

Invest in Buses to Address Transit

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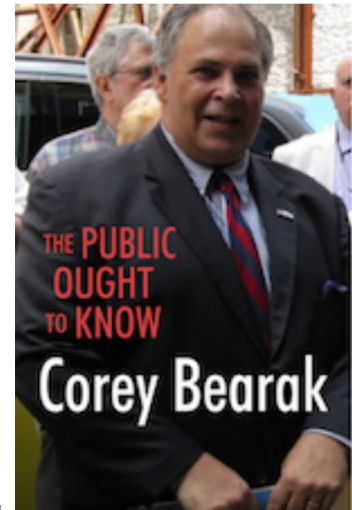
By Corey Bearak

Queens, NY – Next week (Nov. 12) the City Council looks at mostly capital-intensive rail approaches to address areas underserved and not served by mass transit. Some expressed concern about the status of further legs of the Second Avenue Subway. What policymakers and advocates must not forget: the utility afforded by expanding and improving public transit options through buses.

The street grid already exists; New York City, its Department of Transportation and the MTA need to look at effectively using that grid by deploying more buses and establishing expanded and new routes. The current focus on Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) or [Select Bus Service](#) (SBS) routes involve no significant service upgrades when studying the metrics. This makes clear the need to look at how best to deploy buses.

BRT and SBS approaches work as part of any plan to improve bus service system wide. The deployment of substantial human and money resources on current schemes diverts attention for the needed holistic approach to public transit in places that need more, better and the introduction of bus service. The hearing notice calls such places “transportation deserts.” Some interesting concepts under consideration at next week's hearing include free transfers between LIRR and MTA buses. A free transfer option just might induce greater ridership and remove a few people from cars. That makes some bus routes more useful and perhaps induce ridership to justify a more frequent bus trips.

City Hall's plans to develop more affordable housing units and housing with less or no parking requirements needs adequate public transit options in place, and not just to funnel commuters to subway and rail; it needs buses in place to take residents to school, work, recreation and family within boroughs such as Queens. Buses connect neighborhoods. Moreover, building in smarter transit options using buses could assist many residents who currently rely on personal vehicles.



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