East 149th St Bus Priority Improvements

Community Board 4 – May 26th, 2020

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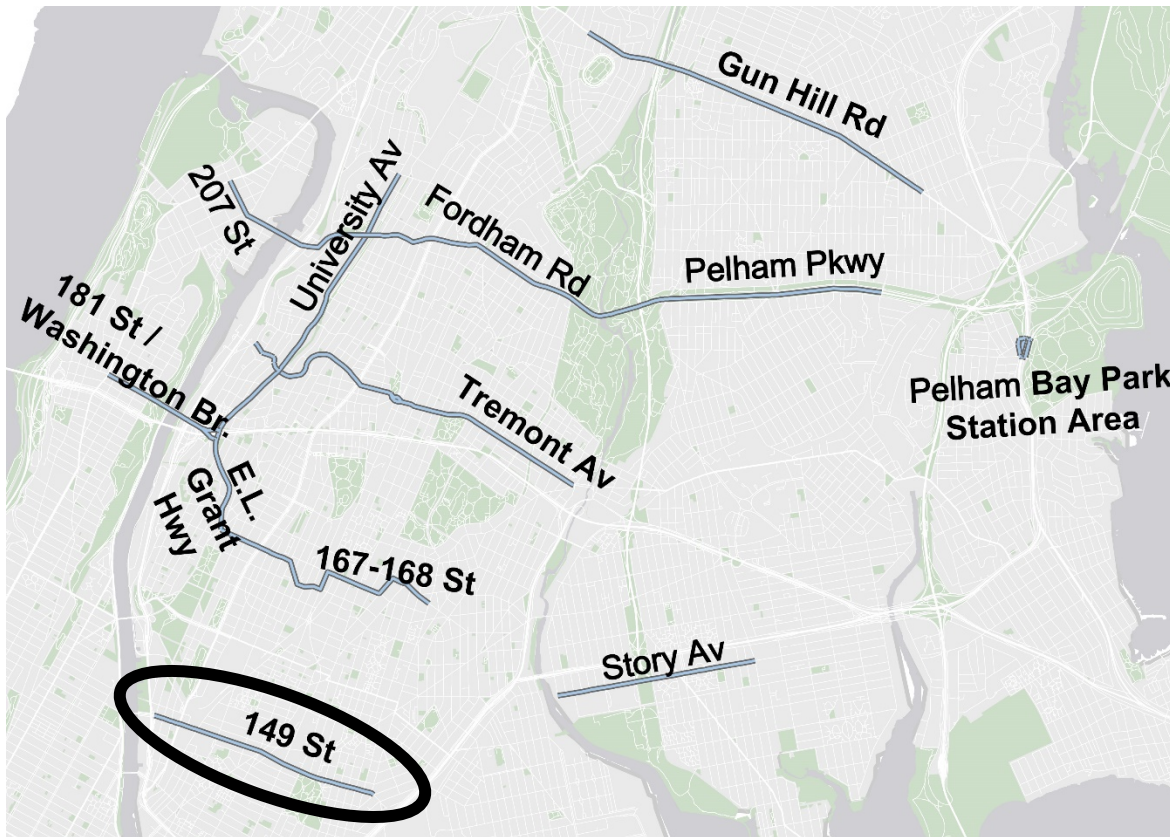
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Background

1

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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

Better Buses Action Plan

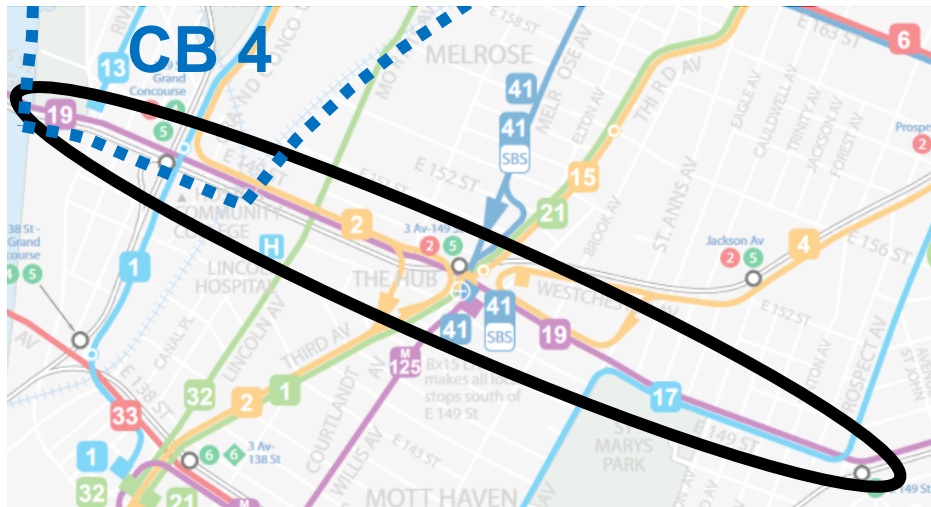BETTERBUSES

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

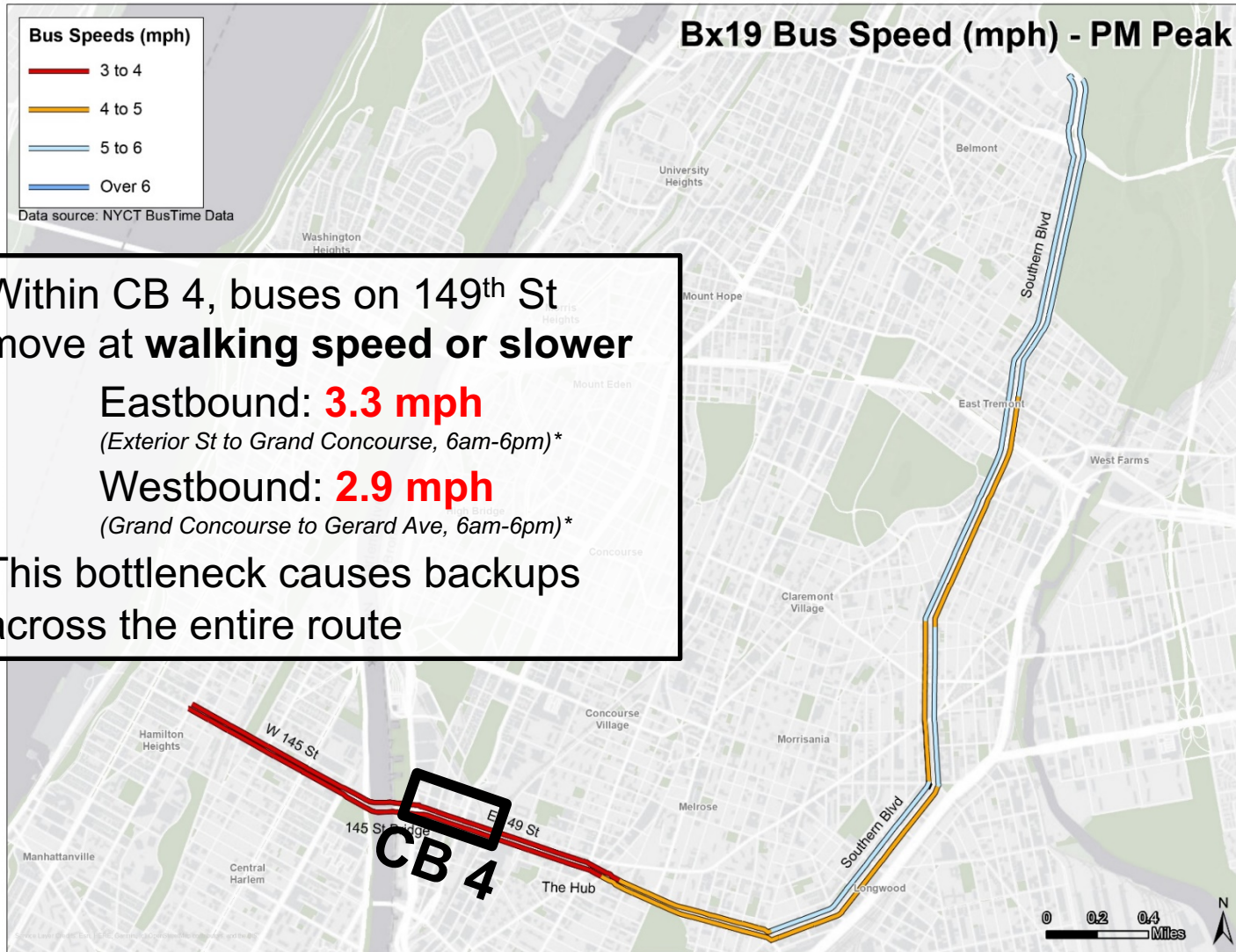 - Important east-west connection

Existing Conditions

2

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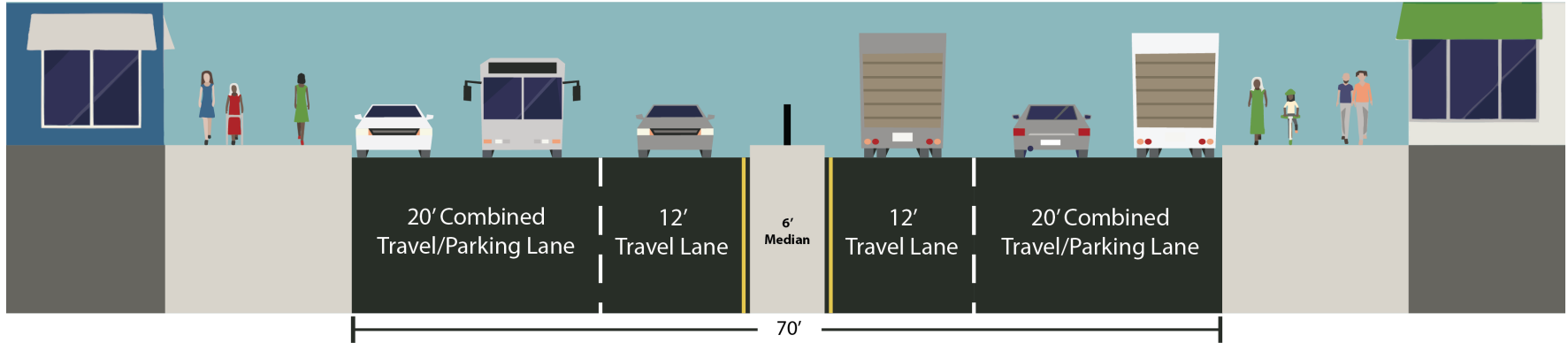# Bus Service Overview

- 4 bus routes, 55,000 daily riders
  - Bx2, Bx4, Bx17, Bx19
- Major connections:
  - ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ Ⓐ Ⓑ Ⓒ Ⓓ
  - The Hub
  - Lincoln Medical Center
  - Hostos Community College
- Key issues:
  - Congested corridor w/ slow bus speeds
  - High traffic volumes between Exterior St and Grand Concourse
  - Double parking, weaving & merging

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Current Bus Speeds

Bx19 Bus Speed (mph) - PM Peak

Bus Speeds (mph)
- 3 to 4
- 4 to 5
- 5 to 6
- Over 6

Data source: NYCT BusTime Data

- Within CB 4, buses on 149th St move at **walking speed or slower**

  Eastbound: **3.3 mph**
  (Exterior St to Grand Concourse, 6am-6pm)*

  Westbound: **2.9 mph**
  (Grand Concourse to Gerard Ave, 6am-6pm)*

- This bottleneck causes backups across the entire route

* Data is available by segment; these are the segments closest to CB 4's boundaries.

Existing Geometry

20' Combined Travel/Parking Lane	12' Travel Lane	6' Median	12' Travel Lane	20' Combined Travel/Parking Lane

70'

- Each direction has 2 travel lanes + 1 parking lane
- Buses stuck in heavy traffic at all times of day
  - Causes buses to arrive off-schedule, 2-3 at a time
  - Slows down emergency response vehicles
- Cars waiting to turn left or right block through traffic

Bus stuck in traffic on E 149th St between Walton Ave and Gerard Ave

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Time Lapse Photo Study

Mid-Day

- 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)
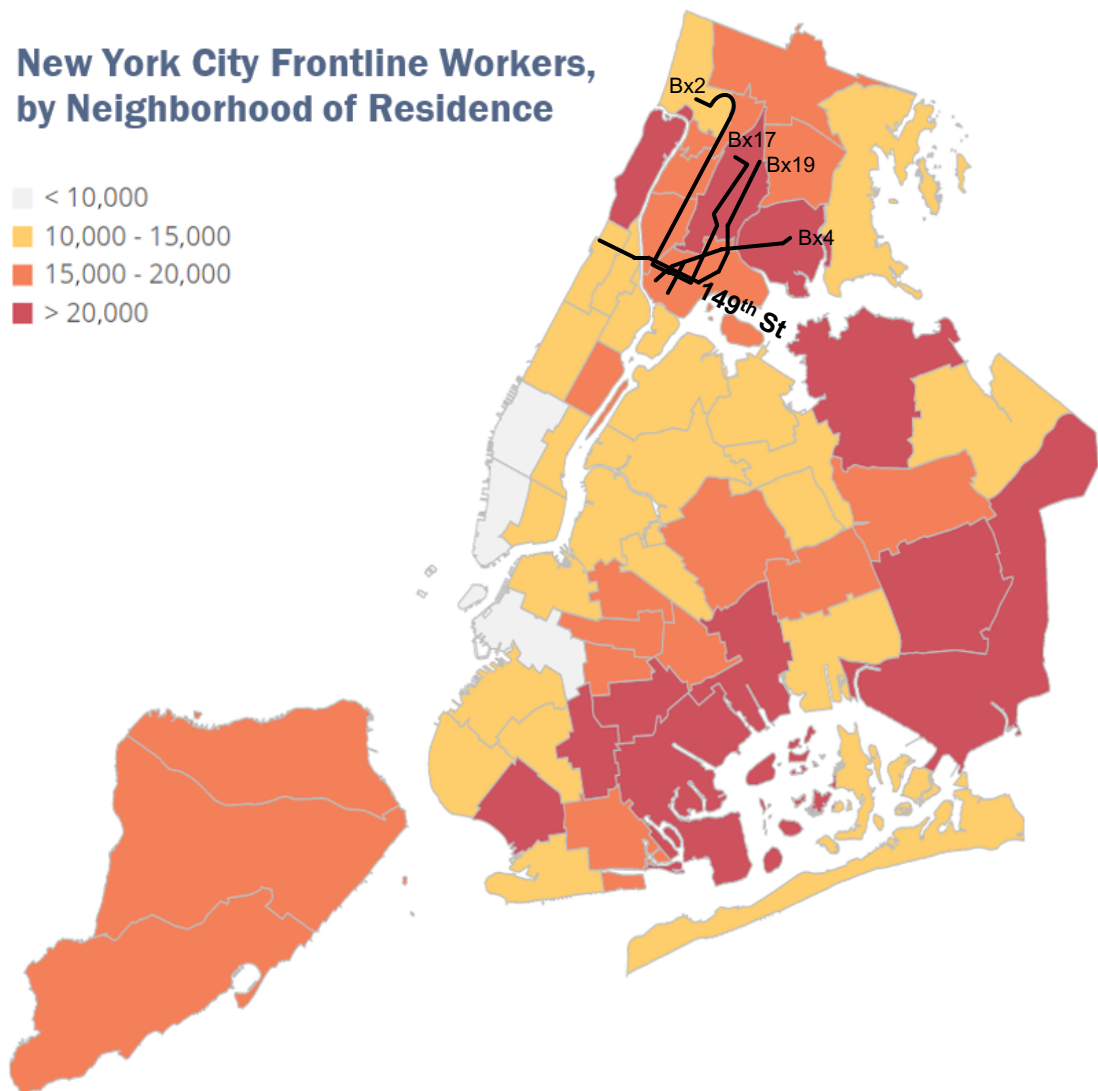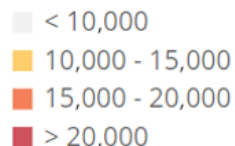- *Note: photos taken March 4-8, before COVID-19 outbreak*

AM peak

PM peak

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Transporting Essential Workers During and After COVID-19

3

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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

*Source: NYC Comptroller Report, "New York City's Frontline Workers," 3/26/20*

New York City Frontline Workers, by Neighborhood of Residence

- < 10,000
- 10,000 - 15,000
- 15,000 - 20,000
- > 20,000

Bx2
Bx17
Bx19
Bx4
149th St

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MTA

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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
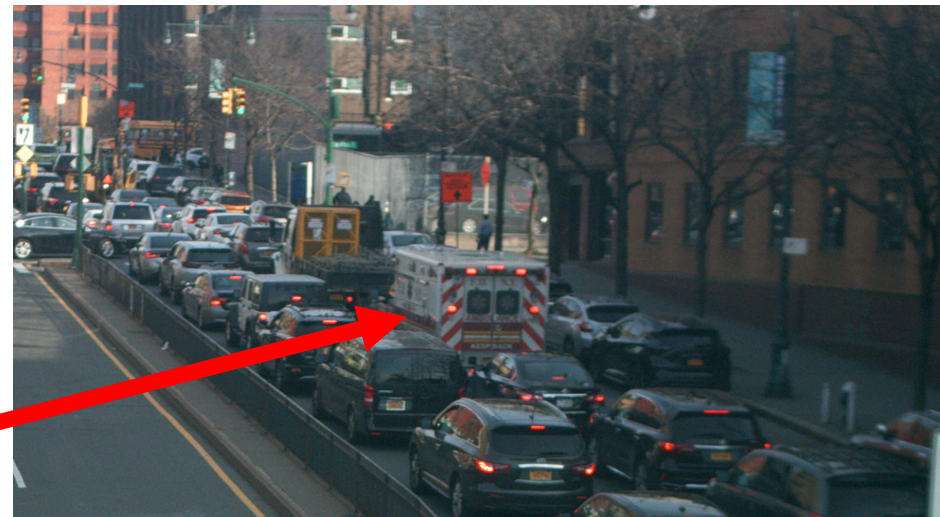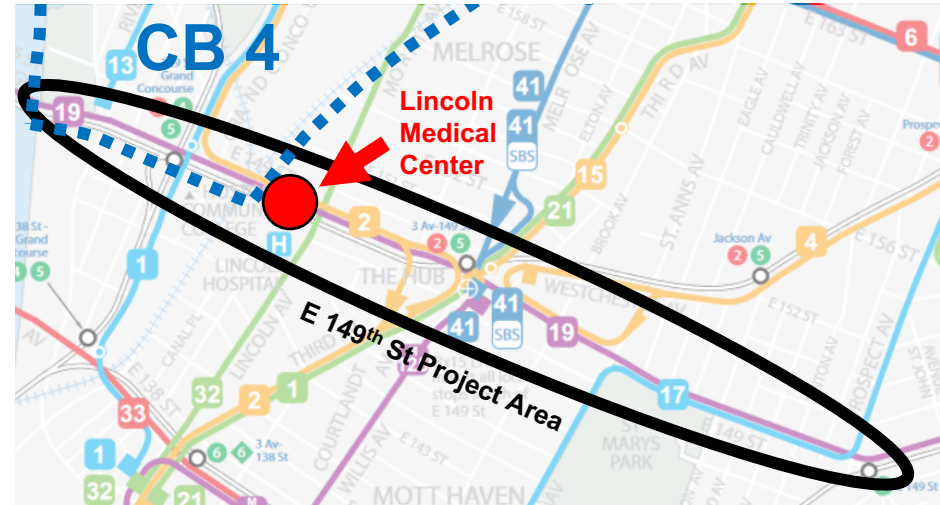
149th St & Walton Ave, 3/5/20

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Proposal

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Proposed Treatments

Bus Lanes

Webster Ave, The Bronx

Pedestrian Islands

Baychester Ave, The Bronx

Turn Bays

Webster Ave, The Bronx

Curb Management (Meters, Loading Zones)

178th St, The Bronx

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Existing: Exterior St to Gerard Ave

Exterior St

Bx13 bus stop

River Ave

Gerard Ave

E 149th St

Bx19 bus stop

BUS

BUS

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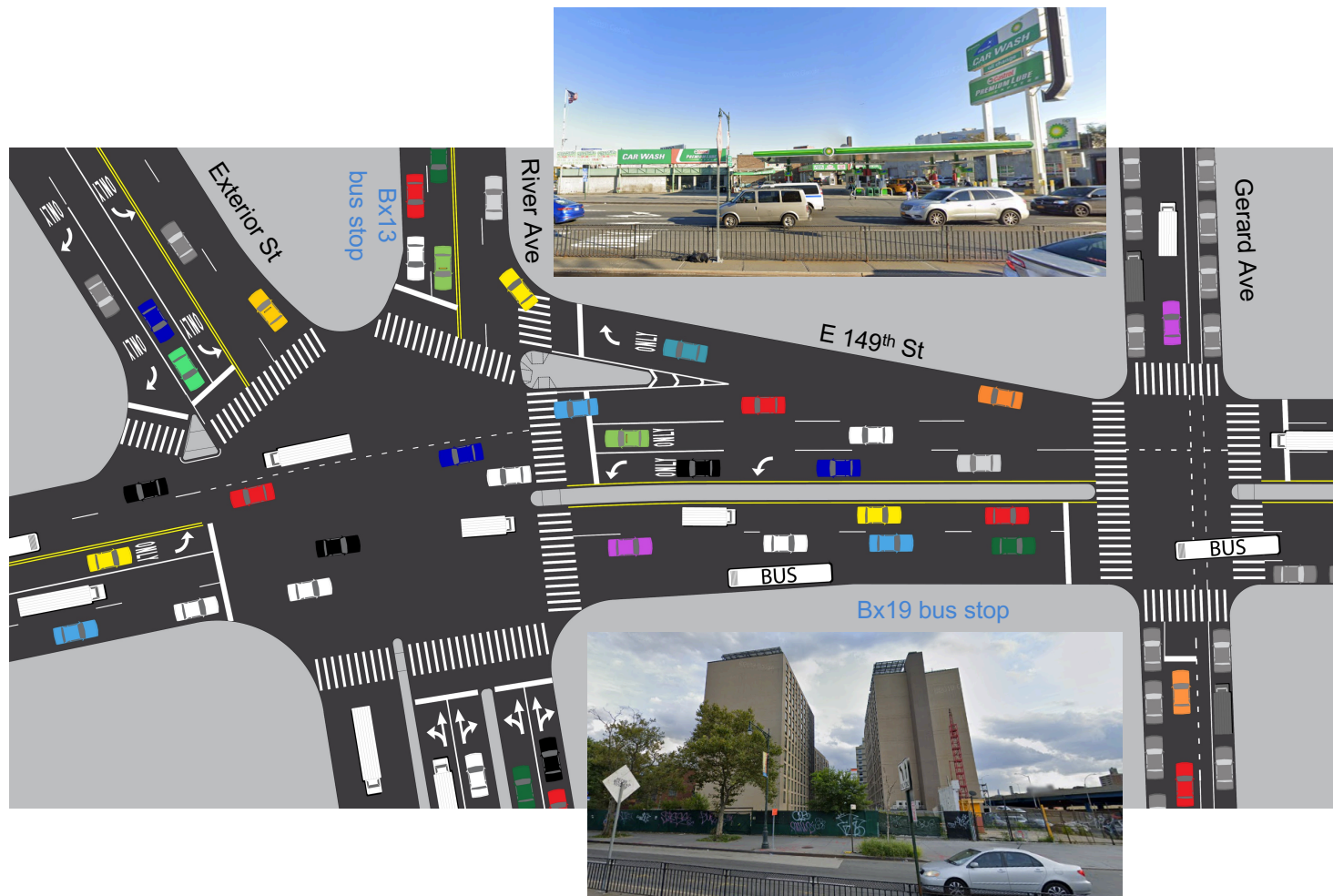
Proposed: Exterior St to Gerard Ave

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

Repurpose 1 legal parking space

Widen pedestrian island at Gerard Ave (from 6' to 15', ADA accessible)

Bx13 bus stop

Bx19 bus stop

Exterior St

River Ave

Gerard Ave

E 149th St

BUS

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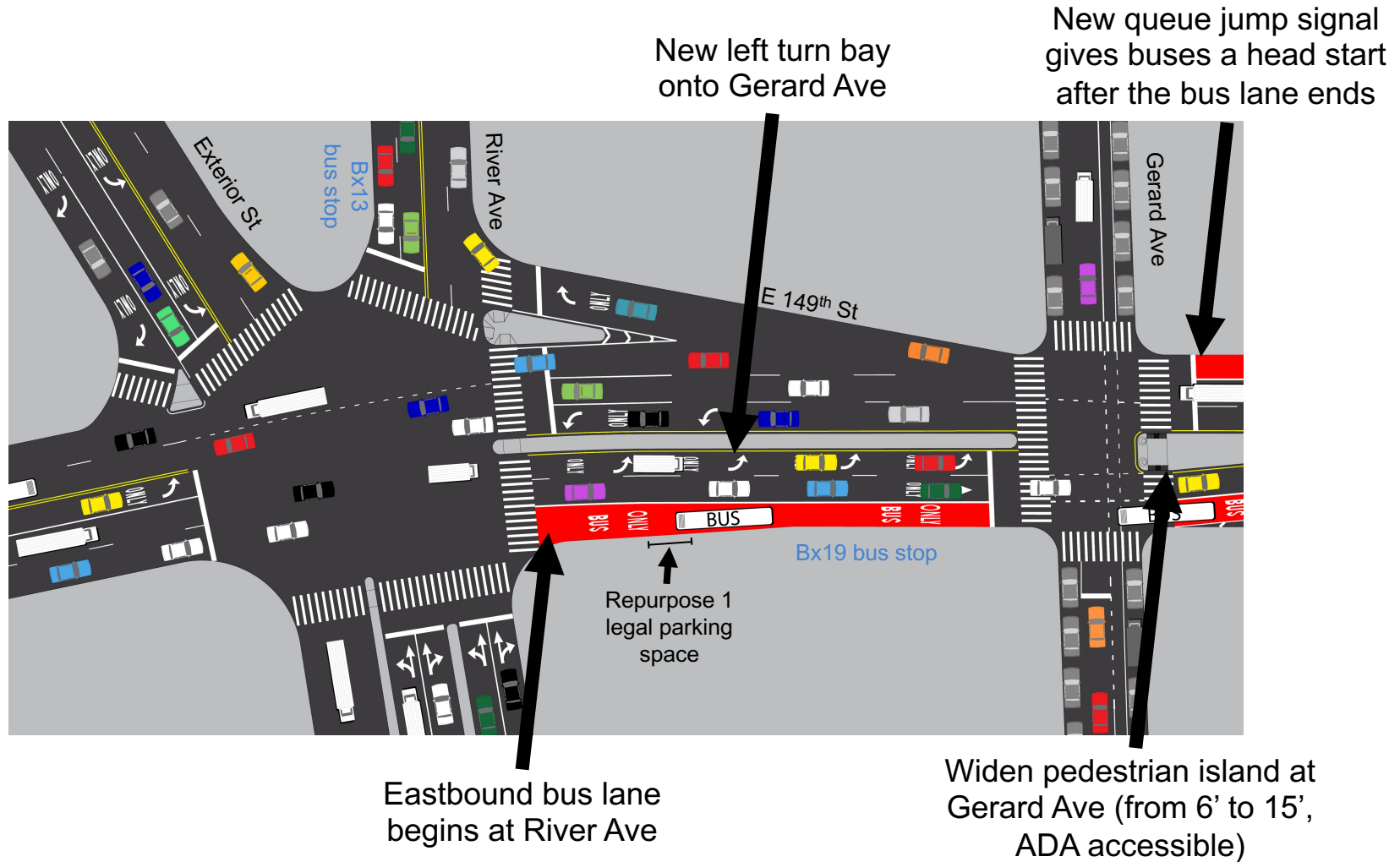
Existing: Gerard Ave to Grand Concourse

Existing, 1-block bus lane on Grand Concourse

Gerard Ave

Bx19 bus stop

Walton Ave

E 149th St

Grand Concourse
Bx1/Bx2 Bus Stop

BUS

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BUS

BUS
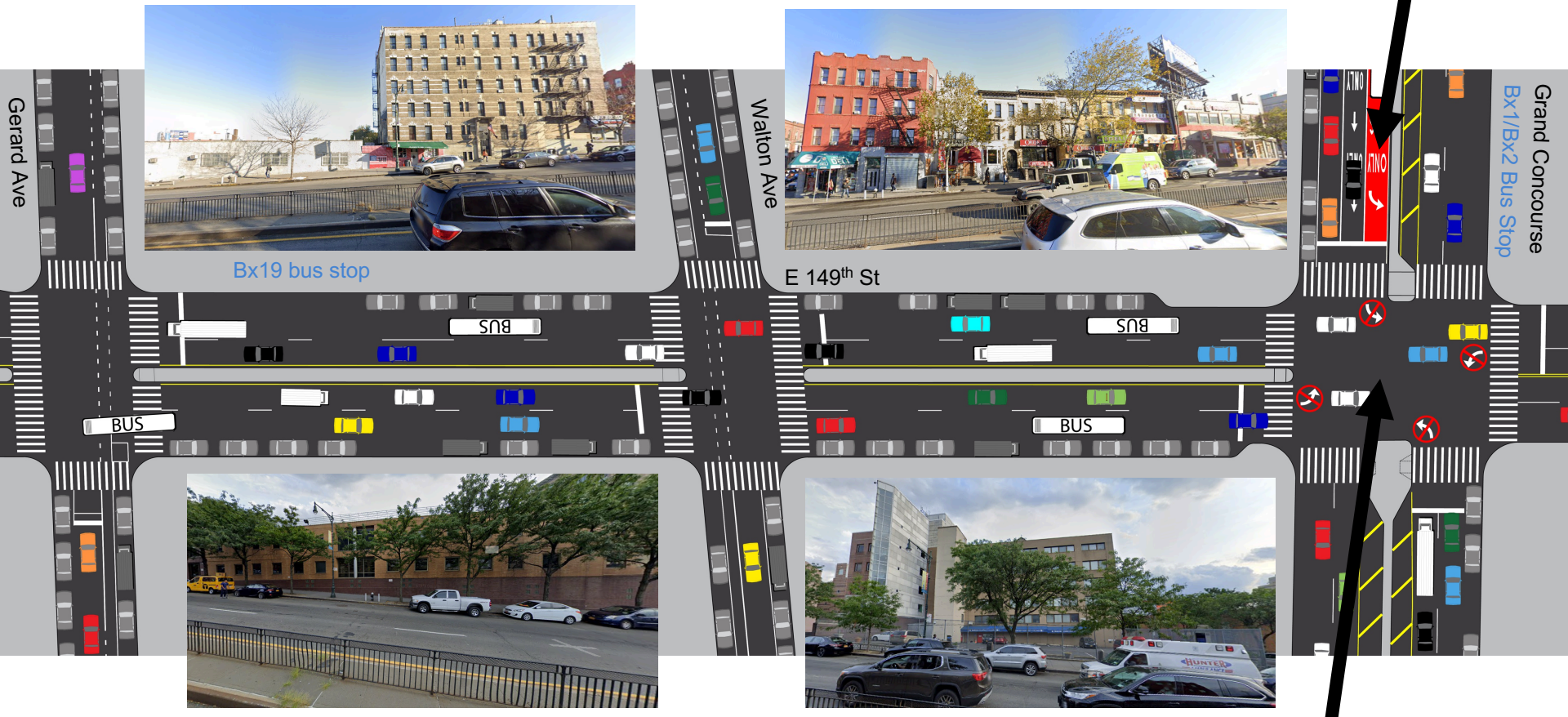
Vision Zero Priority Intersection;
all left turns currently restricted
(except buses)

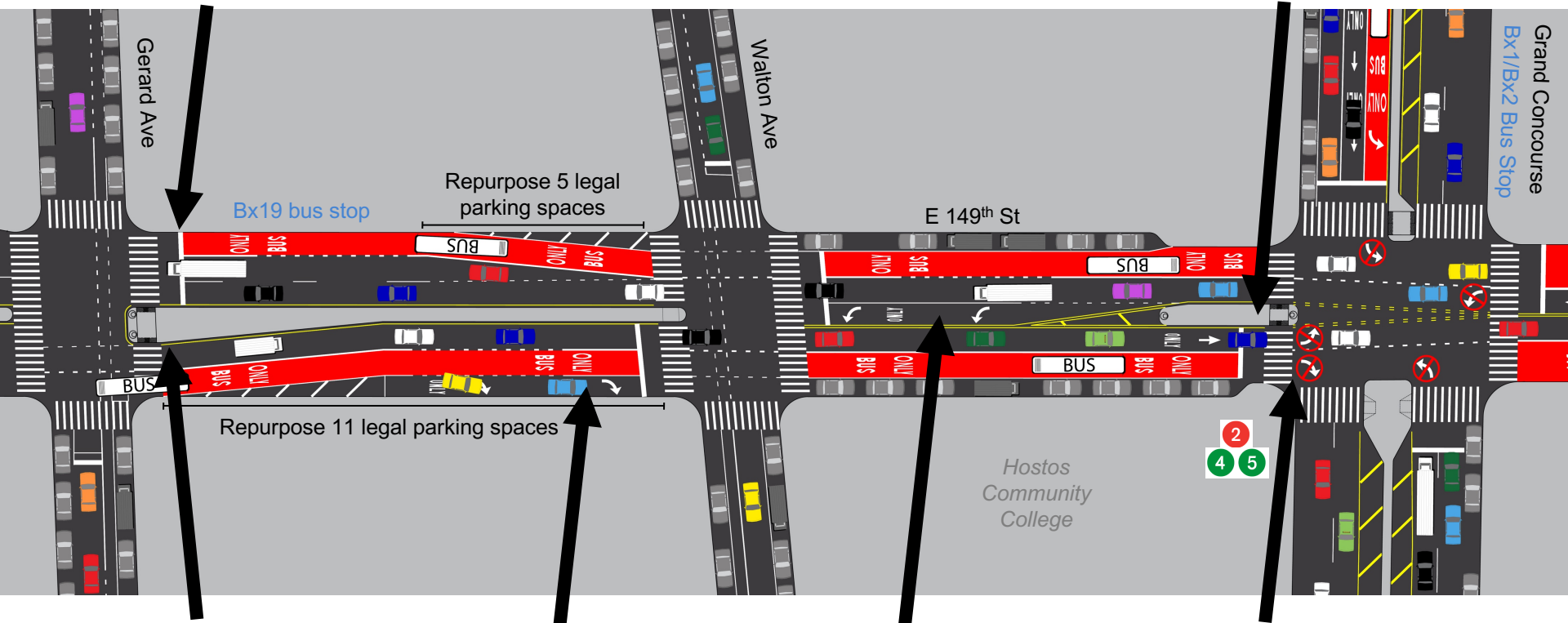BETTERBUSES

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)

Bx19 bus stop

Repurpose 5 legal parking spaces

E 149th St

Gerard Ave

Walton Ave

Grand Concourse
Bx1/Bx2 Bus Stop

Repurpose 11 legal parking spaces

Hostos Community College

Widen pedestrian island at Gerard Ave (from 6' to 15', ADA accessible)

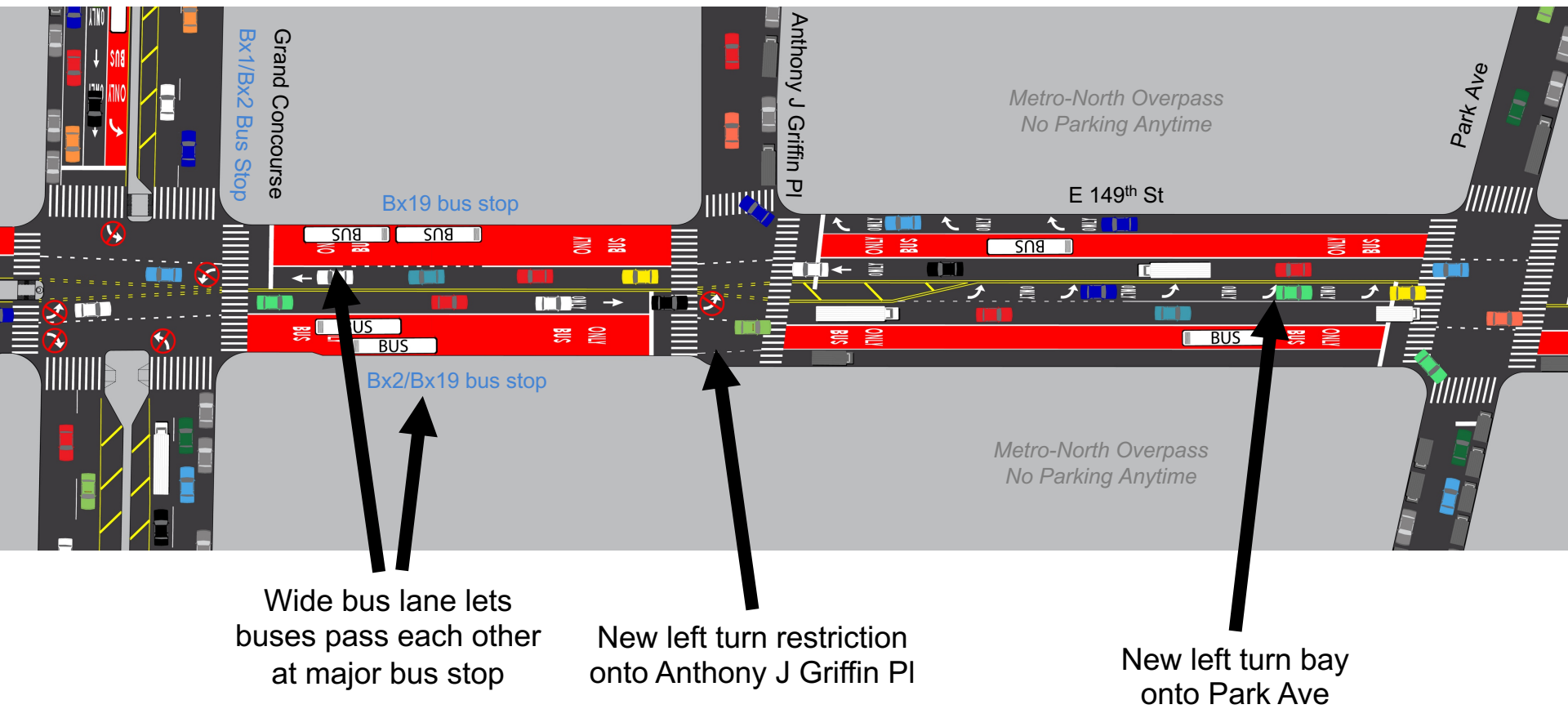New right turn bay at Walton Ave keeps through lanes clear

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

New right turn restriction onto Grand Concourse

Existing: Grand Concourse to Park Ave

Grand Concourse

Bx19 bus stop

Bx2/Bx19 bus stop

Anthony J Griffin Pl

E 149th St

Park Ave

Major bus stop (connect to 2/4/5 trains, Bx1/Bx2 buses, Hostos CC)

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Proposed: Grand Concourse to Park Ave

Grand Concourse

Bx1/Bx2 Bus Stop

Anthony J Griffin Pl

Park Ave

Metro-North Overpass
No Parking Anytime

E 149th St

Bx19 bus stop

Bx2/Bx19 bus stop

Metro-North Overpass
No Parking Anytime

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

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 <u>south curb only (7 spaces)</u> 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

Exterior St

Gerard Ave

Walton Ave

Grand Concourse

E 144th St

Alternate-Side Parking

Alternate-Side Parking

Alternate-Side Parking

No Parking Mon-Sat 8am-6pm

No Parking Mon-Sat 8am-6pm

Existing: Alt-Side Parking
Proposed: <u>No Parking</u>
Mon-Sat 8am-6pm
(repurpose 7 spaces)

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Making it Work

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

Changes being studied:

1. New metered parking zones and truck loading zones, to reduce double-parking and lane blocking

2. Changes to traffic signal timing, to keep traffic flowing smoothly

3. Opportunities to improve parking availability around the corner on side streets

4. Other refinements based on community feedback

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Next Steps

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Project Timeline

Fall 2019

- Present potential treatments to CB 4, CB 1
- Collect traffic data
- Survey merchants

Winter/Spring 2020

- Develop draft street design plan
- Present draft plan to CB 4, CB 1
- 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)

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Continuing Community Engagement

Suggestions on additional organizations or stakeholders we should reach out to?

Past and present outreach:

- MTA Bronx Bus Redesign / NYC DOT Better Buses

  - Open Houses

  - Community Board Presentations

- Community Board 4

- Community Board 1

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THANK YOU!

Questions?

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