



Is the problem signal delay?

- Signal priority can be simplified
- Queue jump opportunities

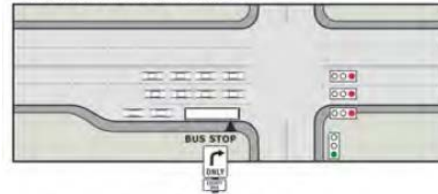


Is the problem slow travel?

- Strategic use of bus lanes
- Queue jump opportunities



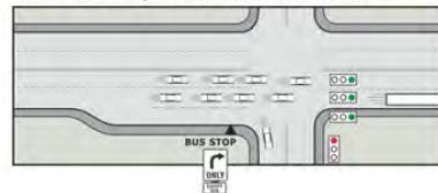
Passengers board during red



Bus receives green before other vehicles



Other vehicles proceed a few seconds later



SOURCE: Kittelson & Associates, Inc.

Is the problem lack of recovery time?

- Be realistic about schedule needs
- Travel time savings will vary by time of day



Institutional Coordination – NACTO Cities

City	Transit Agency	Roadway Owner
New York	MTA New York City Transit & MTA Bus	New York City Department of Transportation
Boston	MBTA	Boston Transportation Department, Cambridge TP&T, Somerville T&P, etc. and MassDOT
Philadelphia	SEPTA	Philadelphia Streets Dep't and PennDOT
Chicago	CTA	Chicago DOT and Illinois DOT
San Francisco	San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency	
Seattle	King County Metro	Seattle DOT
Los Angeles	LA County MTA	Los Angeles DOT
Washington	WMATA	District of Columbia DOT

Lessons Learned

- Signal engineers are conservative—for good reason—but are also “boys with toys”
- Definition of what makes a street “work”
- Use multimodal measures of effectiveness
- Use available technology, then grow from there
- “Big Data” needs to be analyzed and understood
- Partnerships are required at all levels
- The best bus priority improvement is the one that actually gets implemented

“It takes a lifetime to build a good reputation, but you can lose it in a minute.”
– Will Rogers

Final Thought

It's not about always getting to yes...

...it's about never getting to no.