

# Northern Blvd Bus Improvements

Community Board 2 - Queens

May, 2023



# Project Area

- Project limits: Broadway – 114 St, 2.7 mile section of Northern Blvd
- Busy commercial and residential area
- M & R Subway lines at Broadway; 7 Subway line to the south along Roosevelt Ave; Q66 local bus; Express Buses (QM2, QM3, QM20, QM32) along Northern Blvd
- Vision Zero Priority Corridor
- Future Vision Zero Great Streets Capital Project with \$79 million awarded in City funds



# Safety Concerns

- 7 pedestrian fatalities since 2016, and 15 people killed or seriously injured (KSI) per mile
- 38% of pedestrians injured were crossing in the crosswalk with the walk signal, struck by a driver failing to yield



Left Turn Traffic Calming & LPI at Northern Blvd & 70 St

Injury Summary, 2016-2020 (5 Years)

Mode	Total Injuries	Severe Injuries	Fatalities	KSI
Pedestrian	121	8	7	15
Bicyclist	58	5	0	5
Motor Vehicle Occupant	606	18	0	18
Other Motorized	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>785</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>38</b>

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

# Outreach

- October 2018 – Three public workshops were held to understand safety and mobility concerns and help guide a vision for a future Capital Project
- Key community desires raised:
  - Improved **bus service**, i.e. transit signal priority, bus lanes, bus boarding islands
  - Protected **bike lanes** on Northern Blvd
  - Additional **islands or medians** with plantings, shorten crossings
  - Remove underused **rush hour regulation**
- February 2020 – DOT and State Senator Ramos solicited feedback from businesses on Northern Blvd
  - Businesses shared concerns about parking conditions, access to public transit, loading zones, and congestion
- 2022 – Elected officials request additional transit improvements, including dedicated bus lanes and “rapid bus service”



DOT holds community workshops, October 2018



Elected officials, community members campaign for transit improvements, May 2022

# Safety Projects

## 2018

- Left Turn Traffic Calming at 7 locations
- Leading Pedestrian Intervals (LPIs) at all feasible intersections

## 2019

- 10 new concrete pedestrian safety islands at high crash intersections between 70 St and 92 St

## 2020

- 5 additional concrete pedestrian safety islands between 71 St and 112 St

## 2021

- Removal of curbside rush hour regulations
- Painted curb extensions at all possible corners
- Bus stop consolidation for the Q66

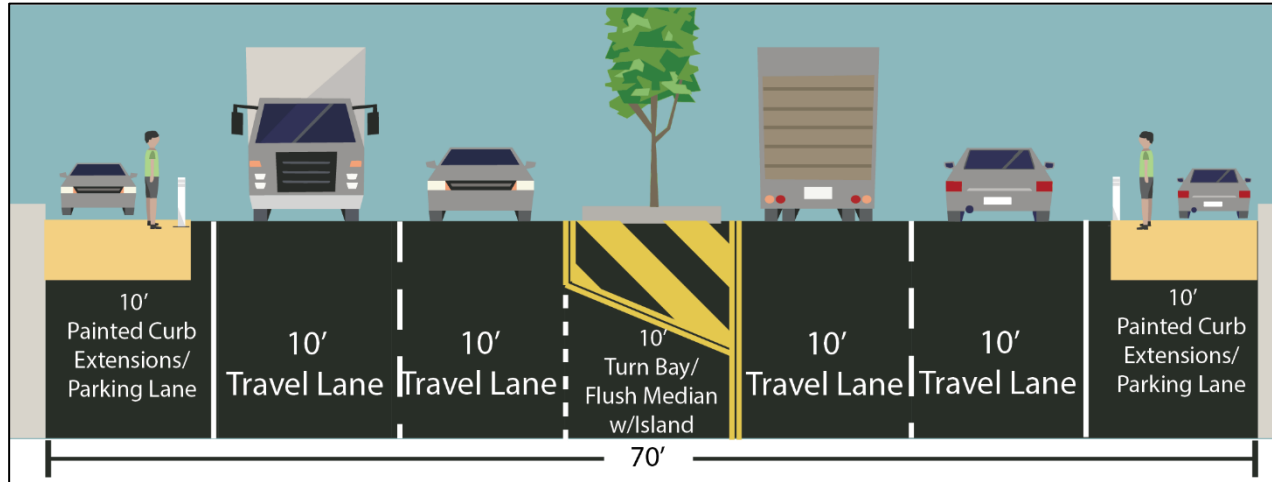


Before: Northern Blvd & 70 St, 2018



After: Northern Blvd & 70 St, 2019

# Corridor Existing Conditions



- 70' wide roadway, with two travel lanes in each direction
- Major bus transit corridor for local and express buses
- Through truck route
- Peak traffic volumes of 1200-1500 vehicles per hour



70' wide, islands at many locations



Major bus transit corridor

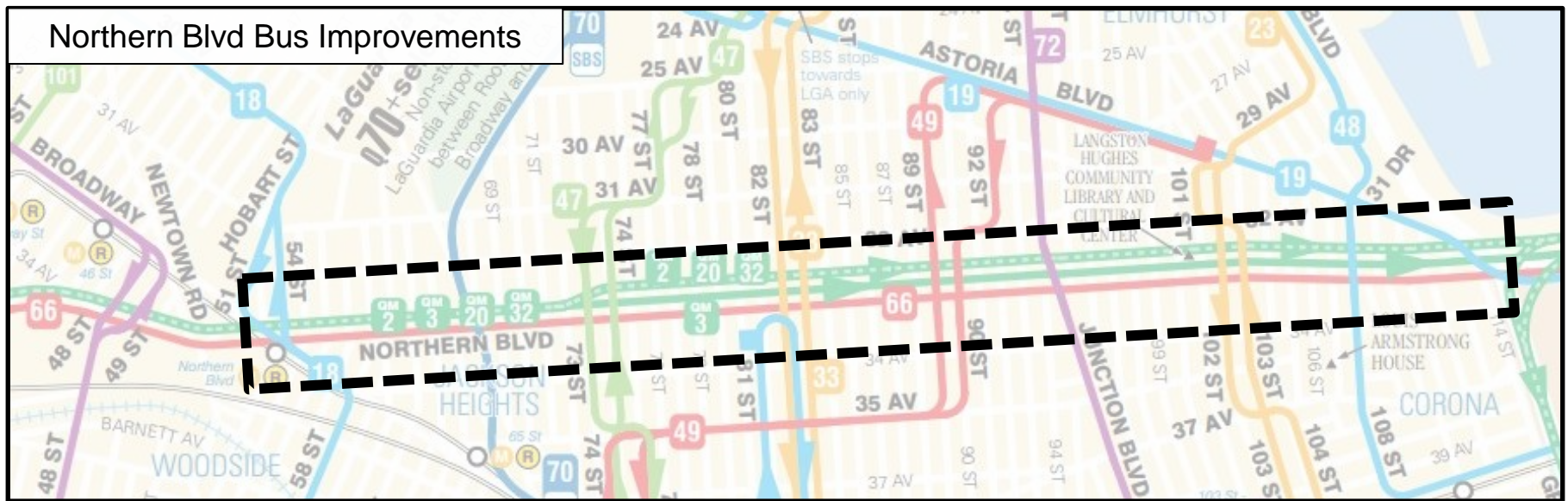


Multimodal corridor, diverse users

# Existing Conditions: Limited Transit Access

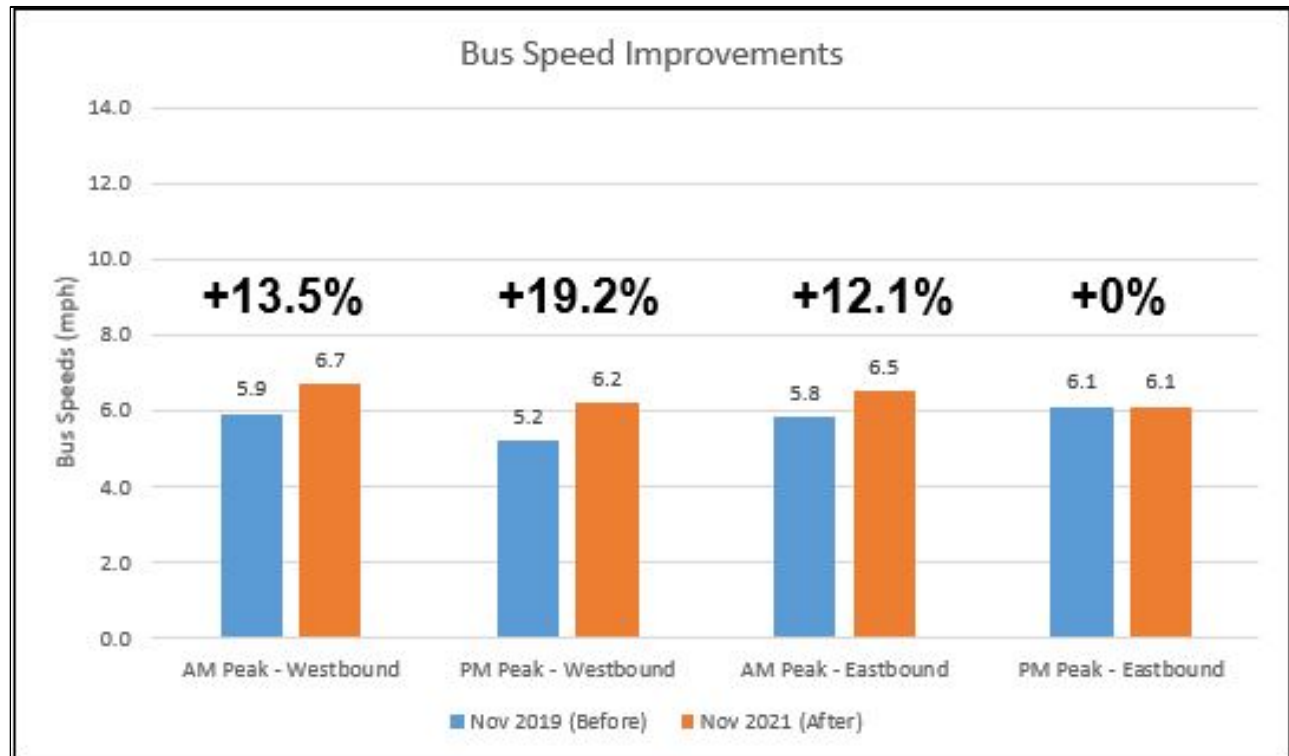
Transit improvements needed east of Broadway

- Existing Q66 bus travels at an average of only ~6 mph during peak
- 7 train ½ mile or more away from Northern Blvd
- Broadway M & R train is the easternmost subway stop on Northern Blvd



# Bus Speed Increases on Northern Blvd

- DOT consolidated 10 paired Q66 stops in 2021
- Bus speeds significantly increased after consolidation, but still have room to improve



Source: NYCT Bus Time data. Peak volume refers to the highest vehicle count per hour during the morning and evening.

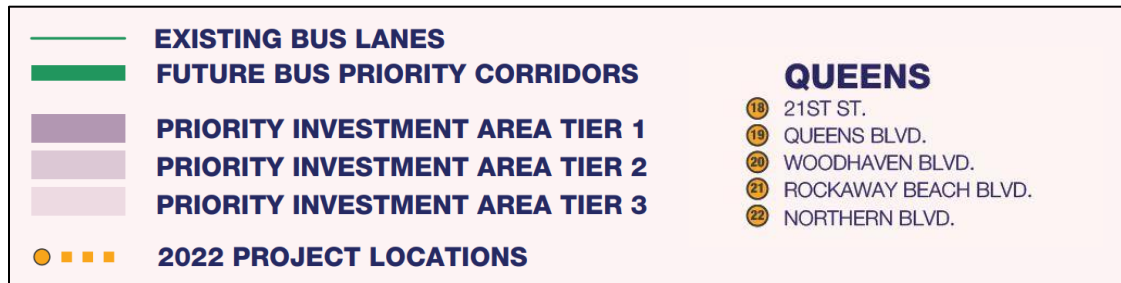


# NYC Streets Plan

Transit goals of the Streets Plan:

1. **Increase sustainable travel modes** by reconfiguring streets and making more attractive choices available for New Yorkers to support the continued growth of NYC while reducing congestion and emissions
2. **Expand access to job opportunities** and encourage job creation through faster and more reliable transportation options.
3. **Allow all New Yorkers, regardless of ability, to get around the city** in multiple ways without encountering barriers to travel

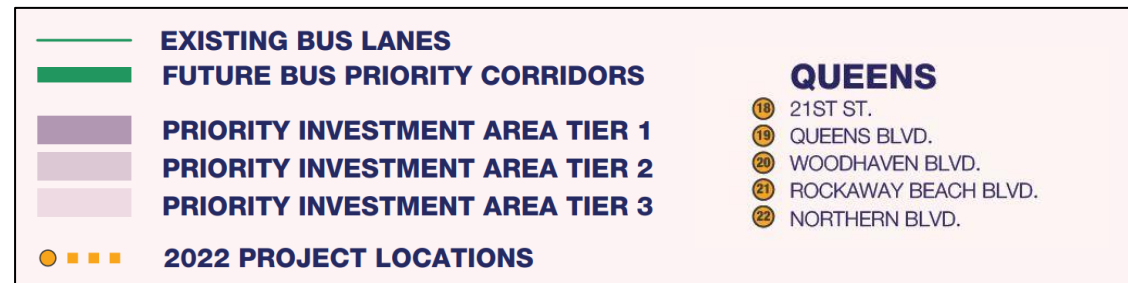
## Queens Bus Priority Corridors



# Why Northern Blvd?

- Identified as one of 10 key Queens corridors for bus priority in the NYC Streets Plan
- Nearly 15,000 average weekday bus passengers along 5 routes
- Express Bus corridor (QM2, QM3, QM20, QM32)
- Critical transit service with connections to many local bus routes and the M & R Subways
- More efficient bus service could relieve crowding on the 7 train

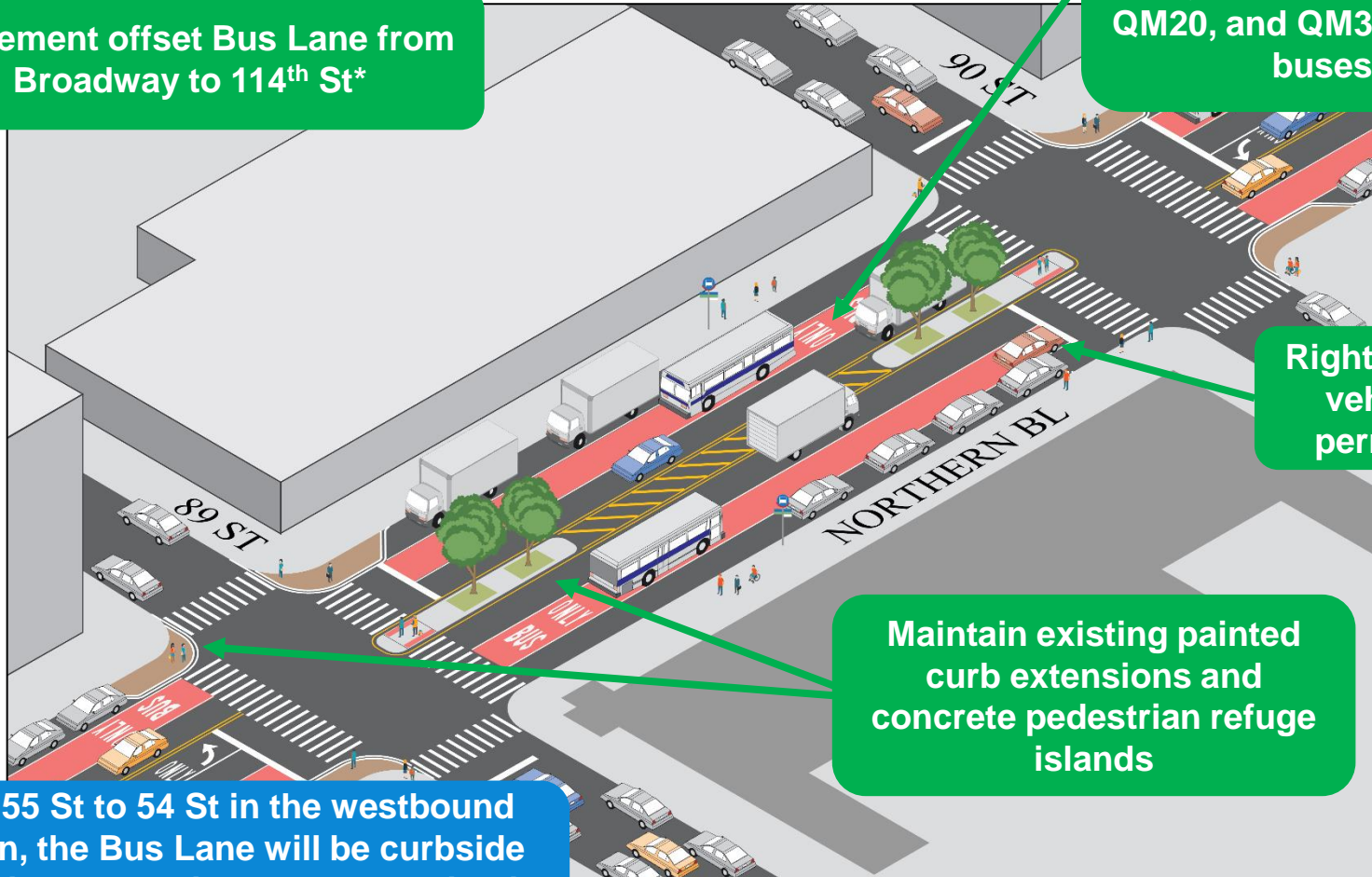
## Queens Bus Priority Corridors



# Proposed: Bus Lane

Implement offset Bus Lane from Broadway to 114<sup>th</sup> St\*

Bus lane increases travel speeds on the Q66 local bus, and the QM2, QM3, QM20, and QM32 express buses



Right turning vehicles permitted

Maintain existing painted curb extensions and concrete pedestrian refuge islands

\* From 55 St to 54 St in the westbound direction, the Bus Lane will be curbside repurposing ~6 parking spots to maintain two travel lanes for private vehicles

# Benefits of Design

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- Improves bus speeds and travel times
- Prioritizes transit, a sustainable transportation mode
- Offset bus lane allows bus priority while preserving curbside uses:
  - Parking
  - Commercial loading
  - Traffic calming, pedestrian refuge (i.e. curb extensions)
  - Allows buses to pass a stopped bus in the stop
  - Maintain outdoor dining setups



Webster Ave, Bronx

# Making it Work- Traffic Effects

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- DOT expects an increase in traffic delays and travel time for private vehicles on Northern Blvd during initial adjustment period
- Excess volumes expected to divert to alternate routes (Astoria Blvd, Grand Central Pkwy, 31<sup>st</sup> Ave)
  - Based on data collected in 2019 and 2022, vehicle volume reductions of 25% during the AM peak and 35% during the PM peak would be required to maintain the existing level of service (or traffic flow) after installation of a bus lane on Northern Blvd
- Continued monitoring and mitigation as needed, may include
  - Changes to traffic signal timing
  - Opportunities for additional truck loading zones, curb regulation changes, or design elements

# Making it Work

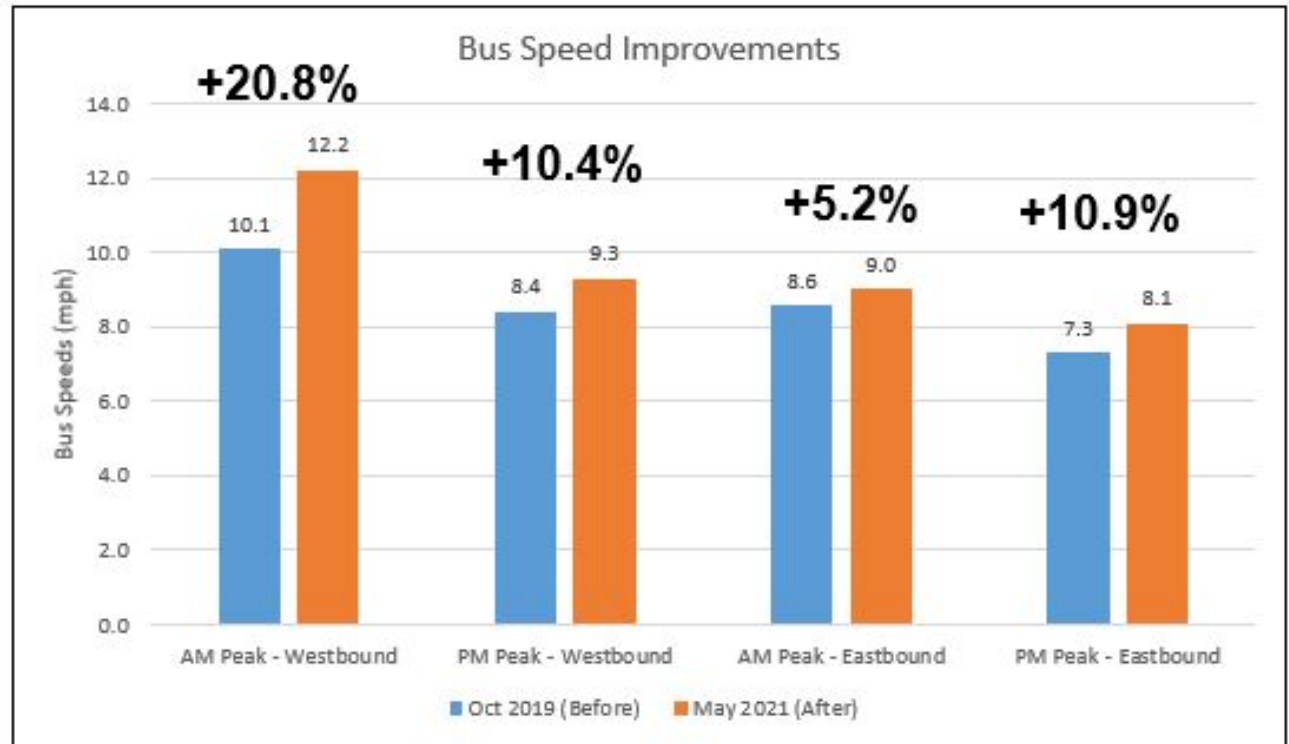
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- Mitigation already planned or underway
  - Transit Signal Priority, currently being implemented
  - Camera enforcement planned for 2023



# Bus Speed Increases on Merrick Blvd

- Bus speeds increased across the board on Merrick Blvd, a similar corridor to Northern Blvd, between October 2019 and May 2021 after DOT installed a bus lane
- MTA and DOT continuing to monitor bus speeds



Source: NYCT Bus Time data. Peak volume refers to the highest vehicle count per hour during the morning and evening.

# Next Steps

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## May/June 2023

- Project implementation, install bus lane on Northern Blvd from Broadway to 114 St

## Future Capital Improvements

- Develop further transit and pedestrian safety improvements
- \$79 million in City funds already awarded to Northern Blvd



2022 Proposal: Northern Blvd, Broadway – 114 St



# Thank You!

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## Questions?



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