

# 34<sup>th</sup> Street Enhanced Bus Priority

Community Board 5 Transportation & Environment Committee, May 19, 2025



# Table of Contents

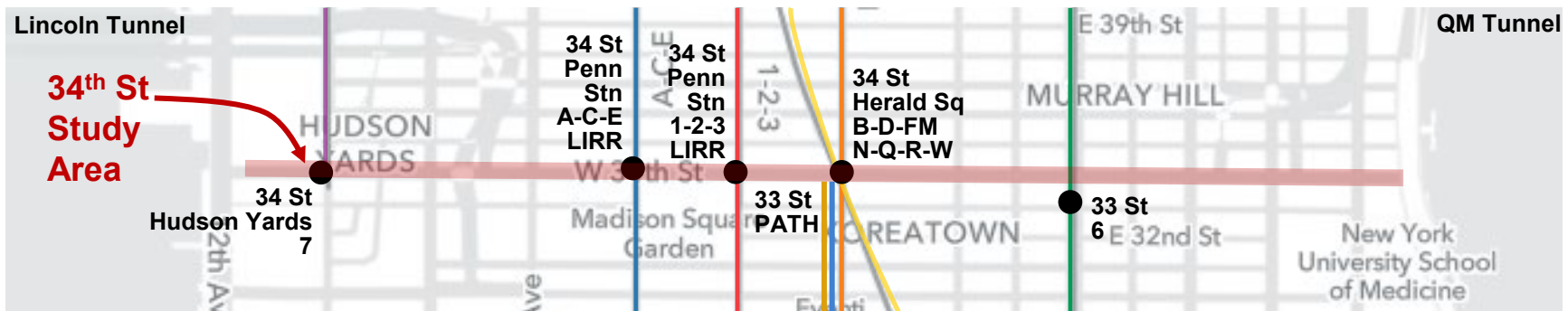
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1. Background and Work to Date
2. Proposal
3. Traffic Analysis
4. Summary and Next Steps

# Background and Work to Date

# Why 34<sup>th</sup> Street?

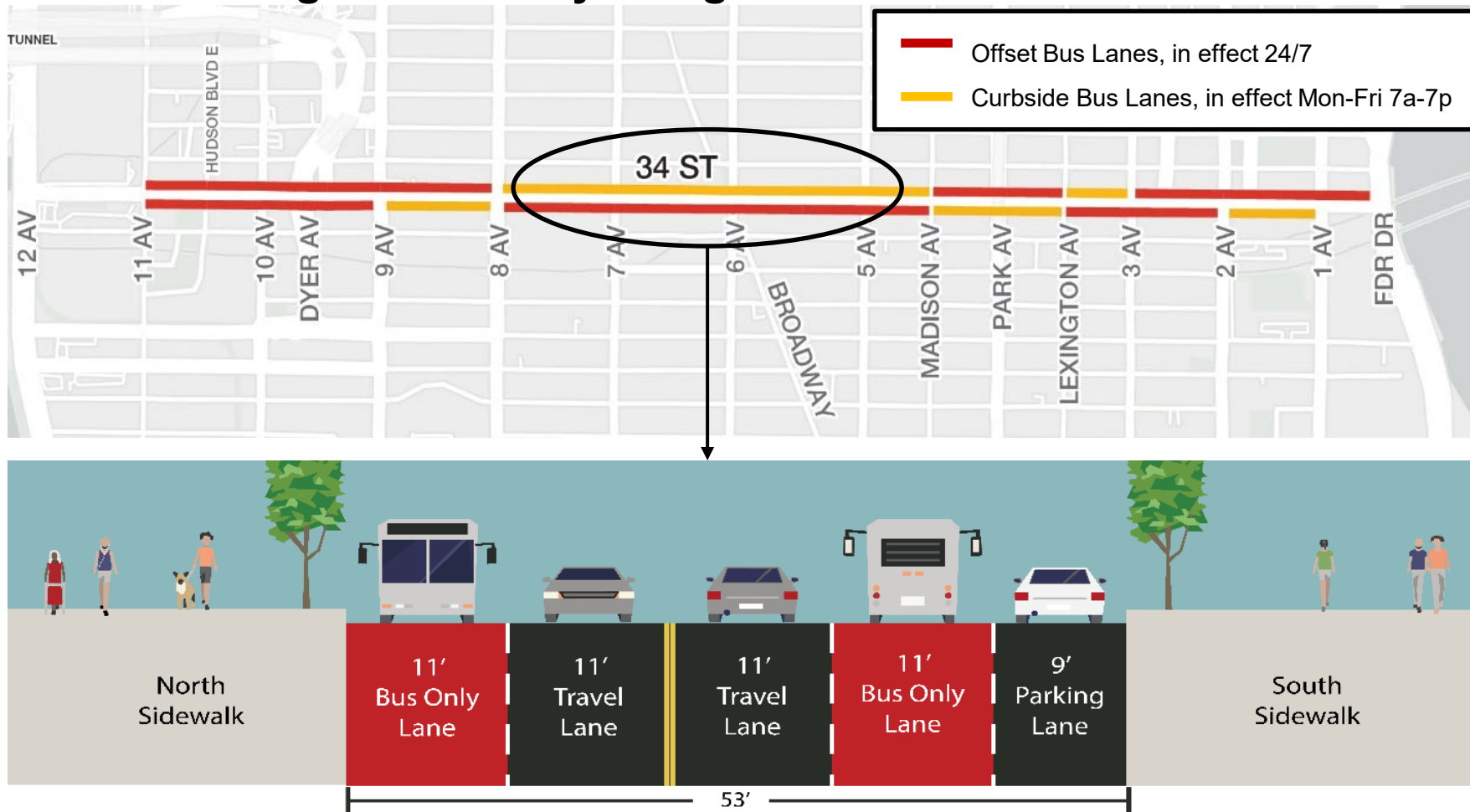
- Study area: 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue to FDR Drive
- Central Business District Tolling Program began in January 2025
- 28,000 daily bus passengers on the M34/M34-A SBS and express buses
- Slow crosstown bus speeds
- Critical crosstown service with connections to
  - MTA Subway, PATH, LIRR, NJ Transit, and Amtrak
  - Numerous local and Express Bus Routes
- Complex street demands with heavy commercial and pedestrian activity
- Vision Zero Corridor



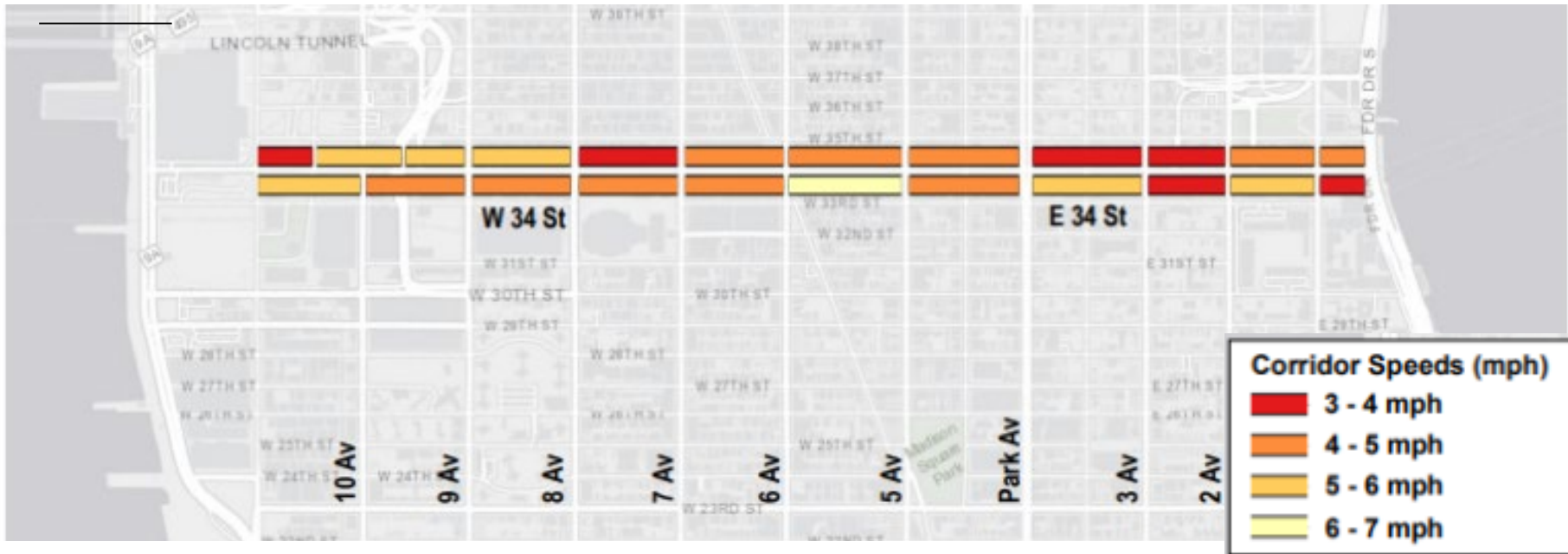


# Existing Curbside and Offset Bus Lanes

## Bus Lane Regulations vary along the corridor



# Bus Speeds on 34<sup>th</sup> St



- Bus speeds improved after the launch of Select Bus Service, but the M34/M34A SBS is still one of the slowest buses. The current bus lane design is not working.
  - Average weekday peak hour bus speeds are only 5.0 mph, and as low as 3 mph
- On the average weekday, roadway congestion causes over 750 hours of passenger delay on the M34/M34A+.
- Weekday average bus peak speeds on the 14<sup>th</sup> St Busway are 15% faster than on 34 St

# Work to Date

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- Curbside bus lanes added to 34<sup>th</sup> Street (2008)
- M34/M34-A Select Bus Service launched (2011)
  - Upgraded many existing curbside bus lanes to offset bus lanes
  - Added eleven bus bulbs
- DOT on-street engagement (2024)
  - Pedestrian intercept survey – 200 surveyed
  - Merchant surveys –112 businesses visited from 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave to 9<sup>th</sup> Ave
- Existing conditions presentations to Community Boards 4, 5 & 6 (January – February 2025)
- In this meeting, we are presenting a **draft proposal**



*34<sup>th</sup> Street Curbside and Offset Bus Lanes*



*2024 Pedestrian Intercept Surveys*

# Community Feedback

- DOT on-street engagement:
  - Overcrowding on sidewalks, long crossing distances, and vehicular congestion were primary concerns for pedestrians
  - Bus riders noted slow bus speeds and long wait times
  - Businesses noted a need for additional loading space on and around the corridor
- Community Board Feedback:
  - Request for a 24/7 14<sup>th</sup> Street style busway
  - Request for sidewalk widening, and other pedestrian safety elements
  - Request for design and regulations to facilitate deliveries



*2024 Pedestrian Intercept Surveys*



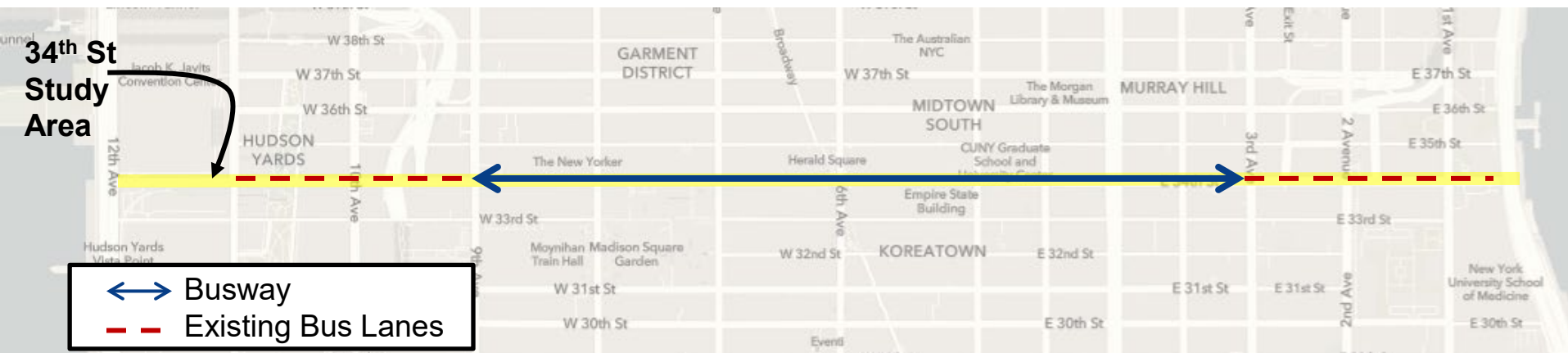
*2024 Merchant Surveys*



# Proposal

# Draft Proposal - Busway

- Busway between 3<sup>rd</sup> Av and 9<sup>th</sup> Av in both directions
- Maintain existing bus lanes on the rest of the corridor
- New pedestrian safety improvements
  - Painted pedestrian spaces
  - Hardened daylighting
  - Concrete median island
- Prioritize curb management for loading and delivery needs



# What is a Busway



- Buses, trucks, emergency vehicles, and Access-a-Ride are allowed to travel along the entire corridor
- Local access is allowed for other vehicles, including cars, taxis, and for-hire vehicles
  - Vehicles access the corridor from side streets
  - Must leave the corridor at the next required turn, using posted signage
- Makes bus service faster and more dependable
- Allows loading and deliveries, customer access to businesses

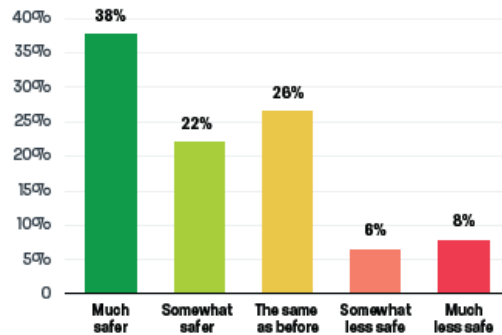
# Why Busway?

## SAFETY

Since the 14th Street Project changes, my experience as a pedestrian crossing 14th Street feels:



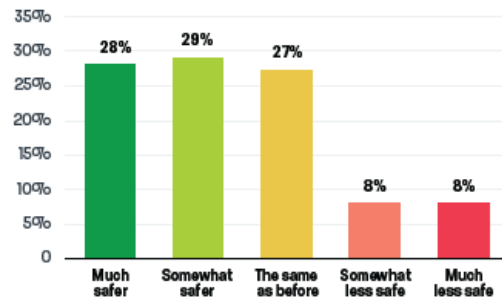
**For those who walk...**



Respondents: 735



**For those 62 and over who walk...**



Respondents: 268

## A Busway on 34<sup>th</sup> Street:

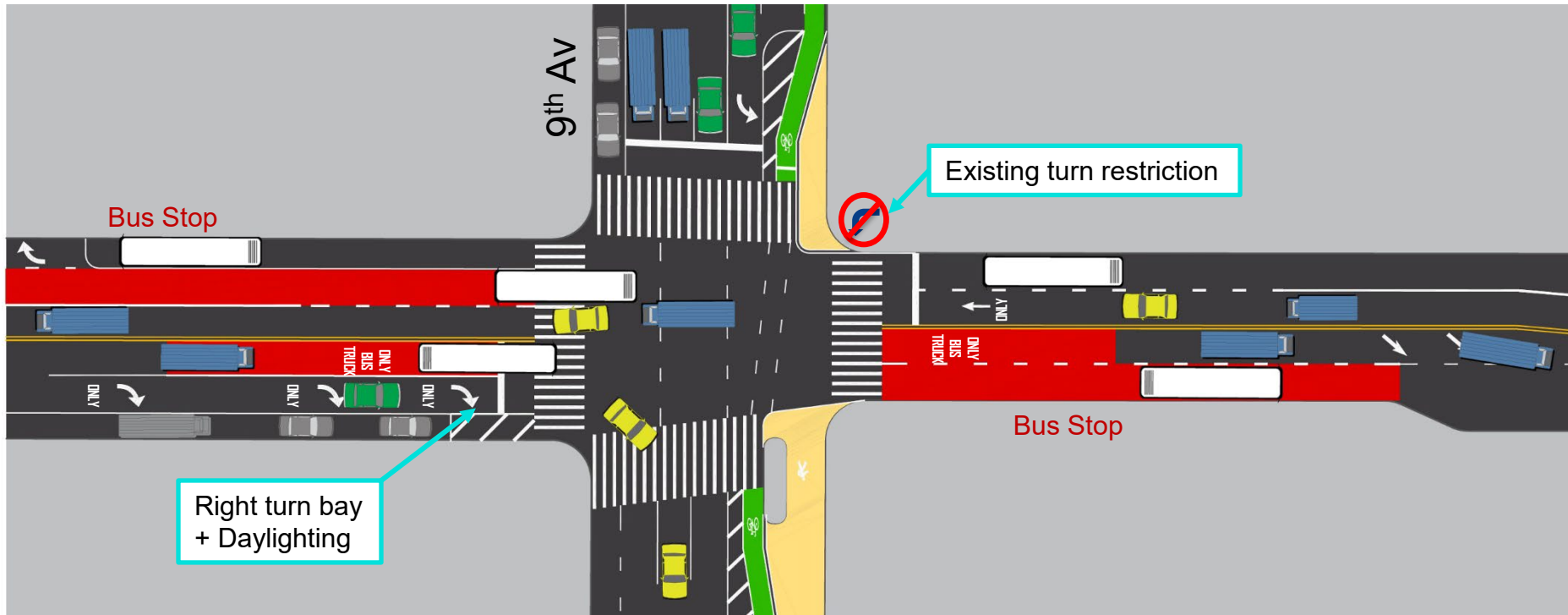
- Prioritizes truck and transit through traffic, improving bus speed and reliability
- Eliminates cut-through traffic
- Retains local access, parking, and loading
- Enhances the pedestrian experience

## Case Study: 14<sup>th</sup> Street

- Pilot launched in October 2019, in conjunction with M14A/D Select Bus Service
- Bus speeds increased up to 24%
- Crashes along the corridor decreased by 42%
- Travel speeds for streets around the busway had minimal changes
- In post-implementation surveys, participants mentioned:
  - Faster, more frequent bus service
  - People feel safer crossing the street

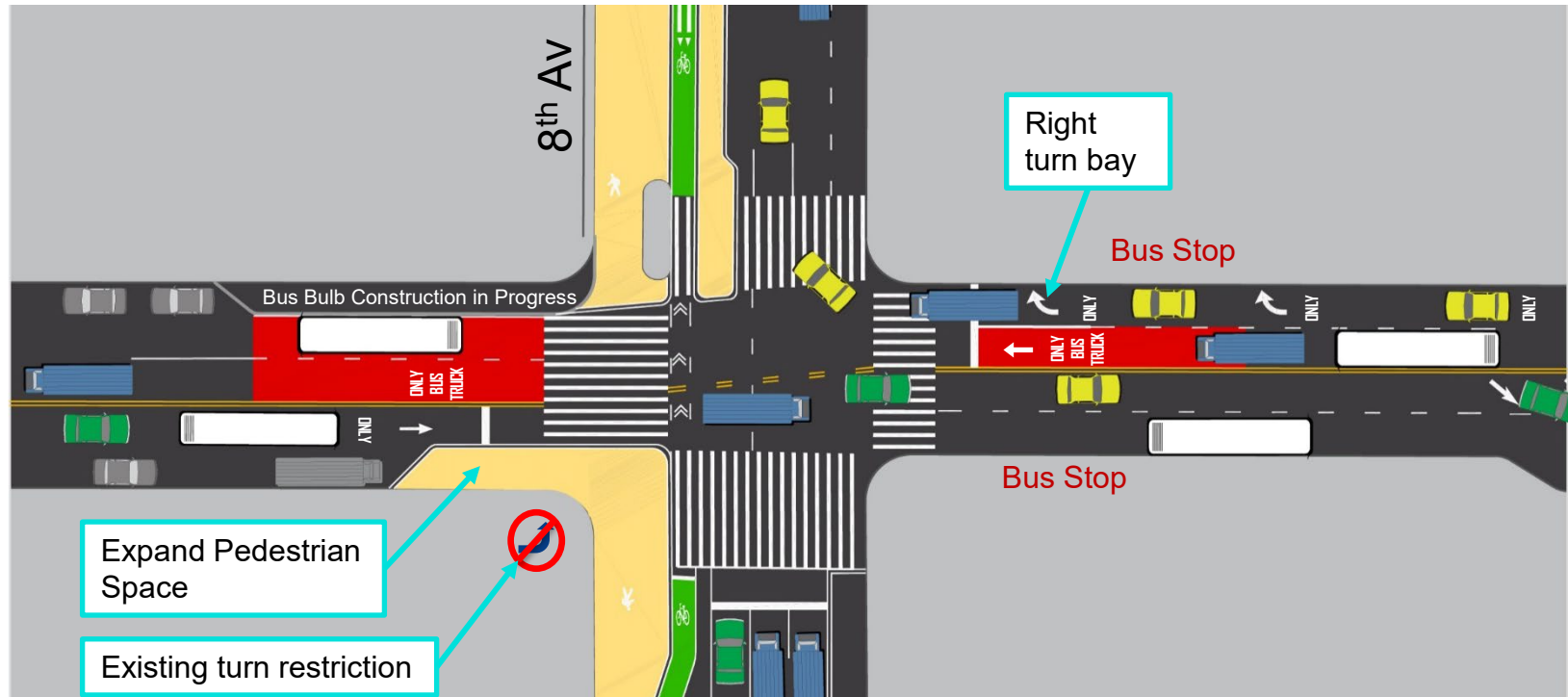


# 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue – Eastbound Gateway



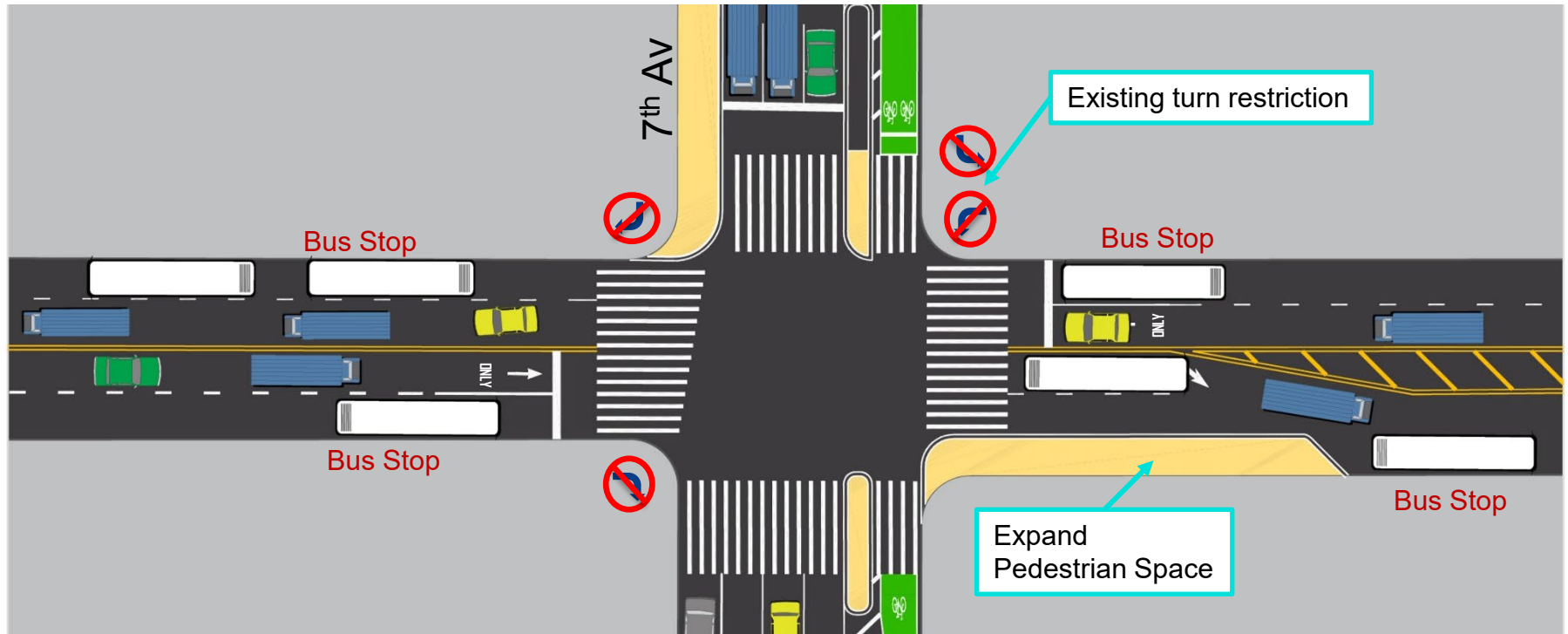
- Eastbound cars must turn right onto 9<sup>th</sup> Av
  - Buses and trucks may turn or continue straight
- All westbound traffic must continue straight
- Southbound traffic may access the busway via a left turn from 9<sup>th</sup> Av onto 34<sup>th</sup> St

# 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue



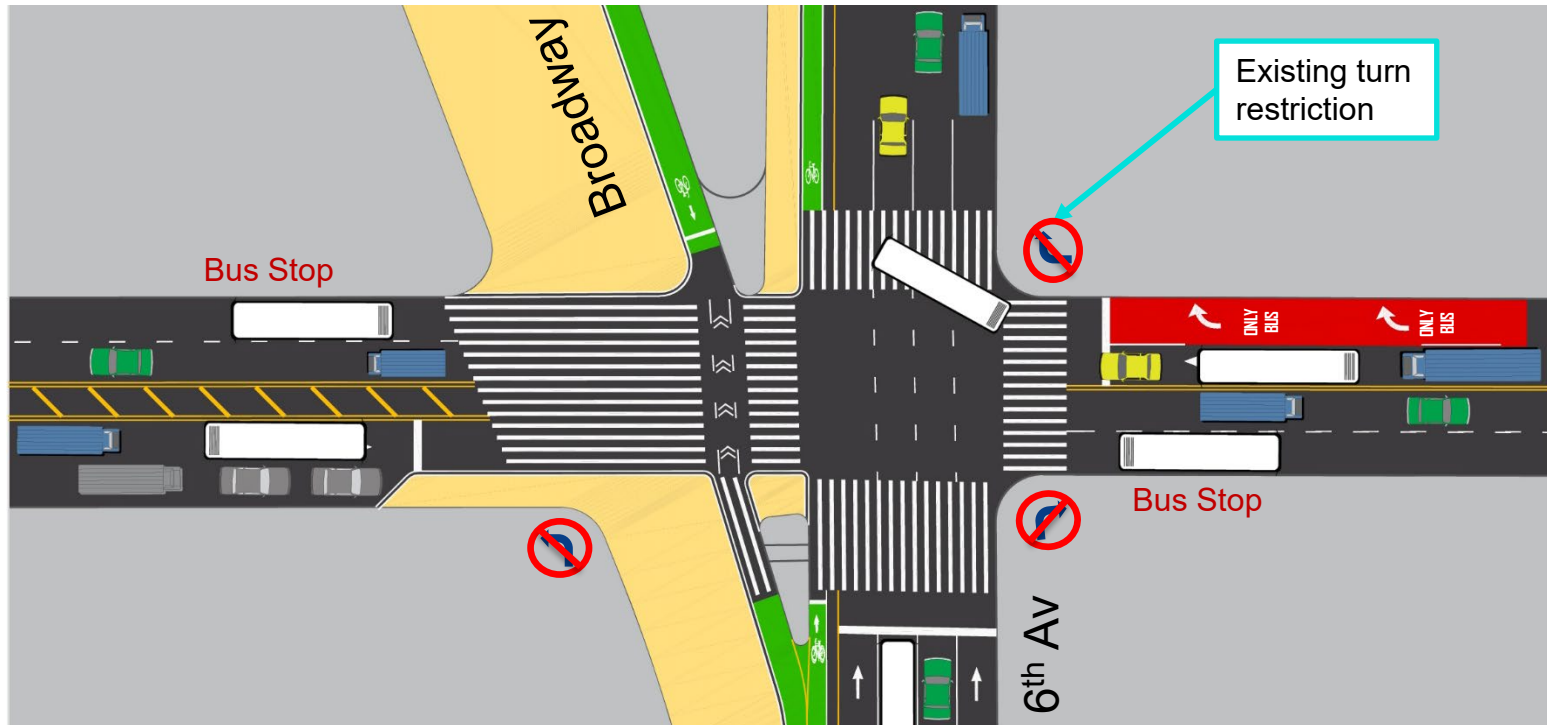
- All eastbound traffic must continue straight
- Westbound cars must turn right onto 8<sup>th</sup> Av
  - Buses and Trucks may turn or continue straight
- Northbound traffic may access the busway via a left or right turn from 8<sup>th</sup> Av onto 34<sup>th</sup> St

# 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue



- All traffic in all directions must continue straight
  - Existing turn restrictions for all turns

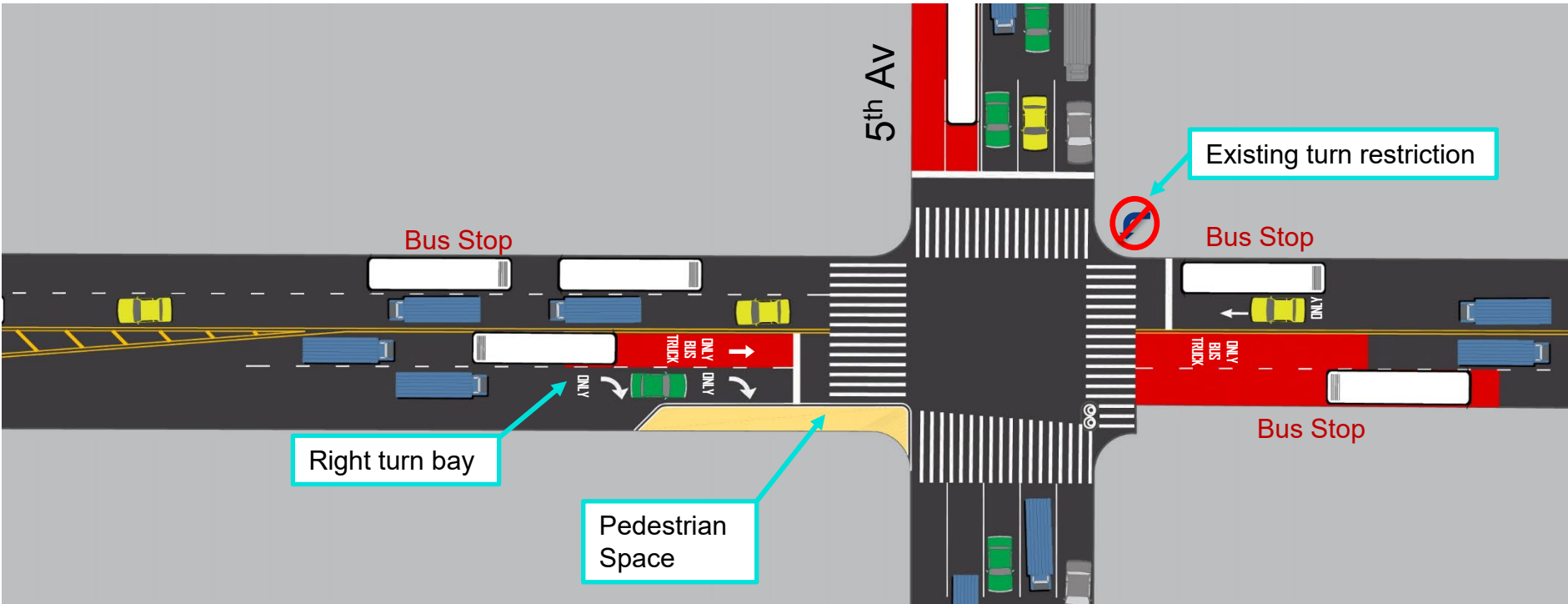
# 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue/Broadway



- All cars and trucks in all directions must continue straight
  - Existing turn restrictions
  - MTA buses traveling westbound may turn right

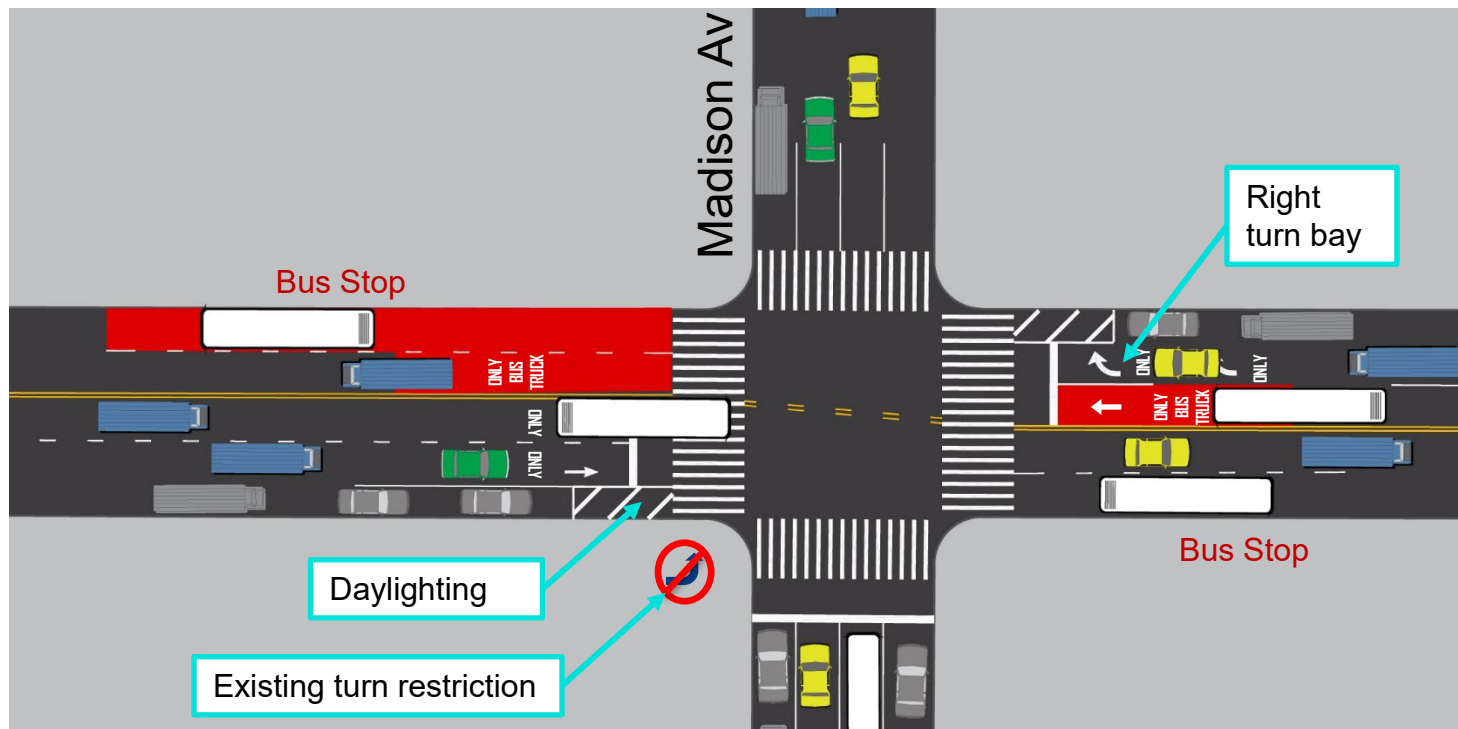


# 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue



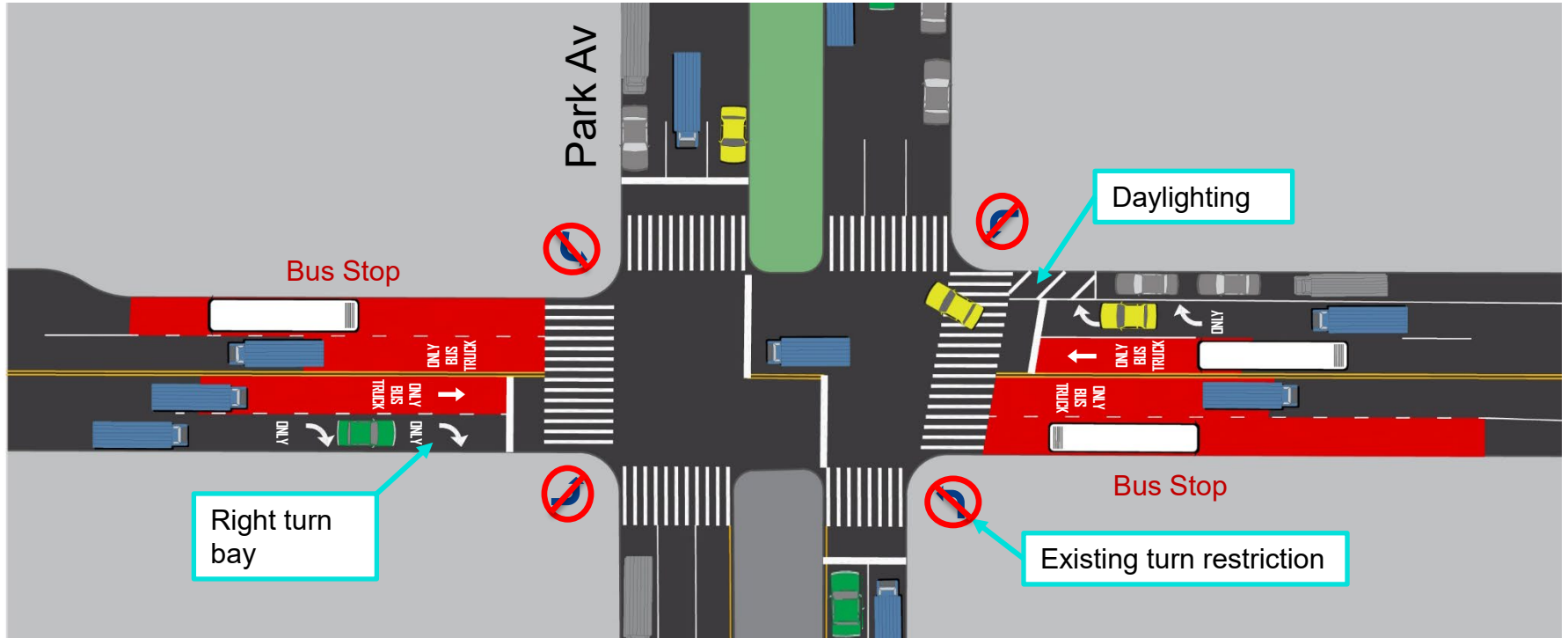
- Eastbound cars must turn right onto 5<sup>th</sup> Av
  - Buses and trucks may turn or continue straight
- All westbound traffic must continue straight
- Southbound traffic may access the busway via a left or right turn from 5<sup>th</sup> Av onto 34<sup>th</sup> St

# Madison Avenue



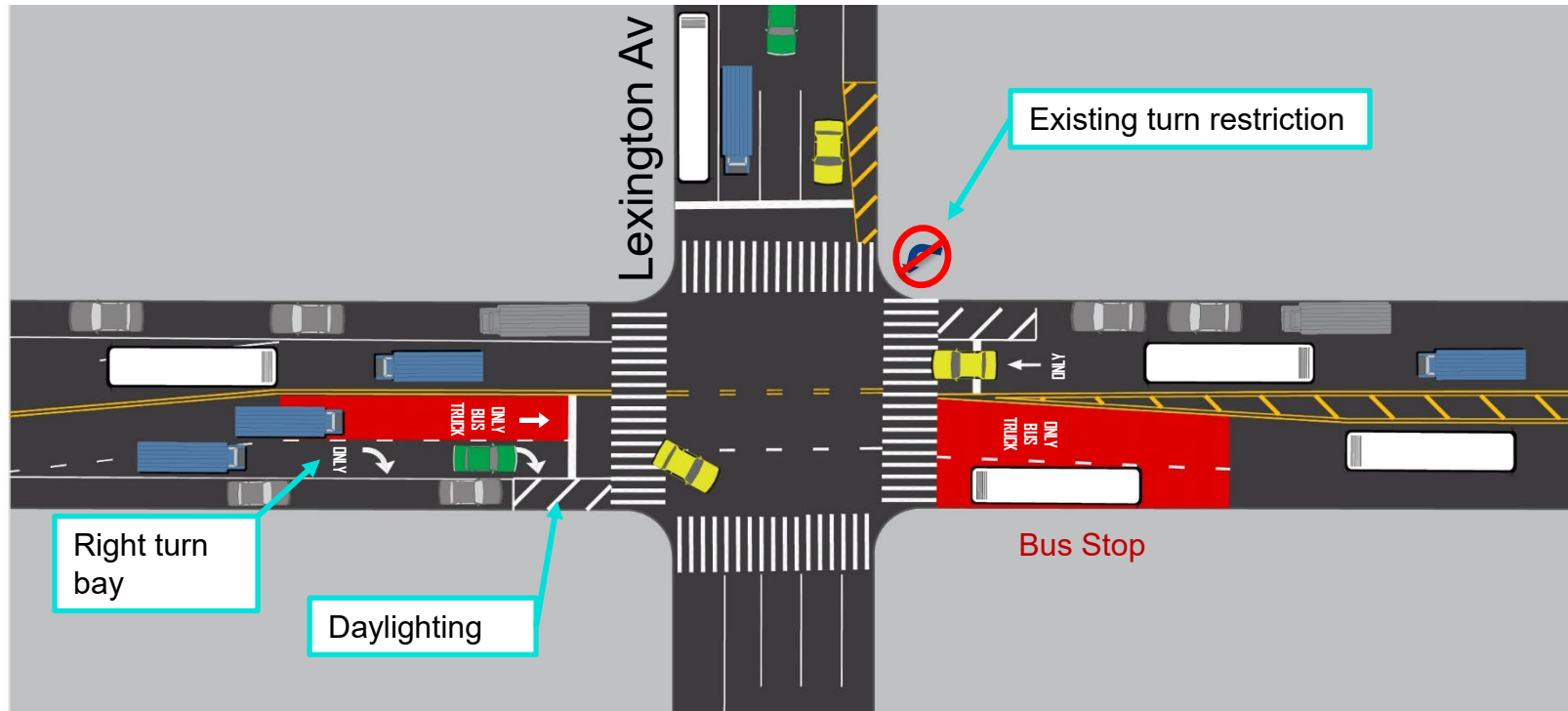
- All eastbound traffic, except authorized buses must continue straight
- Westbound cars must turn right onto Madison Av
  - Buses and Trucks may turn or continue straight
- Northbound traffic may access the busway via a left or right turn from Madison Av onto 34<sup>th</sup> St

# Park Avenue



- East and westbound cars and trucks must turn right
  - Buses and trucks traveling east and westbound may continue straight
- Left turns are banned in all directions – existing turn restriction
- North and southbound vehicles may access the busway by turning right from Park Av onto 34<sup>th</sup> St

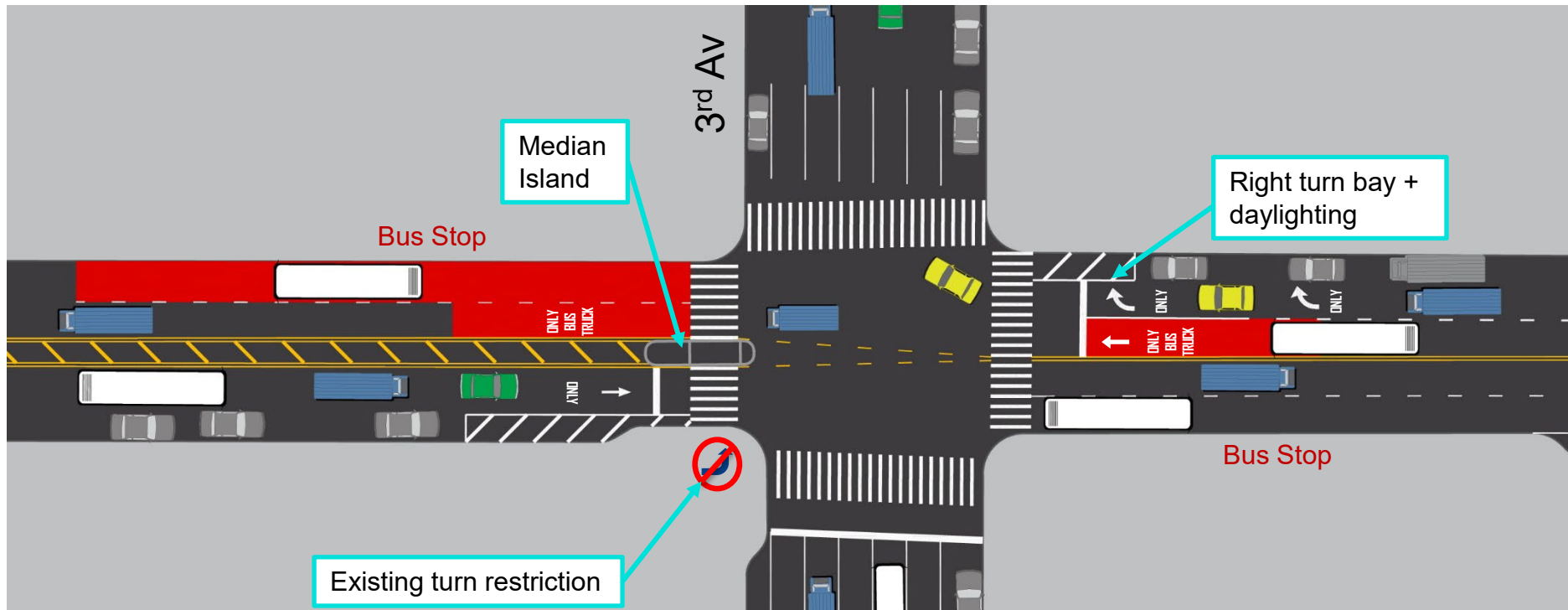
# Lexington Avenue



- Eastbound cars must turn right onto Lexington Av
  - Buses and Trucks may turn or continue straight
- All westbound traffic must continue straight – existing turn restriction
- Southbound traffic may access the busway via a left or right turn from Lexington Av onto 34<sup>th</sup> St

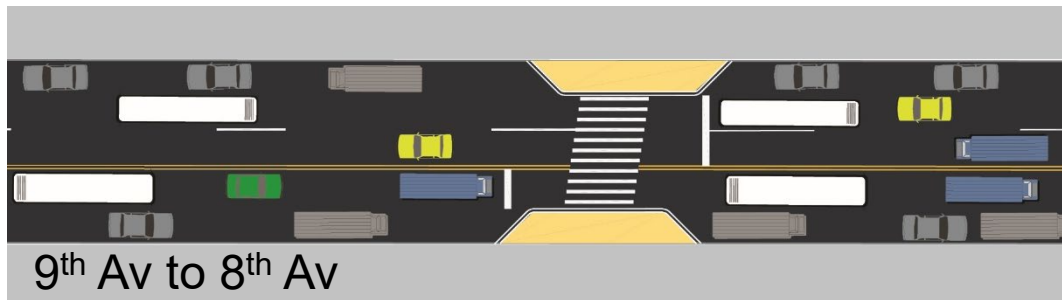


# 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue – Westbound Gateway

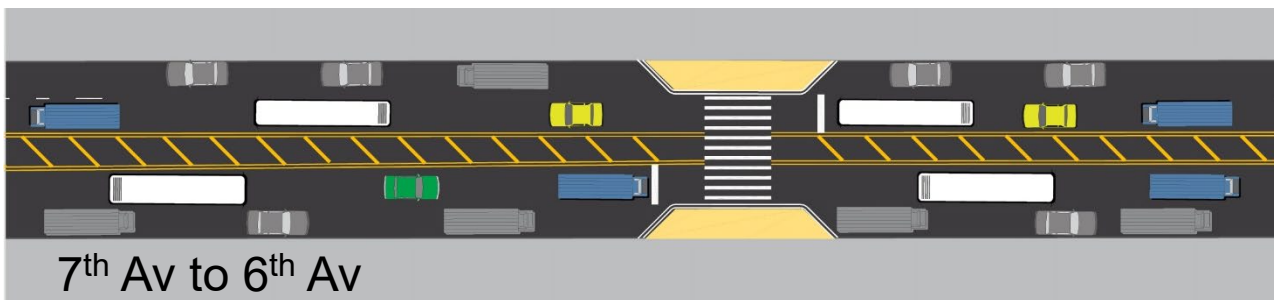
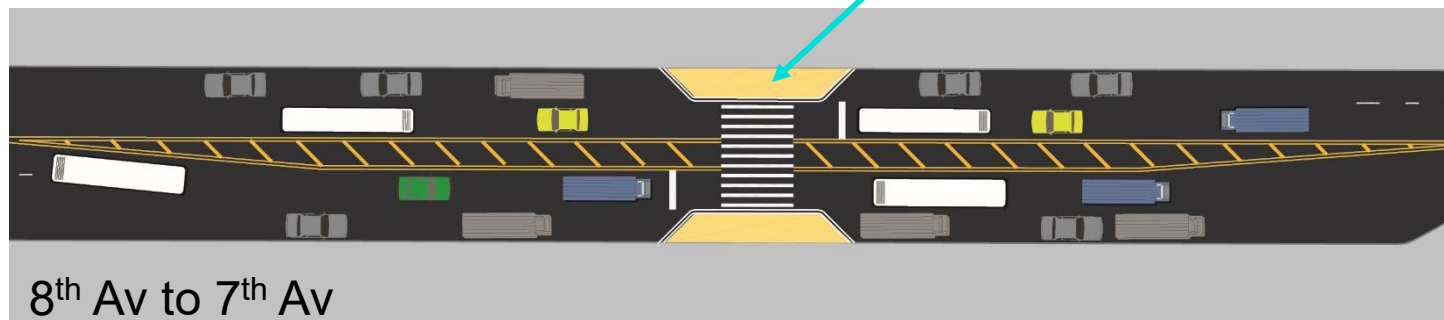


- All Eastbound traffic must continue straight – existing turn restriction
- Westbound cars must turn right onto 3<sup>rd</sup> Av
  - Buses and trucks may turn or continue straight
- Northbound traffic may access the busway via a left turn from 3<sup>rd</sup> Av onto 34<sup>th</sup> St

# Upgrading Existing Mid-Block Crossings



Painted pedestrian space to shorten crossing



# Busway Enforcement

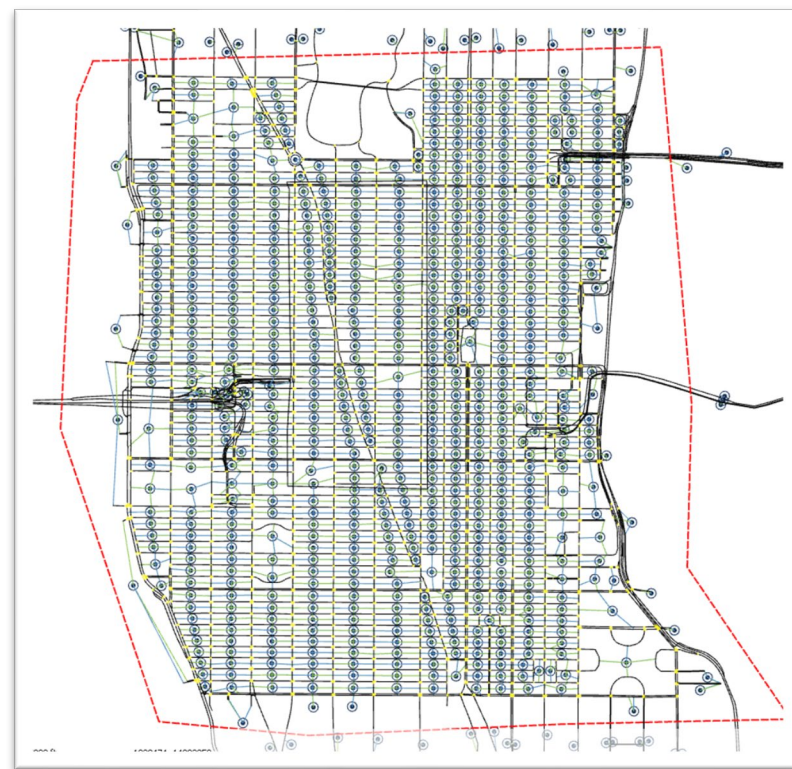
- ACE on-bus and fixed-location cameras enforce illegal parking in bus stops, double parking, and violations of required turns on the busway
  - ACE cameras in effect on 34<sup>th</sup> Street (M34/M34A SBS route) since 8/10/20
- Data shows that camera enforcement is successful in changing driver behavior
  - The number of violations decreases over time as drivers adjust to busway violations
  - ~80% of violators don't get a second ticket
  - Human review by DOT process ensures violations are captured and issued according to program rules
- For new regulations, cameras issue **warnings only for the first 60 days**
  - Existing regulations will be enforced as usual
- Close coordination with NYPD for busway launch

# Traffic Analysis



# Traffic Analysis

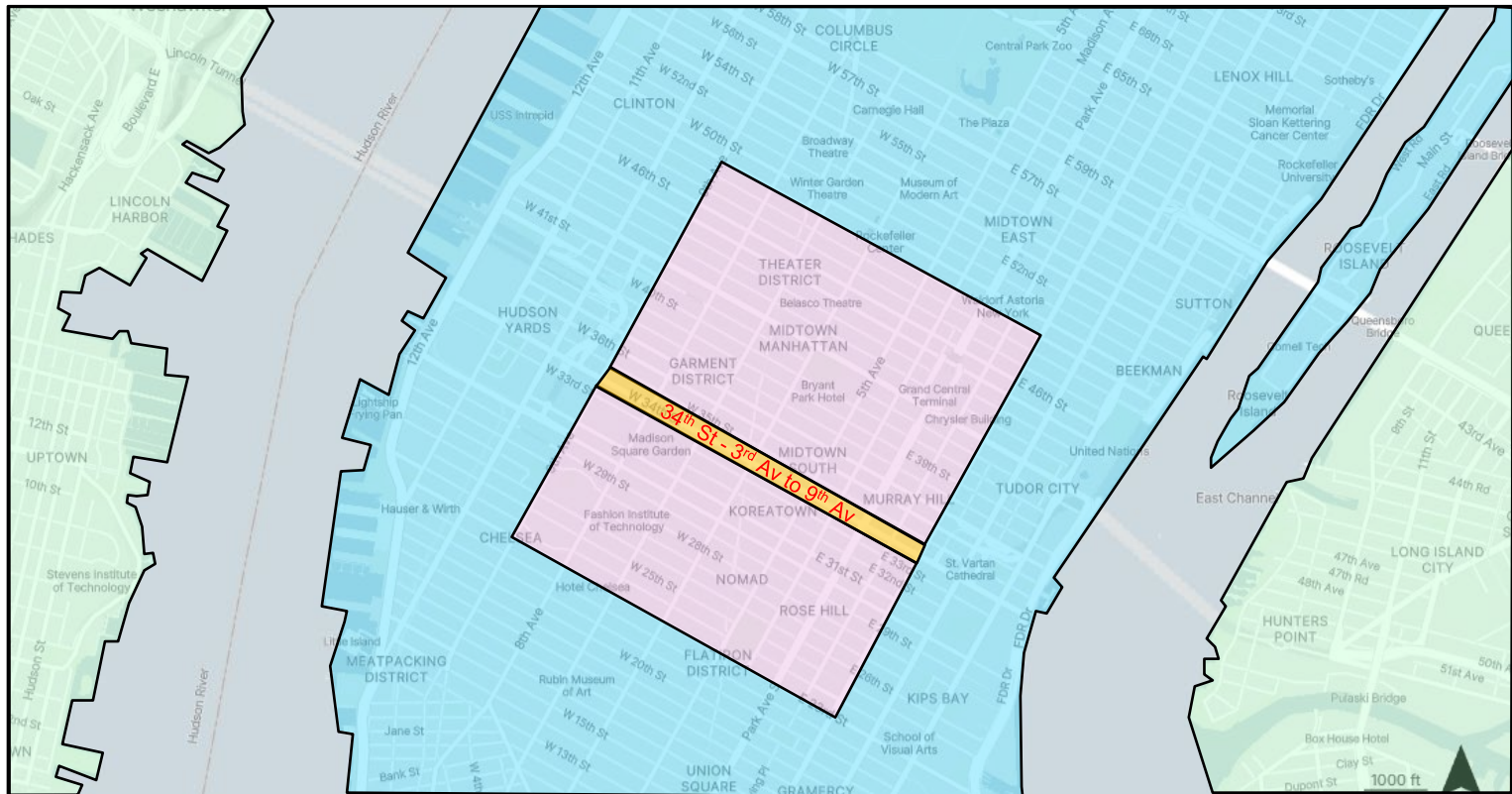
- Traffic analysis work to date:
  - Data collection: Existing traffic and pedestrian volumes along 34<sup>th</sup> St
  - Development of existing conditions model
- Ongoing work:
  - Development of proposed condition models
  - Analysis of how the proposal would affect traffic patterns
  - Exploration of changes to signal timing to improve traffic flow
- Traffic analysis report will use dynamic traffic modeling to explore how a proposal would affect traffic patterns on Manhattan avenues and other crosstown streets between 66<sup>th</sup> St and 14<sup>th</sup> St
- DOT will provide results of the traffic analysis after completion



*Example of Aimsun Traffic Model Network*

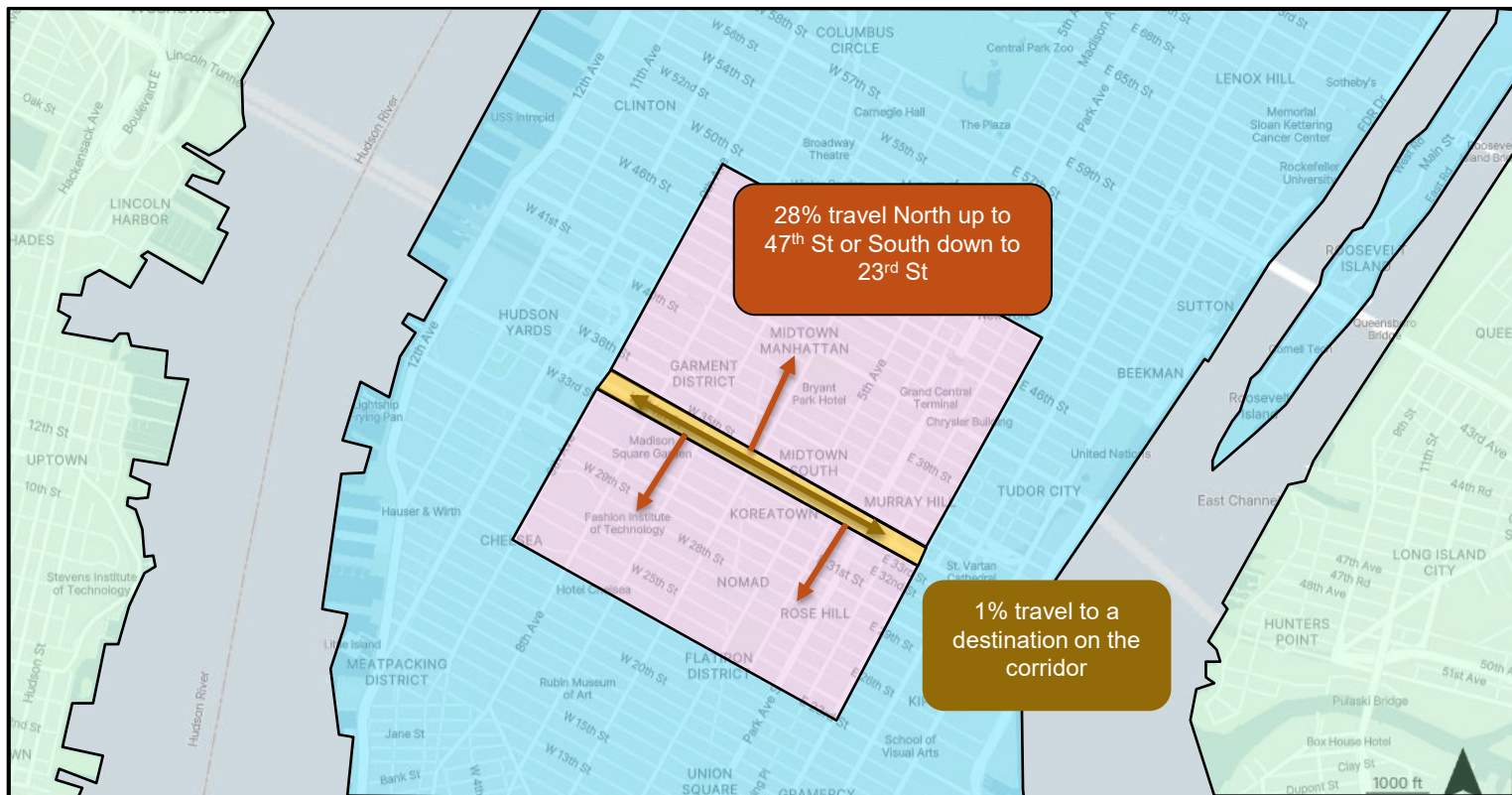
# Where are drivers who use 34<sup>th</sup> St going?

- Based on vehicle/app GPS data:
  - 29% of trips that use 34<sup>th</sup> St have destinations on or directly North and South of the project corridor
  - 24% of trips that use 34<sup>th</sup> St have destinations in other parts of Manhattan
  - 47% of trips that use 34<sup>th</sup> St have destinations in other boroughs or beyond the city limits



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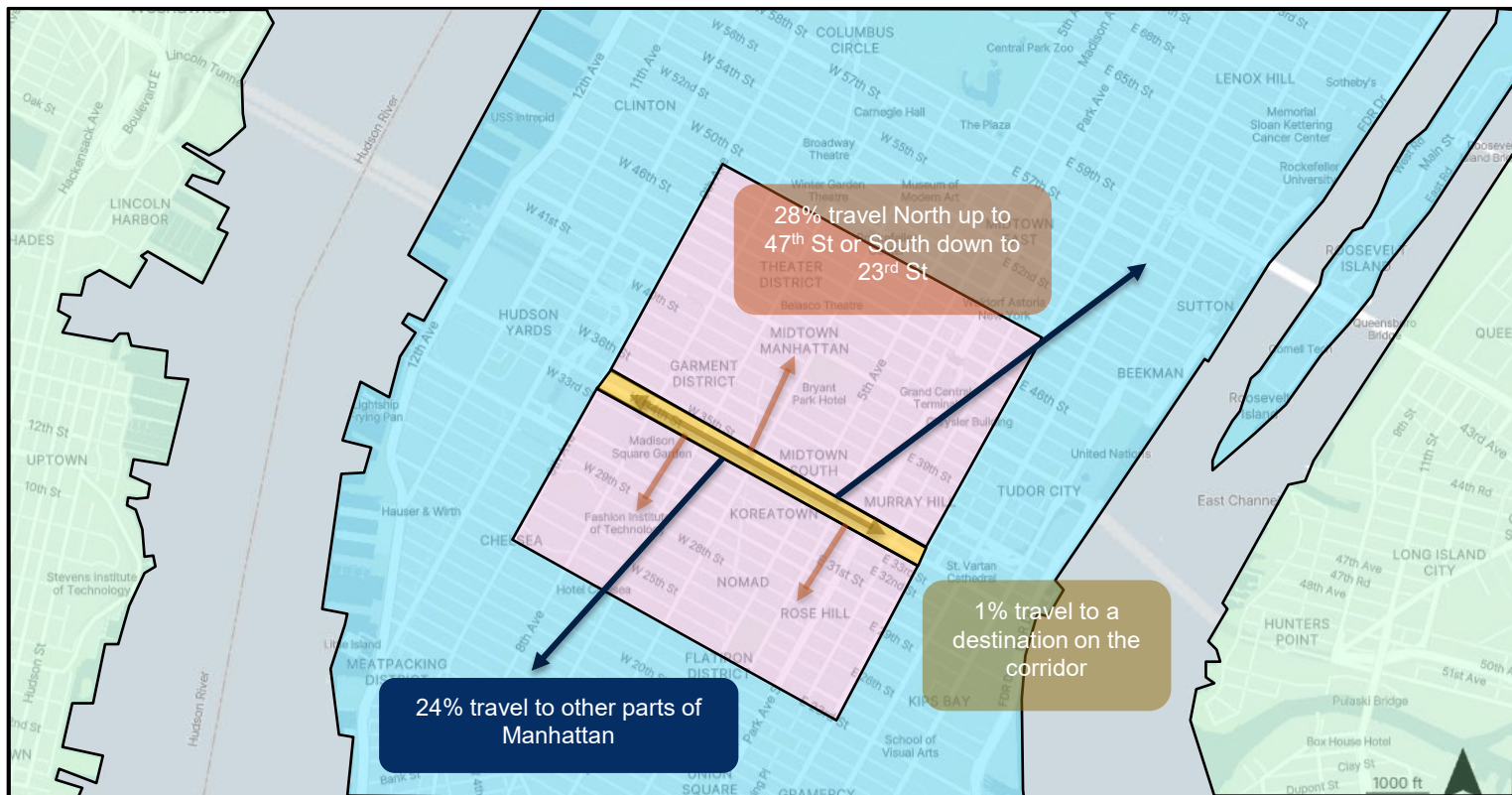
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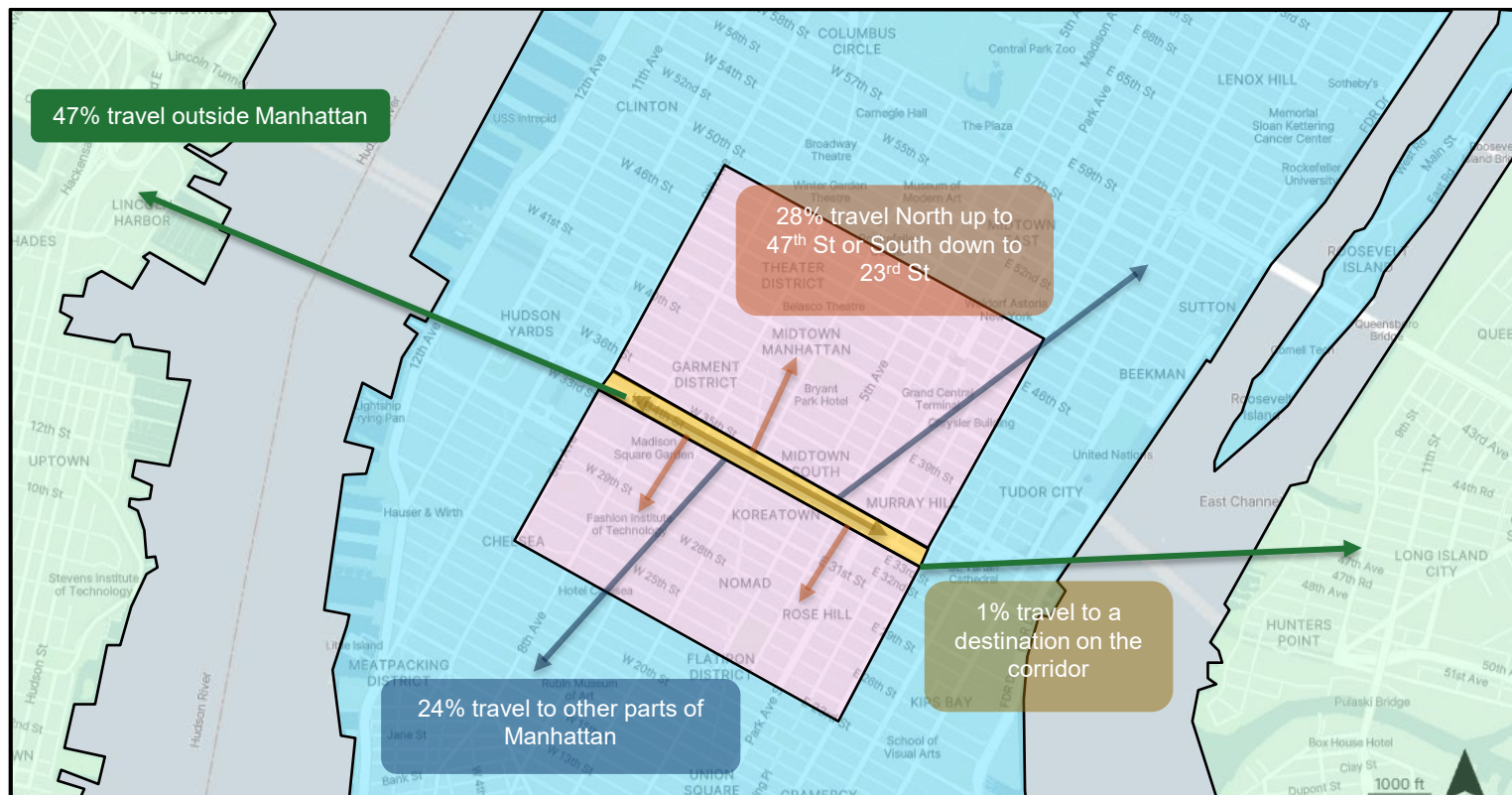
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# Summary and Next Steps

# Summary

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- Goals for 34<sup>th</sup> St:
  - Make bus service faster and more reliable
  - Increase safety on the corridor
  - Ensure access to businesses
- Proposal:
  - 14<sup>th</sup> St style busway between 3<sup>rd</sup> Av and 9<sup>th</sup> Av
- Ongoing work:
  - Finalize traffic analysis
  - Further develop design
  - Synthesize community feedback



# Next Steps

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## Spring 2025

- Meet with Community Board to discuss draft proposal
- Feedback will help shape DOT's final proposal
- Site visits

## Spring/Summer 2025

- Continue traffic analysis
- Refine proposal based on traffic analysis and community feedback

## Summer 2025

- Share refined plan

## Implementation in Summer/Fall 2025



# Thank You!

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## Questions?



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