

Better Buses Restart – 5th Avenue Busway Pilot

Community Advisory Board Kickoff, July 1, 2020



BETTERBUSES



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Better Buses Restart

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
 - 24 projects were planned for 2020, heavy focus on coordination with NYCT Bronx Bus Network Redesign



Better Buses Restart

Impact of COVID-19

2020 Work Program was disrupted by the pandemic

- Limited ability to conduct data collection and outreach starting in March
- Bronx Redesign implementation postponed to 2021



Better Buses Restart

Bus Service During the Pandemic

- **Speeds increased by over 20%**
- **Ridership decreased about 70%**
- **Highlighted areas of particular need**
 - Essential workers using transit
 - Underrepresented communities hardest hit by virus
- **Good bus service needed for restart**
 - Support essential workers
 - Attract people back to transit

NYC Reopening

Phase 1

- **June 8**
- Approx. 300k workers returned
- Construction, manufacturing, some retail

Phase 2

- **June 22**
- More retail
- Outdoor dining
- Some office

Phase 3

- **Timing TBD**
- Hospitality focus

Phase 4

- **Timing, TBD**
- Schools, Entertainment

Better Buses Restart

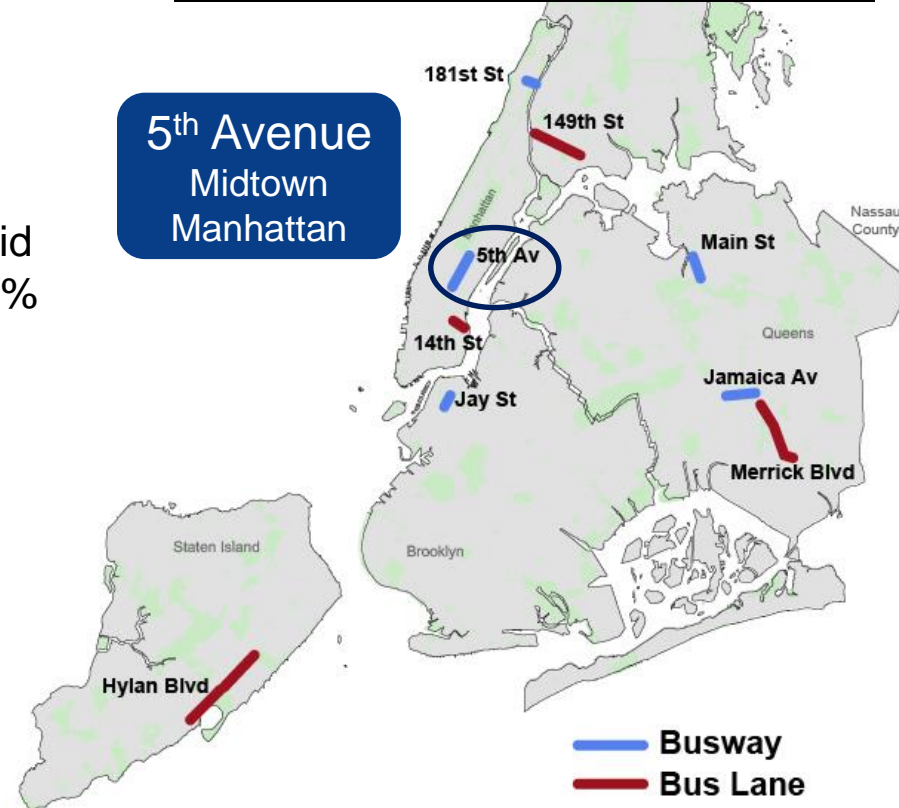
Recovery Plan

In June, Mayor de Blasio announced a plan for fast, reliable transit service during reopening

- Buses played a vital role during the shutdown and continue to during recovery
- Bus ridership is already at 50% of pre-Covid levels, while subway ridership is only at 20%

9 busway & bus lane projects announced, focused on:

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



14th Street Busway

- Implemented in Oct 2019
- Made permanent in June 2020
- Significant gains for bus riders
- Very small impact on vehicle travel times (<1 minute)
- 4% decrease in crashes with injuries



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

WEEKDAY RIDERSHIP



14% increase in bus ridership
from January 2018 to
January 2020, up to
29,568.

3,526 riders

Background

Background

5th Avenue – 57th Street to 34th Street

- Major commercial/retail corridor and tourist destination
- Critical bus corridor for commuters from across the city
- High pedestrian and cyclist volumes
- Safety concerns
- Community requests for improvements



Background

Citywide Bus Connections

- **41 different bus routes coming from all 5 boroughs**
 - 9 from Brooklyn
 - 9 from the Bronx
 - 6 from Manhattan
 - 4 from Queens
 - 13 from Staten Island
- **50-130 buses per hour throughout the day**
- **Bus delays here can impact reliability citywide**

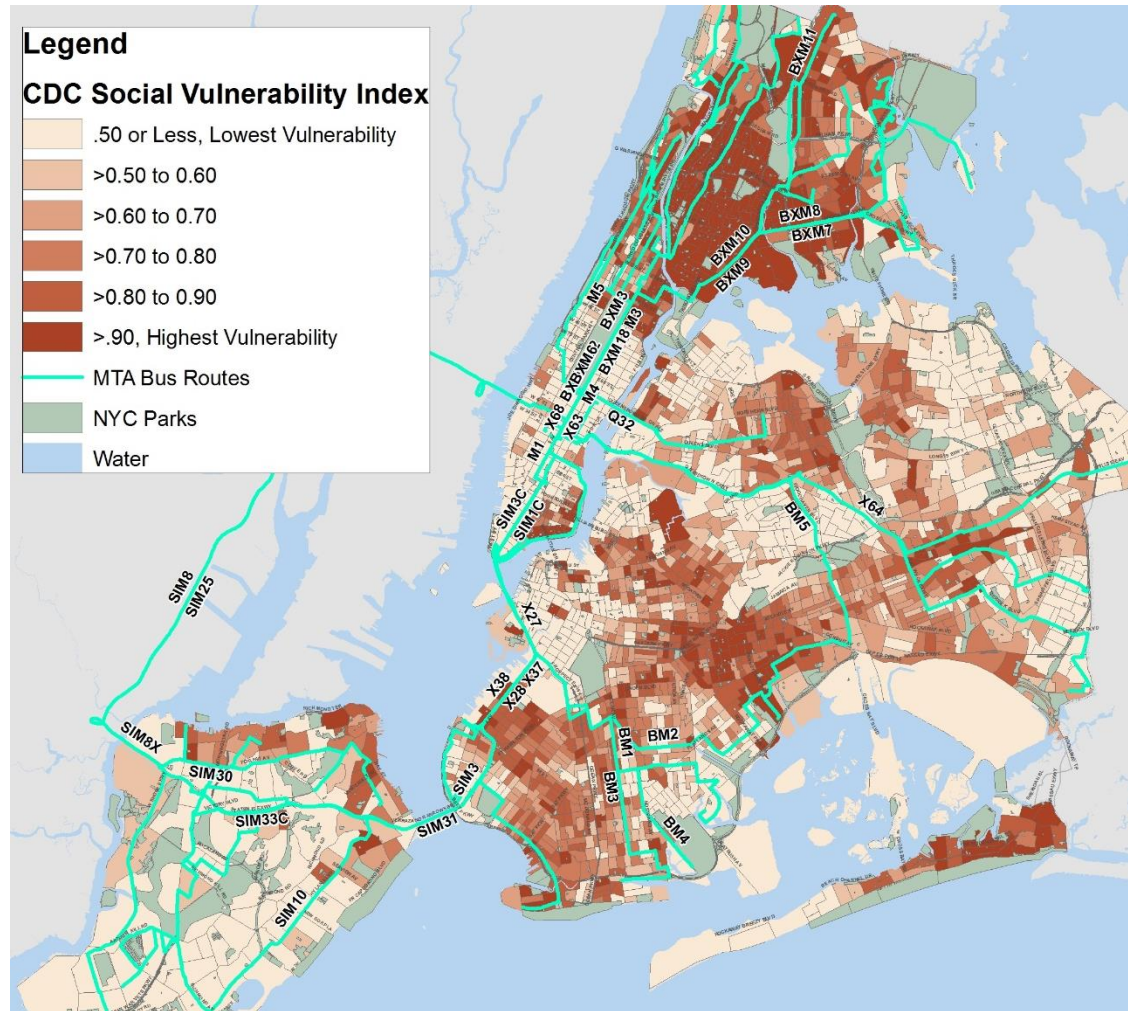


Background

Citywide Bus Connections

Routes connect to outer areas of the city ranking high on CDC's Social Vulnerability Index

- Includes:
 - high poverty
 - low vehicle access
 - aged 65 or older
 - civilians with a disability
- Vital transportation links for communities with limited options



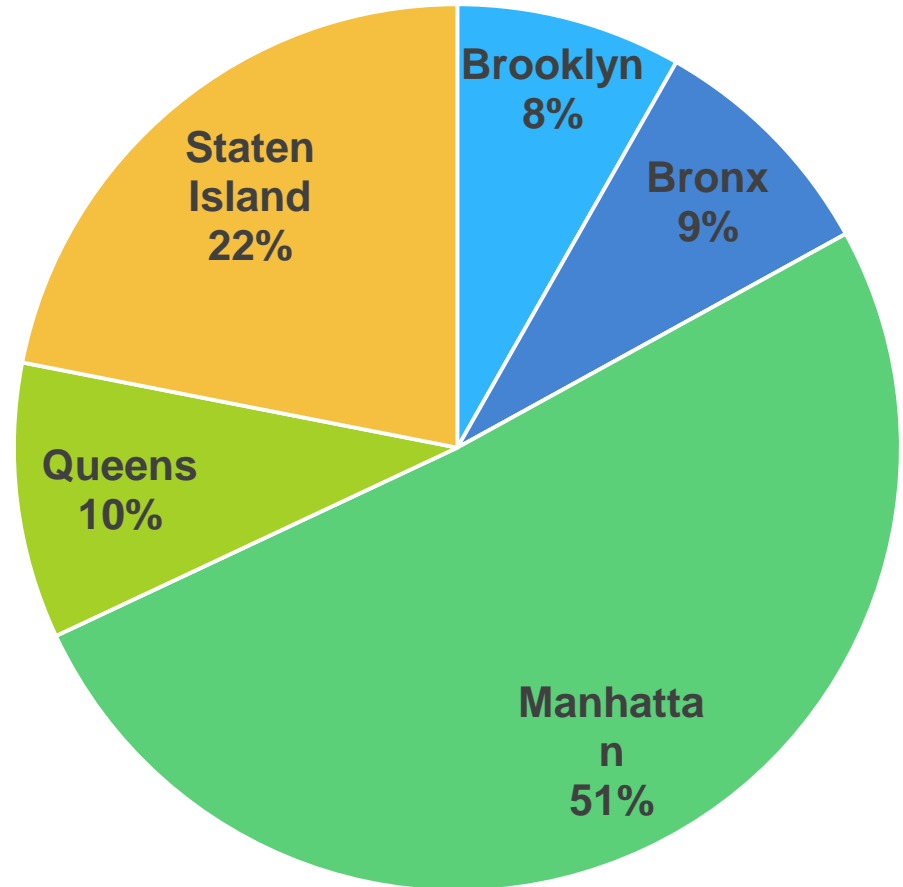
Background

Bus Ridership

110,000 daily bus riders on routes serving 5th Av (2019)

- 51% from Manhattan routes
- 49% from routes originating in other boroughs

Average Weekday Riders (2019) by Borough on Routes Serving 5th Av



Background

Previous Bus Priority Treatments

Double bus lane implemented in 2018

(61st Street to 34th Street)

- From 2017 to 2019:
 - Local routes have had a speed increase of 6-12%
 - Express routes have had a speed increase of 11-20%

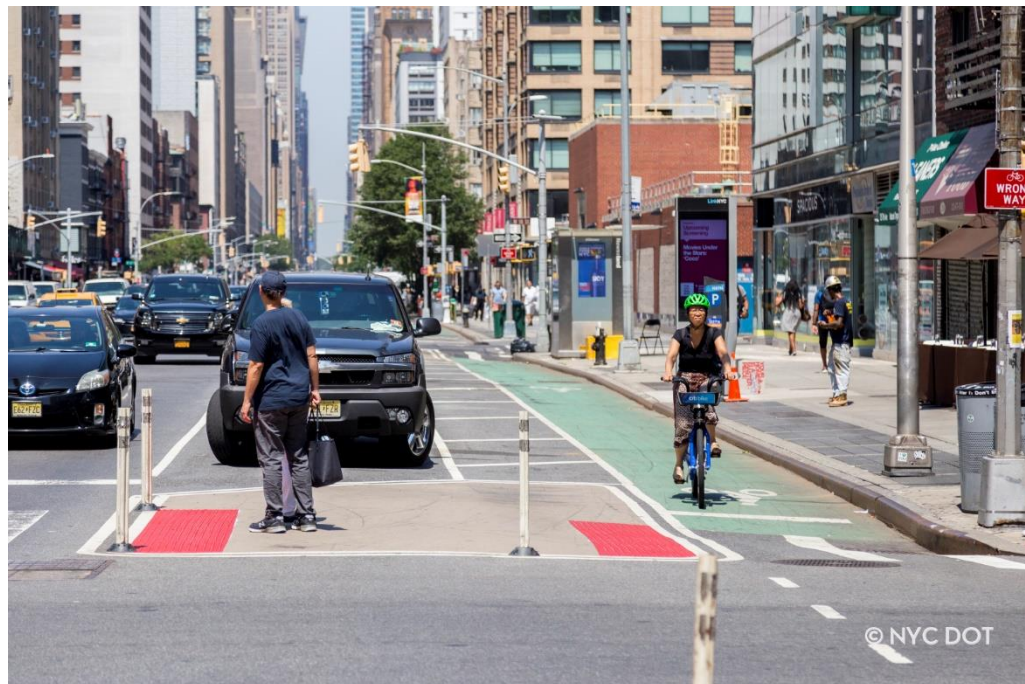


Background

Bicycle Volumes

On average, 1,800 cyclists use 5th Av daily (at 51st Street)

- Highest ridership on a Manhattan corridor without a bike lane
- There are 35 Citibike stations with $\frac{1}{4}$ mile of 5th Av and 34th St
- Low percentage of female riders
 - Less than 10% of riders were women
 - Protected bike lanes in Midtown see approximately 25% women riders



Background

Safety and Crash History

- High crash rates among all road users – pedestrians, bicyclists, and motor vehicles
- Underscores need for design improving safety for all modes
- Cyclist fatality in June of 2020 on 5th Av near 59th St in bus lane

5th Av, 57 St to 34 St				
Injury Summary, 2013-2017 (5 years)				
	Total Injuries	Severe Injuries	Fatalities	KSI
Pedestrian	162	16	1	17
Bicyclists	95	10	0	10
Motor Vehicle Occupant	256	14	0	14
Total	513	40	1	41

Source: Fatalities: NYCDOT
Injuries: NYSDOT
KSI: Persons Killed or Severely Injured

Background

Public Requests for Complete Streets Improvements

- Broad support, including from CB5, for double bus lanes implemented in 2018
- Multiple longstanding requests for a Complete Streets design, including protected bike lane
- Requests to accommodate high pedestrian volumes, especially during holidays



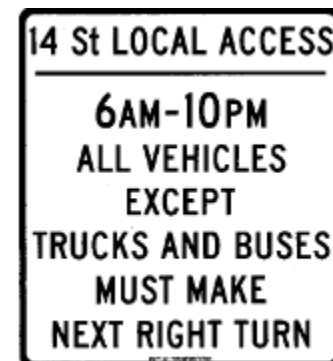
5th Av at 45 St

Proposed Treatments

Proposed Treatments: Busway

Through Traffic Restrictions

- **Traffic restrictions prioritize bus travel while maintaining local access (Hours TBD)**
 - Only buses and emergency vehicles allowed to drive continuously along the busway
 - Other vehicles are allowed to turn onto busway for local trips, pick-up/drop-off, and garage access but must make the next available turn off busway
- **Traffic diversion strategies prior to start of busway at 57th St**
- **Traffic operations adjusted as needed (turn bays, turn bans, or signal timing changes)**



Proposed Treatments: Busway

Dedicated Bus Lanes

Existing double bus lanes on west curb are well used

- Safe & accessible curbside boarding at bus stops
- Right turns can still be made from bus lanes where permitted



5th Av at 46 St

Proposed Treatments: Curb Regulations

Local Traffic Access and Pickup/Drop-off Zones

Maintaining local traffic access allows taxis, FHVs, and other vehicles to serve 5th Av

- Could add floating parking, pickup/drop-off or loading zones



Proposed Treatments: Complete Street

Providing Safe & Accessible Options

- Reduced vehicular volumes on Busway can help create space for other modes including walking and biking
- Provide safe and accessible options for all travel modes and people of all ages and abilities
- Support City's Vision Zero Initiative



Potential Treatments: Pedestrians

Sidewalk Extensions

Painted curb extensions can create more space for pedestrians where volumes are high

- Allow for better social distancing
- Bollards, planters, or other elements can provide separation
- Can shorten crossings, increasing pedestrian safety



Potential Treatments: Bikes

Protected Bike Lane

Curbside bike lane can be protected by parked cars or vertical elements

- Accommodate increases in cycling associated with Citi Bike expansion and COVID-19 pandemic
- Designs can accommodate adjacent loading of people and goods



1st Av Protected Bike Lanes (60-72 St)

Potential Treatments: Bikes

Interim Designs

- In early phases of project rollout, temporary materials could be used to provide physical separation from vehicles for cyclists and pedestrians
- City Council rule requires 45 day notice of new bike lane proposal



Temporary Protected Bike Lane, Smith St, BK

Next Steps

Next Steps

Stakeholder Engagement

- Community Advisory Board (CAB)
 - Elected officials
 - Community Board members
 - Representatives of local institutions and organizations
 - Property owners
 - Transit advocates and bus riders
- Meet regularly throughout the 12-month pilot period
 - Planning
 - Design
 - Implementation
 - Monitoring

Next Steps

Project Timeline

June 2020

- Begin outreach
- Begin project coordination

July 2020

- **First Community Advisory Board (CAB) Meeting**
- Project design and coordination
- Ongoing stakeholder engagement and outreach
- Phased implementation begins

Late July & Early August

- Ongoing CAB Meetings
- Project design and coordination
- Ongoing stakeholder engagement and outreach

Summer 2021

- Busway performance evaluation through pilot end date
- Ongoing stakeholder engagement and outreach

Next Steps

Tracking Project Effects

NYC DOT is developing a Monitoring Plan to track bus speeds, traffic flow, and travel time

- Midtown in Motion, a monitoring system for Midtown Manhattan, captures traffic, congestion and travel times
- Allows for regular reporting before, during and after implementation



Thank You!

Questions & Discussion



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