Hillside Avenue Bus Priority Improvements

Springfield Blvd to Queens Blvd

Community Board 8 – May 29th, 2025

BETTERBUSES

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Summary and Work to Date

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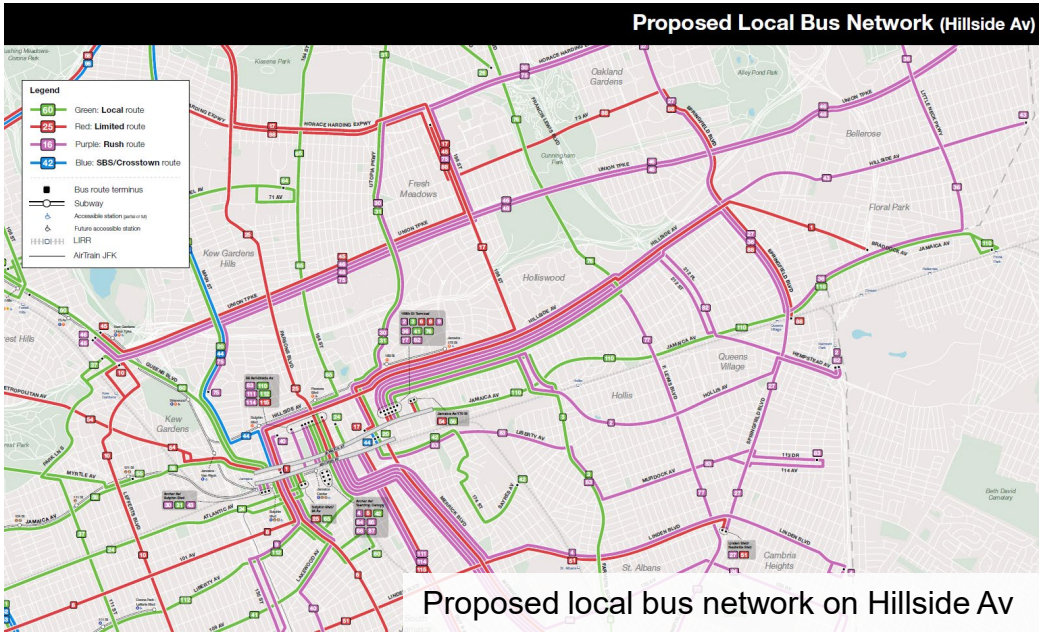
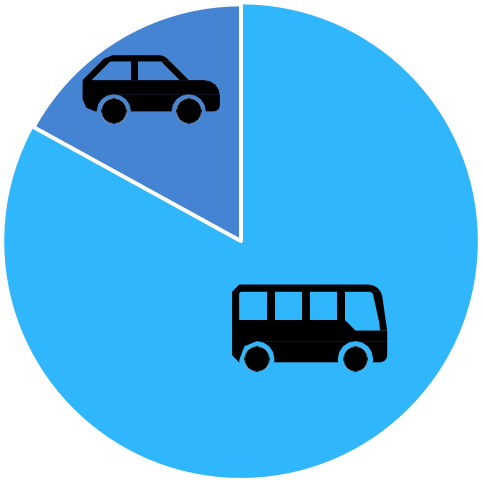
Why Hillside Avenue?

- Springfield Blvd to Queens Blvd (4.2 miles)
- 194,000 daily bus passengers on 17 MTA bus routes and 21,000 on 5 Nassau County (NICE) bus routes
- Connections to E F J Z , LIRR, AirTrain, additional bus routes
- Buses as slow as 4 mph
- 60% of nearby residents take transit to work
- 40% of nearby households don't have access to a private vehicle
- Bus passengers account for 83% of roadway users, but buses are allocated less than 1/3 of the roadway itself



Proposed local bus network on Hillside Av

Roadway Users on Hillside Av



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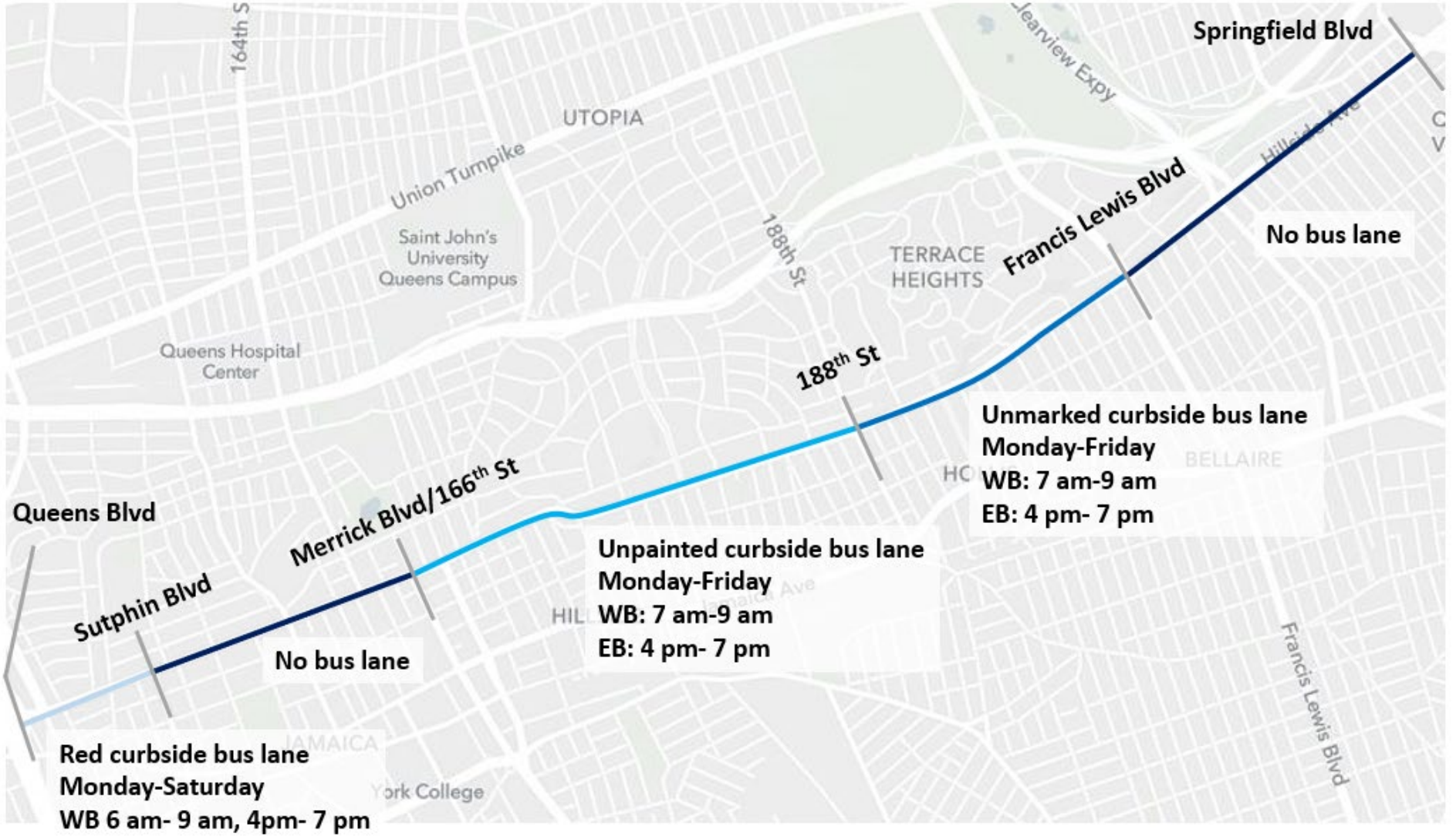
Existing Conditions



Existing Conditions Challenges

- Bus lanes are inconsistent
- Unmarked bus lanes not visible to drivers or pedestrians
- Double parking blocks bus lanes, contributes to congestion
- Bus lanes frequently blocked by illegal loading and parking, forcing buses to merge in and out of lane

Work to Date

1. Pedestrian Intercept Surveys (3 days) – April 2024
2. Bus Rider Surveys (3 days) – April 2024
3. Briefing to Elected Officials – Existing Conditions – May 2024
4. Community Board 8 Transportation Committee – Existing Conditions – May 2024
5. Community Board 12 Transportation Committee – Existing Conditions – June 2024
6. Community Board 13 Transportation Committee – Existing Conditions – June 2024
7. Merchant Surveys (7 days) – July/August 2024
8. Briefing to Local Stakeholders – Existing Conditions – August 2024
9. Transfer at Jamaica Exhibit Opening – August 2024
10. Briefing to Elected Officials – Draft Proposal – January 2025
11. Community Board 8 Transportation Committee – Draft Proposal – January 2025
12. Community Board 12 Transportation Committee – Draft Proposal – February 2025
13. Community Board 13 Transportation Committee – Draft Proposal – February 2025
14. Briefing to SS Comrie's Office – Draft Proposal – February 2025
15. Briefing to CM Lee's Office – Draft Proposal – March 2025
16. Briefing to NYC Dept. of Small Business Services – Draft Proposal – April 2025
17. *Community Board 12 Transportation Committee – Final Proposal – May 2025*
18. *Community Board 13 Transportation Committee – Final Proposal – May 2025*
19. *Community Board 8 Transportation Committee – Final Proposal – May 2025*

On-Street Engagement by the Numbers

295 Total In-Person Surveys

158 Surveys Completed in Bangla, Spanish, and Haitian Creole

145 Digital Self-Administered QR Code Surveys

420 Businesses Visited

30 Testimonials Collected

BETTERBUSES

What We've Heard

Your Feedback	*Our Response*
Traffic Congestion	• Detailed traffic analysis to determine potential effects of lane reduction • Adjustments to design of project to ensure efficient traffic movements • Monitoring plan to identify, minimize any negative effects
Parking	• Adding ~650 parking/loading spaces across Hillside Av, where peak hour no standing regulations are currently in effect
Local Business Access	• Curb access is improved or maintained as-is on every block
Loading Needs	• Install loading zones where appropriate for efficient curb management
Enforcement	• DOT stationary cameras and ACE on-bus cameras to enforce bus lane • Coordinating with NYPD for in-person enforcement

Final Project Proposal

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Proposed Design

- Offset bus lanes for most of the corridor
  - Offset bus lanes are located one lane away from the curb, next to the parking lane
  - Westbound: offset bus lanes from Springfield Blvd to 143rd St, curbside bus lane approaching 188th St and between 143rd St and 139th St
  - Eastbound: offset bus lane from 144th St to Springfield Blvd
  - Bus lane drops approaching Queens Blvd, and 212th St WB
- Extended bus lane hours to 24/7
  - 15,000+ bus passengers overnight (10pm- 5am)
  - 80,000+ bus passengers on weekends
- Bus and truck only left turns at three intersections
  - Westbound left onto 169th St
  - Westbound left onto Merrick Blvd
  - Westbound left onto Sutphin Blvd
- Offset bus lanes serve as right turn, driveway, and parking access lanes, keeping traffic moving

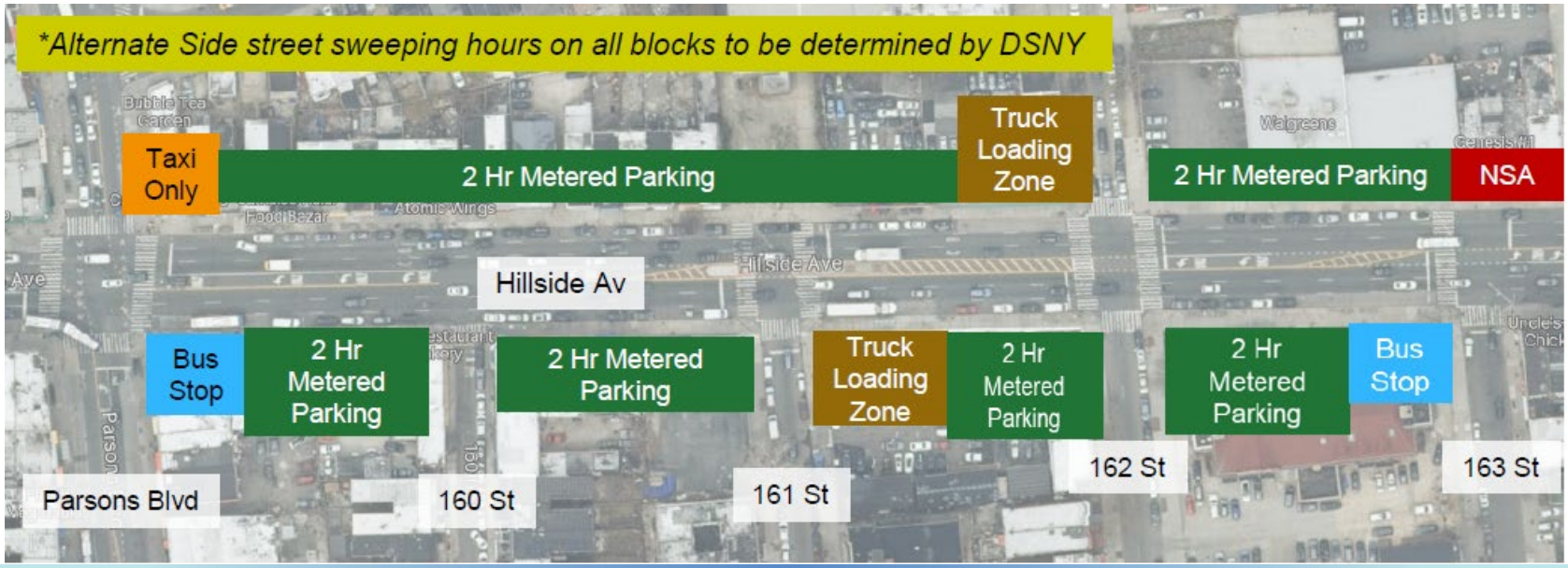
21st St, QNS – up to 17% increase in bus speeds

Webster Av, BX – up to 23% increase in bus speeds

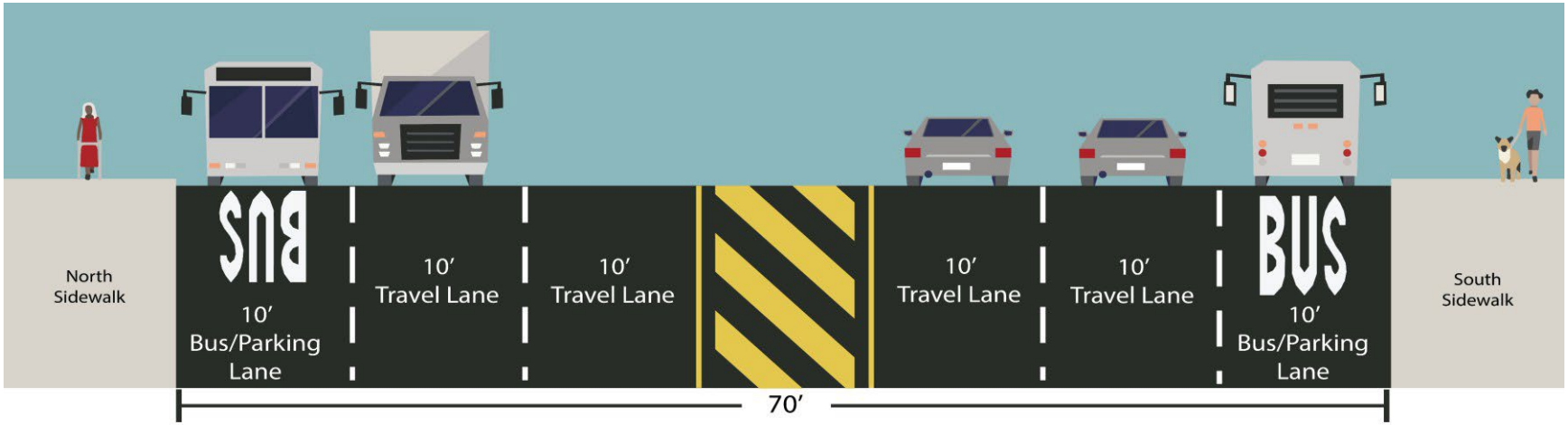
Proposed Design – Curb Regulations

- Existing: No Standing during peak hours on most of the corridor
  - WB: 7-9 am No Standing
  - EB: 4-7 pm No Standing
- Proposed: add ~650 parking and loading spaces
  - Expand existing regulations (metered parking, free parking) into previously No Standing hours
  - Add Truck Loading Zones in highly commercial areas
- Bus stops remain, buses will continue pulling to the curb to pick up and drop off passengers

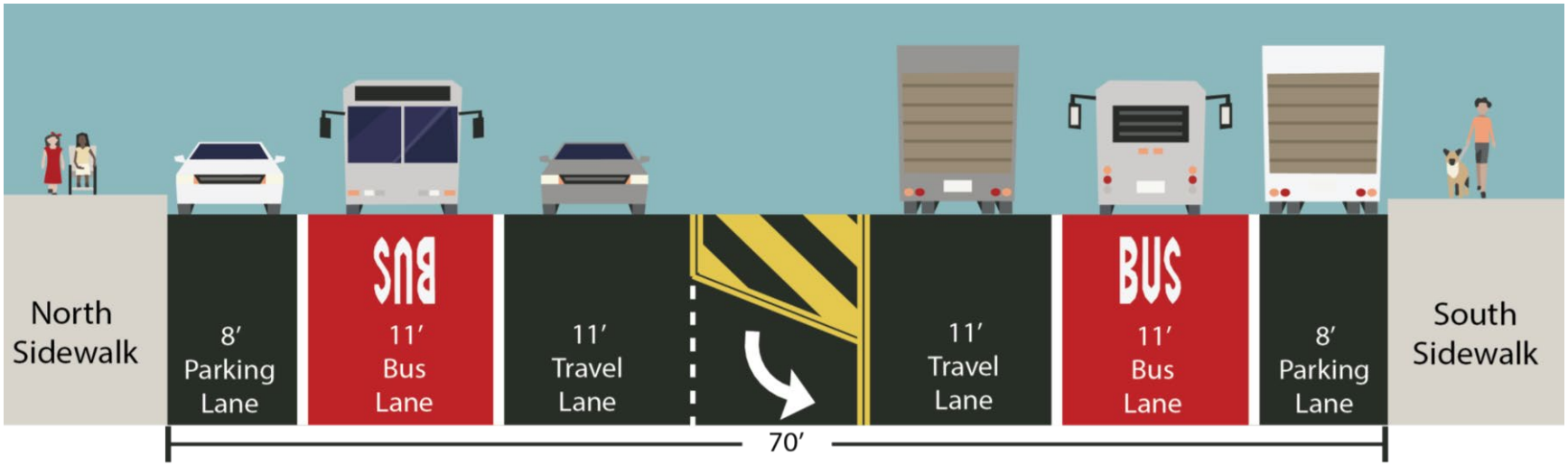
Draft curb regulations plan



Existing Condition vs. Offset Bus Lanes – Cross Section



Existing condition on Hillside Avenue

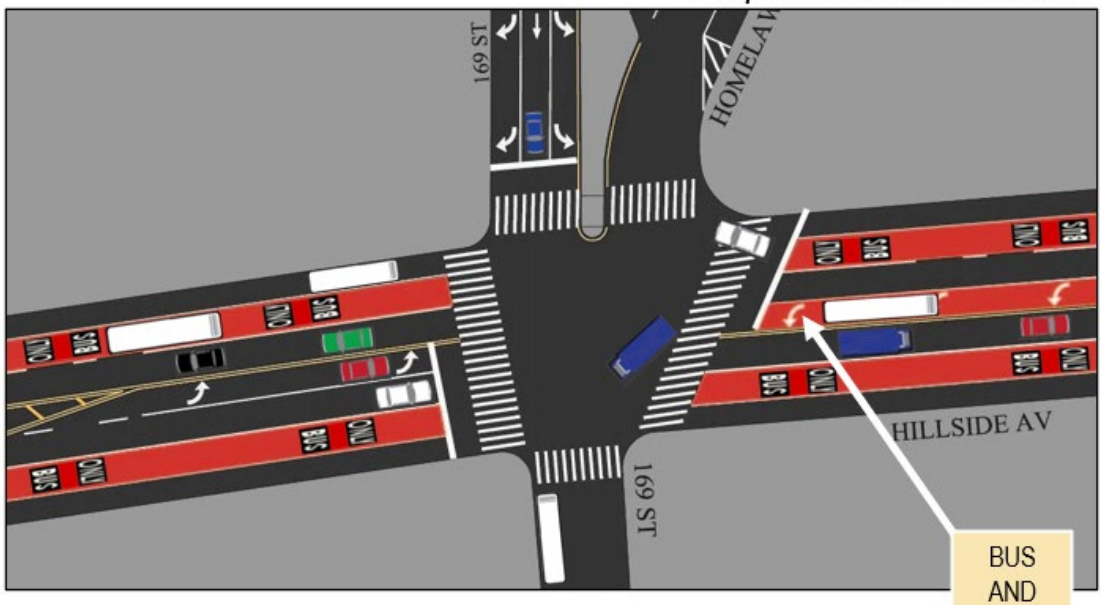


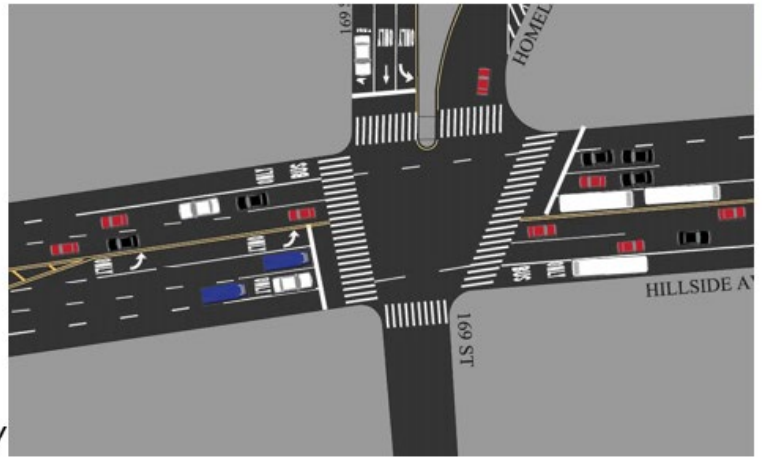
Proposed offset bus lanes on Hillside Avenue

169th St Intersection – Sample Offset Plan

- Bus and truck only left turn from westbound Hillside Av onto southbound 169th St
- Typical offset bus lane
- Curb space used for parking/loading

Proposed offset bus lane

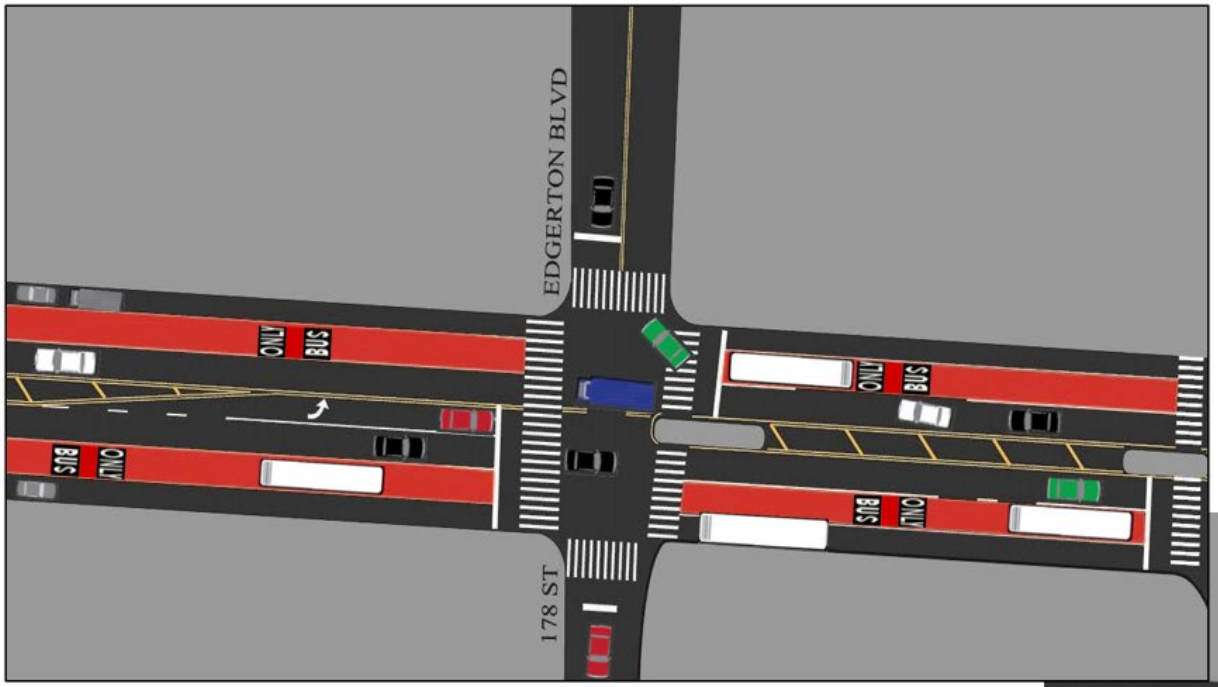




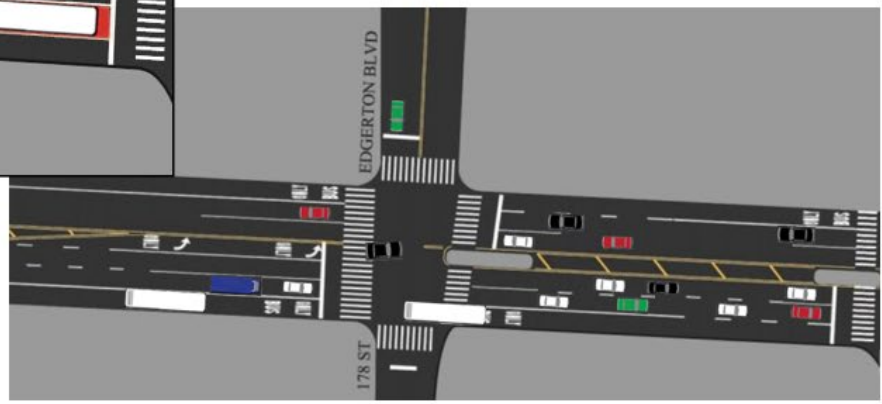
Existing roadway

178th St/Edgerton Blvd Street Intersection – Sample Offset Plan

- Typical offset bus lane
- Curb space used for parking/loading



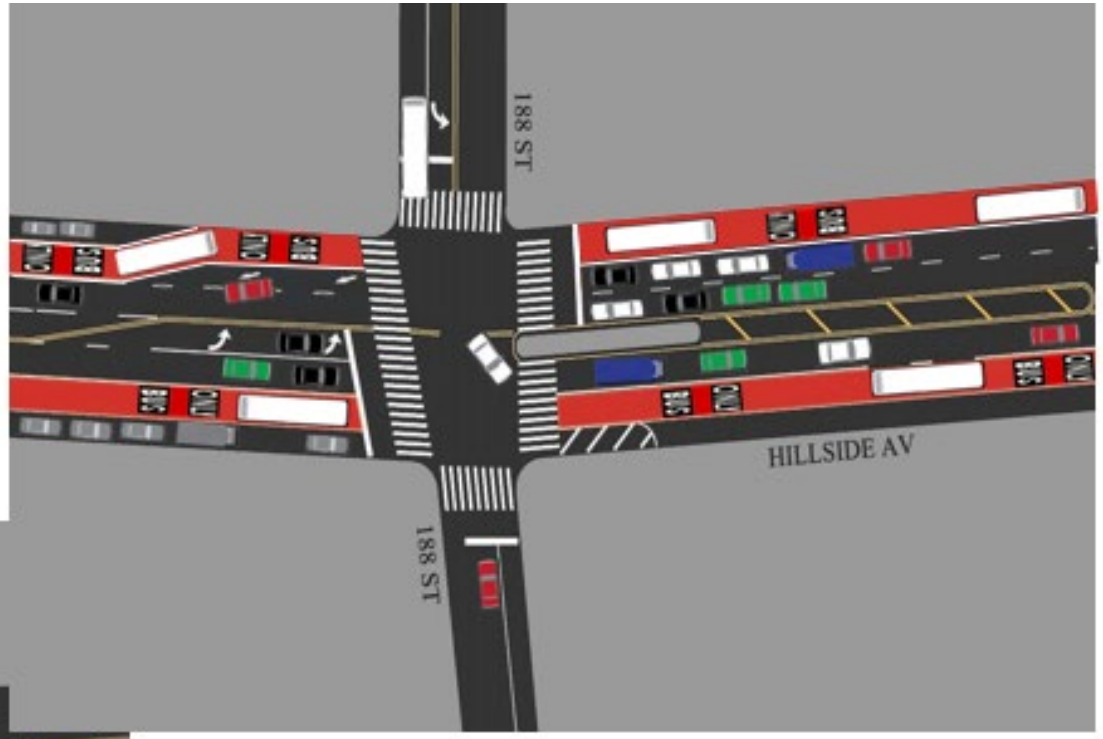
Proposed offset bus lane



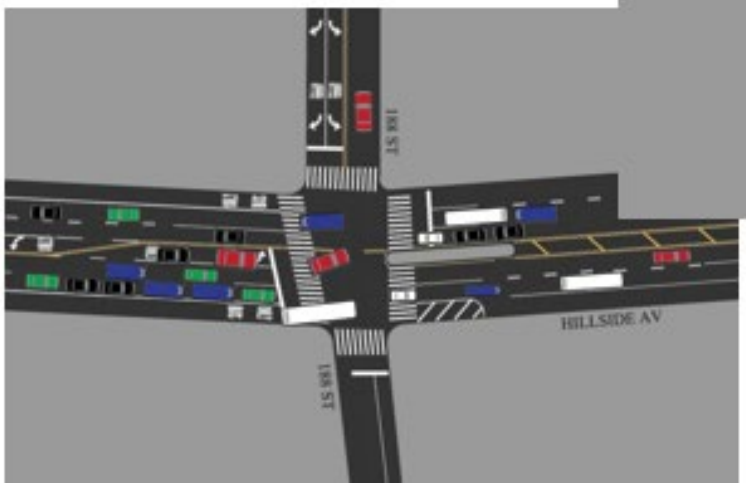
Existing roadway

188th St Intersection – Sample Offset Plan

- Typical offset bus lane
- Bus lane shifts to curbside in westbound direction between 189th St and 188th St to maximize traffic flow at this busy intersection
- Curb space used for parking/loading, bus stop



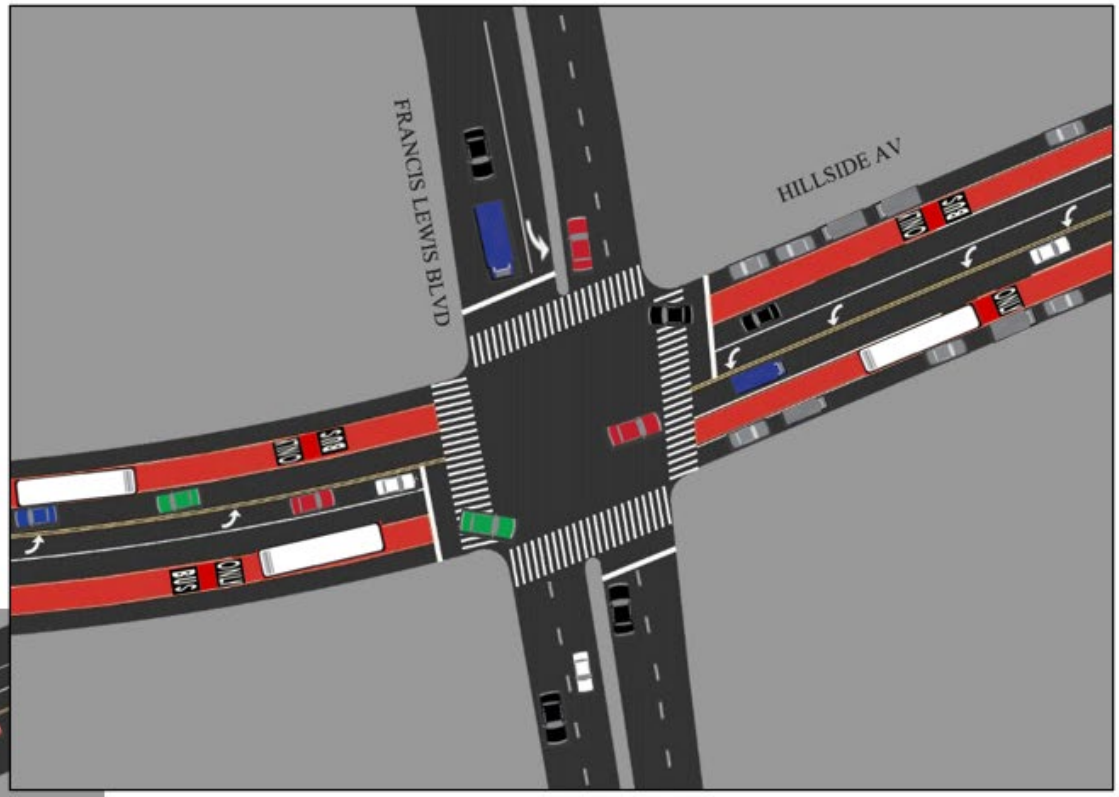
Proposed offset bus lane



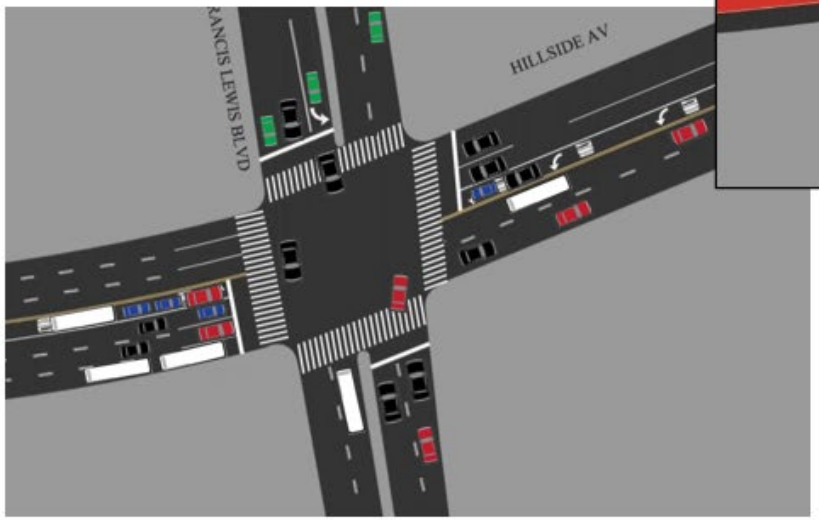
Existing roadway

Francis Lewis Blvd – Sample Offset Plan

- Typical offset bus lane
- Curb space used for parking/loading



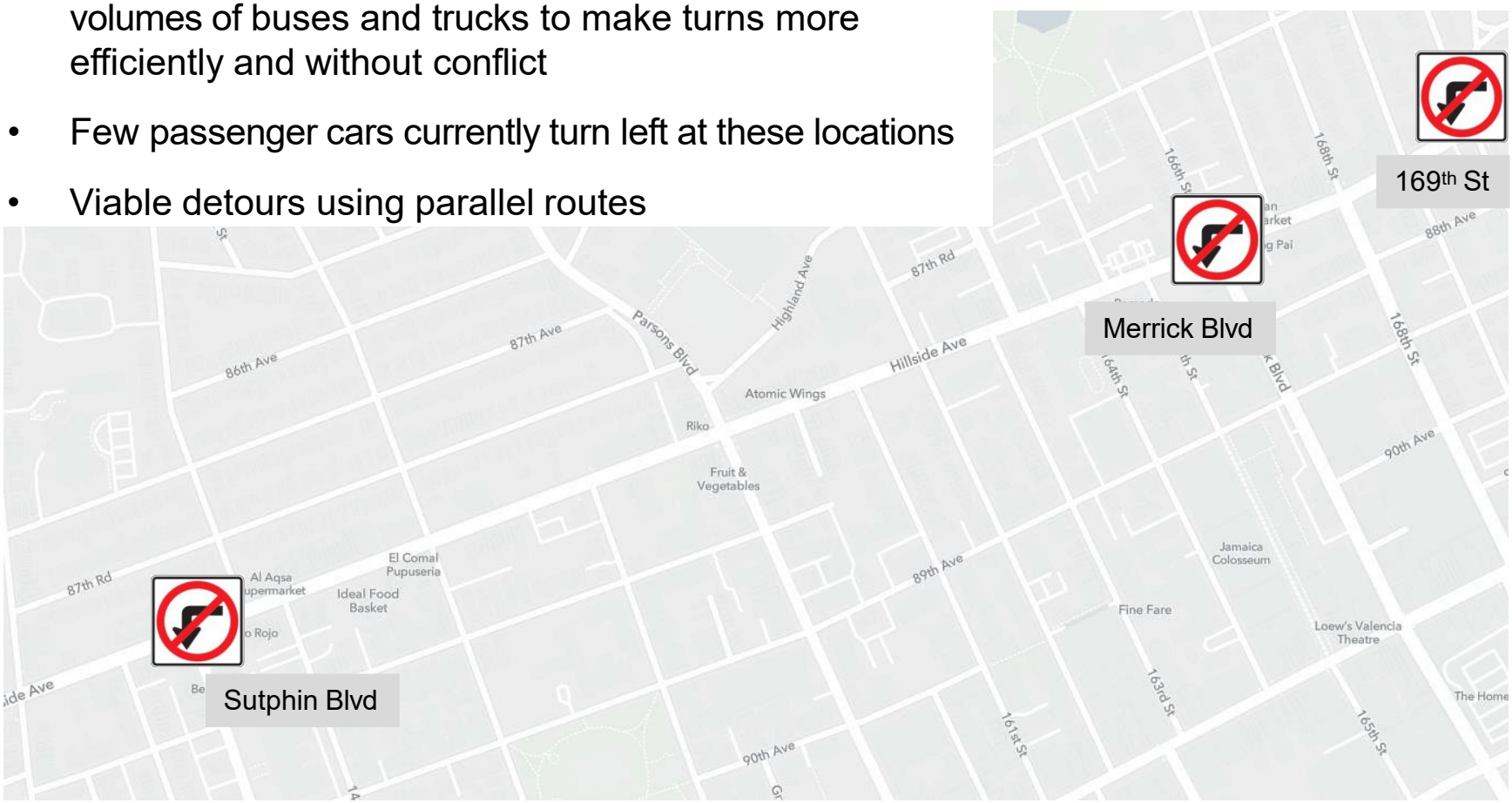
Proposed offset bus lane



Existing roadway

Proposed Left Turn Restrictions – buses and trucks permitted

- Restricting left turns for general traffic will allow high volumes of buses and trucks to make turns more efficiently and without conflict
- Few passenger cars currently turn left at these locations
- Viable detours using parallel routes



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Traffic Analysis

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Traffic Analysis Methodology

1. Count traffic and pedestrians at approx. 100 intersections on Hillside Av and nearby streets

2. Analyze vehicle origins and destinations with anonymized GPS data from drivers on Hillside Av, to understand likely diversion routes, with special consideration of Jamaica Av and Archer Av busways

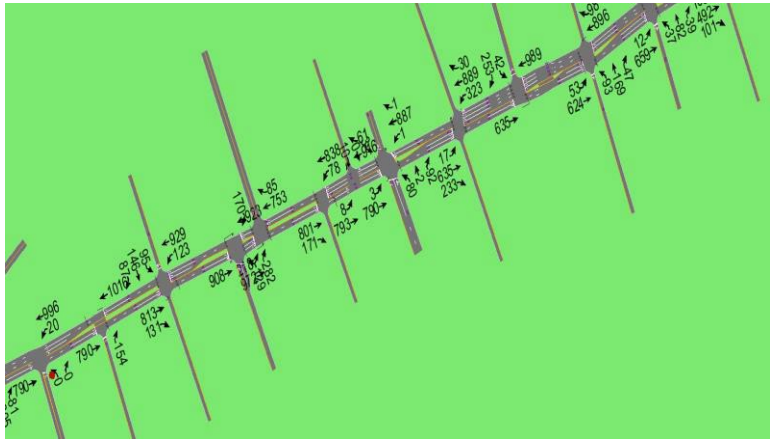
3. Model each intersection and analyze:

- Signal timing
- Number of lanes and turning movements (left, straight, right)
- Pedestrian volumes
- Existing conditions and multiple potential future scenarios

4. Validate model with in-person observations of traffic flow, parking movements, double parking and truck loading, etc.

5. Analyze worst case scenario

- Busiest hours of day, longest traffic queues
- Realistically, some drivers divert to other routes, other modes of transportation, or choose to travel at different times of day
- Prepare traffic analyses for a range of scenarios, from no traffic reduction up to a 40% reduction

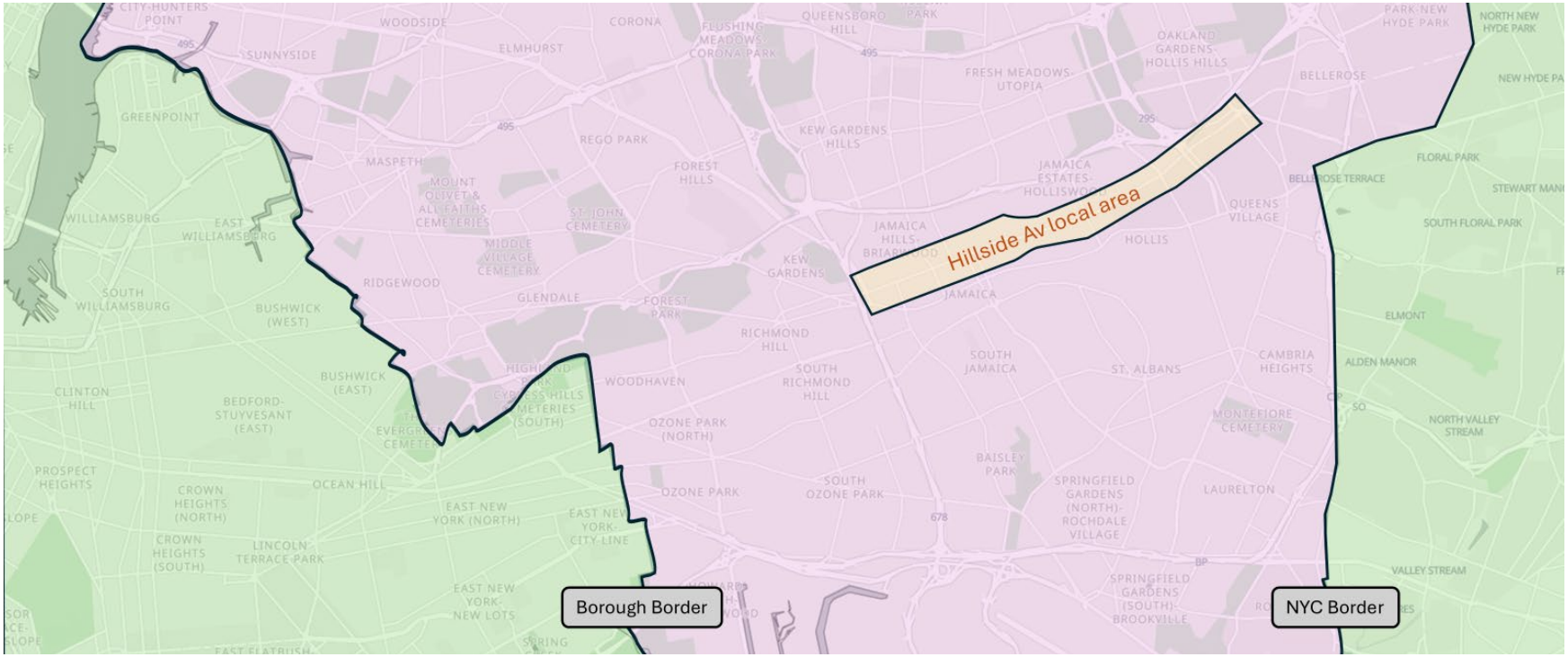


Example of Synchro Traffic Model Network

Result is a prediction of the future according to engineering standards.

Where are drivers who use Hillside Av going?

- Based on vehicle/app GPS data:
  - 11% of trips are between areas on or near Hillside Av
  - 42% of trips are between Hillside Av and other neighborhoods
  - 47% of trips use Hillside Av as a through route, do not stop on or near Hillside Av
- Traffic analysis anticipates some peak-hour drivers will use an alternate route, travel at a less busy time of day, or use transit or other modes of travel



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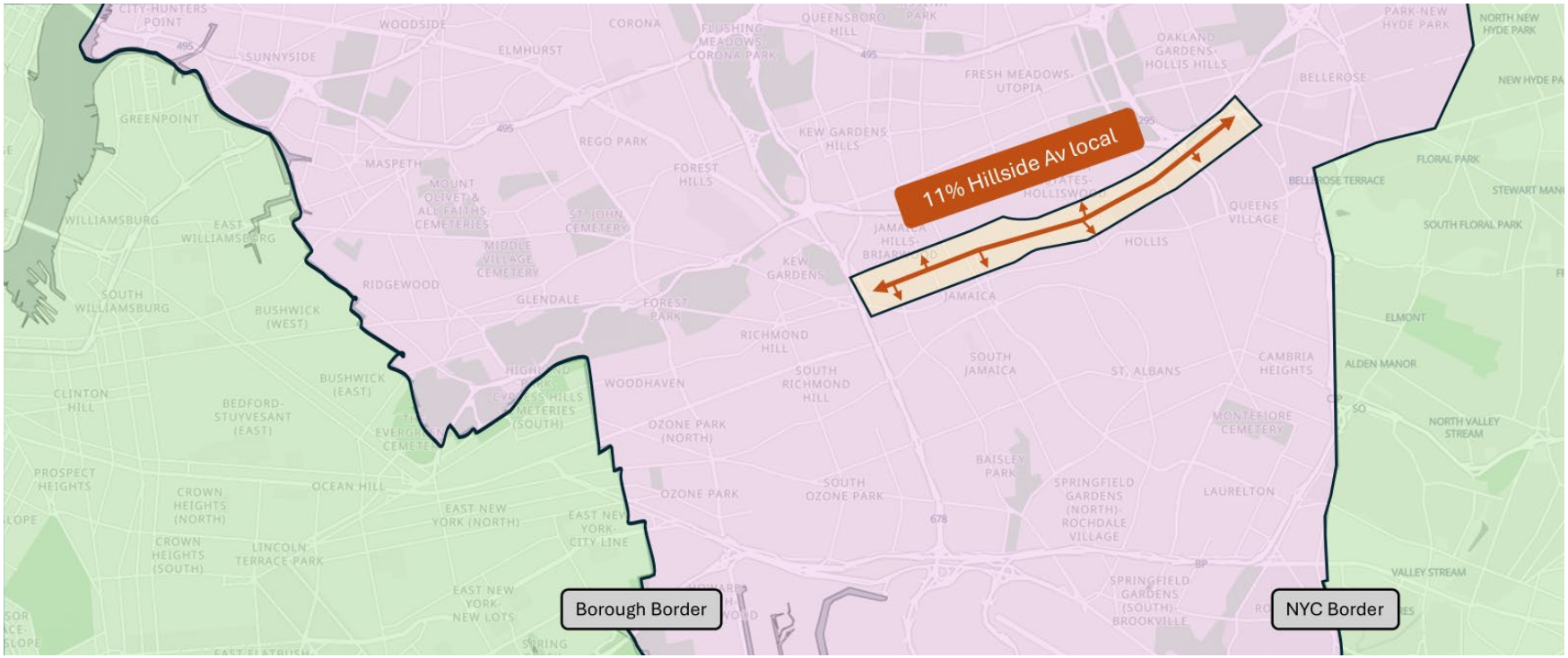

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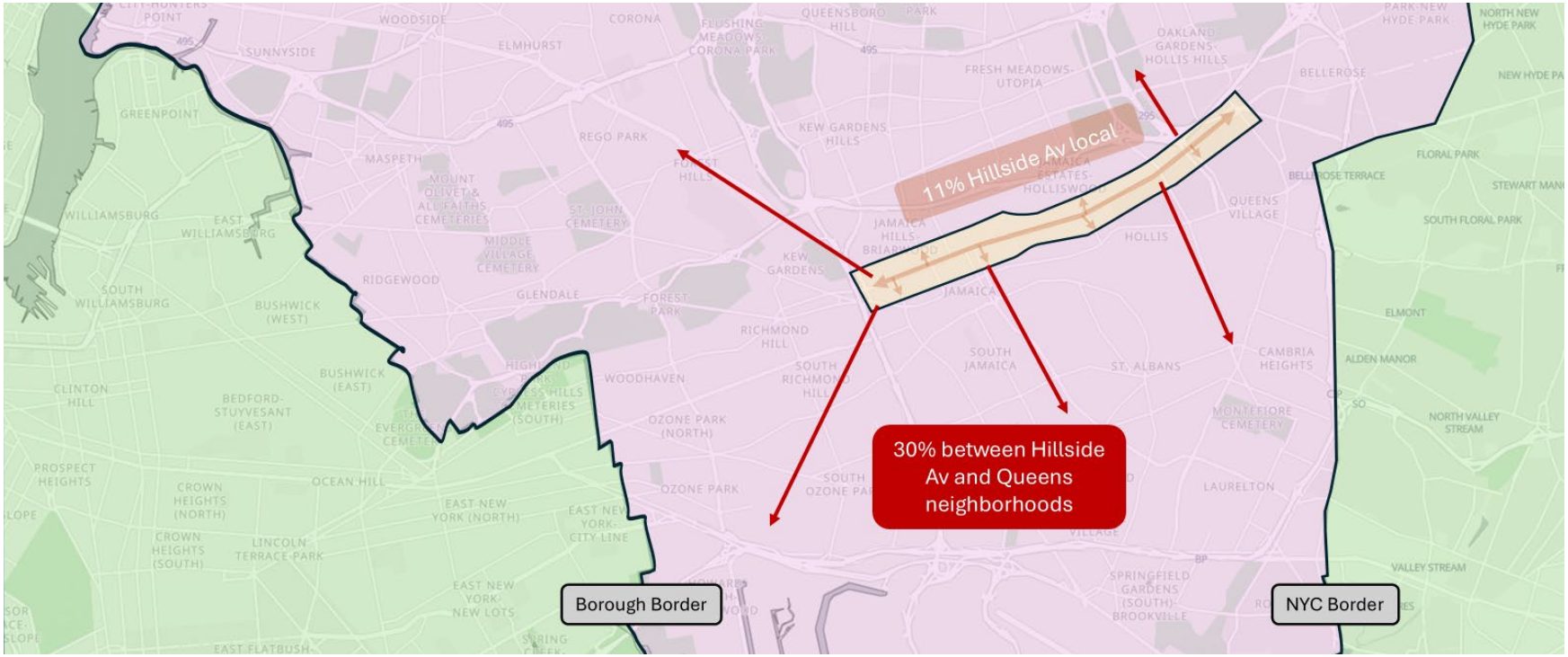

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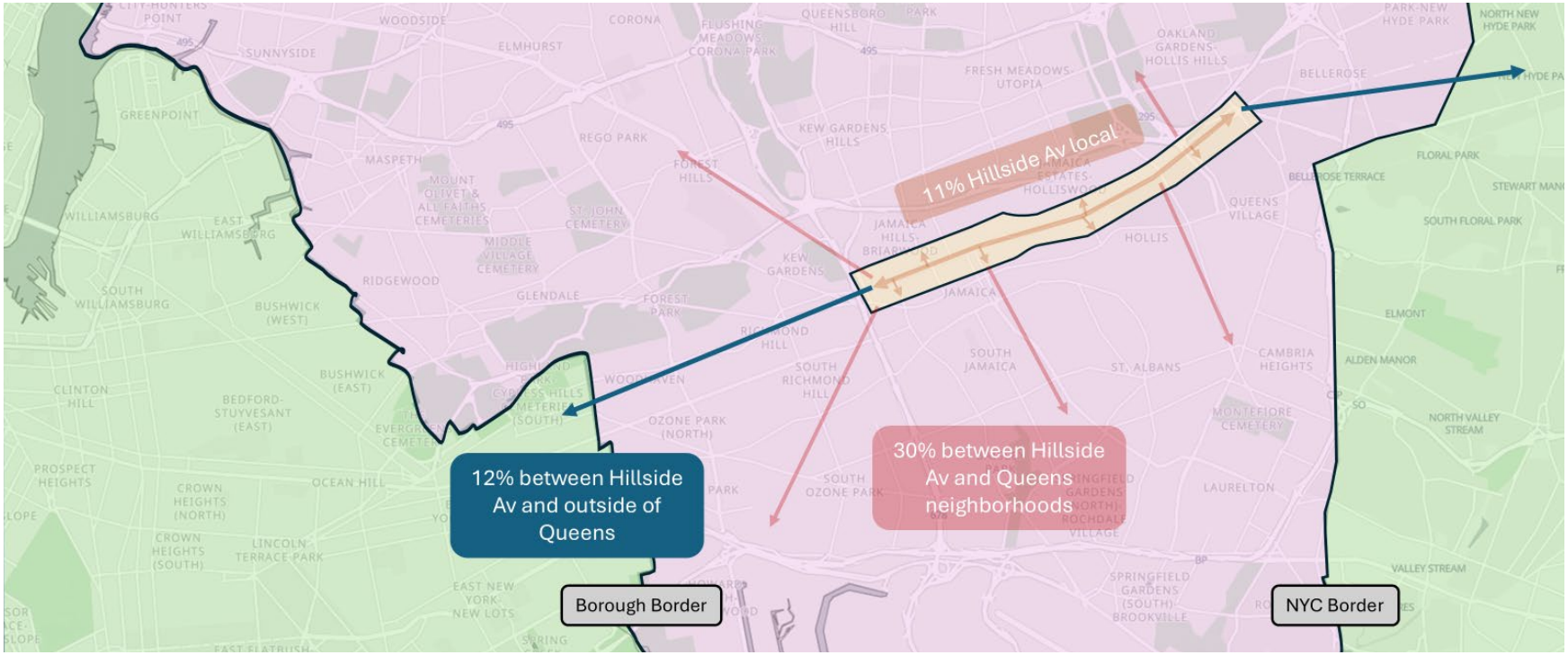

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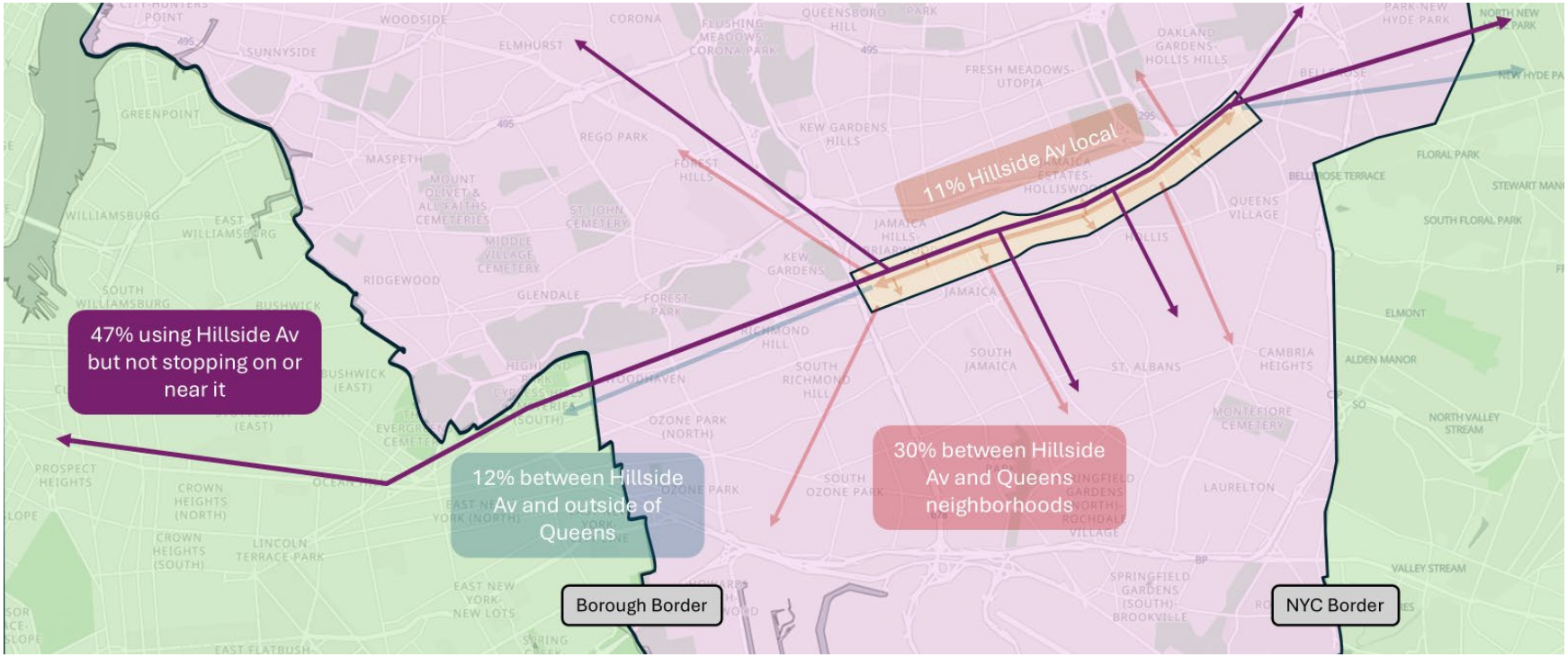

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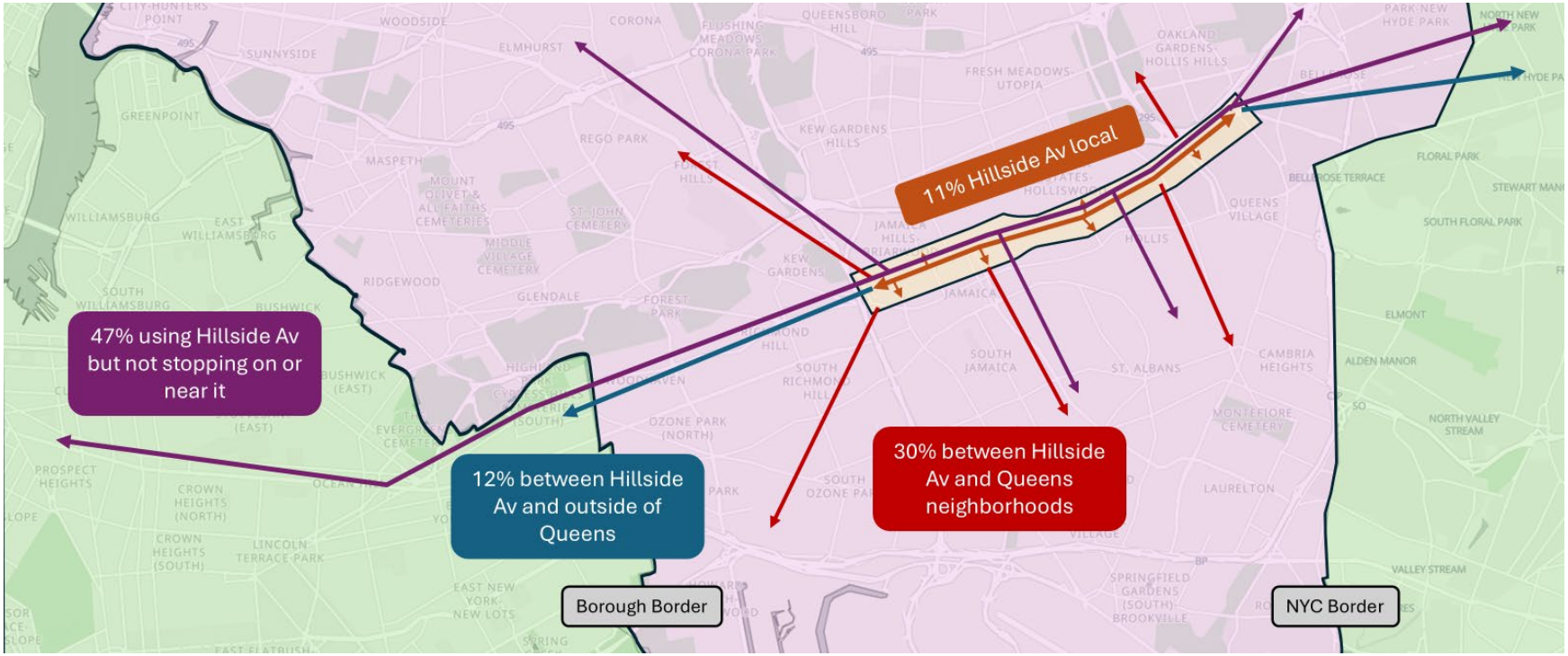
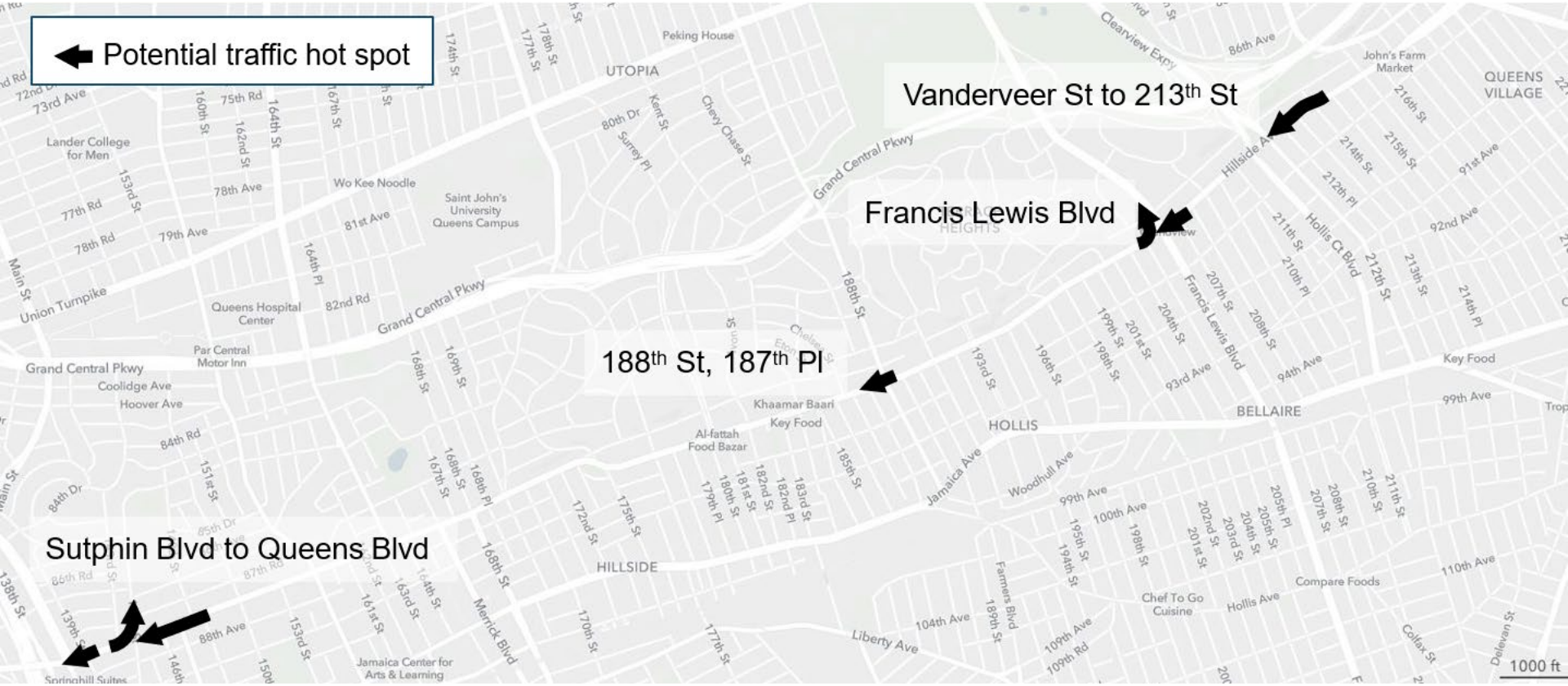


Potential Traffic Hot Spots

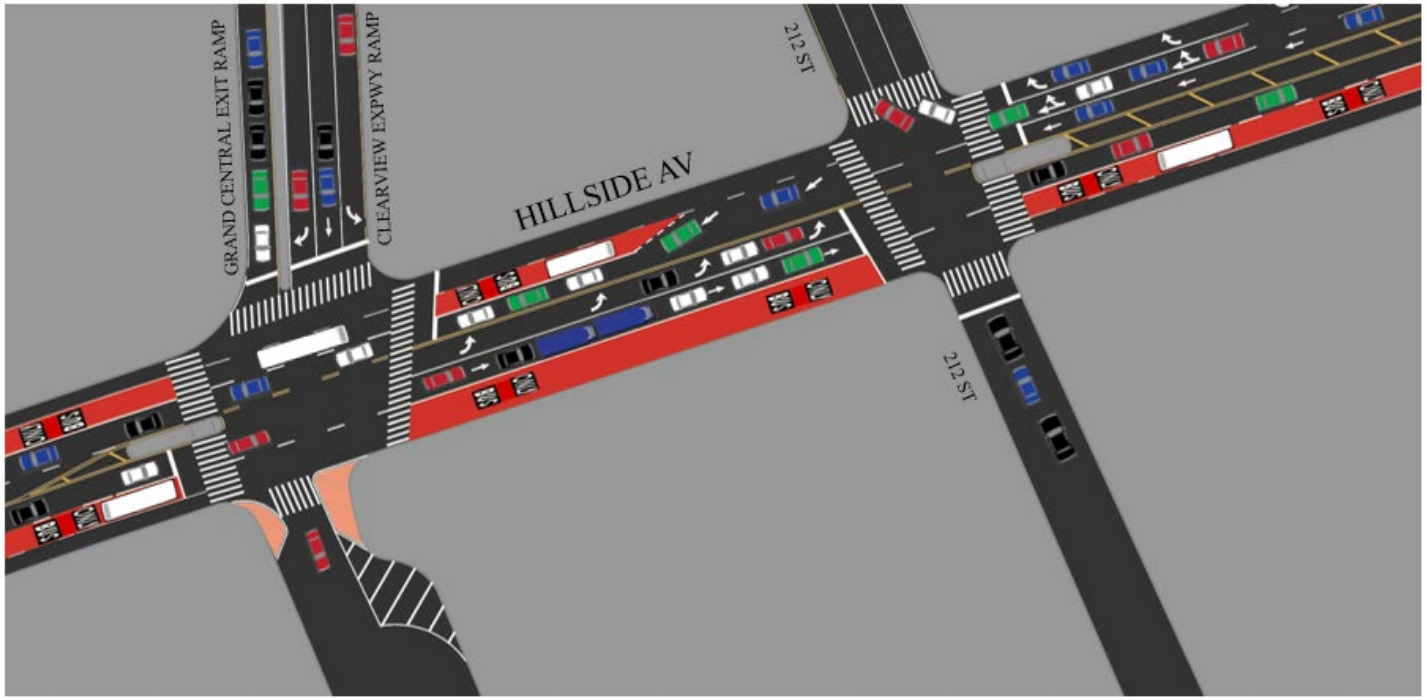


DOT has made changes to the project in response to traffic analysis and community feedback, adjustments include:

- Removing the bus lane at approaches to some major intersections
- Additional signal timing accommodations, especially at hotspots and diversion points

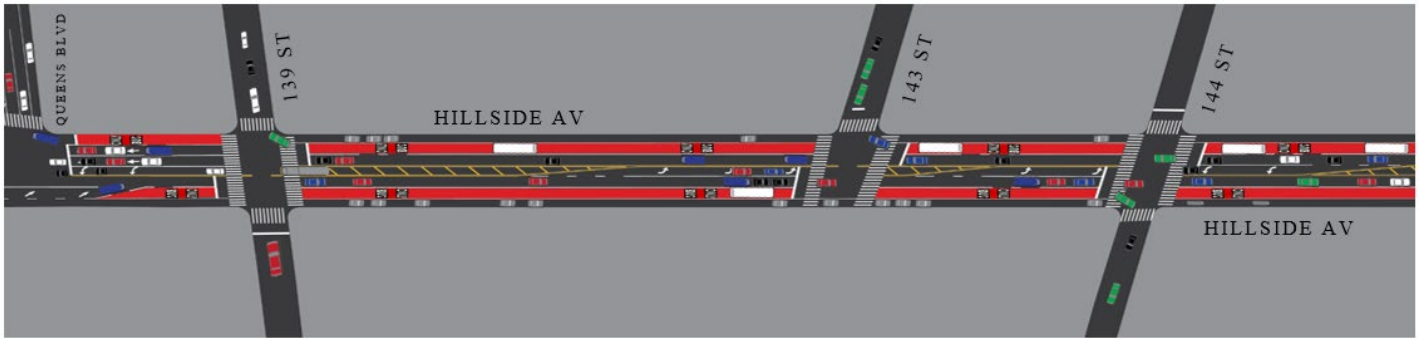
Design Adjustment Example: 212th St/Hollis Ct Blvd

- Initial plan (right): offset bus lane through existing high traffic intersections
- Revised plan (below): offset bus lane drops at 213th St to keep traffic flowing at highway entrances, keeps existing No Standing Anytime condition



Design Adjustment Example: Queens Blvd

Initial design: offset bus lane beginning (EB) and ending (WB) at Queens Blvd



Revised design: westbound offset bus lane shifts to curbside at 143rd St, curbside bus lane ends at 139th St. Eastbound offset bus lane begins after 144th St. Both adjustments ensure efficient flow of traffic approaching and through the Queens Blvd intersection

Making Sure it Works: Post-Implementation Monitoring Plan

- We will be evaluating bus and traffic speeds, traffic volumes and patterns, and congestion closely after launch:
  - In-person observations
  - StreetLight and INRIX (GPS)
  - Traffic counts
  - Bus speed & ridership data
- Adjustments can be made to alleviate congestion and improve bus performance as needed, including:
  - Signal retiming at intersections on and around Hillside Av
  - Curb regulations
  - Roadway markings
  - Signage

Next Steps and Discussion

4

Summary: Project Benefits

- New, offset bus lanes for most of project corridor
  - Improves access to the subway, jobs, stores, and appointments for over 200,000 New Yorkers daily
- ~650 parking/loading spaces added during peak hours (7-9am, 4-7pm)
  - Adds additional parking and loading for hundreds of local businesses and thousands of homes
  - Includes free alternate-side parking, metered parking on commercial blocks, and loading zones on portions of the busiest blocks
- Emergency response vehicles (police, fire, ambulance, etc.), Access-a-Ride vans, school buses also use bus lanes

Next Steps

Summer/Fall 2025

- Planned implementation – signage and pavement markings installation

Fall 2025 and beyond

- Monitor project performance and adjust as needed

Thank You!

Questions?