

## Section 4: 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Bridge to Willis Avenue Bridge

### Preferred Route

#### *3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue extensions between East 135<sup>th</sup> Street and Bruckner Boulevard*

Class 3 bike routes should be signed on the extensions of 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue on either side of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Bridge between East 135<sup>th</sup> Street and Bruckner Boulevard. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue street extensions are wide enough only for one travel and one parking lane and cannot accommodate a striped bicycle lane. The easterly sidewalk between East 134<sup>th</sup> Street and Bruckner Boulevard is in poor condition and should be repaved. Should the street be improved in the future, then sidewalk space could be borrowed to implement Class 2 bike lanes along these segments.

#### *Connection to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Bridge*

Pedestrian and bicycle access to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Bridge is possible from a westerly ramp from East 135<sup>th</sup> street and via the recently-constructed stairs at both 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue street extensions, which do not provide direct access to the waterfront (see Photo 25, page 27).

Crosswalks and pedestrian walk signals should be installed at East 135<sup>th</sup> Street and the entrances to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Bridge (see Photos 23 and 24, page 26). Signs indicating the entrances to the bridge bicycle and pedestrian paths should be added at the foot of the bridge and at the intersections of 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and East 135<sup>th</sup> Street on either side of the elevated Major Deegan Expressway.

Between 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and Lincoln Avenue, there are two one-way extensions of Bruckner Boulevard on

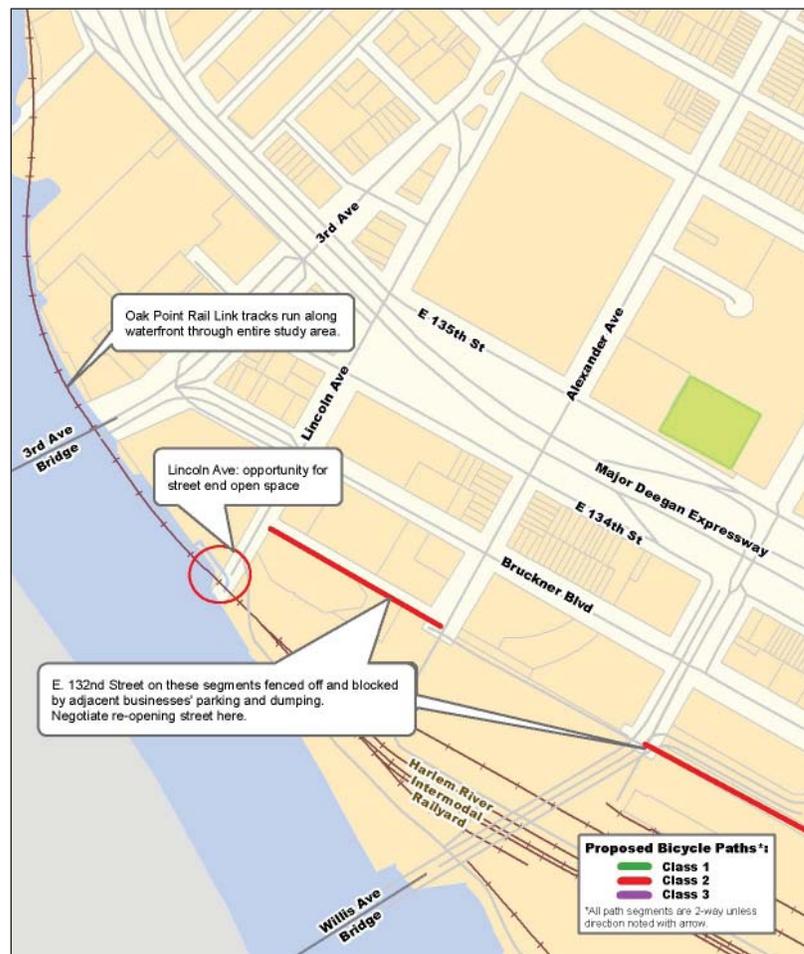


Figure 49. Map of opportunities and constraints along Section 4

either side of an on-ramp to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Bridge. Each is lightly trafficked and has sufficient width to stripe a six-foot wide Class 2 path to connect the Bruckner Boulevard paths (described below) to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue paths (described above).

*Bruckner Boulevard between the 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Bridge and Alexander Avenue*

The route would continue through the pleasant Bruckner Antique and Art District on two-way Bruckner Boulevard between 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and Alexander Avenue. Five-foot wide Class 2 bicycle lanes should be striped in each direction where possible.

Bruckner Boulevard between Lincoln Avenue and Alexander Avenue is wide, with two eastbound lanes and three westbound lanes (narrowing to two lanes), separated by a striped median, with curbside parking permitted in each direction (see Photo 31, page 31). There is insufficient space for a continuous bicycle lane on the south side of the street for a short stretch east of Lincoln Avenue unless approximately six on-

street parking spaces are eliminated along a 110-foot segment of the street (see Figures 51 and 52). The bike lanes could be striped along the rest of the block while retaining two (11-foot wide) moving lanes and an eight-foot wide parking lane in each direction.

Bruckner Boulevard between Alexander Avenue and Willis Avenue narrows to 60 feet, leaving no space to stripe a bike lane and still retain two vehicular traffic lanes and a parking lane in each direction.

Alternate Route

*East 135<sup>th</sup> Street southerly street extension between 3<sup>rd</sup> and Lincoln avenues*

An alternative to the recommended southbound route on the westerly extension of 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue would be to reclaim unnecessary roadbed to stripe a one-way six-foot Class 2 bike lane and buffer on the south side of East 135<sup>th</sup> Street from 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue to Lincoln Avenue. This segment runs one way eastbound and has one vehicular travel

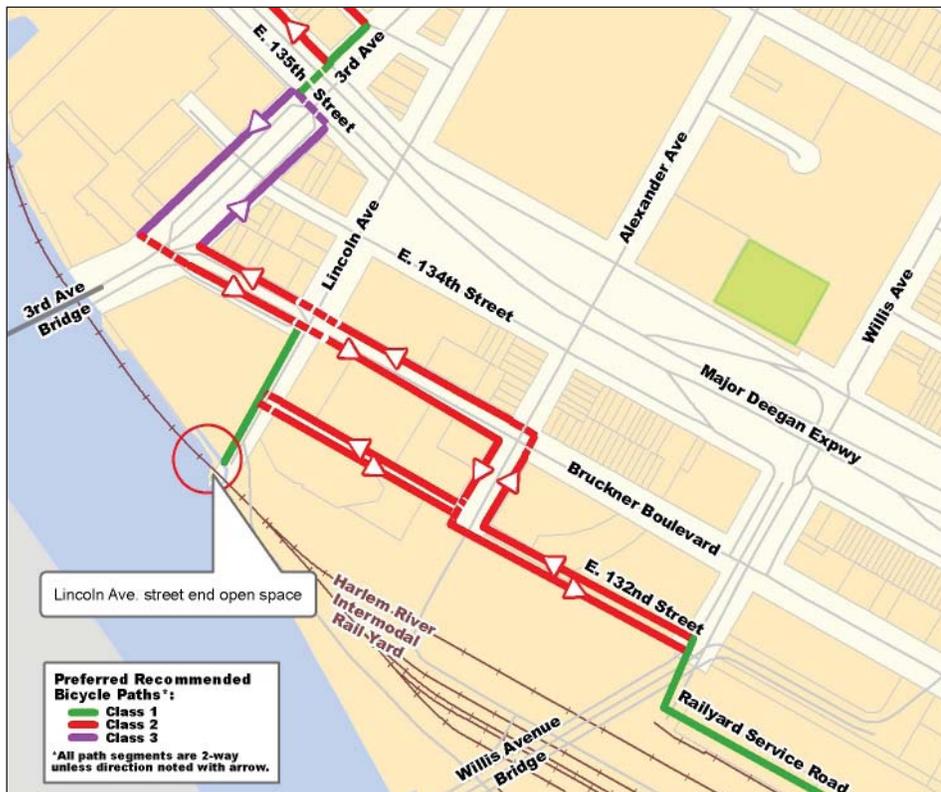


Figure 50. Section 4 map with preferred route

lane, with no parking allowed on either side of the street. The bicycle lane would connect to the proposed path along Bruckner Boulevard and the proposed Lincoln Avenue street- end (as described below) via a southbound Class 3 lane on Lincoln Avenue.

*Lincoln Avenue between East 135<sup>th</sup> Street and Bruckner Boulevard*

Lincoln Avenue, a two- way street with two traffic lanes in each direction and parking on both sides, is not sufficiently wide to accommodate bicycle lanes between East 135<sup>th</sup> Street and Bruckner Boulevard. A Class 3 bicycle route could be signed on Lincoln Avenue to connect East 135<sup>th</sup> Street and Bruckner Boulevard.

*East 132<sup>nd</sup> Street via Lincoln Avenue or Alexander Avenue*

The route would leave Bruckner Boulevard due to the increase in heavy truck traffic between the Willis Avenue Bridge and the Bruckner Expressway in Section 5. Cyclists would ride one block south on Lincoln Avenue or Alexander Avenue to reach East 132<sup>nd</sup> Street. On Lincoln Avenue the route would continue as a Class 3 bike route or as the shared use sidewalk described below. On Alexander Avenue six-foot wide Class 2 bicycle lanes would be installed in both directions, which would leave two eight-foot parking lanes and an 11-foot travel lane, which would be adequate for traffic.

The route could continue on East 132<sup>nd</sup> Street between Lincoln and Alexander or St. Anns avenues

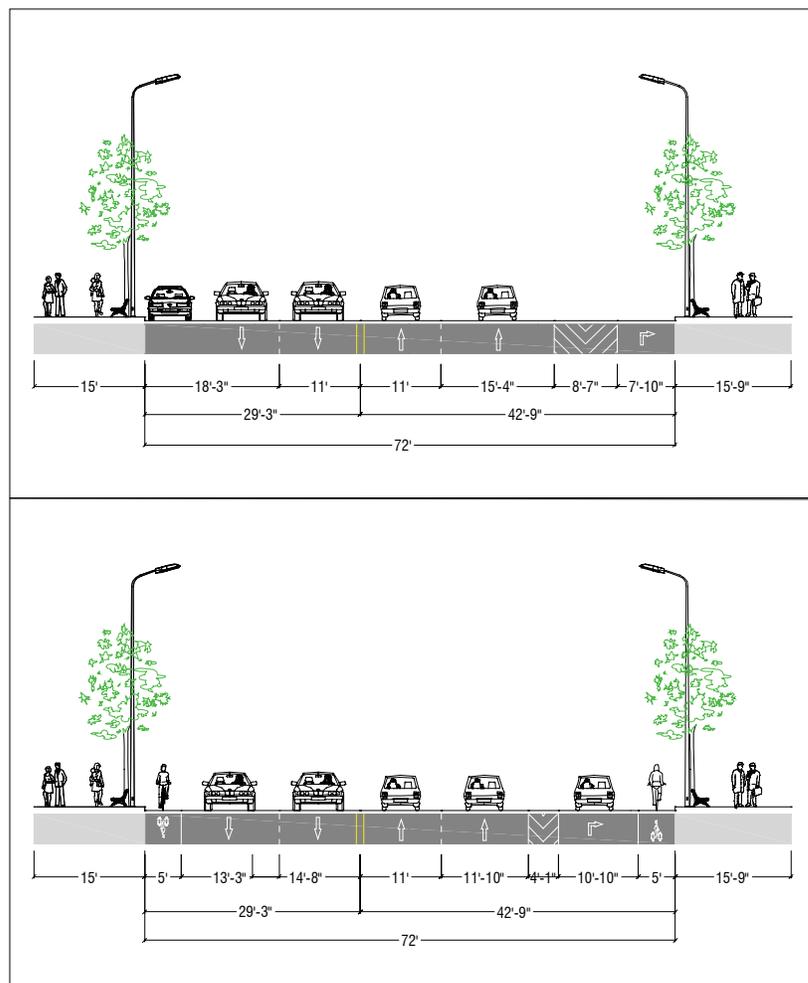


Figure 51. Bruckner Boulevard at Lincoln Avenue, existing and recommended cross section (facing west)

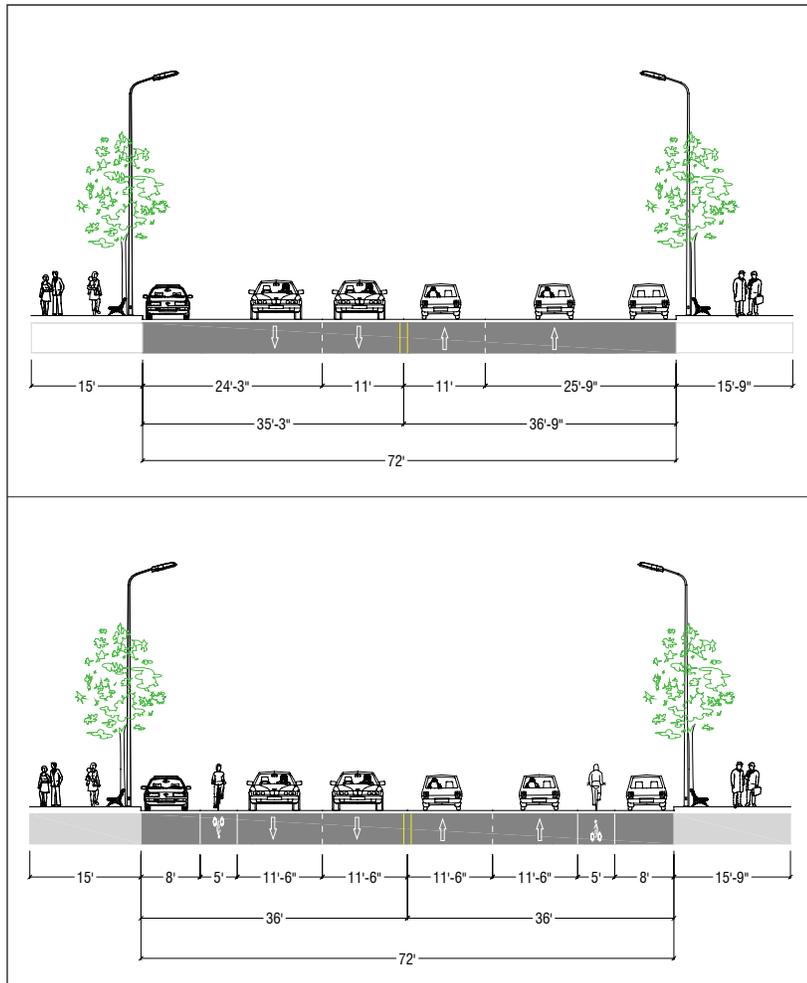


Figure 52. Bruckner Boulevard between Lincoln Avenue and Alexander Avenue, existing and recommended cross section (facing west)

(see Figure 54). However, East 132<sup>nd</sup> Street along this segment is mapped but unbuilt (according to the official New York City map) and much of the right-of-way is owned by the adjacent private property owners, fenced, and used mainly for parking (see Photo 35, page 32). While the City of New York could acquire these portions of the right-of-way in order to continue the route on East 132<sup>nd</sup> Street, it is unlikely that the City would build a new street solely for the purposes of establishing a bike way.

*Lincoln Avenue street-end*

Lincoln Avenue terminates at the waterfront and is a potential candidate for improvement as street-end open space. Lincoln Avenue and Park Avenue are

the only streets in the study area that provide direct access to the waterfront, since the Oak Point Rail Link tracks are on land at these locations (see Photo 32, page 31). The Lincoln Avenue street end might be a difficult site to develop as a public open space, however, because of its proximity to the entrances to the Harlem River Intermodal Railyard and Waste Management’s waste transfer station. Truck traffic and objectionable smells characterize the site. School buses and Bell Atlantic vehicles frequently use the street to reach two separate adjacent parking lots. In addition, the connection to the alternate path along East 132<sup>nd</sup> Street would be difficult because East 132<sup>nd</sup> Street is blocked between Lincoln and Alexander Avenues (see below).

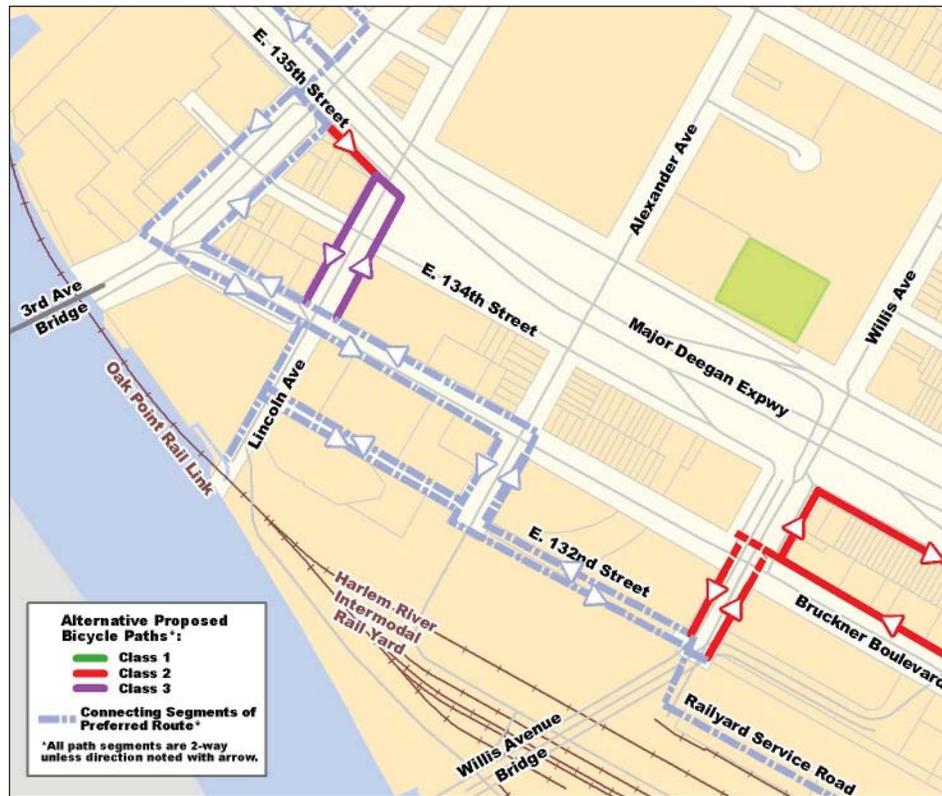


Figure 53. Section 4 map with alternate route

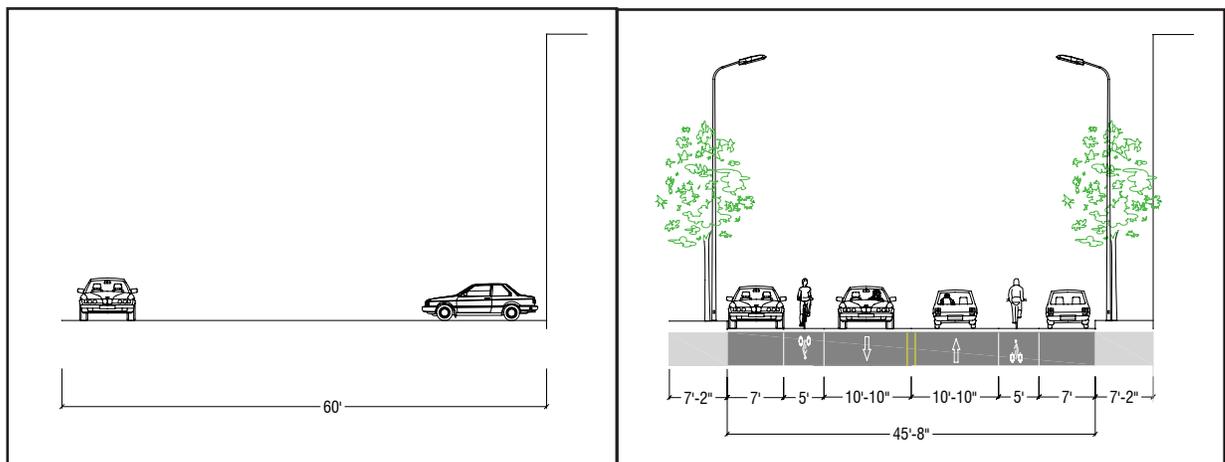


Figure 54. East 132<sup>nd</sup> Street between Alexander Avenue and Willis Avenue, existing and recommended cross section (facing west)

A possible reconfiguration of the street (see Figure 55) is designed to address the aforementioned problems. Excess roadbed at the street end would be recaptured and repaved as sidewalk, and a new triangular median would split the roadway in two directions to channel traffic to and from the Harlem River Intermodal Yard and the school bus parking lot. This street improvement would require re-establishing the curb line along the westerly sidewalk of Lincoln Avenue and moving a Bell Atlantic fence approximately 20 feet to align it with the property line. Any use of the land adjacent to the water at this site would also require the installation of a gate at the railroad crossing to allow for safe crossing of the tracks.

Direct access to the waterfront and its proximity to the renewed Bruckner Boulevard Antique and Art District could make the Lincoln Avenue street-end useful in spite of the waste transfer facility and its characteristic smells. The street-end could be used as an educational open space with a waste and

recycling theme - a kiosk, informational panels, and tables and benches could be installed and used by the community and nearby schools as an outdoor workshop.

The Class 3 signed bike route on Lincoln Avenue would direct bicyclists to the street-end from the recommended route on Bruckner Boulevard, or a shared-use sidewalk could be designated on the 20-foot wide westerly sidewalk.

*Connection to the Willis Avenue Bridge*

The existing Willis Avenue Bridge is scheduled to be replaced by a new span and re-designed approaches on both its Manhattan and Bronx sides (see Photos 36 and 37, pages 34 and 35). Construction is scheduled to begin in 2007. The new bridge will have a 10-foot wide pedestrian and bicycle path on its northwest side only; stairs will connect this path with to the Bruckner Boulevard south sidewalk. At East 134<sup>th</sup> Street, the path will cross the bridge and continue



Figure 55. Lincoln Avenue street-end design

as a flyover over the Major Deegan Expressway, and land at East 135<sup>th</sup> Street.

Bicyclists riding to the bridge from Bruckner Boulevard would use the recommended northbound Class 2 bike lane along Willis Avenue between Bruckner Boulevard and East 134<sup>th</sup> Street (described below), and then walk their bike on the sidewalk over the Major Deegan Expressway connecting to the ramp.

## Section 5: Willis Avenue Bridge to Triborough Bridge

### Preferred Route

Planning a continuous and functional bicycle and pedestrian route using existing public surface streets presents significant problems in Section 5. Much of the waterfront is used for heavy industry, and the streets in this section are busy with traffic. East 132<sup>nd</sup> Street between Brown Place and the Triborough Bridge is heavy with fast truck traffic, and its sidewalks between St. Anns Avenue and the Triborough Bridge are blocked by parked cars during the day (see Photo 39, page 36). Bruckner Boulevard carries noticeably more traffic between the Willis Avenue Bridge and Saint Anns Avenue, and East 135<sup>th</sup> Street essentially functions as a service road for the Major Deegan Expressway.

Therefore, the preferred route in Section 5 would require the public use of a Harlem River Yard service road, which could be redesigned as a separated bi-directional Class 1 path between Willis Avenue and Cypress Avenue (approximately ½ mile), with upland connections at Brown Place, Brook Avenue and St. Anns Avenue.

### *Harlem River Railyard Service Road*

The Harlem River Railyard is a multi-modal transportation center established by the Galesi Group, a private developer doing business as Harlem River Yard Ventures, Inc. In 1991 the New York State Department of Transportation leased the property for 99 years to Harlem River Yard Ventures (see Photo 33, page 32).

The public use of a 52-foot wide service road parallel to and immediately south of East 132<sup>nd</sup> Street would provide a unique opportunity to develop a bicycle/pedestrian path almost undisturbed by vehicular traffic (see Figure 57). The route between the Willis Avenue and Triborough bridges would offer welcome relief for bicyclists and pedestrians, who currently must choose between streets with busy traffic or streets with manufacturing and industrial land uses.

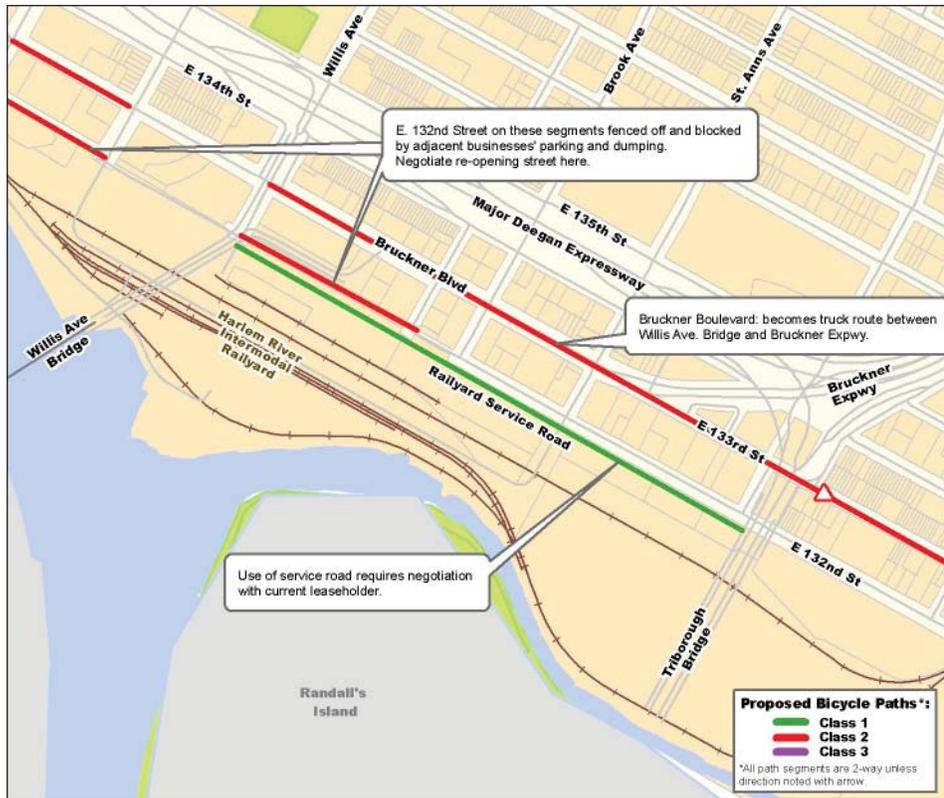


Figure 56. Opportunities and constraints along Section 5

The service road could be reached via Willis Avenue, which has very light traffic between Bruckner Boulevard and East 132<sup>nd</sup> Street. Five-foot wide bicycle lanes could be striped on Willis Avenue without impacting the travel or parking lanes, or the very wide (24 to 26 feet) sidewalks could be redesigned for shared-use.

*Connection to the Triborough Bridge*

Cypress Avenue currently terminates at East 132<sup>nd</sup> Street, and the street would need to be extended to the south through the Harlem River Railyard to the service road in order to connect the route to the Triborough Bridge (see Photo 33, page 32). The City would need to negotiate use of a property easement with the State and the Galesi Group, and then construct a multi-use path within the easement, an unlikely scenario given the time and cost.

*East of the Triborough Bridge*

East 132<sup>nd</sup>, East 133<sup>rd</sup>, and East 134<sup>th</sup> streets between the Triborough Bridge and the East River are wide, two-way roads with relatively light traffic. Land uses change from heavy manufacturing to light industrial uses, including a large New York Post publishing

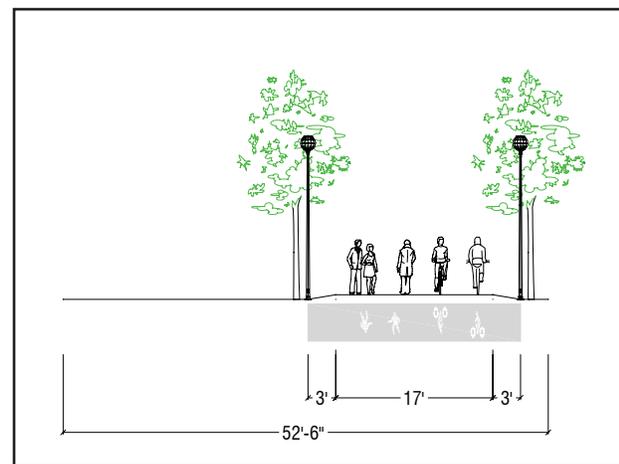


Figure 57. Harlem River Railyard Service Road cross section

facility along East 132<sup>nd</sup> Street. These are interspersed with residential blocks on East 133<sup>rd</sup> Street.

The Hell Gate Bridge carries Amtrak trains over Randall’s Island and then east of the study area. Under the bridge is a dirt road that leads to the Bronx Kill from East 132<sup>nd</sup> Street (between Willow and Walnut avenues) (see Photo 41, page 37).

The New York City Economic Development Corporation (EDC) is working with Sustainable South Bronx (SSB) and other local organizations to develop a South Bronx Greenway along the Hunts Point waterfront. The plan seeks to construct a shared-use path on the road under the bridge connecting to a new bicycle/pedestrian bridge over the Bronx Kill to Randall’s Island. East 132<sup>nd</sup>, East 133<sup>rd</sup> or East 134<sup>th</sup> Street should be further studied to ensure that the route recommended in this study connects with proposed South Bronx Greenway routes.

Alternate Route

The use of the Harlem River Rail Yard service road as a multi-use path is a long-term proposal that would require negotiation with the leaseholders and New York State DOT. If unsuccessful negotiations render the greenway path along the Harlem River Yard Service Road infeasible, a study more focused on traffic calming, enforcing parking regulations, and beautifying this area is recommended. In the short-term, riders may use the following cautionary routes on existing streets as described below.

*Westbound Bruckner Boulevard and Eastbound East 134<sup>th</sup> Street between Willis and St. Anns Avenues*

Bruckner Boulevard east of the Willis Avenue Bridge and the Bruckner Antique and Art District becomes less attractive than west of the bridge, with heavier traffic, narrower



Figure 58. Section 5 map with preferred route

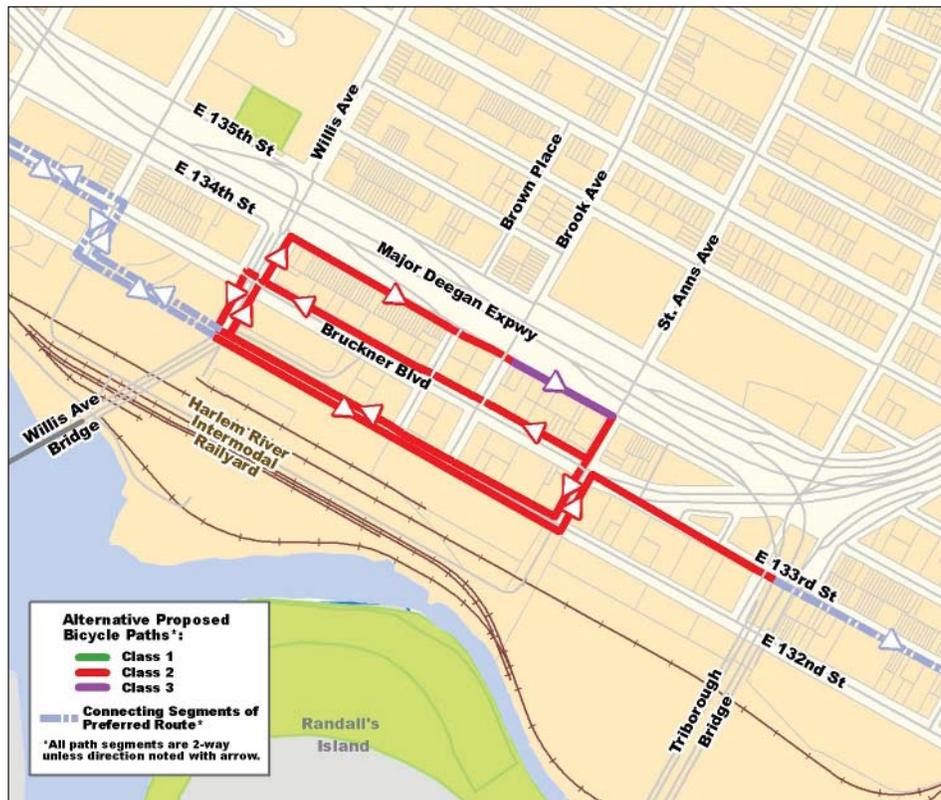


Figure 59. Section 5 map with alternate route

sidewalks and fewer trees. Traffic exiting the Willis Avenue Bridge along this segment makes eastbound Bruckner Boulevard potentially dangerous for cyclists, as the bridge exit ramp empties out onto the eastbound Bruckner lanes between Willis Avenue and Brown Place.

To avoid the eastbound Bruckner Boulevard lanes, the eastbound route should continue on East 134<sup>th</sup> Street, where a Class 2 bicycle lane should be striped between Willis Avenue and St. Anns Avenue (see Figure 61). East 134<sup>th</sup> Street is a residential one-way street and carries much less traffic than Bruckner Boulevard. The installation of a six-foot wide Class 2 bicycle lane on the south side of East 134<sup>th</sup> Street would leave one travel and one parking lane and would not adversely impact the flow of vehicular traffic, although the route may have to continue as a Class 3 signed route between Brook Avenue and St. Anns Avenue, where parking on both sides of the street does not leave enough roadbed to continue the Class 2 bike lane and maintain an adequate vehicular travel lane.

Willis Avenue between Bruckner Boulevard and East 134<sup>th</sup> Street has two segments, one on each side of the Willis Avenue bridge. A one-way northbound Class 2 striped bicycle lane should be striped on the easterly segment of Willis Avenue to connect Bruckner Boulevard and East 134<sup>th</sup> Street. A six-foot wide Class 2 bicycle lane striped on the east side of the street would leave a 22-foot wide travel lane and a parking lane along this segment, and would not affect the low levels of vehicular traffic.

The eastbound bicycle lane would be paired with a westbound lane along the north side of Bruckner Boulevard between St. Anns and Willis avenues, where traffic is not as daunting for cyclists as it is along the south side of Bruckner Boulevard (see Figure 60). However, cyclists would need to exercise particular caution, given that Bruckner Boulevard is designated as a truck route between the Willis Avenue Bridge and the Bruckner Expressway.

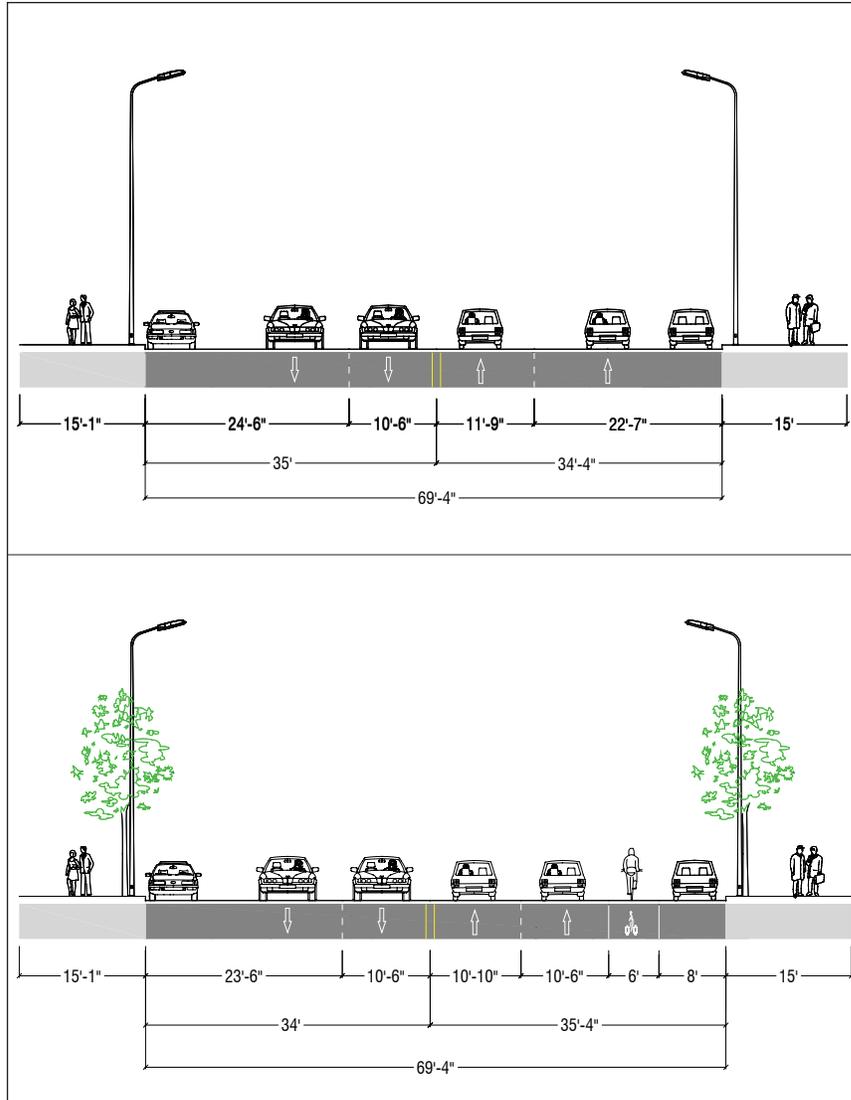


Figure 60. Bruckner Boulevard between Willis Avenue and St. Anns Avenue, existing and recommended cross section (facing west)

*St. Anns Avenue between East 135<sup>th</sup> Street and Bruckner Boulevard*

Existing Class 2 bicycle lanes (the only bike facilities in the study area aside from bridge paths) are striped on either side of St. Anns Avenue between East 135<sup>th</sup> and East 161<sup>st</sup> streets (see Photo 1, page 12). It is recommended to extend these lanes south to Bruckner Boulevard to connect to the eastbound path on East 134<sup>th</sup> Street and the westbound path on Bruckner Boulevard. Striping six-foot wide Class 2 bicycle lanes on either side of St. Anns Avenue between

Bruckner Boulevard and East 135<sup>th</sup> Street would maintain 11-foot travel lanes and eight-foot parking lanes in each direction.

*East 133<sup>rd</sup> Street between St. Anns Avenue and Cypress Avenue*

East of St. Anns Avenue, Bruckner Boulevard briefly becomes one-way eastbound as it diverges from the Bruckner Expressway and subsequently becomes East 133<sup>rd</sup> Street near the Triborough Bridge. Here, East 133<sup>rd</sup> Street is 40 feet wide, with a single vehicular travel lane and parking

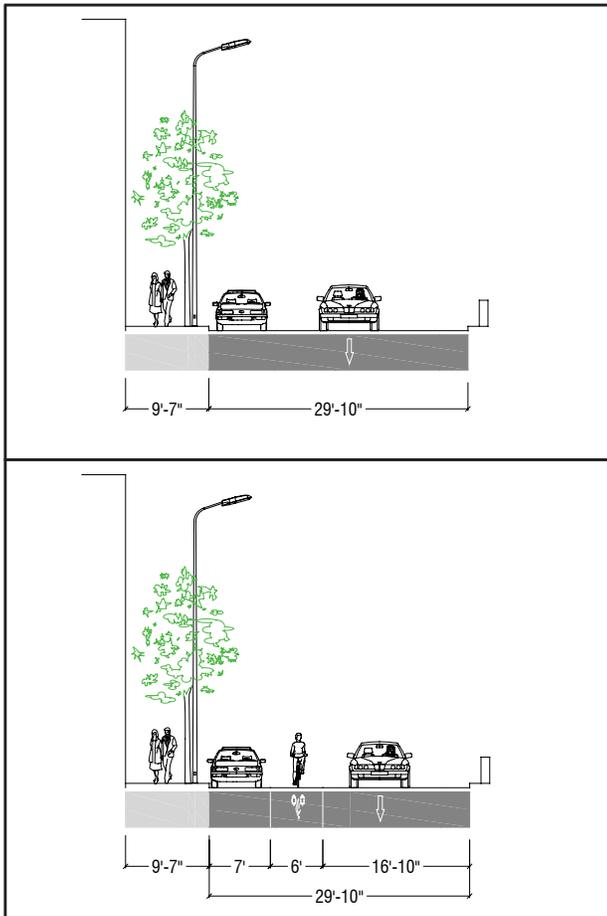


Figure 61. East 134<sup>th</sup> Street between Willis Avenue and Brown Place, existing and recommended cross section (facing west)

along both sides of the street, and carries light traffic as it traverses a pleasant residential neighborhood.

Bruckner Boulevard/East 133<sup>rd</sup> Street would comprise the eastbound component of a bi-directional paired route. A six-foot wide lane with a three-foot buffer could be striped on-street without impacting traffic or parking. However, a westbound route to match is difficult to identify. As noted below, East 132<sup>nd</sup> Street is not a promising option, as it carries busy industrial-related traffic and parked cars litter its sidewalks west of Willow Avenue. Also, East 134<sup>th</sup> Street dead-ends at the Bruckner Expressway.

Given the above problems, a bi-directional route could be established on East 133<sup>rd</sup> Street,

which has sufficient roadbed to permit a two-way bicycle path. Typically, however, two-way bicycle facilities are not recommended on one-way streets; in addition, the Bx17 bus runs along this segment of the street. If this action is infeasible, the following potential (although unlikely) alternate westbound route on East 132<sup>nd</sup> Street is suggested for further study.

### Alternate Route

#### *East 132<sup>nd</sup> Street between Willis Avenue and St. Anns Avenue*

A possible long-term alternate would continue the bi-directional route on East 132<sup>nd</sup> Street east of Willis Avenue, thereby precluding the need to use busy Bruckner Boulevard. As mentioned above, East 132<sup>nd</sup> Street is a mapped but unbuilt street blocked between Willis Avenue and Brown Place by a privately-owned dumping/parking area. As in Section 4, the City could seek to purchase the right-of-way from the private owners and construct a public street (or a greenway within the right-of-way), although the prohibitive cost of such construction makes this option highly unlikely.

#### *East 132<sup>nd</sup> Street between St. Anns Avenue and Willow Avenue*

Parked cars completely block the sidewalks on East 132<sup>nd</sup> Street between St. Anns Avenue and Willow Avenue (see Photo 39, page 36). This, combined with relatively heavy truck and car traffic, makes walking or biking down the street intimidating. Significant traffic calming measures as well as re-establishment of the sidewalks along East 132<sup>nd</sup> Streets should be implemented prior to any continuation of the bicycle route here.

## Next Steps

The Transportation Division will develop its final recommendations for this study after meeting with the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and addressing their comments and concerns. Subsequently, it is expected that negotiations with current landowners and leaseholders will be necessary in order to develop the required consensus for implementation of the recommendations. For example, negotiations are expected to be necessary for such recommendations as the use of Parks-owned land adjacent to the Major Deegan service road in Section 1; the removal of a travel lane along East 135<sup>th</sup> Street to accommodate a shared-use path in Section 3 (NYC Department of Transportation); the establishment of a bicycle and pedestrian overpass in Section 3 (New York State Department of Transportation); and the use of a service road along the Harlem River Intermodal Railyard in sections 4 and 5 (Harlem River Yard Ventures, current railyard leaseholder and New York State Department of Transportation, owner of the land).

If, after negotiation with stakeholders, the implementation of certain recommendations in this study is deemed feasible, it will subsequently be necessary to undertake focused analyses based on field observations (bicycle and pedestrian counts, traffic analyses, etc.) in order to develop a specific implementation plan. Further funding will be required and sought for implementation.



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