

Three months ago, this commentator noted the [need](#) to collect on deadbeats who disobey traffic and parking regulations. Now we learn of private “long-haul” buses not based in terminals such as the Port Authority's, but using and congesting local streets. NYC needs to take decisive action very soon.

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### **Long-distance buses piling up in midtown**

Midtown businesses, which began to notice a proliferation of long-distance buses at several on-street locations in early 2008, say their numbers are increasing. Companies like Bolt Bus and Vamoose appear to be gaining market share from Amtrak and the airlines—hardly surprising, since buses offer recession-conscious travelers cheap deals, like \$25 to Washington, D.C.

The buses tend to idle noisily and block pedestrians' view of street-level stores and restaurants, says Dan Biederman, president of the 34th Street Partnership. Biederman's organization points to four problem spots within its business improvement district: two on Seventh Avenue and two on Eighth Avenue, between West 31st and West 34th streets.

Buses are not allowed to keep their engines idling for more than three minutes, but they often do because of a lack of enforcement.

“The noise is overwhelming when you're standing within 10 or 15 feet,” says Biederman. “It's not that different from being at La Guardia.”

But the buses do have permits to load and unload at the curbside locations, and the city Department of Transportation has limited authority over interstate bus operations.

Biederman's group has yet to propose an alternative. There's no room for more buses at the Port Authority, the city's largest bus depot.

The issue is reminiscent of the advent of commuter express buses on Madison Avenue and other midtown streets in the 1970s. At the time, the city parried complaints by saying the buses were needed to transport outer-borough residents who lacked subway service.