

# Tremont Av Bus Priority Project

Bronx Community Board 5 Municipal Services Committee

November 4, 2024



# Agenda

1. Summary & Work to Date
2. Business Outreach
3. Project Updates
4. Next Steps

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# Work Summary & Updates

# 1

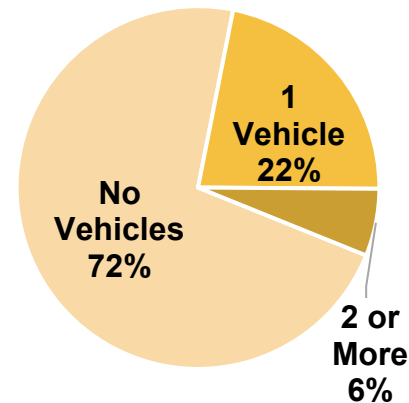
# Why Tremont Av?

- University Av to Bronx River Pkwy
- Bx36 carries 34,000 bus riders per day
  - 5<sup>th</sup> busiest route in the Bronx
  - Critical east-west transit connection
- Buses move slowly all day, and **less than 5 mph** in many areas during peak periods
- 3+ injuries per week on average (2019-2023)
- 72% of households do not have access to a private vehicle
  - 78% commute to work via public transit, walking, or biking

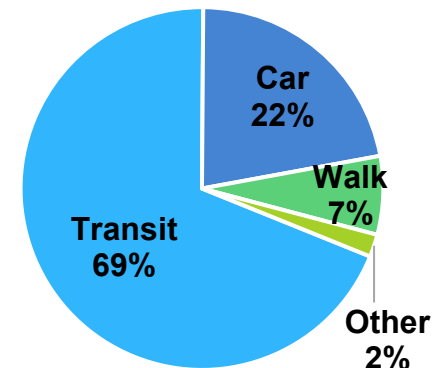


Eastbound Bus Speeds – PM Peak (3-7pm)

## Vehicle Access by Household



## Travel to Work



Source: 2016-2020 American Community Survey, census tracts adjacent to Tremont Av between University Av and Bronx River Pkwy

# Outreach Status & Additional Engagement

- In our last round of outreach in June-July 2024, stakeholders requested:
  - Additional engagement with business community
    - Ask opinion on bus priority treatments
  - Consider center-running and/or curbside bus lanes instead of busway
- Engagement since our last elected official briefings:
  - June 2024: Present Draft Proposal to CBs 5 & 6
  - July 2024: Community Advisory Board meeting #2
  - August 2024: Merchant Survey #3 (229 responses)
  - August 2024: Bronx Summer Streets Event
- Currently in our third round of outreach:
  - Presenting Merchant Survey findings and our Updated Proposal
  - More outreach to come this Winter

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# Merchant Survey Results

# August 2024 Merchant Survey

- Requests from elected officials and Community Board 6 to re-engage with the business community
  - Ask specifically about opinions of bus priority facilities
- From August 20-23, 2024, DOT and MTA visited every business on Tremont Av between University Av and the Bronx River Parkway
  - Every outreach team had Spanish speaking staff and/or interpreters
- Administered survey to **229 businesses**

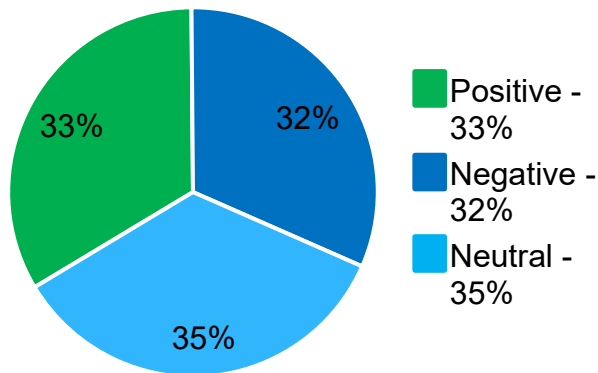


# Merchant Survey Results

- When asked if they felt positive, negative, or neutral about bus priority facilities:
  - Slightly more merchants were positive about a busway than negative
  - Most merchants were negative about bus lanes that repurpose parking

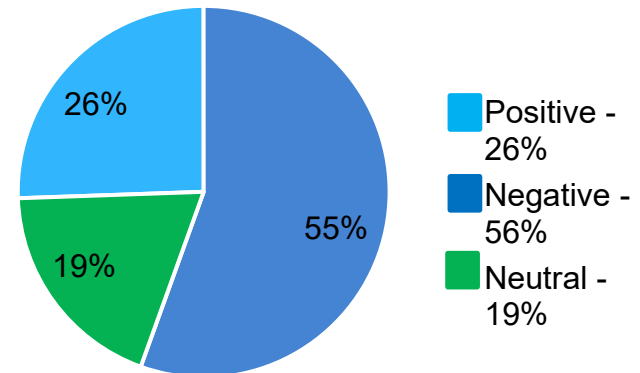
## Merchant Sentiment on a Busway

*How would you feel about a busway that does not remove parking in front of your business?*



## Merchant Sentiment on Bus Lanes

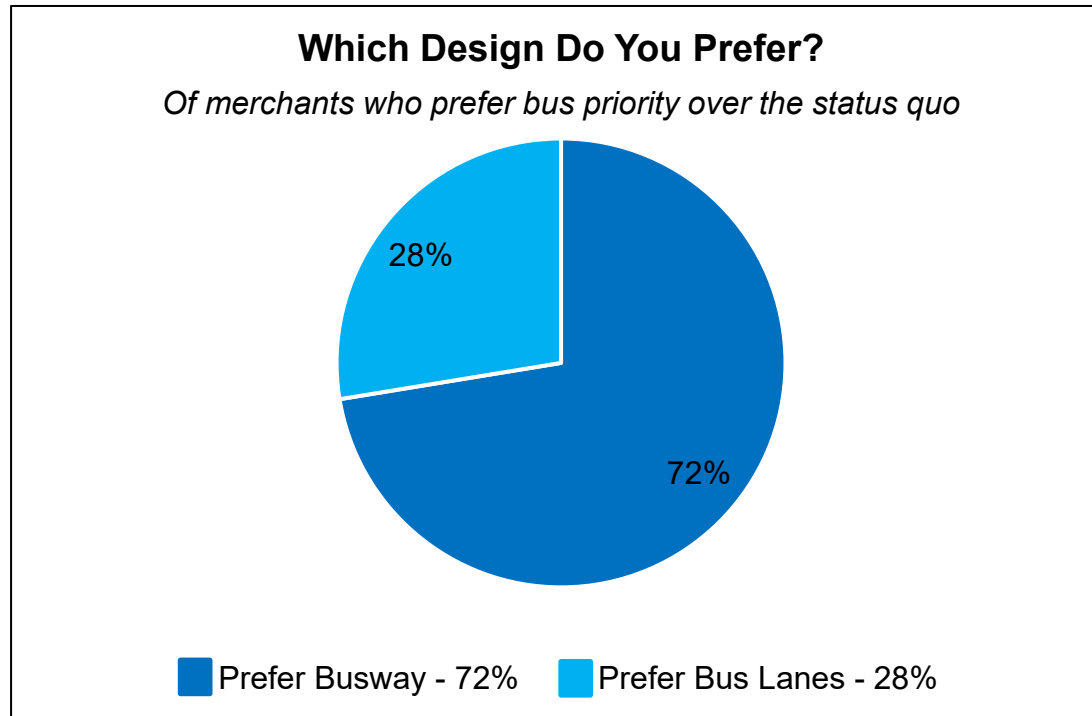
*How would you feel about bus lanes that remove the parking lane in front of your business?*





# Merchant Survey Results: Bus Priority Preference

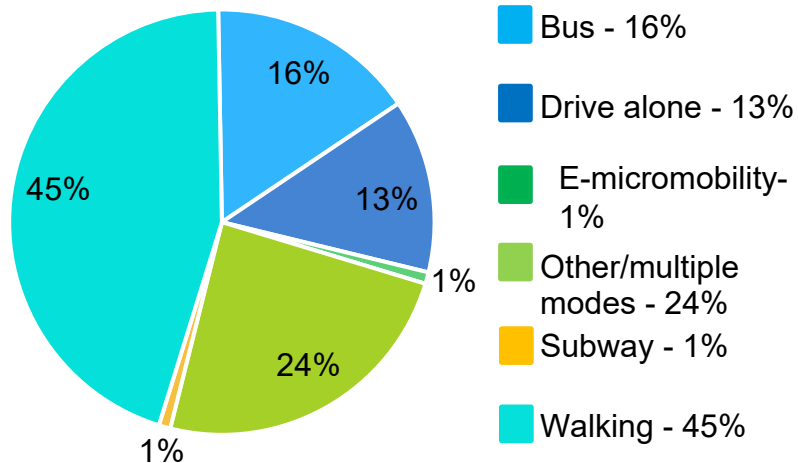
- DOT asked merchants if they would prefer a busway or bus lanes
  - Of the merchants that supported bus priority, over 2/3 would prefer a busway, while less than 1/3 would prefer bus lanes



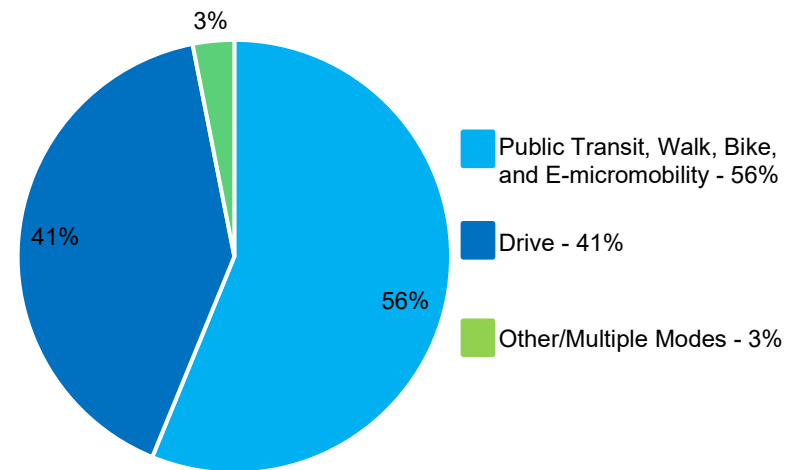
# Merchant Survey Results: Business Access

- Most merchants say their customers reach them by walking, taking the bus, or using a combination of transport modes
- Most employees get to work on Tremont by taking public transit, walking, or biking
  - Business owners are much more likely to drive to work than employees

**How Do Most Customers Access Your Business?**



**How Do You Get to Work?**  
*(Employees & Managers)*



# Community Input Summary

- DOT has spoken to 220+ businesses, 150+ pedestrians, 290+ bus riders
- Most shoppers and pedestrians report that they travel to Tremont Av by bus or walking
- Bus riders reported long wait times, bus bunching, and congestion
- Bus riders' top requests:
  - Timely service/more reliable service
  - Less crowding
  - Faster bus speeds
  - Improved accessibility for older residents & people with disabilities



*Bus rider testimonial from Tremont Av*



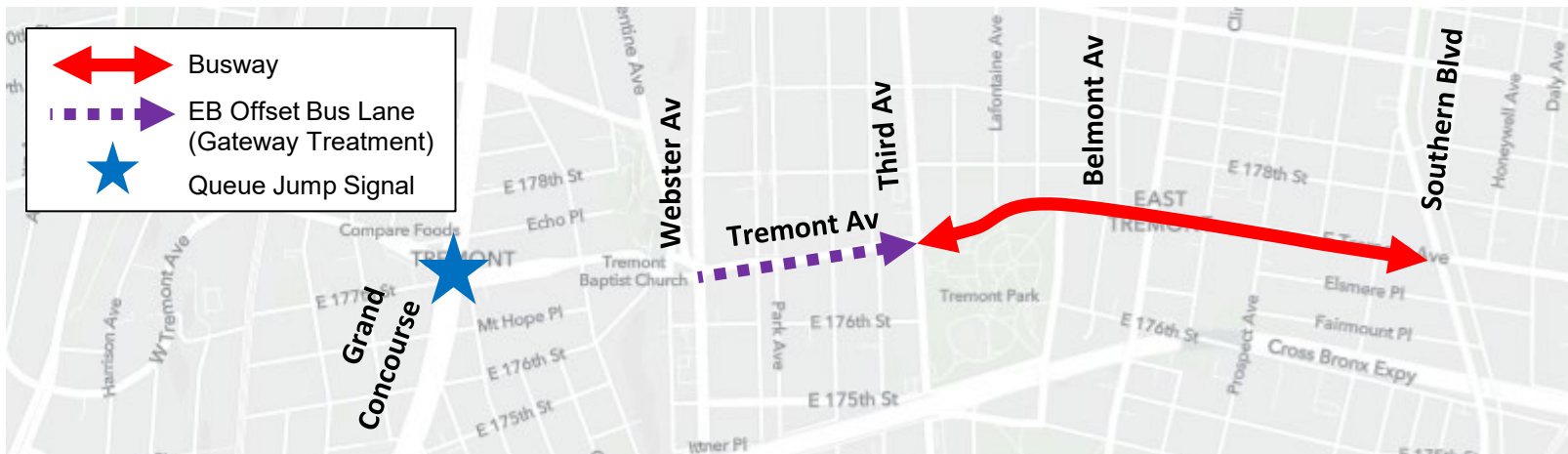
*DOT staff surveying pedestrians on Tremont Av*

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# Project Updates

# Updated Proposal

- **Fall 2024:** Bus Queue Jump Signals at Tremont Av & Grand Concourse
- **Spring 2025:** Busway from Third Av to Southern Blvd
  - Additional gateway treatment: 4 blocks of offset bus lane approaching busway (Webster Av to Third Av, eastbound only)
  - Regulations will ensure easy access to businesses across the street from Tremont/Walter Gladwin Park
- **Summer 2025:** Present busway performance data & project modifications if needed



# Bus Queue Jump Signal

- Gives buses a head start, bypassing traffic at major intersections
- Installed at Grand Concourse & Tremont Av to provide immediate benefit
  - No change to signal timing – buses share existing Leading Pedestrian Interval (LPI)
- Studying additional locations for 2024/2025 implementation



*Queue Jump Signal*

# Busway

- Buses, trucks, emergency vehicles & Access-a-Ride vans can travel through entire corridor
- Local access allowed for all other vehicles, including cars, taxis & for-hire vehicles
  - Vehicles access the corridor from side streets
  - Must leave the corridor at the next required turn, using posted signage
- **Maintains existing parking, loading, deliveries & customer access to businesses**
- Any vehicle can still access every block & every building
- Signage & red paint make the rules clear & direct traffic



*Jamaica Ave busway, Queens*

# Busway Parking & Curb Access

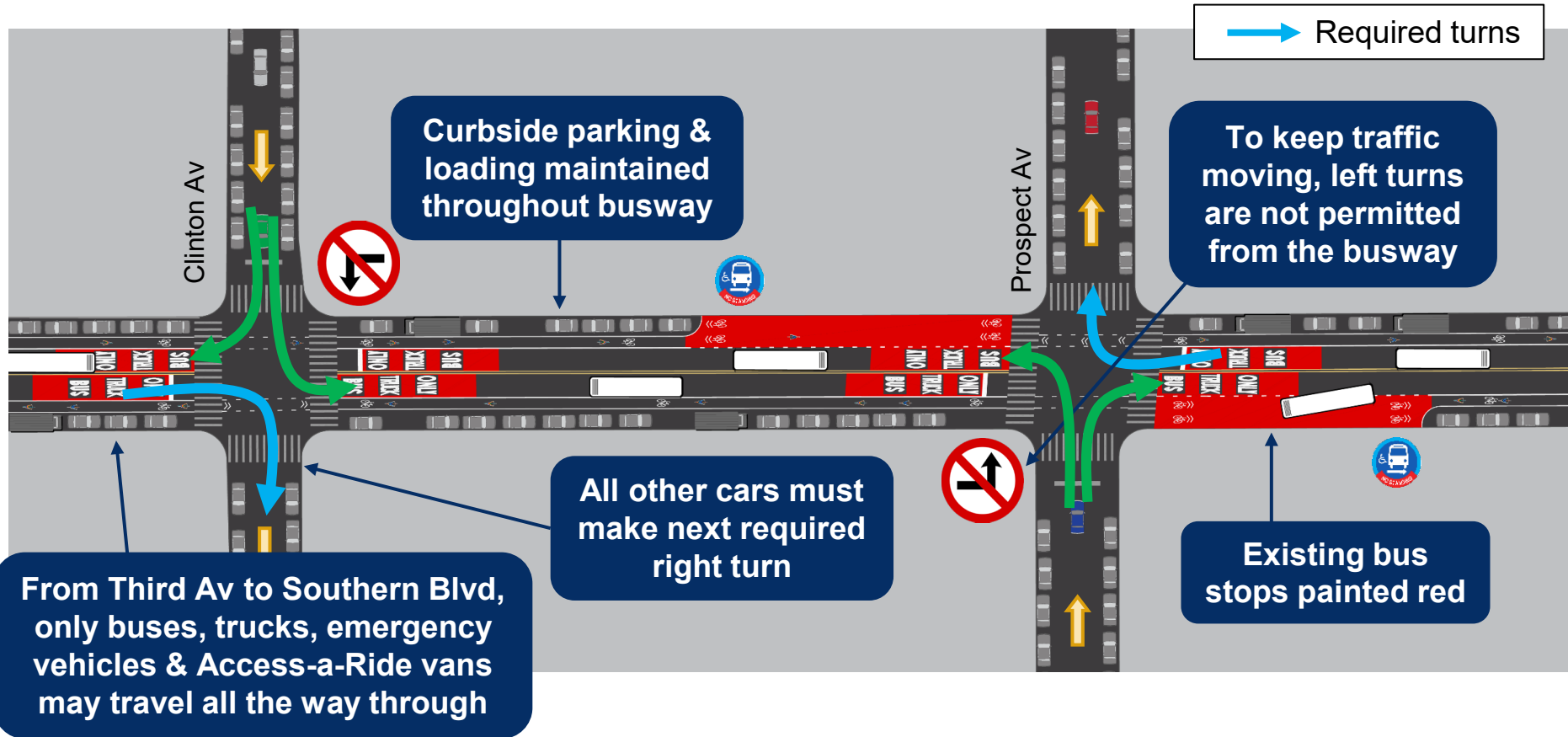
- Busway maintains existing parking, loading, deliveries & customer access to businesses
- Our final curb regulation plan may include additional loading zones, changes to meter rules, and any other adjustments to optimize curb use according to business and community needs



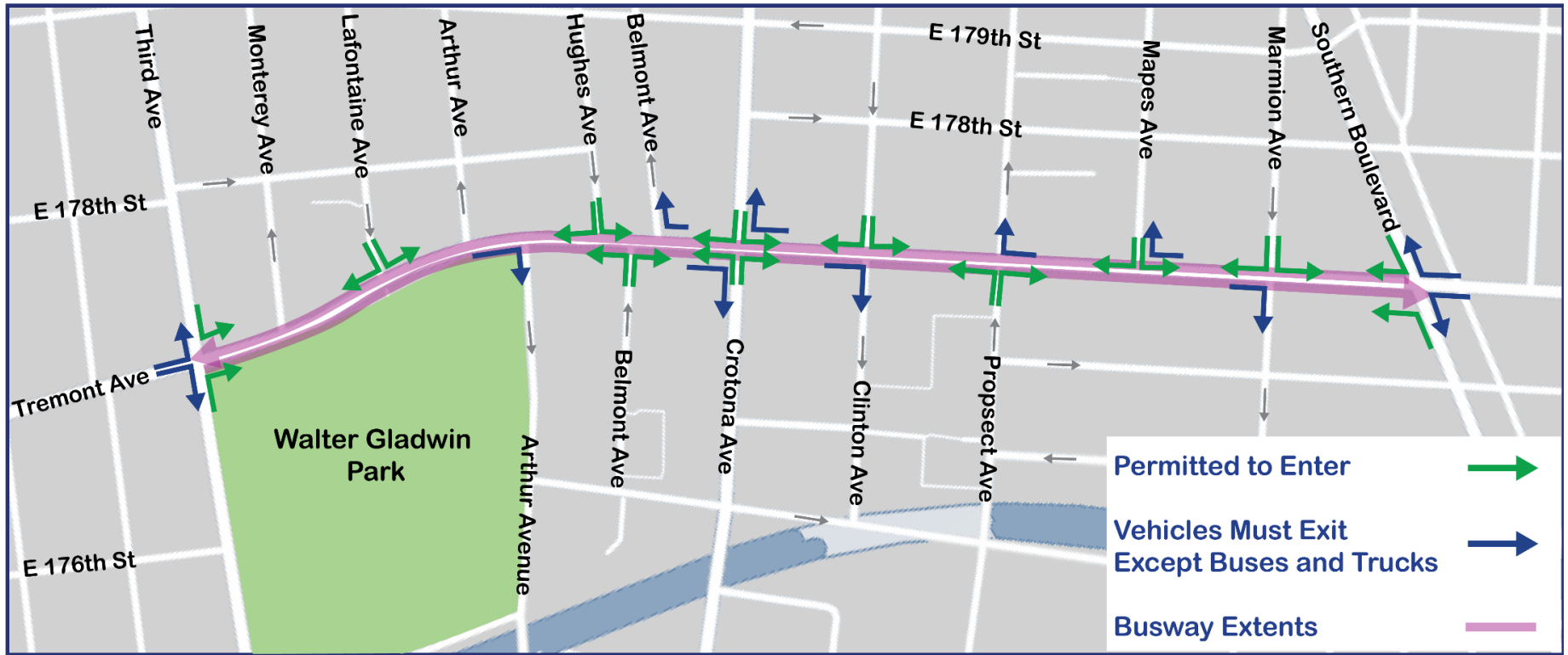
*Parking on 181<sup>st</sup> St busway, Manhattan*



# Busway Example: Clinton Av to Prospect Av

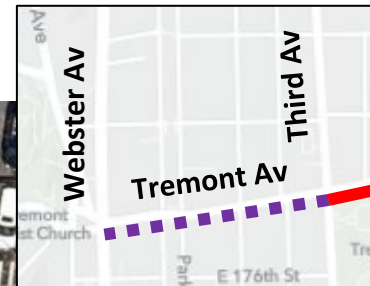


# Busway Turn Map



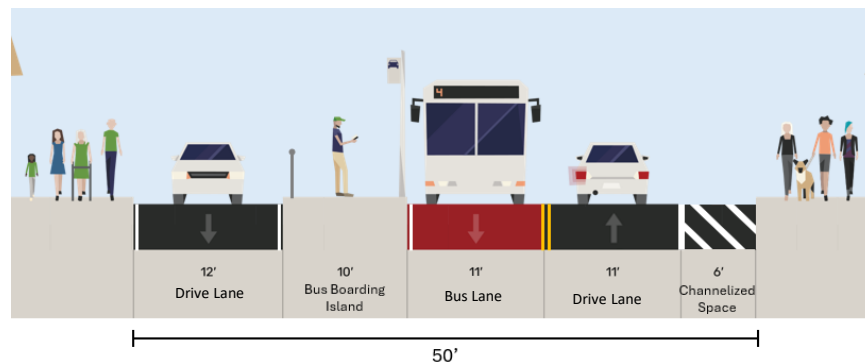
# Eastbound Gateway Treatment

- To help buses reach the busway, add 4 blocks of offset bus lanes
  - Webster Av to Third Av, eastbound only
  - Uniquely, these 4 blocks already have a second eastbound travel lane
  - Retains most or all parking

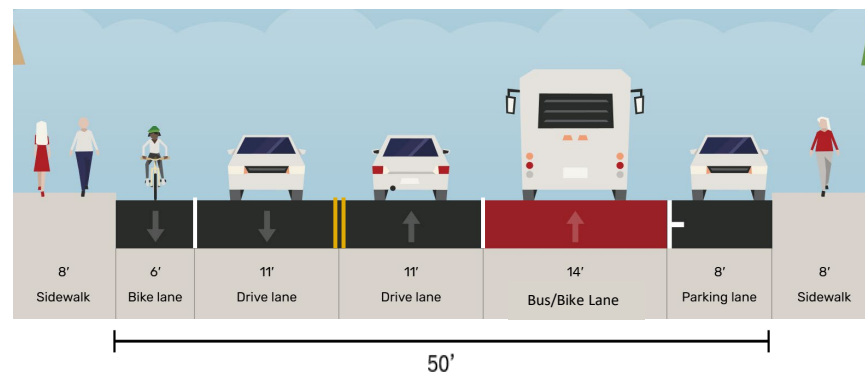


# Bus Lane Alternatives

- We evaluated the potential for curbside, offset, and center-running bus lanes along Tremont
- Center-Running Bus Lanes:
  - Requires 70' right of way for center-running bus lanes in both directions
  - Most of Tremont Av is 50' wide – bus lane could fit in *one direction*
    - Would eliminate parking on both sides of street
  - Would require removing at least one bike facility
- Offset Bus Lanes:
  - Requires 60' right of way for offset bus lanes in both directions
  - On Tremont, offset bus lane could fit in one direction
    - Would eliminate parking on one side of the street
- Busway provides better bus benefits, in both directions, while maintaining parking



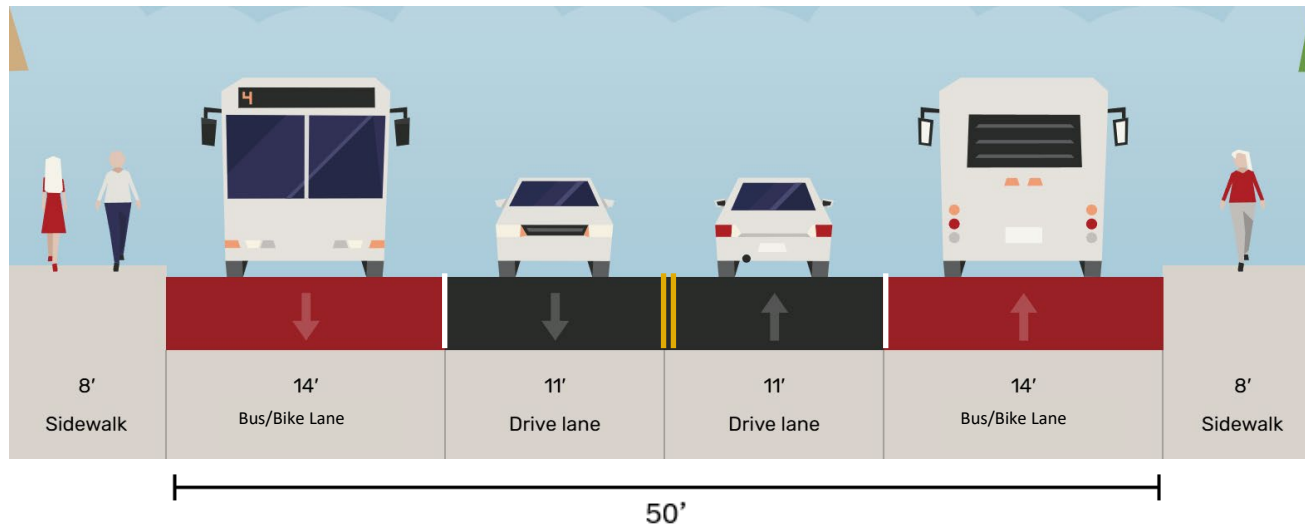
Rendering of center-running bus lane on Tremont Av



Rendering of offset bus lane on Tremont Av

# Bus Lane Alternatives

- Curbside Bus Lanes:
  - On streets with 50' right of way, curbside bus lanes are the most feasible option
  - Would require removing all parking spaces on both sides of the street
  - Where feasible, busways do more for bus riders while maintaining parking
    - After implementation of the 181<sup>st</sup> St. busway, bus speeds increased up to 28%

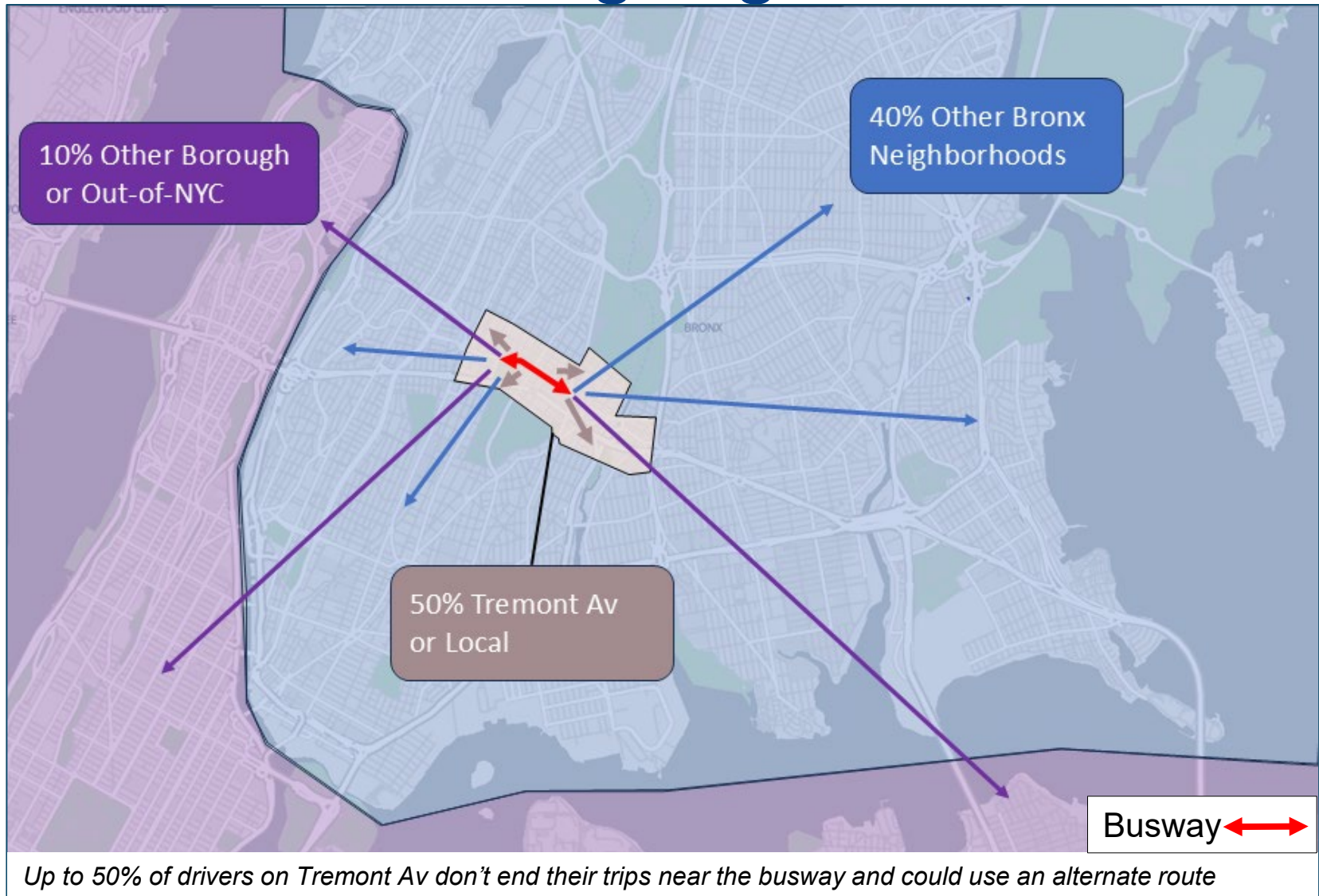


Rendering of curbside bus lanes on Tremont Av

# Bus Lanes on Tremont Av

- Other than the eastbound gateway treatment, we are not including bus lanes in our current proposal for several reasons:
  - Narrow street width means curbside bus lanes are the most feasible option
    - Would require removing parking
    - Existing bike facilities present design challenges
  - Busways are the most effective tool for improving bus speeds and reliability on corridors of this width
  - By rerouting through traffic, busway could improve bus speeds across Tremont Av
- After busway implementation, DOT will monitor busway and performance data
- Make any additional changes needed, which could include:
  - Modifications to busway and curb regulations
  - Bus lanes on other parts of corridor

# Where are drivers going on Tremont Av?



# Traffic Analysis Methodology

**1. Count traffic & pedestrians** at 100+ intersections on Tremont Av & nearby streets

**2. Analyze vehicle origins & destinations** with anonymized GPS data from drivers on Tremont Av, to understand likely diversion routes

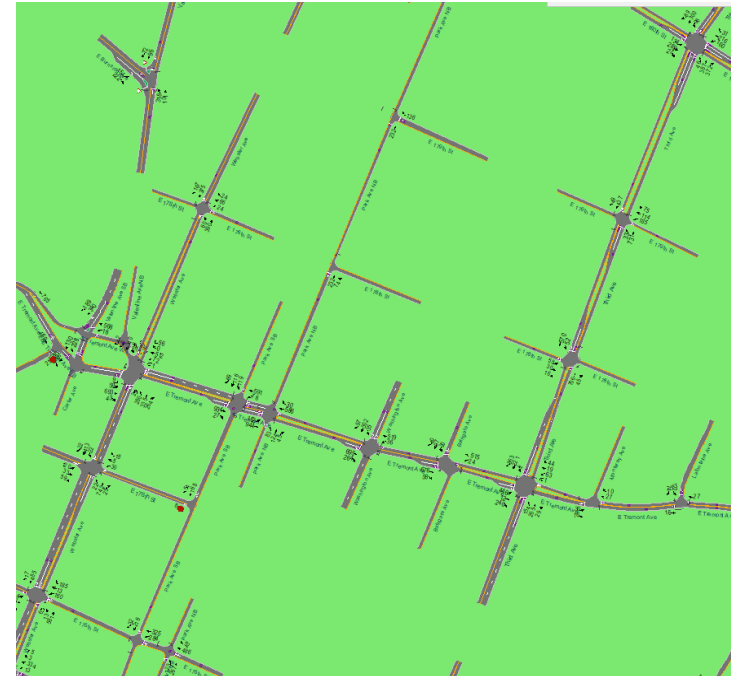
**3. Model each intersection and analyze:**

- Signal timing
- Number of lanes and turning movements (left, straight, right)
- Pedestrian volumes
- Existing conditions & multiple potential future scenarios

**4. Validate model** with in-person observations of traffic flow, parking movements, double parking & truck loading, etc.

**5. Analyze worst case scenario**

- Busiest hours of day, longest traffic queues
- Realistically, some drivers divert to other routes, other modes of transportation, or choose to travel at different times of day
- Prepare traffic analyses for a range of scenarios, from no traffic reduction up to a 40% reduction
  - Reported results assume a 10% reduction

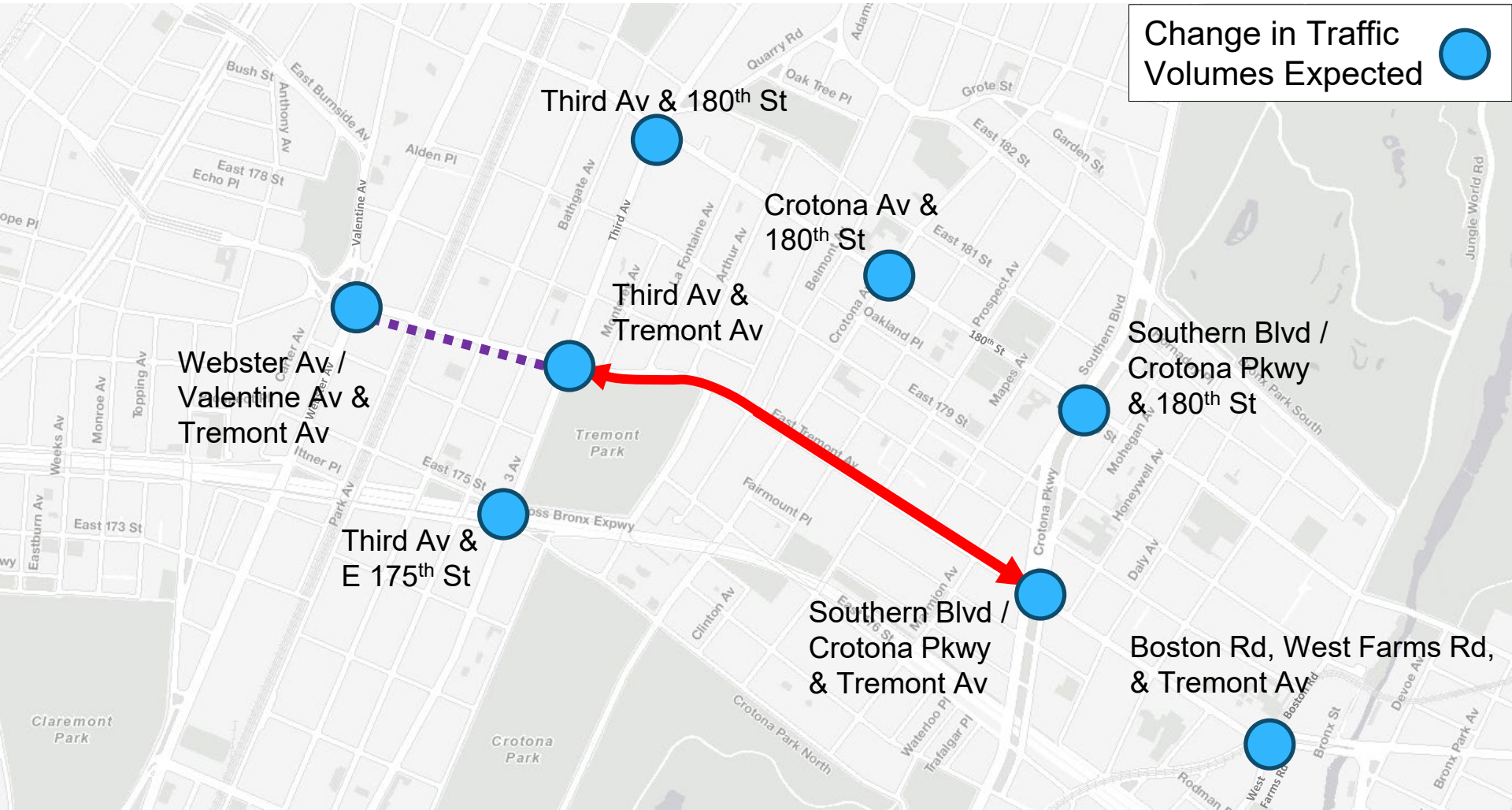


*Example of Synchro Traffic Model Network*

**Result is a prediction of the future according to engineering standards.**



# Traffic Analysis Results



# Busway Enforcement

- ACE on-bus and fixed-location cameras enforce illegal parking in bus stops, double parking, and violations of required turns on the busway
  - ACE cameras in effect on Tremont Av (Bx36 route) since 6/20/24
- Data shows that camera enforcement is successful in changing driver behavior
  - The number of violations decreases over time as drivers adjust to busway violations
  - ~80% of violators don't get a second ticket
  - Human review by DOT process ensures violations are captured and issued according to program rules
- After activation, cameras issue **warnings only for the first 60 days**
- NYPD also enforces busway regulations

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## Next Steps

# 27+ Outreach Events to Date

- 2016: Tremont Av Safety Project
- 2018-2023: MTA Bronx Bus Network Redesign (50+ public outreach events)
- 2019: Merchant Survey #1 (146 responses)
- Dec 2022: Community Advisory Board meeting #1
- 2023: DOT on-street engagement
  - Merchant survey #2 (162 responses)
  - Pedestrian intercept survey (131 responses)
  - Bus passenger survey (290 responses)
- Feb-March 2024: Present Existing Conditions to CBs 5 & 6
- March 2024: Borough President briefing
- June 2024: Present Draft Proposal to CBs 5 & 6
- June 2024: Present Draft Proposal to elected officials
- July 2024: Community Advisory Board meeting #2
- August 2024: Merchant Survey #3 (229 responses)
- August 2024: Bronx Summer Streets Event

## Upcoming Outreach:

- Oct & Nov: Present Updated Proposal to Elected Officials, CBs
- Winter 2025: Present Final Proposal to Elected Officials, CBs and CAB

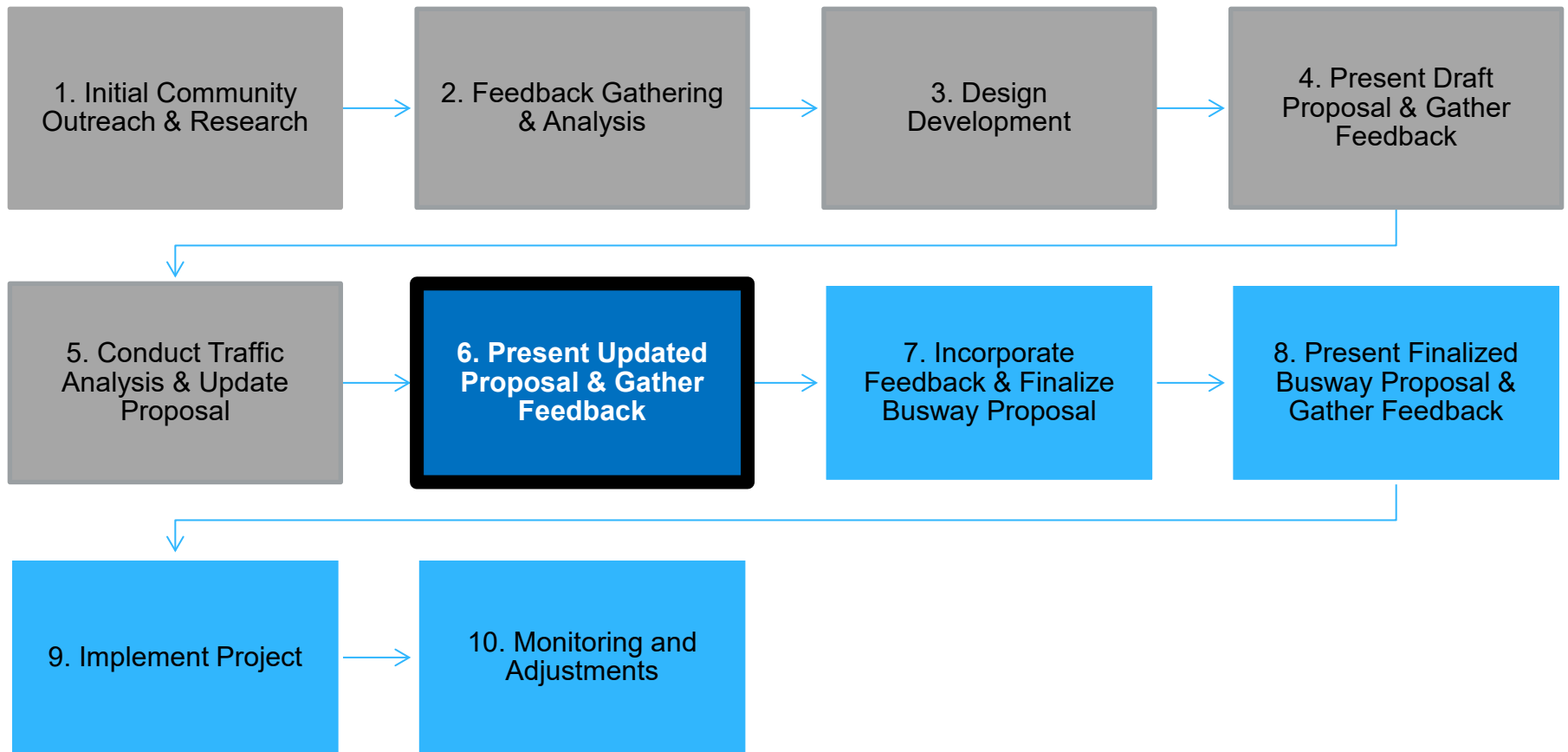


Participant in the 2023 bus passenger survey  
Sign reads "Pasar ma rápido"/ "Go faster"



August 2024 Merchant Survey

# Updated Project Timeline



# Next Steps

## Fall/Winter 2024

- Share and discuss Updated Busway Proposal with community stakeholders and elected officials

## Winter 2025

- Share and discuss Final Busway Proposal with community stakeholders and elected officials
  - Includes any curb regulation changes, busway information & education plan

## Implement Busway Spring 2025

## Spring/Summer 2025

- Evaluate busway performance
- Evaluate performance outside of busway for additional potential treatments

# Thank You!



NYC DOT



NYC DOT



nyc\_dot



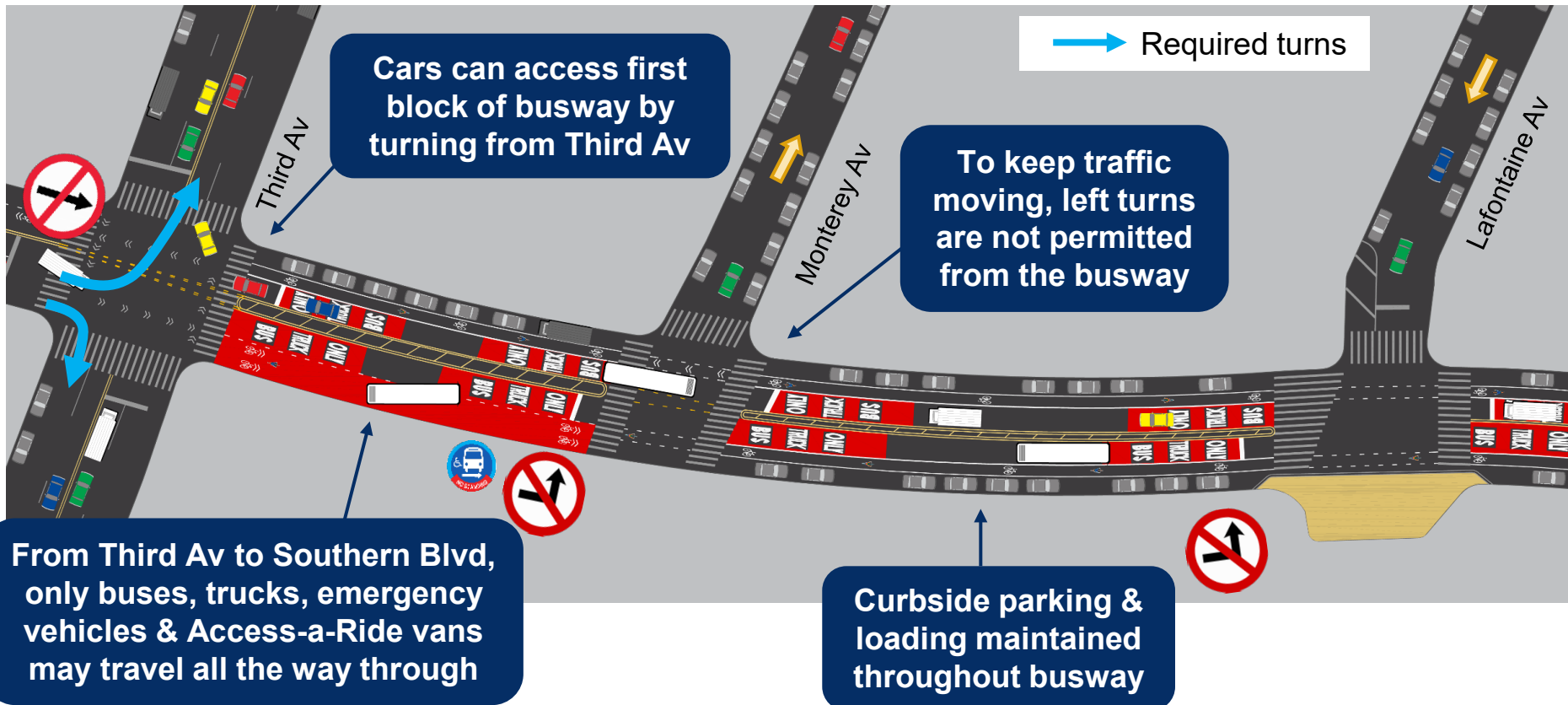
NYC DOT

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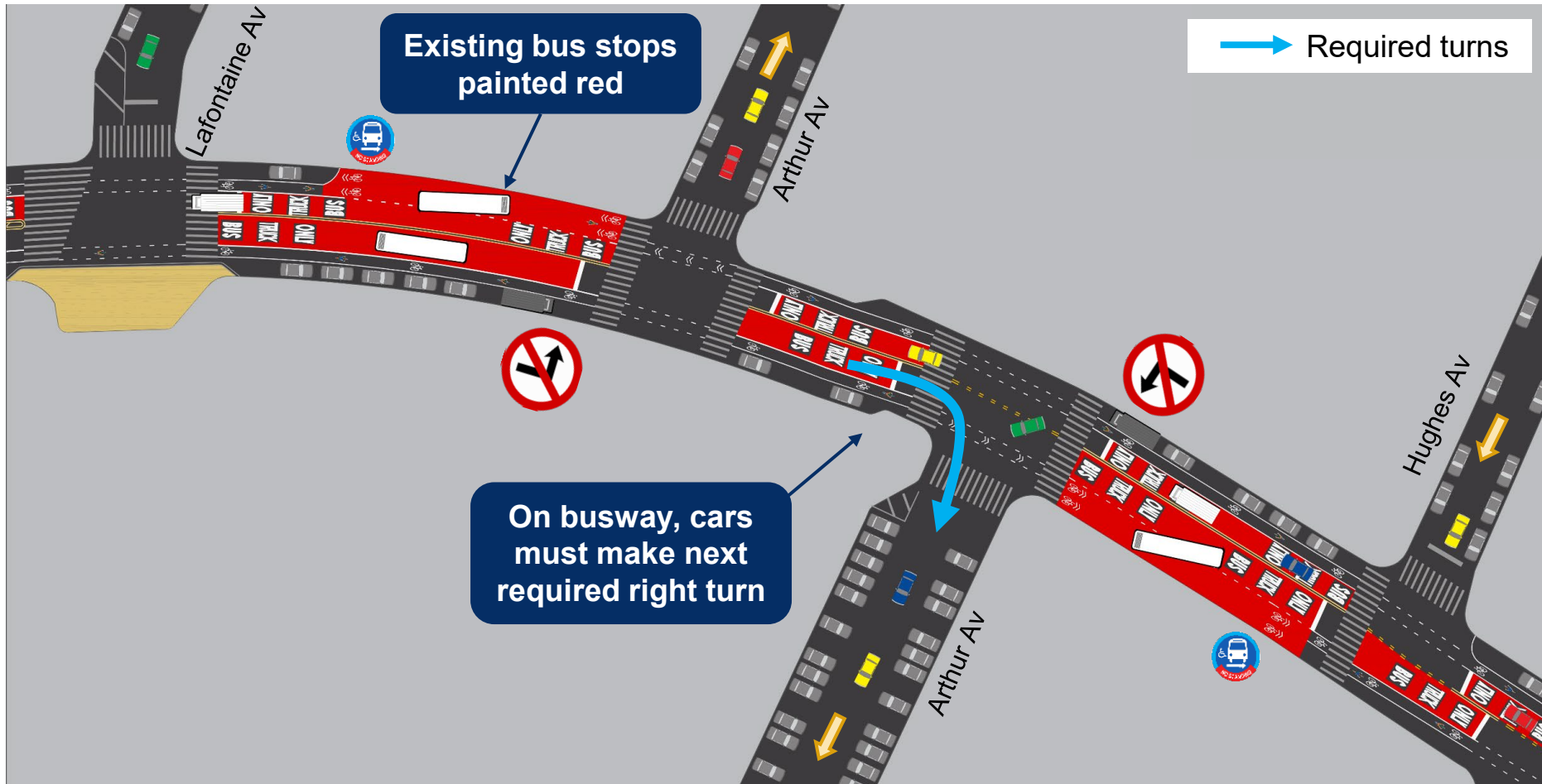
# Appendix



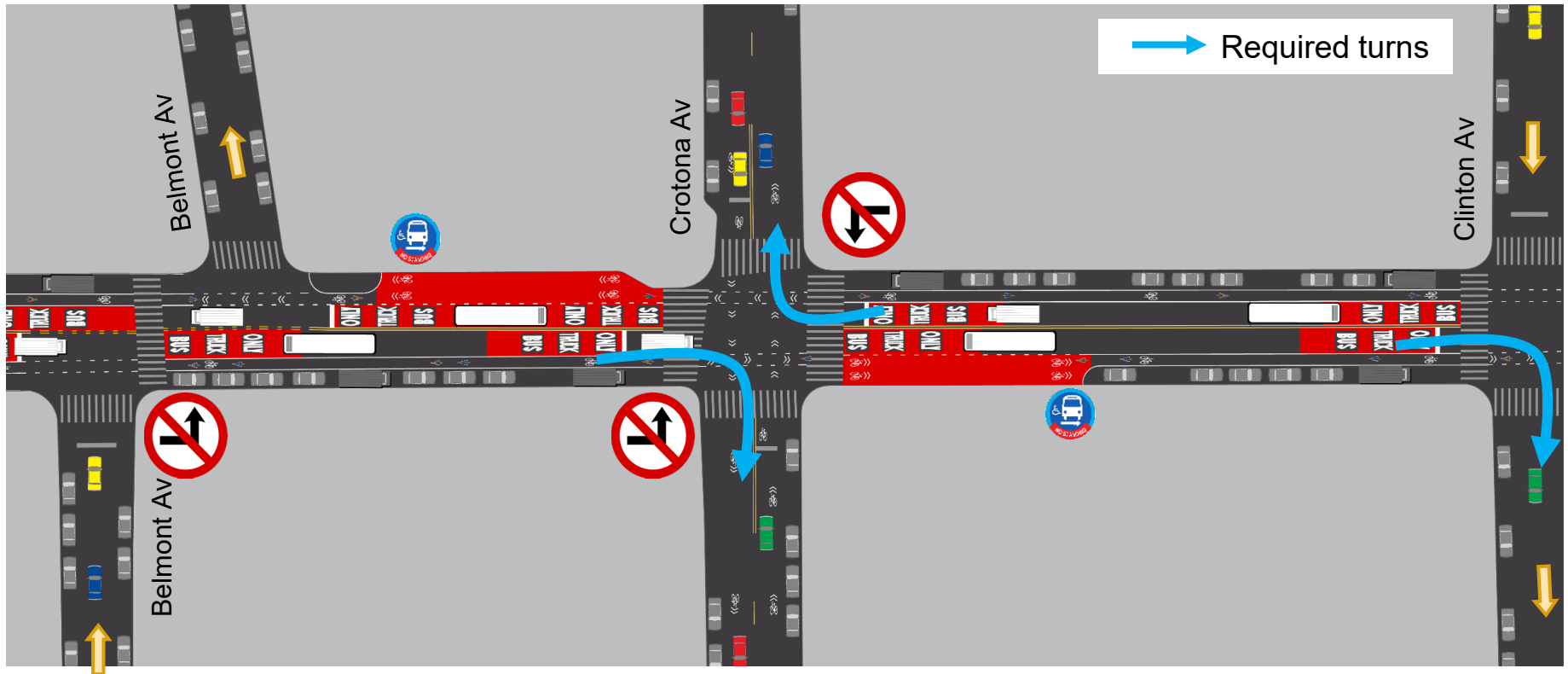
# Busway: Third Av to Lafontaine Av



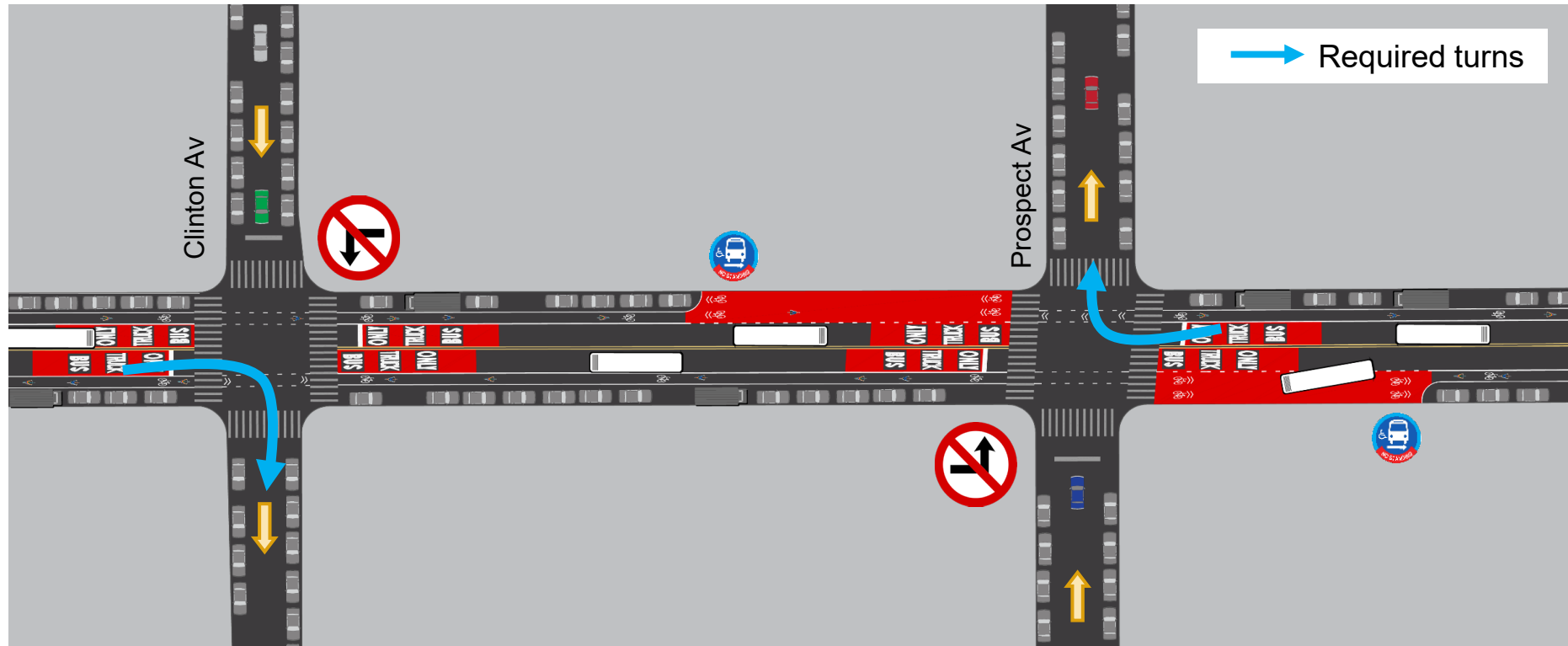
# Busway: Lafontaine Av to Hughes Av



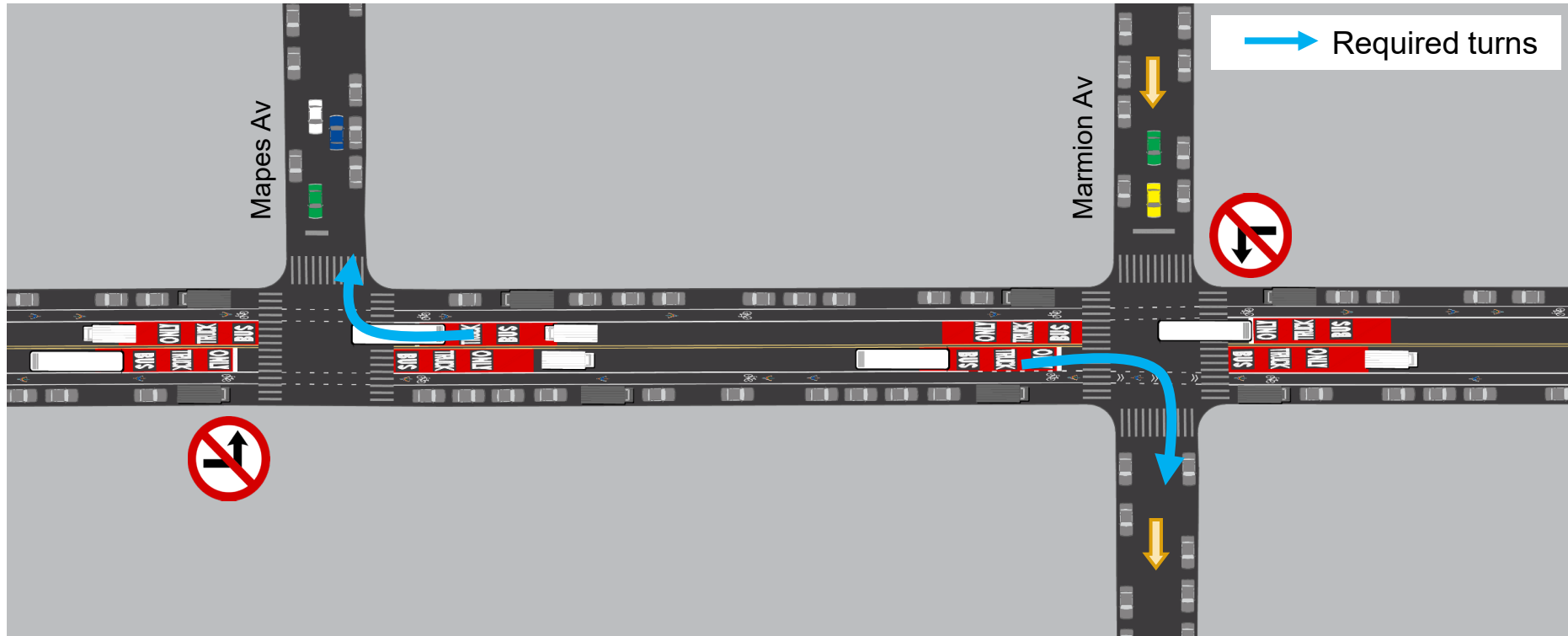
# Busway: Hughes Av to Clinton Av



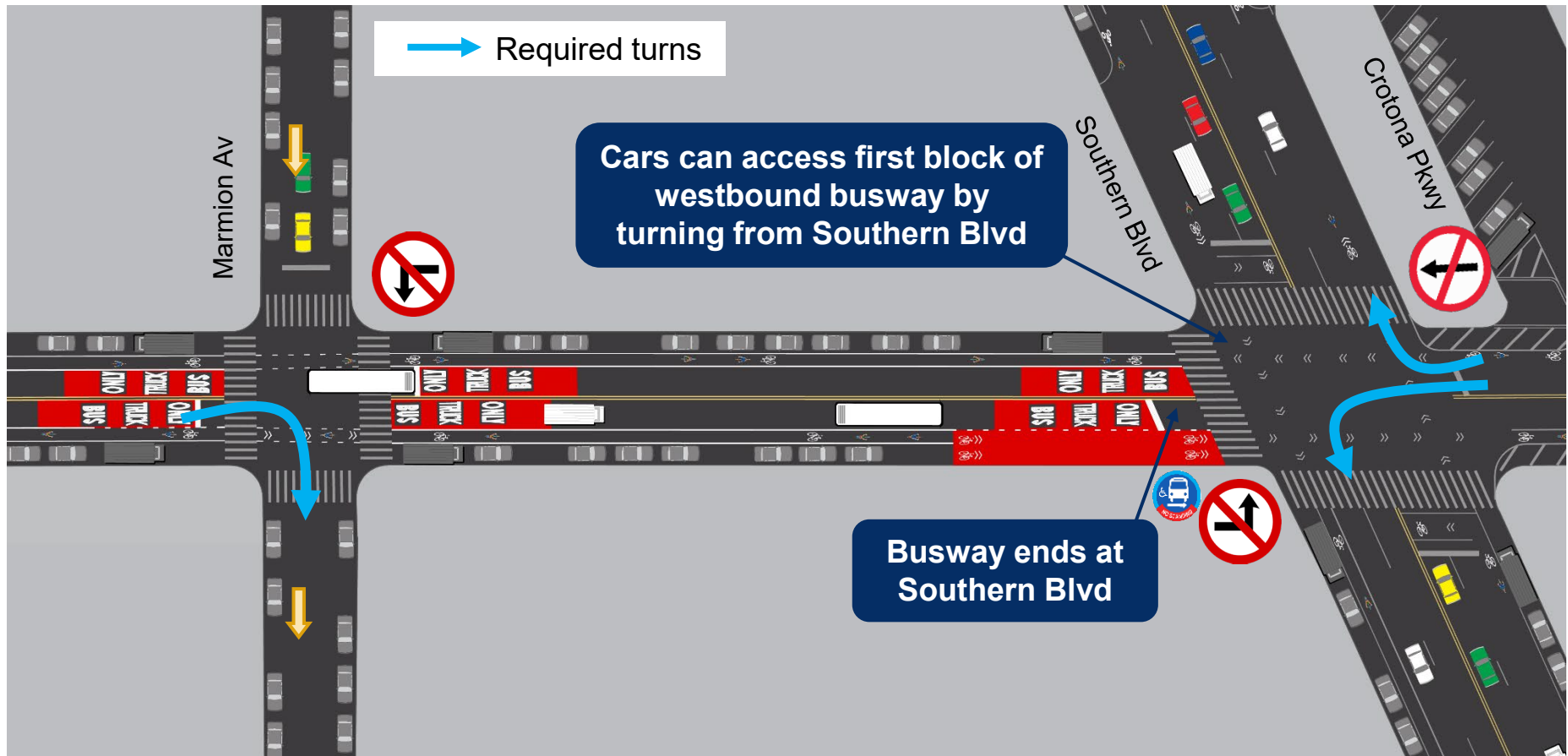
# Busway: Clinton Av to Mapes Av



# Busway: Mapes Av to Marmion Av



# Busway: Marmion Av to Southern Blvd

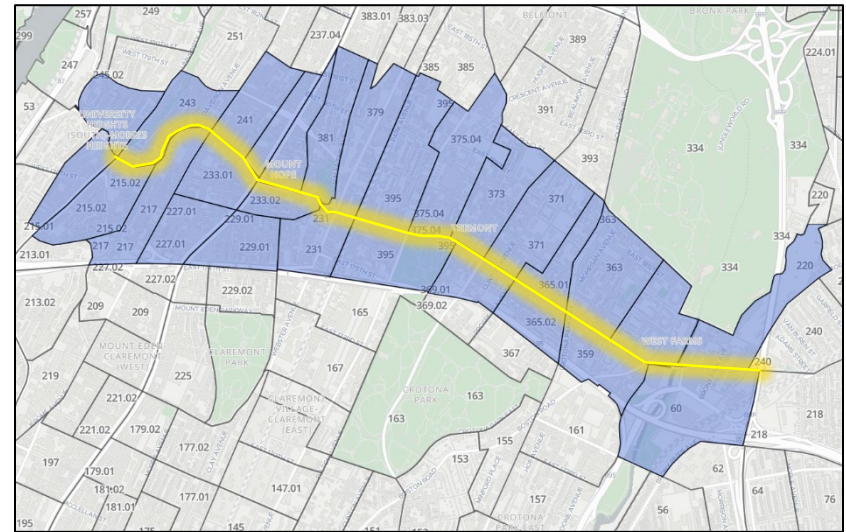


- Allowed turns onto busway
- Required turns

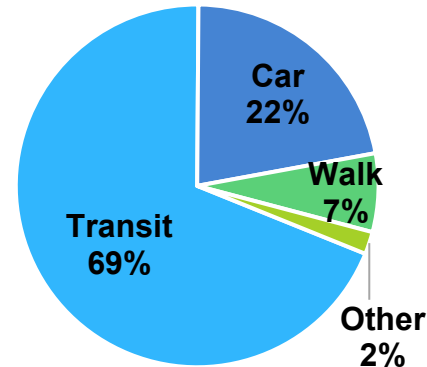
# Demographics

## Census Tracts – Tremont Av (University Av to Bronx River Pkwy)

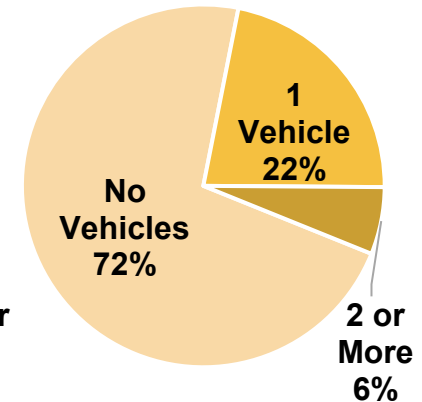
- 118,000 residents
- 72% of households do not have access to a private vehicle
  - Above city average of 55%
- 78% commute to work via public transit, walking, or biking
  - Above city average of 71%
- 45 minute average travel time to work
  - Above city average of 41 minutes
- \$31,000 median household income
  - Below city median of \$77,000



**Travel to Work**

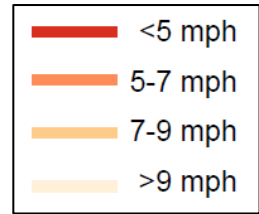


**Vehicle Access by Household**



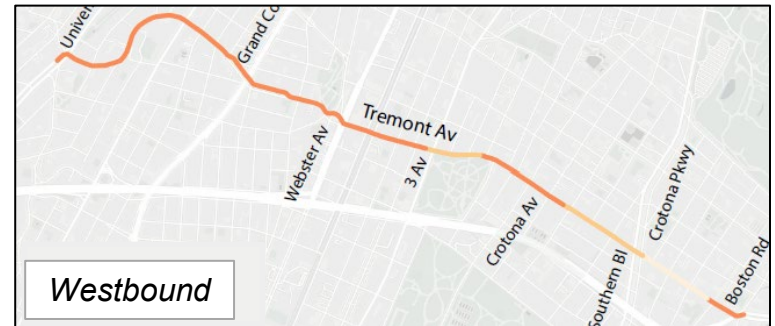
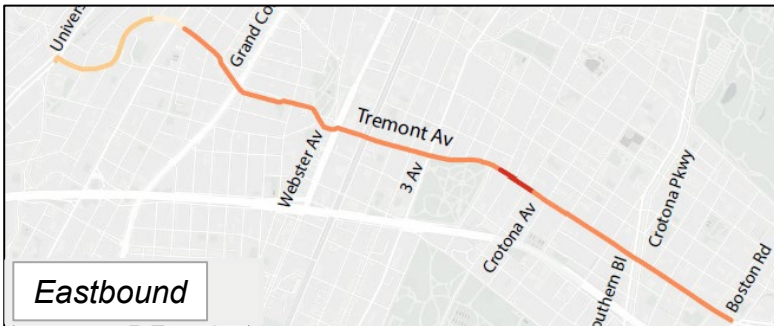
Top: Map of census tracts adjacent to study area  
Bottom source: 2016-2020 American Community Survey

# Tremont Av Bus Speeds

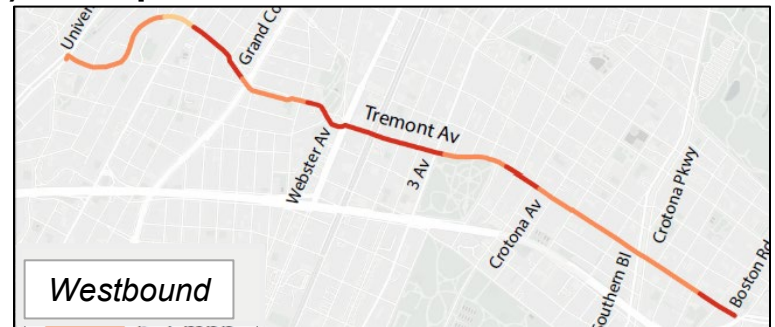
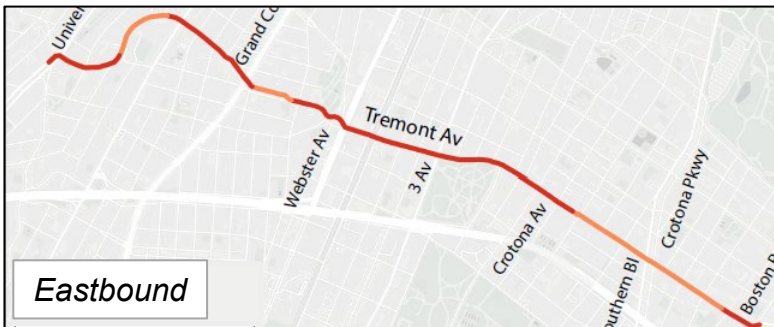


- Buses move slowly all day, and often **less than 5 mph**
- Between 3-7pm, trips take **7-9 minutes longer** than evening/overnight

### AM Peak Period (6-10am) Bus Speeds



### PM Peak Period (3-7pm) Bus Speeds



Source: MTA NYCT Oct 2023



# Community Feedback

- DOT Street Ambassador Outreach:
  - Bus riders’ top requests: timely and more reliable service, less crowding, improved accessibility for older residents and people with disabilities, and faster speeds
  - Tremont Av is congested throughout
  - Lack of parking for delivery vehicles forces double parking
  - Pedestrians feel unsafe crossing the street
- Community Board 5 Feedback:
  - ‘Tremont Ave does not work now for anyone’
  - Leadership support for a busway along Tremont
  - Congestion and pedestrian safety concerns throughout the corridor, including Third Av, Anthony Av, Creston Av
  - School bus parking increases traffic on school days
- Community Board 6 Feedback:
  - Fast & reliable bus service is important to the community
  - Biking on Tremont feels unsafe and uncomfortable
  - Lots of double parking, especially around Arthur Av and on commercial blocks
  - Multiple businesses on the same block get deliveries simultaneously, causing increased double-parking



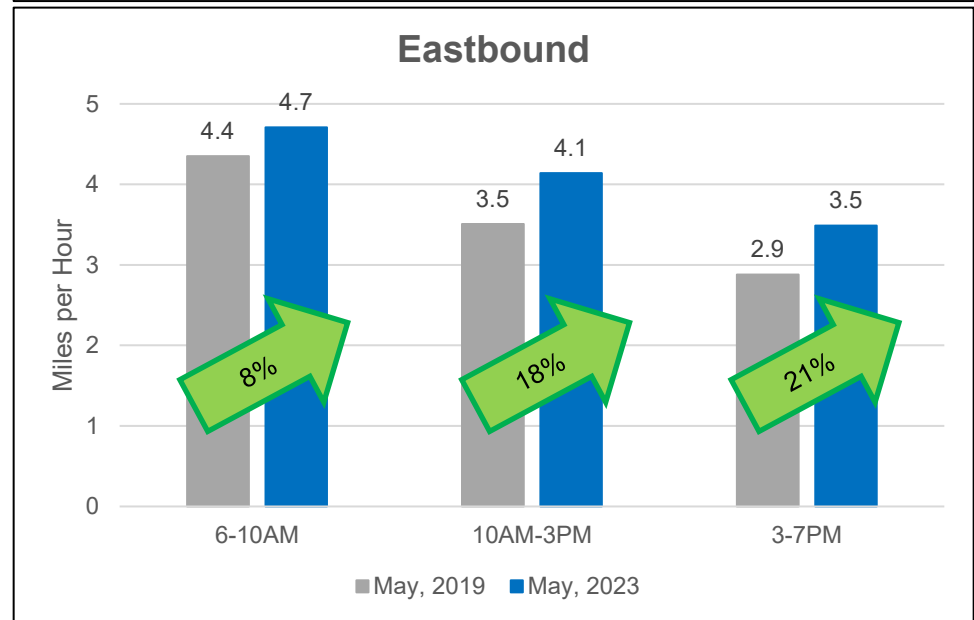
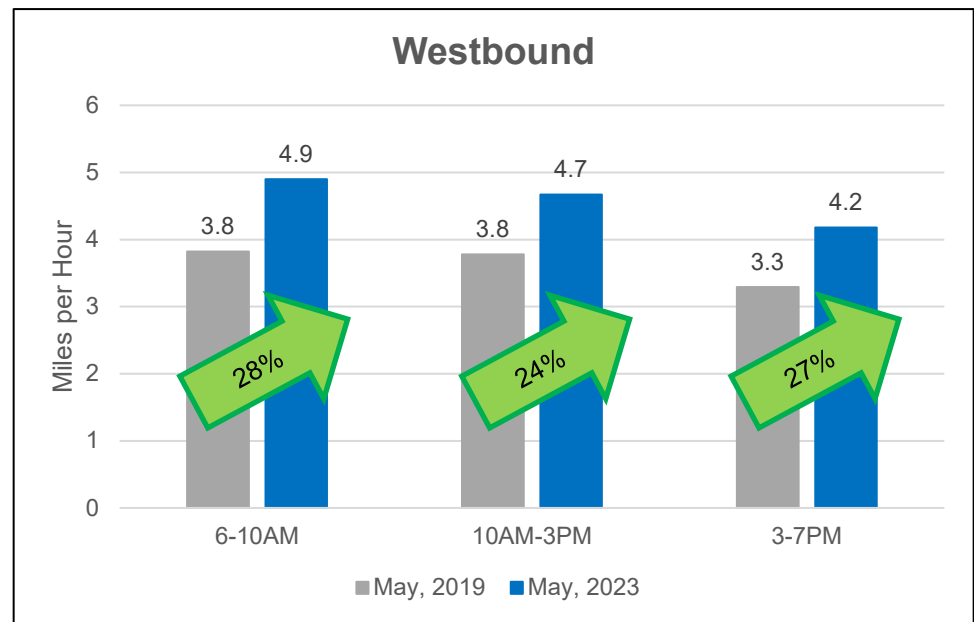
*A DOT Ambassador talking to a pedestrian intercept survey participant*



*DOT & MTA Presenting at Bronx CB 5, March 12, 2024*

# 181<sup>st</sup> Street busway Speed Analysis

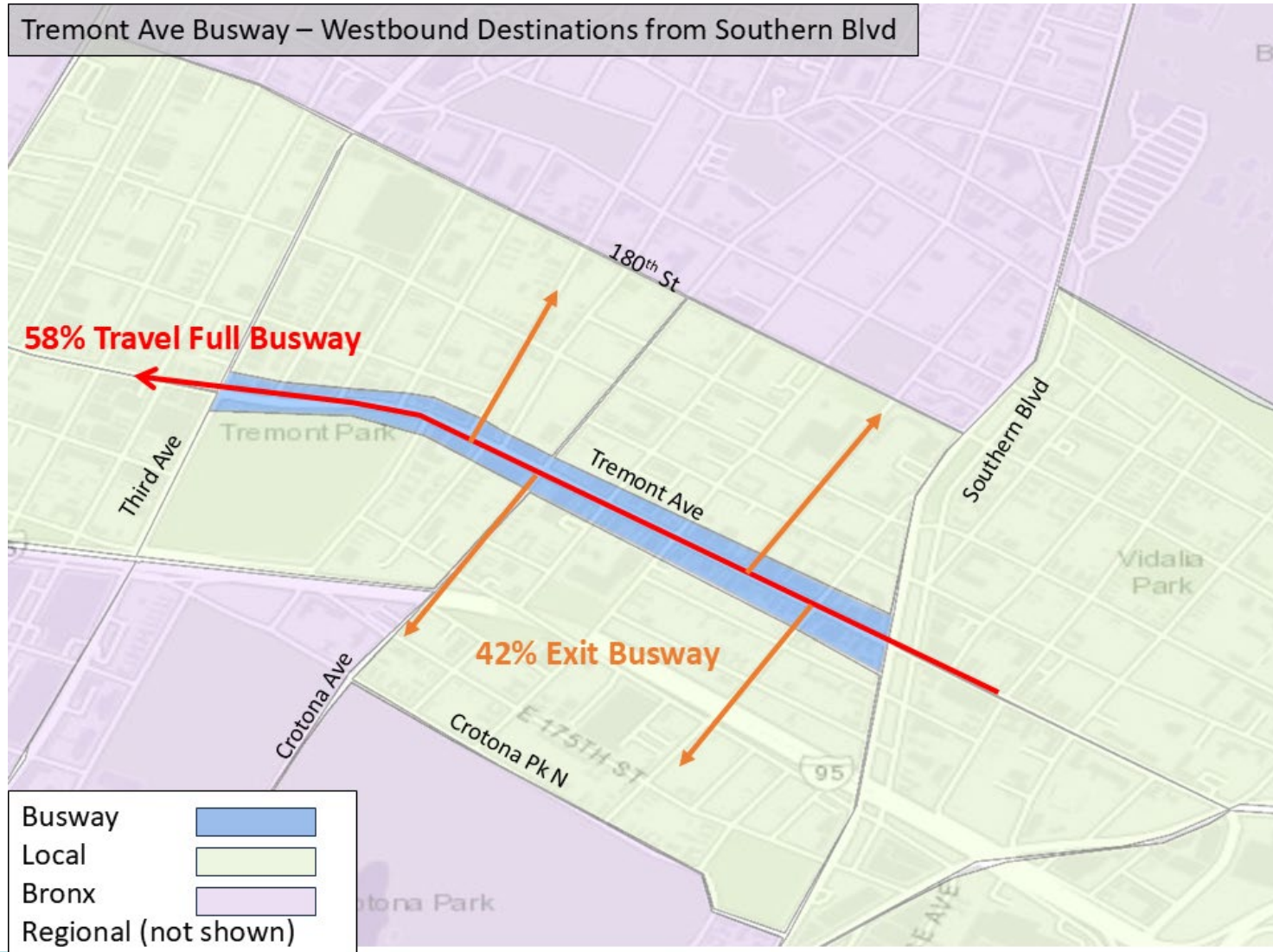
- 181<sup>st</sup> busway launched in 2021
- Average bus speed for all routes using the 181<sup>st</sup> busway increased at all times of the day compared to the same period in 2019
- Overall, eastbound speeds increased by 15% and westbound speeds increased by 26%



Source: MTA

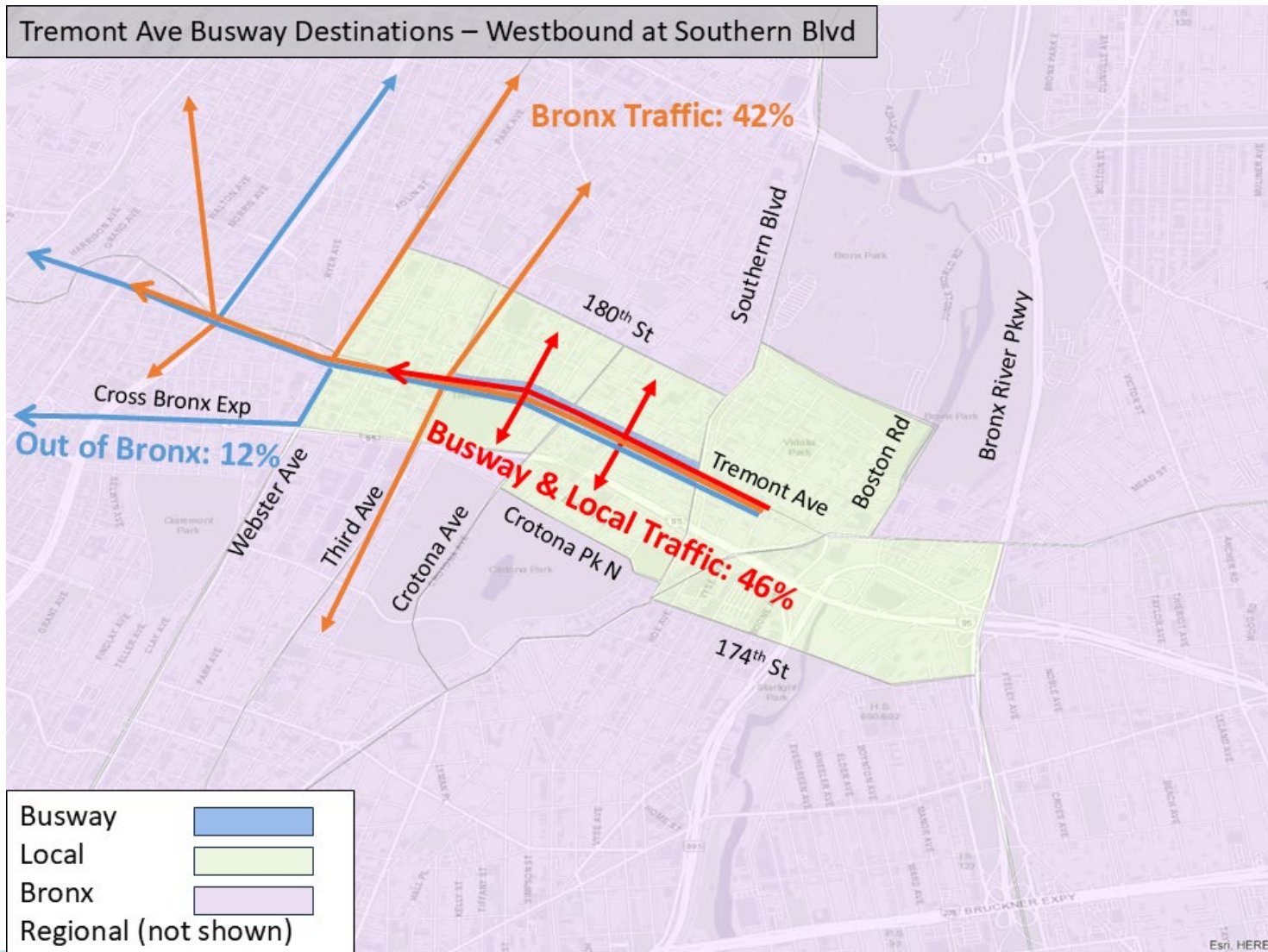
# Westbound Vehicle Travel Paths

Tremont Ave Busway – Westbound Destinations from Southern Blvd



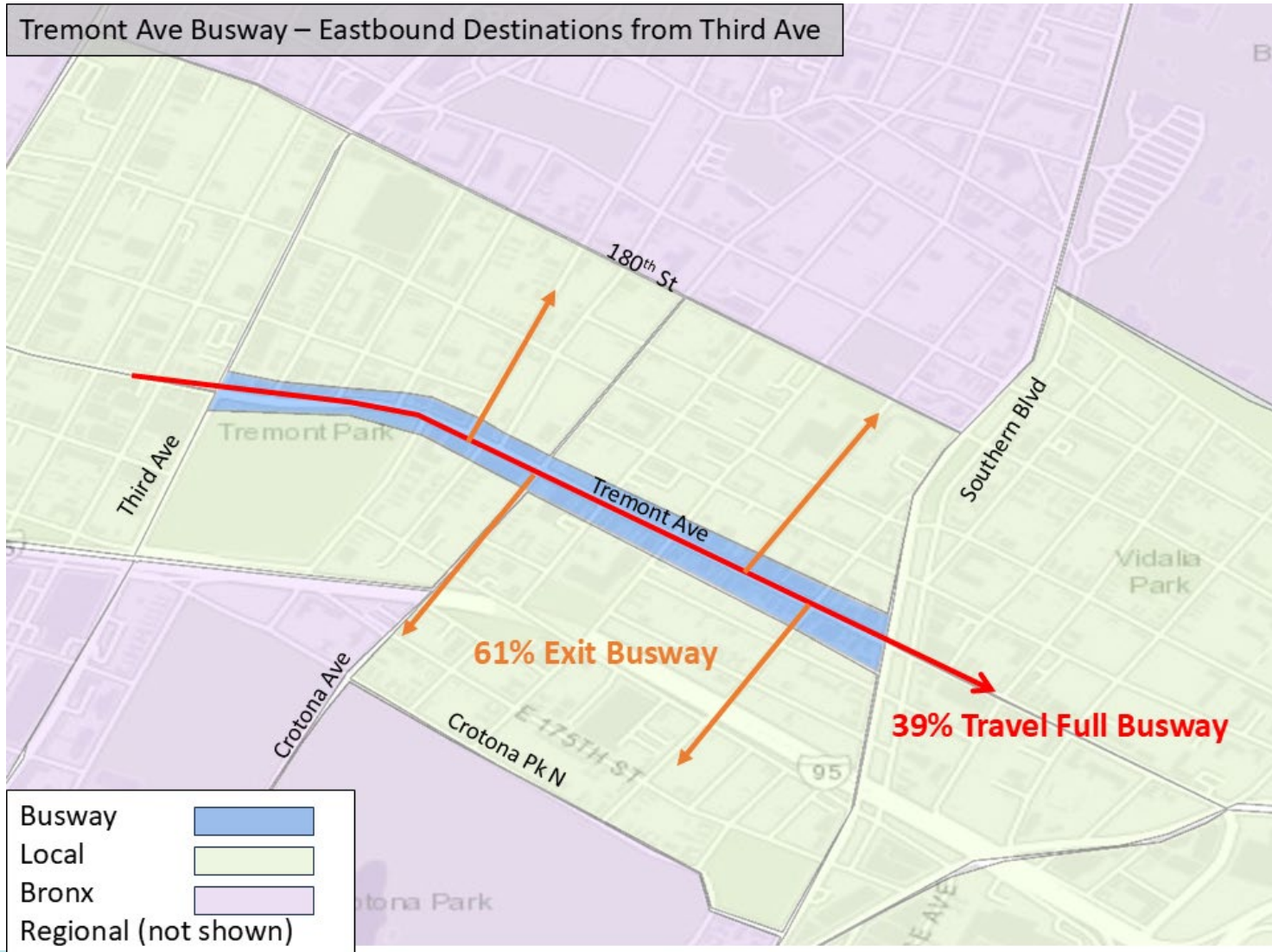
# Westbound Vehicle Destinations

Tremont Ave Busway Destinations – Westbound at Southern Blvd



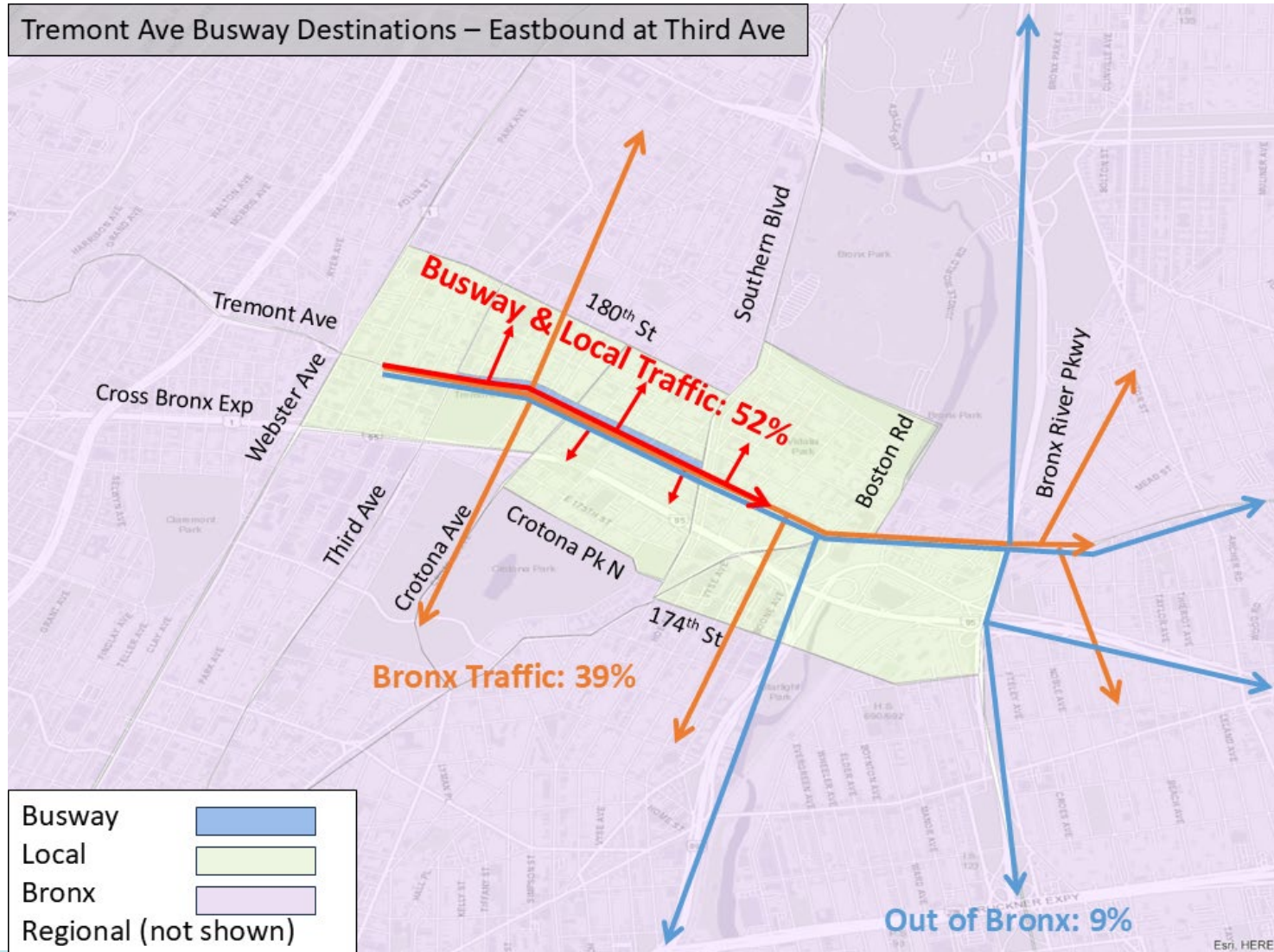
# Eastbound Vehicle Travel Paths

Tremont Ave Busway – Eastbound Destinations from Third Ave



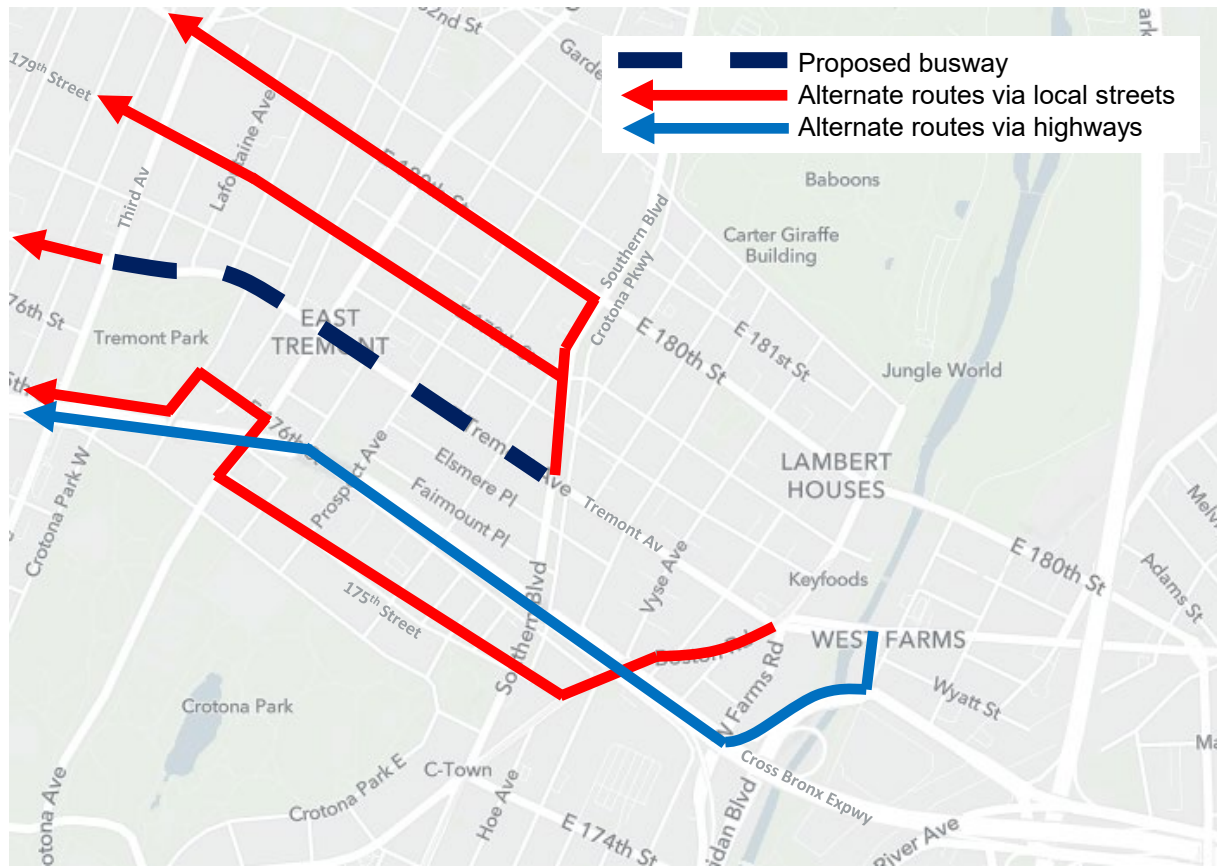
# Eastbound Vehicle Destinations

Tremont Ave Busway Destinations – Eastbound at Third Ave



# Westbound Alternate Routes

- Vehicles passing through the area can choose from multiple alternate routes to divert around the busway



# Eastbound Alternate Routes

- Vehicles passing through the area can choose from multiple alternate routes to divert around the busway

