

East 149th St Bus Priority Improvements

Community Board 1 Municipal Services Committee – May 11th, 2020



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Background

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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



Bus Priority Corridors

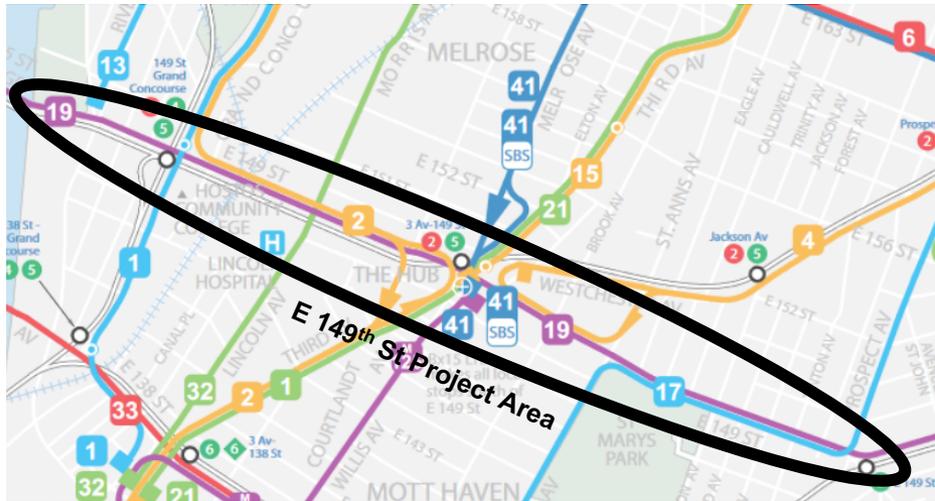


- NYCDOT analyzed Bronx corridors to determine where bus lanes and other bus priority treatments are most needed
- E 149th St identified as a top ten Bronx corridor due to:
 - High ridership
 - Slow and unreliable bus service
 - Important east-west connection

Existing Conditions

2

Bus Service Overview



- **4 bus routes, 55,000 daily riders**
 - Bx2, Bx4, Bx17, Bx19

- **Major connections:**



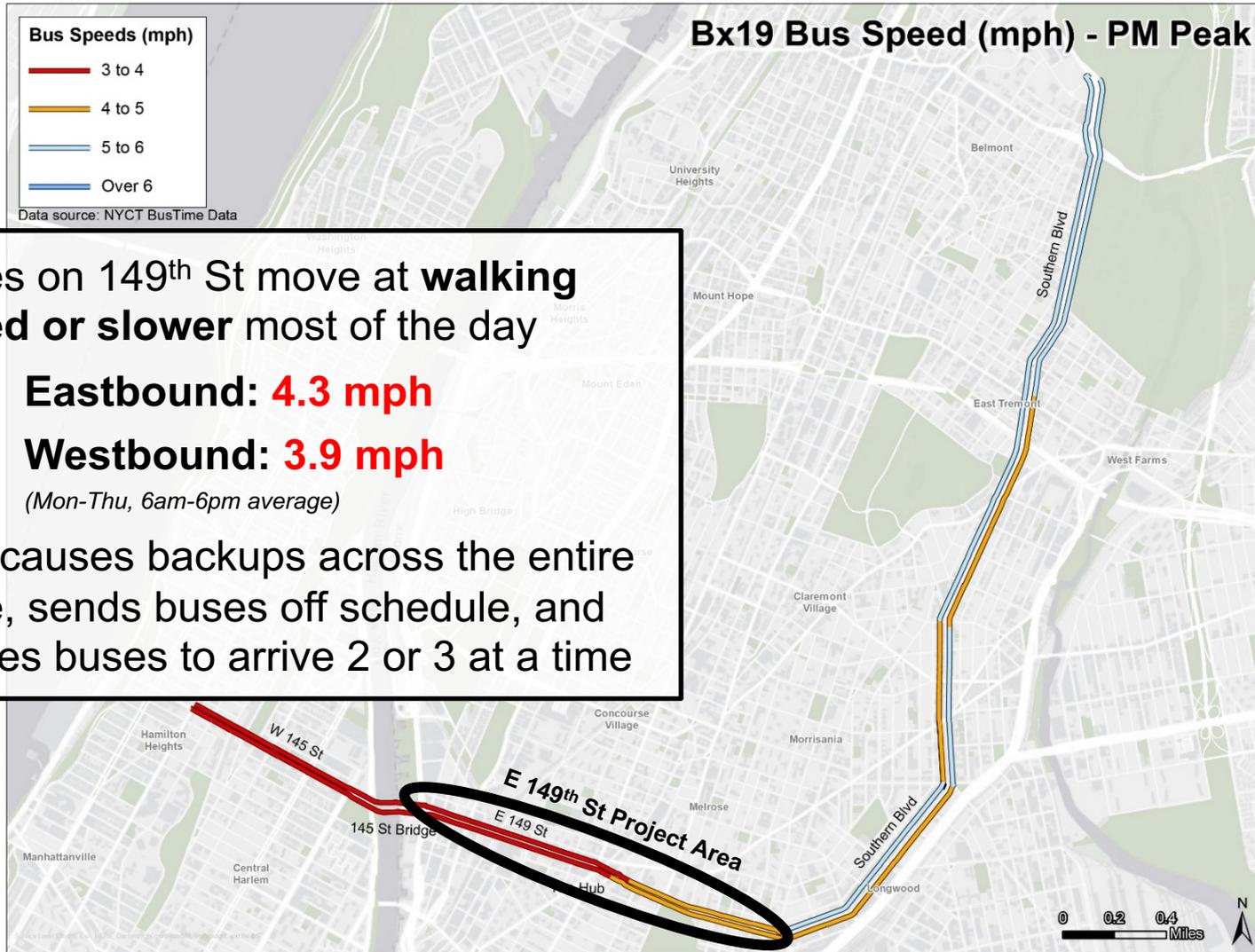
- Lincoln Medical Center
- The Hub
- Hostos Community College

- **Key issues:**

- Traffic congestion and slow bus speeds at all times of day
- Double parking, weaving and merging



Current Bus Speeds



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*



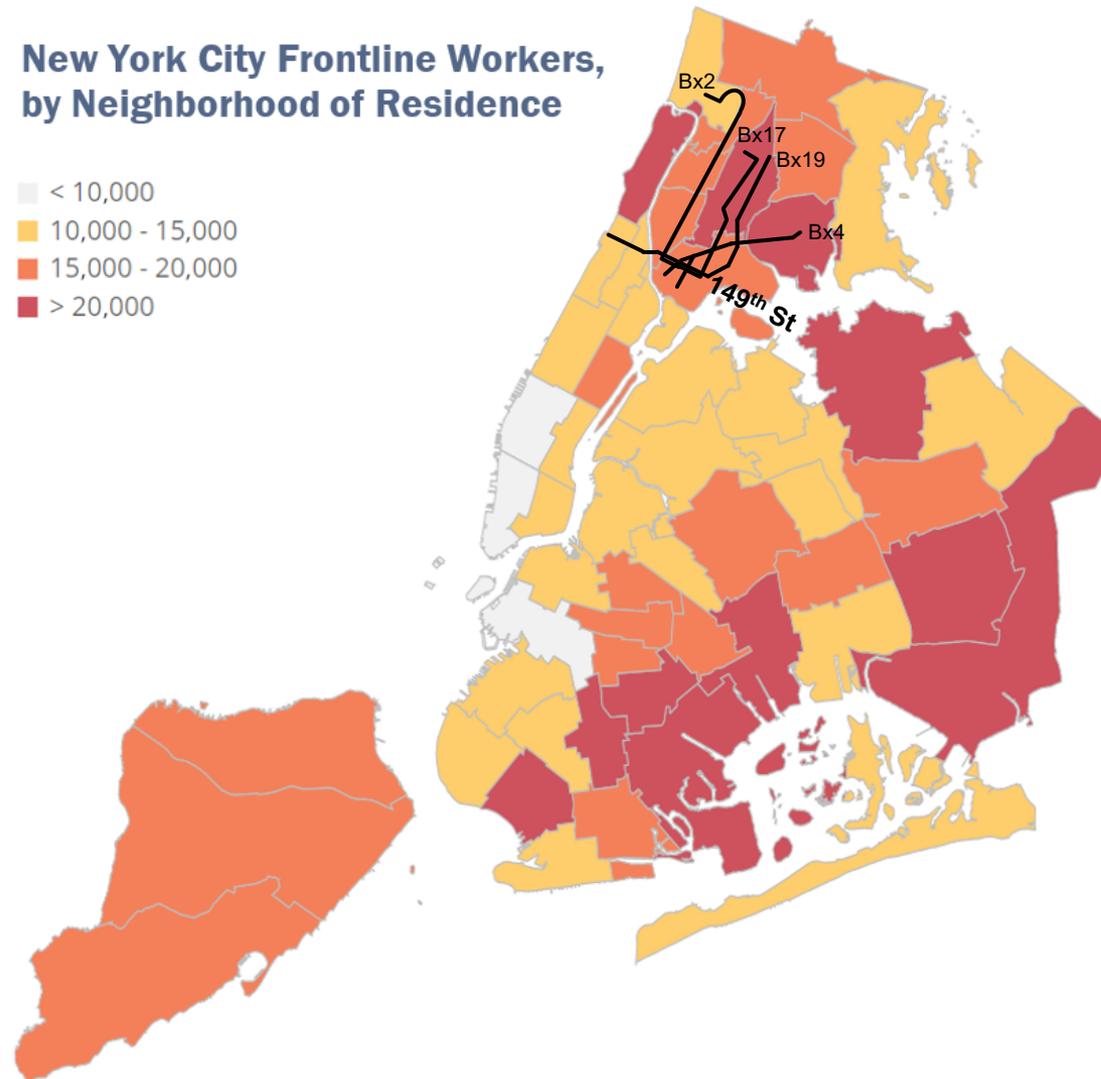
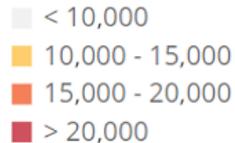
Transporting Essential Workers During and After COVID-19

3

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

New York City Frontline Workers, by Neighborhood of Residence



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

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

Proposal

4

Proposed Treatments

Bus Lanes



Webster Ave, The Bronx

Pedestrian Islands



Baychester Ave, The Bronx

Left & Right Turn Bays



Webster Ave, The Bronx

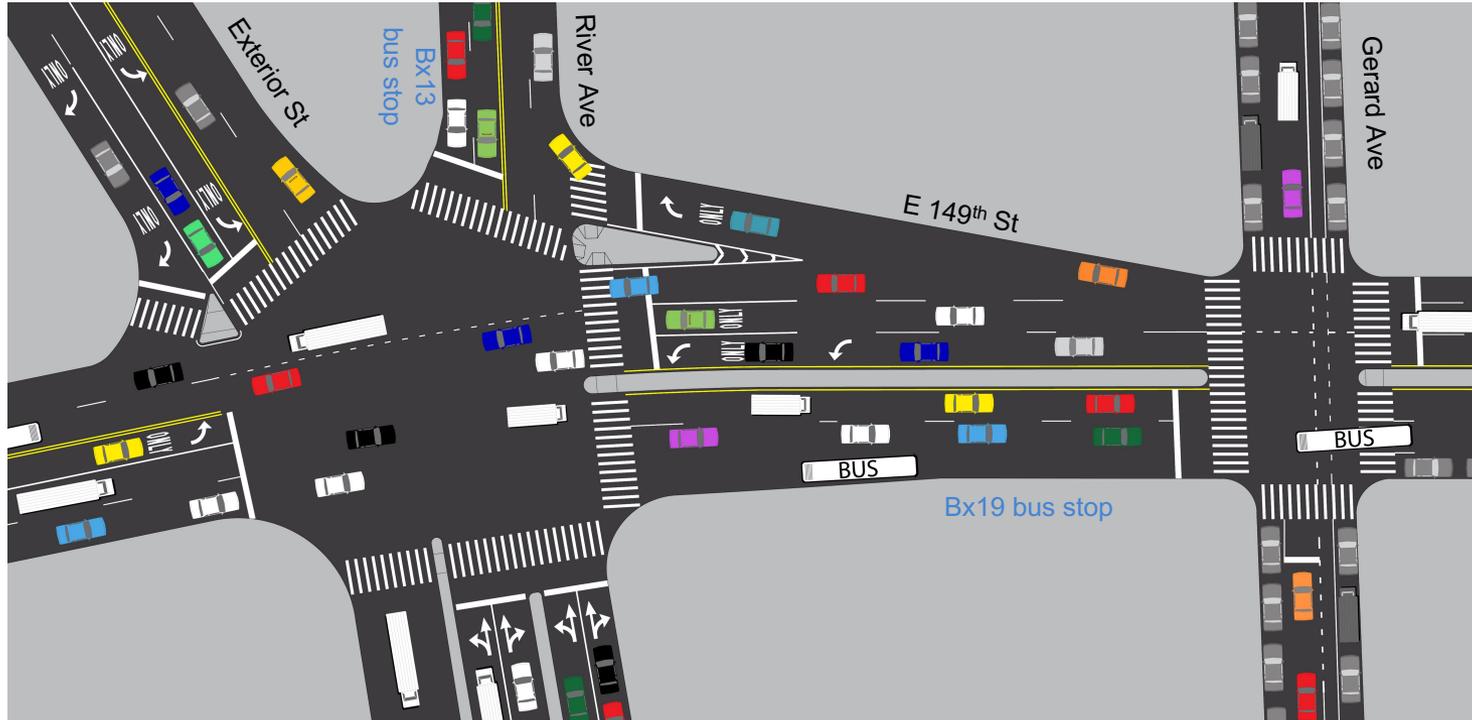
Curb Management (Meters, Loading Zones)



178th St, The Bronx

© NYC DOT

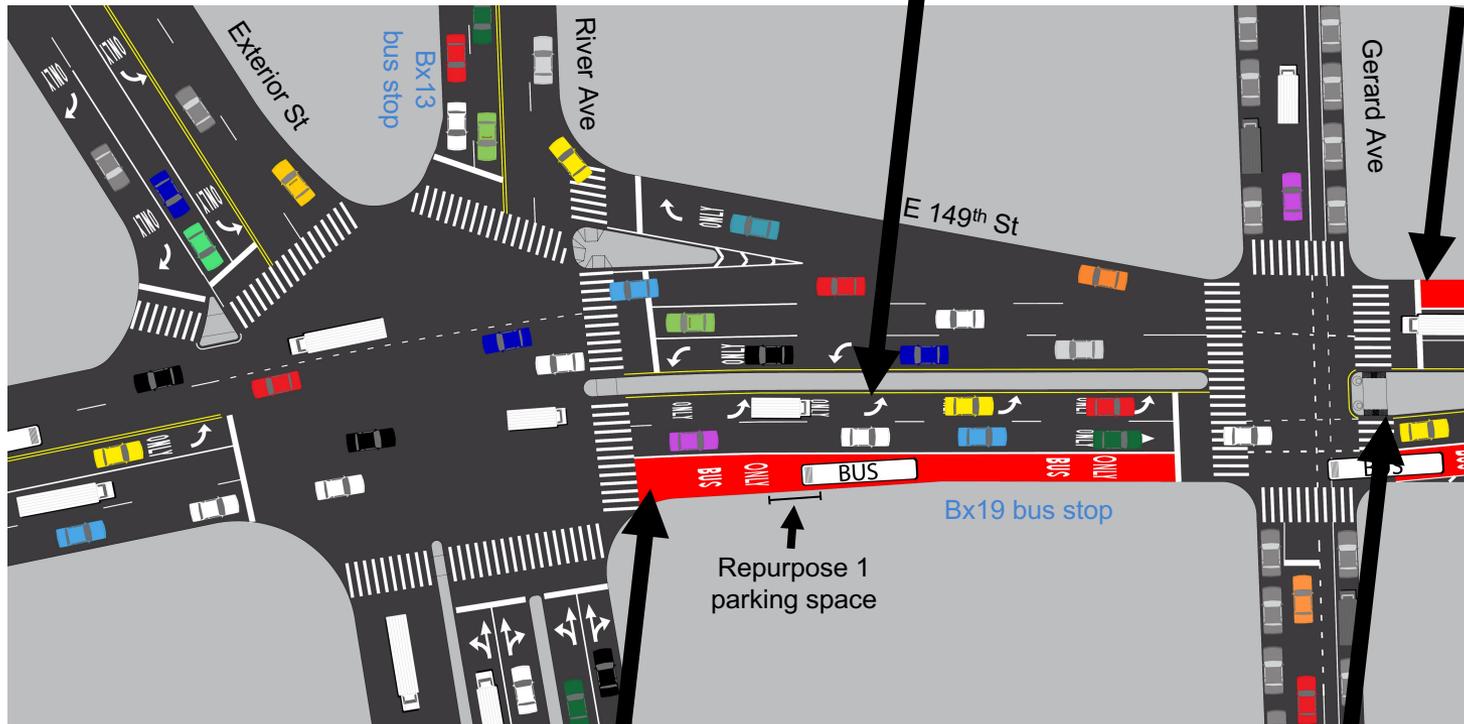
Existing: Exterior St to Gerard Ave



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



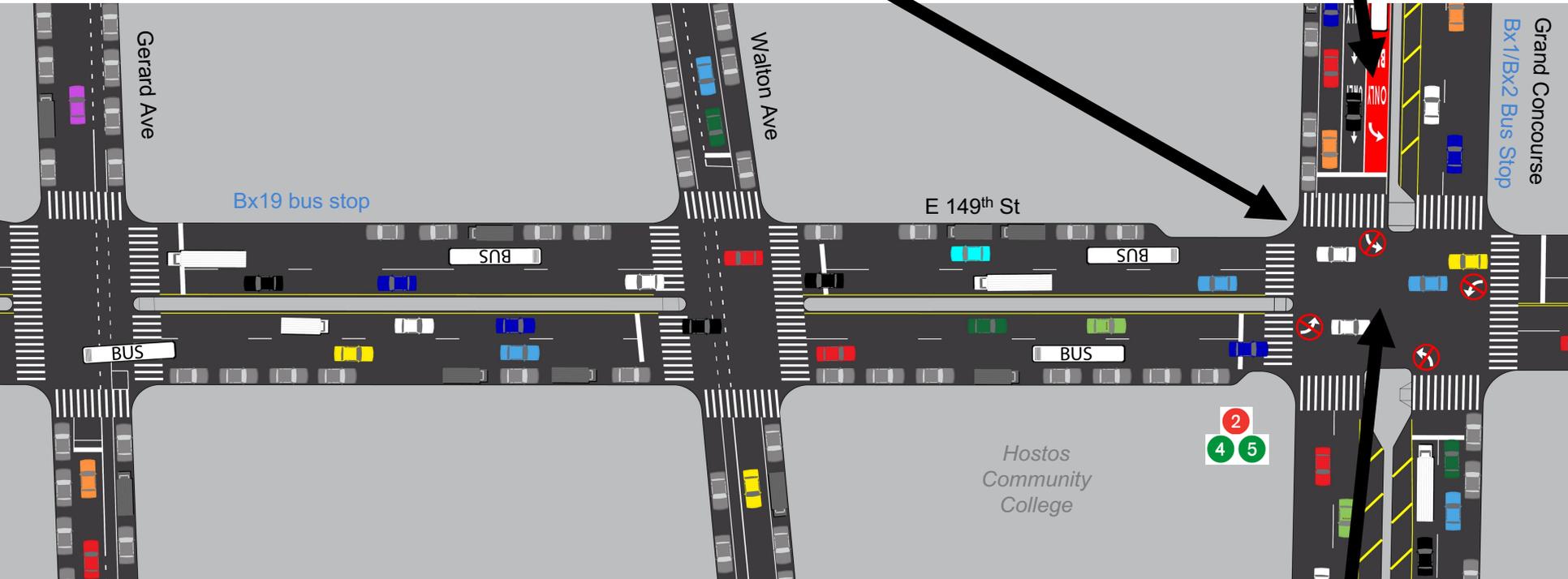
Eastbound bus lane begins at River Ave

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

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

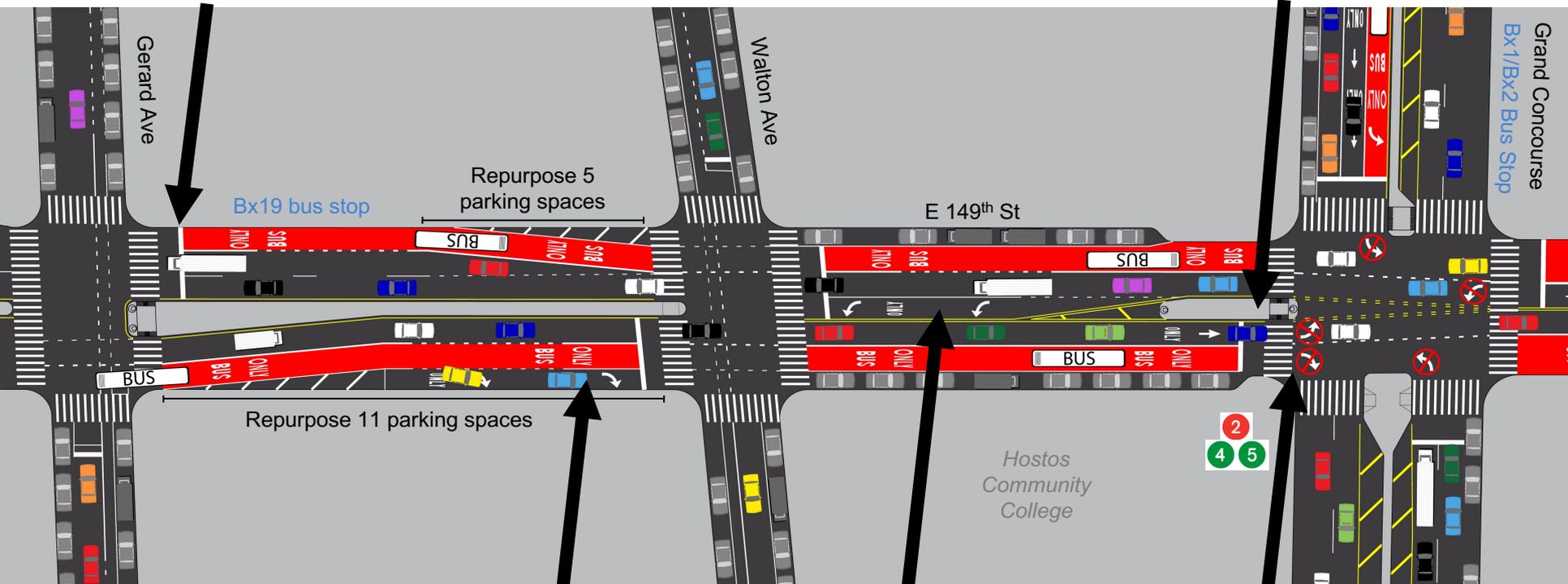


Vision Zero
Priority Intersection

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)

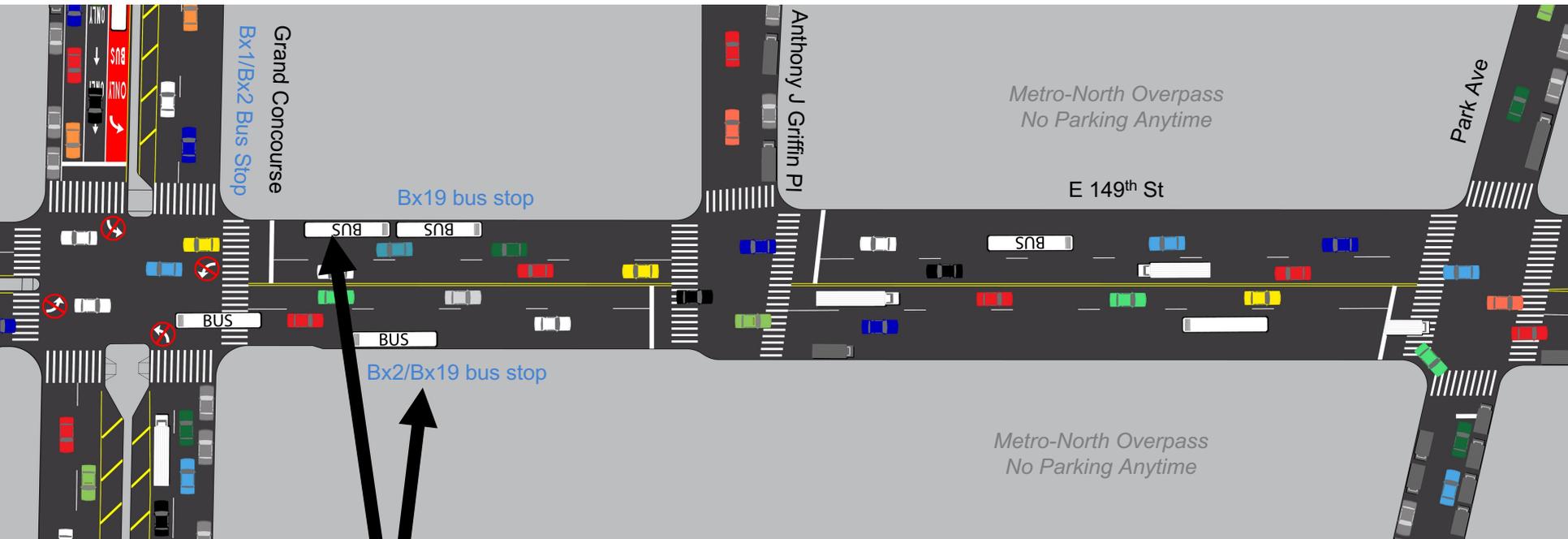


New right turn bay at Walton Ave keeps through lanes clear

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

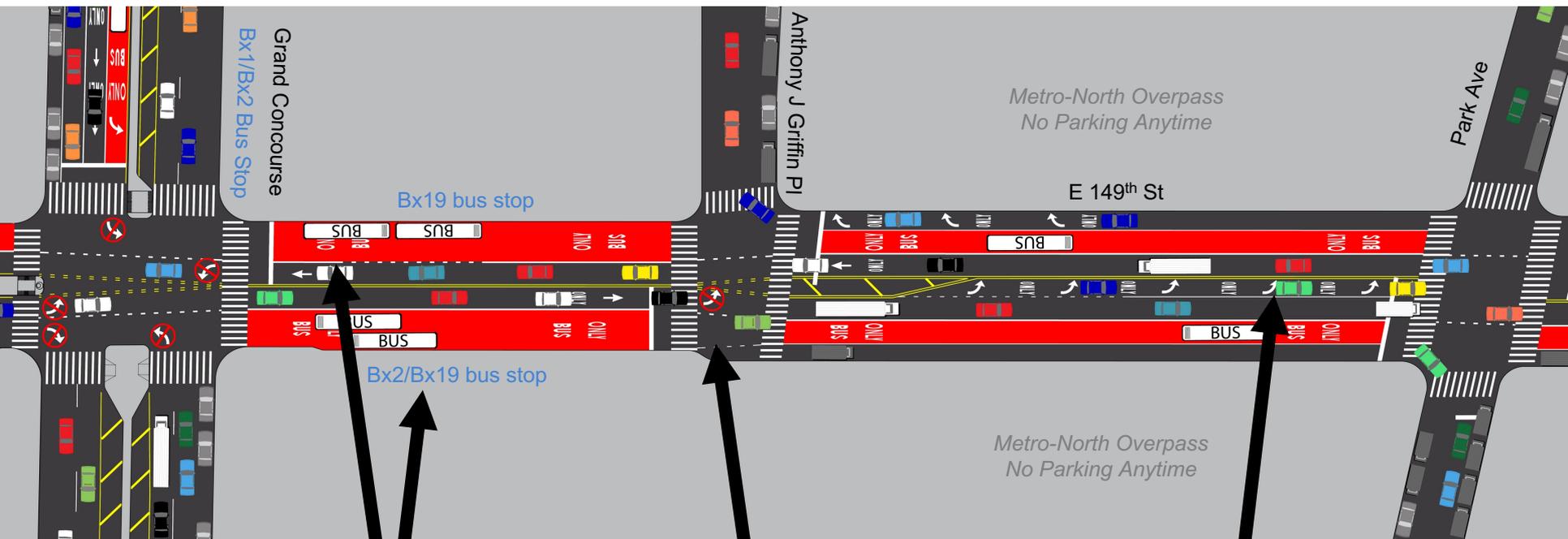
New right turn restriction onto Grand Concourse

Existing: Grand Concourse to Park Ave



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

Proposed: Grand Concourse to Park Ave

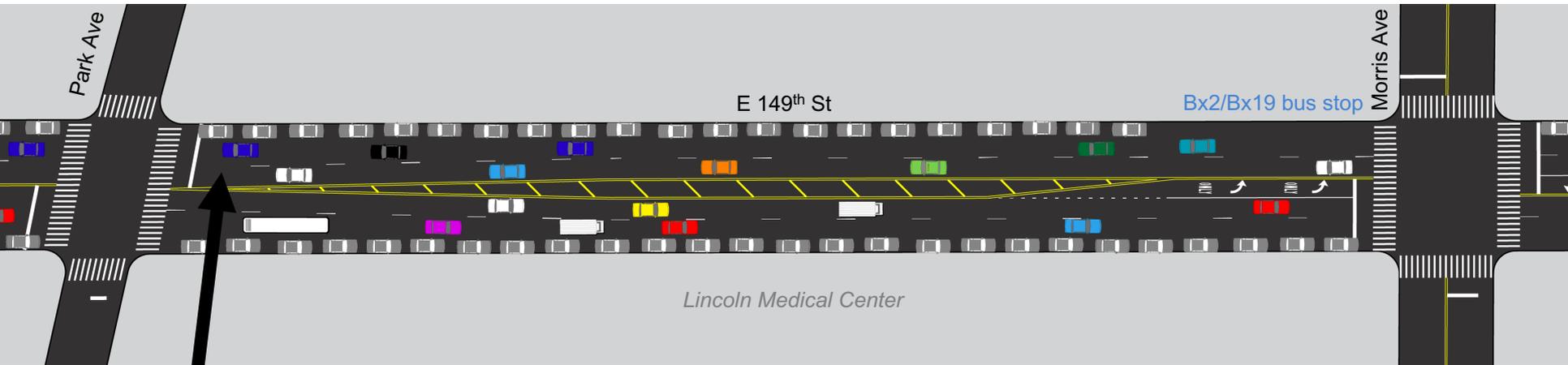


Wide bus lane lets buses pass each other at major bus stop

New left turn restriction onto Anthony J Griffin Pl

New left turn bay onto Park Ave

Existing: Park Ave to Morris Ave



E 149th St

Bx2/Bx19 bus stop

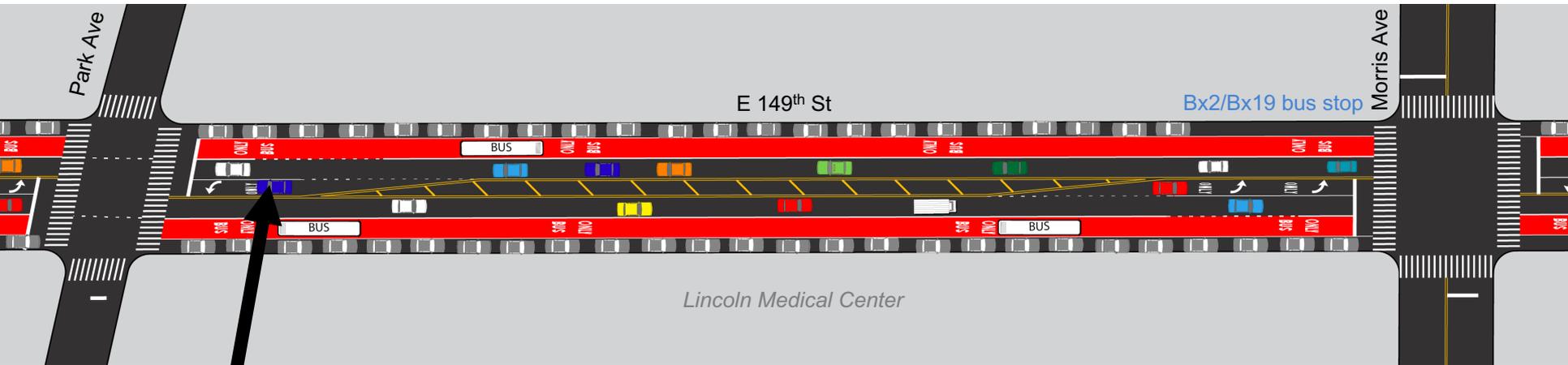
Lincoln Medical Center

Park Ave

Morris Ave

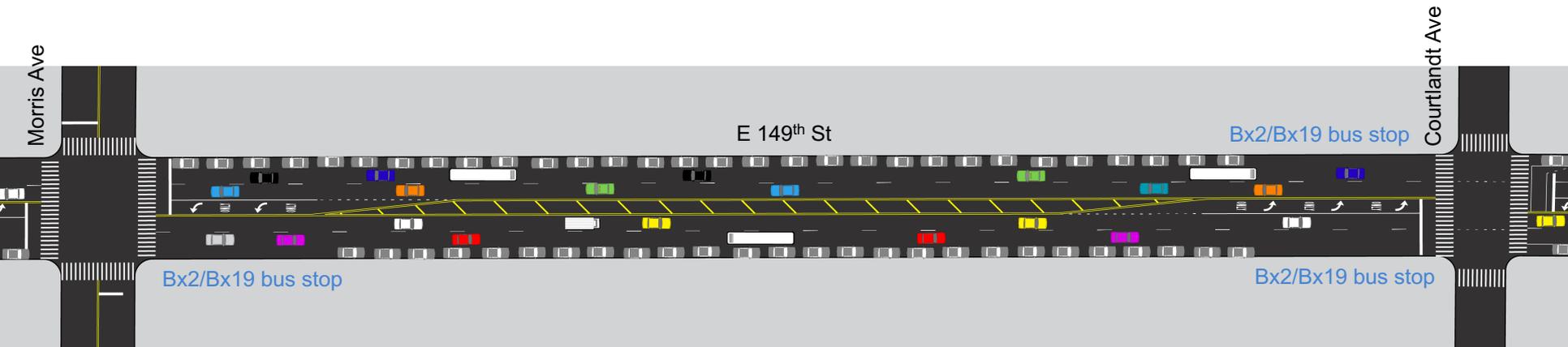
Legal westbound left turn
with no turn bay

Proposed: Park Ave to Morris Ave

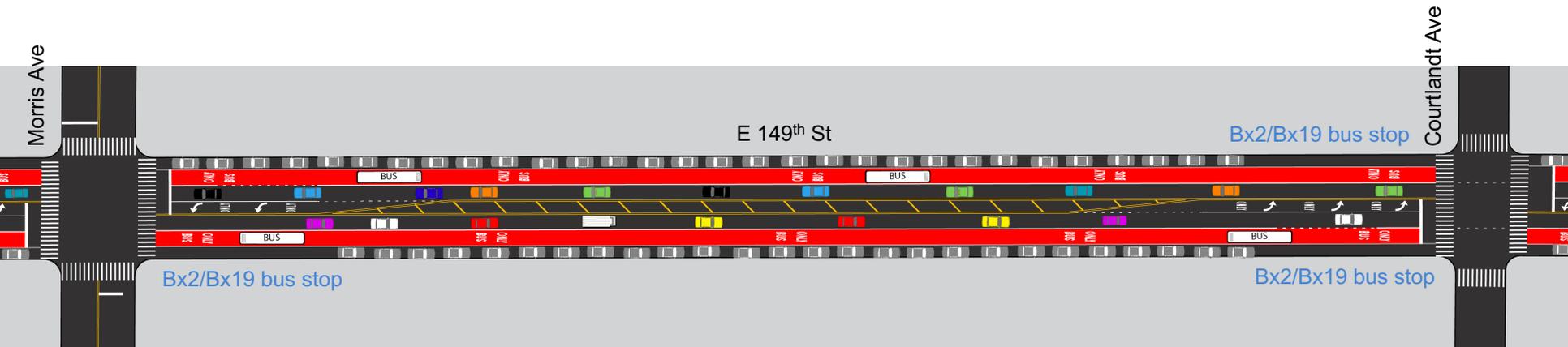


New left turn bay

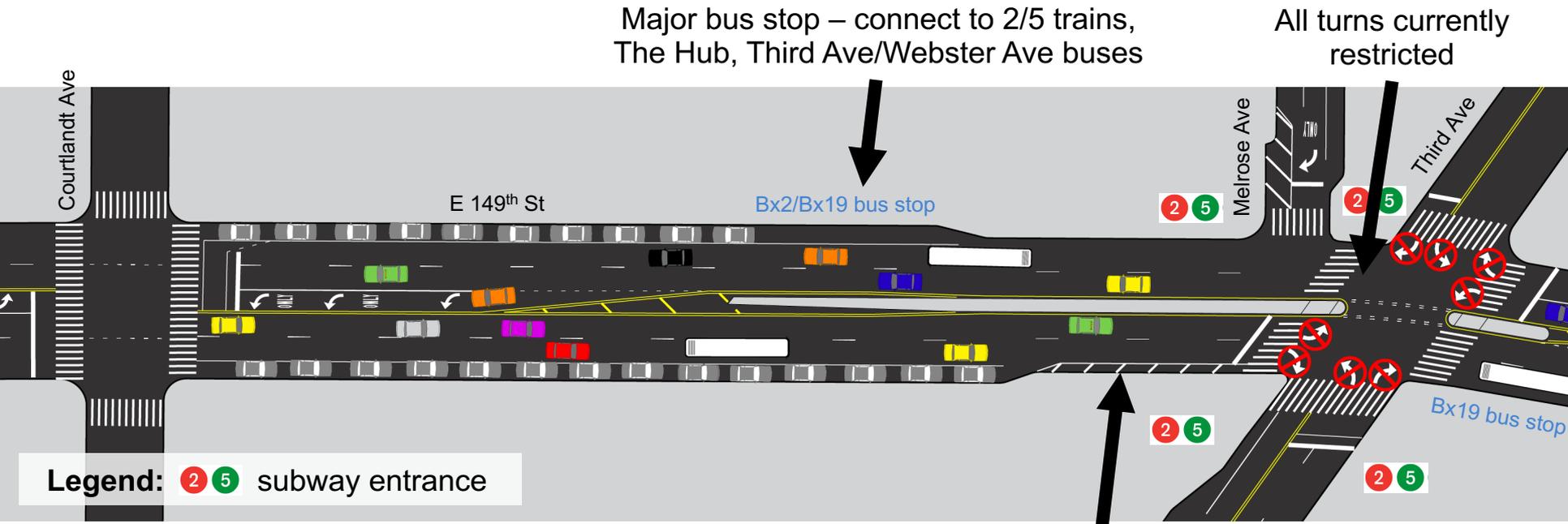
Existing: Morris Ave to Courtlandt Ave



Proposed: Morris Ave to Courtlandt Ave

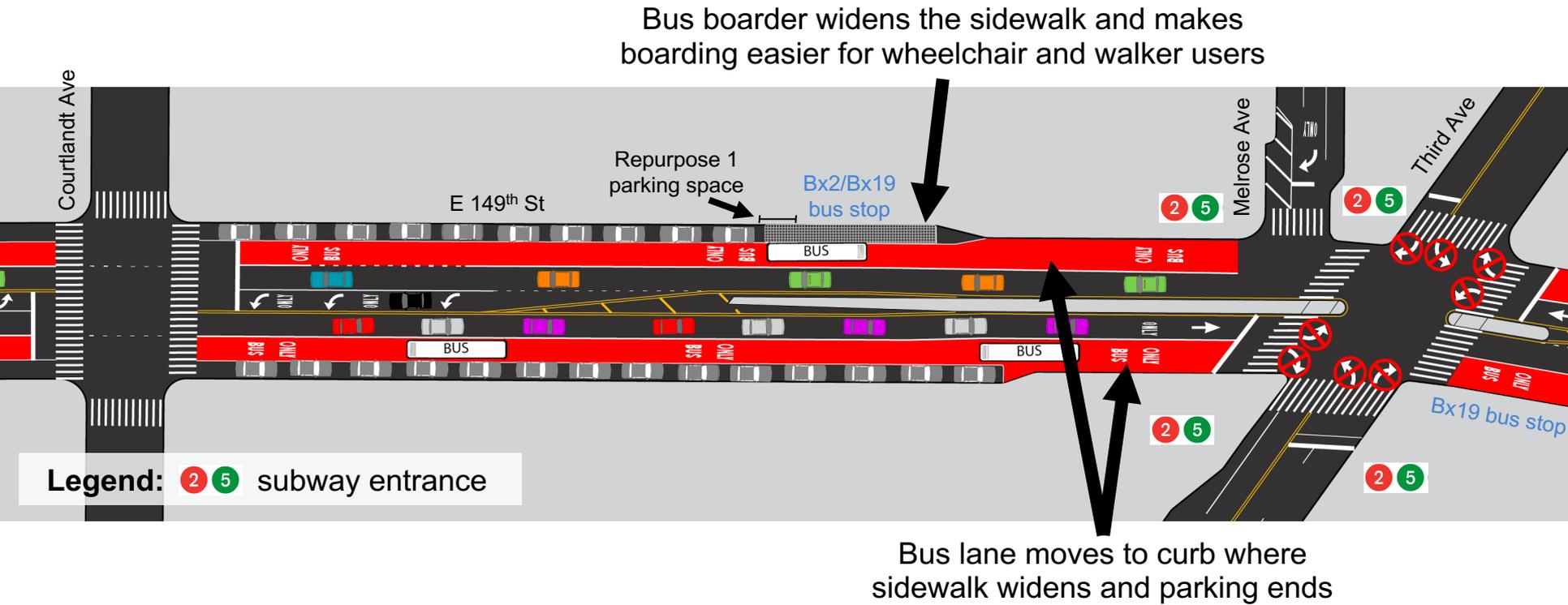


Existing: Courtlandt Ave to Third Ave

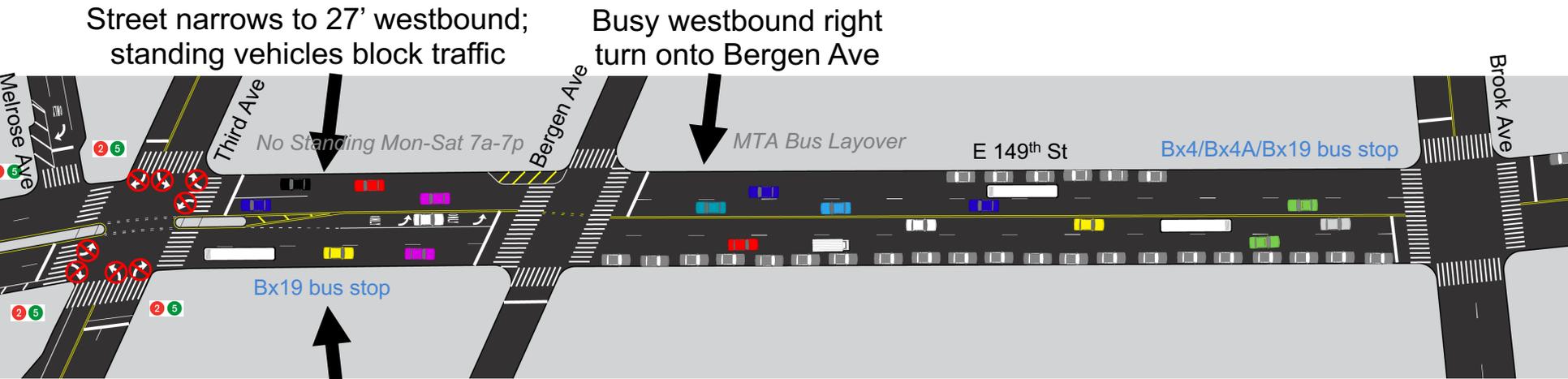


4.5' wide channelized area is a hotspot for illegal parking and standing, blocking traffic

Proposed: Courtlandt Ave to Third Ave

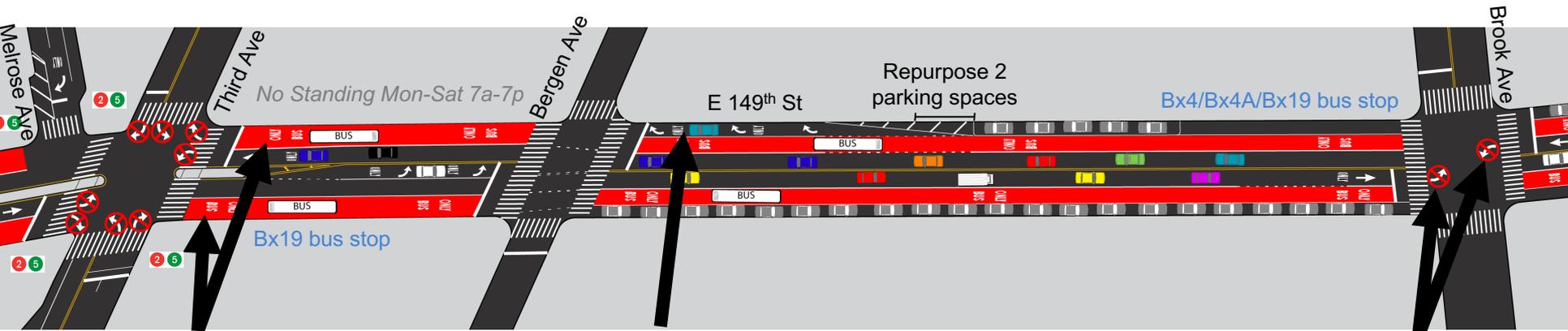


Existing: Third Ave to Brook Ave



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

Proposed: Third Ave to Brook Ave

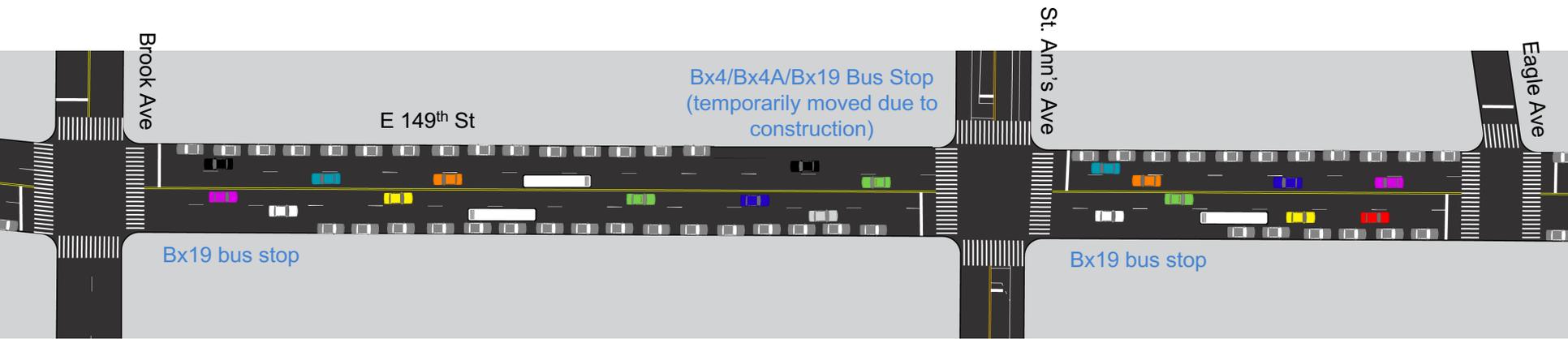


Curbside bus lanes on this block

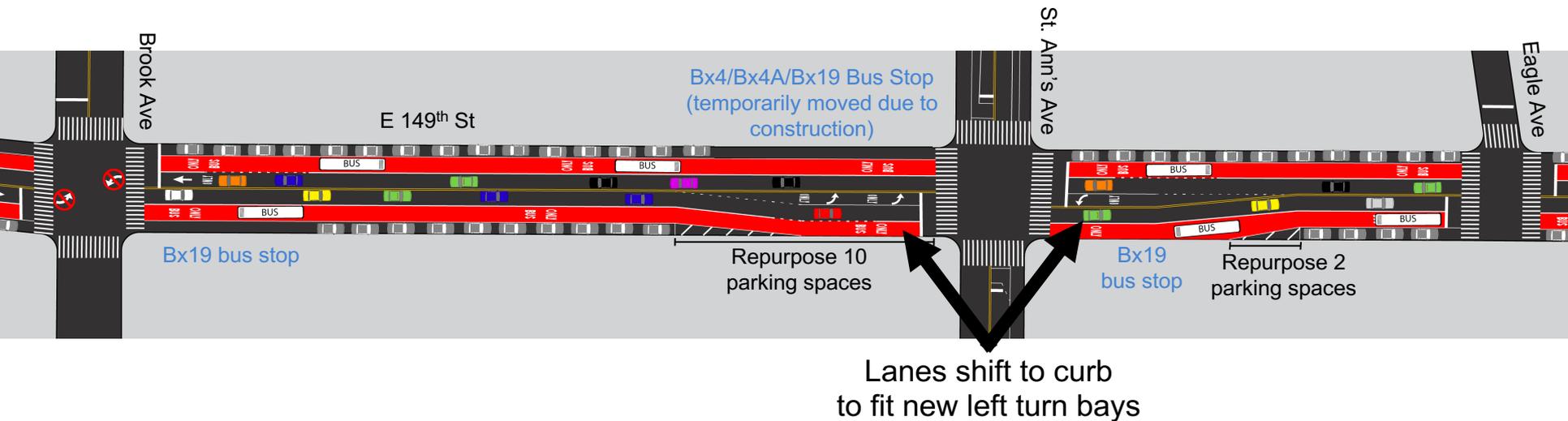
New right turn bay keeps through lanes moving

New turn restrictions at Brook Ave: eastbound left & westbound left

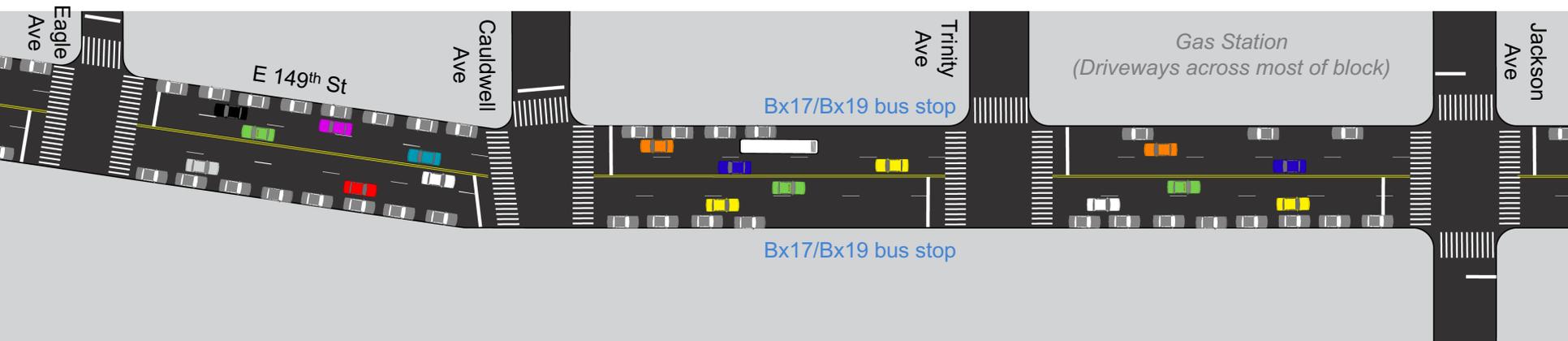
Existing: Brook Ave to Eagle Ave



Proposed: Brook Ave to Eagle Ave

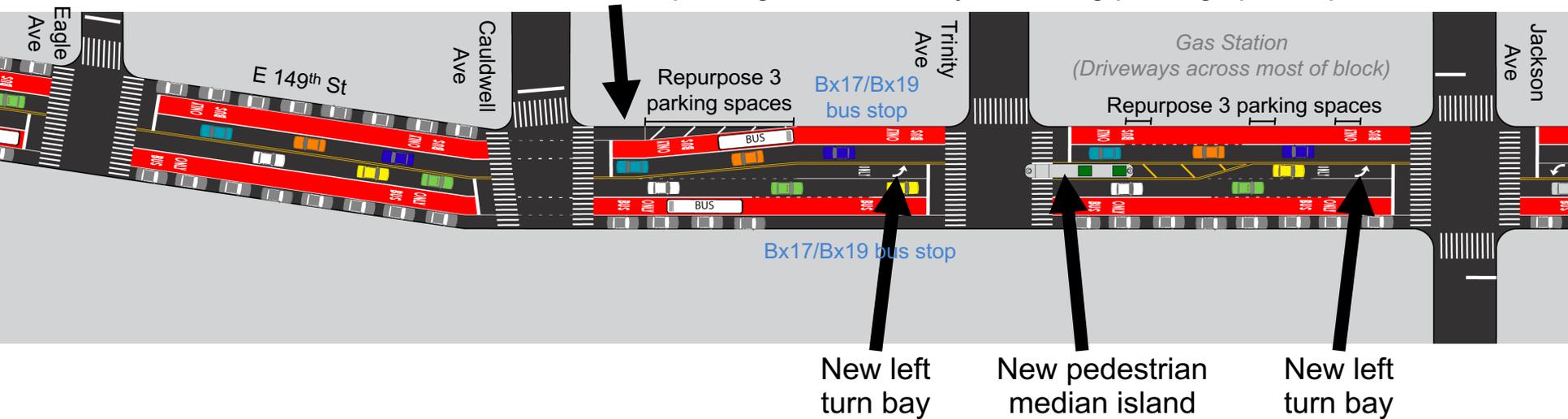


Existing: Eagle Ave to Jackson Ave

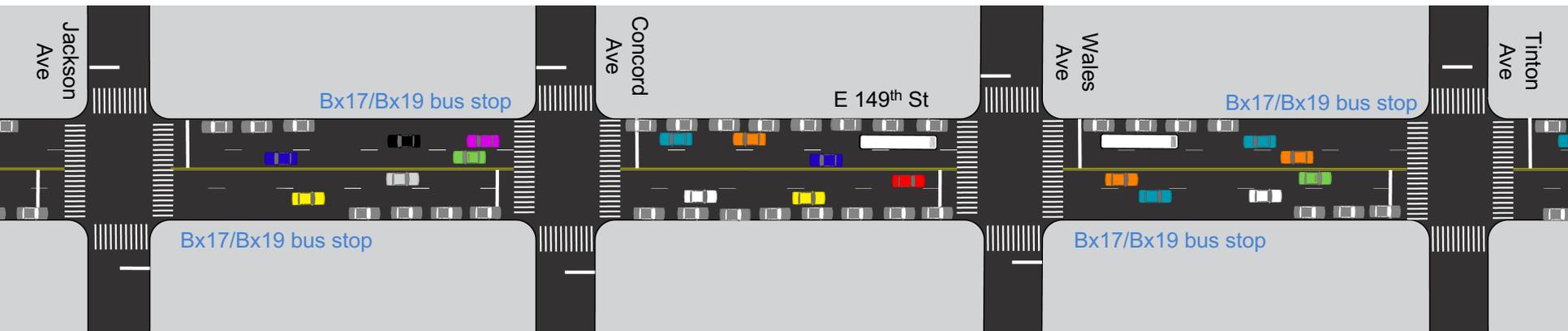


Proposed: Eagle Ave to Jackson Ave

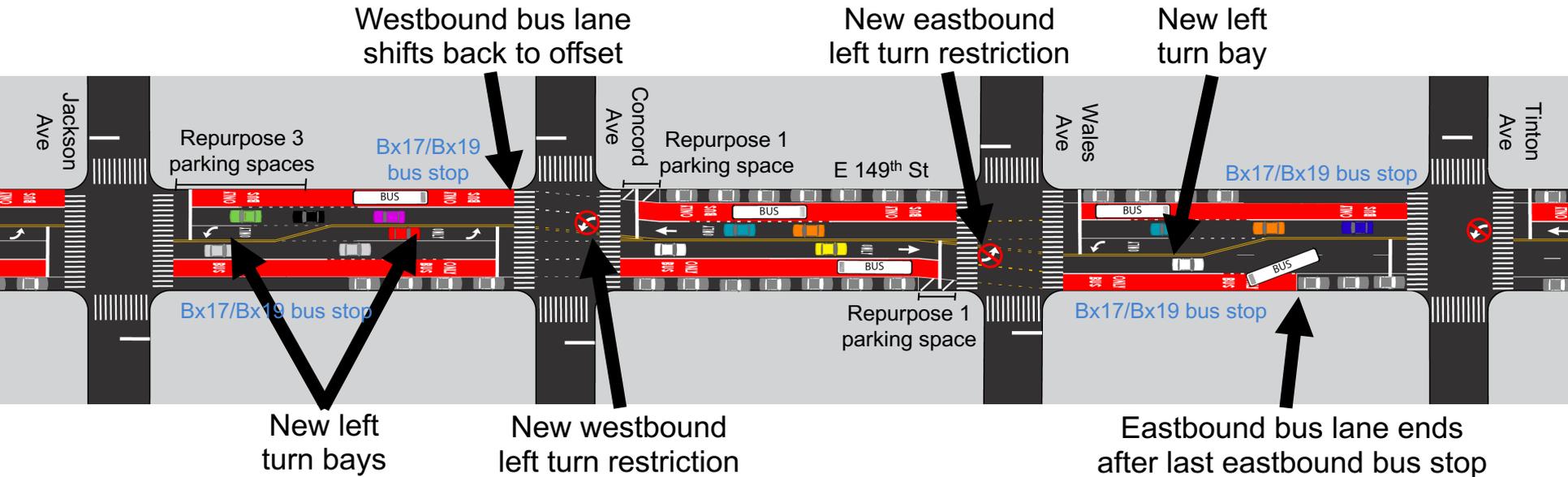
Westbound bus lane shifts to curb for 3 blocks to accommodate left turn bays. These blocks were selected to minimize parking loss, with only 3 existing parking spaces per block.



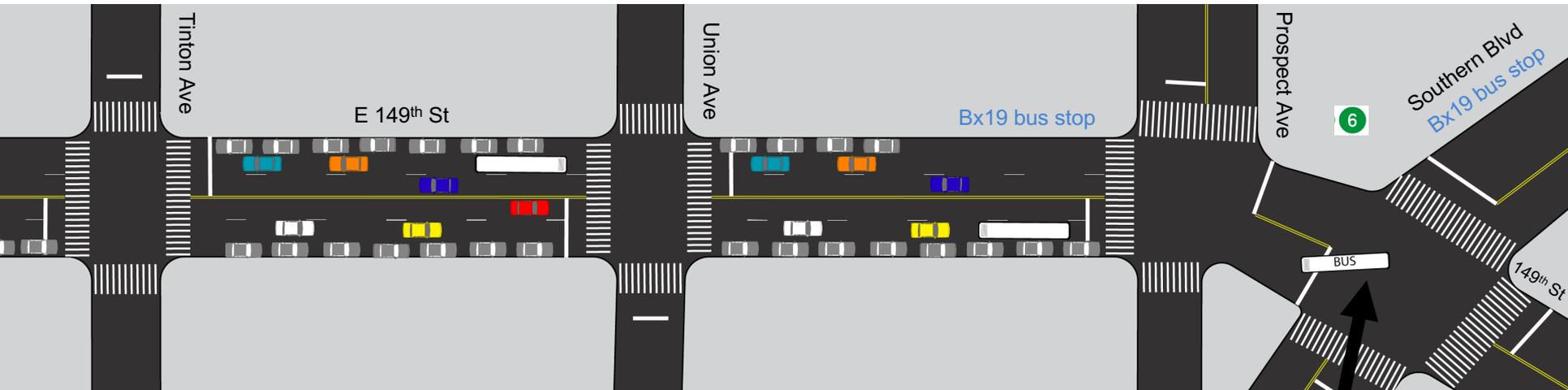
Existing: Jackson Ave to Tinton Ave



Proposed: Jackson Ave to Tinton Ave

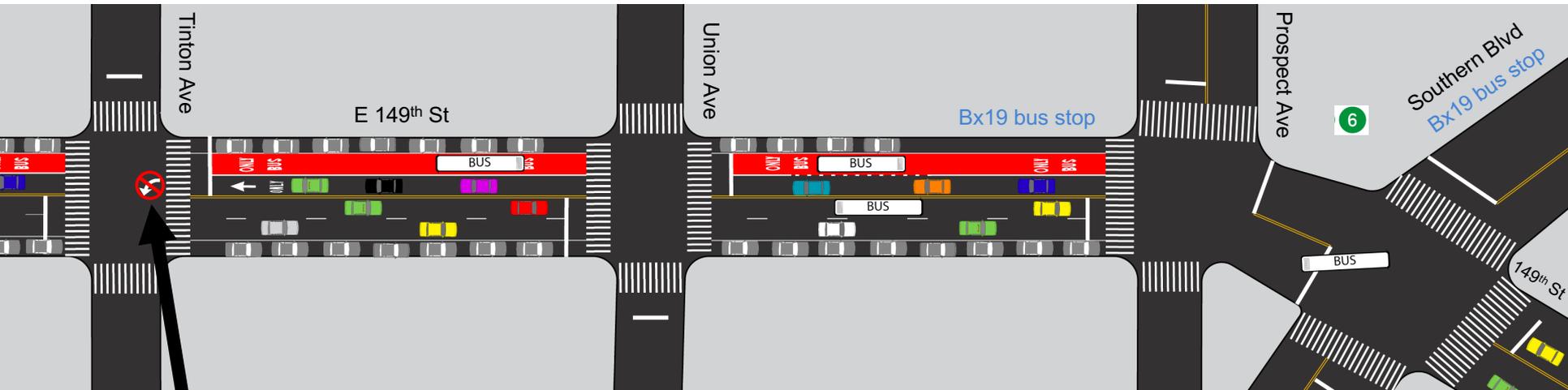


Existing: Tinton Ave to Southern Blvd



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

5

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?



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