

Tremont Av Bus Priority Project

Bronx Community Board 6 Transportation Committee

November 14, 2024



Agenda

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

Work Summary & Updates

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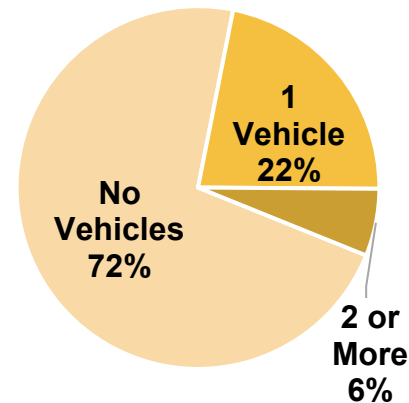
Why Tremont Av?

- University Av to Bronx River Pkwy
- Bx36 carries 34,000 bus riders per day
 - 5th 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

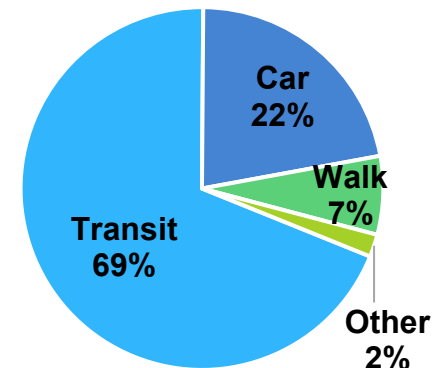


Eastbound Bus Speeds – PM Peak (3-7pm)

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

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**

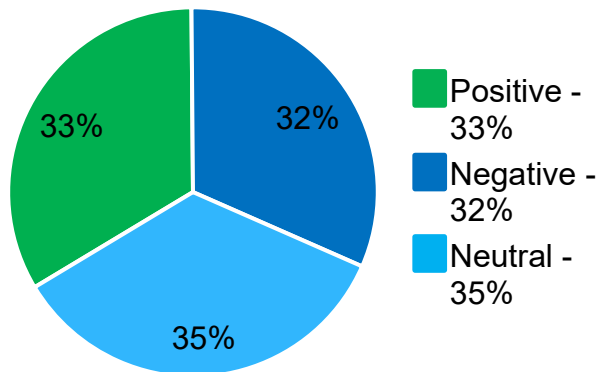


Merchant Survey Results

- 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

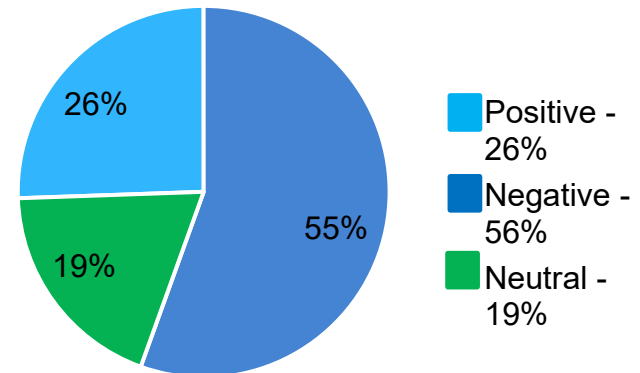
Merchant Sentiment on a Busway

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



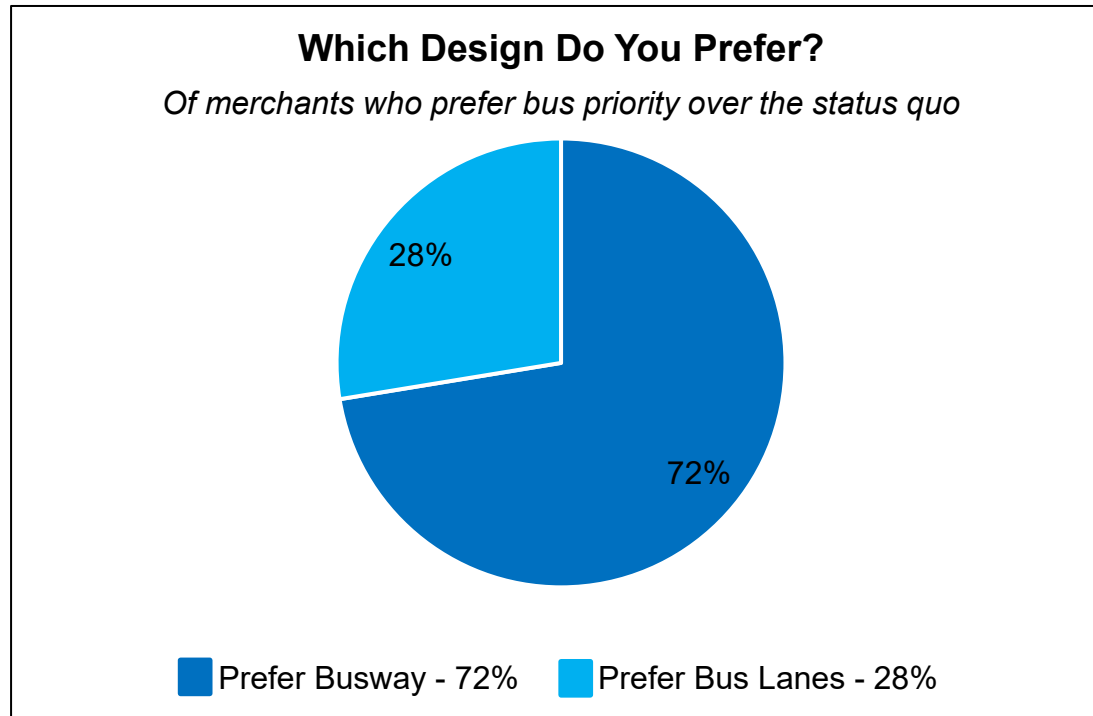
Merchant Sentiment on Bus Lanes

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



Merchant Survey Results: Bus Priority Preference

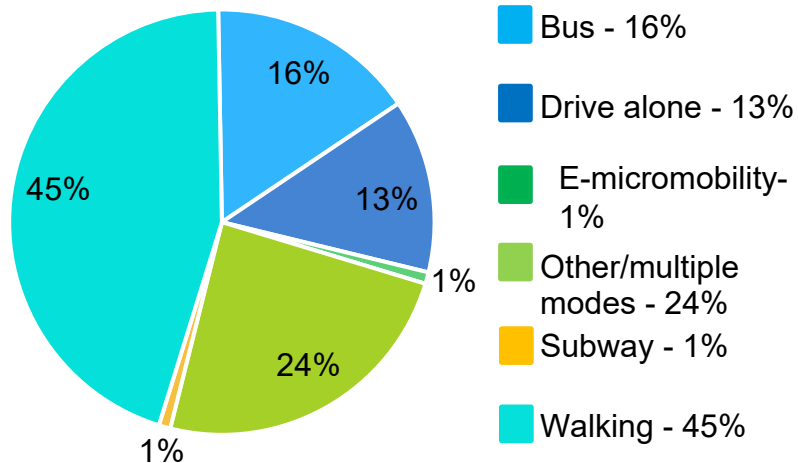
- DOT asked merchants if they would prefer a busway or bus lanes
 - Of the merchants that supported bus priority, over 2/3 would prefer a busway, while less than 1/3 would prefer bus lanes



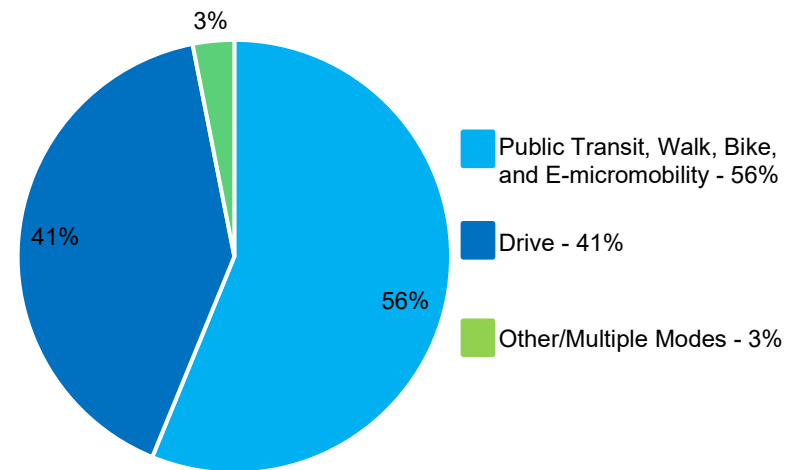
Merchant Survey Results: Business Access

- 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

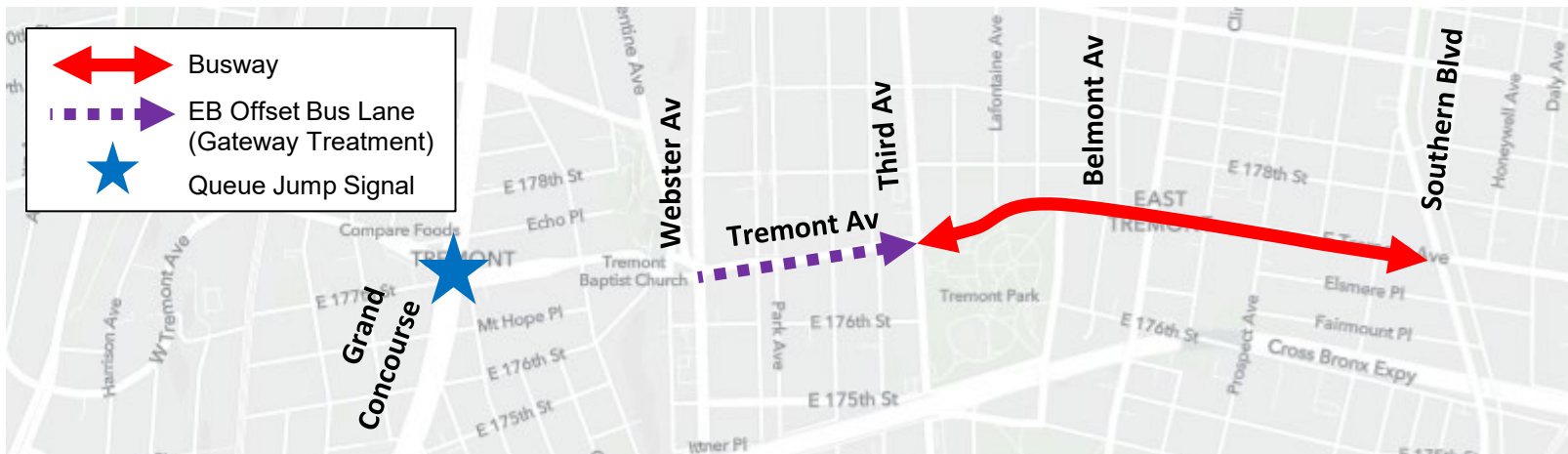


DOT staff surveying pedestrians on Tremont Av

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

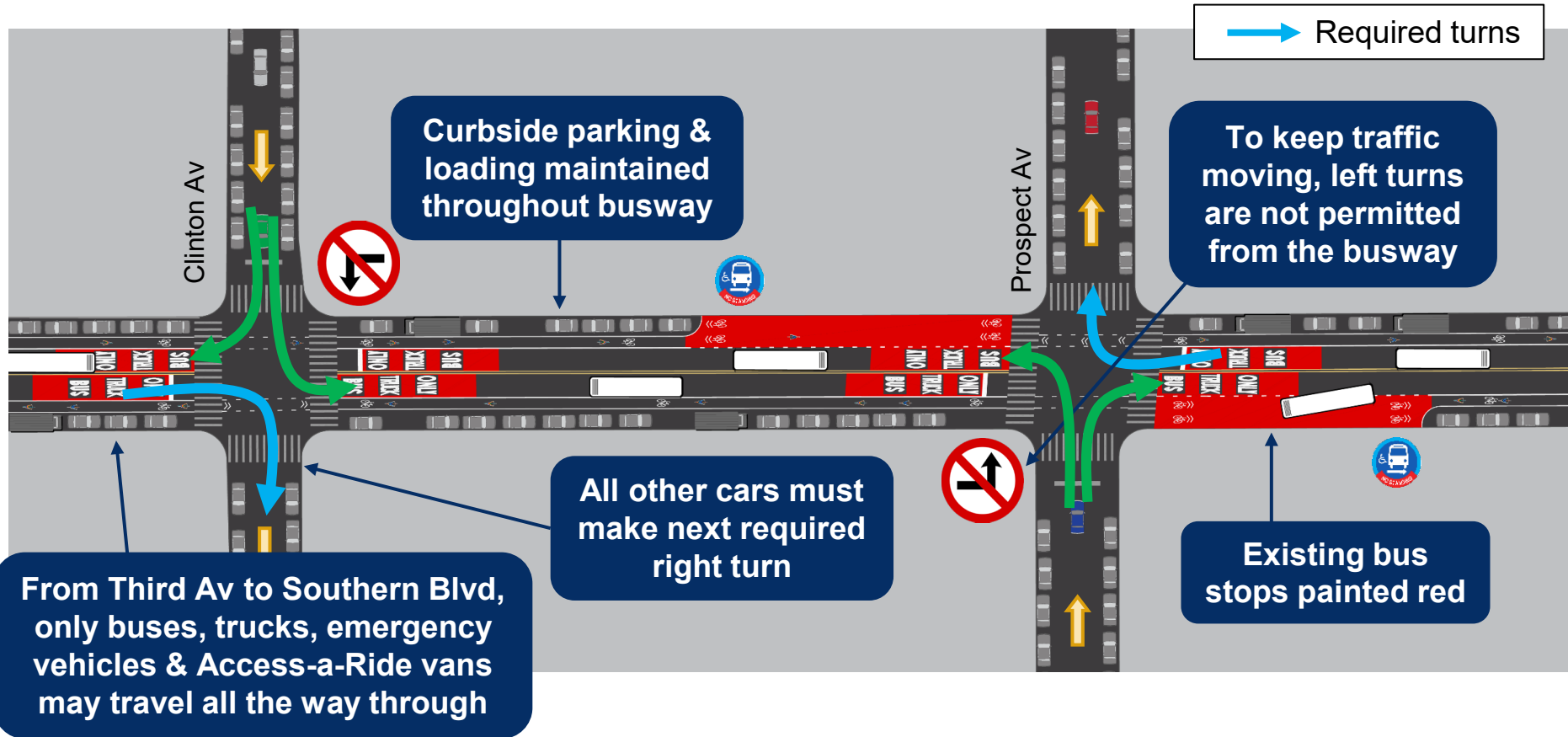
Busway Parking & Curb Access

- 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

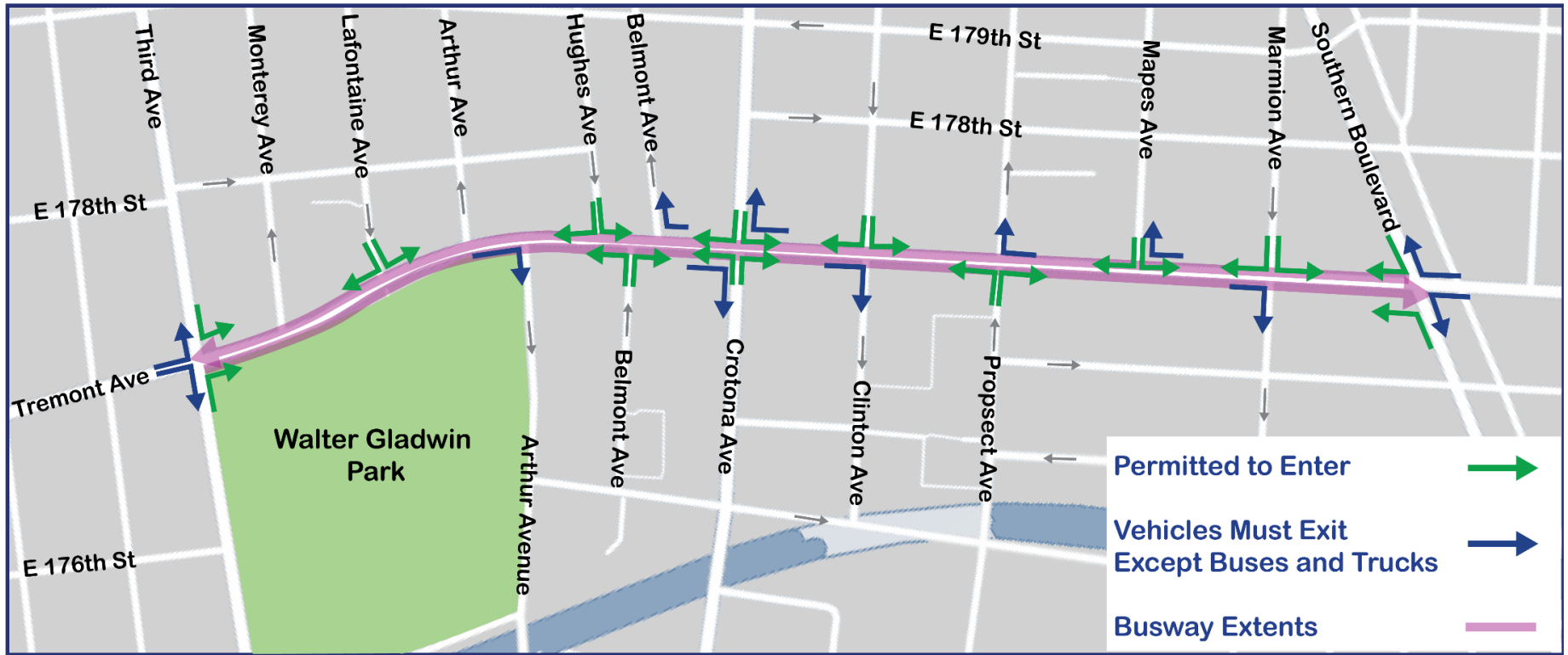


Parking on 181st St busway, Manhattan

Busway Example: Clinton Av to Prospect Av

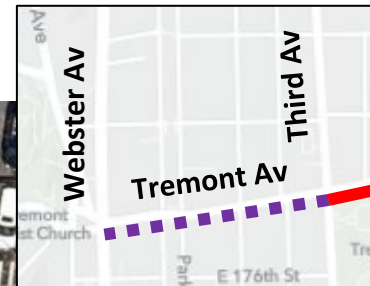


Busway Turn Map



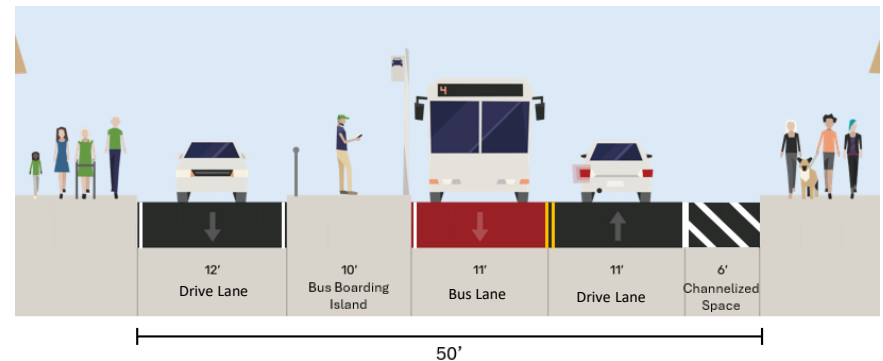
Eastbound Gateway Treatment

- 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

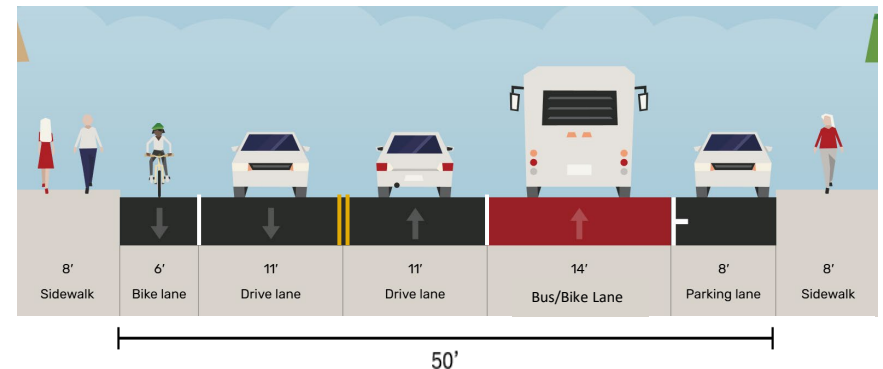


Bus Lane Alternatives

- 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



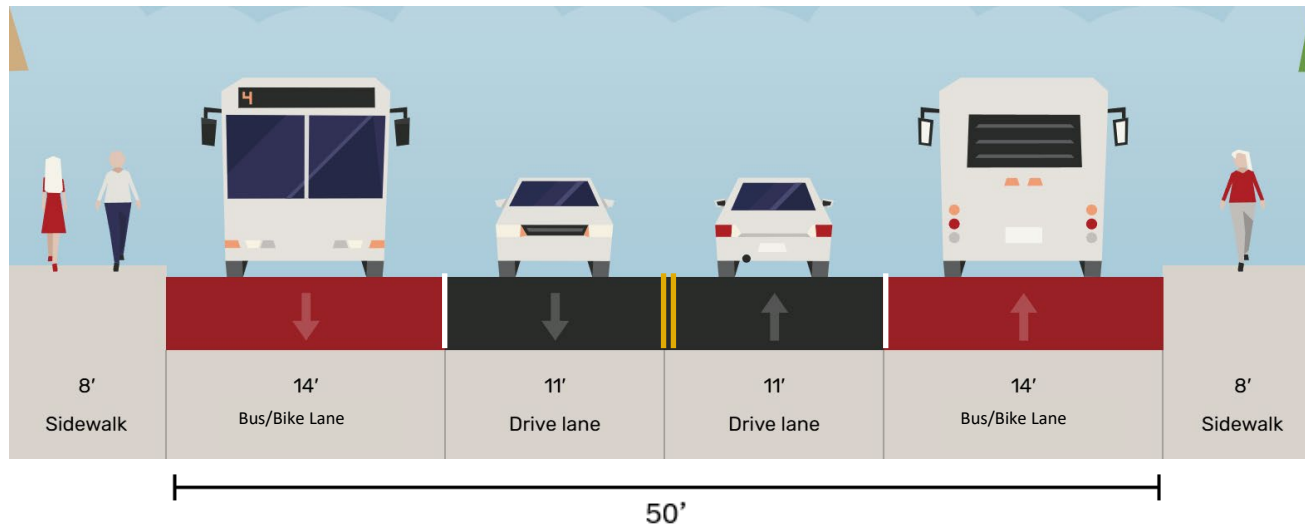
Rendering of center-running bus lane on Tremont Av



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 181st St. busway, bus speeds increased up to 28%

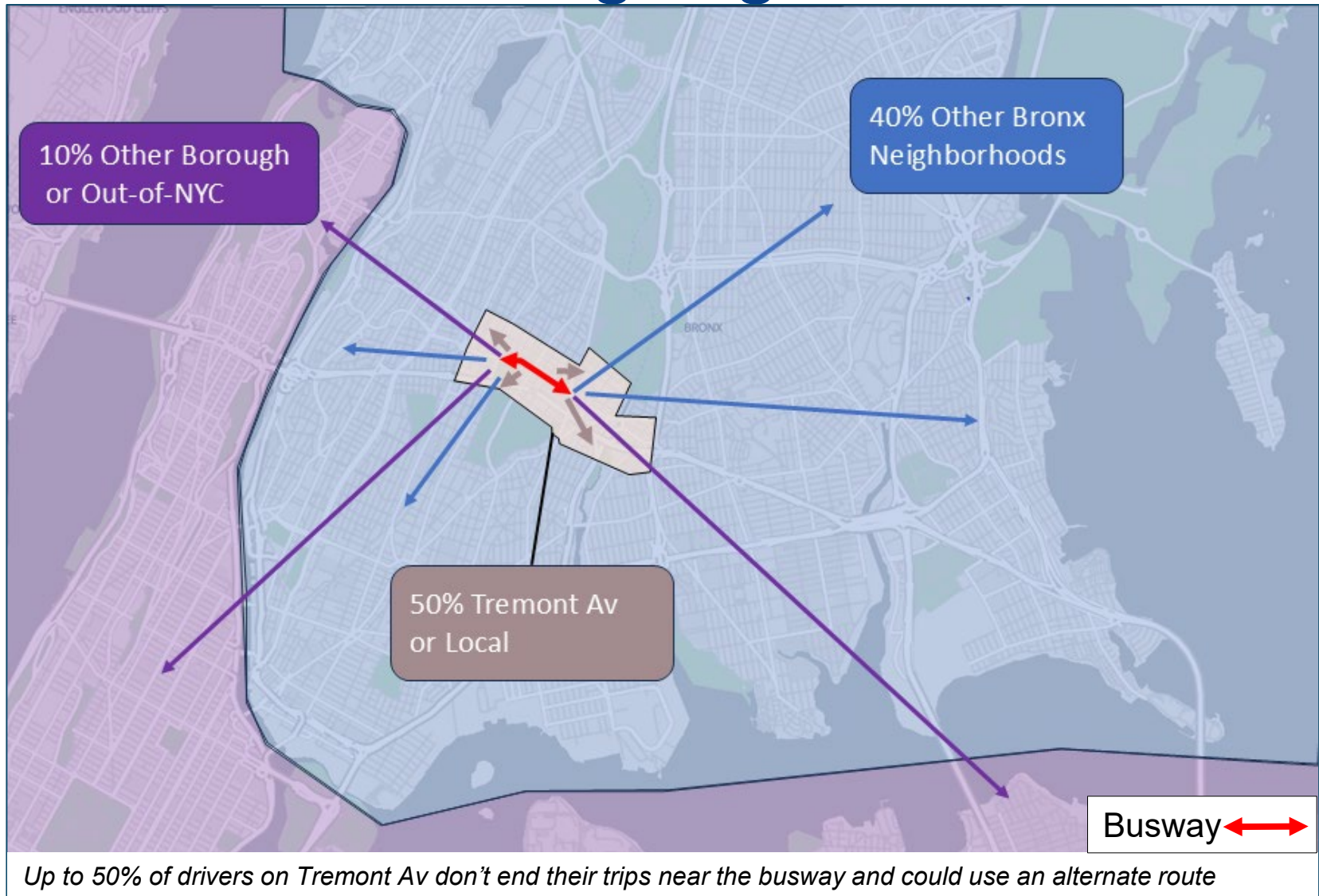


Rendering of curbside bus lanes on Tremont Av

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

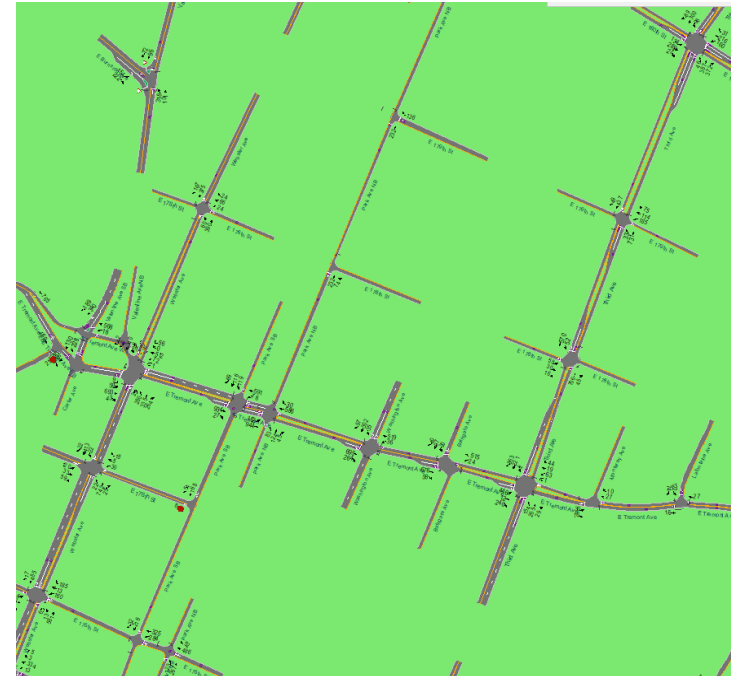
3. Model each intersection and analyze:

- 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

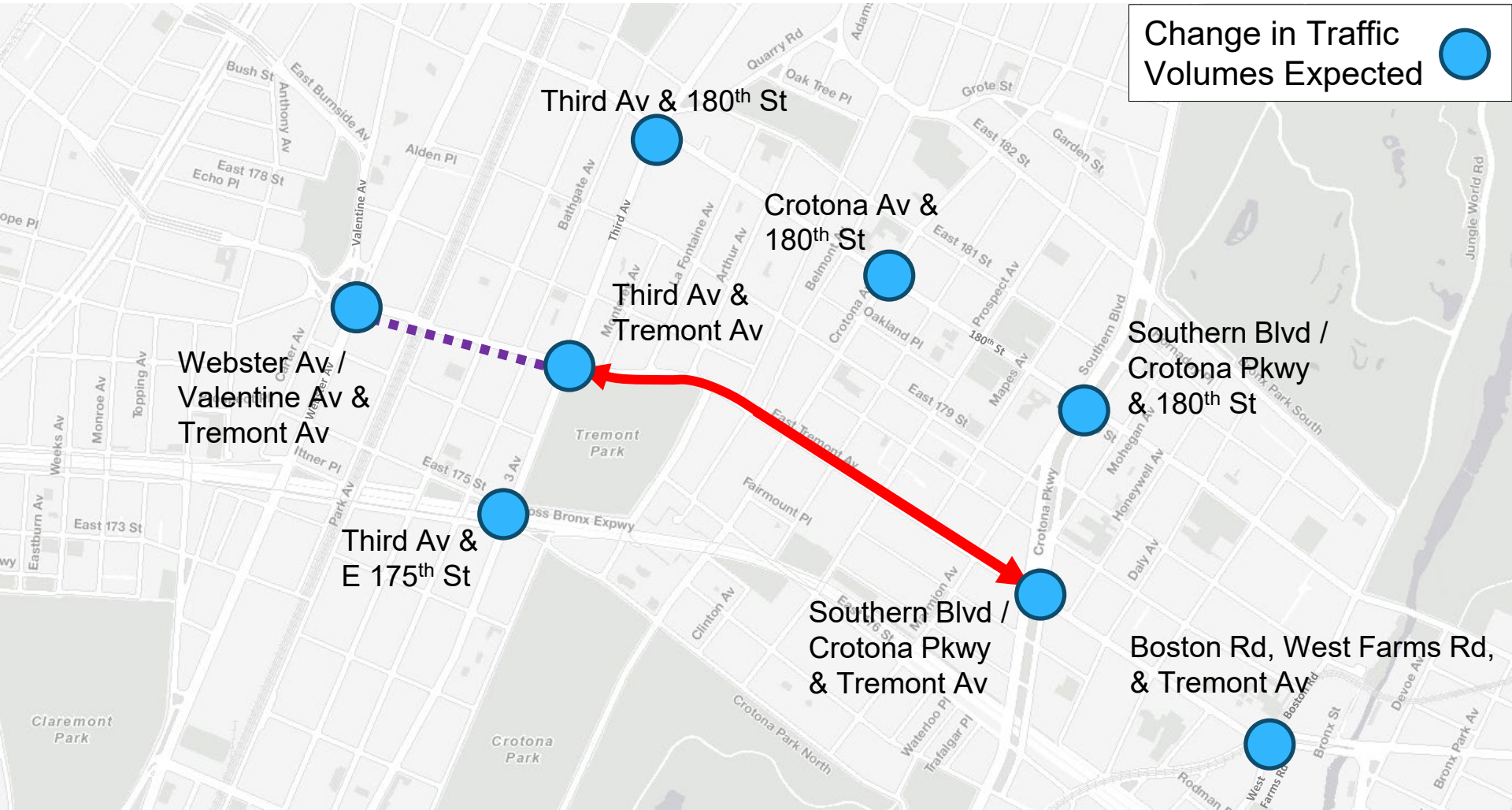
- Busiest hours of day, longest traffic queues
- Realistically, some drivers divert to other routes, other modes of transportation, or choose to travel at different times of day
- Prepare traffic analyses for a range of scenarios, from no traffic reduction up to a 40% reduction
 - Reported results assume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

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

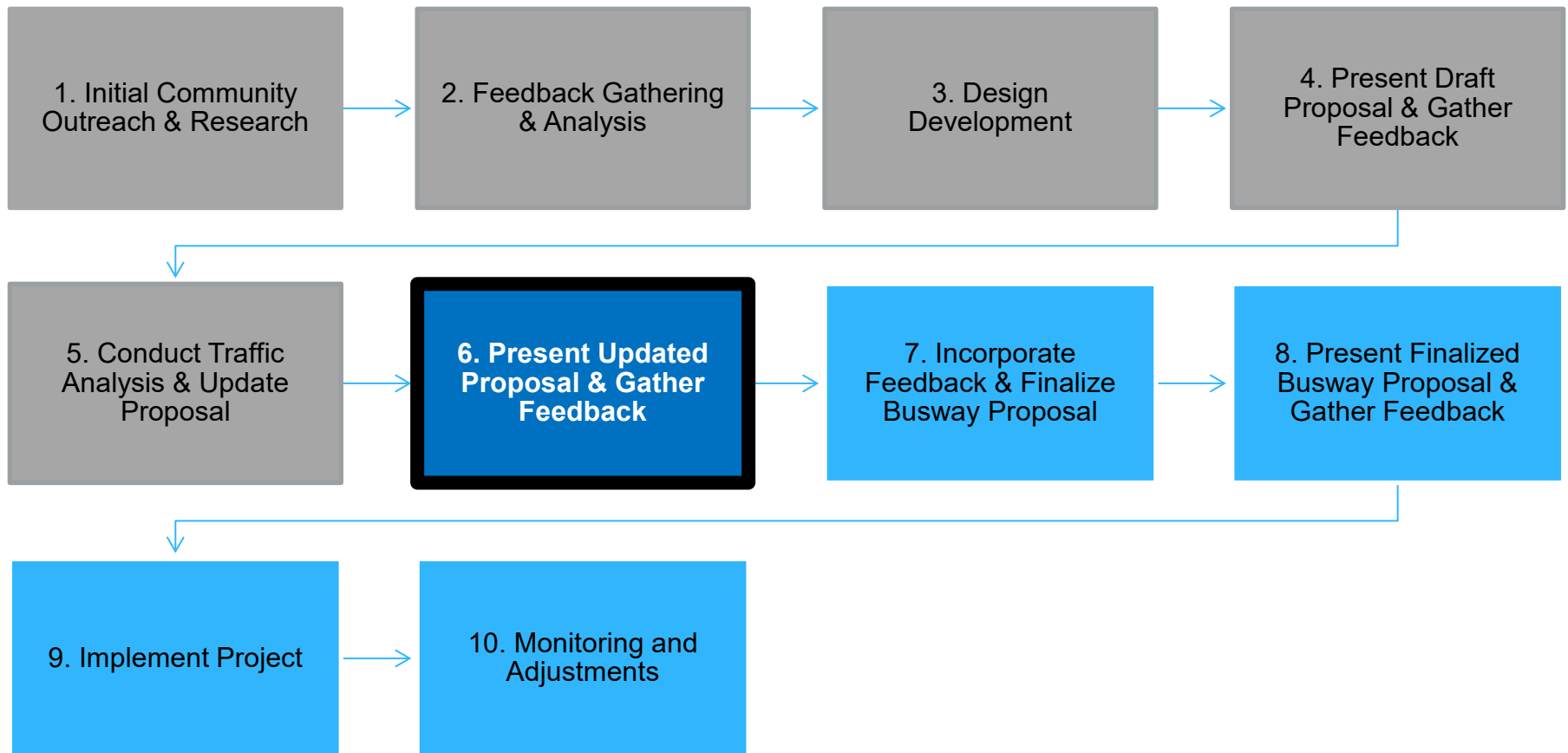


Participant in the 2023 bus passenger survey
Sign reads "Pasar ma rápido"/ "Go faster"



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



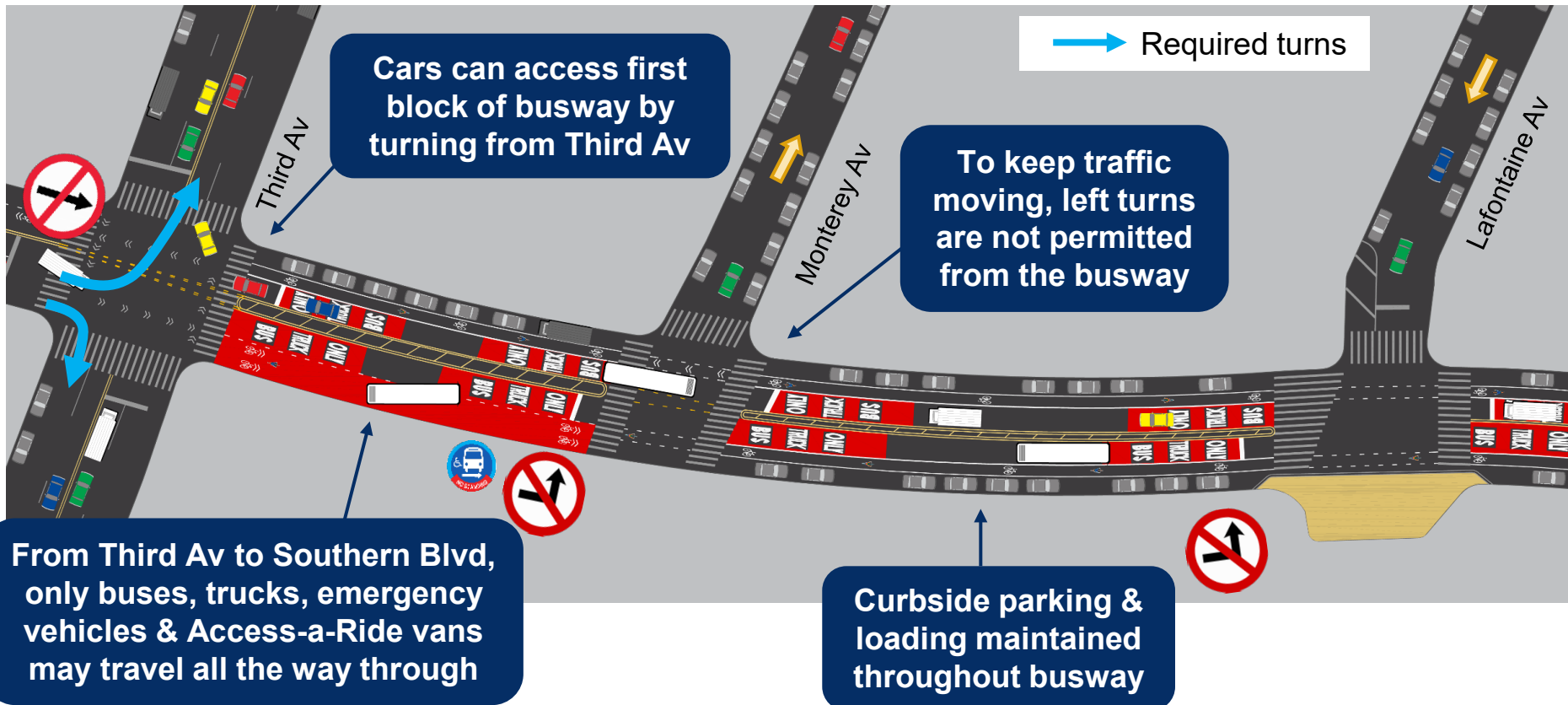
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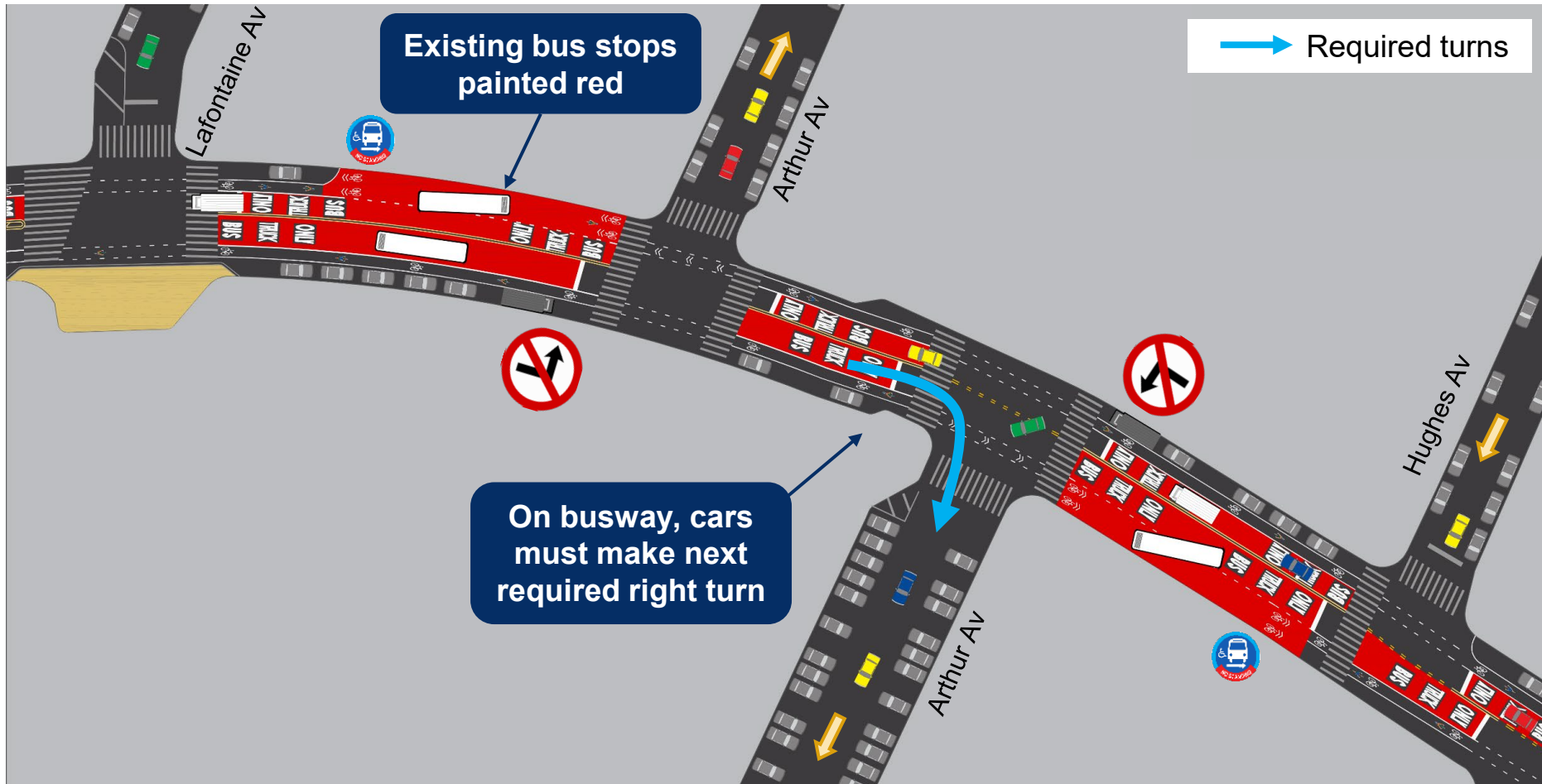
NYC DOT

Appendix

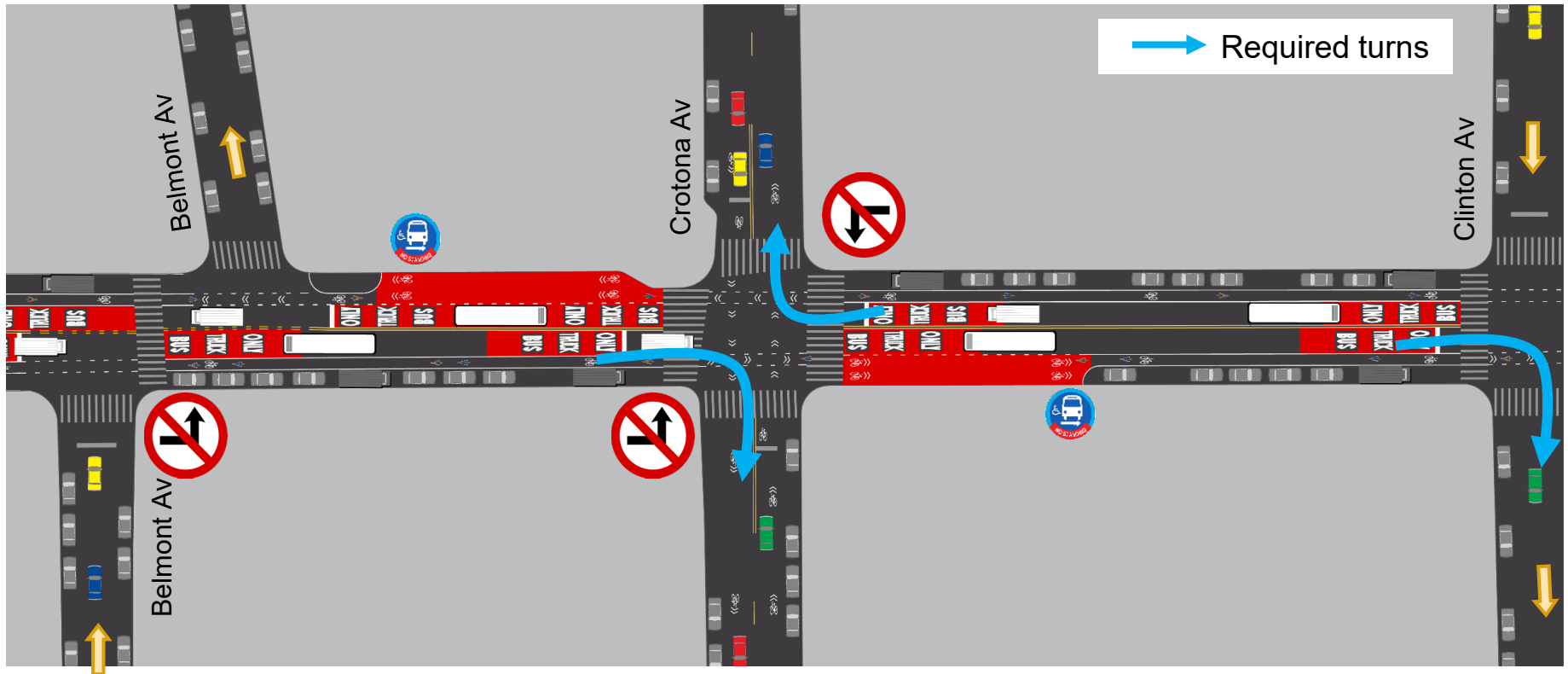
Busway: Third Av to Lafontaine Av



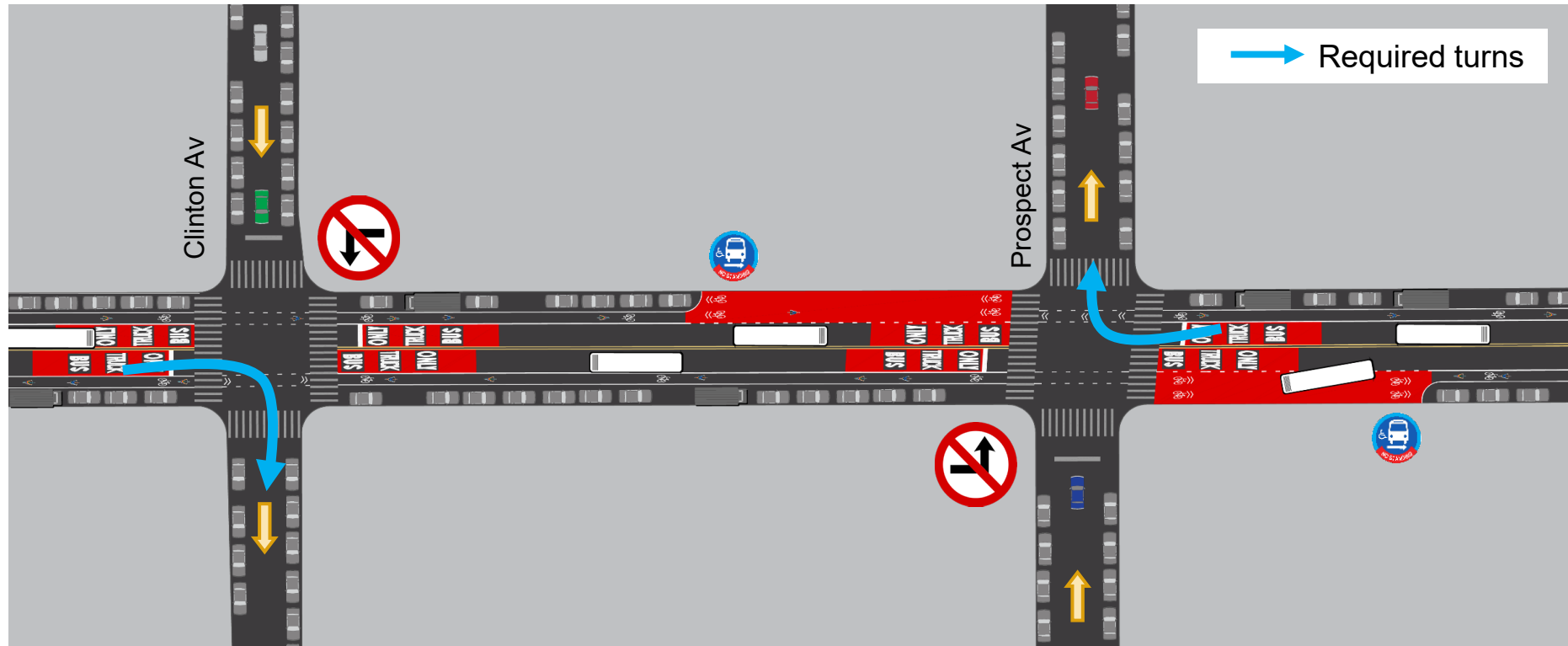
Busway: Lafontaine Av to Hughes Av



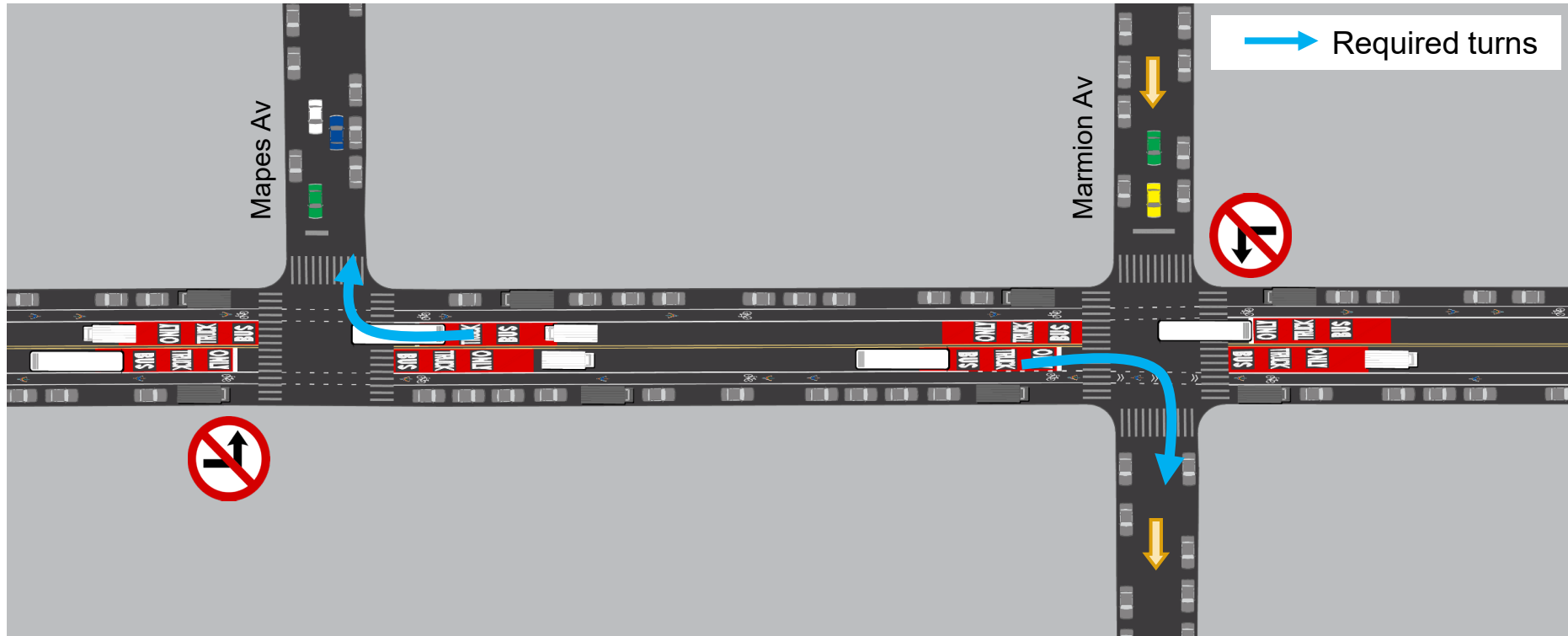
Busway: Hughes Av to Clinton Av



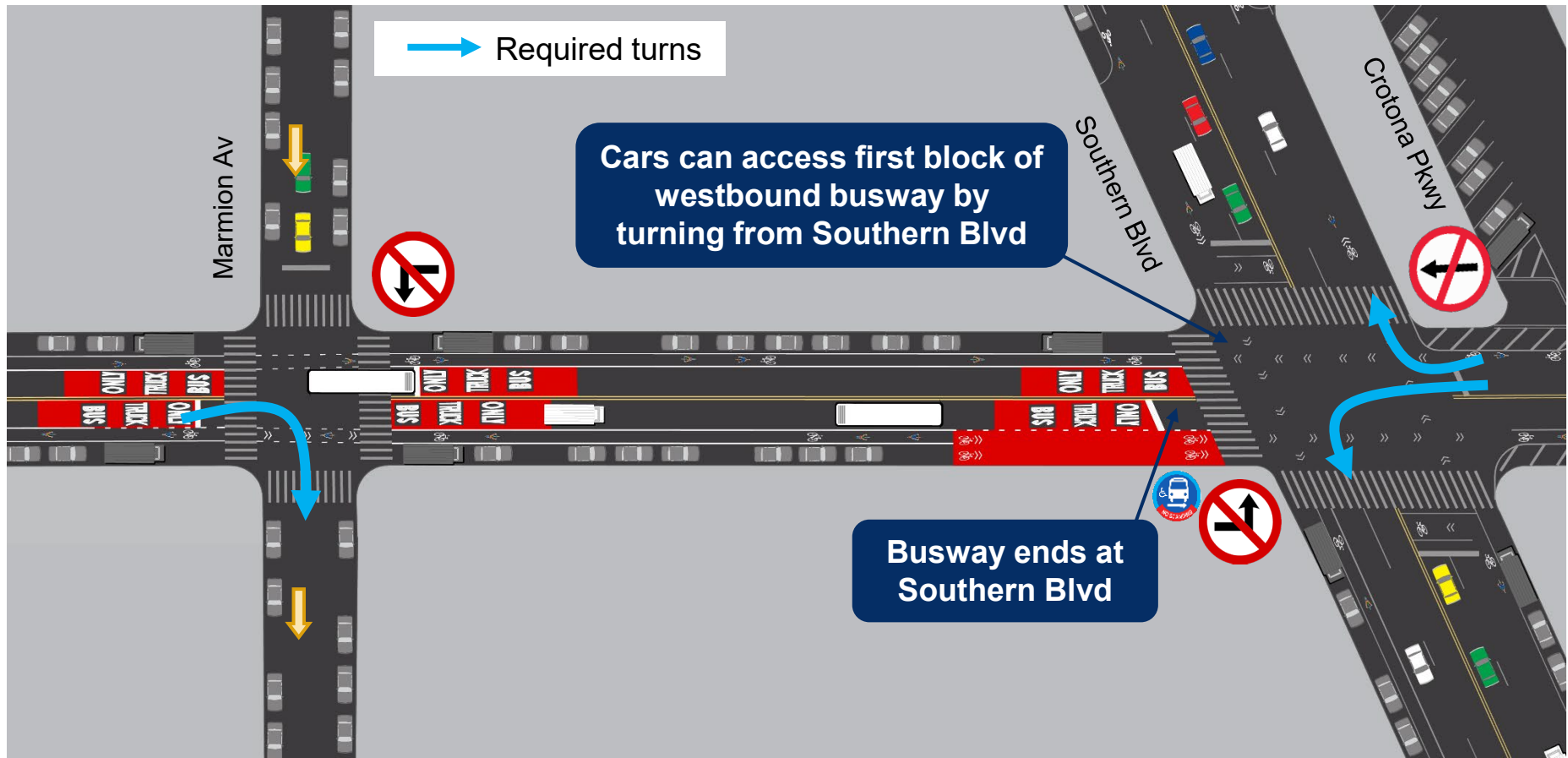
Busway: Clinton Av to Mapes Av



Busway: Mapes Av to Marmion Av



Busway: Marmion Av to Southern Blvd

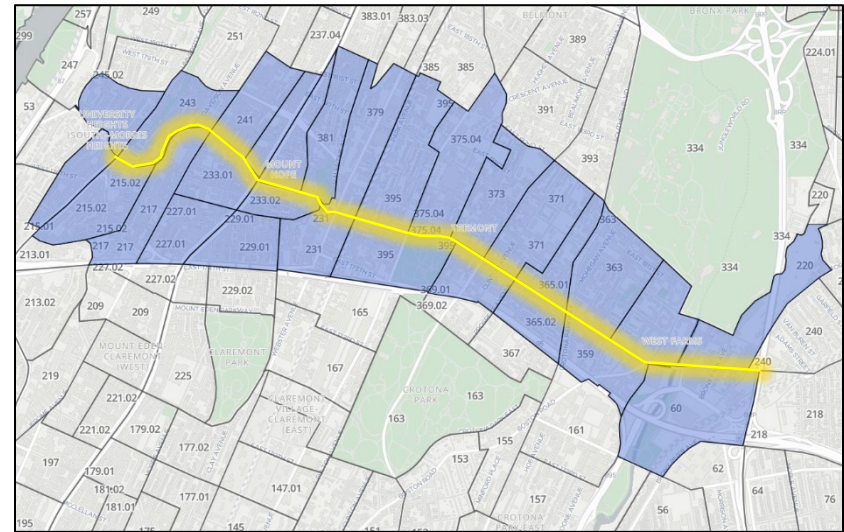


- ➡ Allowed turns onto busway
- ➡ Required turns

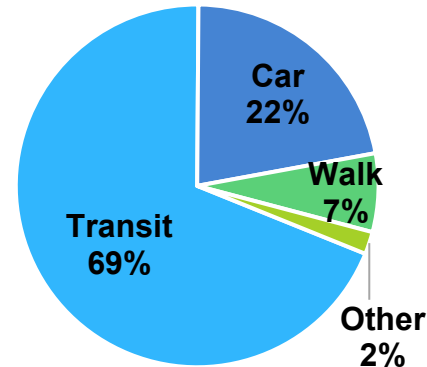
Demographics

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

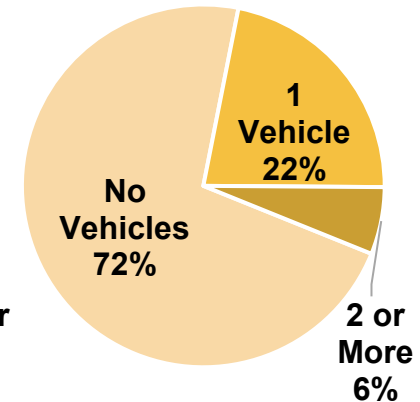
- 118,000 residents
- 72% of households do not have access to a private vehicle
 - Above city average of 55%
- 78% commute to work via public transit, walking, or biking
 - Above city average of 71%
- 45 minute average travel time to work
 - Above city average of 41 minutes
- \$31,000 median household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



Travel to Work

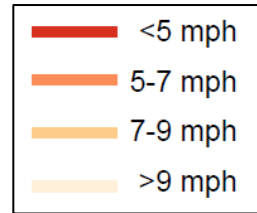


Vehicle Access by Household



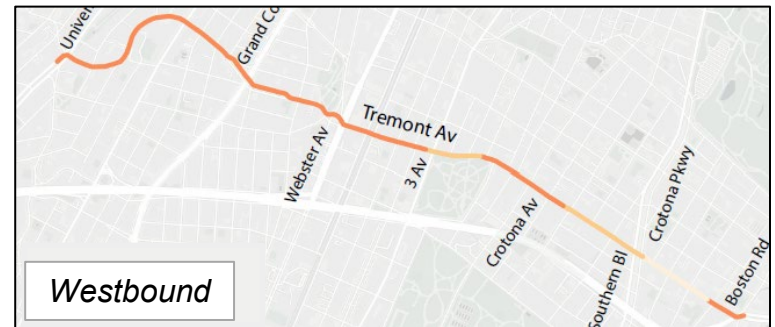
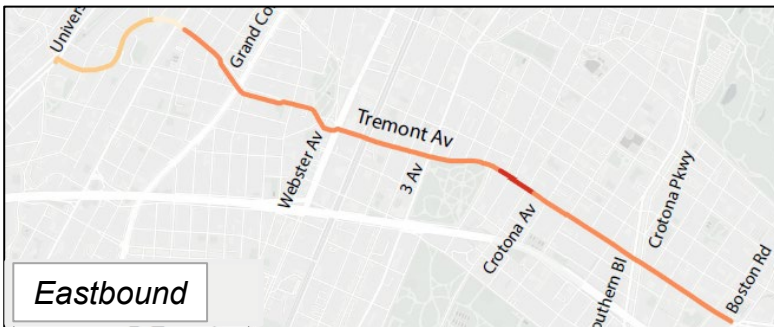
Top: Map of census tracts adjacent to study area
Bottom source: 2016-2020 American Community Survey

Tremont Av Bus Speeds

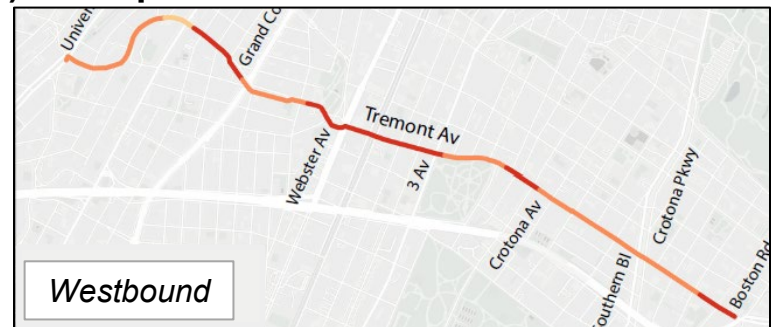
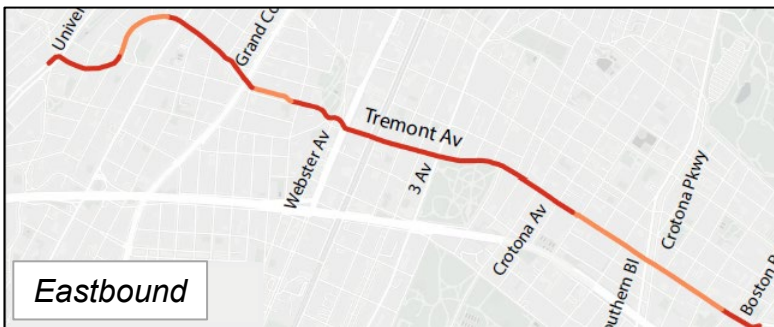


- Buses move slowly all day, and often **less than 5 mph**
- Between 3-7pm, trips take **7-9 minutes longer** than evening/overnight

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



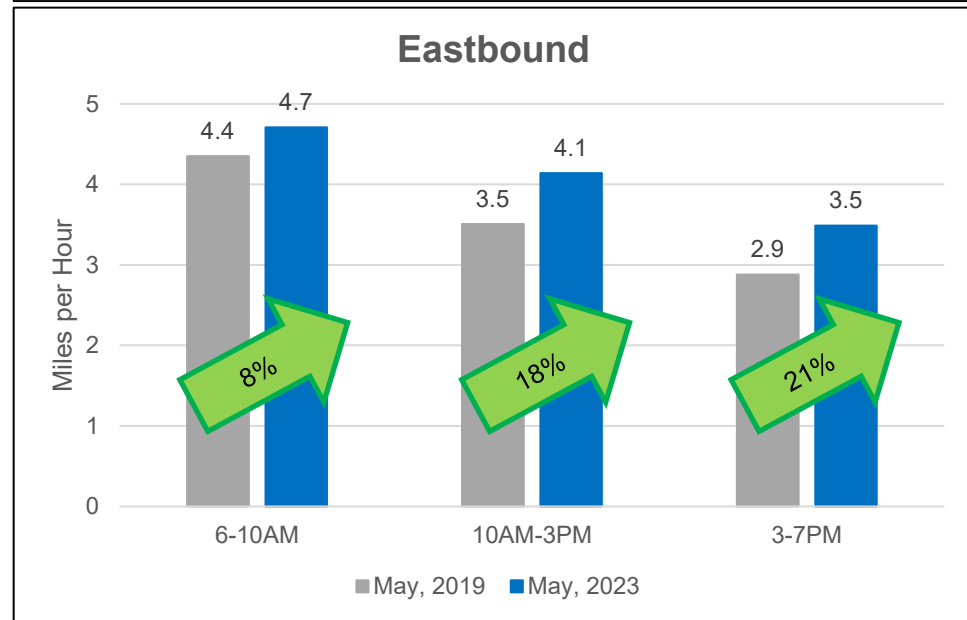
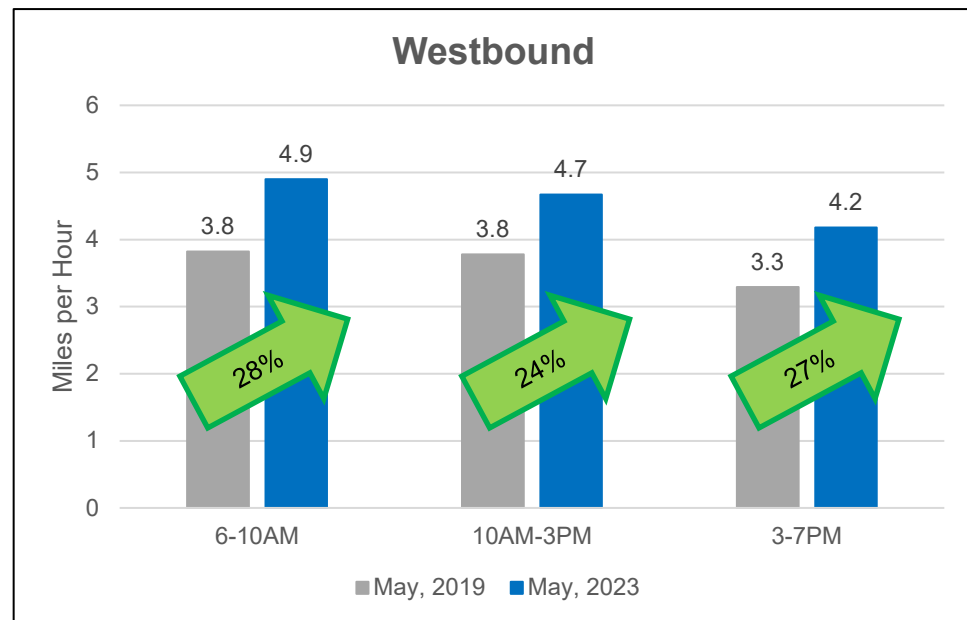
A DOT Ambassador talking to a pedestrian intercept survey participant



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

181st Street busway Speed Analysis

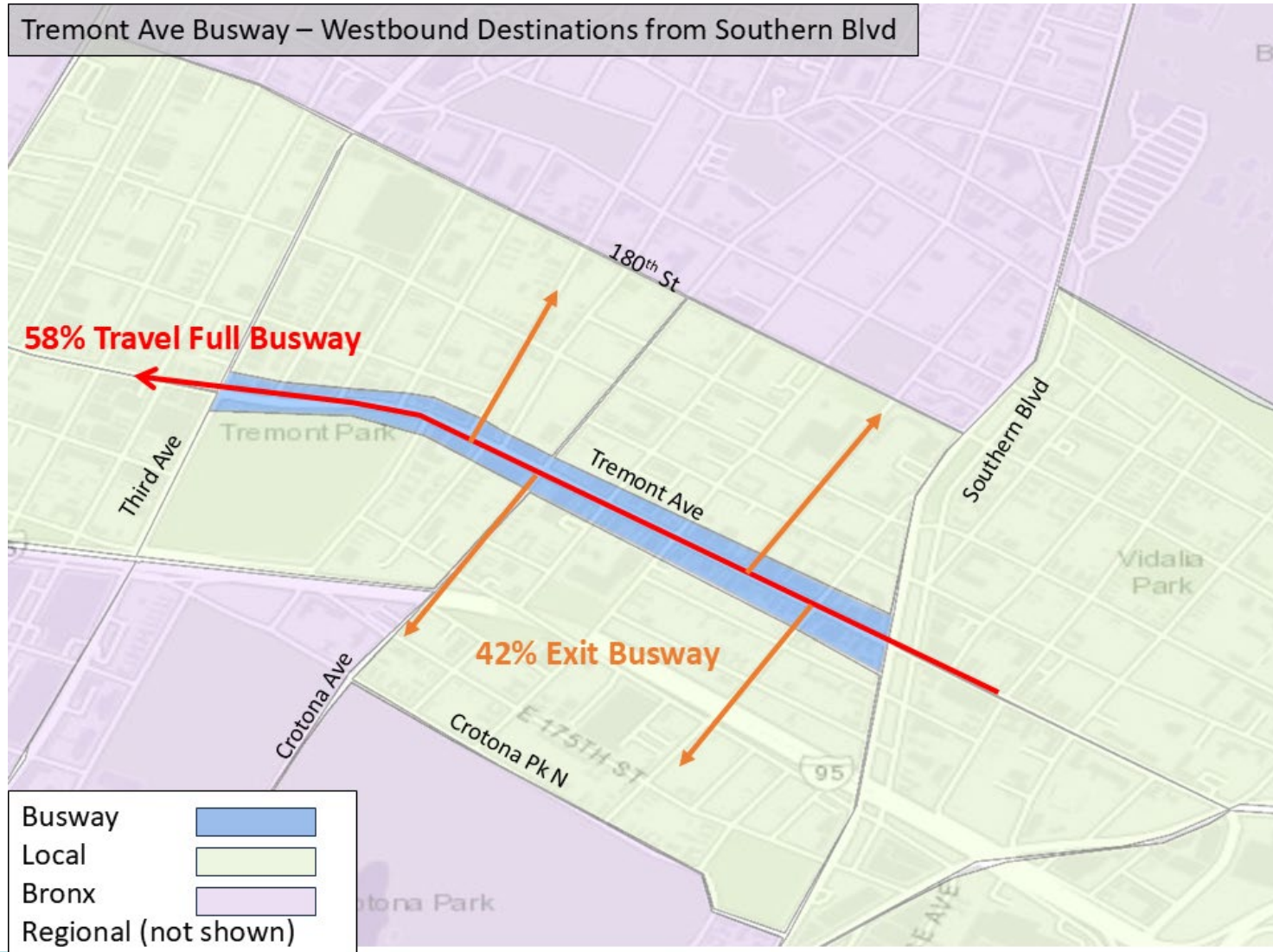
- 181st busway launched in 2021
- Average bus speed for all routes using the 181st busway increased at all times of the day compared to the same period in 2019
- Overall, eastbound speeds increased by 15% and westbound speeds increased by 26%



Source: MTA

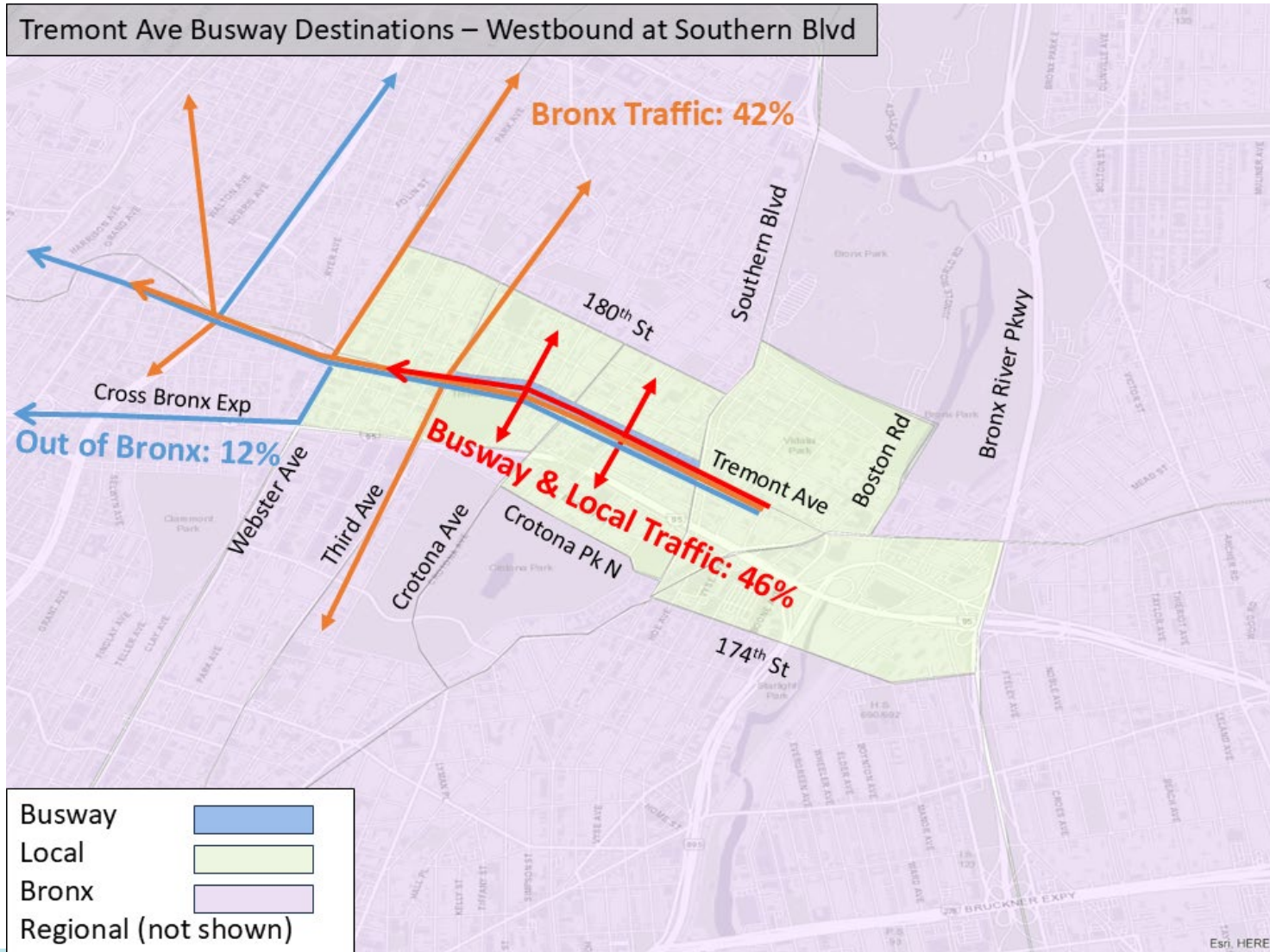
Westbound Vehicle Travel Paths

Tremont Ave Busway – Westbound Destinations from Southern Blvd



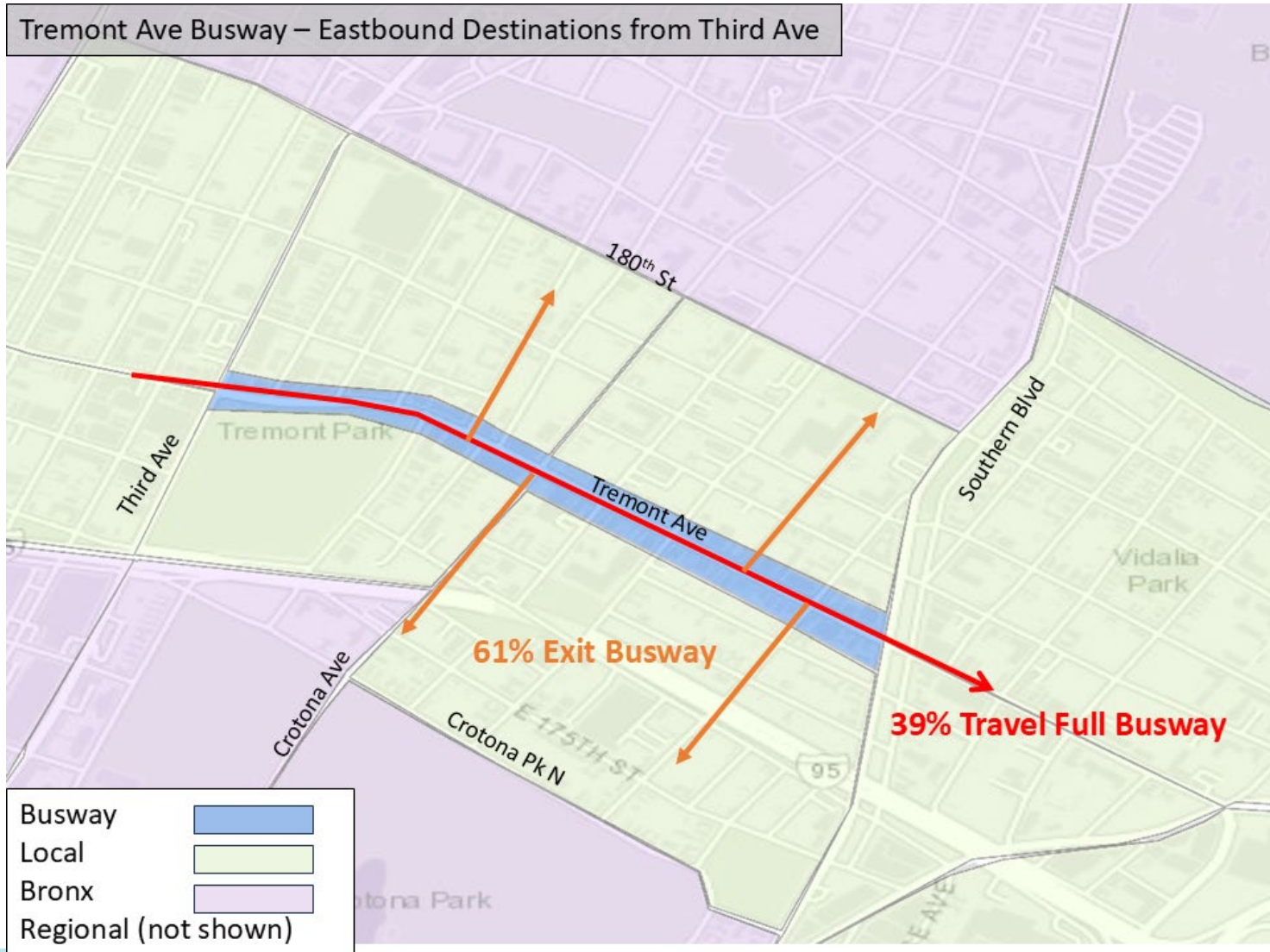
Westbound Vehicle Destinations

Tremont Ave Busway Destinations – Westbound at Southern Blvd



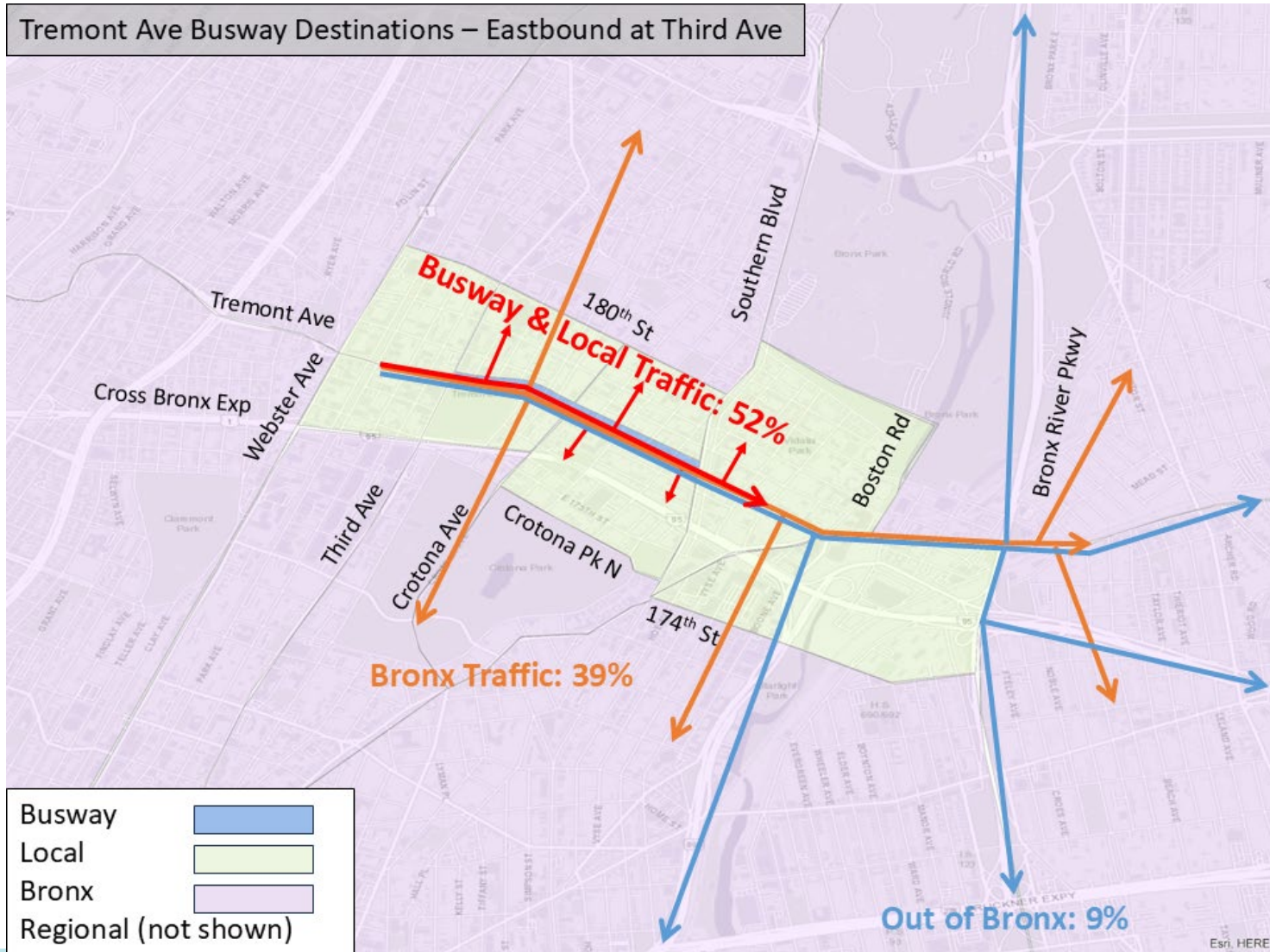
Eastbound Vehicle Travel Paths

Tremont Ave Busway – Eastbound Destinations from Third Ave



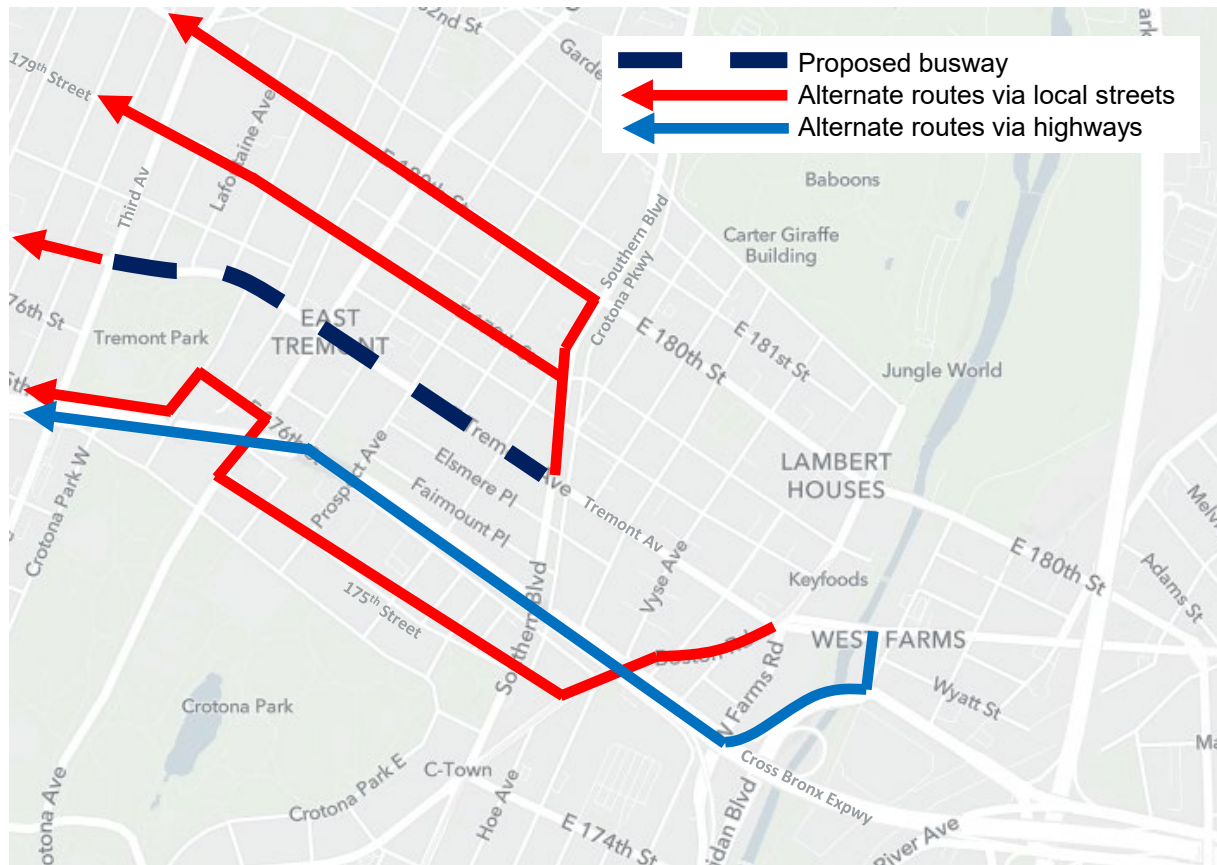
Eastbound Vehicle Destinations

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

