

## **Community Board 1, Queens – Full Board / Public Hearing Meeting Minutes**

**March 21, 2023**

Meeting opens with Chairperson, Marie Torniali at 6:30 p.m.

### **PUBLIC HEARING ITEM:**

Deputy Inspector Kenneth S. Gorman will provide community updates related to the district. The Deputy Inspector has been with the 114<sup>th</sup> Precinct since July of 2022. During his presentation he will address crime statistics and crime prevention.

**Deputy Inspector Kenneth Gorman** Hello everyone, very happy to be with you for the first time since I've been to commanding office, I appreciate the invitation. I want to thank the staff here at the 114<sup>th</sup> Precinct, the office, men and women here are doing phenomenal work on behalf Community. Last year we were up 25% in crime. We ended the year down a few points from there at only up 21% in crime. We are currently up less than one and a half percent in crime for the year and our 28-day period we're actually down to two percent in crime. We are even or have a decreased in five of the seven Major Crimes, which includes remaining at zero murders for the year, which is phenomenal. Our rapes are even, our robberies are down 31% almost 32% for the 28 -day period. Our grand larcenies are even and our grand larcenies auto theft, which is something that has plagued us this last year are down for the period 28%, almost 29%. Where we did see a little bit of an uptick for the 28-day period, were in felony assaults and burglaries. When it comes to burglaries, we are seeing an increase in residential burglaries during the day. When people are out to work, houses are being broken into that's an increase of only four, but still too many to have. Making sure that everybody's securing their home and then, if you have any concerns about that, you reach out to our Crime Prevention Officer or our Community Affairs Officers, and they can do a crime prevention survey of your property, whether it's a residential or a commercial property. They are more than happy to do that. A great 28 day- period, a decrease in crime by two percent. When we look at the things that are plaguing us, for the year and plaguing is such a wrong word this year, because everything is really close, even if we're up grand larcenies, we're only up four for the entire year. A lot of those are scams where we are seeing are phone scams, online scams, by mail, and scams on the street. If there's anything that I can get out to everyone is that if anything doesn't sound right to you, whether it's a phone call from Con Ed when you've paid your bill on time for your entire life, now they say they are about to shut your lights off or someone calling and saying that a loved one is in jail or a loved one has been kidnapped or something of that nature we implore you if anything, doesn't sound right in call the police before you transfer any kind of money or take any kind of action to sharing personal information, account information and so forth. I've seen that since we've been here a lot of phone calls from people claiming to be law enforcement claiming to be utility workers, the landlord even sometimes building management, some of you don't normally get a phone call from and you don't recognize them, then reach out to us. One scam that we did see on the street was a distraction scam. We only have a couple of them, but they've happened throughout the borough. We have a group, that has been going up to people on the street and they distract them by saying, there's something liquid or some kind of dirt on their clothing, and they pretend to help wipe it off and either there's a second perpetrator, that's grabbing something from you or that perpetrator that's touching you uses that as an opportunity to take something out of your pocket. One of the ones we saw here was two people involved, but we have them now is what we call Persons of Interest. One distracted the person, while the other one went into their trunk. They left the trunk open, they saw them at the trunk open and distracted them by saying you have something on your jacket and as they went to help them, the other person went into the trunk and removed property from the trunk of their vehicle. Last year, we saw another a similar street scam, where they were approaching people with jewelry necklaces, and they try to show you a necklace. Let me show you how this looks around your neck. When they pretended to remove it, they'd actually removed a necklace or some other jewelry that was already on your person before they got to you and do a swap of the jewelry and you're left with fake jewelry, while they walk off with your necklace. We did see about four of those at the end of last year, so those types of street scams are out there.

If you are approached by someone on the street that you don't know, you definitely want to take a step back and make sure that they're not making any contact with your person. We did do a crime prevention event. Unfortunately, we did it on a rainy Friday, so it didn't get the turnout we wanted to, but we did it at Mount Carmel. We are in the process of planning another event. Education is a key piece to crime reduction, especially in a place like the 114<sup>th</sup> (Precinct), because we have so much property crime. Educating people about the scams, educating people about securing their vehicles and their personal property-is going to have a huge impact on crime in this community. We are planning another event and what we would like to see moving forward is more of a police -community collaboration. We would like to have the Community Board the Community Council, the Civic Associations feel free to set up a table of their own. If they want to hand out information, any crime prevention information they have, or even just information about attending their meetings, where people will get additional information on a regular basis. We want it to be a very collaborative type of event where we are working together and then,

hopefully through that we'll also bring more people in to get the information that they need To give an overview; We had Youth Outreach information there, our Youth Coordination Officers were there. We had some traffic safety information there with our Traffic Safety officers. We had domestic violence survivor information there with our domestic violence team. We also had people from what we call our CVAC, Crime Victim Advocate Program. They are employed by Safe Horizon, contracted through the department. They are to not only help people that are victims of general crime, but specifically with domestic violence. They are there to help connect people to their crime victim services, whether that be at the state or city level. So we had them there as well, and our huge strategies, division from our Community Affairs Bureau-was there as well. We are going to replicate and have them there next time as well. We want to expand to our Public Officials and our Civic Associations and Community Boards. If anybody would like to participate and have a table there and have participation on that level, we'd like to know about it and we are looking at trying to get something done within the next month, so setting it up again as we get into spring. Going back to crime, the grand larceny in the autos or auto theft, we have a slight tick: we're up 18 crimes of 40%, which is it sounds like a lot, obviously 40% for the year. It's something that definitely I will use say plagued us. Last year we were up 120 vehicle thefts. It was a city-wide problem, it is actually a nationwide problem, we saw a concentration in two things: concentration in Honda products being targeted. It was very much the CRVs and this year it's more General Honda products, so we're seeing CRVs we're seeing Honda Accords we're seeing Acuras, which are made by Honda Corporation. What we have done is reached out to some Honda dealerships in the area and they can give crime prevention materials to anybody purchasing a vehicle. In addition to that, we've tried to get people enrolled in what we call our CAT program, combat, auto, theft program. We give you a sticker. You register with the Department, we give you a specific vehicle and it allows officers to stop that vehicle from 10 o'clock at night to six in the morning, just to check and make sure the right person is driving that vehicle and no other need.

If it has that stuff, it's been a tool, that's been around for decades, but it is very impactful when we get enough people involved in the program.

Another thing that we've seen is work vans, support, Econoline Vans are being targeted in order to facilitate normally in order to facilitate additional crimes.

So what we see is that they'll steal a Ford, Econoline Van, and that or a similar vehicle, usually they are, Ford Econoline, empty cargo vans and they'll use those to pick up scooters and motorcycles at this ceiling as well.

So that's another Trend that we're starting to see. So, if you own a business or for any reason, have your own Ford Econoline vet. Cargo van: it's definitely something you want to take a little extra step in securing and the motorcycles are starting to pick up. We always see motorcycles getting stolen at a higher rate as we get into the warmer weather, we're starting to see that we had a night just two nights ago, where we had three motorcycles stolen in one night. So we definitely want to see, educate people as much as we can about securing your motorcycles if there's a way to get it inside whether in a garage or other place, that's the best way to do it, but obviously, if the vehicle has to stay outside, we want to do as much as we can to secure it, wheel, locks and Etc, and that's pretty much all I have for the crime right now, but I'll take any questions.

#### **Question and Answers:**

##### **Chelsea Lopez**

On Astoria Boulevard, where the 114th Precinct is there's a problem double and triple parked police cars. It's not only like a traffic safety problem, but it's right next to the Grand Central Parkway. The parking lot that is connected to the 114th Precinct, it's pretty empty, there are cars that might be connected to an arrest right there on the street. Can the precinct get an alternate space to put cars associated with the arrest in a different location? Cars are being parked where the sidewalk is curb cut so people who are disabled can't cross the street, and it's always like that.

**Deputy Inspector Kenneth Gorman** I did see that, and it is a problem. I will I have to say it has improved dramatically since I've been here, I put a policy in place where I do not allow the officers to double park in front of the Station House. Is that 100 percent? Absolutely not. We have outside commands, like the Housing Police may come here process an arrest. We may have somebody from the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel, the State Police. They don't fall under my direction on a regular basis. We will have some issues with them on occasion, but every one of my desk officers would be in charge of the operation of the command and has been directed to make sure that we do not allow anybody to double park in front of the command. I'm, not saying it's, 100% we do still have some problems with it, but I've actually gone to the extent to make that a directive from me, it's part of our training. Officers that violate that are subject to my direction. As far as the parking lot is concerned, Sunday, maybe it's empty, but I park in that parking lot every day and it's pretty packed for the most part. A majority of vehicles you see are personal officers' vehicles, but a lot of the vehicles that we do have are what we call voucher vehicles that we've taken in

connection with an investigation or an arrest. We are a little overwhelmed with those right now. Our pound in Brooklyn, had a major fire, so it slowed down them collecting those vehicles for a little while. We are in the process of trying to relocate as many of those as possible, getting those towed has been a little bit of a problem for two months now.

We are all working on that and I apologize for that the, we actually have a unit right now, that's going around and looking for officers that are parking in spaces they shouldn't be parking and those officers are not only subject to reinstruction but possibly internal discipline. The things that I've seen that I'm most concerned about and I'm sure you are as well is the crosswalks. So crosswalks are specifically on 35th Street I've seen a problem there. We have been moving those vehicles out of that area, instructing officers not to park there. It is probably going to raise to the next level internally, but I have to say I believe there has been a dramatic improvement as far as the flow of traffic on Astoria Boulevard. If you have a specific time that you are passing the Station House and you see it or even if you want to take a photo and send it to us, I will address it because I don't want that out there myself.

**Chelsea Lopez**

Where should we send our photos?

**Deputy Inspector Kenneth Gorman** You can send it through our Community Affairs, guys and I will have it addressed. I'll tell you that the most problematic times and something we're trying to address is when we do our shift changes three times a day. It is hard to find enough parking spots to leave the car until somebody else takes it so, I try to limit that as much as we can to a brief 10 minute period, and that none of those directly coincide with the rush hour, but one obviously is right after three o'clock. That's the beginning of the post school and getting into that evening rush hour. That's the only one that really impacts the rush hour and the other one is seven in the morning so it's a little bit before, especially for the eastbound traffic and the other one is in the middle of the night it shouldn't be impacting so much but I don't want any impact, I'm not trying to make excuses. We don't want any impact. So as we are able to get more of these vehicles that we've confiscated out of here, we should have more areas to place those vehicles and get them out of your way.

**Antonella DiSaverio** Are the theft of catalytic converters a problem in our area? Do you have any tips to prevent that?

**Deputy Inspector Kenneth Gorman** It is a continuing problem, and a nationwide problem. There is a very valuable metal that's used to create the catalytic converter and the interior of the catalytic converter. We have seen a bunch of thefts here from the of the catalytic converters. The best way that we have to prevent and secure those is a new program and it's a little resource heavy, so we're trying to get it out to as many people as possible, but we do have a catalytic converter etching program where we do basically three things to the catalytic converter. We'll etch it with a serial number. We put a sticker on it, which is a an overt symbol that it's been registered with the Police Department and there's also a paint that's put on it. That is only visible if we shine a certain light on it. So what happens is that when they steal these, they don't put them on other cars. They go to places that are buying these things off of them.

If we do an investigation into one of those locations, we can check all those catalytic converters to see that paint is on them, Brew, etching them and putting that symbolism on the symbol on there, we're hoping that deters some people when they go underneath your car, if it doesn't, that paint will help us prosecute those that are buying it. So that program is we're, going to be setting it up at our next prime prevention event that we're trying to set up in the next couple of weeks. The thing with it is: it takes a little while the car has to be cold, so the car has to get to the location, we're doing it, and then we have to give the car time to cool down so that we can work on the catalytic converter, but that is definitely one way of preventing it. I can definitely reach out to my crime prevention officer, to see if there's anything that we're endorsing yet that we can put out on social media. But as of now, we haven't seen that.

**Antonella DiSaverio** When that program starts, could you let Florence know so she can send a bulletin out, or post it on our website, because I think a lot of people are interested in that.

**Kathleen Warnock** Can you tell us what the people in your Precinct are told about what regulation should be applied and enforced and what you still need to get in terms of law enforcement?

**Deputy Inspector Kenneth Gorman** One of the major problems with the smoke shops now is there is still only two licenses in the city. There are definitely no licenses within Astoria, nobody in Astoria has a location and a license to sell marijuana products, that adds to the problem, because now everybody who is selling marijuana in Astoria is doing it illegally and it becomes a cash business which makes them a target for criminals, because they know there's going to be a large amount of cash under the counter. They know the marijuana products are going to be hidden. They hope that people aren't going to report it, but they do report it, which is good. So obviously that creates a bad situation. We are trying to identify those locations that are selling illegally and then work with our Narcotics Division and the Sheriff's Department on how we can address those issues. The problem where the law stands right now, we would have to observe that sale and even at that point it may not be an arrestable offense. It may be a "summons-able" offense or a

very small arrestable offense for us, depending on the amount of marijuana, but we don't have a lot of enforcement remedies for very small marijuana sales at this point because of the way the law is written. The Sheriff's Department is questioning what their status is and as far as enforcing. Our focus is to identify the places that are selling illegally. Many of those are committing other offenses, also we're seeing if they're selling marijuana illegally. What we've seen is that not all of them, but some of them are also selling other narcotics. I should say narcotics and that is a way for all Narcotics Division to get in there and do an investigation and see if we can try and get it that way. The other thing that we're seeing is the sale to underage. So if a place is selling they are, probably selling underage, which is another enforceable offense that we can look at, but the nature of the store, just having a store, is not illegal, just having a store that sells things that can be used to use marijuana like bongs and rolling paper, and things of that nature is not illegal. We are asking the community, and we've gotten a lot of information, to bring us information on what stores are selling illegally so that we can take that next step. It is very unlikely that we're going to see a sale right in front of a uniformed officer. It gets very difficult for us to address that and enforce. Unfortunately, it's been something that's been problematic for us. We encourage people not to get involved in illegal sale of marijuana and that's one thing that we've been doing, but the next step is to get information from the community about who is selling illegally and then take a step from there. Whatever angle that we can address it from.

**Kathleen Warnock** Do you have any idea, whether you're going to get anything in terms of Regulation

**Deputy Inspector Kenneth Gorman** It is very hard to say because, as you know, this has been a couple of years in the making now with the legalization-and there are a lot of these aspects of the business that have not really been worked out. The people that are seeking licenses think it's taking too long to get licenses. There has been different approaches on how they're going to distribute licenses so and there's been a lot of back and forth about what enforcement should be done and who should be doing that enforcement, whether it be us or the Sheriff's Department or so forth, so I'm sure at some point we're going to get better direction, we're going to continue to get more and more as we go on, but I couldn't predict to be honest with you.

**Adam Fisher-Cox** I would like to return to the issue of parking, it is difficult to those who are interacting on foot, with a stroller or wheelchair, it is impossible for them to pass and poor visibility is a problem. In addition to the double parking, is it policy that officers are allowed to park on the sidewalk, so they can have space right near the precinct or are those also in violation of those policies.

**Deputy Inspector Kenneth Gorman** It is what we call combat parking when we park halfway up on the sidewalk, that's a common practice throughout the department. The reason for that is so that we can get in and out more quickly. It does lead to us taking up less space because you'll still have, as you see on Astoria Boulevard, you still have the two active Lanes of traffic, we're not taking out another Lane, but if we parked all those vehicles on the curb in the street, obviously they would take up a lot more space. We look at it as we're taking up less space on the street and we're able to get more vehicles and have them be able to respond quicker than if you're parallel parked on the streets of New York, how tough it can be sometimes to get out of that parking space when something parallel parks in front of you right. So our the idea is that those vehicles are unobstructed when they have to respond to an emergency. So that's the way we do it, but those vehicles the way they're parked, At least the ones in front of the Station House I personally, don't see them obstructing anybody's ability to walk on the sidewalk. There still seems to be plenty of sidewalk to walk on and to push strollers and whatever else. If there's a difference of opinion that I'm absolutely you know willing to take a look at it, but we don't bring them all the way back up to the building line, there's a lot of room in between the building line and the vehicle in order for people to get by. When we get into things like line of sight, that's obviously a big concern and that's why we want to get those vehicles out of the crosswalks on the corner. Not near hydrants, not near all those things that create a line of sight problem. If you put something in a crosswalk it's going to make it a lot harder to see around the corner. We are hoping that will be dramatically improved by not having those vehicles in those crosswalks. If something continues to be a problem specifically, we're open to discussion. I don't want to be a bad neighbor I want to be a good neighbor like I said: I live in the city, I deal with the same parking issues that everybody else does. If there's a specific corner where you say, this is really too close. I can't see around the corner. I'll look at that if I have to make more room, I'll do my best to make more room. It is our challenge, not the community's challenge. We have well over 300 people that work in this building and because of the nature of public transportation here the vast majority of them drive to work, a lot of my officers who live further out in Queens and into Long Island. With 300 people working in the building with very limited parking, it does become a big challenge for us, but we want to balance that with the needs of the community, so whatever we can do and those blatant violations like blocking the crosswalks and things like that, we're addressing and the double parking, but anything else that we can work on we're more than happy to have a discussion please feel free to contact us.

**Daniel Aliberti** I have a clarification and I'd like some understanding stores such as CVS or supermarkets are being raided, people stealing things and that either the police are not doing anything about it if the



value of these things is less than a thousand dollars or that the DA's are not doing anything about it and just all these types of statements and I'd, like some clarification or some understanding.

**Deputy Inspector Kenneth Gorman** The bail reform changes in the last couple of years has made it challenging. Although we have had some changes in the law in the last few months, which is given us and the DA's a little more tools to keep people in jail. At no point did we stop arresting anybody. We make those arrests every time, we're called, and we find that perpetrator. We make that arrest, whether it's a what we call a petty larceny, which would be under a thousand dollars or a grand loss, we're making those arrests. What we were seeing is a challenge in the past, and this is getting a lot better. The people being released right away from arraignment, or incarceration, but now, if they have open cases, we're able to look at that or the DA is able to look at that request bail and to request remand and things of that nature. So we have additional tools now to address that. We have not at any time, though, stopped arresting people, in fact we're moving to come up with new ideas on how to address those problems, so what we were seeing and what could or would lead people to believe that we're doing nothing I would imagine is that we would arrest somebody for a petty theft or petty larceny and they would get a desk appearance ticket. They would come right back out and they would commit another petty theft and they would come back in and they would get a desk appearance ticket and they'd go back out or they may not qualify for a desk appearance ticket based on all rules, go to court and be released on their own recognizant right away pending trial, and they would go right back out and commit another offense, and we do have a couple of those what we call repeat-offenders or recidivists in the command that we focus on. Now with some of the changes to the law, the D.A has some more tools to keep those people incarcerated or at least request bail on them, which will hopefully be more of a deterrent for them not to commit an additional offense, but absolutely in no time that we stop arresting people. I will tell you this command and the District Attorney's office have a very good relationship. We communicate on a regular basis about people that are problematic in that area, and they are doing everything they can do within the laws. They have to work within to make sure that they're serving and protecting the communities to the best in their ability. What I think everybody should understand is understanding what bail reform did and what the changes to bail reform are partially reversing, but not fully, but understanding that, because there's different ways, we approach the arrest processing system which not only bail reform but the desk appearance, ticket reform that was done a couple years ago and there's a different way that the D.A has to approach even requesting bail. The D.A when they prosecute a case, all they can do is request bail and then the judge ultimately makes the decision, whether or not to issue that bail and hold that person on that bail. Sometimes the law doesn't even allow the judge to impose the bail. The DA can only request it and the judge has to approve it and the judge under the law in some instances is not even allowed to approve it. We are going to continue to tackle the problem and we are working with the DA now on a new program that is something that may start somewhere else in the borough and but it definitely will wind up here in the 114 at some point, where we are looking to start a trespass-affidavit program which we'd like to call it the Astoria Business Improvement Program. If you had someone who's problematic, it continues to go into your store and steal, they could be issued an affidavit, actually a trespass notice that would direct them that they are no longer allowed into your store under the direction of the owner or the custodian of the property or the manager. Once they re-enter that store for any reason, they would be in violation of Criminal Trespass and the penal law, so they would automatically be arrestable just for walking through your front door again. that would give us the opportunity to make that arrest before they commit an additional larceny within your business. If they're issued this the next time it would also subject them to the possibility of higher charges, because they'd have a combination of that trespass. So that's a program that the DA is working on. They have it in between South and 103rd Precinct. They are looking at expanding it with us here in Queens North, so that will help address that problem too.

**Dominic Stiller** I am going to go back a little bit to the questions raised by Chelsea and Adam. I just want to wonder and hope that maybe in the coming months you can check how many of your officers do take the subway today. Maybe you can increase that by 50 or 100 percent. Do you have any idea how many of your 300 people do take the subway to work and if you have any thoughts on maybe significantly increasing that in the coming months and years.

**Deputy Inspector Kenneth Gorman** use the subway myself off duty, and it would be great if we had more officers on the subway I agree with you 100 percent. That would be something I'd have to look into I would want to say it's a very small amount. I think I'd be comfortable, saying that, but as far as a number I wouldn't even have any idea, but no I'd love to see more of them take public transportation and I think it'd make a lot easier for the community, like you said, I think it make a lot easier for us. My officers with parking issues that are here and if you drive around the precinct or you walk around the precinct you'll see, there's not a lot of open spots. When they are coming to work, they're still driving around the block, like every New Yorker driving around the block numerous times looking for that parking spot. I think it would be beneficial if we had more of them coming in via public transportation.

**Evie Hantzopoulos** I want to go back to the comments he made about bail reform. You are attributing that to the rise in crime, I'm wondering what your statistics are and where are you getting those from, because all the research that has been done shows there is not a connection.

**Deputy Inspector Kenneth Gorman** No, that wasn't my point at all: I'm, not getting into that and I wouldn't say it to be my position to make that argument at all. What I was saying is that the way we address certain arrests and the way that certain arrests are prosecuted were impacted by bail reform. I just put that out as a point so that whether or not that has led to an increase or decrease in crime would be well beyond my pay grade or my position to speak about.

**Stella Nicolaou** I think the police are doing all the best on the shoplifting, if they're informed. The major discount stores have a security person who check receipts etc. and they don't have that problem. Is it possible to get these major brands to invest in similar prevention. What I've been told by the people that work there they are told not to do anything because a person can be violent. but I think stores really have to take more of a responsibility on this to work along with what the police are doing.

**Deputy Inspector Kenneth Gorman** It's a balance for them. Unfortunately, as the Police Department, it is not our position to tell them how to protect their property. I will say, not to speak for any store specifically, there are concerns that if personnel get involved they could get injured, that they could create liability for the store if they injured the perpetrator. Those concerns have been expressed to me by different stores over the years. It would be great if everybody could have a security guard and everybody would pay attention to the security guard and respect that security guard and not commit any crime. Whether or not they want to take that chance at creating the risk of injury or a liability is something that the store has to make for themselves. Some stores have made the decision that they would rather let the property go and not get anybody hurt and write it off. We are called after the fact. We do our best to make sure that person is apprehended. The majority of people that are committing, especially petty theft, are not violent. I want to say one in a million, but that one in whatever chance if they have a physical altercation and they subject their employees to injury or subjective themselves to some kind of liability. Some of them don't want to take that step. If you had somebody there I think it would be a deterrent to a lot of people, but unfortunately that's not my decision

## **PRESENTATION:**

The Queens Economic Development/Coalition (QEDC) and central Astoria Local Development Coalition (CALDC) will provide a presentation to review preliminary findings of the Commercial District Needs Assessment (CDNA). Speakers: Victor Prado Project Manager | Astoria Boulevard (QEDC), Roxy Tico Tico Program Manager Central Astoria LDC, Matthew O'Malley | Project Manager Neighborhood Development Division NYC Department of Small Business Services. **(Presentation attached).**

## **Question and Answers:**

**Evie Hantzopoulos** The responses, how did you capture the information? Was it multiple choice or did people check things off, or did you get open responses to some of the questions?

**Victor Prado** We did have two primary surveys. We had a consumer survey which were more for people who shopped in Astoria as well as lived in Astoria, and then we had a merchant survey specifically for merchants on the specific corridors. It is a mix of both multiple choice and open ended. When we would say to a merchant, for example, what would you like to see or what would you like to see improved? What would you think would help your business grow and some of those multiple-choice questions would be landscaping beautification, resolving safety concerns better lighting for your area, things of that sort. Although it was multiple choice, it was a lot of variety and it was a lot of choices as well as open-ended questions. I can give a practical example. There was a deli on Broadway east of Steinway Street, where it gets a little rougher and his number one issue was not on the survey. He had a lot of people ordering in front of his Deli they would get alcoholic drinks and then they would hang out in front of his Deli and then at some point it would cause a little bit of a mess for any potential customers who wanted to come in. They would feel maybe a little scared and would not go in exchange for doing the survey he wanted to make sure his voice was heard, which again was the whole point of the survey that his concern of this issue that he's had specifically can be marked down. We have, at the bottom end of the survey, which is open-ended for anything that the merchant needs, or has questions about.

**Adam Fisher-Cox** What is this feeding into? What's the next step with this data and what will that it impact?

**Roxy Tico** These are just preliminary findings and the final complete CDNA will be out sometime the end of this year, with the hopes of hearing people's thoughts and ideas for potential projects to develop based on these findings. Again, these are long-term goals, and these are just the preliminary findings at this time.

**Adam Fisher-Cox** I know as someone who took the survey, they were also just more demographic type things in there. I saw a parking mentioned twice as I go want to have, but I know. You also asked for how

consumers are arriving at these business districts. Do you have the results of that breakdown of how people are actually getting to the business district

**Roxy Tico** We can definitely check on that and get back to you, but just roughly to quickly answer your question. We will get you the hard math we have, but I believe the number one is public transportation, so it's kind of a mix of all of them, I believe I'm, not sure which one's number one but I know subway and bus are pretty close type, they're fighting for the top spot, but public transportations.

**Richard Khuzami** Did you get any sense of the attitude towards box stores where there are smaller retail, particularly when there was discussion about quality reach, retail being needed in the area? Also I'd like to get an idea of people's attitudes towards the restaurant sheds and the parking capabilities, and, lastly, do they feel that open streets facilitates or hinders commerce in the neighborhoods.

**Marie Torniali** I read the results, I think it's divided, people like the dining sheds if they're well maintained, if they are not used to that purpose, they do not. I think people, and it was mostly women correctly from wrong were looking for more Boutique type for all ages.

**Victor Prado** A lot of the restaurant owners specifically they either love the outdoor eating areas or they hated it. Essentially, they loved it when again, we hit it on the nail, which was when it is well kept when it adds value when it looks nice to the corridor, they loved it. A lot of the negative comments I have heard were actually from restaurant owners pointing out the restaurant owner across the street outdoor eating area, which she says "look at mine, I spent thousands of dollars of mine and that one looks like it was put together with like a Lego set or something and it really brings down the area". A lot of the back and forth that I personally heard was from restaurant owner to restaurant owner, and then that brings up you have this ugly outdoor eating area on top of it just being ugly, but it also eats on probably average three to four parking spots, which during prime dining over the weekend is a factor that they consider, because that's how they make their living, from the patrons who usually drive into Astoria, to enjoy the cuisine here. A lot of them did have concerns regarding double parking, for example on 36th Avenue. There are a couple blocks where double parking is very evident and that little span before 31st Street, where there is a lot of the Bangladesh restaurants, people will double park on both sides and you just have to wait until someone gets their food and then you could actually drive by it's actually very chaotic for a two blocks span. Now, if you throw an outdoor dining area there, then it's total chaos, but that's just one practical example where I would define Astoria that has very specific places where it does bottleneck and when it does bottleneck it's very bad. Although the flow of the streets, more or less, they would be just considered average for New York City.

**Richard Khuzami** One thing I'd like to clarify is when talking about open streets. These are the stretches like the areas on Ditmars, where there is no vehicles allowed they are, totally blocked, and it's just for pedestrians only and whether that is helping commerce helping to facilitate it or hindering it. What were people's attitudes towards it?

**Marie Torniali** I didn't see his strong opinion. I mean I read over the report. That's not something that came up.

**Daniel Aliberti** I didn't hear mention of the 31st Street Corridor. Maybe I didn't hear it, but if it wasn't covered, why wasn't it and if it was covered, then I apologize.

**Victor Prado** I could respond. 31st Street was not on the study area, I'm just repeating for those who might have missed it. The study area included Ditmars Astoria, Boulevard, 30th, Avenue, Broadway, 36th, Avenue and Steinway, which also includes a Steinway BID. 31st Street was not involved. Why not in terms of the exact reason it's hard for us to say, because this comes from SBS, so they determined those corridors reflect the overall it would be able to provide a snapshot of the business health in Astoria. There are a lot of corridors that could have been included or even the corridors that were included technically, they could have expanded them even further. In terms of those details, we could follow up in terms of the why, but it was not communicated to us.

**Dan Aliberti** It is a significant Street and I thought it would be in there.

**Sam Massol** The reason why is because there's a limited capacity. Astoria is extremely lucky in that we have not one, but several commercial corridors. Broadway's huge Steinway is huge, so unfortunately, we had to make some tough choices and focus on the ones we thought needed the most attention. The initial approach was to actually engage with Astoria Boulevard because we felt that Astoria Boulevard needed the most amount of attention to see how we could turn around businesses on Astoria Boulevard so that they would become more resilient at since we're seeing the large turnover in that area.

Anyone else have a question or a comment.

**Florence Koulouris** Regarding rents: did they find that there was an impact because of the rents here in Astoria?

**Marie Torniali Chairperson** Actually, surprisingly, and correct me, if I'm wrong, it wasn't as quite that way it was a relationship with the landlord and most people, I'd, say 80 percent thought they had a great relationship with their landlord, and that was not a factor. Are there any further comments and or questions. No, so thank you Victor and thank you Roxy for being here, and we look forward to the final, which I'm sure we will display on our respective websites.

## **BUSINESS SESSION:**

### **Adoption February 2023 Minutes**

**Motioned** by Kathleen Warnock; **Seconded** by Liz Erion

### **Chair Report:**

**Marie Torniali Chairperson** I have no report except to say we I don't know when we are going to go back in person, so if you would be kind enough to put your cameras on while they're still on whom that would be great, because I miss seeing your faces and that would be great if we can keep our cameras on going soon, since we don't get to see one another, though that might be coming soon, we'll be sure to let. Thank you for your performance.

### **District Manager Report:**

**Florence Koulouris** It's great to see you again, so I have a couple of items that I wanted to bring you up to date.

As the last couple of months, The city of New York is hiring not at the rapid pace. It should be, but there are job openings. We just lost our Buildings Department representative, the person has left service to the city. I've been working very closely with several different agencies related to complaints that we've been receiving between 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue from 20 from 41<sup>st</sup> Street to 49<sup>th</sup> Street regarding RV homes parked on the street, and we have seen some very good action with those RVs being moved not up to par for what we're looking for, but it is progressing. Also I've been working with several agencies regarding the box trucks in our community moving trucks that are parked all over our streets. I ask you please, if you see any commercial vehicles parked in our streets at nighttime, please call 311 with the make the model and the name of the commercial vehicle parked in the street. We have one moving company, which has three different divisions and they're all over Astoria and that impedes on our nightlife industry. Our restaurants, our lounges, our bars, are hurt and the community at large is hurt because people are transversing, the sidewalks going three or four blocks to a business when they should be parked around the corner. One other factor I would like to bring to your attention is feeding birds in our community. As you all know, we've been getting a lot of complaints about rats. There are approximately seven rats for every person. If you reduce the food source available to the rats and other rodents which are attracted to all types of food and properties, they should then dissipate. One fingerprint feeds a rat for three weeks. So if you're in a restaurant shed-and you touch your chair and the chair at night-is left unclean-that rat leaps for three litters. I'm asking you please, if you see your neighbors feeding the birds, please ask them not to feed the birds with the construction in our district, we're having a lot of construction workers dump their lunch in the street thinking they were doing a good thing for the animals, but it's very bad for our community. So please take this to heart. I want to wish you all a happy holiday season and thank you for everything you do. Thank you.

### **Committee Reports:**

**Community Affairs Committee Dino Panagoulis** Please open up your packets, that Florence graciously sent over to us, I believe that there are 23 liquor licenses in front of us that are up for a vote and thanks to Florence, we've actually gotten three items that were on the agenda that had somewhat high numbers as far as 311 complaints. We did get them to sign and notarize stipulations, which they did almost immediately, which did not require a Consumer Affairs Committee meeting and they also agreed to meet with the 114<sup>th</sup> Police Precinct when they're having their Council meetings and to keep in touch with the Consumer Affairs. That's one of the things that we have been trying to do with any of the new businesses that are going into this kind of renewal avenue to make sure that they are good partners in the community and to actually participate within the 114 meetings to understand exactly what is going on in our community to get tips and tricks on how to, in fact better their potentially their security, their practices and everything of that sort, and so at this time I would like to put a motion forward to approve all of the license renewals that are in front of us.

**Motioned** by Jean Marie D'Alleva; **Seconded** by Stella Nicolaou

**Marie Torniali Chaiperson** Is anyone opposed? Seeing none, the motion carries.

**Environmental and Sanitation Committee Antonella Di Saverio** April 1<sup>st</sup> there is going to be a change in when the times that you are going to put out your garbage. If you have garbage cans with lids, you can place that out at 6 p.m. instead of 4 p.m., trash and garbage bags can be taken out at 8 p.m. Some feedback from neighbors: they are not too keen on putting out garbage in the dark and then they don't feel that it is going to curb rats. We probably need to look into that and then one more thing: compost drop-off sites, if you're interested in dropping off compost, there's a map on Queen swab on the queen swab website and it's [www.queensswab.nyc](http://www.queensswab.nyc)

**Housing Committee Katie Ellman** I wanted to apologize that the Committee meeting scheduled for last week had to be postponed and will be rescheduled. I had a family, emergency and I just wanted to thank Marie and Florence and Antonella for their understanding and help with that, and we look forward to scheduling that soon. It will be about lead and lead poisoning lead levels in children and someone from lead free kid, New York, as well as HPD and Department of Health.

**Land Use and Zoning Elizabeth Erion** I wanted to let you know that we are meeting on the 4th of April it's a Tuesday evening because of the Passover holiday beginning on Wednesday. We have two items on the agenda: both are rezoning items. One is anticipated to be certified before the meeting, so that means there will be a public hearing that is 42<sup>nd</sup> Street and Newtown Road area. There is an R6A being proposed for that area, and then there is an informational item concerning a rezoning from M11 I think two M15 for a large of industrial commercial building in the Queens Plaza area. So, just remember that it's Tuesday, not Wednesday and I hope to see you there.

**Parks and Recreation Kathleen Warnock** No report from us this month. We will keep you posted.

**Transportation Dominic Stiller** I think that the 45<sup>th</sup> to Newtown, Road and improvements are basically not what people are looking for and I believe they painted one curb extension on the northwest corner. I think the discussion will continue as to how to fully improve all four corners of that intersection and I'm waiting to see what happens there with Zohran (Mamdani) and (Tiffany) Cabán and the D.O.T.

**Airport RoseMarie Poveromo** We are Community Board members and Committee Chairs we have an obligation to voice both sides of a proposal or issue by an agency or what have you as week as Community concerns. As such, as Chair of Airports, my report tonight, though lengthy, will cover both the Port Authority /MTA and their latest proposal as per Hersh Parekh, Director of Government and Community Relations, NY and that of the Communities' concerns and issues as President of the United Community Civic Association (UCCA). The Port Authority of NY and NJ today released the "Options for Mass Transit Solutions to LGA" report, an exhaustive analysis of 14 different mass transit options to the airport. After thoroughly reviewing the analysis, the "expert" panel recommended that the Port Authority move forward with substantial improvements to airport access by improving the existing MTA Q70 LaGuardia link service and creating new non-stop shuttle service from the terminus of the N/W subway line in Astoria. The wide-ranging analysis commenced in late 2021, at the request of NY Governor Kathy Hochul, and was carried out by a multi-disciplinary team of well recognized outside engineering, construction and transportation firms. The three-member independent, outside expert panel of worldclass transportation leaders was established at the Governor's request to oversee the study and to make recommendations based on the analysis. This panel consisted of Mike Brown former Commissioner of transport for London and former Managing Director of Heathrow Airport; Janette Sadik-Khan, principal at Bloomberg Associates and former Commissioner of the NYC Department of Transportation; and Phillip A. Washington, CEO of Denver International Airport and former CEO of Los Angeles Metro. The MTA worked closely with the engineering/construction firms and the expert panel throughout the study and attended all panel meetings. The panel recommended that the Port Authority move forward in the near term with two bus options evaluated in the study: Substantial improvements to the existing MTA Q70 LaGuardia Link bus service connecting to Jackson Heights and Woodside:

- Transit signal priority on Roosevelt Avenue and Broadway to minimize travel time ;
- A mile long exclusive bus lane built on the shoulder of the northbound Brooklyn-Queens Expressway between Northern Boulevard and Astoria Boulevard, subject to federal, state and local approvals, to increase service reliability between and Jackson Heights and LaGuardia Airport;
- Frequency improvements, as needed, in response to increased demand;
- A new, specially designated bus pick-up and drop-off area near Terminal C with direct, exclusive road access to avoid congestion on the airport frontage;
- Wayfinding and lighting improvements at Jackson Heights-Roosevelt Ave?74St (7,E,F,M,R) and 61 St-Woodside Stations (7,LIRR);
- Further enhanced branding and signage to promote the improved service.

New non-stop shuttle service between the airport and the last stop on the N/W subway line at the Astoria-Ditmars Blvd station serving all three terminals at LGA featuring:

- Exclusive use of fully electric buses to eliminate noise and emissions;
- Dedicated bus lanes, potentially during peak hours, on 31<sup>st</sup> Street and 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue with transit signal priority to minimize travel time;
- Improved facilities at Astoria-Ditmars Blvd station, providing ADA accessibility;
- End of the N/W line station will assure ease of use by airport travelers

The panel expressed a strong preference for a “one-seat ride via subway” as the most effective way to move travelers from cars to mass transit, but given the serious, unresolved constructability and the cost challenges to building a subway extension identified by the engineering/construction firms, the panel recommended a near-term focus on improving bus service to provide better, faster transit access to LGA, as the public benefits would be realized sooner at lesser cost. The improved bus service is projected to benefit nearly 5 million total passengers annually. The engineering /construction firms estimated capital costs for the bus options at just under \$500 million compared to estimates ranging \$2.4 billion to \$6.2 billion for the light rail options. The Port Authority plans to bring a planning authorization request to the Board of Commissioners for approval in the next 60 to 90 days, addressing the panel’s recommendations and starting the process for the Port Authority to fund the costs associated with the improved bus service. The panel did not recommend any light rail options, but advanced bus options that carry equivalent ridership as the former Mets-Willets Point alignment. The panel also did not recommend either of the ferry options, which the study concluded would attract a very low level of ridership. Nor did the panel recommend any emerging technologies that the studies said are still unproven. During the course of the analysis, the Port Authority sought and received input from dozens of elected officials, community stakeholders, advocacy groups, and the general public by holding two public workshops, conducting 10 focus groups with members of the community and airport travelers, and reviewing hundreds of public comments. All plans and concerns are to be determined and will involve Community discussions. At the start of this process the Port Authority committed to conduct a fair, thorough, impartial evaluation of mass transit solutions to La Guardia Airport, said Rick Cotton, Executive Director of the Port Authority. “We assembled a team of top-quality engineering and transportation firms to conduct the study and appointed to an outside panel of world-class transportation leaders to deliver independent recommendations. That report is now complete, and the panel has delivered its recommendations. We thank Mike Brown, Janette Sadik-Khan, and Phil Washington for their tireless efforts and thoughtful recommendations. We also thank the elected officials, community stakeholders, and members of the general public who offered their input and feedback. We are today publishing the entire 450-page report and the full text of the panel’s recommendations.” So ends the PA/MTA report. The current proposal by the PA/MTA for Mass Transit to LGA is not new. Twenty years ago 31<sup>st</sup> Street was in the cross hairs of the PA/MTA the difference then was it was an elevated rail link air train and today it is electric buses to roll through and over the community. It was unacceptable and wrong then and unacceptable and wrong now. An abuse of power then and today. It did not move forward then and hopefully will not come to fruition today if the business es and the residents of the community bond together and make their voices heard and speak to elected officials who will have the final word. The Astoria/Ditmars Blvd N/W subway line at 31<sup>st</sup> Street proposal as the selected option/solution for the PA/MTA to LGA has been residentially developed along 31<sup>st</sup> Street to 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue East to 81<sup>st</sup> Street Marine Air Terminal entry road which currently house LGA fuel far containing thousands of gallons of fuel fed by an underground pipeline, serviced by Buckeye Partners and is a heartbeat away from one- and two-family homes and condominiums. An unacceptable and dangerous proposal devoid of equity or environmental justice for the residents, restaurants and commercial entities along the route that will lose many of their parking spots necessary for local walking businesses, the elderly have to use and drive to get into the many restaurants and doctor offices. Astoria Heights residents had for decades been assaulted, environmentally by air, noise, and traffic pollution, not only from the thousands of jets arriving and departing from Runway 422 also from cars, trucks, trailers, fuel trucks, etc. located to and from Marine air terminus, but also the Industrial Park, Rikers Island, Bowery Bay Wastewater Treatment Plant and all feeding into 81st, Street 82nd Street to get to the Grand Central Parkway and the BQE. This operates 24/7, 365 days a year already a nightmare and not a good quality of life, an environmental concern, thousands of cars, trucks, causing gridlock, is a 24/7, 82nd, Street problem. We suffer from exhaust fumes, horn, blowing and now the sweet smell of weed, which is in the air as the cars pass by. It is past time that dollars and the traveling public take a back seat and we the long-time suffering residents, the stakeholders, who have attended these hearings and spoken out against the current route, move up front and the experts go back to the board and select another more equitable route, less dangerous to the health and well-being of we-the-people of Astoria and Astoria Heights. So goes my report Madam chair.

#### **ELECTED OFFICIALS/REPRESENTATIVES – Announcements:**

**Allan Swisher -Queens Borough President’s Office** First, The State of the Borough Address is coming up on April 28<sup>th</sup> at 10 A.M, it's going to be held at Queen's Theater, I will put the link in the chat for folks to get more information about the event and RSVP to attend, and we hope to see you there. Community Board applications. I am in the thick right now of reviewing applications and going over them with Council Members and the Borough President. I just want to let everyone know that all applicants are going to be notified either way about the BP's decision on Friday, March 31<sup>st</sup> and I have been making calls for CB1 applicants and a lot of good candidates. A lot of interest in serving on the board. I think that you had 92 applications in total for far fewer spots than that. It is going to require some tough decisions.



Also, I mentioned this last month, but I just want to remind everyone that there's a Period Product Drive being held by my office I'll put information about that in the chat, but it's going to be going on all throughout March. If you want to donate anything, you can do that at Borough Hall.

**Angela Sherpa Office of Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez**

Last week, the Oversight Committee, for which the Congresswoman is Vice Ranking Member, held 8 hearings. The Congresswoman pushed back on the CBP One app's use of facial recognition technology, as it has been shown to be discriminatory. If you are interested in staying up to date on the Congresswoman's committee work, we encourage you to follow us on social media at Rep AOC. We are happy to share that the IRS has moved forward with taxpayer service improvements, hiring 4,000 new staff to provide additional support during the 2023 tax season. The Inflation Reduction Act funds resulted in improved customer service, processing times and expediency overall. Our office is currently hiring for an intern for our district office. To apply please have them fill out an application on our [website](#) which I will link below. Lastly, we invite all high schoolers in NY-14 to participate in our 2023 Congressional Art Competition! To participate, students may submit their artwork to our office via email for a chance to have it displayed in the US Capitol for one year and to be recognized in a special reception in DC. The deadline to submit artwork is April 26<sup>th</sup> at 5pm. If you have any questions or know of a school or student that would like to participate, please contact our office at [NY14Art@mail.house.gov](mailto:NY14Art@mail.house.gov)

**Farah Salam -Office of Council Member Julie Won,** I wanted to just wish Nowruz Mubarak for everybody who celebrated yesterday, Ramadan Mubarak for everybody who will be celebrating Ramadan in the next month and Happy Bangladesh Independence Day for any of our Bangladeshis that are on this call, which includes me. I just wanted to let everybody know that we are beginning this Saturday Participatory Budgeting Vote Week, and it will go on until April 2<sup>nd</sup>, so we have about a week for people to vote on these projects. Our participatory budgeting projects focus on infrastructural improvements to schools in the district, and we hope to see out folks out there voting. We will be kicking off the weekend at Lulu daddy playground in Sunnyside and at more Jackson Garden. We will also be at each and every school that has a project in place for themselves. So once we have all of the locations set which should be finalized tomorrow, I will share that with Community Board 1 with Florence and the team. Another exciting piece of exciting news for Constituent Services, Queensborough Plaza's bathrooms, will be reopening on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. This is I know it's not exactly in Community Board 1, but a lot of people go through Queensborough Plaza, and this is just exciting for us: they'll be open from 7:00 a.m., to 7 p.m. With one hour closed in between for cleaning. We are also hosting our CUNY law partnership for housing. If you have a housing need or have any questions regarding, you know your rights as a tenant if you're facing eviction or if you just want a little bit more information, we have a housing lawyer coming every other week to provide one-on-one services. We are currently taking appointments, beginning of April, if you or anyone you know, needs assistance. Please contact our office and we'll be happy to make that appointment for you and then this next Wednesday March 29<sup>th</sup> we will be holding a tax Clinic with Woodside On The Move at 6:00 p.m., we are partnering with Woodside On The Move and we're also referring folks to Urban Outbound, if they need individual tax, prep or assistance. Woodside On The Move is gracious enough to provide us with a tax webinar for those who are filing taxes as individuals, and so, if you or anybody you know, needs assistance with taxes, then I wholeheartedly encourage you all to join this webinar I'll share the flyer in the link, also with Community Board 1.

**Marissa Mavrich- Office of Senator Kristen Gonzalez** In legislative news, last week the New York State Senate released its One-House Budget, which now progresses to next stage of final budget negotiations. Many provisions included in the One-House improve material conditions for working-class New Yorkers, a guiding principle for Senator Gonzalez. Included were the following: The Build Public Renewables Act (BPRA) which will have a significant impact on Senate District 59, which has had to deal with the disproportionate impact of fossil fuel infrastructure for generations. The core provisions of #GoodCause were included, which will prevent harm in working-class communities by protecting New Yorkers from unjust evictions and unreasonable rent increases. The Senate also proposed freezing the fares for MTA users and piloting two free buses per borough, increasing pay for home health workers, rejecting tuition hikes on CUNY and SUNY, and setting \$250 million for the Housing Access Voucher Program (HAVP). Locally, Senator Gonzalez recently joined Congresswoman Velázquez at the Western Queens Community Town Hall, where our office heard from local leaders about these issues that are deeply important to this community, from affordable housing to social services to environmental protection, among many more. Ramadan Mubarak to all who celebrate, as the holy month of Ramadan will begin on Wednesday evening. Our office will be joining the community in events throughout the month to celebrate, and you can find out more by visiting our social media – accessible through our website. Finally, please do not hesitate to contact our office regarding any assistance we may be able to provide. Our office contact information General Email: [gonzalez@nyssenate.gov](mailto:gonzalez@nyssenate.gov) Phone: (718) 765-6674 Website: <https://gonzalez.nyssenate.gov> Marissa Mavrich [mavrich@nyssenate.gov](mailto:mavrich@nyssenate.gov) Queens Community Board 1 Liaison : Mahfuzul Islam [islam@nyssenate.gov](mailto:islam@nyssenate.gov).

**Javier – District Attorney's Office** I've been on the call since the beginning, so I did hear the concerns earlier when the Commissioner was on discussing the police concerns and concerns with the D.A. The only thing I want to briefly touch upon, and this is from directly from the District Attorney. Our office is working very closely with the Sheriff's Office, with local police to shut down the illegal smoke shops, but something that has not been touched upon, the DA's tried to bring it more into fruition is the fact that a lot of these smoke shops are not well. None of them in Queens are regulated. So whether or not people want to go out and buy them, we cannot control that. However, the problem is, we don't know what's in them, so a lot of the marijuana that's being sold has been found to have different types of substances in it like Fentanyl and other lethal deadly substances. So we just wanted to keep that in mind. So if you do know somebody that's going out these shops thinking, you know they're, not they may not be licensed, but at least you know it's safer than going out to someone on the street and just selling it it's not it's actually a little more dangerous, depending on where you're going so we just want to keep that in mind and any concerns that I heard from anyone on this call earlier regarding DA's office, I have wrote it down. I am going to put my contact information in the chat in case. Anybody wants to reach out to me or discuss further.

## **PUBLIC SESSION:**

**Cormac Volunteer** My name is Cormac I'm a volunteer with the 31st Ave Open Street. I just wanted to come out and provide an update to everybody, as we are getting ready for our new season coming up so on Saturday April 22<sup>nd</sup> is going to be our first day of operation for the 2023 season. We're going to have the same hours that we did last year, which is every Saturday and Sunday from 12 P.M to 8 P.M. During that time, 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue between 33<sup>rd</sup> Street and 35<sup>th</sup> Street is close to motor vehicle traffic and parking, and it's open for pedestrian cyclists programming hanging out we've kind of been calling it Astoria's backyard. This is kind of any activity you could do in a backyard is an activity you could do on the open street. We've had over 1600 signatures on a petition asking for us to come back this year. We've been engaging a lot of folks on social media as well and in the next few weeks, we're going to be doing more in-person flowering on the street tabling on the street to make sure that folks are aware that the program is returning. Business owners are also excited. I'm going to be planning on meeting individually with folks about how they can best plug in I had a great conversation with the particular business owner as a retail shop on the open Street who, when I told him it was coming back, said he was excited because business has been a little bit slow, but that when foot traffic comes back to the block, you'll get more business from customers who are shopping. On that note, I know that Mr. Khuzami had a question about the economic impact of open street zone businesses. I'd refer you to a really great report that was done by D.O.T in October about the impact of these open Street corridors on local businesses. It's called streets for Recovery by DOT. We have resumed our litter cleanups in advance of the season beginning, we've been getting some support from the council member's office council member Caban on litter collection from Ace. We are working on an art installation for the new bike corral to beautify that as well as we've requested from DSNY to get to participate in their Better Business Project. DSNY is coming out with these new more windproof litter baskets, which is something that we're hoping to get on the open street and just a few other quality life things just changes that we're making this year in response to community feedback from last year, we're going to be more strict about live and amplified music events on the open street. We had guidelines last year, but we want to tighten those up because we want to make sure that we're respecting folks that live directly overlooking the block and we're not causing issues for them and similarly, with prepared food on the street, we had a few vendors last year who were cooking on the street, using generators using charcoal caused issues for some local businesses and in responses, the responsive that we are going to be limiting, if not eliminating, prepared food from our open street events going forward again as a way to kind of respond to the feedback that we've gotten from the community. If you have any questions about the program, we want to learn more. You can visit our website, 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue openstreet.org. You can also email us at info 31st at openstreet.org.

**Kat C** I wanted to bring this issue up to the Community Board to see if there's a response from the board, or a certain committee or the precinct on what can be next steps. As a growing concern in the Astoria community over the past few weeks, I've seen this personally and there's a lot of reports online of a group of teenagers that are wreaking havoc on the neighborhood. What started as harassing people throwing garbage is now including throwing bricks at stores at cars going up to people's houses breaking into lobbies. There was supposedly an arrest, but they're all underage, so it seems like the schools are involved, they've been to the precinct, but it's right now currently being taken as like a slap on the hand, and the worry is something worse will happen to someone or something versus what will happen to them. I wanted to open it up, if you know others that have heard this concern, if the precinct has any response and really what we can do as a community. What seems like now is a daily occurrence from these group of teens that are just continuing. They may see as harmless, but what's growing more and more dangerous as they continue.

**Carlos Chacon Police Officer 114th Pct** Could you be a little specific in regards to where and when?

**Kat C** There's Reddit threads, they congregate at the McDonald's on 31st Street they've broken into the Starbucks rooftop and have thrown garbage and ice off of there. The occurrences are really from 31st Street to Upper Ditmars area down towards Steinway. I had spoken to an officer who had apprehended them there. Maybe you could speak further to that.

**Carlos Chacon Police Officer 114th Pct** I'm, aware of an incident that happened right in front of that McDonald's by the dental office a week two weeks ago, now I'm aware of that event, you're, saying 31st, and then, you said on Steinway.

**Kat C** Not to get I mean but if every if everyone needs to report it to the precinct maybe that's something to issue to the community, but it's been from 31<sup>st</sup> to Steinway and upper 40s. Lower 40s people have pictures of them.

Some recordings and, like I said it really ranges from people are being harassed and attacked, with garbage thrown to them physically throwing bricks at cars they're following delivery workers from the McDonald's to people's doorsteps and basically waiting for people to open the door for the delivery men and either throw eggs or storm at their door. People are questioning what is the best next step? How do we bring it to the precinct or whatnot? My only experiences was with talking a pair of cops, who said you know the schools involved this and that so I really wanted to open it up as a big question of what can we as a community? What are the next steps before something worse happens to someone?

**Carlos Chacon Police Officer 114th Pct** Each one of these victims needs to come forward so that they can file a formal complaint and then we can see if maybe the person can get arrested and how far we can take it. The example that you give of someone getting a brick thrown at their vehicle did that person file a police report? Was there damage to the vehicle? Was someone injured? That is a crime that we take seriously. It's called criminal mischief depending on the damage of that brick, the value of the damage that break caused. It could be a felony if someone's assaulted, it could be a felony if someone's assaulted with a weapon each one of these cases are to be treated individually. We can't just as a group, make a blanket statement that these teenagers are doing these this and that. We have to be specific as to what is actually going on. My recommendation would be for each one of these incidents to be documented for a 911 call to happen and I know that it might take a while. You have to file a report. You have to file a report in order to make us aware that it is happening in order for us to document it and have our resources go there.

**Kat C** Thank you, I'll spread the word I guess but I'm sure as it comes into the precinct, it's you know, appreciated. I know I've done a call I've known others, but at that point, if you don't have a picture, you don't have a name, it's no different than what I've just stated so, okay.

**Carlos Chacon Police Officer 114th Pct** What I would suggest to you is when someone tells you there was a teenager or there was someone that threw a brick onto my vehicle, your first question should be: Did you call the police? Did you file a police report? We could go there. We could look at the cameras we might be able to identify the team. We might be able to identify a friend that was there an individual that was there. So the first question should be was a police report made for that incident that you're claiming happened? You're a victim of a crime we need to be there.

**Kat C** I think that's super helpful. Thank you and I think the more people are aware to report it's one of those that needs to be more vocal not just on social media threads.

**Justin Parker** At 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue and Vernon Boulevard there are issues with the crosswalks here. I take my dog out for a walk or just even going across the street there are always cars that's about to hit us here, because there's no stop signs! There's! No red lights, there's no flashing lights for pedestrians being in the crosswalk. There's a sign however a lot of the drivers bypass that and they speed they go down these streets very fast, there's a curve, that's right there, a lot of the drivers coming from the opposite lane can't see that there's people in the crosswalks. I'm just asking that the Community Board can do something about this, because eventually somebody is going to get hit and that's the reality or one of these cars on the side of the street is going to get hit. I was just asking: what can we do about this or who exactly can I speak to about this? To try to place some safety precaution here.

**Marie Torniali Chairperson** You can you call our district office and speak to the District Manager, Florence Koulouris, the number is 718 626-1021, and she will put her email in there right now.

**Jasmine Rodriguez** My name is Jasmine Rodriguez. I'm excited to tell you about a new business that is opening in District One. It is called Everytable and we are opening very soon. March 31<sup>st</sup> is our grand opening at the corner of 30th Avenue and 30<sup>th</sup> Street across from Athens Square and behind the Trade Fair Supermarket. It's a unique business. I wanted to take an opportunity to just give you a little bit of color on what we do. Everytable is a social enterprise with a mission to make healthy food, affordable, and accessible to everyone and everywhere. The company was founded in 2015. Initially, we operated out

of Los Angeles, but we've expanded to the west coast, and this summer we opened our doors in New York City. We're excited to say that the Astoria location will be our first Queen's location. We operate with a unique pricing model that adjusts the cost of our menu based on the median income of the neighborhood, and that means that our meals are affordable in lower income areas, making them truly accessible to a wider range of people. We operate brick and mortar locations and we also have a meal delivery service and offer meals to institutions. It's a pretty diverse menu, there's vegan, vegetarian, gluten-free options. The cuisine is ethically and culturally diverse, featuring hot plates, inspired by Mexican, Caribbean, Indian, Thái, Vietnamese, Korean, Middle, Eastern and Americana Cuisines, there's pasta, wraps sandwiches and Everytable works with community organizations to provide healthy meals to individuals and families in need, including seniors, students, sheltered and unsheltered people. As I mentioned on March 31st, we will have a grand opening there'll be free meals, a DJ, a little bit of a community activation to try to get to know our neighbors and we're inviting all of you. I'm going to put in the chat, just a flyer about the event, and we would really encourage you to come out. We are interested in actively looking for community partnerships, please come in, and let us get to know you and welcome us to the neighborhood.

**Yousof Abdelreheem- Office of Council Member Tiffany Cabán** This is Yousof your community liaison Council Member Tiffany Cabán's office. I wanted to address the amazing person who voiced their concerns regarding the teenagers' behaviors on 31<sup>st</sup> Street. I know there was an incident on Steinway. Our office has been made aware, and we understand that some of these actions are really a byproduct of the lack of resources that our schools, our role models. Some of these teenagers' emotional intelligence I have contacted CCD the Community Capacity Development program to try to implement some programs in our district. We're going to be reaching out to the neighboring Schools IS 141 folks and others to try to stop some of the behaviors that these teenagers are doing. I want to invite folks to call our office to share anything that they've seen and hopefully we'll be able to support. So just quickly wanted to address that point.

**Johnny P** I missed a portion of the meeting, so I'm not sure if this was covered, but I just wanted to raise a concern and maybe open up the conversation a little about some of the intersections that have been a problem in the community. There was a video going around about how frequently drivers seem to ignore red lights, and this was at a particular intersection, but I think the issue is increasingly more common in the neighborhood. In my experience as a cyclist and as a pedestrian, it seems to be happening. At this particular intersection that it happened at was at 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue and 33<sup>rd</sup> Street and over the course of I think about 15 minutes. It was recorded that maybe anywhere from 10 to 26 drivers ran a red light at that intersection. Within the last couple weeks there was a child that was killed at an intersection in Astoria I'm, not 100 percent, clear on the situation for that, but I do think it's important to address the behavior that we see displayed at that particular intersection and around there before someone gets hurt from the reckless driving. To have a reaction to that death rather than being proactive about the behavior of drivers, especially at that intersection. The intersection was 33rd Street and 31st Avenue. Just to you know, repeat it again, thank you.

**Marie Torniali Chairperson** Florence if you could follow up on that would be great. Any other member of the public wish to speak?

The **Chairperson, Marie Torniali** asked for a Motion to Adjourn

**Motioned by Jean Marie D'Alleva; Seconded by George Alexiou**

Meeting Adjourned: 9 p.m.





# ASTORIA

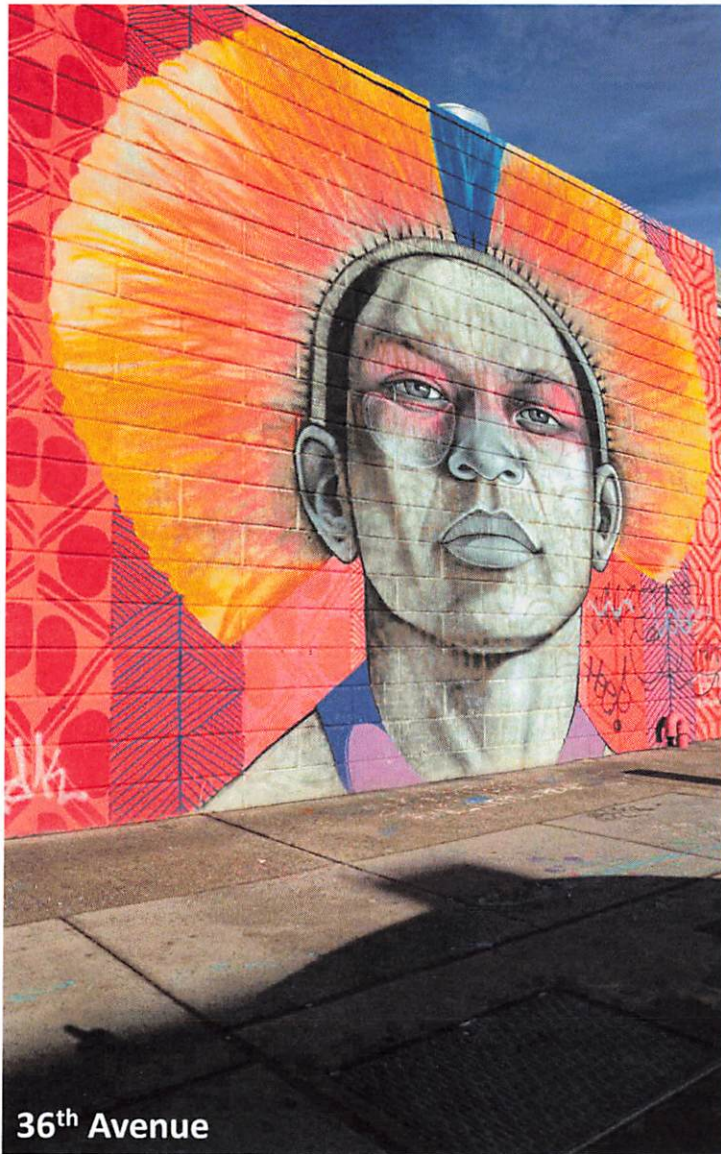
Commercial District Needs Assessment  
Preliminary Findings

Central  
**Astoria**  
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION, INC.

**QEDC**

**NYC**  
Small Business  
Services

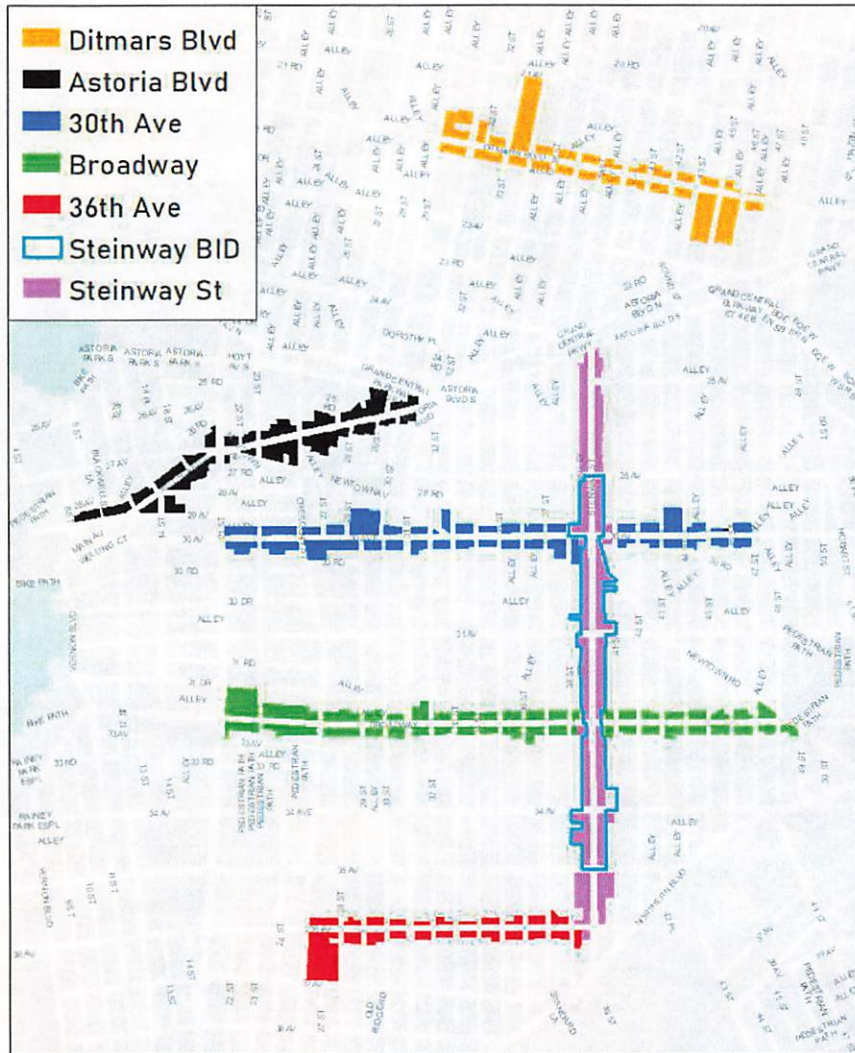




# AGENDA

- Neighborhood Context
- Key Takeaways
- Key Findings: Business Inventory, Storefront Conditions, Streetscape Conditions
- Merchant & Consumer Surveys
- Strengths / Challenges / Opportunities

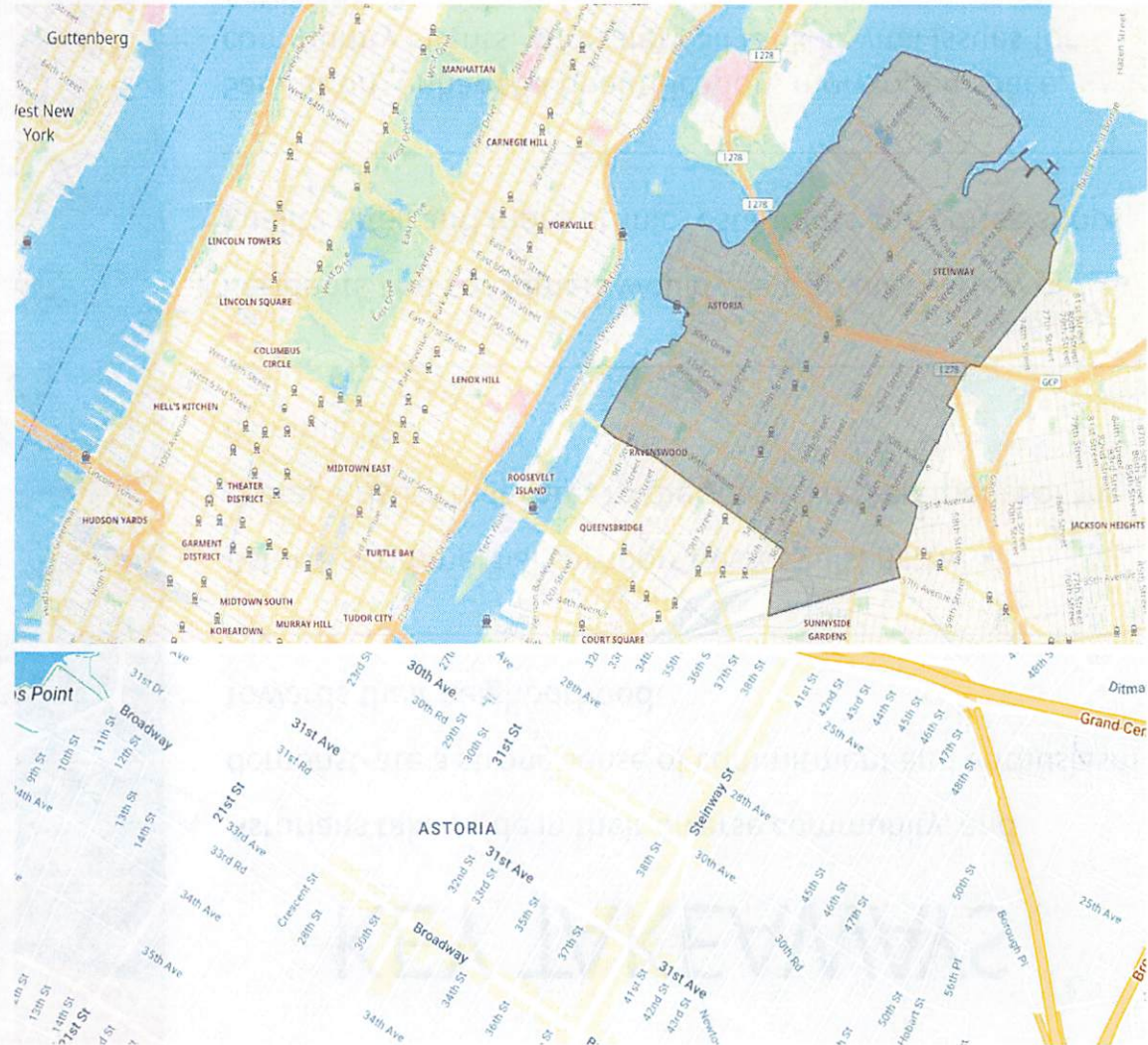




Astoria CDNA Study Area Final



# NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT







## KEY TAKEAWAYS

Astorians take pride in their diverse community, and demonstrate a strong sense of commitment and enthusiasm towards their neighborhood.

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Astoria's commercial corridors possess distinctive characteristics that cater to the specific requirements of the community.

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Residents and consumers would like a greater variety of quality retail and more ethnic restaurants and coffee shops.

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Sanitation, enhanced beautification, more open space, community events, and safety all rank as vital issues for Astorians.

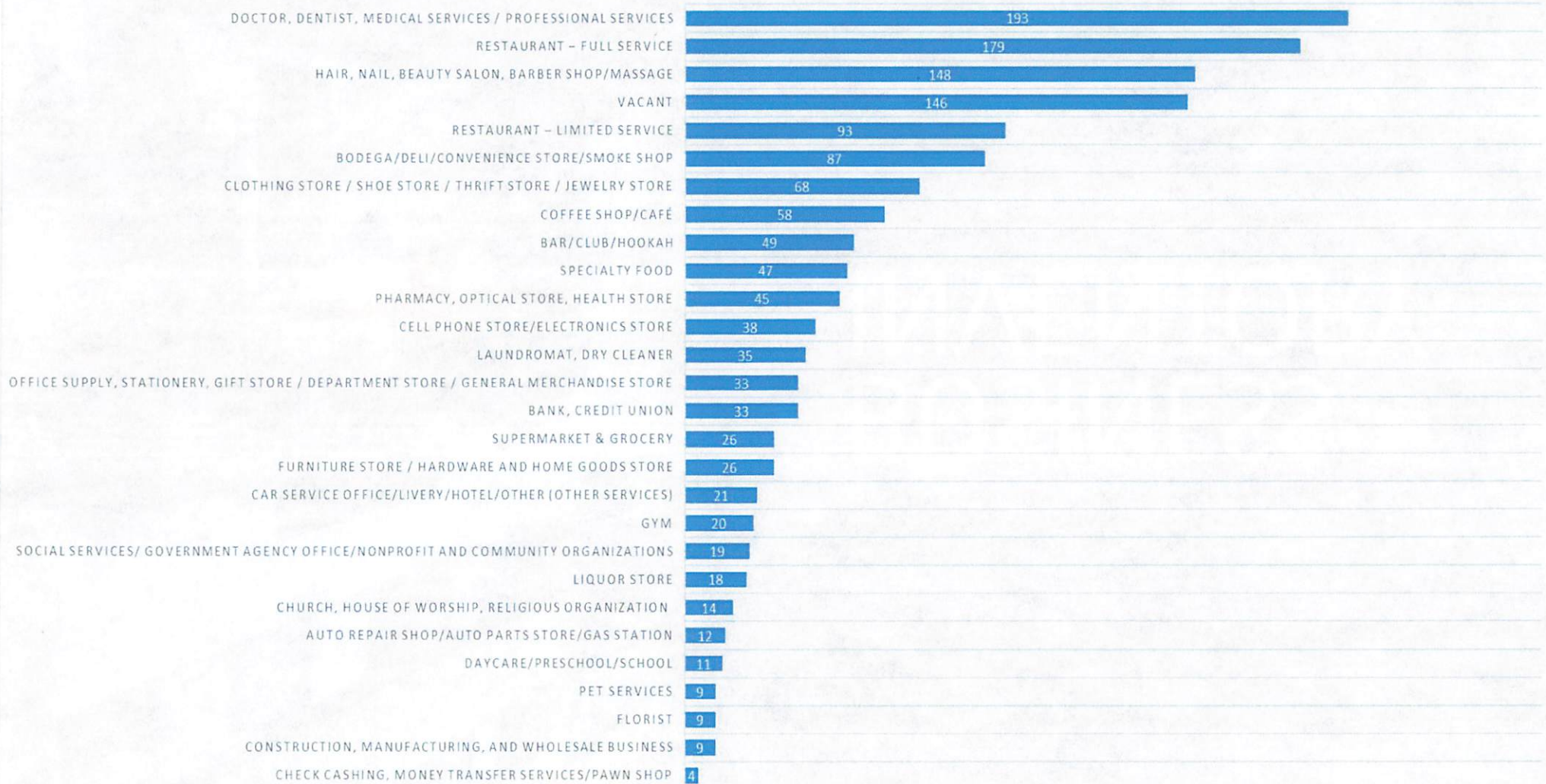




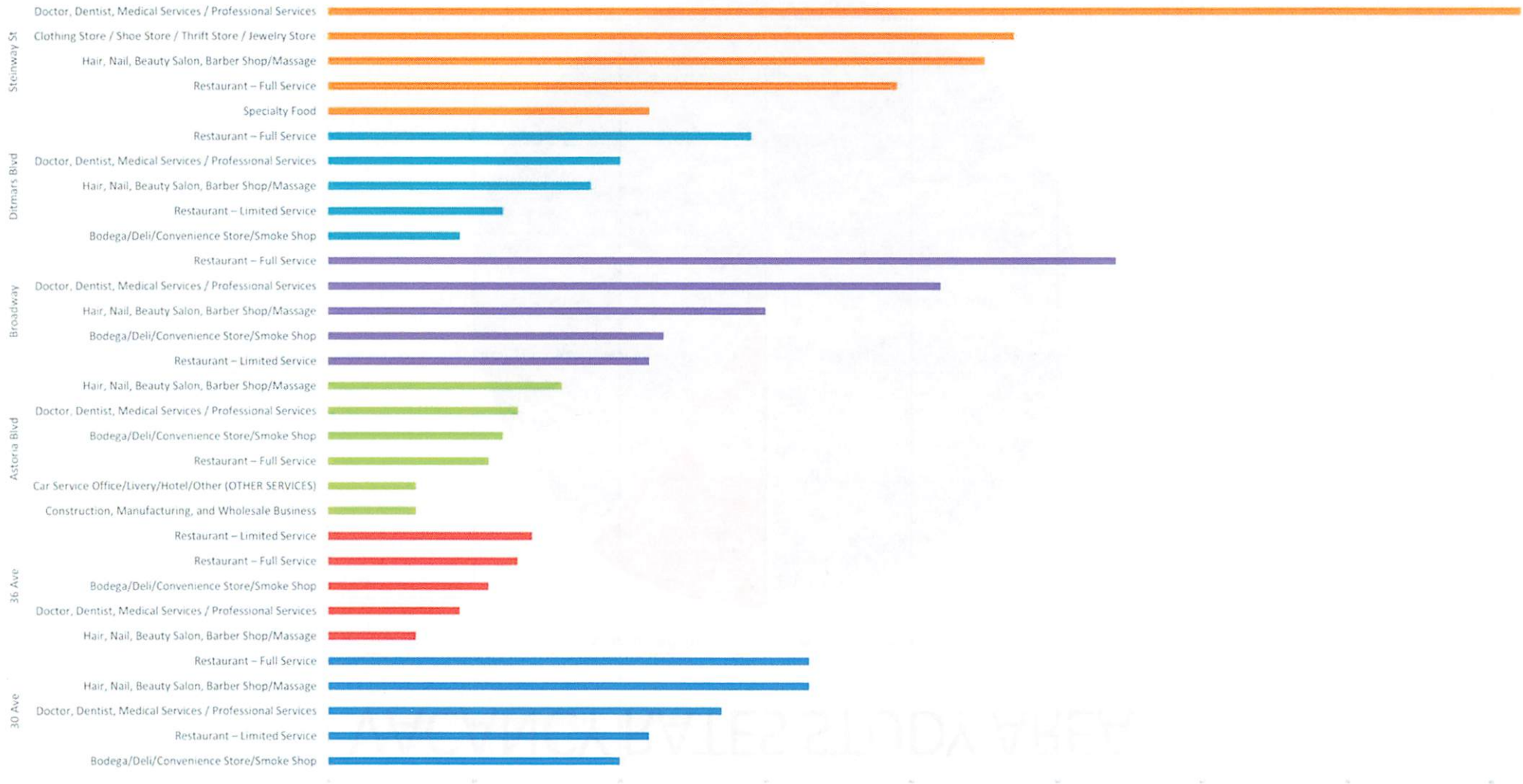
# BUSINESS INVENTORY



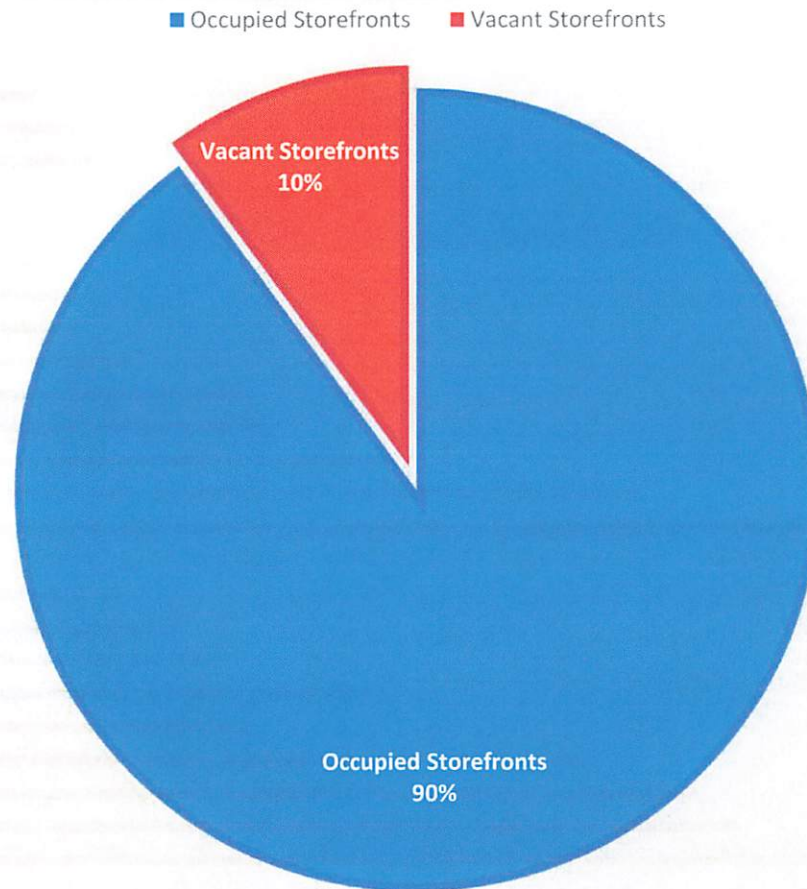
## ASTORIA BUSINESS INVENTORY



# RETAIL MIX: TOP FIVE CATEGORIES



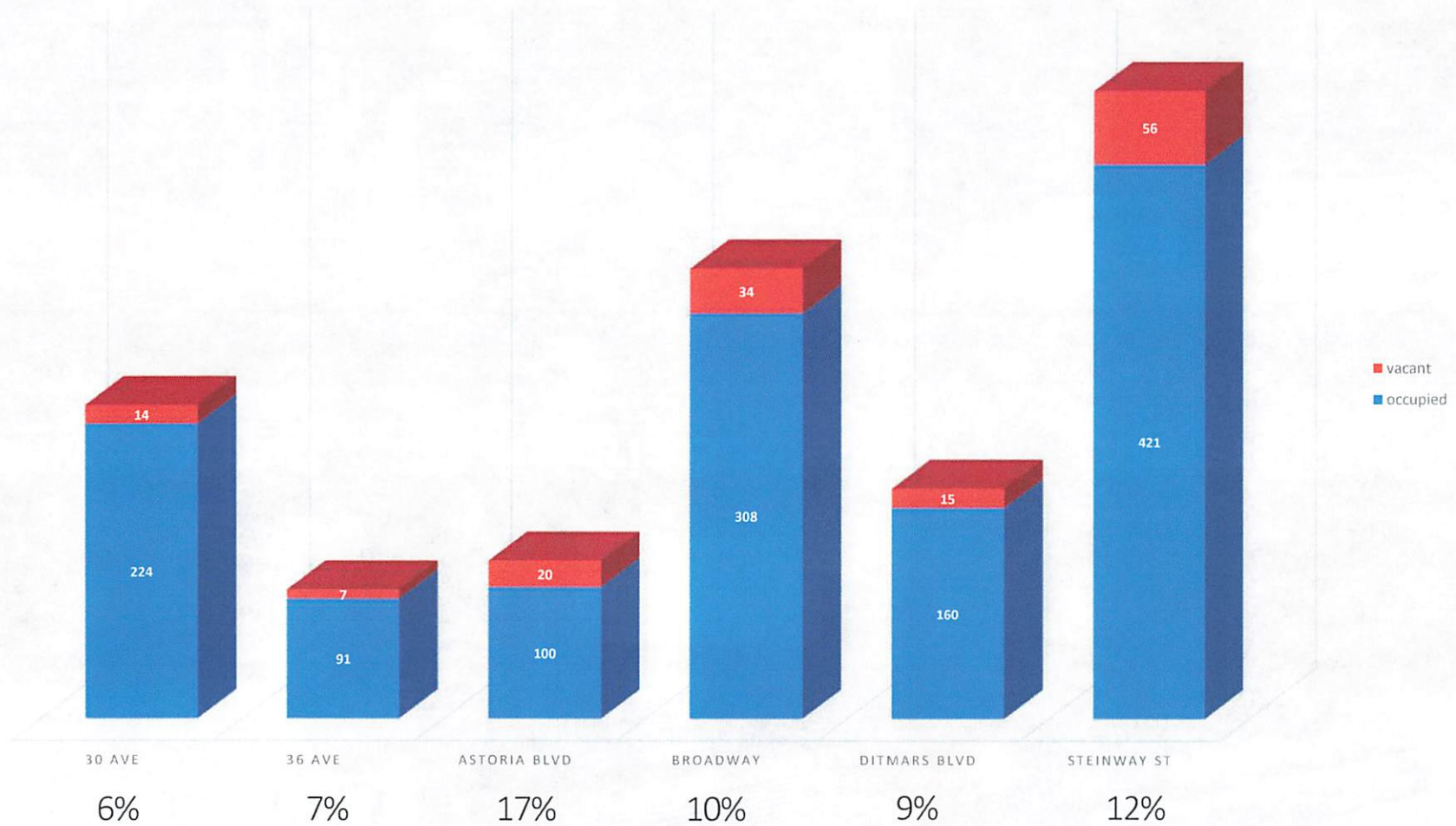
# VACANCY RATES STUDY AREA



RETAIL MIX: TOP FIVE CATEGORIES



# VACANCY RATES PER CORRIDOR







Steinway Street



Astoria Boulevard



Ditmars Boulevard



30<sup>th</sup> Avenue



36<sup>th</sup> Avenue



Broadway



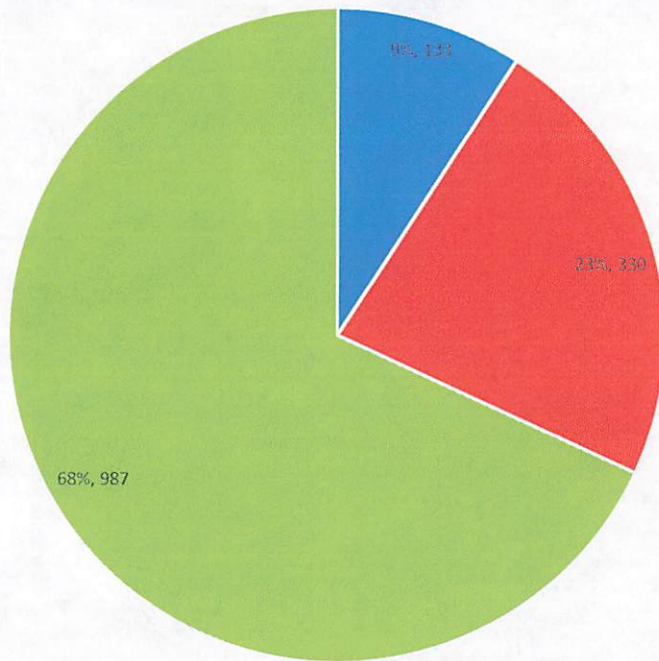


# STOREFRONT CONDITIONS



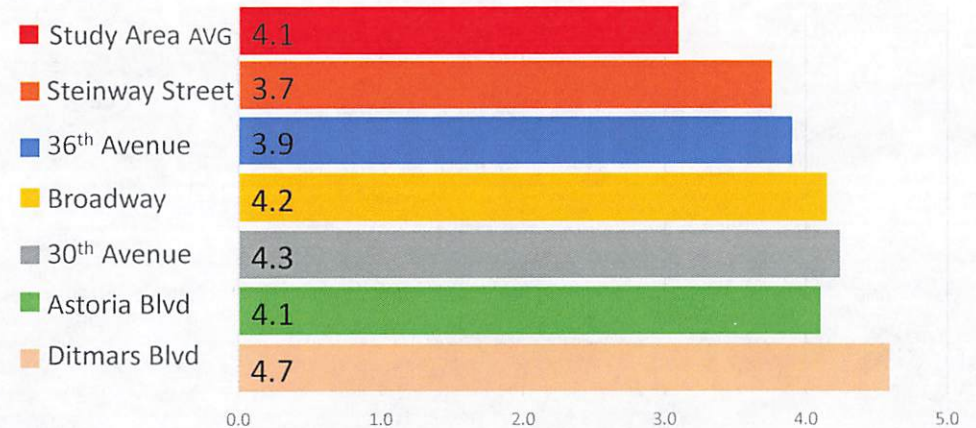
# STOREFRONT CONDITIONS

Astoria Overall Storefront Conditions



■ Poor (1 or 2) ■ Average (3) ■ Good (4 or 5)

Storefront Conditions by Area  
(on scale 1-5)







Broadway





# STREETSCAPE CONDITIONS





Steinway Street



36<sup>th</sup> Avenue



Broadway





## MERCHANT & CONSUMER SURVEY FINDINGS





## MERCHANT SURVEY FINDINGS

- Top challenges include lack of parking, regulatory compliance, high commercial rents, storefront improvements, finding skilled workers, and low foot traffic
- Resources for marketing, storefront improvements, and access to financing would help merchants grow their business
- Sanitation, more open space, safety improvements, community events, district marketing and enhanced beautification will generate return shoppers to the district





# CONSUMER SURVEY FINDINGS

Consumers most frequently shop at:

Restaurants

Retail Stores

Pharmacies,  
Optical, and  
Health  
Stores

Coffee Shops

Specialty Food  
Stores,  
Butchers,  
Bakeries

Consumers would like to see more:

Quality  
Retail  
Stores

Ethnic  
Restaurants  
& Coffee  
Shops

Book Stores

National  
Retailers

Specialty  
Food  
Stores





STRENGTHS,  
CHALLENGES &  
OPPORTUNITIES





# STRENGTHS

- Cultural and ethnic diversity
- Strong sense of community and civic engagement
- Excellent transportation via subway, bus, car, and ferry
- Low vacancy rate, average business life is 12 years
- Strong core of long-standing businesses and institutions
- New development

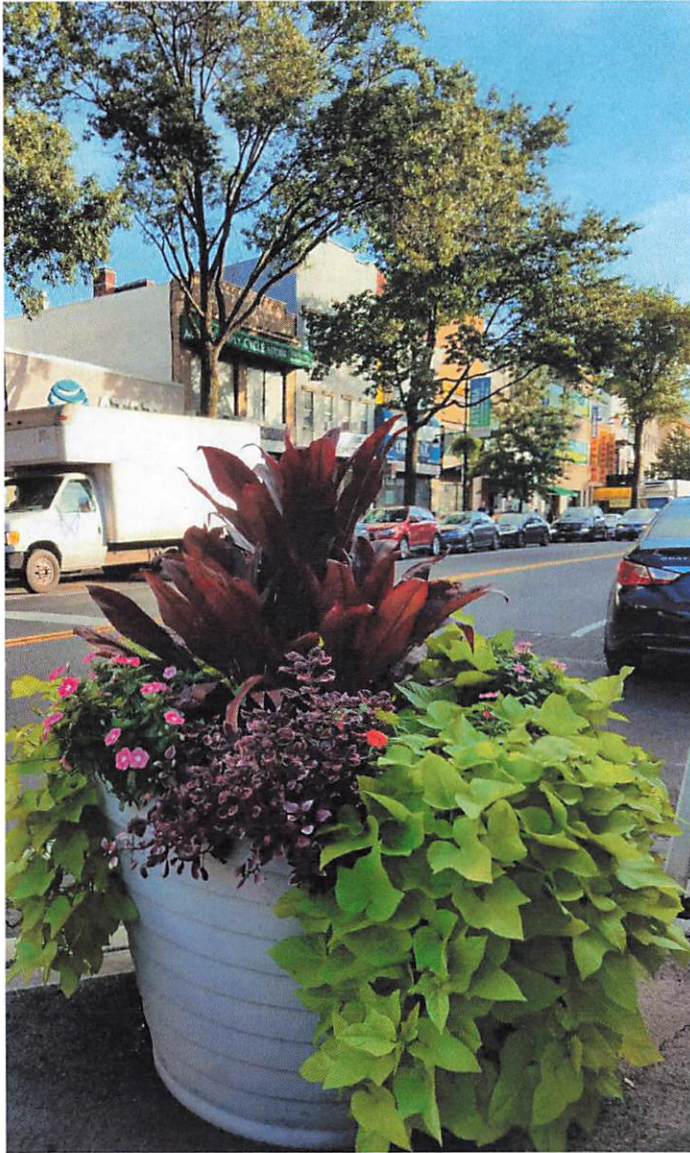




# CHALLENGES

- Sparse offerings for quality retail
- Online competition for merchants
- Regulatory compliance and high commercial rents
- Lack of Parking & Double Parking
- Sanitation





# OPPORTUNITIES

- Landscaping and enhanced beautification
- District marketing campaigns highlighting neighborhood assets
- Expand merchant collaboration
- Forge local civic groups and arts community relationships

# Thank you!



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**COMMUNITY BOARD 1, Queens  
ATTENDANCE FULL BOARD MEETING**

DATE 3-21-2023

Community Board Member	Yes	No	Abs.	Community Board Member	Yes	No	Abs.
Helene Abiola		✓		Chelsea Lopez	✓		
George Alexiou	✓			Huge Ma			E
Daniel Aliberti	✓			Jeffrey Martin	✓		
Louise Bordley		✓		Sam Massol	✓		
Ann Bruno	✓			Amin Mehedi		✓	
Gerald Caliendo	✓			Antonio Meloni	✓		
Jean Marie D'Alleva	✓			Andreas Migias		✓	
Tenzin Dechen	✓			Doreen Mohammed		✓	
Antonella Di Saverio	✓			Eric Mouchette			E
Katie Ellman	✓			Stella Nicolaou	✓		
Elizabeth Erion	✓			Dino Panagoulis	✓		
Mackenzi Farquer	✓			Juliet Payabyab			E
Dean Feratovic	✓			RoseMarie Poveromo	✓		
Adam Fisher-Cox	✓			Brian Romero		✓	
Tyrone Gardner	✓			Thomas Ryan	✓		
Shahenaz Hamde	✓			Dominic Stiller	✓		
Evie Hantzopoulos	✓			Andre Stith		✓	
Amy Hau	✓			Rod Townsend		✓	
Helen Ho		✓		Judy Trilivas			E
Vanessa Jones-Hall		✓		Kathleen Warnock	✓		
Richard Khuzami	✓			Corinne Wood-Haynes	✓		
Cristina Lastres	✓			Rosemary Yelton	✓		
Diana Limongi	✓			Marie Torniali	✓		
Number Board Members Present <u>32</u>							