Better Buses Restart – 181st Street Busway Pilot
Community Board 12 Traffic & Transportation Committee – February 7, 2022
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Background
Better Buses Restart

Recovery Plan

10 busway & bus lane projects focused on:

- Vulnerable populations, essential workers
- Number of bus passengers served
- Ability to implement quickly
- Geographic equity
Why 181st Street?

- 5 MTA bus routes
- 68,000 weekday passengers on average
- Routes serve neighborhoods with high concentrations of essential workers
- Bus passengers comprise 62%-70% of roadway users
- Pre-Busway, average bus speeds were 3.7 mph
- 69% of Washington Heights and Inwood households do not have access to a car
Project Timeline

**July 7, 2020**
- CAB and project kick-off

**July / August 2020**
- Met with SBS and BID
- Added furniture at bus stops
- Developed draft busway plan
- Met with WHIN Charter School

**September 2020**
- Presented draft busway plan to CAB and gathered feedback
- Met with 2420 Amsterdam Av developer

**October 2020**
- Conducted traffic and parking analyses
- Launched online survey and feedback portal

**November - December 2020**
- Presented draft busway plan and analysis overview to Community Board 12
- Met with FDNY
- Completed analyses

**January 2021**
- Present analyses, survey responses, and updated plan to CAB

**February 2021**
- Present analyses, survey responses, and updated plan to Community Board 12

**April 26, 2021**
- Implement busway (1 year pilot)

**Spring 2021 - Spring 2022**
- Project monitoring and evaluation
- Reporting to stakeholders
Outreach

- CAB Kickoff Meeting – July 7, 2020
- Meeting with Small Business Services (SBS) – July 2020
- Meeting with Washington Heights BID – August 2020
- Presented draft Busway plan
  - CAB Meeting #2 – September 3, 2020
  - Presented to Community Board 12 Transportation Committee – November 2, 2020
- Meeting with FDNY – November 13, 2020
- Presented final Busway plan
  - CAB Meeting #3 – January 7, 2021
  - Presented to Community Board 12 Transportation Committee – February 1, 2021
- Meeting with Yeshiva University – February 2021
- Meeting with Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) – April 2021
- Presented post-implementation updates
  - CAB Meeting #4 – February 4, 2022
Post-Implementation Updates
Busway Recap

- Busway launched on April 26, 2021
- Camera enforcement began on July 17, 2021
Updates Since Busway Launch

June 2021:
• Signal timing changes along Broadway to help facilitate traffic flow

October 2021:
• Bus stop consolidation on 181st St/St. Nicholas Ave
  • Included bench relocation and new Leaning Bar

December 2021:
• Gantry signage installation
Bus Speeds

- Average bus speed for all routes using the busway increased at all times of the day compared to the same periods in both 2019 (pre-Covid) & 2020 (Covid).

- Bus speeds increased significantly as customers returned throughout the recovery in 2021.
Bus Speeds

• Greatest speed gains were in the WB direction

• Compared to 2019, WB speeds were over 30% faster in the AM and PM peaks

• Compared to 2020, WB speeds were over 20% faster in the AM peak and over 30% faster in the PM peaks

• EB speed gains were more modest as boardings are very heavy here.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2019 vs. 2021</th>
<th>6 AM-10 AM</th>
<th>10 AM-3 PM</th>
<th>3 PM-7 PM</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W 181 St-Broadway-Amsterdam Av (WB)</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
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<td>W 181 St-Broadway-Amsterdam Av (EB)</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
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<td>10.1%</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2020 vs. 2021</th>
<th>6 AM-10 AM</th>
<th>10 AM-3 PM</th>
<th>3 PM-7 PM</th>
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</table>

Source: MTA
Bus Speeds

- The 1 Train Station at 181st St reopened in December 2021
- Bus speeds have remained relatively stable since October 2021
- Any increased boardings since the station reopening have not had any significant impacts on bus speeds

Source: MTA
**Traffic Speeds**

- Average traffic speeds had minor changes compared to 2020.
- 178th and 179th St saw decreases in traffic speeds, while Amsterdam Ave and Ft Washington saw increases in traffic speeds.
- All side streets experienced speed gains compared to pre-pandemic levels.

### Average Traffic Speed (mph)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>Change from 2019 (mph)</th>
<th>Change from 2020 (mph)</th>
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<td>5.59</td>
<td>6.88</td>
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<tr>
<td>St Nicholas NB</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ft Washington SB</td>
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<td>5.64</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ft Washington NB</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: INRIX, GPS data
Travel Time

- Similarly, average travel times had minor changes compared to 2020
- 178th and 179th St saw increases in travel time, while Amsterdam Ave and Ft Washington saw decreases
- All side streets experienced travel time savings compared to pre-pandemic levels
- DOT will continue monitoring any changes in traffic
Next Steps
Next Steps

• Continue to work with stakeholders to identify and understand community concerns

• Continue to monitor traffic volumes around side streets, traffic speeds, and bus speeds
Thank you

Questions?