

# Hillside Av Bus Service Improvements

Springfield Blvd to Queens Blvd

Community Board 8 Transportation Committee – May 23, 2024



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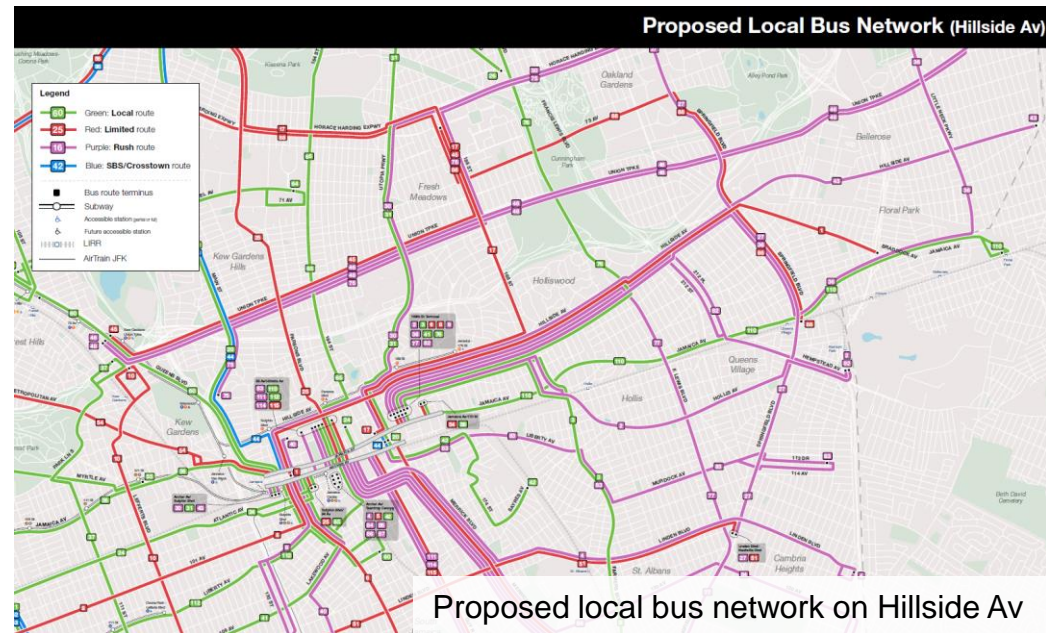
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Background

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# Why Hillside Avenue?

- Study area: Springfield Blvd to Queens Blvd (4.2 miles)
- 194,000 daily bus passengers on 17 MTA bus routes + 21,000 on 5 Nassau County (NICE) bus routes
- Connections to **E** **F** **J** **Z** and LIRR
- Bus speeds as low as 4 miles per hour
- 60 people have been killed or seriously injured on Hillside Av between 2018-2022



Proposed local bus network on Hillside Av



Blocked existing curbside bus lane on Hillside Av

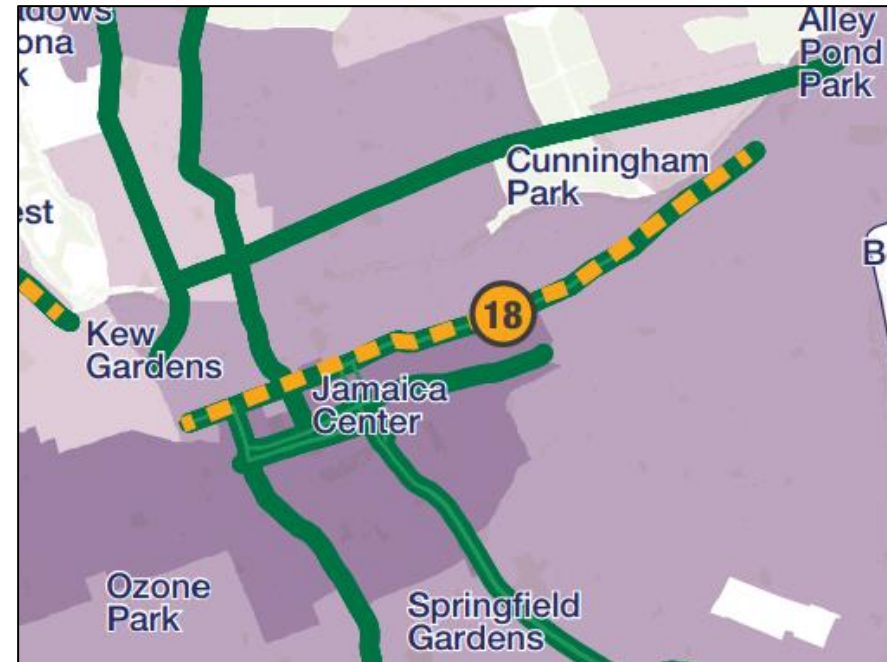


# NYC Streets Plan Update (2024)

Transit goals of the Streets Plan:

1. **Increase sustainable travel modes** by reconfiguring streets
2. **Expand access to job opportunities** through faster and more reliable transportation options
3. Allow all New Yorkers to get around the city in multiple ways **without encountering barriers to travel**

Hillside Avenue was identified in the 2021 Streets Plan, and is within Tier 1 and 2 Priority Investment areas

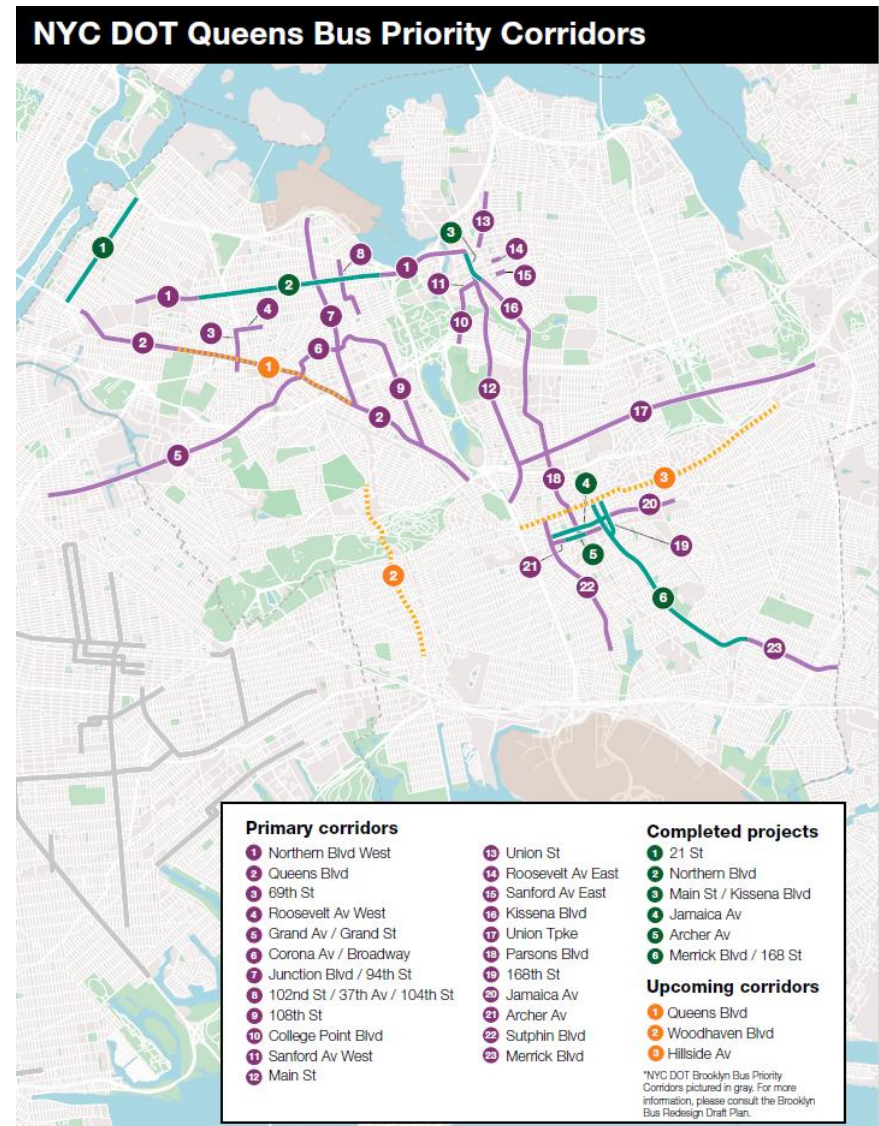


Queens	
18	Northern Blvd.
17	Queens Blvd.
16	Hillside Ave.
19	Woodhaven Blvd.
20	Rockaway Beach Blvd.

TRANSIT PRIORITIZATION AND FUTURE INVESTMENT	
	Existing Bus Lanes
	Future Bus Priority Corridors
	2022 Completed Projects
	Potential Upcoming Projects
	Priority Investment Area Tier 1
	Priority Investment Area Tier 2
	Priority Investment Area Tier 3

# Queens Bus Network Redesign

- MTA's borough-wide plan to improve bus service launched in 2019
- Coordinating with NYC DOT on targeted corridors, including Hillside Av
- DOT is working to support MTA's Proposed Final Plan
- MTA published the Proposed Final Plan in December 2023, which incorporated concerns and needs expressed by riders, labor partners and other stakeholders
- QBNR team has participated in over 60 engagements since publishing the Proposed Final Plan including:
  - 22 Community Board presentations
  - 22 engagements with elected officials, civic groups, community groups, institutions and other stakeholders
  - 18 pop-up events
  - 5 in-person open houses

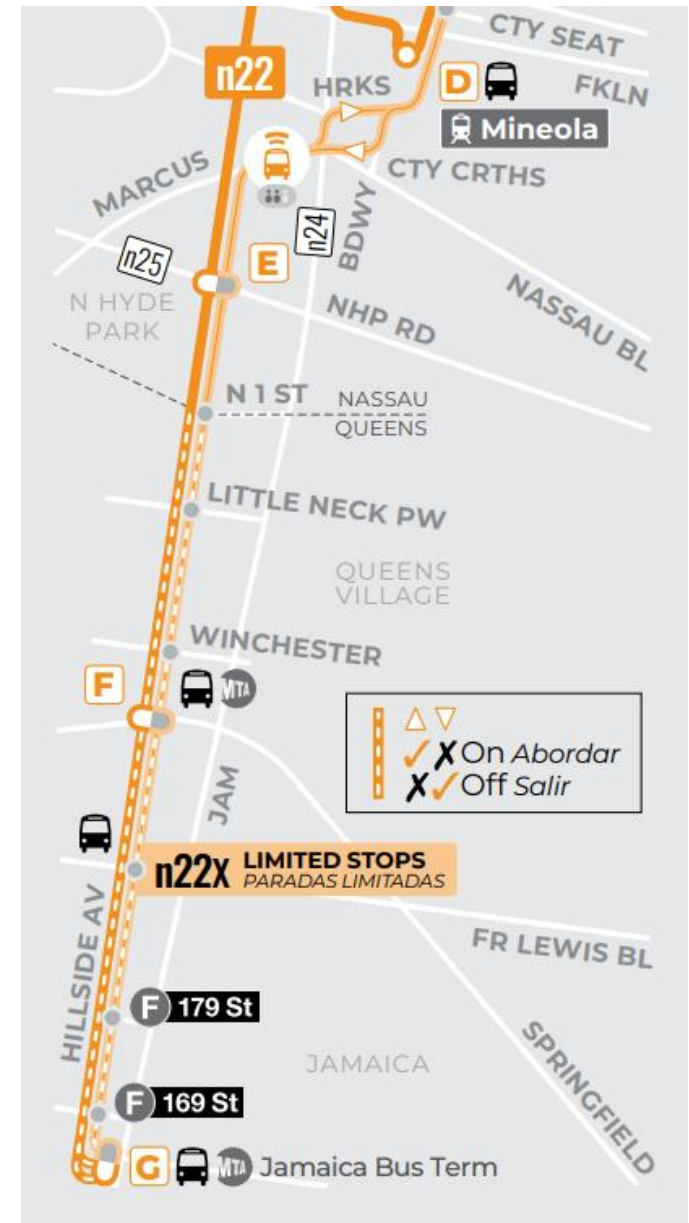


# NICE Bus High Volume Corridor

One of every two NICE riders boards or alights in Queens. Hillside Avenue serves some of NICE's most popular routes:

n1 – 1,500 customers  
n6 / n6X – 10,100 customers  
n22 / n22X – 4,600 customers  
n24 – 4,200 customers  
n26 – 600 customers

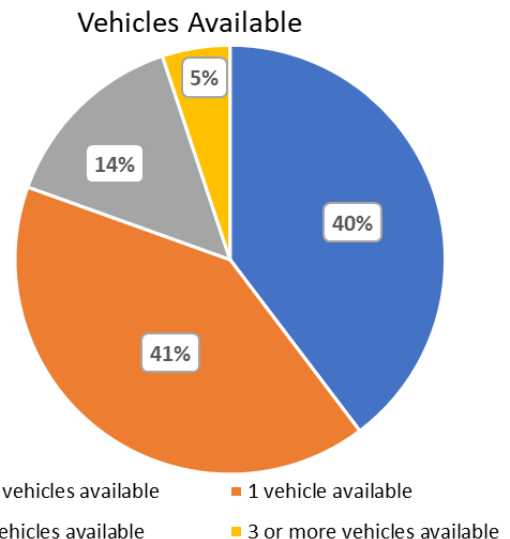
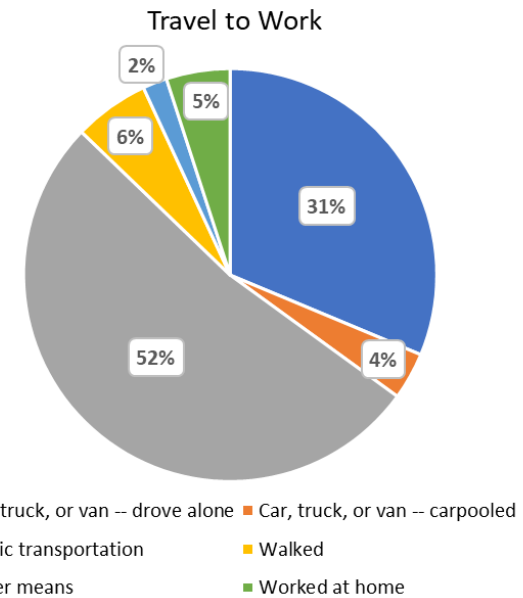
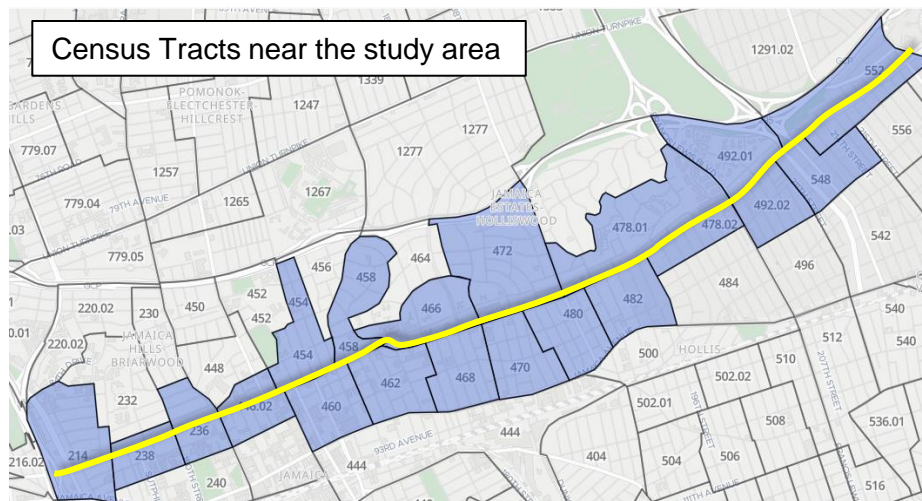
**21,000 total (average Weekday)**





# Demographics

- 73,000 residents live in census tracts within a few blocks of Hillside Av
- 60% of workers commute via transit, walking, or other non-driving means
  - Citywide, bus rider median annual income is lower than drivers (\$30,000 vs. \$47,000)
- 40% of households do not have access to a vehicle
- 46-minute average commute time – above NYC average
- 3,565 additional housing units proposed for downtown Jamaica within DCP's Jamaica Neighborhood Plan

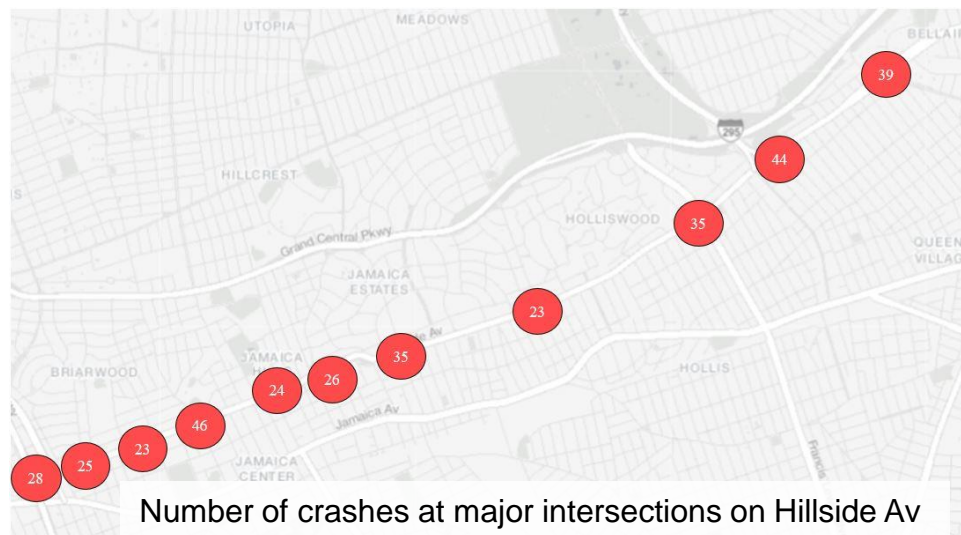


Source: American Communities Survey Population FactFinder, 2020 Census



# Safety

- 992 people were injured in crashes on Hillside Av between 2018-2022
  - Average of nearly four injuries every week
- 58 people were severely injured; two were killed
- Vision Zero:
  - Priority Corridor
  - Two Priority Intersections (Springfield Blvd, 197<sup>th</sup> St)
  - Within Priority Area



Hillside Ave, Springfield Blvd to Queens Blvd Injury Summary, 2018-2022

	Total Injuries	Severe Injuries	Fatalities	KSI
Pedestrian	261	31	2	33
Bicyclist	47	3	0	3
Motor Vehical Occupant	676	23	0	23
Other Motorized	8	1	0	1
Total	992	58	2	60

KSI: Killed or Severely Injured. Data Source: NYC DOT

Source: Fatalities: NYCDOT, Injuries: NYPD FORMS database

# DOT Improvements on Hillside Av

- School safety improvements: shortening crossing distances, providing more pedestrian crossing time near schools
- Pedestrian safety improvements: adding pedestrian refuge islands, curb extensions
- Corridor safety improvements: left turn calming, median extensions, new crosswalks
- Hillside Av remains one of the most dangerous corridors in Queens
- Future improvements will increase safety for all street users

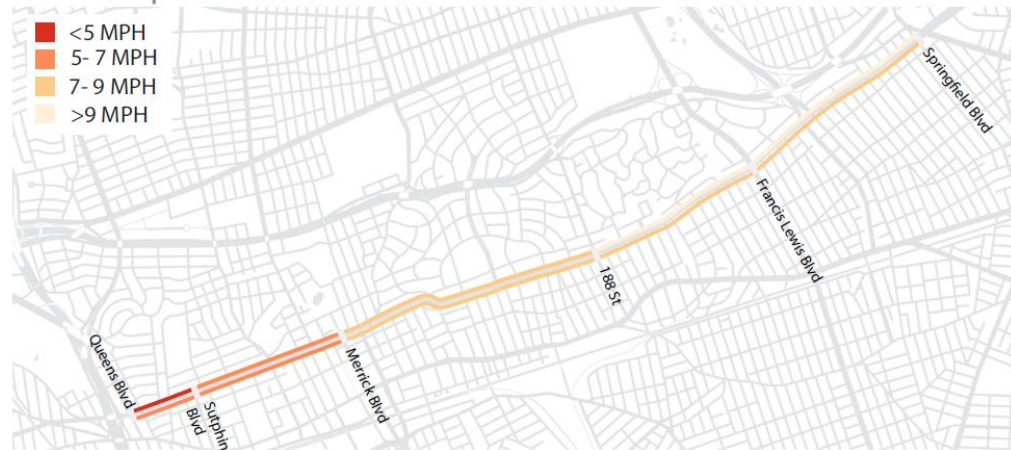


# Hillside Av Bus Speeds

- Speeds as low as 4 mph during peak hours
- Significant congestion around downtown Jamaica, 179<sup>th</sup> St subway station
- Vehicles illegally park and stand in existing curbside bus lanes, slowing down buses
- Double parking blocks curbside bus lane, impedes traffic flow

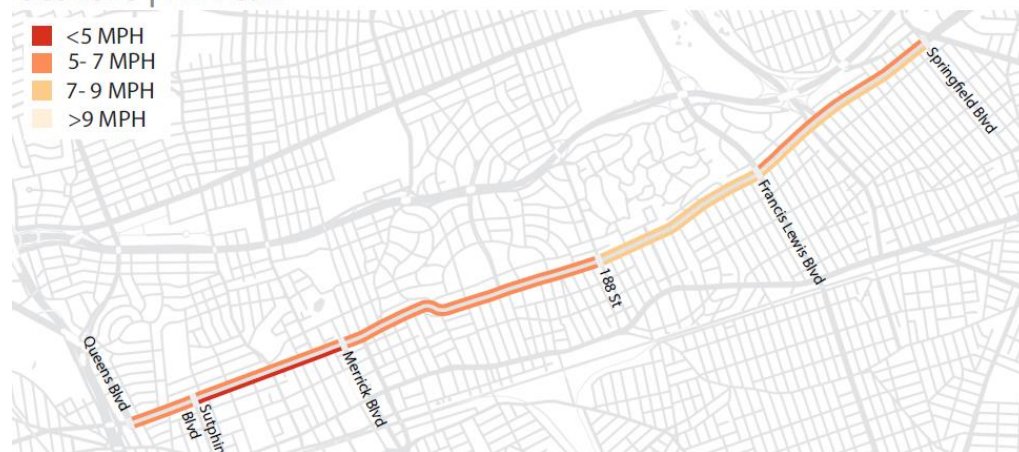
## Hillside Avenue

Oct 2023 | AM Peak



## Hillside Avenue

Oct 2023 | PM Peak



AM Peak: 6-10 am, PM Peak: 3-7 pm

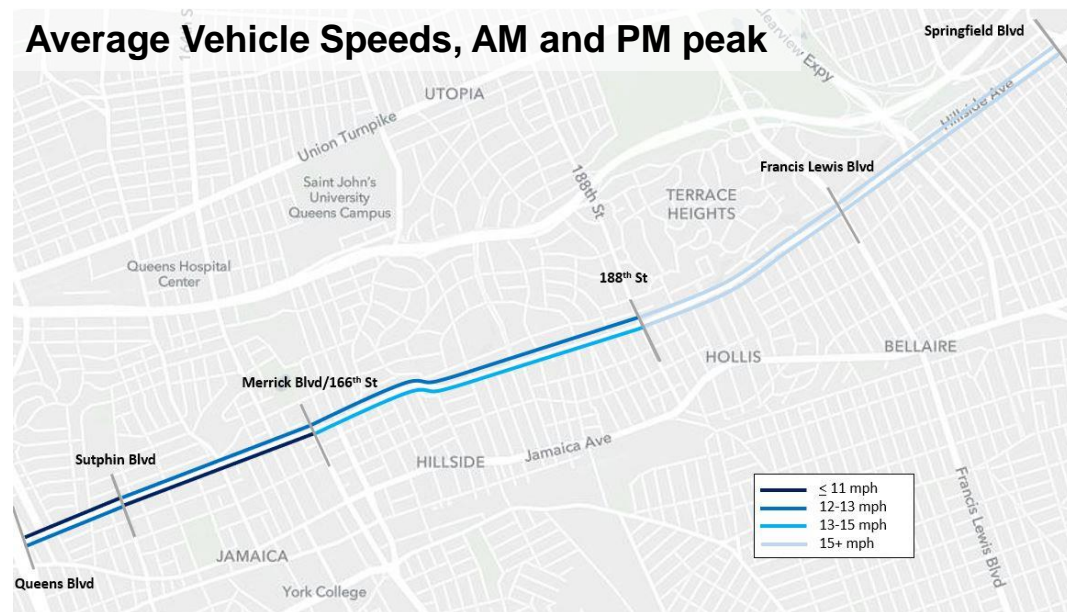
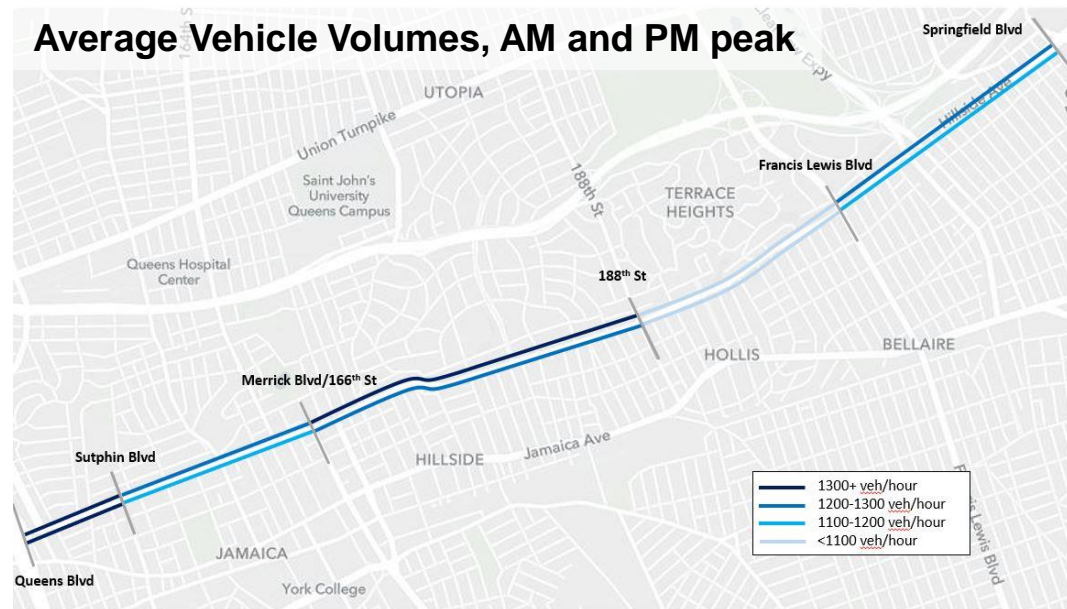


# Vehicle Speeds and Volumes

- Slowest in Jamaica, averaging under 13 mph
- 2,400+ vehicles per hour carrying approx. 2,800 people during peak hours on most of corridor
  - Plus approx. 235 bus trips carrying 14,000 people per peak hour
  - Bus passengers account for 83% of roadway users, buses are allocated less than 1/3 of the roadway itself
- Downtown Jamaica busways have had minimal impact on Hillside Av traffic speeds

Source: Speeds from INRIX May 2023, Volumes from automated traffic recorders taken April 29- May 7, 2023.

AM Peak: 7-9 am, PM Peak: 4-7 pm





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## Existing Conditions

# 2

# Existing Conditions

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- **Francis Lewis Blvd to 188<sup>th</sup> St:** Unmarked curbside bus lane
  - Mon-Fri, 7-9am westbound, 4-7pm eastbound
- **188<sup>th</sup> St to Merrick Blvd:** Marked curbside bus lane (no red paint)
  - Mon-Fri, 7-9am westbound, 4-7pm eastbound
- **Sutphin Blvd to Queens Blvd:** Red painted curbside bus lane
  - Mon-Sat, 6-9am and 4-7pm, westbound only



# Existing Conditions



No bus lane, Springfield Blvd to Francis Lewis Blvd and Merrick Blvd to Sutphin Blvd



Unmarked curbside bus lane, Francis Lewis Blvd to 188th St



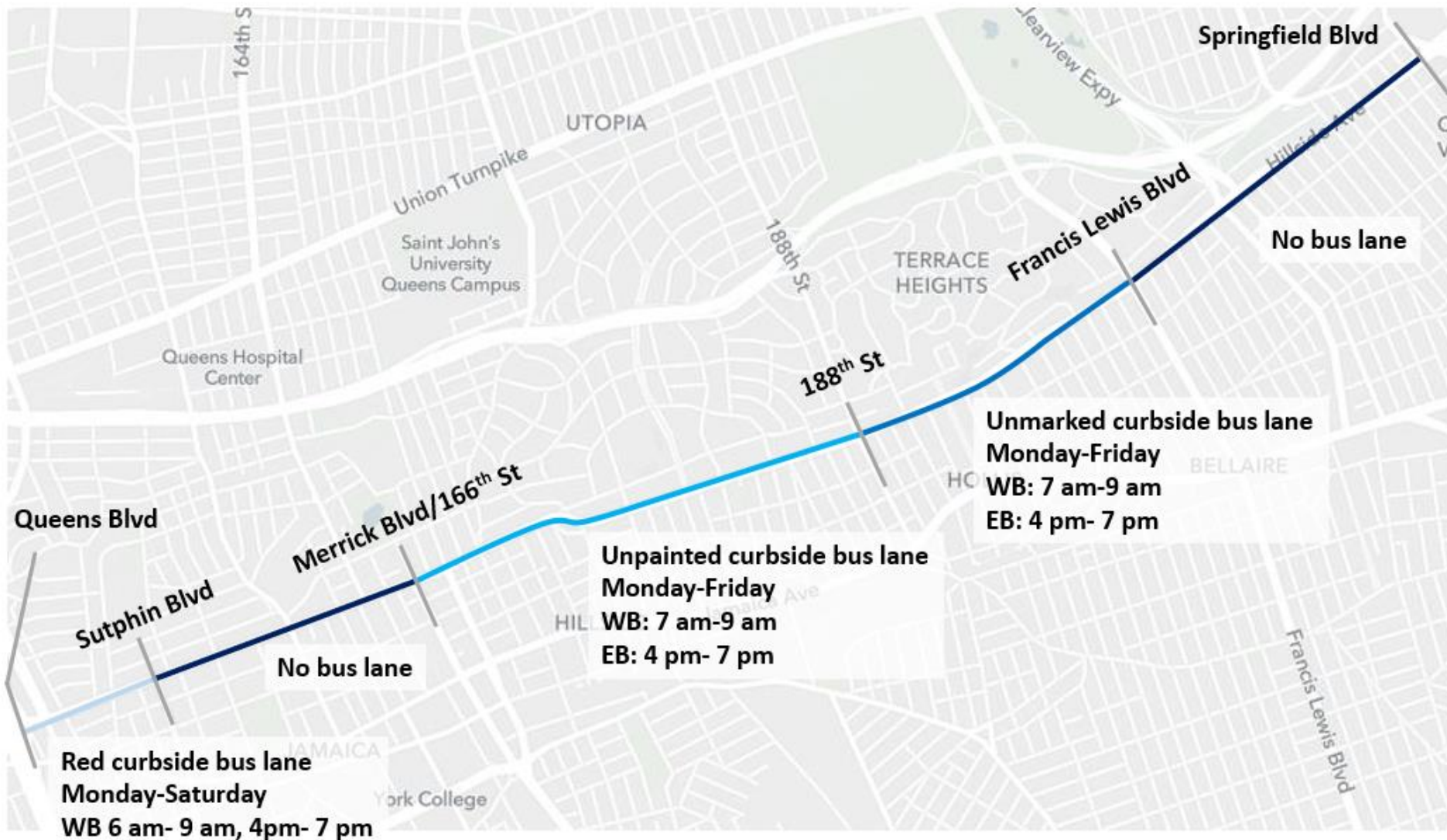
Curbside bus lane, 188th St to Merrick Blvd



Red curbside bus lane, Sutphin Blvd to Queens Blvd WB only



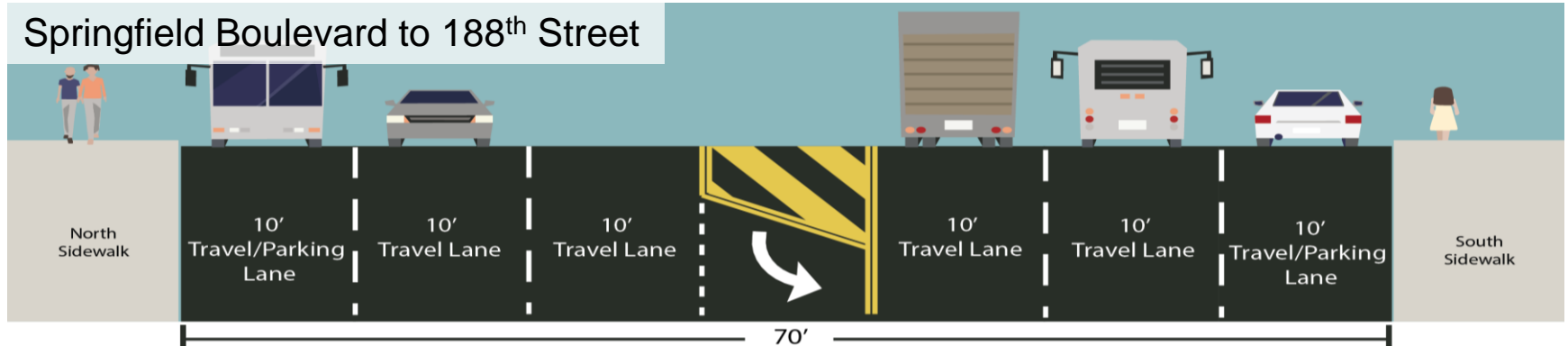
# Existing Conditions



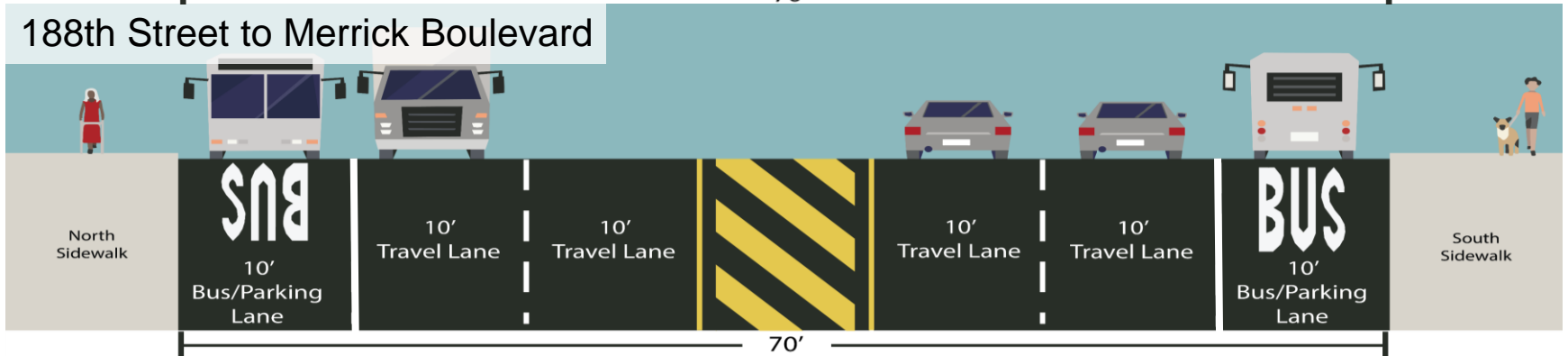


# Existing Cross Sections – three treatments

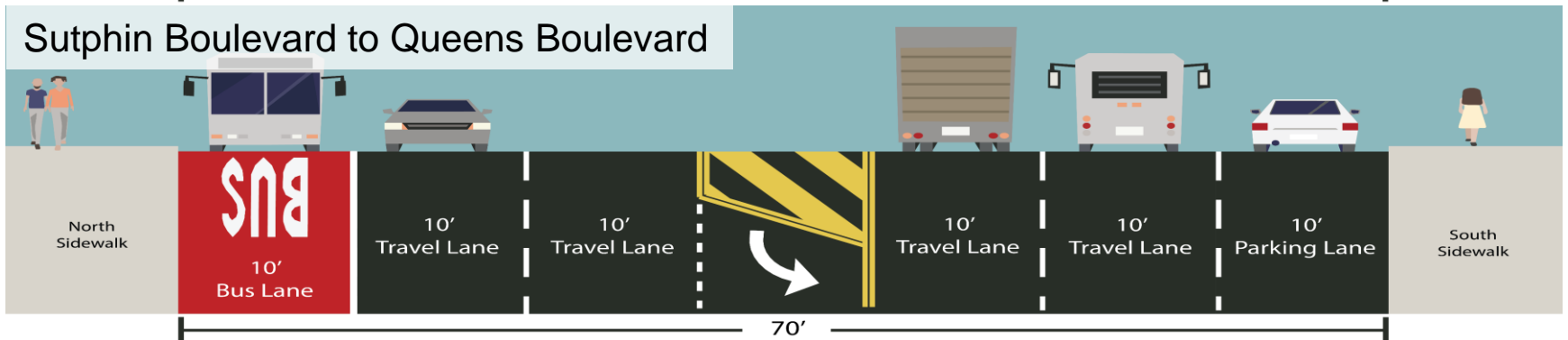
## Springfield Boulevard to 188<sup>th</sup> Street



## 188<sup>th</sup> Street to Merrick Boulevard



## Sutphin Boulevard to Queens Boulevard



# Existing Curb Regulations

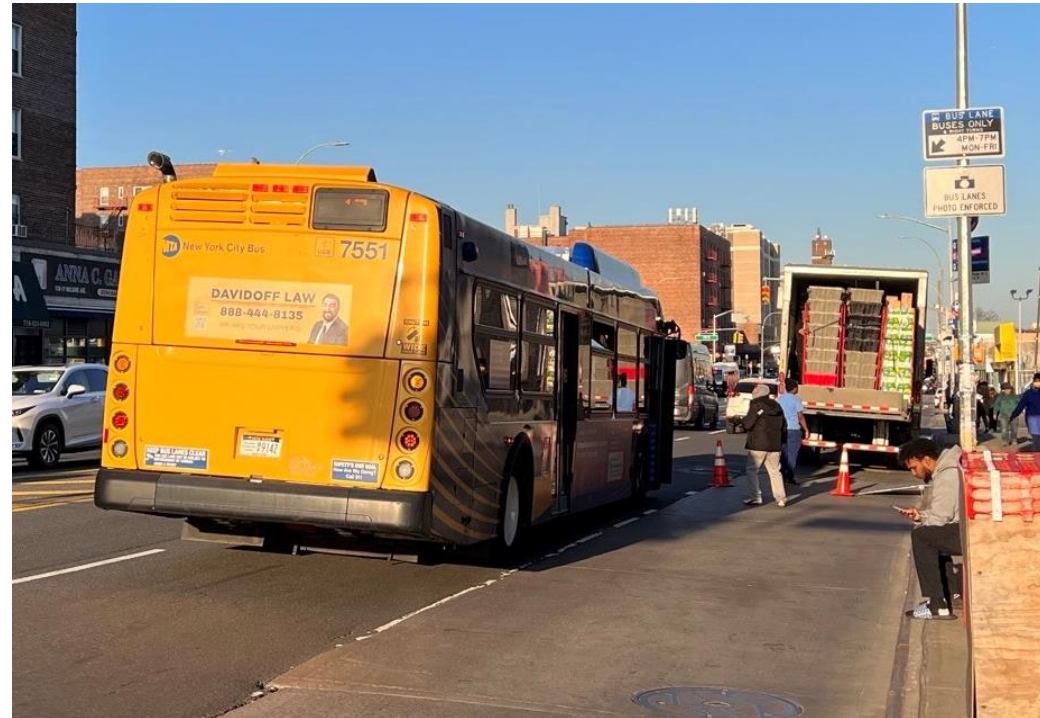
- No Standing curb regulation during peak rush hours on most of the corridor
- Westbound No Standing regulation from 7-9 am
- Eastbound No Standing Anytime from 4-7 pm
- Changes to design would reallocate curb space to better serve pedestrians and businesses in the area



# Existing Conditions Challenges

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- 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



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## Toolkit

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# Transit Toolkit



Woodhaven Blvd, QN



161st St, BX



14th St, MN



Hylan Blvd, SI



Broadway, QN



# Parking Toolkit

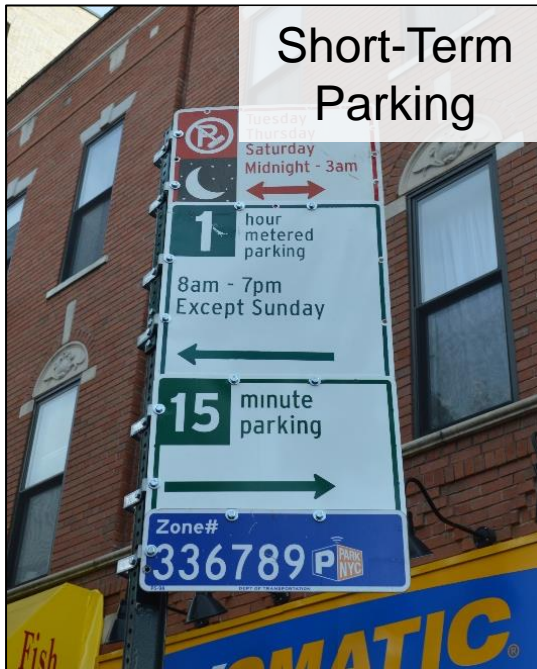
## Parking Meters



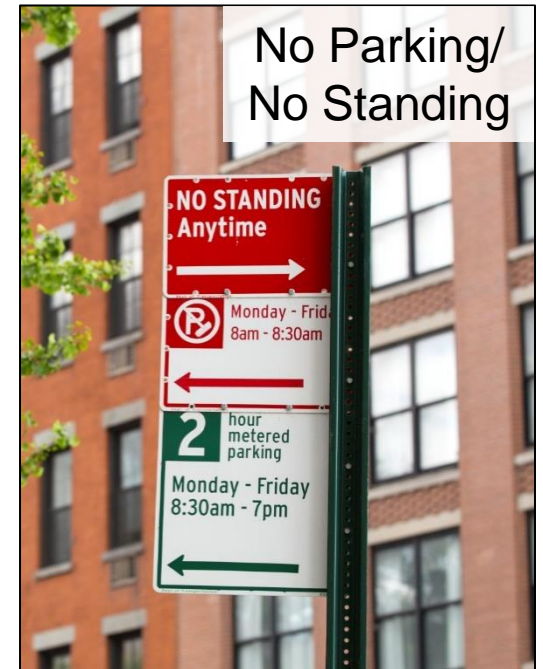
## Truck Loading Zones



## Short-Term Parking



## No Parking/ No Standing



# Other Tools

- Traffic signal timing
- Transit Signal Priority (TSP)
- Bus lane camera enforcement
  - DOT stationary cameras
  - MTA on-bus cameras (ACE, formerly known as ABLE)
- Left and right turn bays
- Turn calming





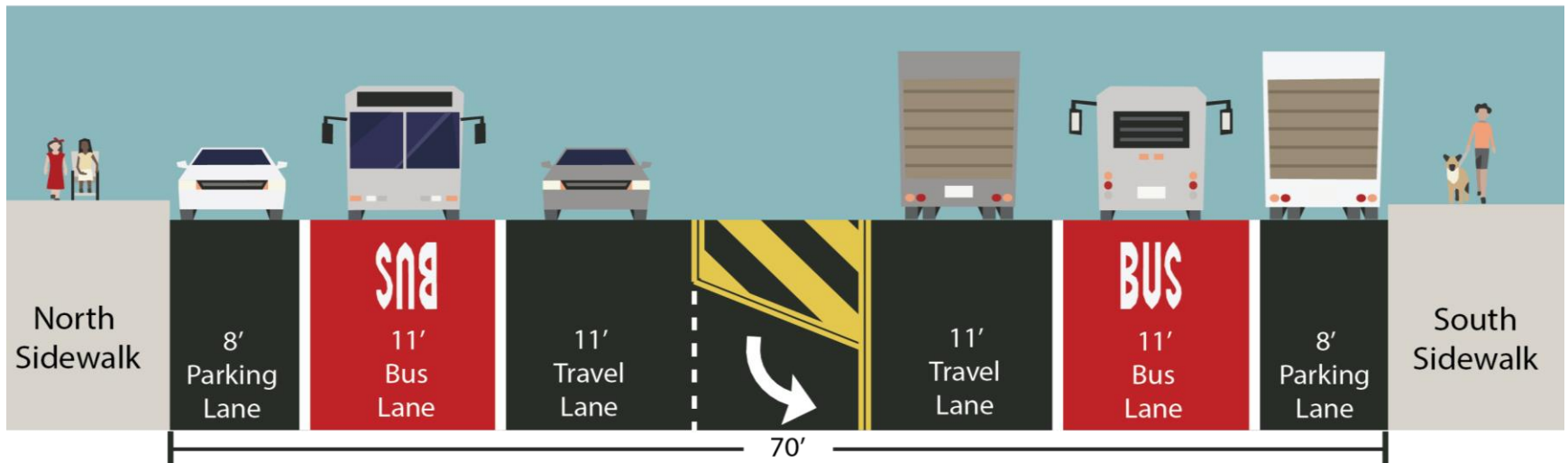
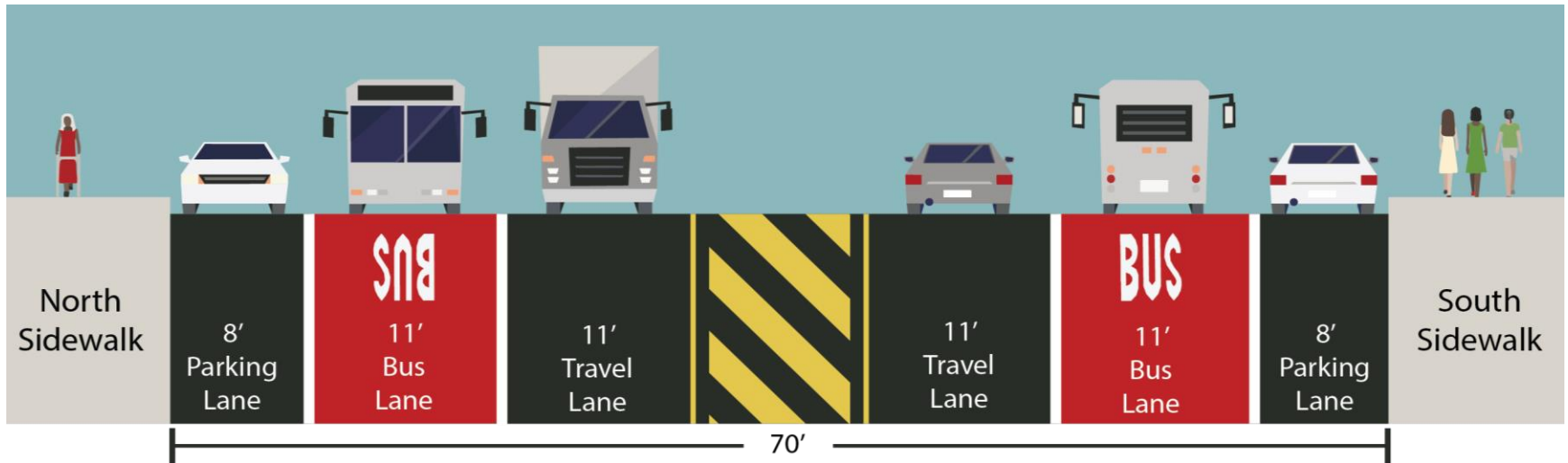
# Potential Design

- New, offset and/or center running bus lanes for the full length of this project
  - Center-running bus lanes – in the left lane – for higher-traffic areas
  - Offset bus lanes – next to the parking lane – on the rest of the corridor
- Extends bus lane hours to 24/7
- Moving bus lanes off the curb may return up to 30 blocks of parking, loading, or other curbside uses
- Add pedestrian refuge islands, which shorten crossing distances and improve safety

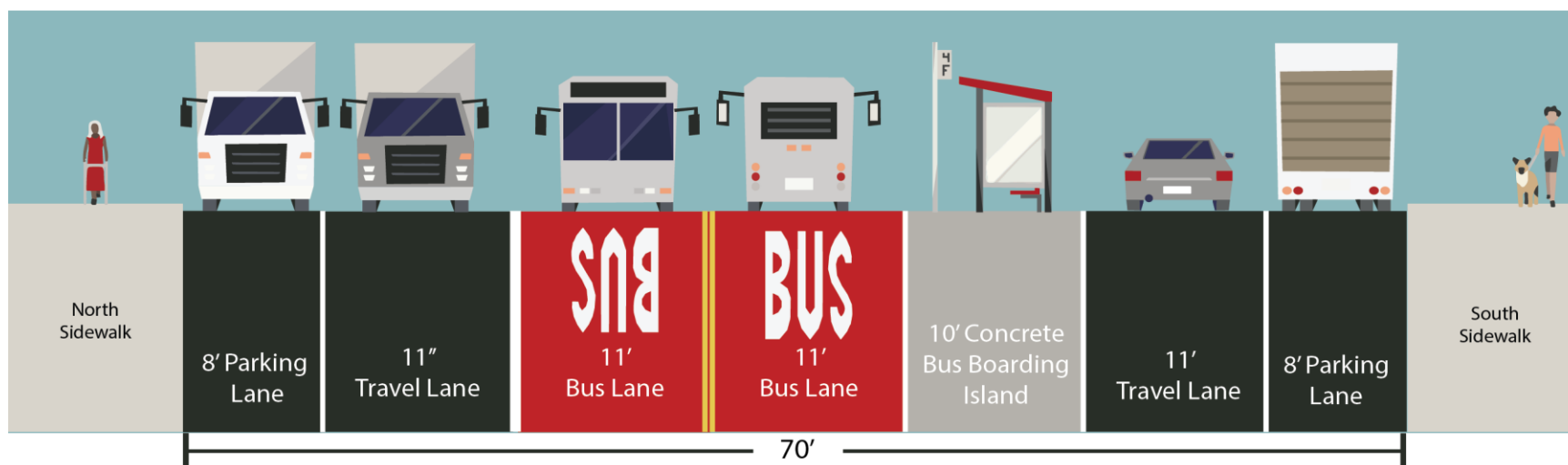
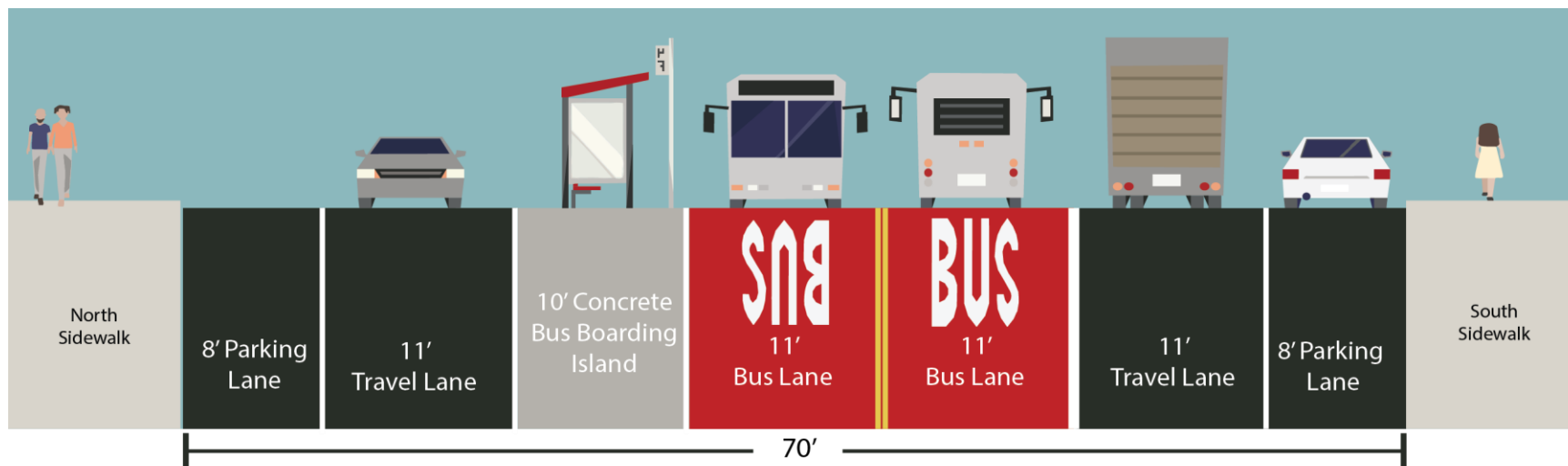




# Offset Bus Lanes – Example Cross Section



# Center Running Bus Lanes – Example Cross Section



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## Community Input, Next Steps, and Discussion

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# Community Input

- "I love that you are asking me about the bus service, no one has asked me about this before."
- "There are so many Bengali [who] live here and we really need better bus [service]."
- "The buses get here late. There are many risks on the street for safety reasons. "
- "The buses do not get on time and I have to wait too long. This happened several times at day. On the weekends I look for other alternative because it's not reliable."



**Help us improve your commute on Hillside Ave!**  
**Ayúdenos a mejorar sus viajes en Hillside Ave!**  
**Hillside Ave-এ আপনার যাতায়াত উন্নত করতে আমাদের সাহায্য করুন!**

Are you a frequent commuter on Hillside Ave? The NYC DOT needs your input for bus route improvements. Take a survey!  
¿Viaja frecuentemente por Hillside Ave? El NYC DOT necesita su opinión para mejorar las rutas de autobús. ¡Tome una encuesta!

আপনি কি Hillside Ave-এ নিয়মিত ভ্রমণকারী? বাস রুটের উন্নতির জন্য NYC DOT-এর আপনার ইনপুট প্রয়োজন। একটা পরিসংখ্যান নাও!

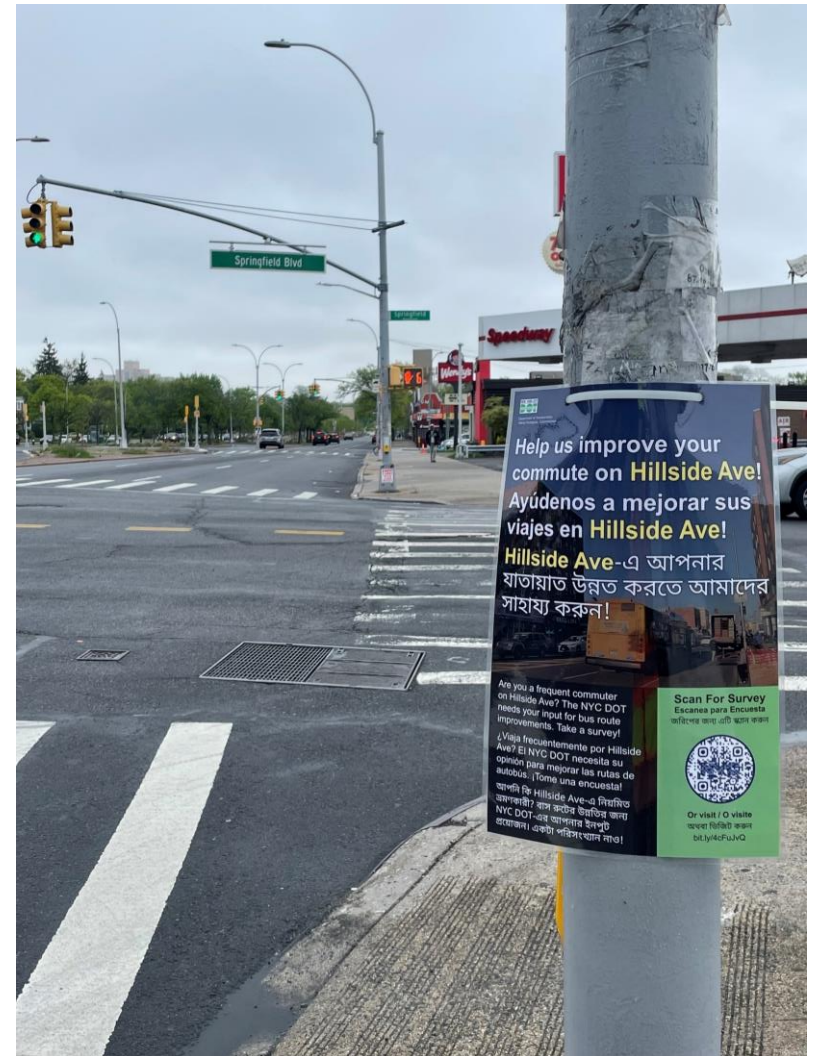
**Scan For Survey**  
Escanea para Encuesta  
জরিপের জন্য এটি স্ক্যান করুন



Or visit / O visite  
অথবা ভিজিট করুন  
[bit.ly/4cFuJvQ](https://bit.ly/4cFuJvQ)



# Community Input Continued



# Next Steps

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- **Spring 2024:**
  - Refine proposal based on community feedback
  - Conduct traffic analysis
  - Continue community engagement, site visits and data collection
- **Summer 2024:** Finalize proposal
- **Fall 2024:** Share revised plan



# Discussion

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- How does Hillside Av operate right now? What works and doesn't work?
- Which tools sound most useful? Less useful?
- Who else should we reach out to about this project? Any groups or specific individuals?
- What would a successful project look like?
- What tradeoffs are acceptable?
- What role can DOT take to make Hillside Av work better?

# Thank You!

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## Questions?



NYCDOT



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