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**A RECOVERY FOR ALL OF US: 181st STREET BUSWAY TO LAUNCH APRIL 26,
BRINGING FASTER BUSES TO 66,000 DAILY RIDERS IN WASHINGTON HEIGHTS**

Two months after launch of Flushing-Main Street busway, DOT announces speeds up 13-31%

NEW YORK—Mayor Bill de Blasio today announced the 181st Street Busway, which will bring faster bus speeds to 66,000 daily riders in Washington Heights, will launch on April 26th, 2021. The 0.5-mile busway, which builds on the success of similar projects on Jay Street in downtown Brooklyn, 14th Street in Manhattan, and Flushing-Main Street in Queens, is the latest promise kept in Mayor de Blasio’s transformational [Better Buses](#) initiative, announced last June.

The Department of Transportation (DOT) also announced today that two months after its launch, the [Flushing-Main Street busway](#) is already providing faster and more reliable bus service for 155,000 daily riders in Queens. Data from MTA/New York City Transit show that bus speeds along the Main Street corridor have been significantly faster since January 19th. Bus speeds in the northbound direction are on average 15%-24% faster during the day, and 13%- 31% faster during the PM peak.

“Washington Heights deserves faster, safer, more reliable bus transit. The 181st Street busway will help this iconic neighborhood come back stronger than ever,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “Busways have transformed transportation across the city – most recently in Flushing, where the new busway has dramatically increased speeds in just two months – and I look forward to bringing these changes to even more neighborhoods citywide.”

"We have seen across this city the benefits of faster, more reliable bus service, and the early success of the Flushing-Main Street busway is just the latest example," said **Deputy Mayor for Operations Laura Anglin**. "Washington Heights is up next in our continued expansion of busways, and we are looking forward to the positive impact this project will have on the more than 60,000 daily riders."

“Next month, DOT will continue our great Better Buses work by speeding up commutes across Washington Heights,” said **DOT Commissioner Hank Gutman**. “We have already worked closely with our partners at MTA New York City Transit to deliver busways with faster and more reliable bus service, including in Flushing, downtown Brooklyn and of course on 14th Street in Manhattan. In all of these locations, busways are successfully connecting New Yorkers, including essential workers, to employment as well as to dynamic commercial hubs, where local business owners are working hard to emerge from the COVID crisis. We expect similar great results along 181st Street – and I for one cannot wait to ride.”

“The key to an effective bus system is well-enforced bus priority. We’re thrilled that the Main Street Busway is improving commutes for thousands of customers with up to 31% speed increases, and are excited to bring improvements to our customers on 181st Street and in other parts of the city,” said **Craig Cipriano, President of the MTA Bus Company and Senior Vice President for Buses, MTA New York City Transit**.

181st Street is one of the busiest and most congested corridors in Manhattan, resulting in average bus speeds of less than 4mph. These slow bus speeds create unreliable service for bus riders making connections to the A and 1 trains; any of the six MTA bus routes traveling on the north-south avenues; and the Port Authority’s George Washington Bridge bus terminal. This project will increase bus speed and reliability, calm traffic, and improve truck travel and loading and unloading, while maintaining local access to support businesses and services.

The busway in Washington Heights will bring transit and truck priority to 181st St between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue in the eastbound direction, and Amsterdam Ave to Wadsworth Avenue in the westbound direction. Through traffic would be limited to buses, trucks, and emergency vehicles. Cars, taxis, and vans must make next available right turn off busway. Local access and parking are allowed, with improved truck loading and parking meter regulations.

NYPD will provide traffic enforcement and inform motorists about the new regulations with the launch of the busway. DOT will also install bus lane cameras, which for the first 60 days will issue warning letters to registered vehicle owners who violate the new regulations, before beginning to mail out violations with fines.

DOT formed a Community Advisory Board (CAB) to guide the project before, during, and after implementation. DOT also met with Community Board 12, the Washington Heights BID, local elected officials, and small businesses.

The Mayor’s record-setting Better Buses Restart plan has increased bus speeds and reliability along major corridors in all five boroughs. Since June 2020, DOT implemented 16.9 miles of new bus lanes and busways, the largest one-year effort in New York City history. Completed projects Jay Street in Brooklyn (0.8 miles), Malcolm X Blvd in Brooklyn (0.1 miles), 14th Street extension in Manhattan (0.8 miles), Hylan Boulevard (4.7 miles) on Staten Island, E.L. Grant Highway (1.2 miles), University Ave (0.1 miles) and 149th Street (2.7 miles) in the Bronx and Merrick Blvd (5.9 miles) and Main Street (0.6 miles) in Queens.

“Our transit systems have been critical to our communities as we continue our efforts to recover and rebuild amid the COVID-19 pandemic,” said **U.S. Rep. Adriano Espaillat**. “Transit equity, streamlining and accessibility for all residents remain at the forefront of our efforts to support and create viable transit options and expanded services for residents, especially during these challenging times. I commend Mayor de Blasio, DOT Commissioner Gutman, and all who worked to ensure today’s announcement to expand services along the 181st Busway to reach and provide increased services to Washington Heights residents.”

"I'm proud to not only be the Manhattan Borough President but also the Manhattan Busway President," said **Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer**. "After the success of the 14th Street Busway, I advocated for DOT to study a busway on 181st Street to ensure uptown Manhattan transit riders received the same benefits as lower Manhattan riders. I look forward to working with DOT to ensure the first few weeks of the busway's implementation go smoothly and to seeing buses fly across 181st Street, bringing Washington Heights residents and essential workers swiftly to their destinations."

"181st Street is a beating heart of Northern Manhattan and the Bronx, a destination in itself for our uptown community and a way station for many working-class New Yorkers en route to earn a living to support their families," said **State Senator Robert Jackson**. "Congestion has long been a problem for residents, small businesses and those who supply them, and commuters. DOT's 181st St busway will increase bus speeds and reliability, which is a good thing! I appreciate the care the agency has taken to convene the Community Advisory Board during this planning process, and if the balance isn't completely right at first, I know they will continue to be responsive to the concerns of stakeholders. We will work together to keep our community moving forward as we recover from the COVID crises!"

"Busways are known to significantly improve bus reliability and efficiency. The 181st busway will help many Northern Manhattan residents and Bronx Residents get to and from their destination without the long waits. My hope is that we can continue expanding busways across the City, predominantly in the outer-borough transit desert areas," said **Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez, Chairman of the Transportation Committee**. "I look forward to continuing to work alongside DOT Commissioner Hank Gutman, NYPD's traffic enforcement, advocates, and community leaders to ensure everyone's voices are being heard within this initiative."

"Commuting between Washington Heights and the Bronx just got a whole lot easier for 66,000 daily bus riders," said **Liam Blank, Policy & Communications Manager for Tri-State Transportation Campaign**. "181st Street is a critical chokepoint in the bus network, but this new 0.5-mile busway will provide a much-needed boost to bus service. We commend Mayor de Blasio and NYC DOT for making buses faster and more reliable by successfully rolling out a record number of bus improvement projects, all of which are already providing real positive results for bus riders across the city."

"We are thrilled to see busways expanding uptown," said **Erwin Figueroa, Director of Organizing at Transportation Alternatives**. "Our streets need to be put to the best use and serve the greatest number of people. This has been made even more clear during the pandemic and serves as the basis of our recent *NYC 25x25* report, which suggests a dramatic expansion of busways across the five boroughs. The 181st Street busway will prioritize tens-of-thousands of public transit riders and build upon the success of other new busways across the city. Transportation Alternatives looks forward to working with City Hall and the MTA on all future busway projects and we applaud the de Blasio administration's determination to get this critical initiative for Upper Manhattan across the finish line."

"DOT's expansion of bus priority in Washington Heights is exactly the type of transportation improvement necessary for a fair recovery from the COVID pandemic," said **Ashley Pryce**,

Senior Advocacy Associate with TransitCenter. "The 181st Street busway will bring faster, more reliable service to riders in Upper Manhattan and the Bronx, providing better connections to hospitals, urgent care centers, and more than 4,000 essential work sites."

"The 181st Street busway is great news for riders in Upper Manhattan and the Bronx," said **Riders Alliance Senior Organizer Jolyse Race**. "By putting 66,000 daily riders first on one of Manhattan's busiest streets, Mayor de Blasio and the DOT are delivering a big win to essential workers, and all the rest of us who depend on their ability to get to work on time. Better buses are a cornerstone of a more equitable city and riders look forward to many more bus lanes and busways citywide this year."

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