East 149th St Bus Priority Improvements
Community Board 1 Municipal Services Committee – May 11th, 2020
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Background
Better Buses Action Plan

- Improve bus speeds by 25%
- Install 10-15 miles of new bus lanes per year
- Improve 5 miles of existing bus lanes per year
- Support MTA Bus Network Redesign efforts with borough bus priority plans
Bus Priority Corridors

- NYCDOT analyzed Bronx corridors to determine where bus lanes and other bus priority treatments are most needed
- E 149th St identified as a top ten Bronx corridor due to:
  - High ridership
  - Slow and unreliable bus service
  - Important east-west connection
Existing Conditions
Bus Service Overview

- 4 bus routes, 55,000 daily riders
  - Bx2, Bx4, Bx17, Bx19
- Major connections:
  - 1 2 3 4 5 6 A B C D
  - Lincoln Medical Center
  - The Hub
  - Hostos Community College
- Key issues:
  - Traffic congestion and slow bus speeds at all times of day
  - Double parking, weaving and merging
Current Bus Speeds

- Buses on 149th St move at **walking speed or slower** most of the day
  
  **Eastbound:** **4.3 mph**
  **Westbound:** **3.9 mph**
  
  *(Mon-Thu, 6am-6pm average)*

- This causes backups across the entire route, sends buses off schedule, and causes buses to arrive 2 or 3 at a time
Congestion

- Blocks buses, emergency vehicles and cars
- Causes buses to arrive off schedule, 2 or 3 buses at a time
- Addressed by:
  - Adjusting traffic light timing
  - Adding turn bays which prevent turning vehicles from blocking traffic
  - Adding bus lanes for buses and emergency vehicles

Between Brook Ave and Bergen Ave
Between Gerard Ave and Walton Ave
Between Third Ave and Courtlandt Ave
Double Parking

- Reduces traffic to one lane across much of the corridor, at all times of day
- Worsens existing congestion
- Addressed by:
  - Metering commercial blocks
  - Adding loading zones
  - Adding bus lanes to keep buses and emergency vehicles moving

Between Third Ave and Courtlandt Ave
Between Wales Ave and Concord Ave
Between Brook Ave and Bergen Ave
Time Lapse Photo Study

• In March 2020, DOT hung a time lapse camera at Gerard Ave, an observed traffic hotspot
  • Took a photo every minute, from 6am to 8pm, to observe congestion throughout the day and week
• Footage showed severe congestion all day, especially eastbound (right side of photos)
• Note: photos taken March 4-8, before COVID-19 outbreak
Transporting Essential Workers During and After COVID-19
Transporting Essential Workers

- 38% of NYC transit riders are frontline workers (nurses and medical workers, transit workers, postal/courier workers, grocery store workers, etc.)
- 79% of the city’s frontline workers are Black, Hispanic, or mixed race
- The bus routes that use 149th St serve high concentrations of frontline workers
- Roughly half of frontline workers commute during off-peak hours

Transporting Essential Workers

• Lincoln Medical Center makes 149th St a key corridor for transporting frontline workers during the COVID-19 crisis

• Better bus service can get frontline workers to their jobs quickly and on-time, during and after the crisis

• Bus improvements can help keep buses evenly spaced along the route, which minimizes crowding and allows social distancing onboard

• Emergency vehicles use bus lanes to improve response times
Proposal
Proposed Treatments

- **Bus Lanes**
  - Webster Ave, The Bronx

- **Left & Right Turn Bays**
  - Webster Ave, The Bronx

- **Pedestrian Islands**
  - Baychester Ave, The Bronx

- **Curb Management (Meters, Loading Zones)**
  - 178th St, The Bronx
Existing: Exterior St to Gerard Ave
Proposed: Exterior St to Gerard Ave

- New left turn bay onto Gerard Ave
- New queue jump signal gives buses a head start after the bus lane ends
- Eastbound bus lane begins at River Ave
- Widen pedestrian island at Gerard Ave (from 6' to 15', ADA accessible)
- Repurpose 1 parking space
Existing: Gerard Ave to Grand Concourse

- All left turns at 149th St & Grand Concourse are currently restricted (except buses)
- Existing, 1-block bus lane on Grand Concourse

Hostos Community College

E 149th St

Gerard Ave

Walton Ave

Bx1/Bx2 Bus Stop

Bx19 bus stop

Vision Zero Priority Intersection
Proposed: Gerard Ave to Grand Concourse

New queue jump signal gives buses a head start after the bus lane ends

Widen pedestrian island at Grand Concourse (6’ to 9’, ADA accessible)

Remove rest of island for new left turn bay at Walton Ave

New right turn bay at Walton Ave keeps through lanes clear

Repurpose 11 parking spaces

Repurpose 5 parking spaces

New right turn restriction onto Grand Concourse
Existing: Grand Concourse to Park Ave

- Grand Concourse
- Bx1/Bx2 Bus Stop
- Bx19 bus stop
- Anthony J Griffin Pl
- E 149th St
- Bx1/Bx2 Bus Stop
- Metro-North Overpass
- No Parking Anytime
- Park Ave

Major bus stop
(connect to 2/4/5 trains, Grand Concourse Bx1/Bx2 buses, Hostos Community College)
Proposed: Grand Concourse to Park Ave

- Wide bus lane lets buses pass each other at major bus stop
- New left turn restriction onto Anthony J Griffin Pl
- New left turn bay onto Park Ave
Existing: Park Ave to Morris Ave

Legal westbound left turn with no turn bay
Proposed: Park Ave to Morris Ave

New left turn bay
Existing: Morris Ave to Courtlandt Ave
Proposed: Morris Ave to Courtlandt Ave
Existing: Courtlandt Ave to Third Ave

Major bus stop – connect to 2/5 trains, The Hub, Third Ave/Webster Ave buses

All turns currently restricted

4.5' wide channelized area is a hotspot for illegal parking and standing, blocking traffic

Legend: 2 5 subway entrance
Proposed: Courtlandt Ave to Third Ave

- Bus boarder widens the sidewalk and makes boarding easier for wheelchair and walker users.
- Bus lane moves to curb where sidewalk widens and parking ends.

Legend:
- Subway entrance

Bus lane moves to curb where sidewalk widens and parking ends.
Existing: Third Ave to Brook Ave

Street narrows to 27’ westbound; standing vehicles block traffic

Busy westbound right turn onto Bergen Ave

Major bus stop – connect to 2/5 trains, The Hub, Third Ave/Webster Ave buses
Proposed: Third Ave to Brook Ave

Curbside bus lanes on this block

New right turn bay keeps through lanes moving

New turn restrictions at Brook Ave: eastbound left & westbound left
Existing: Brook Ave to Eagle Ave

Bx4/Bx4A/Bx19 Bus Stop
(temporarily moved due to construction)
Proposed: Brook Ave to Eagle Ave

- Lanes shift to curb to fit new left turn bays
- Repurpose 10 parking spaces
- Repurpose 2 parking spaces

Bx4/Bx4A/Bx19 Bus Stop (temporarily moved due to construction)

Bx19 bus stop

Bx19 bus stop

Repurpose 10 parking spaces

Repurpose 2 parking spaces

Lanes shift to curb to fit new left turn bays
Existing: Eagle Ave to Jackson Ave
Westbound bus lane shifts to curb for 3 blocks to accommodate left turn bays. These blocks were selected to minimize parking loss, with only 3 existing parking spaces per block.
Existing: Jackson Ave to Tinton Ave
Proposed: Jackson Ave to Tinton Ave

- Westbound bus lane shifts back to offset
- New left turn bays
- New westbound left turn restriction
- New eastbound left turn restriction
- Eastbound bus lane ends after last eastbound bus stop
- Repurpose 1 parking space
- Repurpose 3 parking spaces
- Bx17/Bx19 bus stop
- Jackson Ave
- Concord Ave
- E 149th St
- Concord Ave
- Wales Ave
- Tinton Ave
- Bx17/Bx19 bus stop

- New left turn bays
- New westbound left turn restriction
- Eastbound bus lane ends after last eastbound bus stop
- Repurpose 1 parking space
- Repurpose 3 parking spaces
- Bx17/Bx19 bus stop
- Jackson Ave
- Concord Ave
- E 149th St
- Concord Ave
- Wales Ave
- Tinton Ave
- Bx17/Bx19 bus stop
Existing: Tinton Ave to Southern Blvd

Bx19 bus turns onto Southern Blvd
Proposed: Tinton Ave to Southern Blvd

New westbound left turn restriction
Proposed: E 144th St – Walton Ave to Grand Concourse

E 144th St between Walton Ave and Grand Concourse:

- Currently 35’ wide, with 1 parking lane and 1 travel lane in each direction
- Sub-standard street width has generated community complaints
- Right turn restriction from eastbound 149th St onto southbound Grand Concourse would add additional vehicles to this block (see green arrow)

Proposal: change the south curb only (7 spaces) to No Parking, Mon-Sat 8am-6pm

- Matches the adjacent blocks of E 144th St from Walton Ave to Exterior St
- Overnight and Sunday parking remains
Summary: Turn Restrictions & Reroutes

• This project is designed to minimize turn restrictions, except at key locations to:
  • Address an immediate safety need
  • Alleviate a traffic bottleneck, and/or
  • Preserve parking

• This project includes 7 proposed turn restrictions:
  1. Eastbound right at Grand Concourse
  2. Eastbound left at Anthony J. Griffin Pl
  3. Westbound left at Brook Ave
  4. Eastbound left at Brook Ave
  5. Westbound left at Concord Ave
  6. Eastbound left at Wales Ave
  7. Westbound left at Tinton Ave
Making it Work

*Based on community feedback and data analysis, DOT will consider additional changes to this proposal.*

Changes being studied:
1. Refinements based on community feedback
2. New metered parking zones and truck loading zones, to reduce double-parking and lane blocking
3. Changes to traffic signal timing, to keep traffic flowing smoothly
4. Opportunities to improve parking availability around the corner on side streets
Next Steps
Project Timeline

Fall 2019

• Present potential treatments to CB 4, CB 4
• Collect traffic data
• Survey merchants

Winter/Spring 2020

• Develop draft street design plan
• Present draft plan to CB 1 and CB 4
• Analyze traffic data

Summer/Fall 2020

• Develop detailed final plan
• Present detailed final plan to CB 4, CB 1
• Implement project improvements (as conditions allow)
Continuing Community Engagement

Which additional organizations or stakeholders should we reach out to?

Past and present outreach:
• MTA Bronx Bus Redesign / NYC DOT Better Buses
  • Open Houses
  • Community Board Presentations
• Bronx Community Board 1
• Bronx Community Board 4
THANK YOU!

Questions?