

# Flatbush Ave Bus Priority

Presentation to Community Board 8 Environment, Sanitation and Transportation Committee

June 24, 2025



# Table of Contents

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1. Vision
2. How We Got Here
3. Proposal
4. Making It Work
5. Summary and Next Steps

# Vision

# 1



## High Ridership & Slow Speeds

- **132,000 daily riders on 12 bus routes** where buses often crawl at **speeds as slow as 4 mph**
- 59% of households with no access to a private vehicle
- Buses primarily serve Black, female, and low-income workers (Pratt Center Study)
- Over half of workers—51%—reported being reprimanded, docked pay, or even fired due to bus service delays (Pratt Center Study)
- Nearly 40% of all B41 trips start, end, or travel through the project area. Of those B41 trips, 80% begin or end south of Grand Army Plaza







## Commercial Hub

- Critical corridor for jobs, shopping, medical appointments, education, and entertainment
- Flatbush Ave is a designated truck route and vital freight corridor
- Small businesses with loading needs along the corridor



## High Pedestrian Volumes & Traffic Safety Issues

- Wide street with long crossing distances and many turning conflicts
- Vision Zero Priority corridor with 11 Vision Zero Priority Intersections
- 55 people killed or severely injured since 2019





# Concept Proposal – Reimagined Flatbush Avenue

New pedestrian spaces and shorter crossing distances to improve safety, comfort, and neighborhood connectivity

Less space for traffic, more space for people and transit

High-performing transit priority street connecting Brooklyn neighborhoods

# How We Got Here

# 2



# Project Extents & Future Phasing

- Current round of design options will focus on Downtown Brooklyn/ Northern Flatbush section of the corridor from **Livingston St to Grand Army Plaza**
  - Slowest bus speeds on the corridor
  - 69,000 average daily bus riders on 6 MTA bus routes use this section of Flatbush Ave
- Bus priority improvements on this section would benefit riders throughout the corridor
- DOT plans to study bus priority treatments in other sections of the corridor in future phases



# Public Outreach to Date

## Kick-Off Meetings

- Public Town Hall (June 2022)
- Mayoral Bus Ride with Rider's Alliance (August 2022)
- Presentations to elected officials, CBs, stakeholders (2022 – 2023)
- Surveyed 166 merchants on Flatbush, between Parkside Ave and Avenue D (November 2022)
- Community Advisory Board Meeting 1 (November 2022)

## Present Design Options for Northern Section

- Community Advisory Board Meeting 2 (June 2024)
- CBs 2, 6, 8 (June 2024)
- Meetings with North Flatbush BID, Downtown Brooklyn Partnership (2024 – 2025)
- Surveyed 78 businesses and 185 pedestrians on Flatbush, between Atlantic Ave and Grand Army Plaza (July 2024)
- Received 105 feedback submissions at Brooklyn Open Streets (August 2024)
- Spoke with 118 riders in citywide Bus Boarding Island survey (2024-2025)





# What We've Heard

## Collected feedback from:

- Meetings with Community Boards, Business Improvement Districts, elected officials
- Conducted 185 pedestrian surveys, 118 bus boarding island surveys, 78 business surveys

## Common feedback:

- **Bus performance:**
  - Bus is too slow; wait times are too long; service is not reliable
  - Double parking slows down the bus
  - Sometimes faster to walk than take the bus
- **Pedestrian safety:**
  - Flatbush does not feel safe for pedestrians
  - Uncomfortable crossing the street
  - Heavy traffic causes noise and air pollution
- **Curb access for businesses:**
  - Double parked vehicles obstruct traffic flow and pedestrian crossings
  - Truck drivers often double park far from businesses to make deliveries



# Design Concepts Studied

## June 2024 Outreach

- DOT presented three design concepts for the northern segment of Flatbush Ave
- **Curbside Bus Lanes:**
  - Converts parking lane to bus lane
  - Removes curb access for businesses
  - Bus lanes more likely to be blocked from illegal parking
- **Offset Bus Lanes:**
  - Converts rightmost travel lane to bus lane
  - Maintains curb access for businesses
  - Bus lanes may still be blocked from double parking
  - Public realm improvements not as drastic as center-running concept
- **Center-Running Bus Lanes:**
  - Converts center travel lane to bus lane
  - Minimizes bus-vehicle conflicts as well as bus blockages
  - New bus stop islands double as pedestrian refuge islands to enhance safety and comfort of the pedestrian experience
  - Same traffic capacity reduction as offset bus lanes but includes greater public realm and safety benefits





# Why Center-Running Bus Lanes?

- Provides **physically-separated space for buses** in the middle of the roadway
- Center-running lanes **dramatically increase bus speeds** with similar effects on traffic as an offset bus lane
- Bus boarding islands **increase safety** by shortening crossing distances and providing pedestrian refuge, and providing **near-level boarding**
- **Minimizes bus-vehicle conflicts** as well as bus lane blockages
- **Improves business access** compared to curbside lanes and reduces incidences of double parking
- **Near level boarding platforms** create high quality transit experience for riders that resembles train service. Bus riders, including seniors, report that bus boarding islands make service faster and are easy to access (*DOT Bus Boarding Island Survey 2024-2025*)
- **Enhances the public realm:** adds more pedestrian space, calms traffic, and makes Flatbush Ave a more inviting destination and major hub



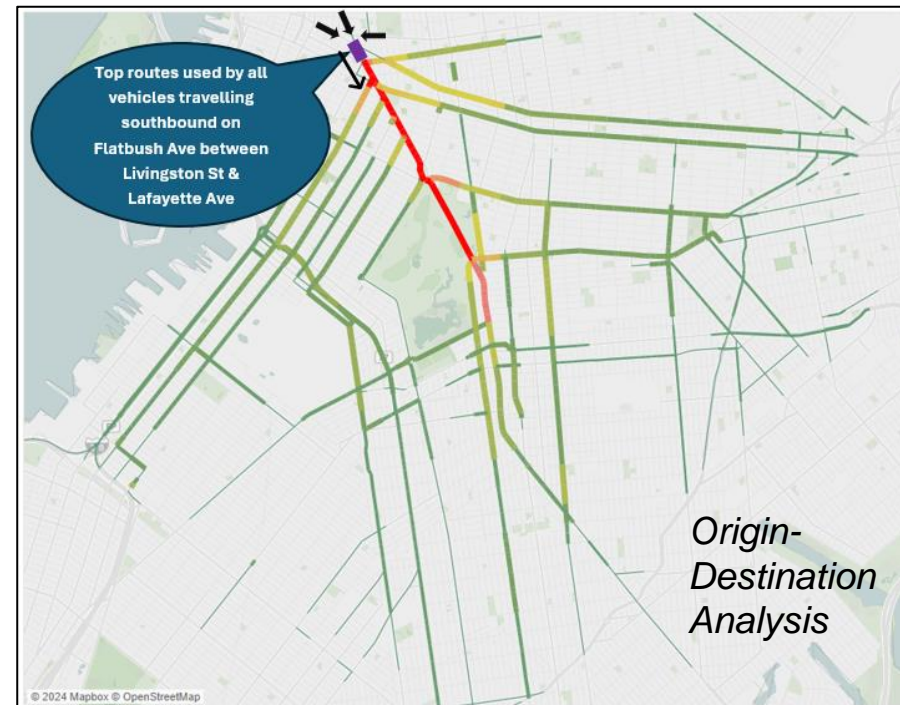
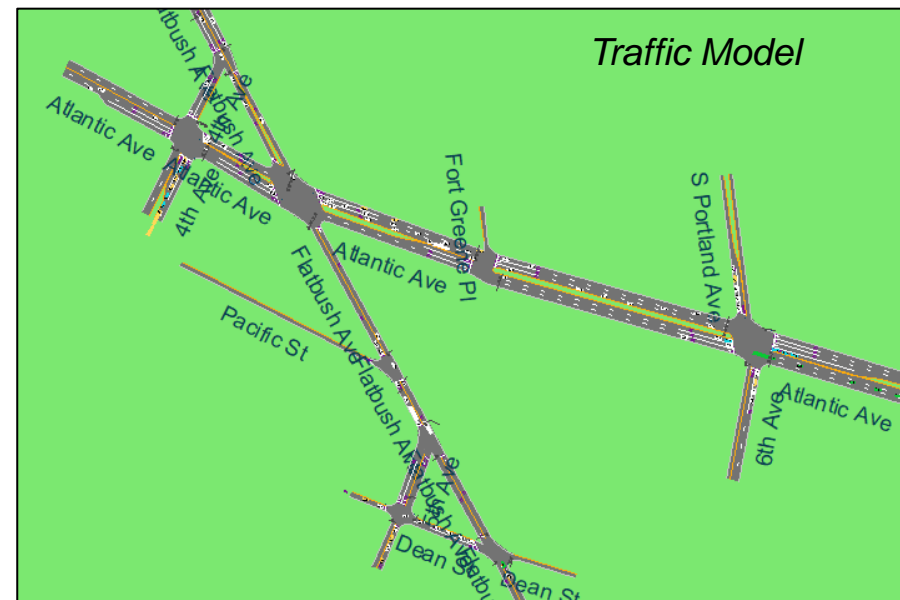
*E. Gun Hill Rd, Bronx*

## ***What do you like about this bus boarding island? (Answers from DOT Survey)***

- “Accessible and not as far as the old stop”
- “It feels safer”
- “Buses are faster”
- “Safer and easier”
- “Feels more comfortable”

# Traffic Analysis

- DOT undertook an extensive traffic analysis process, including:
  - Data collection at all intersections on Flatbush Ave as well as adjacent critical intersections
  - Extensive modeling per traffic engineering standards to determine the potential effects of installing a bus lane
  - Origin-Destination analyses to determine where vehicles are going and where they might divert to in a future bus lane scenario
- Analysis and outreach informed the decision to pursue the center-running bus lane design





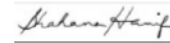
# Community Support

## Support for bus priority improvements on Flatbush Ave, including center-running bus lanes

- Councilmembers Hanif, Hudson, Restler, and Joseph request center-running design
- 1199 SEIU; Brooklyn Botanic Garden; Flatbush Streets for People; Flatbush Development Corporation; Haitian American Caucus; TWU Local 100; LIUNA Local 1010; New York Communities for Change; Pratt Center; Prospect Park Alliance; NYPIRG, Transportation Alternatives, Riders Alliance request bus priority improvements on Flatbush Ave

Fast, reliable bus service must be the linchpin of a city that works better for everyone, every worker, every family, and every neighborhood. Accordingly, we respectfully request that you create center-running bus lanes on Flatbush Avenue this year. Flatbush has been fully vetted by stakeholders. There is broad agreement that buses should move faster. New Yorkers across our economy will benefit once they do.

Sincerely,



Councilmember Shahana Hanif



Councilmember Crystal Hudson



Councilmember Lincoln Restler



Councilmember Rita Joseph

## BETTER BUSES FOR FLATBUSH AVENUE: PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH REPORT

PRATT  
CENTER  
FOR  
COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT

RIDERS  
ALLIANCE



# Proposal

# 3



# Existing – Flatbush Ave and 4<sup>th</sup> Ave



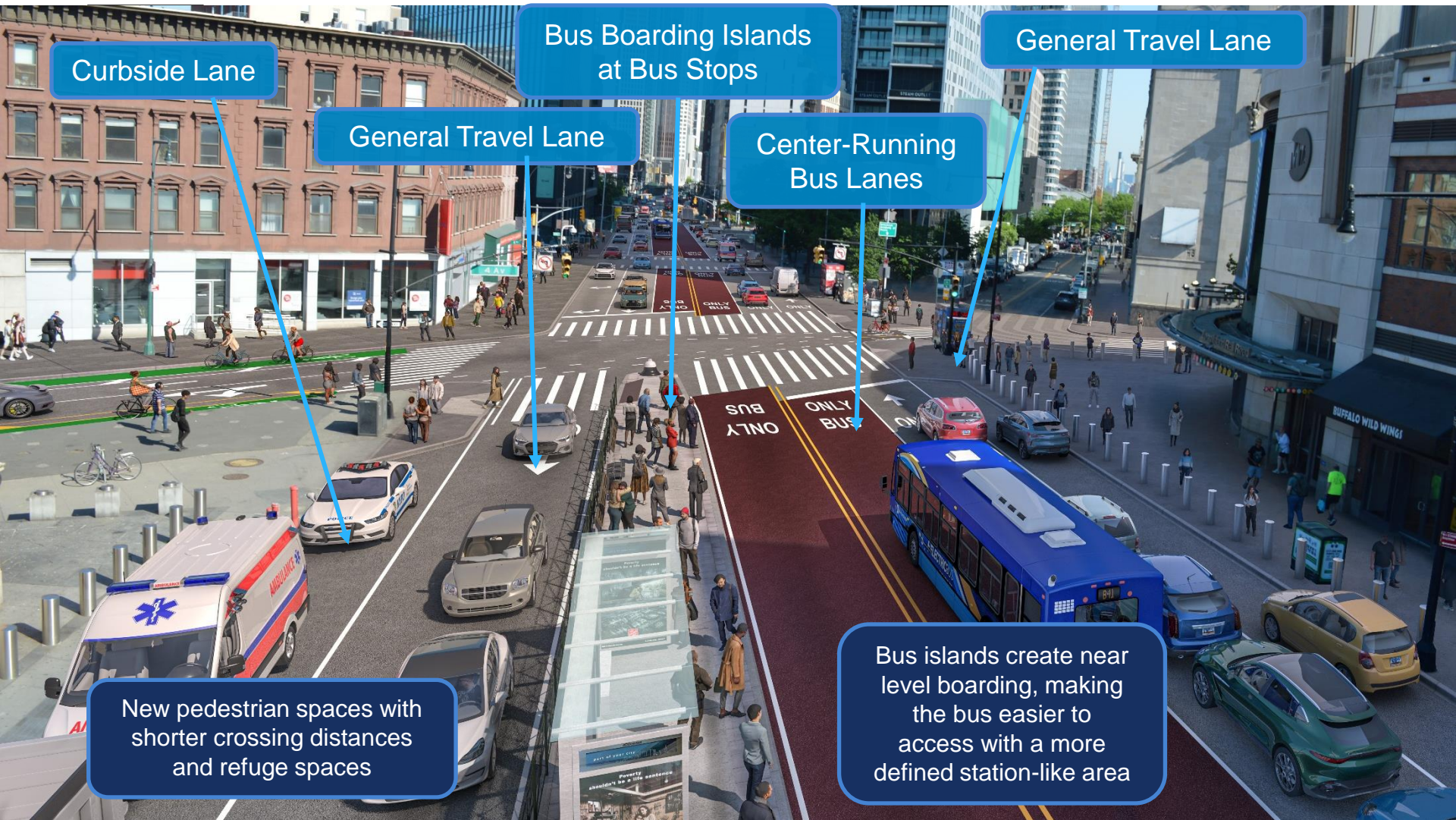
Insufficient pedestrian space for major transportation and destination hub at Atlantic Terminal and Barclay's Center

Car-centric thoroughfare leading to high levels of congestion and traffic injuries

Long crossing distances creating uncomfortable conditions for pedestrians



# Proposed – Flatbush Ave and 4<sup>th</sup> Ave





# Existing – Flatbush Ave and Prospect Pl



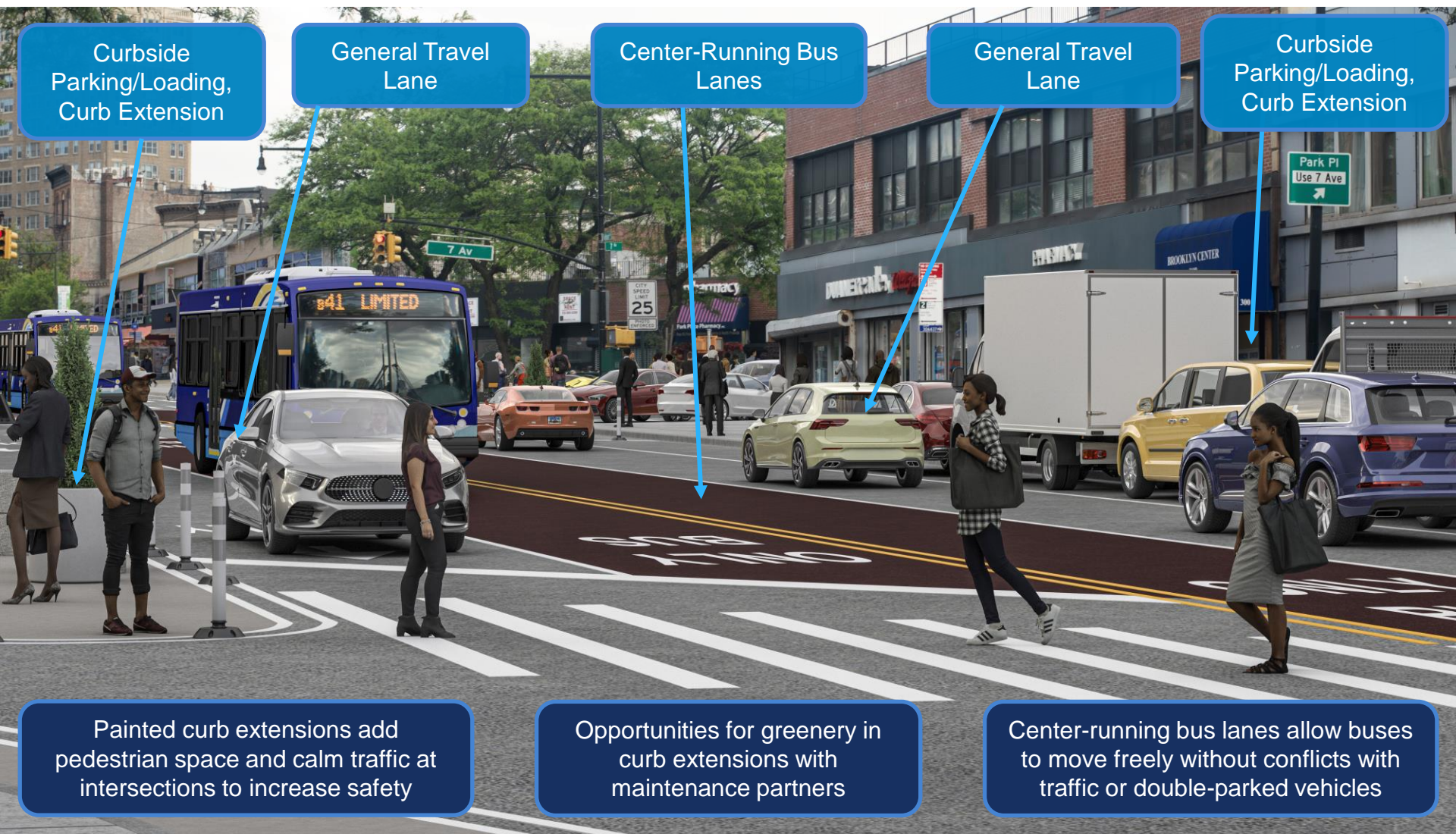
No dedicated space  
for transit

Traffic  
congestion

Long crossing  
distances

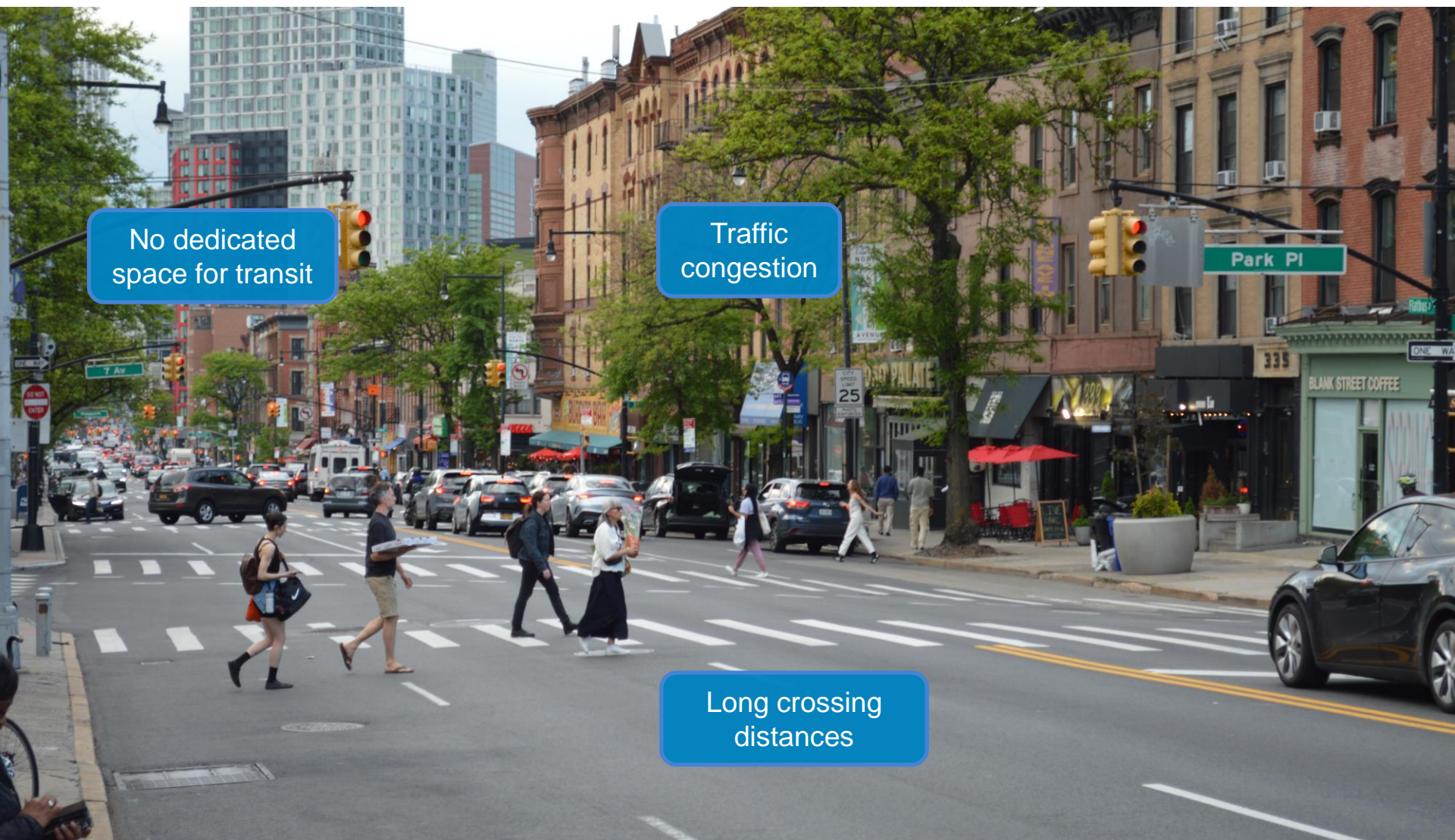


# Proposed – Flatbush Ave and Prospect Pl



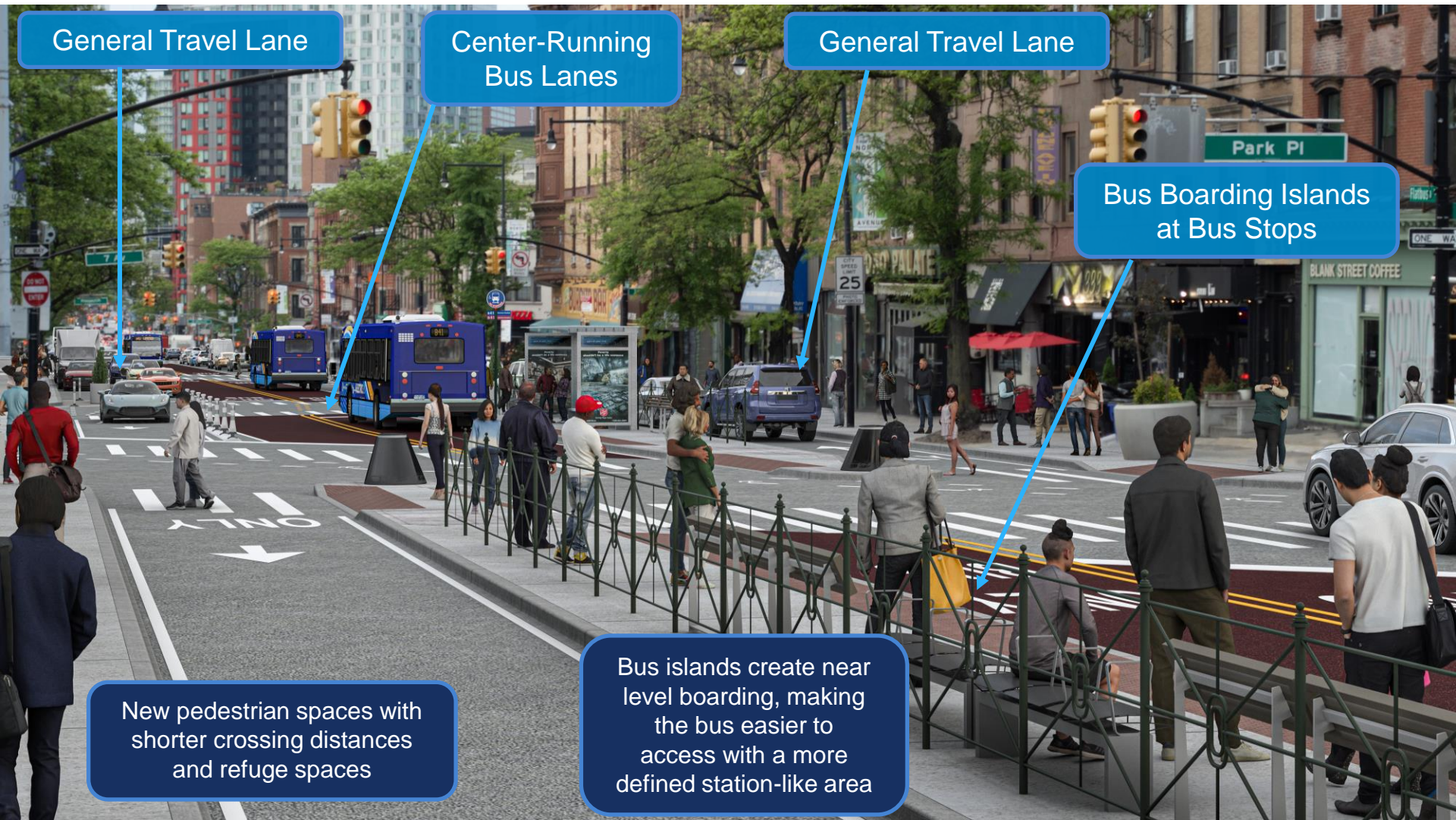


# Existing – Flatbush Ave and Park Pl





# Proposed – Flatbush Ave and Park Pl



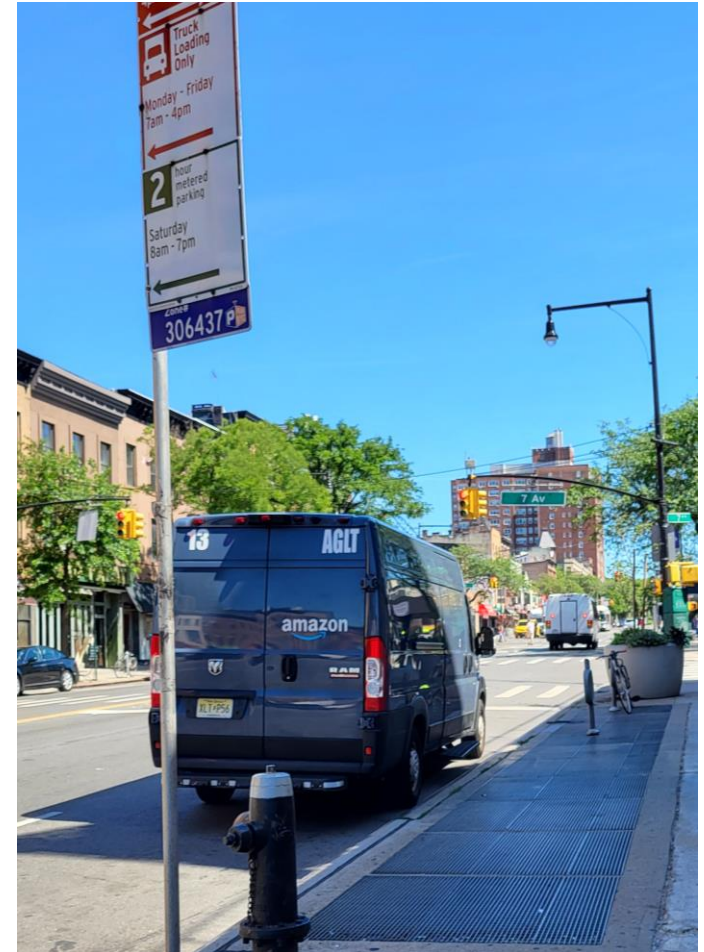


# Making It Work

# 4

# Making It Work: Curb Management

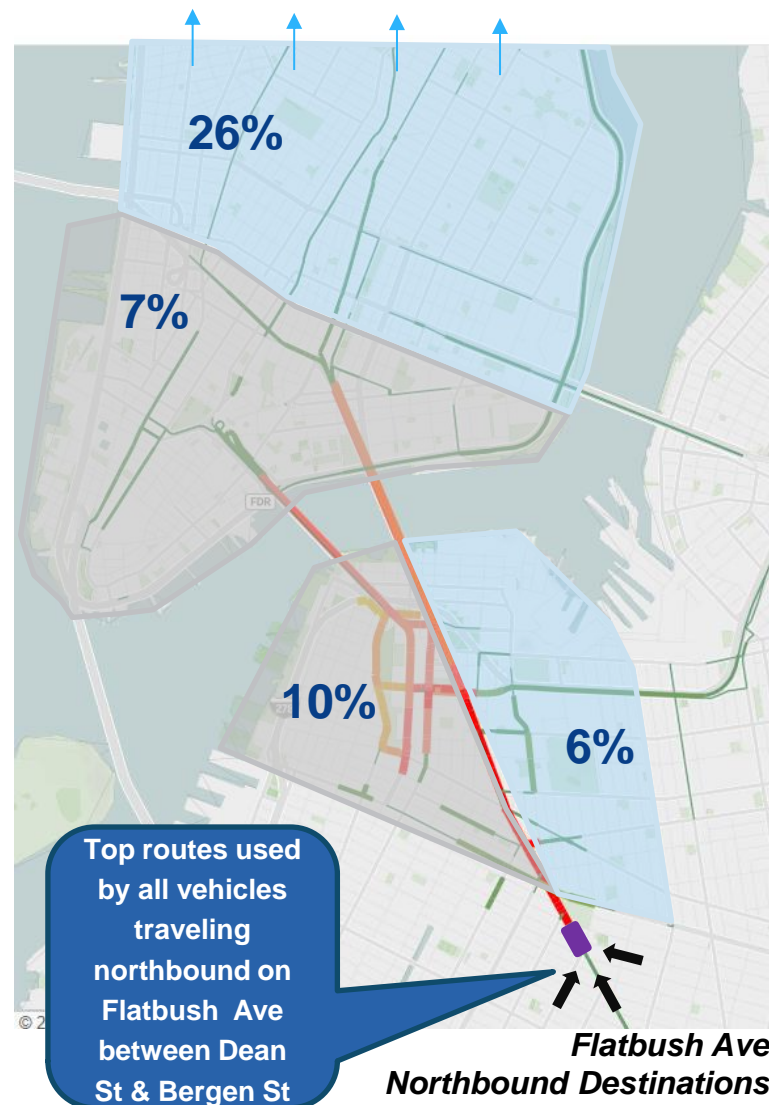
- **Curb access remains essential** to support Flatbush's small business commercial strip, between Dean St and Grand Army Plaza, and ensures businesses can continue to operate efficiently.
- DOT is **identifying locations for Truck Loading Zones** on Flatbush Ave and side street spurs so businesses can maintain loading access, with careful attention to safety, street design, and neighborhood context.
- Where the parking lane is maintained, **short-term parking and loading zones** will be designated to improve turnover and access for customers and deliveries.





# Making It Work: Current Travel Patterns

- Flatbush Avenue remains a critical corridor connecting people to Downtown Brooklyn and Manhattan, though **since CBD Tolling Program (CBDTP) was implemented, fewer car trips are headed to Manhattan.**
  - ~**33% of northbound traffic** continues to Manhattan (down from 44% pre-CBDTP), just 7% is headed to Lower Manhattan
  - ~**30% of northbound traffic** is headed to other **boroughs outside of Manhattan or out of the city entirely**
  - Southbound travel patterns are similar emphasizing two-way demand
- ~24% of Flatbush Ave roadway users are already on the bus (in 3-10% of total vehicles)



# Making It Work: Future Travel Patterns

- A reimagined Flatbush Ave will not have room for as many private vehicles as use the roadway today
- DOT expects that with the new design:
  - **Some drivers** to/from Downtown Brooklyn **will shift to faster, more reliable bus service**
  - Some car **trips to/from Manhattan** will **switch to alternate routes or transit service**
  - **Some local car traffic** may shift to **regional and adjacent corridors**, which DOT will continue to monitor and manage





# Summary and Next Steps

# 5

## Goals for Flatbush Ave:

- **Reimagine Flatbush Ave as a transit and pedestrian-centric corridor** that contributes to the **long term-vision of improving the public realm** of Downtown Brooklyn and Grand Army Plaza
- **Deliver high-quality transit infrastructure** that improves bus speeds and reliability along this critical transportation corridor
- **Maintain Flatbush Ave's role as a key connector for goods movement**, ensuring commercial access and deliveries are supported through improved curb management and freight access strategies.
- **Create a vibrant, accessible street** that connects people to jobs, businesses, and destinations across Brooklyn.





# Project Timeline

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## **Spring 2024:**

Community Advisory Board meeting #2

Community Boards 2, 6, 8

## **Summer 2024:**

On-street surveys for merchants and bus riders

Continue traffic analysis and project design

## **Fall/Winter 2024-2025:**

Complete traffic analysis and project design

## **Spring 2025:**

Present to Community Boards 2, 6, 8, and elected officials

Collect feedback from center-running proposal

Continue coordinating with MTA on operational adjustments

## **Next Steps:**

Incorporate feedback and refine

Goal to implement in 2025



# Thank You!

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## Questions?



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