Commercial District Needs Assessment
A Research Toolkit for Community-Based Organizations

Organization Name:

Commercial District
Boundaries:

Before you use this tool, please read the accompanying guide. Your Avenue NYC Contract Manager is available to address any questions you may have.

careers
businesses
neighborhoods

ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

1. Is there an existing organization leading commercial revitalization efforts in your commercial district?

   Yes ☐   No ☐

2. List any community-based organizations in your area and rank their respective level of engagement or willingness to engage in commercial revitalization efforts. (Scale: 5 = Highly engaged, 1= Very disengaged or opposed)

Name/Organization	Don't know	1	2	3	4	5
CBDO: Housing, Economic Development						
Community Based Organizations: Social Services						
Civic and Cultural Institutions						
Community Based Organizations: Other						
Property Owners or Landlords						
Merchants or Merchant Groups						
Resident Leaders or Resident Groups						

careers
businesses
neighborhoods

Small Business Services

3. List elected officials who represent your area and rank their respective level of engagement or willingness to engage in commercial revitalization efforts. (Scale: 5 = Highly engaged, 1= Very disengaged or opposed)

Elected Official	Don't know	1	2	3	4	5
Local Electeds (New York City)						
Council Member						
Community Board Chair						
Mayor						
Public Advocate						
Comptroller						
Borough President						
City Agency contacts						
State Electeds (New York State)						
Governor						
Assemblyman						
Senator						
State Agency contacts						
Federal Electeds (Federal Government)						
Congressperson						
Senators						
Federal Agency contacts						

4. What are the economic development priorities of the LOCAL elected officials for your target area?

Council District: _____   **Council Member:** _____

Top three priorities for the commercial district	1. 2. 3.	
Current or past funding of projects in the area	**Current Funding**	**Past Funding**
Areas for partnership		

NYC Small Business Services

careers
businesses
neighborhoods

Community Board: _____   **District Manager:** _____

Top three priorities for the commercial district	1. 2. 3.	
Current or past funding of projects in the area	**Current Funding**	**Past Funding**
Business or economic development committee?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
Areas for partnership		

Borough President: _____

Top three priorities for the commercial district	1. 2. 3.	
Current or past funding of projects in the area	**Current Funding**	**Past Funding**
Areas for partnership		

Mayor: _____

Top three priorities for the commercial district	1. 2. 3.	
Current or past funding of projects in the area	**Current Funding**	**Past Funding**
Areas for partnership		

Comptroller: _____

Top three priorities for the commercial district	1. 2. 3.

Current or past funding of projects in the area	Current Funding	Past Funding

Areas for partnership	

City Agency: _____   **Contact:** _____

Top three priorities for the commercial district	1. 2. 3.

Current or past funding of projects in the area	Current Funding	Past Funding

Areas for partnership	

Other: _____

Top three priorities for the commercial district	1. 2. 3.

Current or past funding of projects in the area	Current Funding	Past Funding

Areas for partnership	

Note: See Appendix B in the accompanying Commercial District Needs Assessment Guide for templates that you can use for collecting more detailed information on stakeholders, including property and business owners.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT[i]

1. Rank the following **Public Realm** components in your area on their respective condition. (Scale: 5 = strong/excellent, 1= weak/poor)

Public Realm	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
Streetscape Conditions						
Sidewalk						
Street Conditions						
Amenities: Artwork/Murals/Banners						
Street Lighting						
Amenities: Street Furniture						
Tree Conditions						
Perception of Safety						
Cleanliness						
Trash Management						
Graffiti: Paint/Posters/Stickers						
Signs of vandalism						
Open Space*						
Park						
Plaza						
Other						

*If your district has open spaces, see the Open Space Inventory Template on Appendix B in the accompanying Commercial District Needs Assessment Guide to help you collect information and asses their conditions.

2. Rank the following **Private Realm** components in your area on their respective condition. (Scale: 5 = strong/excellent, 1= weak/poor)

Private Realm	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
Building Stock						
Building						
Storefront						
Scaffolding						
Owner Engagement						
Landlord/Property Owner Accessibility						
Business Owner Accessibility						

Note: See Appendix C in the accompanying Commercial District Needs Assessment Guide for a template that you can use for collecting more detailed information on commercial property owners.

3. Rank the following **District Access** components in your area on their respective condition. (Scale: 5 = strong/excellent, 1= weak/poor)

Access	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
Streetscape Conditions						
Public Transportation						
Station Maintenance: Subway						
Station Maintenance: Elevators						
Station Maintenance: Bus Shelter						
Station Maintenance: CitiBike						
Station Safety						
Station/Shelter Signage/Markings						
Pedestrian/Bicycle						
Intersection safety for pedestrians and cyclists						
Clear crosswalks						
Sufficient intersection signage						
Bicycle lanes and parking						
Automobile						
Availability of Parking						
Appropriate meter regulations						
Clear traffic lines						

QUANTITATIVE ASSESSMENT

Data Point	Figure	Source
Crime Rates and Trends		
Ridership Counts and Trends		
Traffic Counts		
Pedestrian/Bicycle Counts		
Car Ownership*		

*Reach out to your designated SBS representative for assistance in acquiring elements of this data.

| | BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT |
| | |

BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT

1. Rank the following **Business Environment** components in your area based on whether you agree or disagree with the associated statement.

	Don't know	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Store Density						
It is easy to shop at multiple stores in one visit						
There are few to no vacancies in the district						
Tenant Mix						
The district's retail meets the needs of local residents						
Business Health						
Businesses are performing well as compared to previous years						
Anchors and Destinations						
The district has strong anchor(s) that attract visitors						

Note: See Appendix D in the accompanying Commercial District Needs Assessment Guide for a survey template you can use to collect information from local merchants.

QUANTITATIVE ASSESSMENT

Data Point	Figure	Source
# of existing businesses		
# of new business openings in the last year		
# of business closings in the last year		
Businesses by Category*		
Vacancy rate		
Anchors		
# of students		
# of employees		
# of hospital beds		
# of individuals served		

*Reach out to your designated SBS representative for assistance in acquiring elements of this data.

MARKET AND DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Residential Consumers

QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT

1. Do you expect new development – including residential, commercial, or mixed-use – in your area that might alter market demand?

    Yes ☐   No ☐

2. If you answered yes, what type of development do you expect and how will the expected development alter market demand?

3. What or who is the target market for the new developments? Do new development projects aim to attract a significantly different resident than those who already live in the area?

4. What kind of development projects would current residents like to see occur in the area?

QUANTITATIVE ASSESSMENT

Data Point	Figure	Source
Population*		
Population density*		
Population growth*		
Number of households*		
Household Size*		
Median Age*		
Race*		
Median Household Income*		
Average Household Income*		
Income growth*		
Education*		
Housing type*		
Home Ownership*		
Retail leakage*		
Retail/Service needs		
Number of anticipated housing units under development		
Housing prices (rentals and sales)*		

*Reach out to your designated SBS representative for assistance in acquiring elements of this data.

careers
businesses
neighborhoods

Non-Residential Consumers

QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT

1. Do the businesses in your commercial district rely on **employees of other area businesses** for sales?

    Yes ☐   No ☐

    If you answered yes:

What and where are the major employers?	
What types of jobs and incomes do employees have?	
What retail/service needs does the employee population have?	
Are their needs met by the existing businesses?	

2. Do the businesses in your commercial district rely on **students** for sales?

    Yes ☐   No ☐

If you answered yes:

What schools are in the area?	
What retail or service needs does the student body have?	
Are their needs met by the existing businesses?	

3. Do the businesses in your commercial district rely on **visitors** (i.e. NYC residents who don't live in the area or tourists) for sales?

        Yes ☐   No ☐

If you answered yes:

What anchors in the district are drawing visitors from outside the area?	
What are the retail/service needs of visitors? Are their needs met by the existing businesses?	

QUANTITATIVE ASSESSMENT

Data Point	Figure	Source
Jobs in the area		
Employee Characteristics		
Visitation to destinations		
Student Enrollment		

---

[i] Elements taken from LISC Commercial Revitalization Planning Guide