

# New York City Bus Lane Camera Enforcement 2015 Report Program Review 2010-2014





# Introduction

New York City has the highest bus ridership in the United States, with over three million passenger trips made daily. However, New York also has the slowest bus speeds in the country, with buses averaging under eight miles per hour—and even slower speeds in congested areas and at busy times of day.

To improve bus service, the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) partnered with the MTA New York City Transit (NYCT) to collectively design and operate more efficient and reliable bus service for over 200,000 daily bus riders by carefully applying elements of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), such as frequent service, faster fare payment, and dedicated bus lanes. New York City's brand of BRT is called Select Bus Service (SBS).

In the summer of 2010, New York City and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) were given legislative authorization to operate a camera-based bus lane enforcement system on five specifically named SBS corridors and a sixth undesignated SBS corridor in Queens. The legislation also named specific restrictions regarding the time and day of week usage, as well as methods of enforcement. With this authority, the City and the MTA initiated implementation of a camera-based enforcement system beginning in November 2010.

Bus lane camera enforcement is an essential aspect of the SBS system, which has improved travel times by 15-23% for all SBS riders and increased corridor ridership by 10%. However, the legislative authority for this enforcement program will expire in 2015. Mayor de Blasio has set the goal of reaching twenty SBS routes by the end of his first term. It is imperative that the City's bus lane camera enforcement authority be extended and expanded to enforce all bus lanes in New York City.

This report gives an overview of the implementation of the camera-based enforcement system, including the outreach and education completed in advance of implementation, and also discusses the results of the demonstration program in terms of bus speeds and reliability. This is an update of the report originally prepared in 2012.

## **Education and Outreach**

Prior to implementing the camera enforcement program, DOT and NYCT conducted a joint outreach and public education campaign to raise awareness of bus lanes and ensure that the rules of bus lanes are clear to the public.

NYCT conducted bus and subway ad and media campaigns to raise awareness, beginning in 2010 with the start of SBS on the M15 route in Manhattan. At the same time, DOT distributed thousands of brochures to drivers, bus riders, elected officials and community stakeholders along SBS corridors. The brochure, available at [www.nyc.gov/buslanes](http://www.nyc.gov/buslanes), is available in six languages; all information in the brochure is

also available by calling 311. In addition, DOT and the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission continually work together to educate taxi and livery drivers, including direct messaging to drivers and fleet owners. DOT has also worked with the New York Police Department, the American Automobile Association, the Motor Trucking Association, and local Business Improvement Districts to educate New Yorkers about bus lane rules. As each new bus lane is implemented, similar forms of outreach occur along the corridor.

## **Camera Operations**

Under the City's traffic rules, bus lanes in New York City can be legally used by non-bus vehicles for a number of purposes, including making a right turn, accessing the curb, or to avoid an emergency vehicle. As a result, the camera enforcement system needs to be able to differentiate between these legal activities and illegal uses of the bus lane before issuing violations. The systems therefore rely on the use of recorded video that is reviewed by DOT staff before a violation is issued.

Two types of violation monitoring equipment have been used to date. DOT has implemented a fixed location camera system, which uses two cameras that are mounted above the bus lane. One camera provides a high quality view of the rear of a vehicle, clearly showing the vehicle's license plate, but not showing the driver of the vehicle. The second camera provides a wider angle view of the street, clearly showing both actions in the bus lane and other activity on the street that might have forced a vehicle to use the bus lane. As of this report, fixed location cameras have been installed at 41 locations along First Avenue/Second Avenue, 34th Street, Fordham Road, Hylan Boulevard, and Nostrand Avenue SBS corridors. The total cost of this system is \$3,349,372 in capital costs, and \$1,965,540 in annual operating costs.

The second system was a NYCT pilot for on-bus mobile cameras. For the mobile camera system, equipment was installed on buses that can read the rear license plates of vehicles stopped in the bus lane as the bus passes the vehicle, and uses GPS to mark that location. However, to issue a violation under this system, two buses must have observed the same vehicle stopped at the same GPS location. This ensures that violations were not issued to vehicles making an expeditious drop-off in the bus lane. Additionally, because this system records only standing violations, it does not duplicate the fixed camera system, which primarily captures driving in the bus lane violations. Mobile cameras were used on six buses, only on the First Avenue/Second Avenue SBS corridor. The cost of the pilot was \$505,251.03, not inclusive of NYCT internal support costs. This pilot program has since been discontinued.

## **Program Results: Violations and Adjudication**

Under the bus lane camera enforcement program, DOT sends notices of liability to the vehicle owners. These notices include the date, time and location of the violation, a photo of the vehicle recorded, and a link to a website with a personalized PIN that allows the video of the violation to be viewed. The notices of liability are then sent to the New York City Department of Finance (DOF) for adjudication. DOF adjudicates all traffic violations for the City, and has developed a high quality process to adjudicate the violations identified through the bus lane camera program.

From November 1, 2010 through December 31, 2014, 420,635 violations were recorded by the bus lane camera enforcement system, and an equal number of notices of liability were issued. A monthly breakdown of these violations is provided in Table 1.

**TABLE 1:  
Monthly breakdown of violations recorded by the bus lane camera enforcement system.**

<b>PERIOD</b>	<b>CAMERA VIOLATIONS ISSUED</b>	<b>NUMBER OF ACTIVE CAMERAS</b>
November 2010	232	5
December 2010	706	5
<b>2010 TOTAL</b>	<b>938</b>	<b>-</b>
January 2011	2,689	13
February 2011	3,560	14
March 2011	3,660	15
April 2011	5,529	17
May 2011	8,174	19
June 2011	8,919	20
July 2011	5,851	20
August 2011	6,018	19
September 2011	5,751	20
October 2011	5,676	20
November 2011	5,305	19
December 2011	6,309	19
<b>2011 TOTAL</b>	<b>67,441</b>	<b>-</b>

TABLE 1: (CONTINUED)

PERIOD	CAMERA VIOLATIONS ISSUED <sup>1</sup>	NUMBER OF ACTIVE CAMERAS
January 2012	5,387	19
February 2012	5,322	20
March 2012	4,946	19
April 2012	2,788	17
May 2012	1,772	14
June 2012	3,433	17
July 2012	3,100	17
August 2012	4,573	19
September 2012	2,981	18
October 2012	3,386	18
November 2012	3,471	18
December 2012	4,276	19
<b>2012 TOTAL</b>	<b>45,435</b>	-
January 2013	4,145	17
February 2013	3,727	19
March 2013	5,348	19
April 2013	6,731	19
May 2013	6,935	18
June 2013	5,668	19
July 2013	9,830	19
August 2013	19,777	34
September 2013	19,234	34
October 2013	15,368	34
November 2013	10,619	36
December 2013	11,074	34
<b>2013 TOTAL</b>	<b>118,456</b>	-

**TABLE 1: (CONTINUED)**

<b>PERIOD</b>	<b>CAMERA VIOLATIONS ISSUED</b>	<b>NUMBER OF ACTIVE CAMERAS</b>
January 2014	13,754	36
February 2014	12,956	33
March 2014	28,229	40
April 2014	32,623	46
May 2014	15,972	42
June 2014	12,916	41
July 2014	12,769	42
August 2014	5,644	44
September 2014	16,559	45
October 2014	13,445	43
November 2014	11,045	43
December 2014	12,503	44
<b>2014 TOTAL</b>	<b>188,415</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>420,685</b>	<b>-</b>

Of the 420,685 notices of liability issued from November 2010 to November 2014, a total of 48,279(11.5%) were challenged by recipients. Of these challenges 10,232 (21% of challenged notices, or 2% of total notices of liability) were found not guilty.

and violations dismissed or otherwise not paid to date. Based on the authorizing legislation, adjudication is allowed only by the City, and therefore the full amount of this revenue is realized by the City.

The total amount of revenue collected as a result of violations issued by the program from November 2010 to December 2014 was \$36,810,344, or about \$87 per violation issued. This figure includes the base fine of \$115, and also includes both late payment penalties

<sup>1</sup> The number of camera violations issued between April 2011 and March 2012 may differ slightly from numbers reported in the 2012 Bus Lane Camera Enforcement Update Report. This is due to the fact that some violations many have not been processed.

## Program Results: Results

The SBS program has been a significant success, with all evaluated SBS routes implemented to date showing substantial increases in both speed and ridership.

These speed enhancements rely in part on a well-enforced set of bus lanes, as is provided by the bus lane

camera enforcement system. A detailed report on the effect of SBS, including current ridership statistics, is provided in Table 2.

**TABLE 2:**  
**Results of the implementation of SBS**

ROUTE	INCREASE IN BUS SPEED	INCREASE IN RIDERSHIP	INCREASE IN RELIABILITY	2014 RIDERSHIP (AVERAGE WEEKDAY)
Bx12 SBS	20%	10%	73%	35,343
M15 SBS	15%	10%	65%	33,446
M34/A SBS	23%	12%	28%	15,945
S79 SBS	13% - 19%	11%	9%	10,640
Bx41 SBS	19% - 23%	20%	n/a	17,249
B44 SBS	n/a	n/a	n/a	15,961
M60 SBS	n/a	n/a	n/a	16,003

**Source: NYCT**

<sup>2</sup>Based on customer perceptions of service frequency recorded in NYCT before and after surveys; number for Bx12, M15, and M34/A is % of interviewed riders that perceive more frequent service, less the percentage that perceive less frequent service. For S79, number is % increase in the number of riders who were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with S79 waiting time. Between surveys, actual service frequency had only minimal changes, so the perceived increase in frequency reflects buses more evenly spaced.

<sup>3</sup> 2014 Bus ridership figures are preliminary

<sup>4</sup> "Before" period is from 2008, before bus lanes were installed on the majority of the corridor

<sup>5</sup> M60 SBS began service on May 25, 2014 and updated numbers are not yet available. Average weekday ridership only represents the part of 2014 when the service was in operation.





