

# *Executive Summary*

## Summary of Program

Auto travel on Manhattan's crosstown streets has been historically slow and unreliable - with average midtown travel speeds under five miles per hour. In an attempt to make crosstown travel more consistent and reliable for trucks, autos and buses and improve conditions for pedestrians, Mayor Michael Bloomberg, the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT), and the New York City Police Department (NYPD) introduced the ***THRU*** Streets Program as a pilot project in the Fall of 2002. In doing so, the Administration hoped to improve the viability of the nation's largest business district -- and improve the quality of life for the many New Yorkers and visitors who walk, drive, shop and work in one of the world's busiest hubs.

The program initially:

- designated ten streets as ***THRU*** Streets – and restricted all vehicular turns off of these streets on weekdays between 10 am and 6 pm. The restrictions applied on most of these streets between Third and Sixth Avenues.
- introduced “split phasing” at the ends and beginnings of ***THRU*** Streets and at locations on non-***THRU*** Streets to improve pedestrian safety.
- focused midtown traffic enforcement efforts on ***THRU*** Streets.
- facilitated commercial deliveries by providing curb space on both sides of most non-***THRU*** Streets.

The project's first phase, the *Adjustment Period*, was initiated on October 15, 2002. Phase II, the *After Period*, began on November 18<sup>th</sup>. By this point, a number of modifications to the program had been introduced. Split phasing was eliminated at the ends of the ***THRU*** Streets; the ***THRU*** Street designation was removed from 59<sup>th</sup> Street; and turns were allowed from most of the ***THRU*** Streets onto Park Avenue. Phase II lasted through both the traditional winter Holiday Season as well as a number of post-holiday weeks in January. DOT collected a great deal of data during both phases of the program, providing the basis for the following findings.

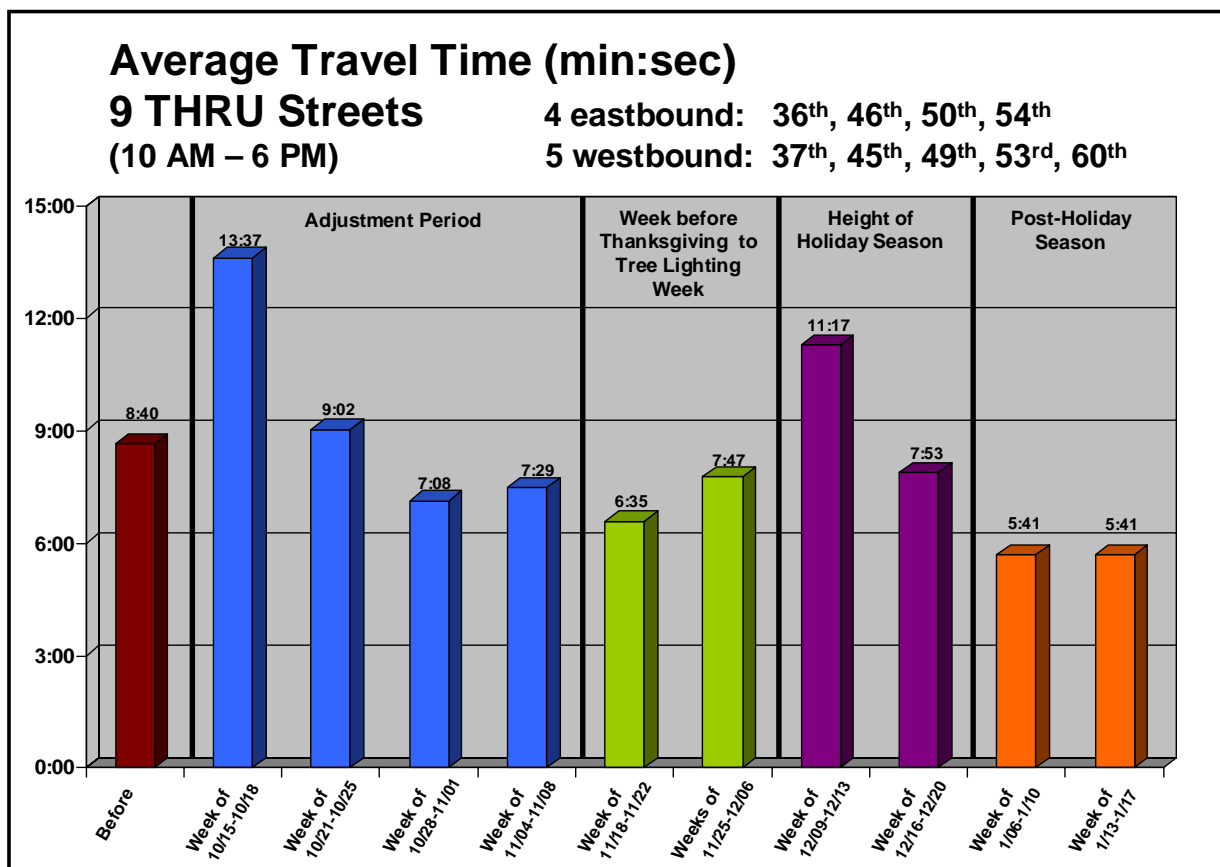
## Summary of Findings

The **THRU** Streets assessment shows that the program better than met expectations – improving travel times on the streets, increasing their vehicular capacity, and improving pedestrian safety.

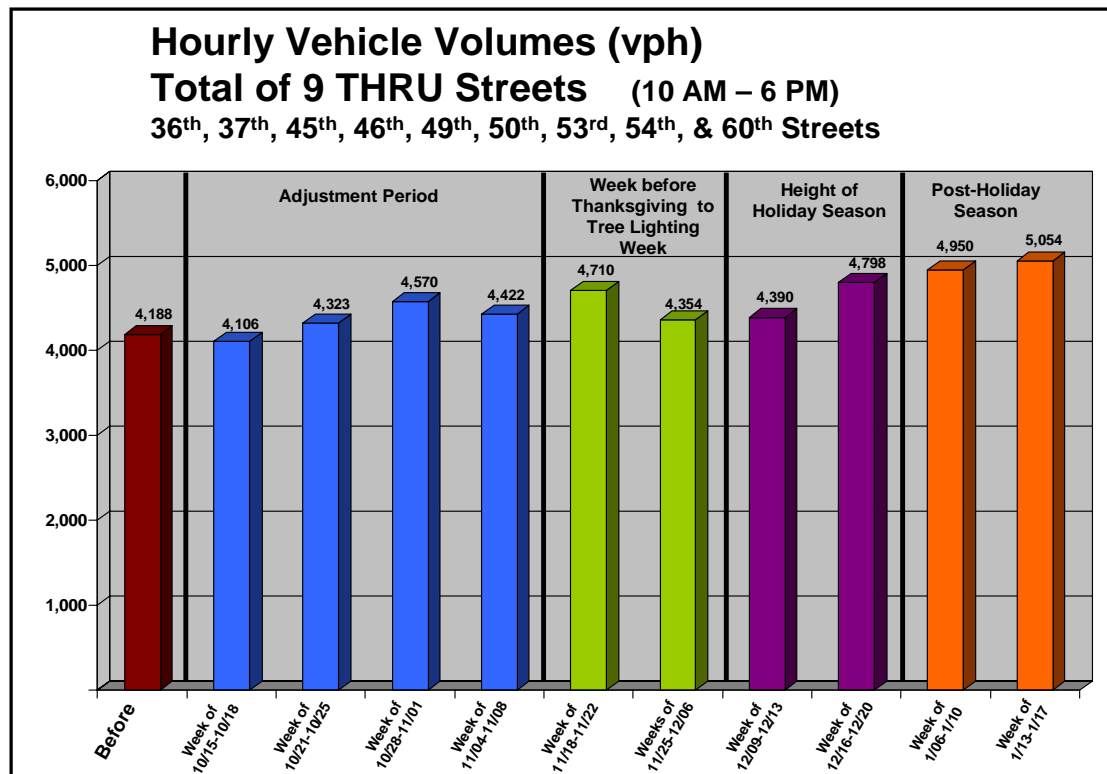
In addition, the program appeared to work with less enforcement resources than expected.

Specifically:

- Travel speeds on the **THRU** Streets showed remarkable improvements. Despite a short, sluggish beginning (and a one week spike during the height of the Holiday Season), the combined average speeds on the nine **THRU** Streets showed a 53% improvement (from 4.0 to 6.1 mph) during the post-holiday monitoring period.
- The average time required to travel along the **THRU** Streets fell from 8 minutes, 40 seconds to 5 minutes, 41 seconds (a 34% improvement).



- The average number of motorists benefiting from this improved travel time rose by nearly 20% (from 4,190 to 5,050 vph). Average hourly volumes using the combined streets rose from 465 to 560 vph.



- Bus travel times also improved with the combined average trip time on the 49<sup>th</sup>/50<sup>th</sup> Street corridor showing a nearly 15% improvement (a saving of more than one and one-half minutes) even during the height of the Holiday Season.
- Compliance with the posted turn restrictions was especially encouraging. During the initial three weeks (when NYPD intersection presence was at its highest), compliance rates averaged 98%. During the subsequent weeks, when intersection coverage declined, compliance remained high, averaging 95% and ranging from 91 to 97%.
- The introduction of split signal phasing at selected intersections proved valuable. An overwhelming number of pedestrians benefited from conflict free crossings and virtually all the locations processed as many or more through and turning vehicles as they had previously. This is especially significant since the amount of time allocated for the turning movements was sharply curtailed.
- The effectiveness of the split phases is even more pronounced when compared to pedestrian behavior at Midtown's recessed crosswalk locations. On average, forty percent fewer illegal pedestrian crossings were recorded at intersections with split phasing compared to those with recessed crosswalks.

- Compliance with the posted curbside parking restrictions was particularly critical. A measure of the successful efforts to effectively direct enforcement resources was that curb clear time (the amount of time the curb is completely free of illegally parked vehicles) rose from 33% to 50%.