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Better Buses
Better Buses

Better Buses Program

• Mayor’s 2019 State of the City: Improve bus speeds 25%

• Better Buses Action Plan Released April 2019

• Bus Priority Projects
  – 22 projects implemented in 2019
  – 16.3 miles of bus lanes installed 2020
  – 2 projects completed in the Bronx in 2020:
    • Edward L Grant Hwy
    • E 149 St
Better Buses

Bronx Bus Priority Corridors

- Analyzed major Bronx corridors to identify locations where treatments to improve bus speeds and reliability are needed
- Ranked potential bus-priority corridors using the following criteria:
  - Demand for bus service
  - Bus performance (speed and reliability)
  - Service levels proposed by MTA
  - Neighborhood demographics
  - Feasibility of implementation
- Selected 10 of the highest ranking corridors and has begun studying bus priority projects to accompany the network redesign. Work began in 2020
Better Buses

Select Bus Service Phase 1

- As part of the Better Buses program, NYC DOT and MTA are evaluating the first Select Bus Service (SBS) corridors throughout the city, including Fordham Road
Better Buses

Better Buses Advisory Group

- In 2019, NYC DOT convened the Better Buses Advisory Group to advise on project development and outreach.
- The group made recommendations for 3 topic areas:
  - Bus Network Redesign
  - Small Businesses
  - Research, Communications, and Outreach
- One key recommendation was to conduct more in-depth polling prior to project planning.
- On behalf of the Association for a Better New York (ABNY), Change Research conducted a survey in the areas near Fordham Road about bus priority treatments.
Public Polling

• Change Research surveyed 302 respondents between November 16–19, 2020, including 275 from CBs 5, 6, and 7

• 79% support changes to city streets that can make buses faster and more reliable

• Respondents support additional bus priority measures on Fordham Rd
  • 89% support improving existing bus lanes
  • 66% support additional bus lanes
  • 70% support a busway

• 72% of non-bus riders support improving the existing bus lanes on Fordham Rd

• If buses along Fordham Rd were faster and more reliable, 67% of riders who ride once a week or less report that they would be more likely to ride the bus and 28% of non-riders say so
Fordham Road
Background
Fordham Road Overview

- Critical crosstown transportation corridor for buses, general traffic, and trucks
- Commercial hubs
- Major institutions and destinations
Who is on Fordham Rd?

- Throughout the corridor, bus riders and pedestrians make up a significant portion of the roadway users.

*Roadway Users
Fordham Rd and Valentine Ave*

- Pedestrians: 33%
- Buses: 37%
- Cars: 30%

Source: NYC DOT Traffic Counts, MTA, Westchester County
**Demographics**

Bronx CBs 5, 6, 7, 10, 11 and Manhattan CB 12

- 910,000 residents
- 62% of households have no access to a private vehicle
- 71% commute to work via public transit, walking, or biking
- 87% of residents are non-White
  - 61% Hispanic, 20% Black, 3% Asian, 3% Other
- Median household income: $40,400 (vs. $60,800 in NYC)

*Source: US Census*
Traffic Network

- Fordham Road / Pelham Parkway is one of the few east-west roads that traverses the Bronx from end to end
- ~32,000 daily vehicles
- Critical truck route
Parking and Loading

- Existing 2 hour loading window in bus lane
- Observations and data show that existing curbside bus lanes are frequently blocked
- Need for curb access throughout the day
- Demand for the curb continues to increase due to:
  - Uptick in for-hire vehicles (Uber, Lyft, etc.)
  - Deliveries of goods purchased online
Safety

- Fordham Rd is a Vision Zero priority corridor, with 4 Vision Zero priority intersections:
  - Sedgwick Ave
  - University Ave
  - Grand Ave
  - Jerome Ave

- In addition to transit improvements, DOT will study safety enhancements for all roadway users

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Transit

- Bx9, Bx12 SBS/Local, Bx17, Bx22, Bx34, Bee-Line 60-62 buses
  - 93,700 average daily riders, of which 40,300 use the Bx12 SBS & Local
- Buses on Fordham Rd provide critical connections to numerous Bronx, Manhattan, and Westchester neighborhoods and destinations
- Connections to A, B/D, 1, 2/5, 4, and 6 subways; Metro North Harlem, Hudson, & New Haven Lines
Previous Work

- In 2008, MTA and DOT launched the first Select Bus Service (SBS) route on the Bx12
- Curbside bus lanes were installed throughout corridor
- Service and street design changes resulted in improvements for bus service:
  - Bus speeds increased 20%
  - Ridership increased 10%
  - Retail sales increased 71% (vs. 23% borough wide)

Source: NYCDOT – “Measuring the Street”
Recent Trends

- SBS improvements sparked an upward trend in speeds and ridership, which continued through 2014
- In recent years, bus speeds and ridership have declined
- Bx12 is still the second highest ridership route in NYC (after M15)
Fordham Rd During COVID

- During the height of COVID shelter-in-place restrictions (late March – April), Bx12 SBS speeds increased
- Increased speeds due to reduced traffic and fewer obstructions of bus lanes
- As traffic volumes have returned to pre-COVID levels, bus speeds have decreased to levels prior to the pandemic
Supporting Essential Workers

- Areas directly served by Fordham Road routes have high concentrations of frontline workers
- Frontline workers (e.g., nurses, transit workers, postal/courier workers, grocery store workers) make up 38% of transit riders in New York City
- 79% of the city’s frontline workers are Black, Hispanic, or mixed race

Source: NYC Comptroller, Bureau of Policy and Research
Public Health

- Residents in neighborhoods near Fordham Road have high rates of asthma, obesity, diabetes, and heart disease, in part due to exposure to pollution
- Transit improvements can reduce private vehicle use, improve air quality, and promote physical activity


Child Asthma Hospitalizations (2014-2016)

- Average Annual Rate per 10,000 residents

- Age (Years)
  - 75.6 - 79.8
  - 79.9 - 81.4
  - 81.5 - 83.1
  - 83.2 - 84.7
  - 84.8 - 85.7

- Average Annual Rate per 10,000 residents
  - 0
  - 6.7
  - 13.8
  - 25.6
  - 44.6
  - 93.8
Analysis and Outreach
Work To Date

- Field observations
- Data collection
- Street Ambassador outreach
  - Merchant surveys
  - Shopper surveys
  - Bronx Night market
- MTA Bronx redesign open houses and CB presentations
Merchant Survey

- In June 2019, NYC DOT Street Ambassadors visited 230 businesses on Fordham Rd and 207 St
- Availability of parking/loading was a key concern
  - Only 20% of businesses on Fordham Rd indicated that they are able to determine when their deliveries arrive
  - Complaints of customers receiving tickets during quick pickup/drop-off activity
Shopper Survey

- Surveyed 175 people July 2019
- 86% of visitors to businesses on Fordham Road reported arriving by walking, bus, or train
- 65% were from neighborhoods along or near the Fordham Road corridor
DOT Toolbox
Toolbox - Transit

Offset Bus Lanes

Webster Ave and 167th St

Physical Protection

161st St and Sherman Av

Transit & Truck Priority / Busway

14th St, Manhattan

Bus Queue Jump Signal

Edward L Grant Hwy and University Ave
Toolbox – Pedestrian Safety

- Pedestrian Island
- Painted Curb Extension
- Median Extension

- Fordham Rd and Hoffman St
- Southern Blvd and E 179 St
- Fordham Rd and Southern Blvd
Toolbox – Parking

Truck Loading Zones

Parking Meters

Short Term Parking
Next Steps
Fordham Rd Community Advisory Board (CAB)

- Fordham Road Community Advisory Board (CAB) will guide the project before, during, and after implementation
  - CAB includes elected officials, nonprofit and community organizations, government agency representatives, advocates, and riders
- DOT does not have a proposed design for the corridor. In subsequent meetings, we will show alternatives based on feedback we receive today and future meetings in addition to data analysis
- Additional community outreach will be conducted with Community Boards and guidance from the CAB (e.g. online surveys, virtual meetings with stakeholders, walk-throughs)
Design Development and Project Analyses

• CAB helps identify considerations unique to Fordham Road, which DOT will incorporate into the project

• Designs and results of all analyses will be shared with CAB as they are completed

• Communication and feedback will be ongoing throughout the entire project process