

Better Buses Restart – 181st Street Busway Pilot

Manhattan Community Board 12 Transportation Committee– February 1, 2021



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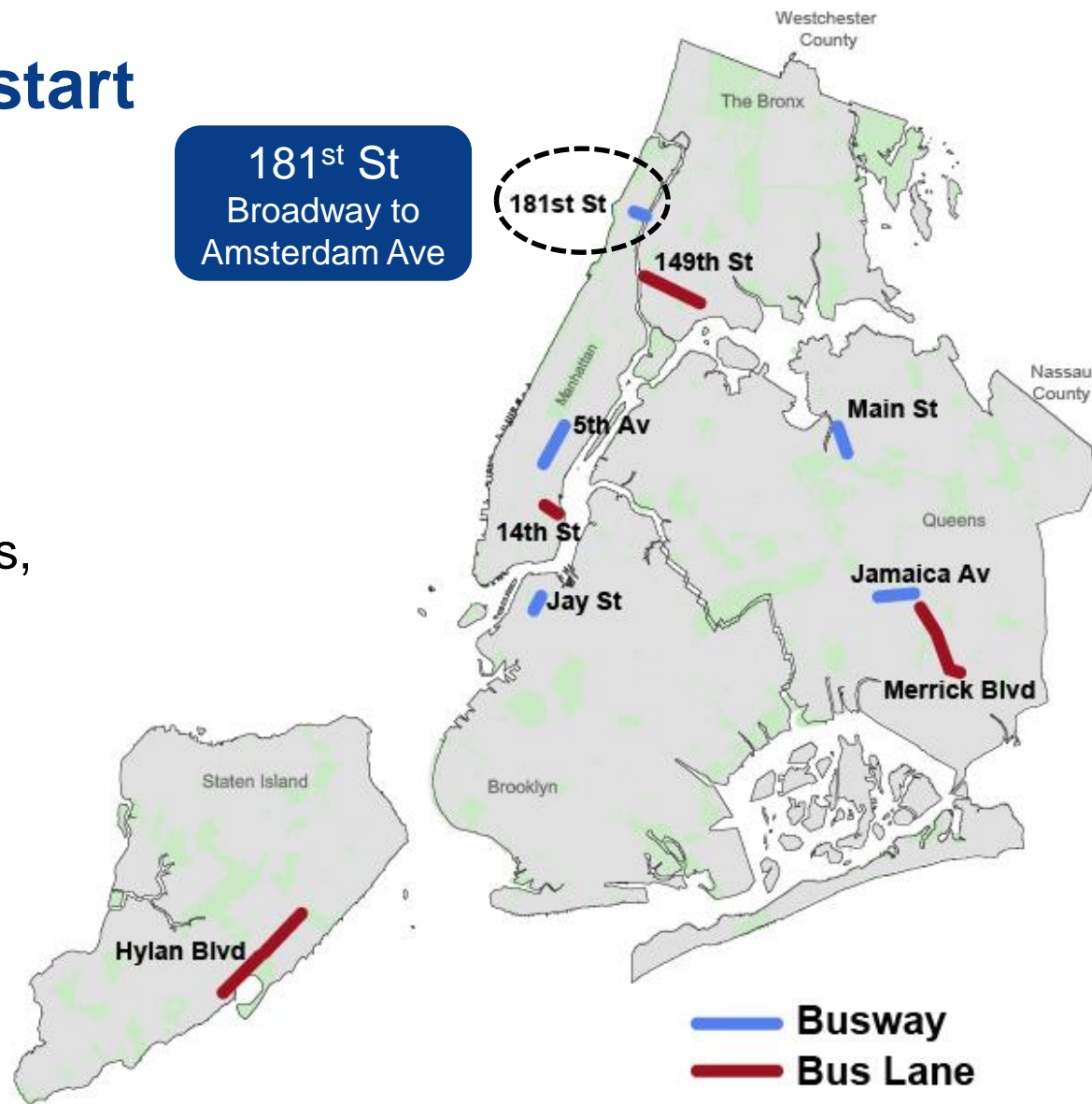
Background

Better Buses Restart

Recovery Plan

9 busway & bus lane projects announced, focused on:

- Vulnerable populations, essential workers
- Number of bus passengers served
- Ability to implement quickly
- Geographic equity



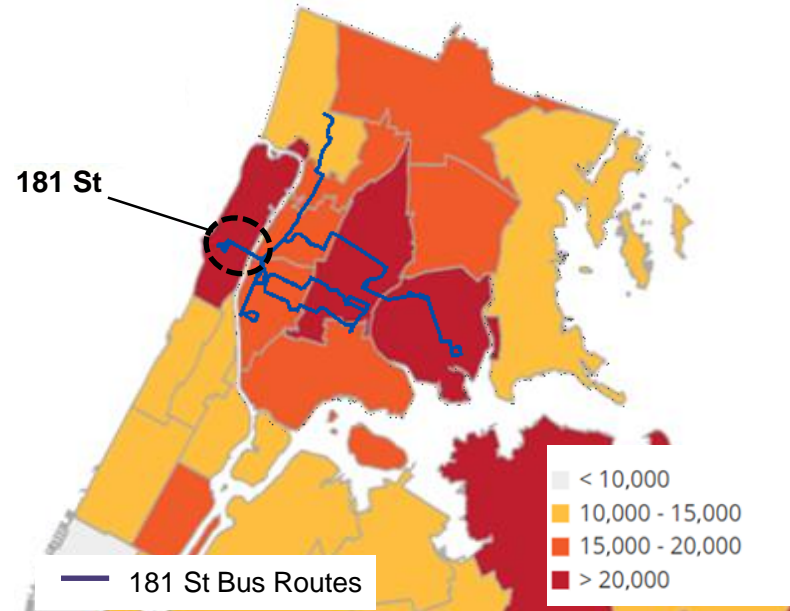
What is a busway?

- A busway prioritizes buses, trucks, and emergency vehicles
- All vehicles may turn onto a busway corridor for local access, but cars and vans must make first available right turn off corridor
- Parking and loading activities are allowed throughout the corridor to support local businesses and services



Why 181st Street?

- 42,000 daily passengers on 5 MTA bus routes
- Routes on 181st St serve neighborhoods with high concentrations of essential workers
- Bus passengers comprise 62%-70% of roadway users on 181st St
- Average bus speed is 3.7mph
- 69% of Washington Heights and Inwood households do not have access to a car
- Surveys indicate that 88% of people get to Washington Heights businesses via walking or public transit



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

Presented analyses, survey
responses, and updated plan
to CAB

February 2021

Present analyses, survey
responses, and updated plan
to Community Board 12

February/March 2021

Business outreach
Project information distribution
Implementation preparation
Collect traffic data

Spring 2021

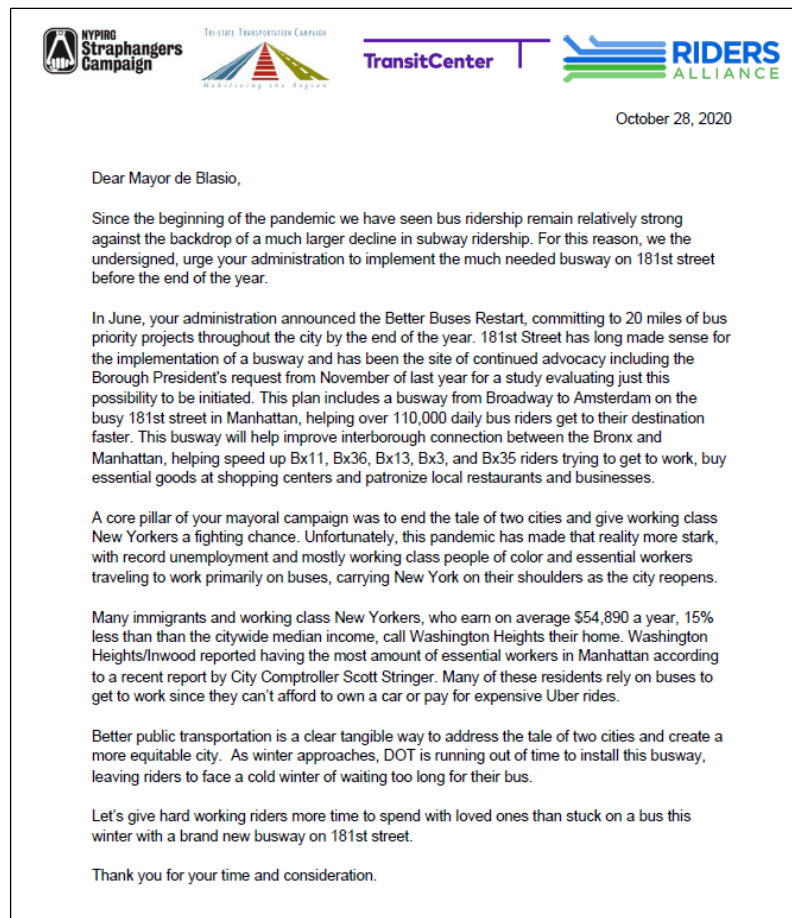
Implement busway
(1 year pilot)

**Spring 2021-
Spring 2022**

Project monitoring and
evaluation
Reporting to stakeholders

What We've Heard

- In October 2020, Mayor de Blasio received letter of support for the busway from elected officials, community organizations, and advocates
- Supporters included:
 - State Senator Robert Jackson
 - Assemblymember Carmen De La Rosa
 - Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer
 - Councilmember Ydanis Rodriguez
 - North Manhattan Improvement Corporation
 - WE ACT for Environmental Justice
 - Riders Alliance
 - Tri-State Transportation Campaign
 - Straphangers Campaign
 - Transit Center



What We've Heard

What We've Heard

Action Items / Next Steps

Traffic Circulation

- Potential traffic hot spots identified
- Neighborhood traffic monitoring
- Additional stakeholder coordination

Supporting Local Businesses

- Improved curb access and parking
- Additional business outreach

Outreach

- Issues identified
 - Crowded buses and bus stops
 - Slow buses
 - Double parking
 - Difficulty finding available parking
- Most comments supportive of busway



This busway is long overdue. The corridor is heavily used by bus riders during all hours of the day, and the hours of the lanes should ideally be 24/7, but should at least be from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m. to serve people with unconventional work hours.



Hopefully this change can actually improve if not deplete this ongoing flaw from these buses, the most remembered aspects of these 181st buses is that they are often crowded and slower than Nevada on Election Day (exaggerated on purpose). Because it is understandable that on a daily basis people have to use these buses for important reasons, like getting home from school, to go to the hospital, and much more to say.



Online Survey

Distribution

- CAB
- DOT Social Media
- Bus Stops

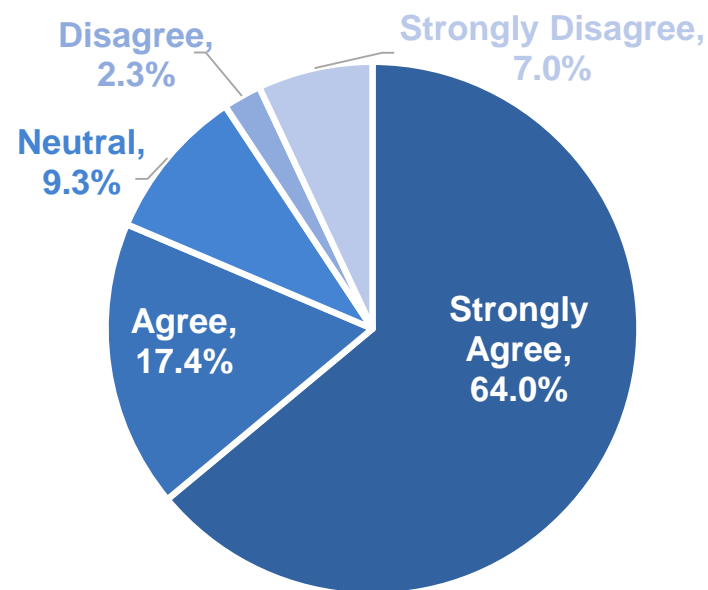
A large banner for the 181st Street survey. The top half shows a street scene with a red tow truck, a white bus, and a black car. The text "181st Street" is overlaid in large white letters. Below this, on a dark blue background, is the text: "The NYC Department of Transportation is looking to hear from you." followed by the Spanish translation: "El Departamento de Transporte de NYC quiere oír sus opiniones." Below that, it says "Please participate in a quick survey." and "Participe en una encuesta rápida." To the right is a large QR code with the instruction "Scan using Camera Mode" and a small image of a smartphone. At the bottom right, it says "or visit: surveymonkey.com/r/181st". The NYC DOT logo is in the top right corner.

Online Survey

Response Summary

- 149 responses
- 83% live in Washington Heights or adjacent neighborhoods
- 81% support busway
- 84% primarily use buses, subway, or walking to access 181st St
- Concerns raised about slow and unreliable bus service, traffic congestion, and parking

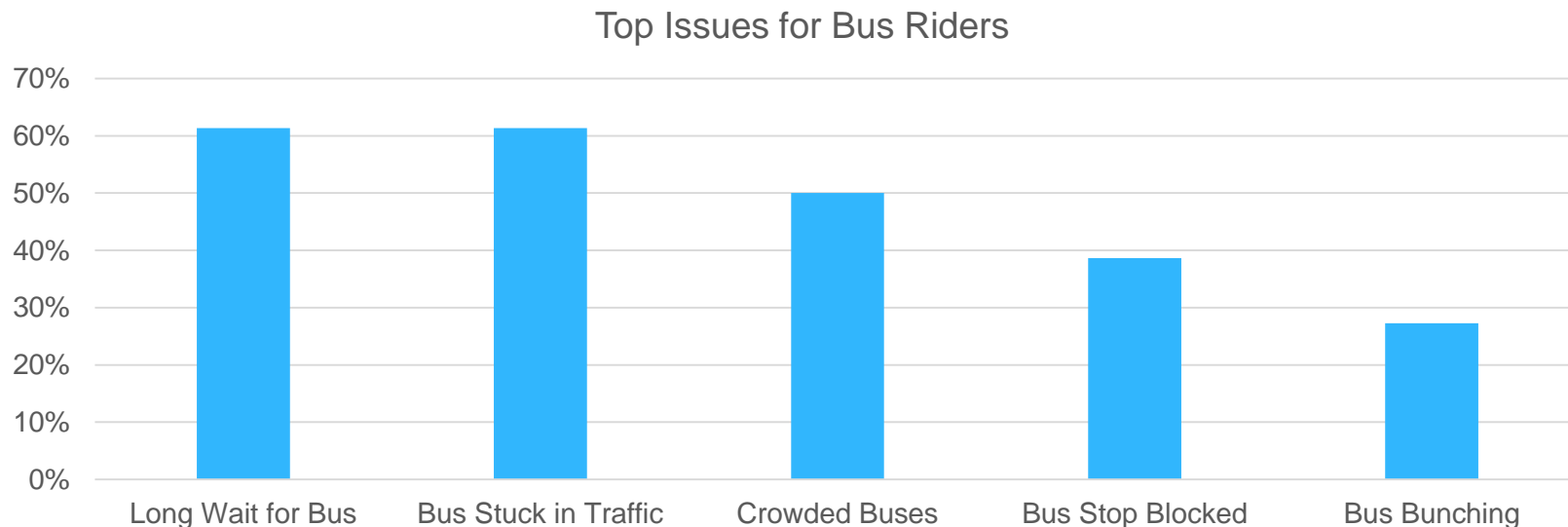
Would you support a busway along 181st St that prioritizes buses and trucks by limiting thru traffic (local access and parking for private vehicles would still be allowed)?



Online Survey

Response Summary – Bus Riders

- Only 8% of riders reported being satisfied with bus service on 181st St
- More than half reported long waits, buses stuck in traffic, and crowded buses as major issues



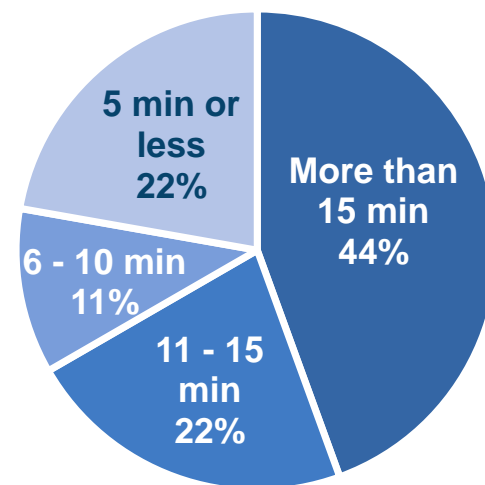
Number of Responses: 44

Online Survey

Response Summary – Drivers and Pickups/Drop-offs

- 67% of respondents indicate that they park on side streets.
22% park on 181st St
- 44% of respondents indicated that finding a parking space typically takes more than 15 minutes
- 46% would take public transit if it were faster and more reliable

How long does it usually take you to find a spot to park on/near 181st St?

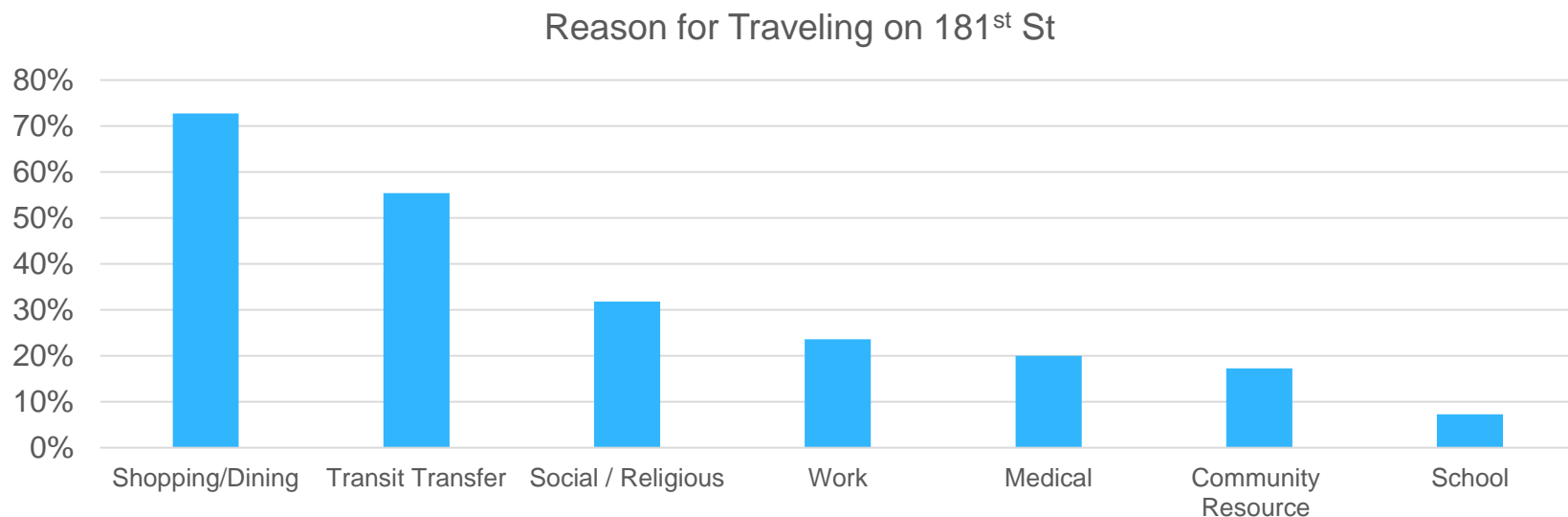


Number of Responses: 9

Online Survey

Response Summary - Shoppers

- 73% of respondents indicated that they shop, dine, or visit other businesses on 181st St
- 89% of those visiting businesses on 181st St arrive via walking, bus, subway, or bike

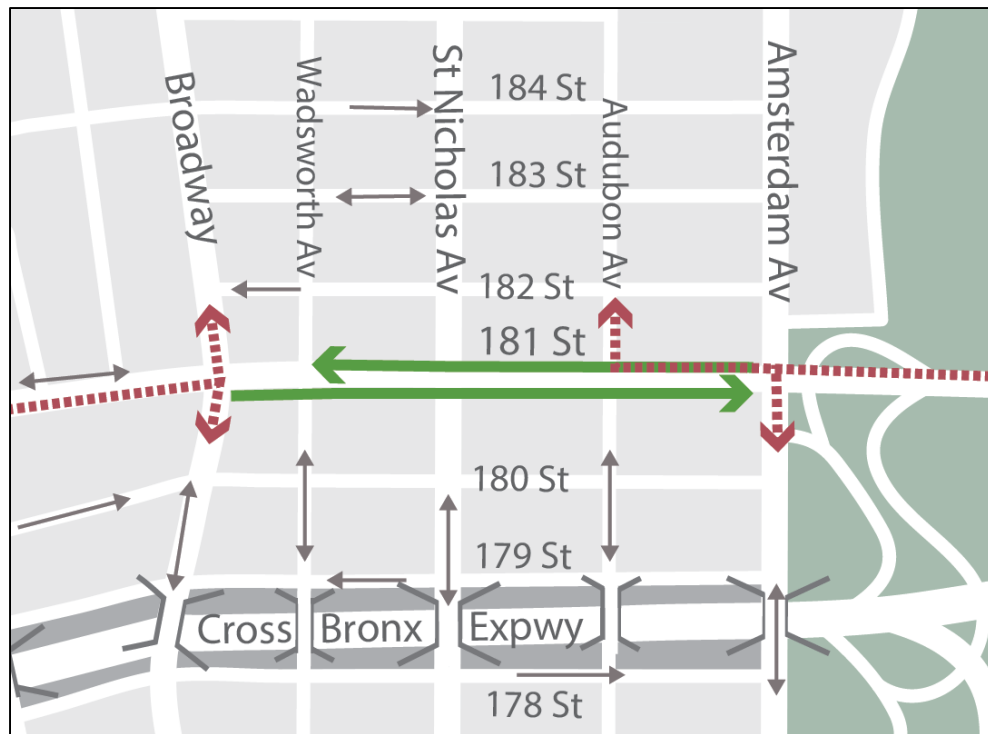


Number of Responses: 110

181st Street Busway Proposal

Busway Proposal

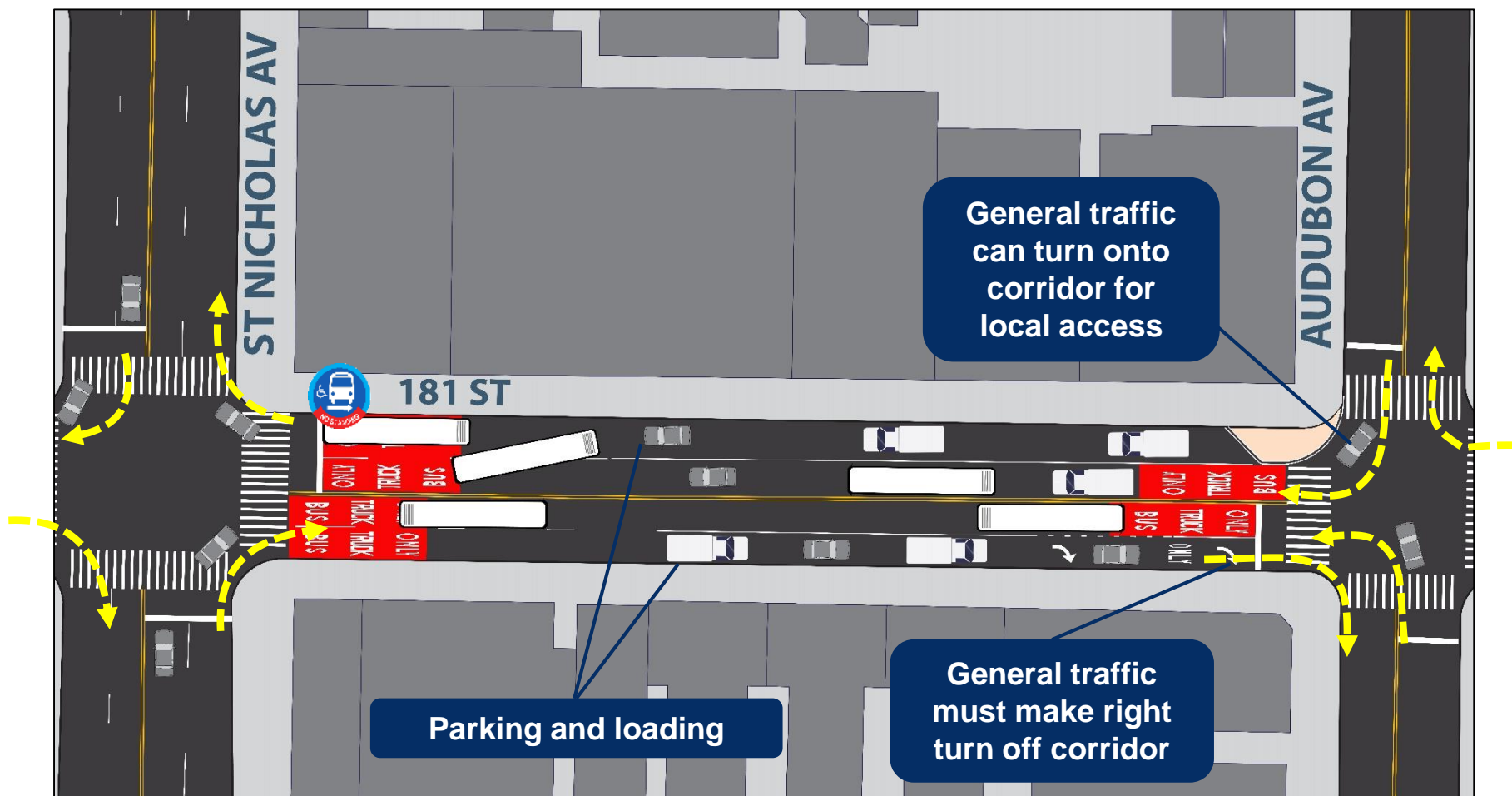
- Busway design remains the same as the previous proposal
- Only buses, trucks, and emergency vehicles may utilize 181st St as a thru street
- All vehicles may turn onto 181st St for local access, but cars and vans must make first available right turn off corridor
- Parking and loading activities will be allowed throughout the corridor to support local businesses and services



- Hours: 6am-10pm, all days
- Extents:
 - Eastbound: Broadway to Amsterdam Av
 - Westbound: Amsterdam Av to Wadsworth Av

Busway Proposal

Example Block – St. Nicholas Ave to Audubon Ave

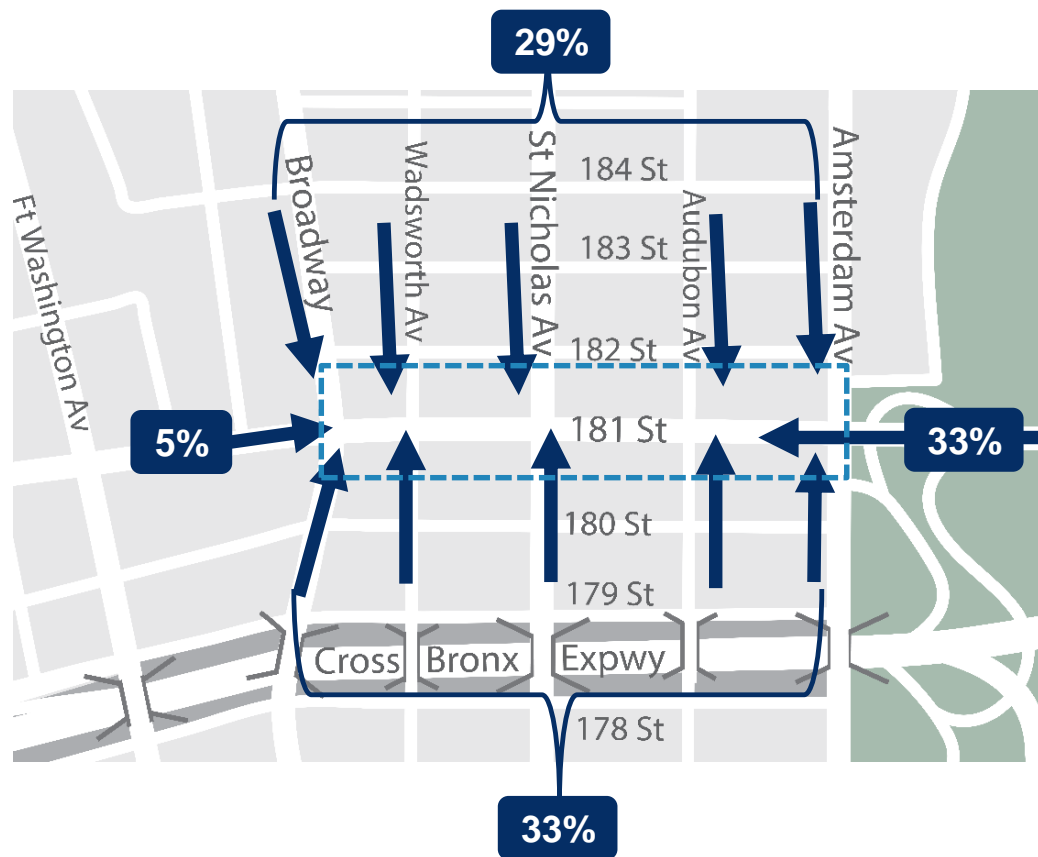


Traffic Analysis

Travel Patterns - Vehicles

- 47% of traffic is “cut-thru” traffic with destination other than 181st St
- Cut-thru traffic could be redirected to larger roadways (e.g. Cross Bronx, 178 St, 179 St)
- Majority of vehicles with destination on 181st St already using cross streets

Vehicles with 181st Street Destination

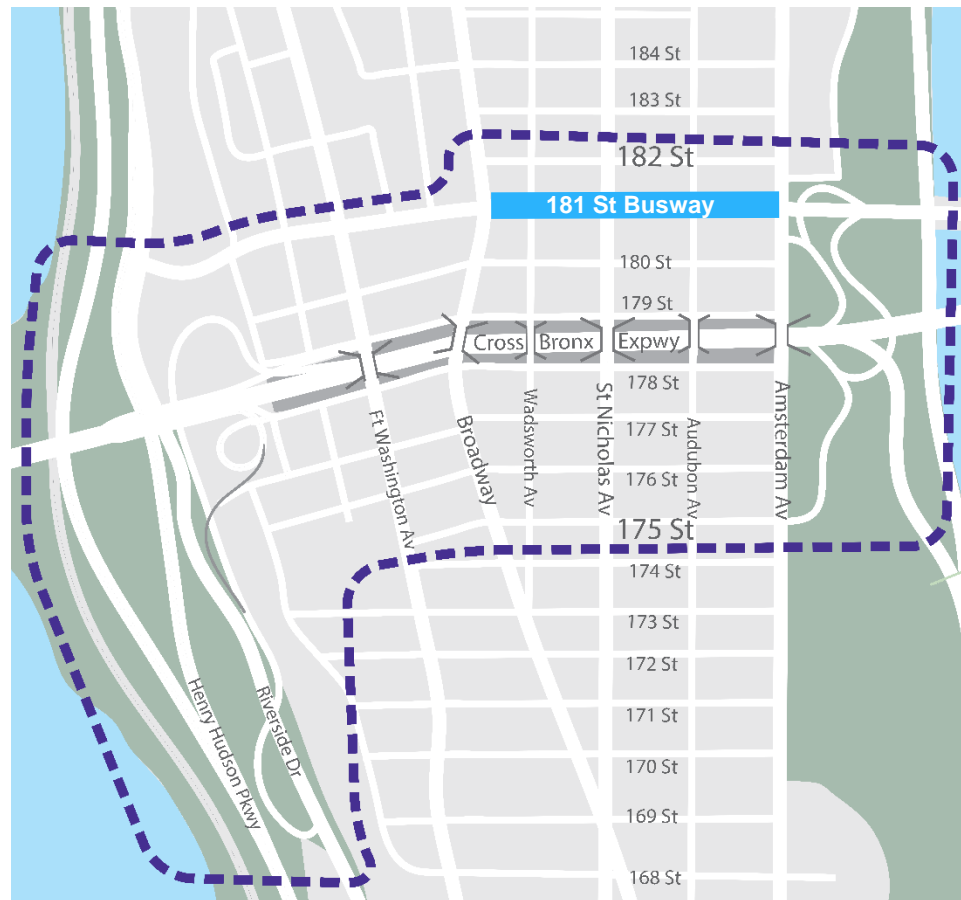


Source: Streetlight

Traffic Analysis

Traffic Modeling

- Builds off model created by Port Authority for GWB Bus Terminal project
- Model calibrated with latest traffic counts available (Fall 2019)
- Additional traffic from new neighborhood developments was included



Traffic Analysis

Transit Improvements

- Proposed busway results in potential significant improvements for bus riders on 181st St
- End-to-end bus travel times reduced 14%-20% during PM Peak hours

Change in Bus Travel Time

Direction	AM Peak Hours	PM Peak Hours
Eastbound	-11%	-14%
Westbound	-9%	-20%

Traffic Analysis

Traffic Effects

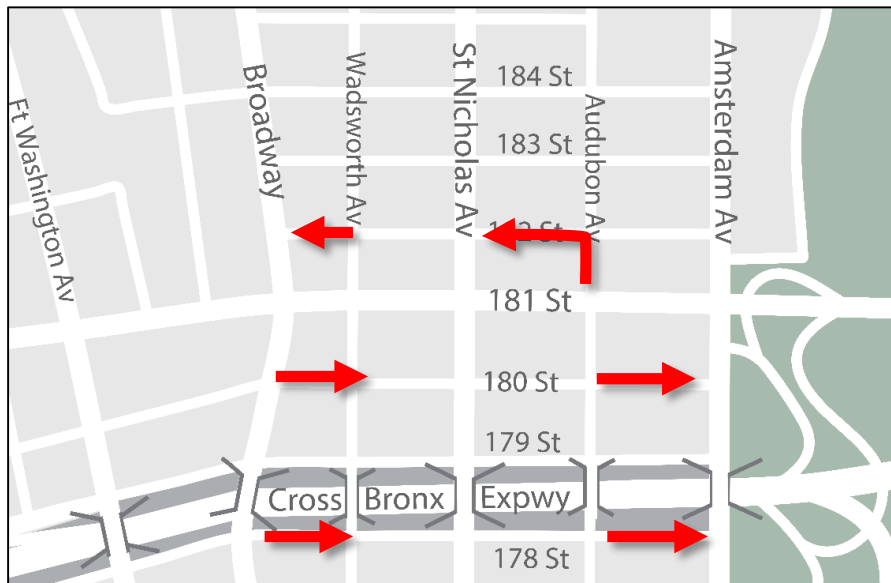
- Truck delays reduced 5% (AM Peak) - 15% (PM Peak)
- Vehicle passenger delay increases 4% (PM Peak) - 6% (AM Peak)
- North-south avenues on blocks approaching 181st St see greatest increase in vehicle volumes, however all average delay increases are less than a minute. In some cases delays are reduced

Traffic Analysis

Potential Hot Spots

- The vast majority of side streets do not see significant changes in vehicle delay, with the exception of a few potential locations
- These locations will be closely monitored during busway pilot

Potential Hot Spots for Increased Traffic



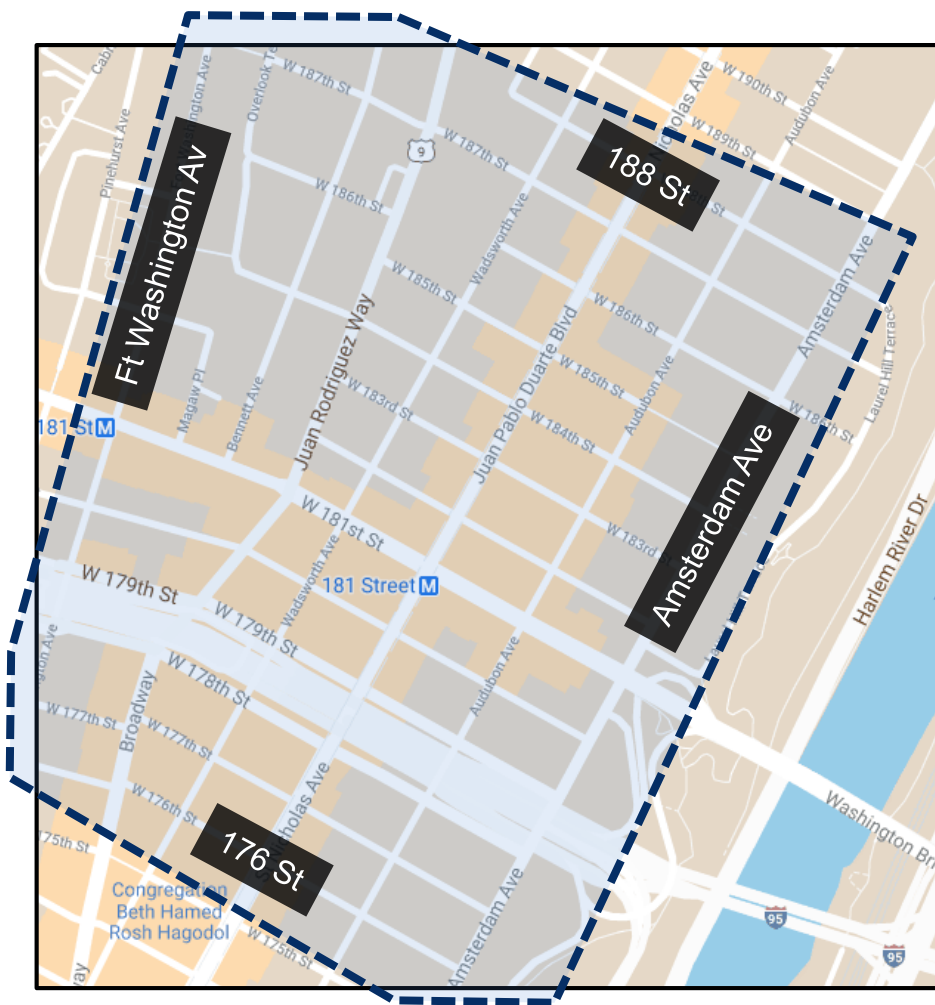
Change in Average Delay (Minutes)

Street	Segment	AM Peak	PM Peak
W 182 St	Broadway-Wadsworth Av	0.2	0.1
W 182 St	Audubon Av – St Nicholas Av	1.3	0.7
W 180 St	Broadway-Wadsworth Av	0.2	0.1
W 180 St	Audubon Av – Amsterdam Av	-	0.3
W 178 St	Broadway-Wadsworth Av	-	0.4
W 178 St	Audubon Av – Amsterdam Av	-	0.2

Traffic Monitoring

181st St Monitoring Plan

- DOT will monitor traffic volumes and patterns using multiple tools, including:
 - Automated Traffic Recorders (ATRs)
 - Manual and Video counts
 - Streetlight and INRIX (GPS)
 - MTA BusTime
- Adjustments can be made during pilot to improve traffic circulation as needed, including changes to:
 - Signal timing
 - Design / roadway markings
 - Signage



Traffic Analysis

14th St Busway Example

- 14th St resulted in fewer delays to surrounding streets than model predicted
- All side streets saw less than 1 minute increases in travel time
- Bus travel times were reduced by 24%



BUS OPERATIONS¹

WEEKDAY AVERAGE TRAVEL TIME



**24% improvement
in travel times**

2.9 minutes faster

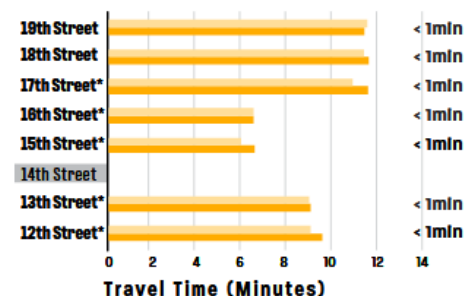
Combined for both directions:
3rd Avenue to 8th Avenue from
January 2018 to January 2020



VEHICLE TRAVEL TIMES²

WEEKDAY PM (5-6PM)

PRE-IMPLEMENTATION (October 2018/May 2019)
POST-IMPLEMENTATION (January 2020)



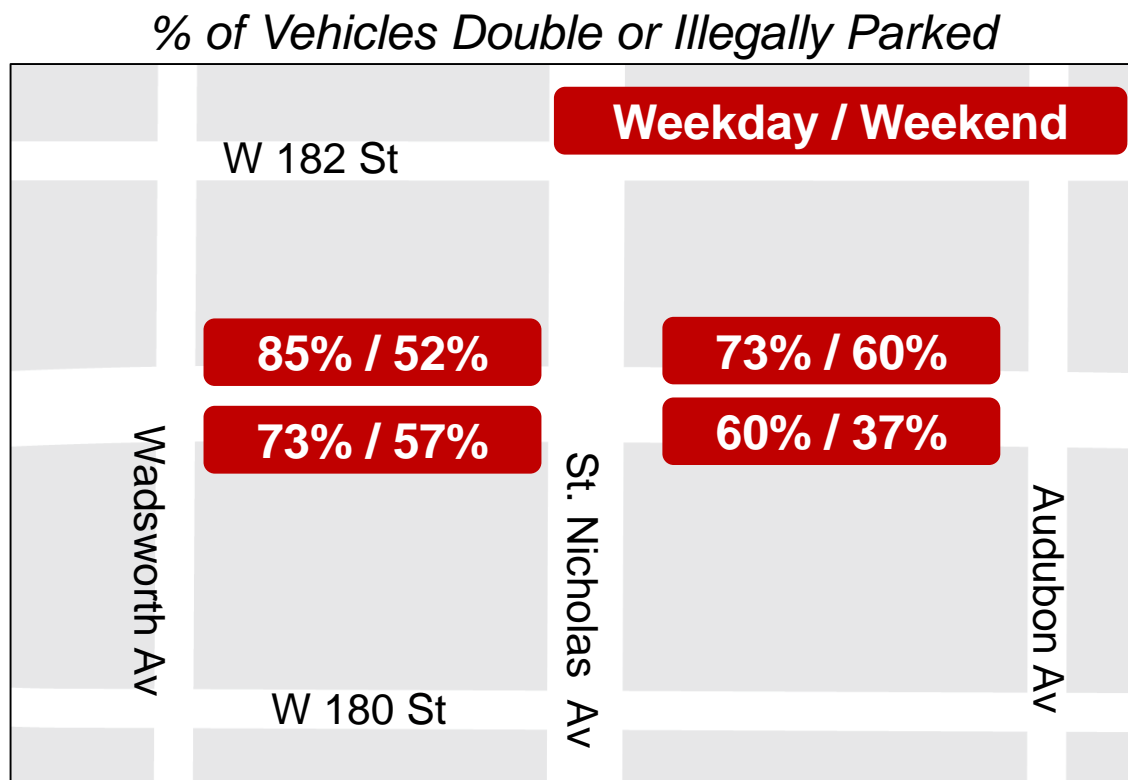
* OCTOBER 2018 DATA NOT AVAILABLE. MAY 2019 USED FOR PRE-IMPLEMENTATION DATA.

Parking Analysis

Parking Analysis

Time Lapse Study Results

- 37%-85% of vehicles on the corridor are double or illegally parked
- Average duration for legally parked vehicles is about an hour
- Double and illegally parked vehicles stay for less than 15 minutes
- Truck loading primarily occurs before 1pm



Parking Proposal

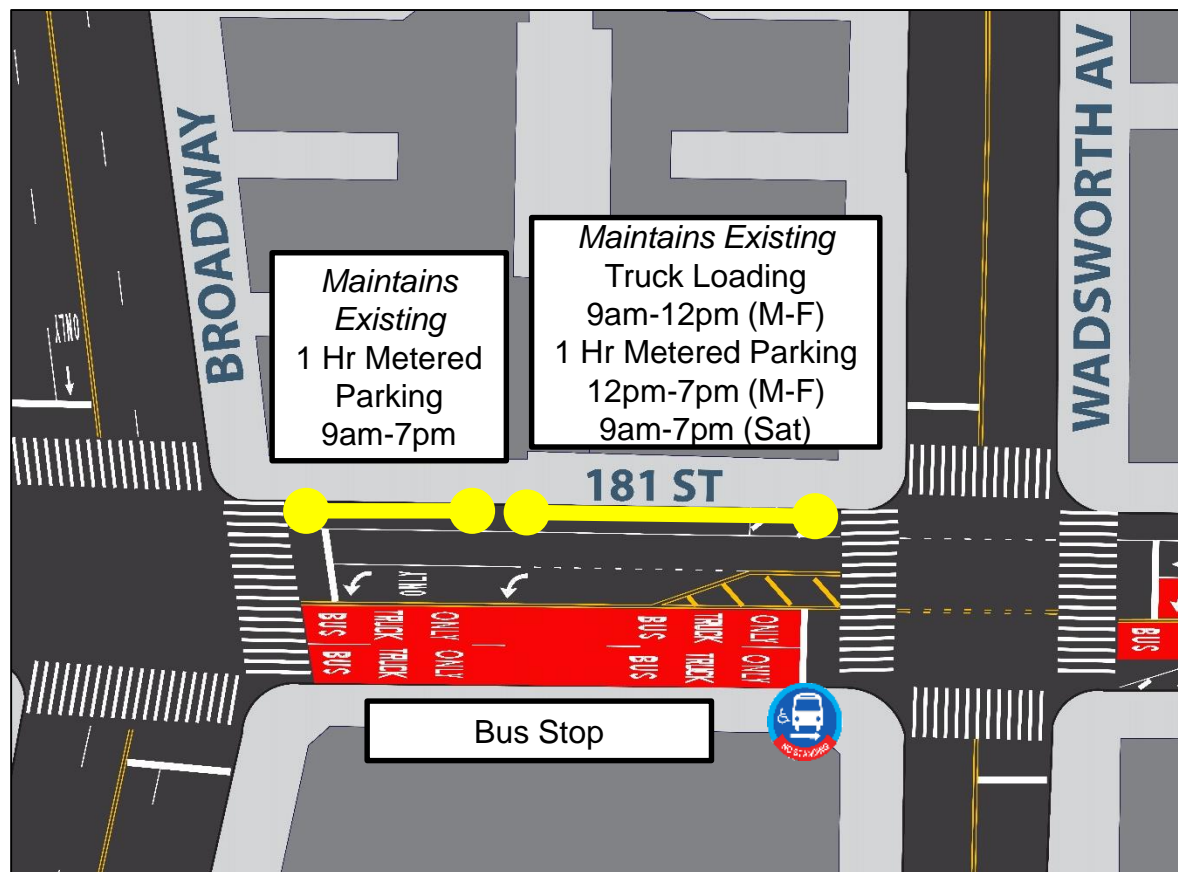
Overview

- Proposed parking regulations allow for greater flexibility at curb, improve access to businesses, and reduce double parking to keep traffic and buses moving
- Summary of proposed changes:
 - Add 12 metered parking spaces during 3-7pm
 - Add 11 flexible spaces for quick pickup and drop-off activities
 - Extend Truck loading hours from 12pm to 1pm
 - Extend metered parking time limit to 2 hours
 - Some metered parking hours extended until 10pm

Parking Proposal

Broadway – Wadsworth Ave

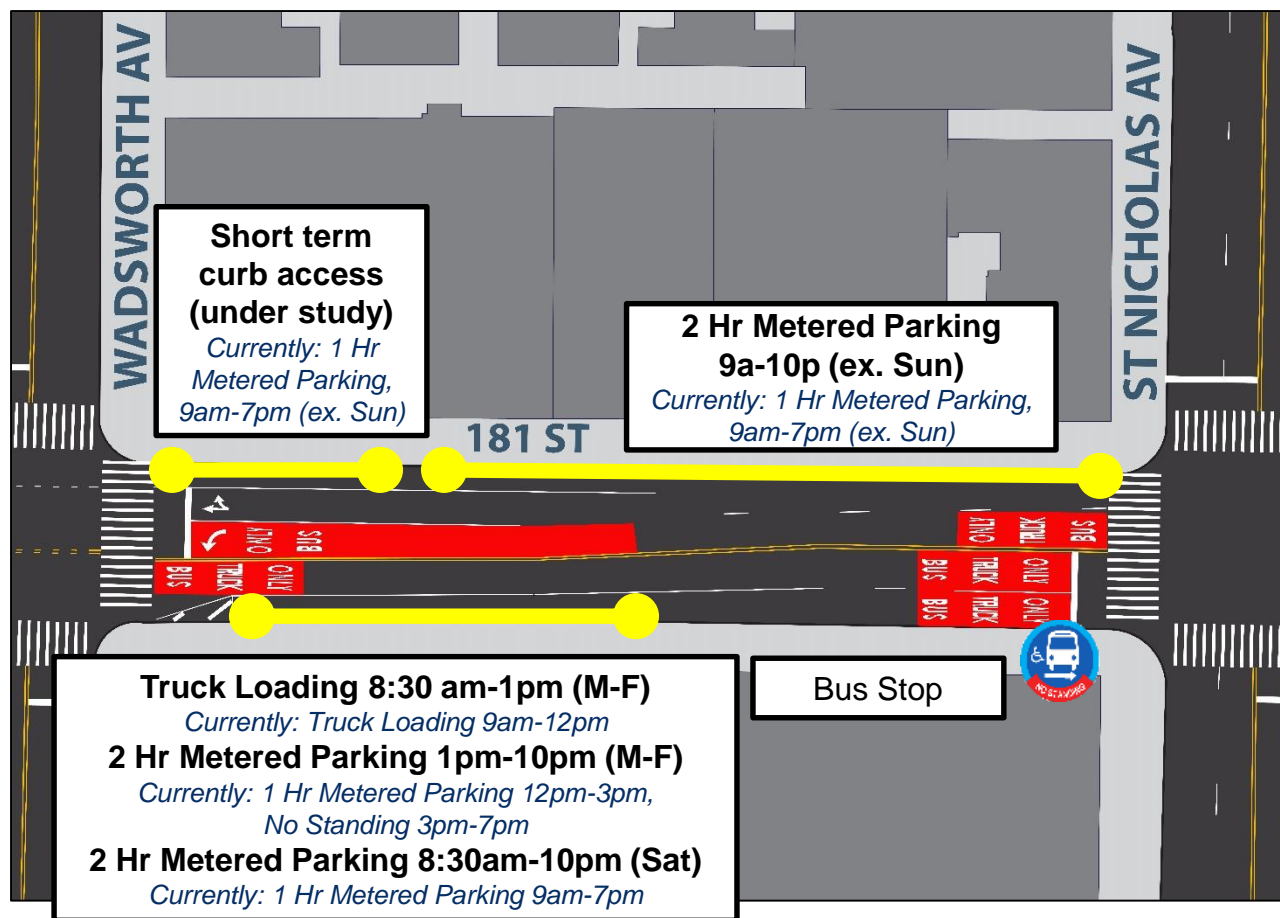
- No changes to existing curb regulations



Parking Proposal

Wadsworth Ave – St Nicholas Ave

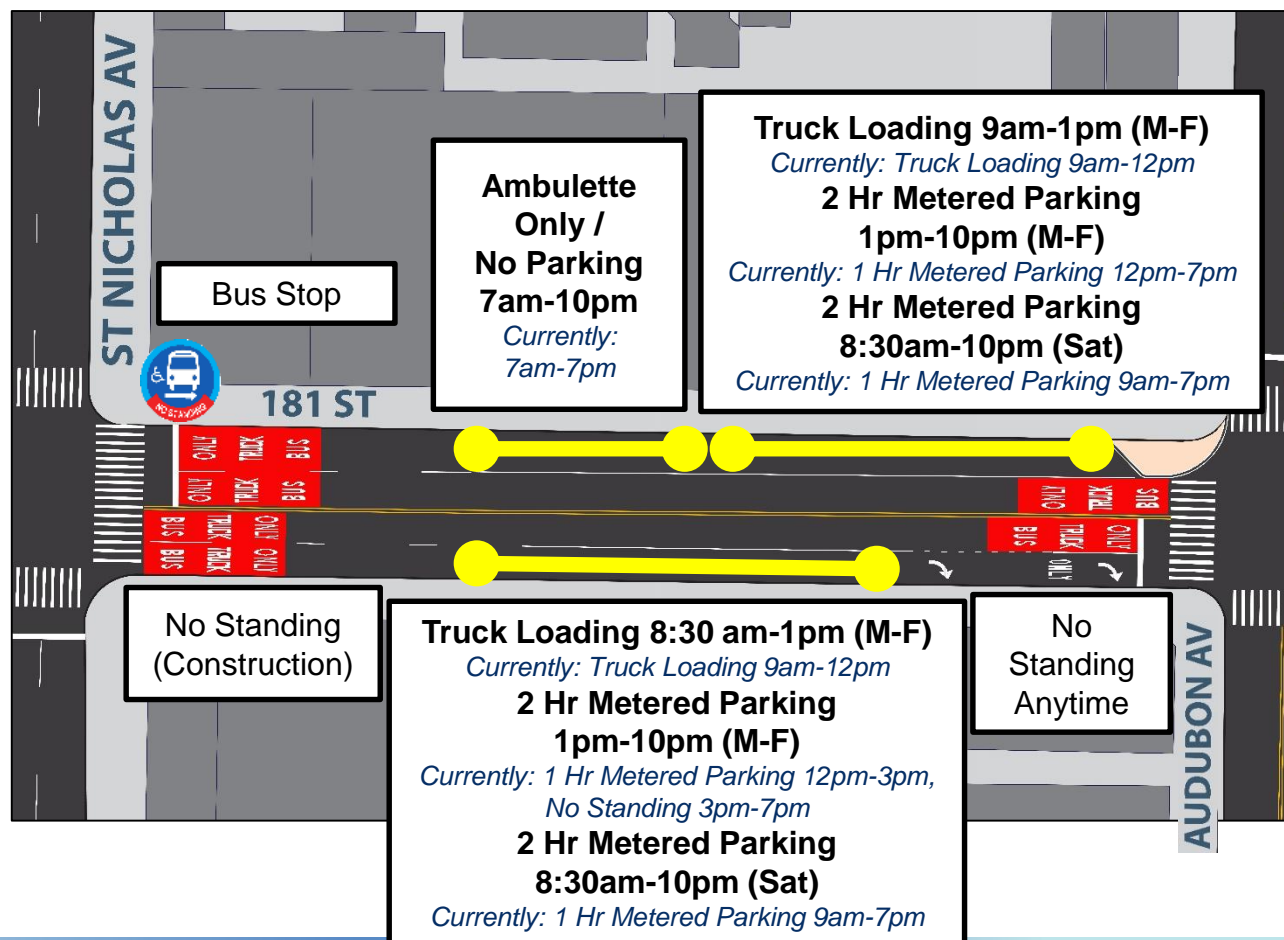
- Adds 3 spaces for short term curb access
- Truck loading hours extended to 1pm
- Adjusts meter time limit to 2 hours
- Extends metered parking until 10pm
- **Adds 7 metered spaces** (currently No Standing 3pm-7pm)



Parking Proposal

St Nicholas Ave – Audubon Ave

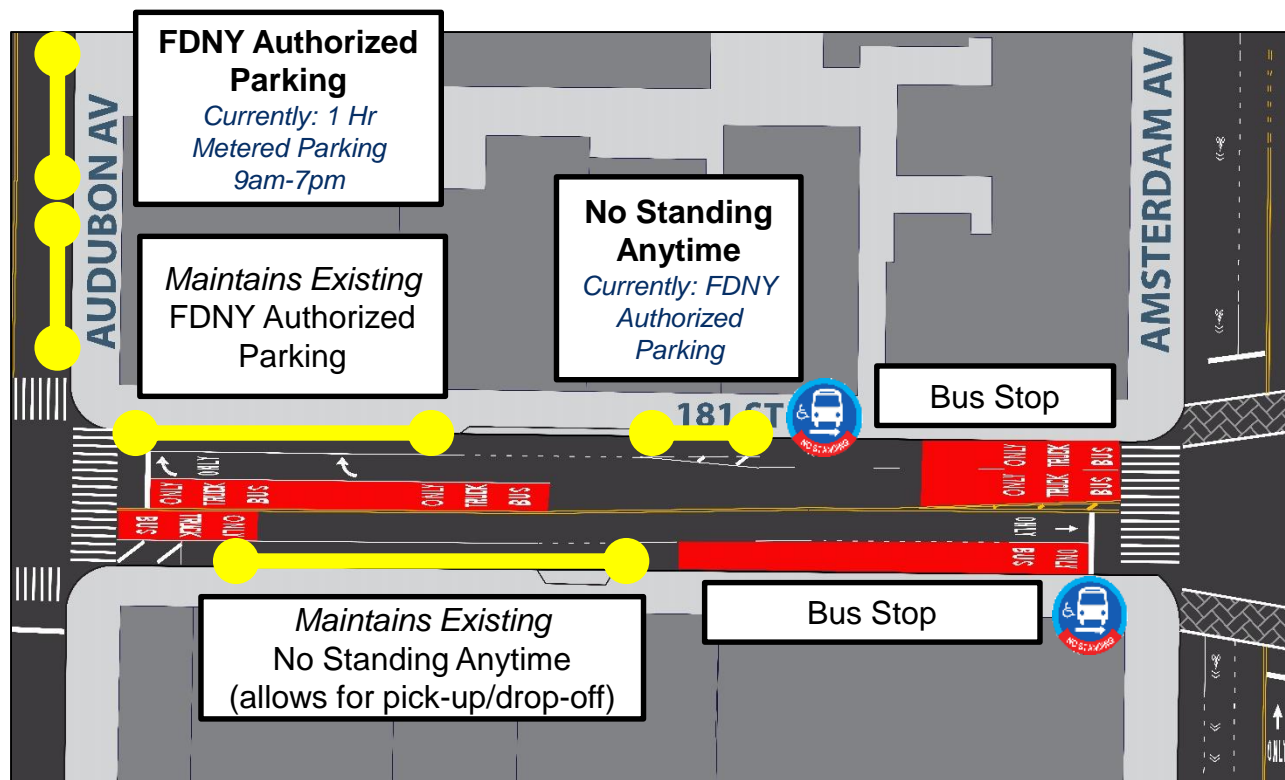
- Truck loading hours extended to 1pm
- Adjusts meter time limit to 2 hours
- Extends metered parking until 10pm
- **Adds 5 metered spaces** (currently No Standing 3pm-7pm)
- Removes 4 spaces for right turn lane
- Existing Ambulette and No Parking area maintained



Parking Proposal

Audubon Ave – Amsterdam Ave

- Working with FDNY to determine optimal locations for transit and FDNY operations
- Potentially relocates 3 FDNY parking spaces to Audubon Av
- Provides 8 spaces for pickup and drop-off activities on the south curb



Next Steps

Next Steps

1. Incorporate feedback received today
2. Coordinate with additional stakeholders
3. Finalize plans and develop installation timeline
4. Notify CAB and Community Board with final plan and implementation schedule

Thank you

Questions?



NYC DOT



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