



Small Business
Services



Business Improvement Districts (BID)
2009 Spotlight Tours

Dear Friend,

I am pleased to present the Overview of the Business Improvement District (BID) Spotlight initiative, which celebrates the vital economic development work, challenges and opportunities for five New York City BIDs. The Spotlight events were designed to bring dynamic problem solvers from the public, private, and non-profit sectors to assist organizations in solving pressing challenges. During the 2009 Spotlight events, participants were impressed with the organizations' innovative programs and strategic ability take advantage of assets in their districts, and were able to assist BID staff and board members in devising strategies to combat challenges facing the organizations.

With a network of 64 BIDs, larger than any other city in the country, the New York City Department of Small Business Services (SBS) is dedicated to building the capacity and supporting the efforts of the City's BIDs. Many times SBS found it difficult to dig deeply into the many obstacles that each organization faces. The Spotlight participants, with their vast and varying experiences and expertise, offered a fresh perspective on how to overcome these obstacles. In addition, the Spotlight events allowed for BID staff to connect and collaborate with potential partners in government and other institutions moving forward.

The success of these organizations is a direct result of their outstanding leadership. I would like to thank Kate Kerrigan of the Dumbo Improvement District, Jennifer Brown of the Flatiron/23rd Street Partnership, M. Blaise Backer of the Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn Partnership, Gayle Baron of the Long Island City BID, and Wilma Alonso of the Fordham Road BID, and their respective staff, for their work in organizing and executing these events.

SBS looks forward to our continued work with New York City's growing network of BIDs and finding innovative ways to support their work.

Sincerely,



Robert Walsh, Commissioner

NYC Department of Small Business Services



**2009
BID
Tours**

Dumbo

**Flatiron
23rd
Street**

**Myrtle
Avenue**

**Long
Island
City**

**Fordham
Road**

Introduction

New York City is home to one of the largest networks of Business Improvement Districts (BID) in the world, with 64 BIDs providing services to districts across all five boroughs. BIDs play an important role in ensuring that our commercial corridors remain strong and meet the needs of the City's residents and visitors. The impact of BIDs across the City is evident. BIDs serve over 3,200 block faces in New York City and include over 16,000 retail businesses. Given the wide range of programs and services provided by the City's network of BIDs, the Department of Small Business Services (SBS) launched the Spotlight initiative. SBS staff worked with each participating BID to bring together a group of thoughtful leaders, from various government agencies, universities, policy institutions, and real estate

and architectural firms to discuss opportunities for innovation and solutions to district challenges. Each Spotlight included a walking tour of the district, a presentation on the services and initiatives of the BID and an open discussion on the impressions of tour participants, all with the objective of assisting the BID in elevating the level of services for their respective districts. This initiative allows BIDs to showcase their innovative programs and services while also providing them with the opportunity to learn from a wide range of professionals. This report provides a summary of the six Spotlight events held over the past year, highlighting the innovative work that is occurring in some of the City's most dynamic and exciting commercial corridors.

Dumbo

111 Front Street, Suite 258
Brooklyn, NY 11201
(718) 237-8700
kate@dumbonyc.org
www.dumbonyc.org

Executive Director: Kate Kerrigan
President: Tom Montvel-Cohen
Date Established: December 2005

Area Description

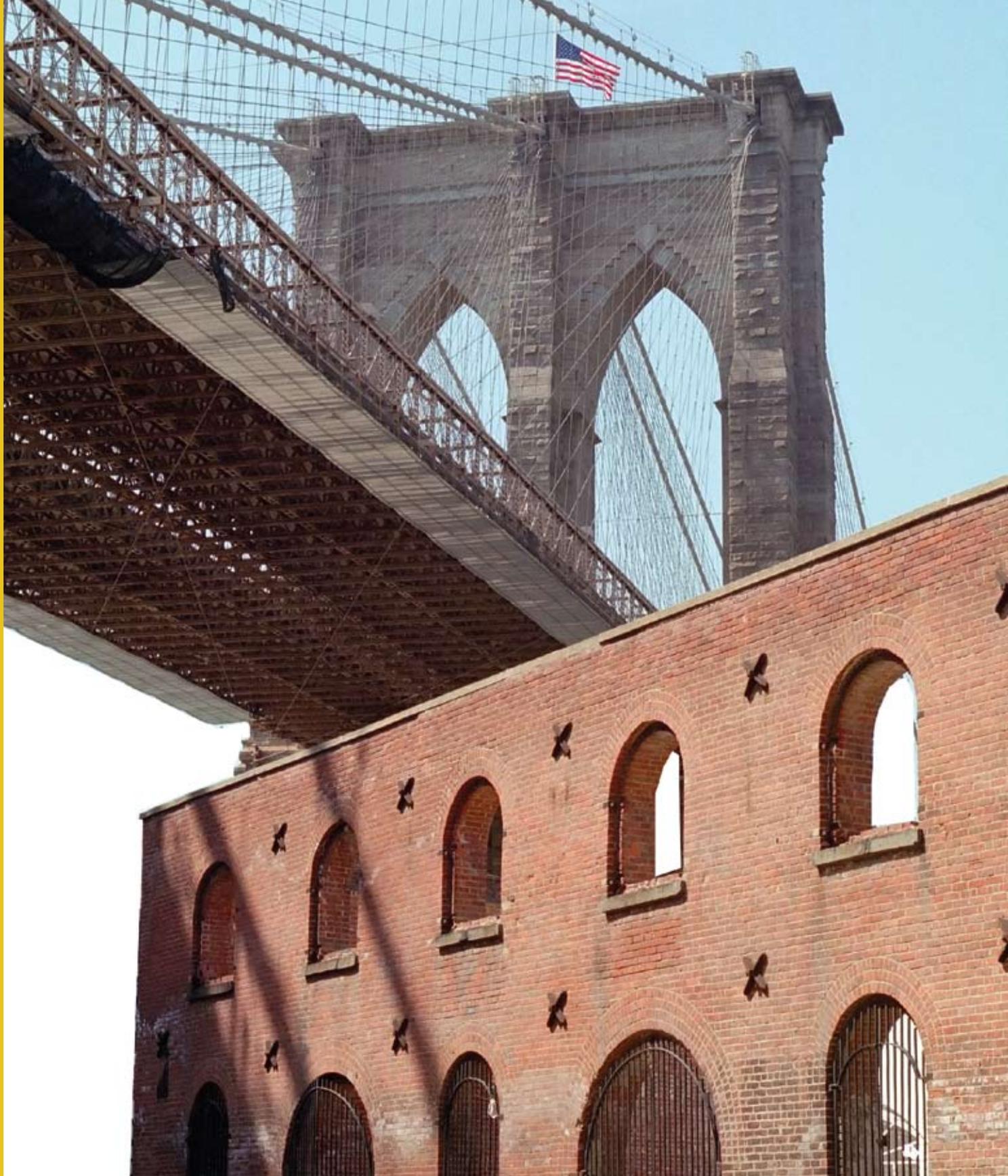
Neighborhood: DUMBO

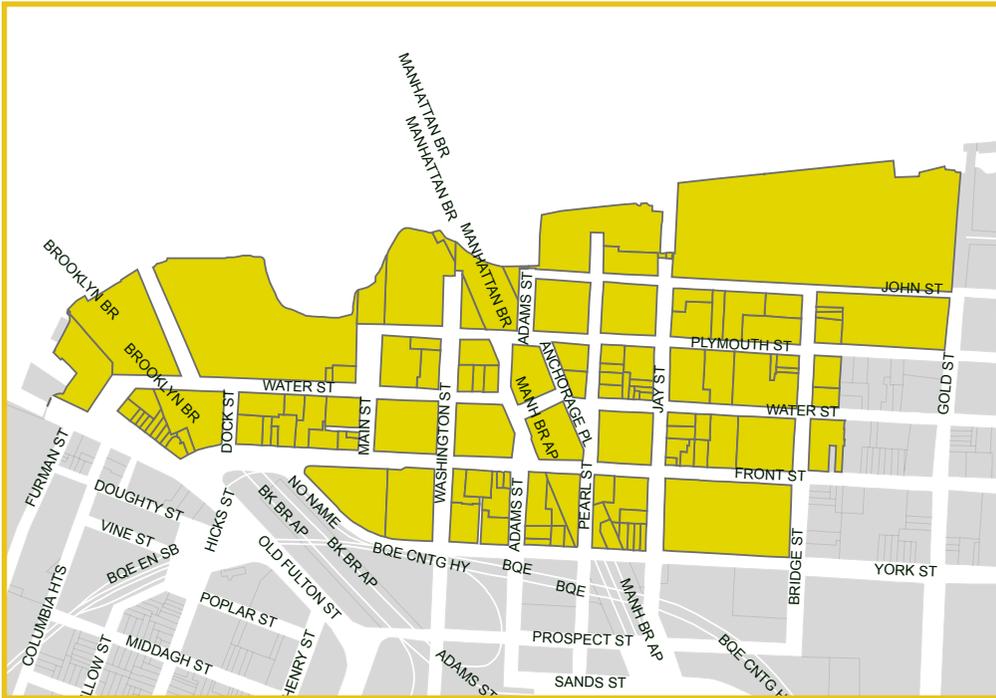
Boundaries: Area generally bounded by the Brooklyn East River waterfront to the north, Gold Street to the east, York Street to the south and Old Fulton Street to the west

No. Block Faces: 98

No. Retail Businesses: 115

Tobacco Warehouse and the Brooklyn Bridge, two of DUMBO's iconic landmarks.





Dumbo Improvement District Map

The Spotlight Initiative was launched in the Dumbo Improvement District on December 4, 2008. The event brought together 19 individuals to learn about DUMBO, a growing commercial and residential community along the East River waterfront in Downtown Brooklyn. SBS put a spotlight on a number of new initiatives that the BID has underway including the creation of new public space at the Pearl Street Triangle and the Manhattan Bridge Archway; encouraging and supporting creative and innovative small businesses, including Green Desk, an environmentally friendly month-to-month office space; and advocating and supporting major infrastructure improvements like the Water and Washington Street Reconstruction Project that is currently underway in the heart of the district. Participants walked the district and experienced first hand the unique character of this former industrial neighborhood that dates back to the 1600s. We then discussed their thoughts and insights about the neighborhood at Superfine, a local restaurant. Below is a recap of a few of the topics that were discussed during the Spotlight. We look forward to working with the Dumbo Improvement District to support the businesses, property owners and residents that have made DUMBO such a great place.



Pedestrians enjoy a market in the Pearl Street Triangle. Credit: Dumbo Improvement District

THE DUMBO IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT NOT ONLY CREATED A SENSE OF PLACE, BUT CREATED SPACE, LITERALLY.

Pearl Street Triangle

Acknowledging the limited amount of public space in the corridor, the Dumbo Improvement District transformed an underutilized parking lot into the Pearl Street Triangle, a public plaza complete with seating, plants and a bright green surface. By offering workers an inviting place to eat their lunch outside, the Triangle averages over 250 users daily during the warmer months. The BID has also installed temporary art sculptures designed by a local artist in the Triangle to further enrich the space.

The Archway

The DUMBO neighborhood holds a distinctive landmark from which its name is derived. Although the 7,000 square foot tunnel under the Manhattan Bridge might have seemed like a historic asset, until recently it was a gated barrier to the community. The Archway was closed for 17 years, being used as a New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) scrap metal storage facility.

Recognizing the potential to activate public space and create a connection through the corridor, the Dumbo Improvement District became a tireless advocate for opening and reconstructing the Archway.

Thanks to support from DOT, the BID, and their private sector partners, the Archway is now open to the public 24 hours a day, 7 days per week and boasts a repaired Belgian block roadbed, sidewalks and curbs.

While the Dumbo Improvement District is encouraging the Archway's pedestrian use through benches, lighting and public art, the organization is also charged with creating a premier, outdoor public event space. The BID is exploring best practices and creative new concepts in programming the space through art shows, craft fairs, green markets, entertainers, and cultural events.

The future looks promising: without solicitation, the BID has received nearly 100 concept requests and inquiries about bringing the Archway to life.

THE DUMBO IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT FOSTERS ECONOMIC GROWTH BY ATTRACTING AND SUPPORTING BUSINESSES WITH AN ORIGINAL FLAIR.

A Creative Cluster

Art galleries, fashionable restaurants and bars, eclectic clothing stores and funky furniture retailers comprise the vibrant small business community that creates a creative ambiance in DUMBO. The Dumbo Improvement District encourages small business owners to open shop in the corridor by highlighting the proximity, sweeping views of Manhattan, and growing residential base. Working closely with the New York City Department of Small Business Services, the Economic Development Corporation, and the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce, the Improvement District is a resource to this thriving business community.

But growth in DUMBO is not only at the ground floor. Commercial tenants of the creative class—artists, architects, graphic designers, web developers and entrepreneurs—are leasing up the area's converted office space. One new venture dubbed "Green Desk" offers affordable and environmentally friendly office space to freelancers and small businesses on a month to month basis in one of DUMBO's beautiful post-industrial buildings. Green Desk is a model enterprise in fostering economic development, environmental stewardship and entrepreneurial innovation in uncertain economic times.



DUMBO Fight Night, a fundraiser for the BID, took place under the newly-opened archway in 2009. Credit: Dumbo Improvement District

THE DUMBO IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT IS ADVOCATING FOR SERVICES AND INVESTMENTS TO SUPPORT THE NEIGHBORHOODS AGING INFRASTRUCTURE.

Along with the historical charm come significant challenges related to an aging infrastructure. The Improvement District is working with the City's Department of Transportation and Department of Design and Construction on a major road reconstruction project along Water Street from Adams Street to Old Fulton Street and along Washington Street from York Street to Plymouth Street. Work began on the project in late FY09, with an anticipated completion date scheduled for 2011. While this project will provide much needed upgrades to the neighborhood's infrastructure, the Improvement District is working to mitigate the resulting challenges, such as traffic congestion, noise and utility disruptions, that can impact normal business operations.

The current construction project is the first of a 5 phase process to repair the neighborhood's network of Belgian block streets. The Dumbo Improvement District is now working with the City of New York to source the additional funding and begin these much needed infrastructure improvements.



Residents and visitors take in views of Manhattan along the East River waterfront in DUMBO. Credit: Dumbo Improvement District

Flatiron 23rd Street

27 West 24th Street, Suite 800B
New York, NY 10010
(212) 741-2323
jbrown@flatironbid.org
www.flatironbid.org

Executive Director: Jennifer Brown
Chair: Gregg Schenker
Date Established: January 2006

Area Description

Neighborhood: Flatiron District

Boundaries: Area generally bounded by Sixth Avenue on the west, Lexington Avenue on the east, 28th Street on the north and 21st Street on the south

No. Block Faces: 103

No. Retail Businesses: 453

Public plazas provide a welcoming juxtaposition to tall office buildings in the Flatiron district.





Flatiron/23rd Street Partnership Map

In March 2009, we toured the Flatiron / 23rd Street Partnership district. Twenty-five participants convened to explore a corridor with a varied mix of uses including over 20 million square feet of commercial office space, thousands of residential units and approximately 500 street level businesses. SBS encouraged tour participants to consider three questions during their tour:

1. Considering the vast amount of residential conversions occurring in the neighborhood, how is the coexistence of commercial and residential uses impacting the retail mix of the district?
2. What opportunities exist in the creation and programming of the new open spaces, namely, the new public plazas at the iconic intersection of Broadway, Fifth Avenue, and 23rd Street?
3. What can be done to continue the revitalization of the eastern corridor of 23rd Street, an area of the district in need of improvements?

Spotlight participants were struck by the historic MetLife Clock Tower and Flatiron buildings and noted the transformation of this historic business district into a mixed-



BID staff plant and maintain the Park Avenue South Mall.

use, live-work, vibrant community. Outlined below is a summary of several of the topics that were discussed in the Spotlight.

THE FLATIRON/23RD STREET PARTNERSHIP IS CHALLENGED WITH AN INFLUX OF CONSTRUCTION BUT THE PROMISE OF NEW RESIDENTS WILL HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE RETAIL MIX OF THE DISTRICT.

Residential conversion and development is prevalent, most notably with the near-completion and partial occupation of “One Madison Park”, the 60-story residential tower on 23rd Street. A sister residential building is slated to rise next to One Madison Park and will share an entrance on 22nd Street. The Partnership welcomes new residential tenants who will make the neighborhood a true live-work community. Their challenge is how to best capture demographic information of new tenants and work with property owners and real estate brokers to attract the ideal retail mix to serve this changing consumer market.

There have been numerous large scale construction projects in the district, most notably the ongoing renovation of 1107 Broadway and 200 Fifth Avenue, the former

International Toy Center South building. Grey Group, a global marketing firm, moved 1,200 employees there in the fall of 2009. This new influx of office employees is having a major impact on 23rd Street and the surrounding area. In response to the new demand generated in the district, the BID partnered with Grey Group to reach out to local businesses interested in offering special introductory discounts for the employees who relocated from midtown Manhattan.

THE CREATIVE ECONOMY IS MAKING AN IMPACT

The Grey Group is one of many ‘creative economy’ businesses that are clustering in the Flatiron district. Architecture, graphic design, performing and visual art firms of all sizes are opening offices in the district. Spotlight participants discussed how the BID could best take advantage of this new prominent industry cluster by holding networking events and branding the district as a place that caters to creative businesses. The BID is also implementing a series of events that are specifically



The Grey Group is one of many ‘creative economy’ businesses that are clustering in the Flatiron district.



Residential towers indicate signs of an emerging live/work community.

focused on providing information and technical assistance to BID members and launched a “District Deals” program to promote discounts provided by businesses throughout the district.

WITH AN INFLUX OF RESIDENTS AND BUSINESS, THE FLATIRON PARTNERSHIP FOUND THAT DATA COLLECTION WAS HALF THE BATTLE

Given the recent influx of residents in the district, and the large number of businesses occupying upper floor offices, Spotlight participants discussed the importance of collecting data on tenants in the district. Although a tenant inventory is a large undertaking, collecting data on new and projected residential units is particularly important to project what effect the evolving demographic will have on the retail



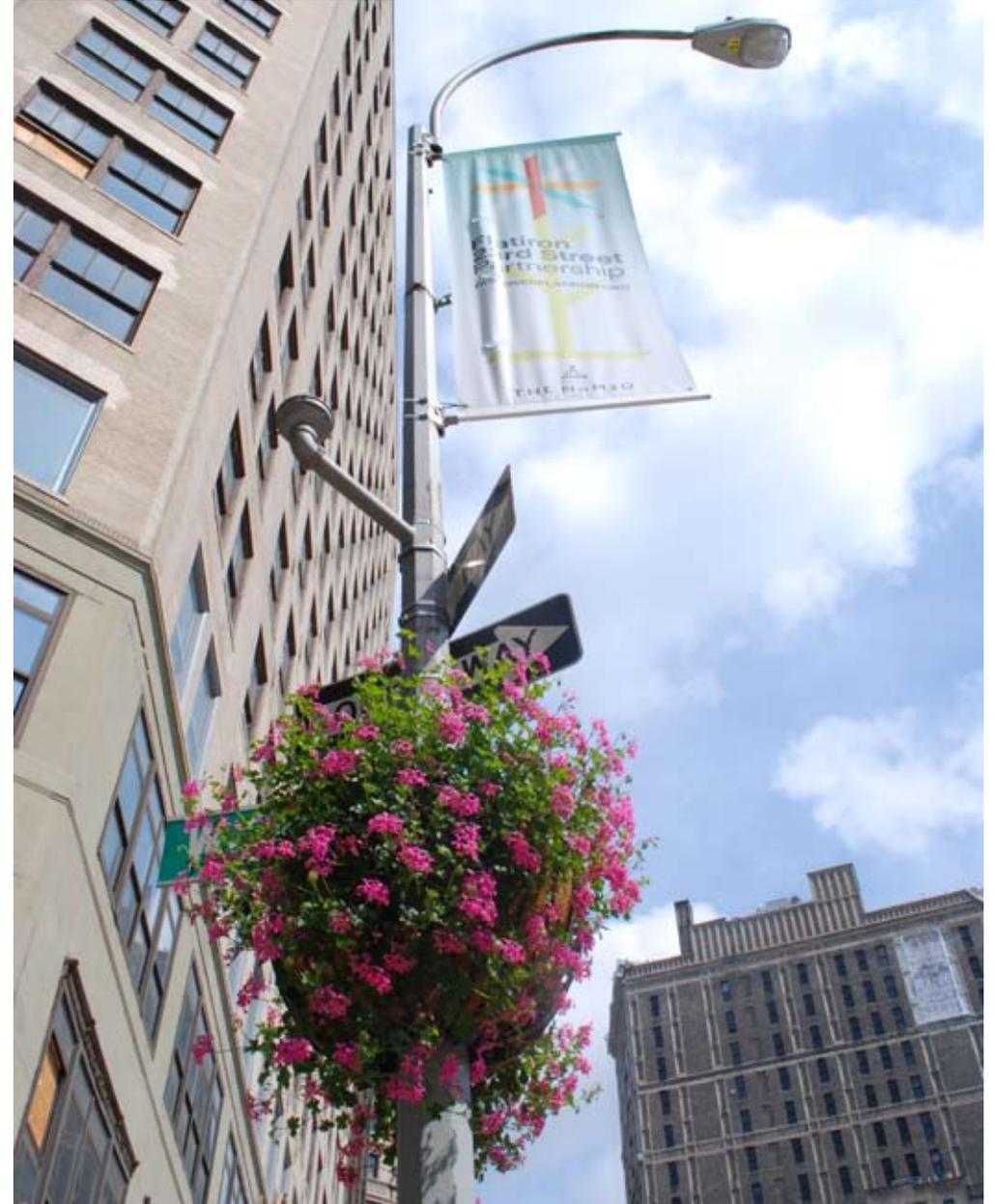
New public plazas encourage pedestrian activity in the Flatiron district.

mix of the district. Since the Spotlight event, the BID has dedicated staff time to updating a tenant inventory and collecting demographic information with the hope of marketing and promoting new business opportunities and strengthening the retail mix of the district.

NEW PUBLIC PLAZAS AND PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS HAVE ENHANCED THE FLATIRON DISTRICT'S SENSE OF PLACE

The Flatiron/23rd Street Partnership became the manager of over 40,000 square feet of new public plaza space as a result of a City led effort to improve traffic and pedestrian flow in the district through the reconfiguration of the intersection of Broadway, 5th Avenue and 23rd Street. The BID, through an agreement with the New York City Department of Transportation, assumed day-to-day responsibility for the plazas in August 2008. The management of these spaces, including sanitation, security, horticulture, and filming/event coordination has had a significant impact on the BID. These events have allowed the BID to begin to earn revenue from the spaces which offsets the annual operating costs. The plaza horticulture program has been well-received by district stakeholders, and the BID began to conduct visitor counts in an effort to better understand the volume of use on each of the two plazas that the BID manages.

While the BID has made significant progress on many fronts, the organization has also been challenged with a range of quality-of-life issues on 23rd Street, especially east of 5th Avenue. The Partnership is implementing a range of physical improvements to the



Hanging flower baskets beautify the district.

district in an attempt to strengthen the eastern part of the corridor and serve both the commercial and the residential tenants that are now calling the Flatiron neighborhood home. New bike racks, hanging flower baskets, enhanced tree guards, and a plethora of flowers and trees have not only beautified this section of the corridor, but also stymied troubling quality of life concerns there.

Myrtle Avenue

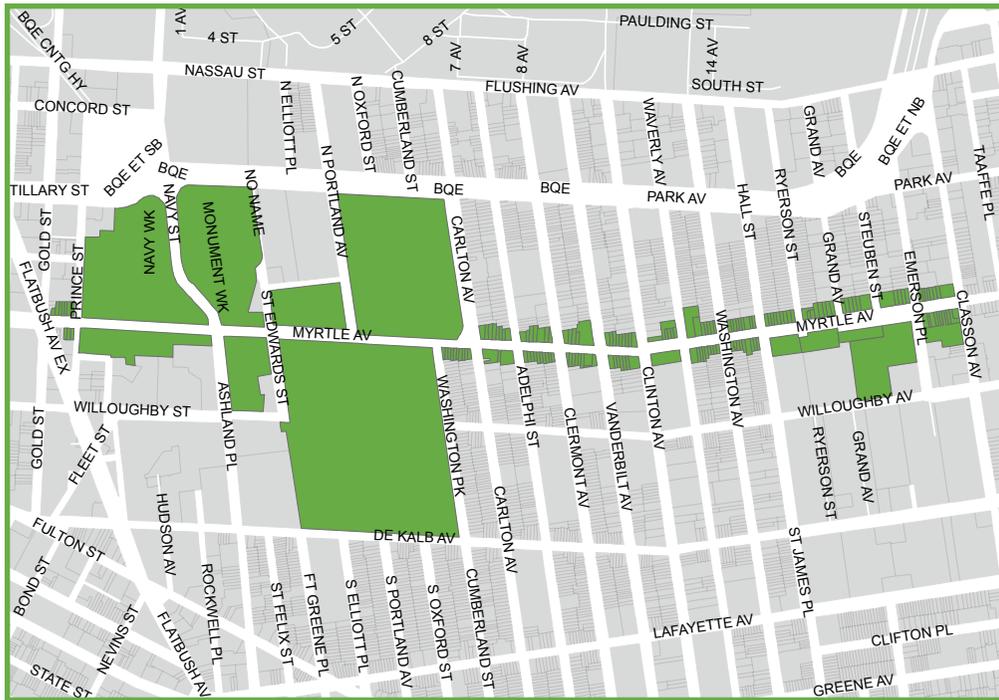
472 Myrtle Avenue, 2nd Floor
Brooklyn, NY 11205
(718) 230-1689
info@myrtleavenue.org
www.myrtleavenue.org

Executive Director: Michael Blaise Backer
Chairman: Thomas F. Schutte
Date Established: April 2005

Area Description

Neighborhood: Fort Greene / Clinton Hill
Boundaries: Myrtle Avenue from Flatbush Avenue Extension to Classon Avenue
No. Block Faces: 40
No. Retail Businesses: 150





Myrtle Avenue Improvement District Map

SBS toured the Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn BID in June 2009 with a group of economic development professionals, government officials and local institutional leaders. Since beginning operations in 2005, the Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn BID has played a pivotal role in strengthening and promoting the 150 retail businesses along its 40 block faces in the Fort Greene/Clinton Hill neighborhood of brownstone Brooklyn. The tour and discussion highlighted the innovative community development work the BID has achieved, despite a limited budget. The close community of local business owners whose welcoming storefronts line the Avenue, and the valuable partnership between the BID and the Pratt Institute, an institution that sets the standard for community-university partnerships, have been central to the corridor's success. Below is a summary of the topics we discussed.

THE MYRTLE AVENUE BROOKLYN PARTNERSHIP KNOWS HOW TO MAKE THEIR DOLLAR GO FURTHER

Despite having an assessment of only \$350,000, the Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn BID has been able to leverage their resources to make the district a vibrant place to live, shop, and do business. The BID partners and shares overhead expenses with the Myrtle Avenue Revitalization Project LDC (MARP), which administers the BID's programs,



Community public art adorns the street in the Myrtle Avenue BID.

and leverages MARP's strong relationships with funders to raise additional revenue from both public and private sources. The BID staff continuously push the envelope to provide exciting cultural events and beautification programs. The organization has been focusing on streetscape improvements and enhancements and recently launched a new public art initiative. This program brings temporary outdoor sculptures and window displays to key sites along the avenue, creating an inviting atmosphere for community members and shoppers. Spotlight participants were impressed with the amount of innovation coming from a relatively small organization.

The eastern part of the district is about to be transformed with a major streetscape project that includes the reconstruction of four blocks of the district and the creation of a pedestrian plaza, a concept that came out of a community planning process the BID started in 2005. The BID is grappling with how to best utilize Myrtle Avenue's border with Fort Greene Park, which currently suffers from physical separation from most of the retail district, as well as how they can be proactive in programming the new pedestrian plaza. Spotlight participants discussed connecting concessionaires to the new plaza and the BID is working to attract programming and activities to the space.



Anima Italian Bistro provides a relaxed and stylish atmosphere for dining on the avenue.

MYRTLE AVENUE IS HOME TO A MIX OF EXCITING, LOCALLY-OWNED BUSINESSES, WHOSE OWNERS LEVERAGE EACH OTHER'S AND THE BID'S CAPACITY

In addition to providing core sanitation and beautification services, the BID has focused on providing assistance and support to the eclectic mix of small businesses in the district. For example, the BID's "Home Grown & Locally Owned" branding campaign highlights stories of the merchants behind the district's mom and pop shops. Spotlight participants met several small business owners in the district who explained how the BID has created a venue for merchant collaboration. The district's business owners' willingness to share information encourages entrepreneurs to re-locate to the neighborhood. Cross-marketing between business types has enhanced the retail mix, attracted customers, and contributed to the renaissance on Myrtle Avenue. The Myrtle Avenue BID has also been very successful in their façade and storefront improvement program by providing technical and design assistance, matching reimbursement grants to property owners and merchants for the rehabilitation and preservation work on historic façades of mixed-use buildings, as well as to the exterior, interior, and signage of retail storefronts. The BID's attention to detail is evident through high-quality innovative design throughout the district.



The Pratt Store, a campus art supply store, anchors the western end of the BID District.

PRATT INSTITUTE, A STRONG PARTNER IN THE REVITALIZATION OF MYRTLE AVENUE, SERVES AS A MODEL COMMUNITY-MINDED ANCHOR INSTITUTION

The BID is very fortunate to have such a visionary and supportive partner in the Pratt Institute, whose President, Dr. Thomas Schutte, is Chairman of the BID's board and a founding member of the organization. Spotlight participants learned more about the multiple ways in which the Pratt Institute supports the district and has created spaces that enhance Myrtle Avenue and bring more pedestrians to the corridor. For example, the Institute opened the PrattStore, a campus art supply and book store on a former parking lot fronting Myrtle. Adjacent to that site is 524 Myrtle, a new 6-story building that Pratt currently has under construction. The building will house Pratt administrative space and art studio uses on the upper five floors, while the ground floor will be a separately owned commercial condo and will house 15,000 square feet of retail. The BID shared information about programs they have for the students in the area, including a retail marketing initiative which encourages Pratt students to shop and eat on Myrtle Avenue. Dr. Schutte also shared future plans for additional efforts to coordinate strategies between the BID, the community, and Pratt.



"Being in this community and serving our neighbors is an important part of Green in BKLYN. As a one-stop shop for eco-friendly products, we're able to make it easy and fun to live greener. We love that."

ELISSA

GREEN IN BKLYN
432 MYRTLE AVENUE • 718.855.4383
OPENED ON MYRTLE APRIL 2009

HOME GROWN & LOCALLY OWNED MYRTLE AV
WWW.MYRTLEAVENUE.ORG BROOKLYN



"abistro began as an idea early in our relationship. It's as if we have all grown up together. We think the Senegalese Fried Chicken is the best reflection of us: savory and sweet, creamy and crunchy, spicy and tart."

ABDOUL & CASSANDRA

ABISTRO
154 CARLTON AVENUE • 718.855.9455
OPENED ON MYRTLE MARCH 2005

HOME GROWN & LOCALLY OWNED MYRTLE AV
WWW.MYRTLEAVENUE.ORG BROOKLYN



"Myrtle Avenue is the home base for garden artist John who creates beautiful urban gardens, and floral designer Kerry who makes bouquets that are beautiful but edgy."

JOHN & KERRY

ROOT STOCK & QUADE
471 MYRTLE AVENUE • 718.230.8081
OPENED ON MYRTLE MAY 2008

HOME GROWN & LOCALLY OWNED MYRTLE AV
WWW.MYRTLEAVENUE.ORG BROOKLYN



"I grew up in Sicily and for most of my life I've been in the restaurant business. Now in Brooklyn, I've never been happier to serve the food I am so passionate about! Great food in a great neighborhood!"

SALVO

ANIMA
458 MYRTLE AVENUE • 718.422.1122
OPENED ON MYRTLE JUNE 2008

HOME GROWN & LOCALLY OWNED MYRTLE AV
WWW.MYRTLEAVENUE.ORG BROOKLYN

The BID's award winning Home Grown & Locally Owned campaign featured different small business owners on a variety of post cards.

Long Island City

One MetLife Plaza
27-01 Queens Plaza North, 9th Floor
Long Island City, NY 11101
(718) 786-5300
gaylebaron@licbdc.org
www.licbid.org

Executive Director: Gayle Baron
Chairperson: David Brause
Date Established: July 2005

Area Description

Neighborhood: Long Island City

Boundaries: Jackson Avenue from 45th
Avenue to Queens Plaza; Queens Plaza from
Jackson Avenue to 21st Street

No. Block Faces: 22

No. Retail Businesses: 24

The Gotham Center development will be a 3.5 million square foot mixed used development in Queens Plaza. Phase 1, a 650,000 square foot building, is under construction and should be completed by the end of 2011. Credit: Tishman Speyer





Long Island City Business Improvement District Map

In June 2009, 30 government officials, property owners and economic development professionals joined SBS as we put a spotlight on Long Island City, Queens. The Long Island City BID serves an area that has recently emerged as a vibrant mixed-use neighborhood. Historically an industrial district, Long Island City has seen a number of changes of late that have redefined the neighborhood as a destination for the arts, businesses, and residents. The Long Island City business district is an ideal corridor to accommodate the growing need for affordable office space in New York City. Meanwhile, the surrounding residential community is also growing as one of the premier affordable neighborhoods in the outer boroughs. The district was rezoned in 2001 to allow for high density, mixed-use development. Since then, developers have been taking notice of this neighborhood with massive potential to become a more vibrant and dense 24-hour community across the river from Manhattan.

Established in 2005, the BID serves businesses like Silvercup Studios, Dykes Lumber and Citibank by keeping the area clean and safe. The BID also plays an active role in promoting Long Island City as a destination for businesses and an ideal place for New Yorkers to work, live and play. With a neighborhood full of development potential as the backdrop, participants on the tour focused their discussions around how the BID could encourage accelerated development during the economic downturn,



Plans for Court Square include a fountain and greenery. Credit: NYC EDC

improve the retail mix in the district while at the same time encourage improvements to the existing retailers, and maximize current improvement efforts in light of a limited budget. SBS looks forward to continuing to support the BID in navigating government and sharing best practices related to these identified challenges. Below is a summary of those issues.

THE BID IS CHALLENGED WITH KEEPING THE RETAIL OF LONG ISLAND CITY ON PACE WITH THE INFLUX OF RESIDENTS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

In the last several years, developers have capitalized on the area's rapid access to Midtown Manhattan and beautiful views of the New York skyline by building new apartments and condominiums. However, the retail mix along Queens Plaza suffers from a lack of diversity and saturation, struggling to meet the needs of the recent influx of new residents. Restaurants, bars, coffee shops, and service retailers are needed to improve the quality of life and capture the unmet demand of the district's residents and workforce. In response, the BID is working with brokers and property owners to improve the retail mix and capitalize on the growing residential community. Although a growing number of new bars, shops, restaurants and cultural amenities



Jackson Avenue as it stands today. Credit: David Milder

are beginning to locate in the district, the BID has the tall order of marketing the neighborhood's vast potential to both likely and unlikely investors. Following the Spotlight tour, the leadership of the BID heard from participants about the types of retail and amenities that the district needs and received suggestions as to how to attract retailers and services. The BID is planning to start a façade improvement program in the near future to help give a face lift to some of the businesses along Queens Plaza, a common concern of many of the Spotlight participants.

EVEN THOUGH LONG ISLAND CITY IS BECOMING A THRIVING LIVE-WORK COMMUNITY, THE ECONOMIC SLOWDOWN HAS NOT SPARED THE DISTRICT

Although there has been a significant amount of new development in this post-industrial district, the economic downturn has slowed some development projects, particularly along Jackson Avenue. The BID is leveraging its relationships to encourage the acceleration of development, including the Gotham Center with over 600,000 square feet of commercial space, scheduled for completion in 2011. Additionally, JetBlue airlines recently named 27-01 Queens Plaza North as the site for their new corporate headquarters which will bring nearly 1,000 employees to the district. Once these projects are completed they will truly enhance the area's potential as a NYC commercial and residential destination.



Streetscape enhancements planned for Jackson Avenue. Credit: NYC EDC

PUBLIC CAPITAL INVESTMENT WILL ALSO CHANGE THE LANDSCAPE OF THIS NEIGHBORHOOD

The BID is working closely with the City on the Queens Plaza Capital Improvement Project to ensure long-term sustainability with a limited budget. In August of 2009 the City announced that \$76.4 million in new infrastructure improvements in Long Island City will transform this primary entrance to Queens from a network of clashing roads into a mixed-use commercial and residential center that is pedestrian, cyclist and vehicle friendly. Phase I of the project extends from Queens Plaza North to Queens Plaza South and from Northern Boulevard/Queens Plaza East to 21st Street and will focus on streetscape improvements, such as new sidewalks and curbs and improved lighting. It will also create a public plaza with benches and pedestrian and bicycle pathways. Phase II will continue improvements from 21st Street to the East River at Vernon Boulevard. Spotlight participants discussed the viability of the planned plaza below the elevated subway line and ways the BID could address the concerns associated with the project, such as the noise issues created by the elevated subway lines, the physical condition of the tracks, the traffic patterns and the lack of retail along the periphery of the park.



An aerial rendering of Long Island City highlights several planned development projects. Credit: NYC EDC

Fordham Road

2488 Grand Concourse, Room 411
Bronx, NY 10458
(718) 562-2104
fordhamroadbid@optimum.net
www.fordhamroadbid.org

Executive Director: Wilma Alonso
Chairperson: David Rose
Date Established: December 2004

Area Description

Neighborhood: Fordham

Boundaries: Fordham Road from Jerome Avenue to Third Avenue; Grand Concourse from 188th Street to 192nd Street; Jerome Avenue from Fordham Road to 191st Street; East Kingsbridge Road from 192nd Street to Fordham Road; Webster Avenue from 188th Street to Fordham Road; and 189th to 192nd Street between Webster Avenue and Park Avenue.

No. Block Faces: 35

No. Retail Businesses: Over 300

Fordham Place, a 288,322 square foot office and retail complex, is a new investment to the neighborhood.





Fordham Road Business Improvement District Map

In December 2009, SBS toured the Fordham Road BID in the Bronx with 25 government and economic development professionals. Fordham Road's commercial corridor is composed of over 300 businesses that include small independent shops and national and regional chain stores. With a large number of anchor stores, a major transportation hub – accessible by several buses, subway lines and Metro North – and close proximity to major cultural and educational institutions such as the Bronx Zoo, New York Botanical Garden, Fordham University, Monroe College and CUNY on the Concourse, this business improvement district boasts the highest traffic counts in the borough of the Bronx, and is one of the highest for all of New York City.

The Fordham Road BID is strongly committed to the beautification and improvement of public spaces along Fordham Road. Through their active involvement, a total of \$3.8 million has been raised and secured for beautification projects in the Fordham commercial corridor. Fordham Road has been a center for recent renovations and major projects such as the \$1.3 million installation of historic street lighting, installation of new bus shelters, solar waste compactors, and dedicated bus lanes. Moreover, a \$2.5 million park redevelopment project at John Fraser Bryan Park is scheduled for late 2010. The BID will soon begin to implement phases of their Streetscape Master Plan which includes upgrades on existing roadway conditions, street furniture, and



Bryan Park, a small pocket park, is slated for redevelopment in the spring of 2010.

signage. In addition, Fordham Plaza, a large public space in the hub of the district just east of the BID's boundaries, is receiving a major facelift.

The discussion during the Spotlight tour focused around the new improvements to Fordham Road. Participants discussed how the BID could benefit from managing improved public spaces in the district and coordinating with several different city agencies involved in future construction projects that will transform the district. Outlined below is a summary of key topics that participants discussed.

THE BID IS CARVING OUT A ROLE IN THE MANAGEMENT OF ADDITIONAL PUBLIC SPACES

Bryan Park

The Bryan Park Redevelopment Project is currently in the design phase with input from the BID, the City, and the architecture firm, The RBA Group. Construction is slated to commence in the Spring of 2010. Bryan Park is a small, 0.15 acre, pocket park at the island of the intersection of East Fordham and East Kingsbridge Roads. The design features a reconfiguration of Fordham Road extension, which will create a much larger public space that will include a sitting area with benches and a planting

area surrounded by a cobblestone retaining wall. Both the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation and the Department of Transportation are working with the BID to make improvements to the park. Currently, the BID hosts numerous programs and events in the park, such as free health screenings and their annual holiday tree lighting ceremony. The BID also supports landscape improvements to the park during the spring and fall of each year. Participants discussed how the BID could best position themselves to subcontract concessions in the park, include moveable street furniture to welcome public use of the space, and conduct future programming events, making it a more prominent public gathering space for the Fordham Road district.

Fordham Plaza

Fordham Plaza currently serves as a major transportation hub, where the Metro-North station and over 10 bus lines converge. This site has been selected as part of Mayor Bloomberg's Public Plaza Initiative. The New York City Economic Development

Corporation (NYCEDC) has been charged with improving Fordham Plaza and is conducting a community outreach process to facilitate stakeholder involvement in the redevelopment of the plaza. Fordham Plaza has the potential to become one of the City's most enjoyed public spaces, bringing shoppers, residents and students to the reinvented space.

Although the plaza is not within the current BID boundaries nor maintained by the BID, the question arose during the Spotlight discussion if the BID might be willing to take on a maintenance role. Similar to Bryan Park, Fordham Plaza has the potential to benefit the BID with concession revenue, should the organization maintain the space. The community could also benefit from the BID's involvement through a cleaner, more attractive space that offers programming and events. However, the plaza construction is still in the conceptual design phase. The BID is working closely with NYCEDC to have a role in the redevelopment but is determined to prioritize Bryan Park as their pilot public space maintenance project.

FORDHAM PLACE: A NEW DEVELOPMENT RAISES THE BAR FOR RETAIL AND OFFICE SPACE ON FORDHAM ROAD

Developed by Acadia Realty Trust and PA Associates, Fordham Place is a new \$120 million, 288,322 square foot office and retail complex at the eastern boundaries of the BID. Situated at the busy intersection of Fordham Road and Webster Avenue, the property features 162,463 square feet of prime Class A office space in a 14-story office tower.

The new development benefits the district with active ground floor retail composed of nationally recognized tenants. The 100,000 square foot retail component is anchored by Best Buy, Walgreens, Bank of America, Sears, Healthfirst, and 24 Hour Fitness, who has taken the entire third floor. In the office tower, the Jonas Bronck Academy, a prestigious middle school, recently leased 50,000 square feet, including a separate ground floor entrance with dedicated elevators. The U.S. Census Bureau has also leased 8,250 square feet on the 8th floor.

PA Associates, a member of the Fordham Road BID's Board of Directors, graciously hosted the Spotlight discussion in one of the built-out office spaces. Participants were impressed with the current tenant mix, particularly with the ground-floor retail tenants, the flexible office floor plans, and the sweeping views that reached Midtown Manhattan.



The Fordham BID's retail mix is composed of local, regional and national businesses.



The Fordham BID boasts one of the highest traffic counts in the Bronx.

Michael R. Bloomberg
Mayor

Robert K. Steel
Deputy Mayor

Robert W. Walsh
Commissioner



For more information on Business Improvement Districts (BID), visit: nyc.gov/BID