



BOROUGH PARK

BROOKLYN

Commercial District Needs Assessment



careers
businesses
neighborhoods

in
partnership
with

Boro Park Jewish Community Council



ABOUT BOROUGH PARK

Background

Avenue NYC is a competitive grant program created by the **NYC Department of Small Business Services** to fund and build the capacity of community-based development organizations to execute commercial revitalization initiatives. Avenue NYC is funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, which targets investments in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods.

Avenue NYC Commercial Revitalization grants provide multi-year commitments aimed at building the capacity of partner organizations to better understand neighborhood needs, develop impactful programs, and sustain their work in the community for at least three years.

The **Commercial District Needs Assessment (CDNA)** highlights a neighborhood's existing business landscape and consumer characteristics.

This CDNA features the commercial corridors of **39th Street, 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, 18th, and New Utrecht avenues in Borough Park**, and was conducted in partnership with **Boro Park Jewish Community Council** between September 2024 and June 2025.

Key issues and opportunities identified through this assessment will help prioritize SBS-supported local investments, and serve as an informational and marketing resource for the neighborhood.

In This Report

Existing conditions, business data, and qualitative depictions of the neighborhood were gathered from more than **328 surveys** and various stakeholder meetings with neighborhood merchants, shoppers, workers, property owners, and residents.

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Located in southwestern Brooklyn, Borough Park is home to a diverse local economy, a strong cultural identity, and a religious tradition that continues to shape the neighborhood's development. Borough Park, also known as Boro Park, is bordered by Sunset Park, Dyker Heights, Bensonhurst, and Kensington. Anchored by a bustling commercial corridor on 13th Avenue, the neighborhood serves as a vibrant hub for residents and visitors from Orthodox Jewish communities throughout the region and world.

Originally home to the Lenape Nation, the area now known as Borough Park was colonized by Dutch settlers in 1652 and remained predominately farmland through the late 19th century. Residential development began in 1887 with the creation of Blythebourne, a suburban cottage community connected to Downtown Brooklyn by the Brooklyn, Bath, and West End Railroad. After Brooklyn was incorporated into New York City in 1898, Blythebourne and its surrounding land were purchased and subdivided for housing, officially adopting the name Borough Park in 1902. By 1907, more than 60% of its residents were either foreign-born or first-generation Americans, many of whom were German, Italian, Jewish, Polish, and Russian. The neighborhood saw further growth after World War I as new apartment buildings attracted Jewish families from the Lower East Side and Williamsburg, leading to the establishment of multiple synagogues, yeshivas, and kosher markets. This trend continued into the 1950s with the arrival of Hasidic Jewish families, ultimately transforming Borough Park into a major cultural and religious center of Jewish life.

With two subway lines and three bus routes, Borough Park is easily accessible to residents and visitors alike. The neighborhood's primary commercial corridors of New Utrecht, 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, and 18th avenues offer an assorted mix of retail shops, home goods stores, and specialty food markets. New Utrecht Avenue is notable for its concentration of hardware, furniture, and home goods stores, reflecting the neighborhood's rapid population growth and the prevalence of residential expansions. In contrast, 39th Street is dominated by warehouses that offer wholesale, construction, manufacturing, and automotive services. Maimonides Medical Center, located at the border of Borough Park and Sunset Park, brings a steady flow of employees who form a significant lunchtime customer base for nearby businesses. Many of Borough Park's small businesses have been managed by families for multiple generations, reflecting the tight-knit communal culture of the neighborhood.

Neighborhood Demographics

See more on page 12

Borough Park is home to 97,340 residents, the majority of whom belong to Orthodox and Haredi Jewish communities. The neighborhood is predominantly white (80%), with smaller populations of Hispanic (8%) and Asian (6%) residents. With one of the youngest populations in New York City, 50% of Borough Park's residents are 19 or younger, more than double the citywide average of 23%. Yiddish is the predominant language for the 80% of residents who speak a language other than English at home. Daily life also differs markedly from broader city patterns: 34% of residents walk to work, compared to just 9% citywide, and only 59% of households have a broadband internet connection, well below the city average of 89%. Educational attainment is also comparatively lower, with 23% of residents holding a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 41% across New York City. The median household income is \$55,390, with 32% of families living below the poverty line.

Future Opportunities

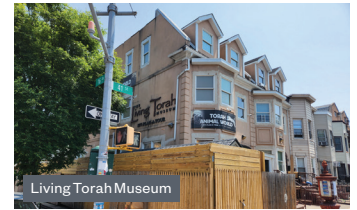
See more on page 5

Borough Park's substantial population growth has contributed to increased demand for new housing and services, most notably culminating in the recent approval of the Brooklyn Yards project, a 14-building, 270-unit development constructed over an active rail line. Building on this growth, the new Boro Park Business Alliance will organize merchants to collectively bolster local commerce. By taking advantage of opportunities ranging from tourism to the neighborhood's strong community ties, Borough Park's commercial district offers a promising environment for new economic investment and growth.

Borough Park



◀ Notable Places



▲ Points of Interest

- Assessed Commercial Corridors
- Parks and Public Spaces
- Notable Places
- Public Facilities

Neighborhood Events

- Bikur Cholim of Boro Park Health and Welfare Events
- Boro Park Chaveirim Community Assistance Events
- Boro Park Shomrim Community Safety Patrol Training and Recruitment Drive
- Boro Park Jewish Community Council Chol Hamoed Extravaganza
- The Great Lag B'Omer Parade
- Maimonides Medical Center Borough Park Health Fair
- Tomchei Shabbos Food Distribution Events

Merchant & Community Groups

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Bikur Cholim of Boro Park | Eruv Society of Boro Park |
| Boro Park Business Alliance | Hatzolah of Boro Park |
| Boro Park Jewish Community Council | Masbia of Boro Park |
| Boro Park Shomrim | Tomche Shabbos of Boro Park |
| Brooklyn Chaveirim | |

KEY FINDINGS & OPPORTUNITIES

Strengths

- ▶ Commercial and residential areas are closely connected, leading to high levels of foot traffic on the commercial corridors
- ▶ 3 bus lines and 2 subway lines provide accessible transportation to and from the neighborhood
- ▶ Many stores have multigenerational owners and have been in business for decades, contributing to a strong sense of community between merchants and shoppers
- ▶ The neighborhood serves as a center of Jewish life and commerce, attracting a devoted consumer base from all over the region
- ▶ Many large schools and institutions like Maimonides Medical Center bring workers from outside the neighborhood who serve as an additional customer base for local businesses
- ▶ The neighborhood enjoys a strong sense of safety at all hours of the day in part due to the continuation of pedestrian activity at night

Challenges

- ▶ Inflation and increasing rent and utility costs create added pressure for new and longstanding businesses
- ▶ There is a lack of internal public transportation to connect different parts of the neighborhood, as the bus and subway lines primarily serve the perimeter of the neighborhood
- ▶ Multiple storefront vacancies, ghost kitchens, and poor storefront conditions on 39th Street and New Utrecht Avenue contribute to a feeling of disinvestment and desolation at night
- ▶ A tremendous amount of traffic and lack of parking makes commuting to the neighborhood time consuming for drivers
- ▶ Litter and illegal dumping give the area a neglected appearance, even on streets with high storefront occupancy and foot traffic
- ▶ Limited green spaces and recreational facilities for children and families
- ▶ A lack of public restrooms and street furniture, coupled with sidewalk crowding from merchandise displays, limits accessibility and creates a challenge for consumers from outside the neighborhood





New Utrecht Avenue



Rappaport Playground



Khal Minchas Eluzar D'Munkacs



15th Avenue

Opportunities

- ▶ Grow the Boro Park Business Alliance to collectively advocate for the neighborhood's merchants and economic development opportunities
- ▶ Invest in sanitation services to keep the streets and sidewalks clean from litter and graffiti
- ▶ Enhance lighting along dark commercial corridors to increase safety and pedestrian activity at night
- ▶ Launch district marketing campaigns using neighborhood communication channels to encourage local shopping and promote the diverse business offerings
- ▶ Coordinate with city agencies, residents, and merchants to improve streetscape conditions under the elevated train on New Utrecht Avenue
- ▶ Create a storefront improvement program to enhance storefronts that are used as industrial or wholesale kitchens
- ▶ Provide technical assistance to help business owners continue to grow in place
- ▶ Create new pathways to securing government contracts by helping local businesses certify as Minority and/or Women-owned Business Enterprises (M/WBEs)
- ▶ Coordinate with city agencies to track planned construction projects and provide proactive support to impacted businesses

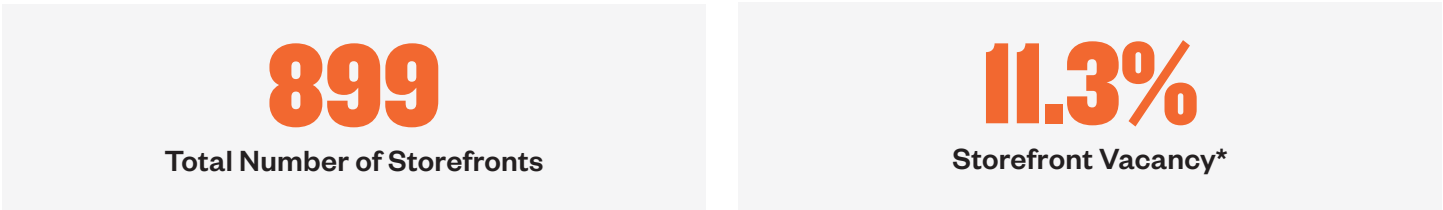
What's Next?

To address these key findings and opportunities, Avenue NYC Grants have been awarded by SBS to nonprofit organizations.

For more information, visit: nyc.gov/avenuenyc

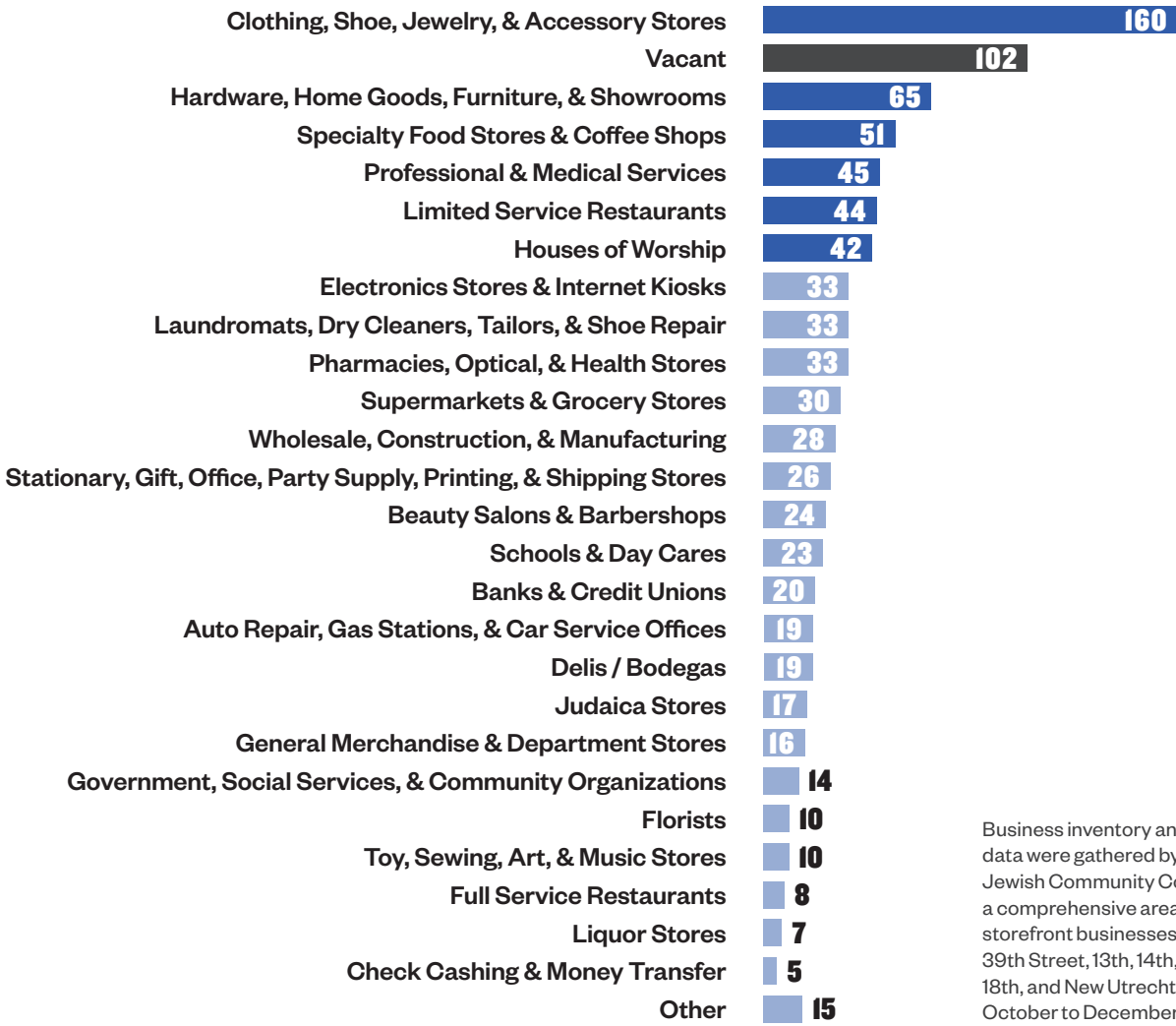
BUSINESS LANDSCAPE: BOROUGH PARK

Business Inventory



*Note: As of June 2025, New York City's commercial corridors have an average storefront vacancy of 12.1% and median storefront vacancy of 10.9% (LiveXYZ).

Storefront & Retail Mix

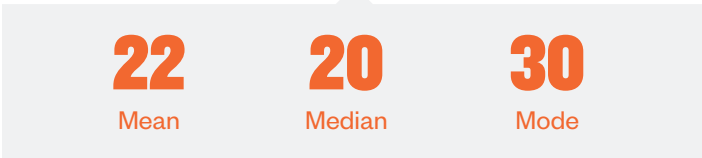
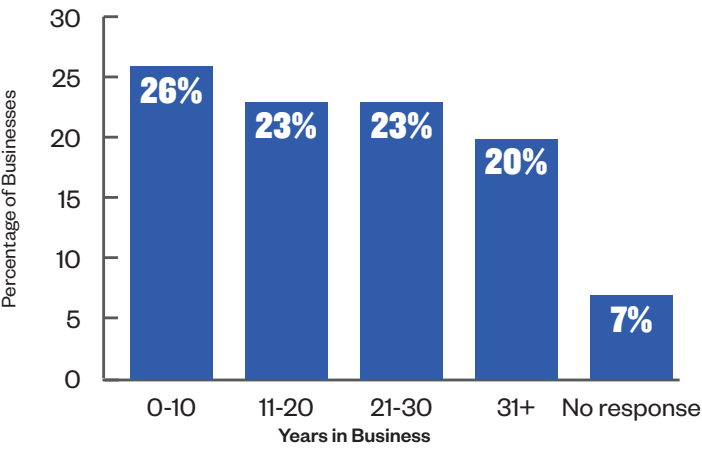


Business inventory and retail mix data were gathered by Boro Park Jewish Community Council through a comprehensive area inventory of storefront businesses located along 39th Street, 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, 18th, and New Utrecht avenues from October to December 2024.



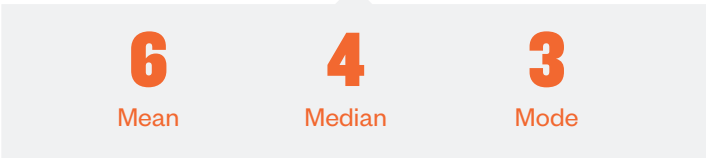
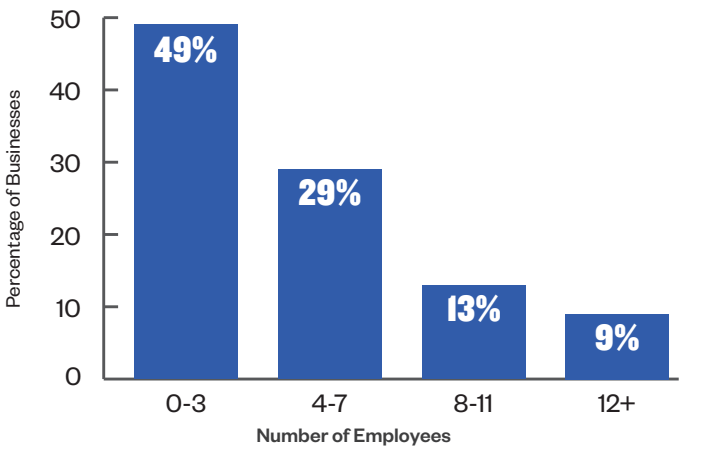
What We've Heard from Borough Park Merchants

How many years have you been in business here?



Note: The mean is the average of all responses, the median is the middle number when all responses are arranged in ascending order, and the mode is the most common response.

How many full-time employees do you have?



Do you own or rent your property?



Are you interested in joining a merchants association?



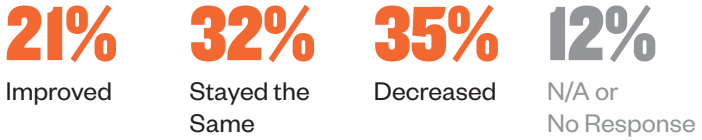
Does your business currently have a website?



What kinds of resources would help you grow your business?

	% Merchant Responses
▶ Marketing Support	51%
▶ Access to Financing	39%
▶ New Equipment	26%
▶ Space Improvements	21%
▶ Training for Staff	17%
▶ Regulatory Compliance Assistance	7%
▶ Lease Support	5%
▶ Legal Services	5%
▶ Other	7%

Over the past year, has your business improved, stayed the same, or decreased?



Source: Based on 98 merchant surveys conducted by Boro Park Jewish Community Council in Fall 2024 and Winter 2025.

BUSINESS LANDSCAPE

What We've Heard from Borough Park Merchants and Shoppers

What do you like about the commercial district?

"We have a very close-knit community and we take care of each other."

"It is a warm friendly community with nice shopkeepers."

"Lots of Yidden! Everything is available close by / local and accessible."

"It's a safe neighborhood."

"Everything!! It pulsates with life and vigor!"

"The variety of accessible stores and hours of operation."

What makes the Borough Park commercial district unique?

"People shop more at brick and mortar businesses."

"The employees at local businesses support neighborhood residents during holidays."

"Accessibility to kosher food."

"Tremendous amount of customers, both locals and people that come from elsewhere to shop in Boro Park."

"24-hour activity."

"Ability to walk everywhere."

What changes need to occur to attract more visitors/shoppers?

	% Merchant Response	% Consumer Response
▶ Sanitation	52%	23%
▶ Transportation Improvements	32%	14%
▶ Safety	31%	13%
▶ Street Lighting	27%	12%
▶ Landscaping/Beautification	26%	11%
▶ More Open Space	24%	10%
▶ Graffiti Removal	15%	7%
▶ Merchant Collaboration	10%	4%
▶ Community Events	7%	3%
▶ Storefront Improvements	4%	2%
▶ Other	3%	1%

What changes would you like to see to improve the commercial district?

"Better lighting and sidewalks in better condition."

"Deliveries at night."

"Try to reschedule the infrastructure repairs so that they shouldn't shut off our streets in the busiest seasons and times of day."

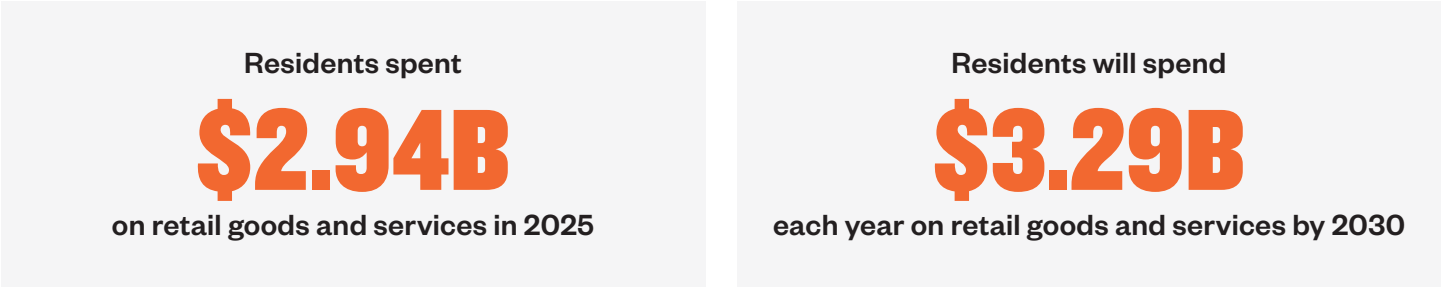
"Much more public transportation in our area."

"Signs with our Yiddish language, clean streets, more and faster buses."

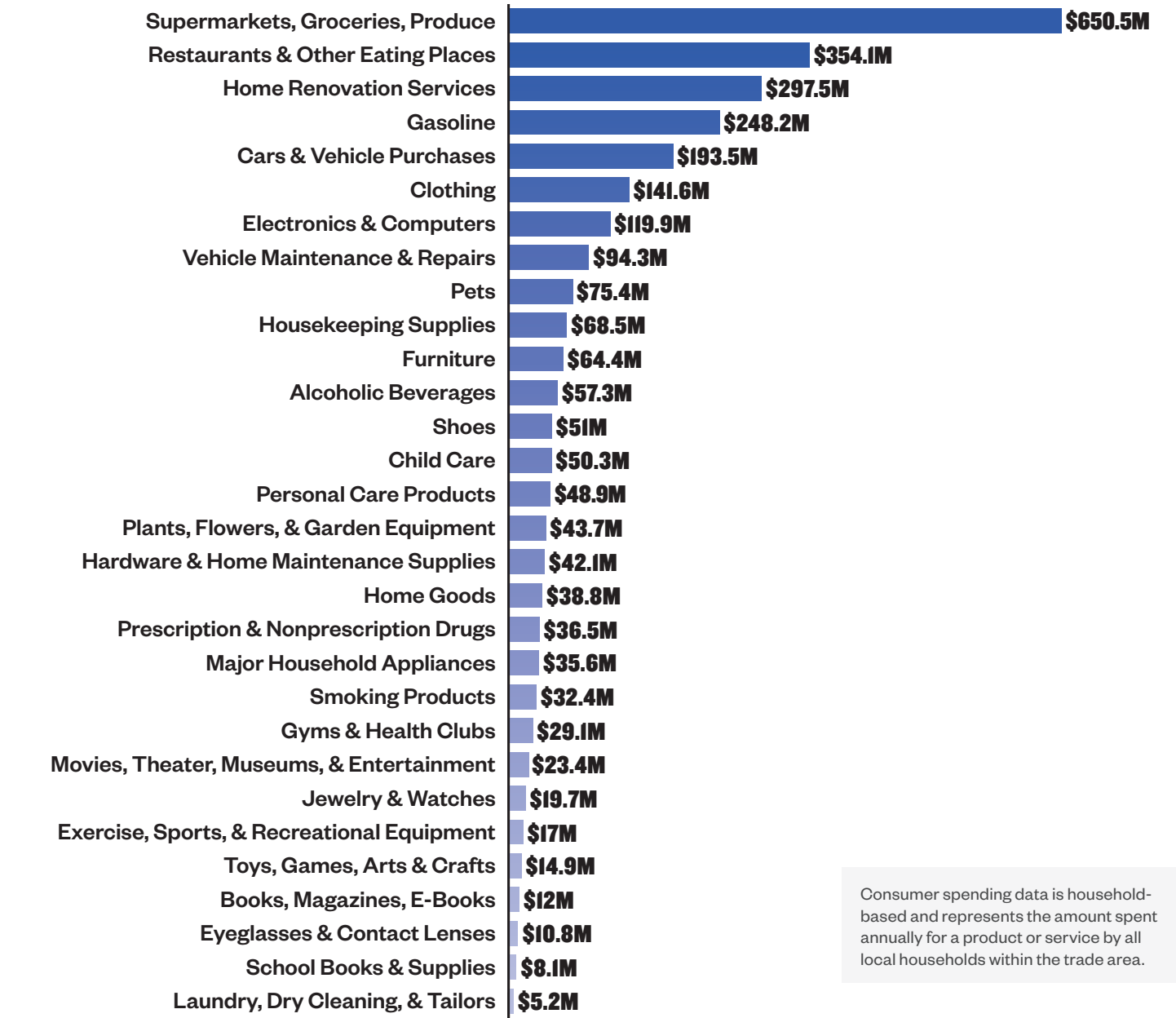
"There are no bathroom facilities available. When shopping with little children or while pregnant this can prove to be very difficult."

Source: Based on 98 merchant surveys and 230 consumer surveys conducted by Borough Park Jewish Community Council in Fall 2024 and Winter 2025.

Borough Park Retail Demand



2025 Consumer Spending

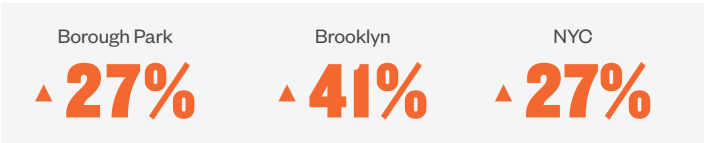


Source: Esri forecasts for 2025 and 2030; Consumer Spending data are derived from the 2022 and 2023 Consumer Expenditure Surveys, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

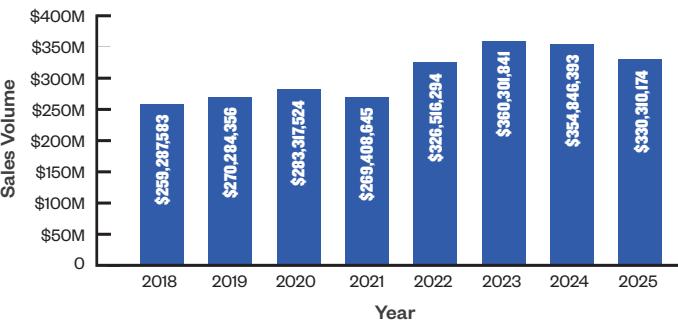
BUSINESS OUTLOOK

Business Trends

Change in Total Business Sales, 2018-2025

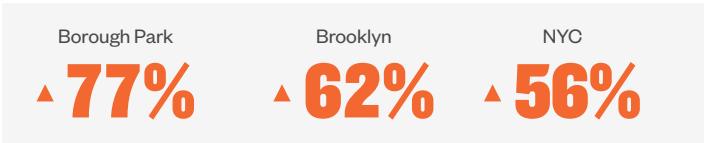


Borough Park Total Business Sales

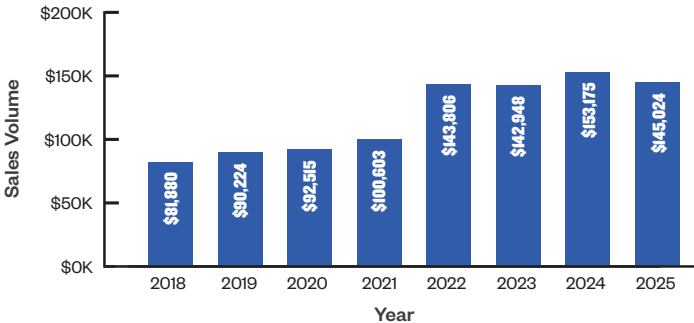


*Year 2025 reflects data gathered up until March 2025. Source: Division of Tax Policy, NYC Department of Finance

Change in Median Sales by Business, 2018-2025









Borough Park Median Sales by Business

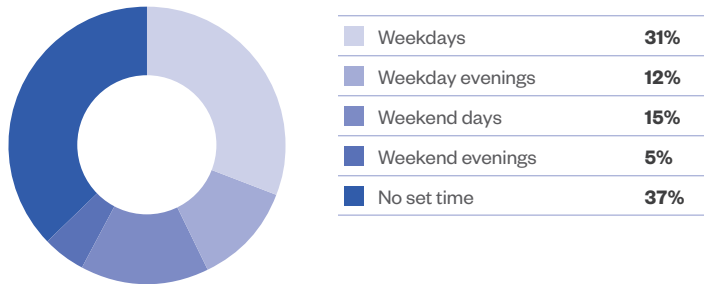


What We've Heard from Shoppers

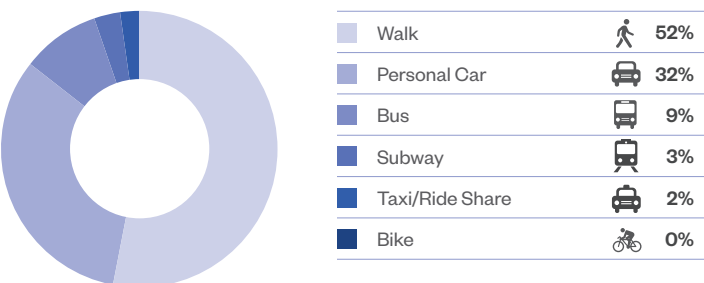
What additional types of businesses would you like to see in Borough Park?

- ▶ Affordable clothing stores 
- ▶ Gyms and fitness centers 
- ▶ Chain stores 
- ▶ Parking lots or garages 
- ▶ Coffee shops, cafes, and bakeries 
- ▶ Children's stores and activities 

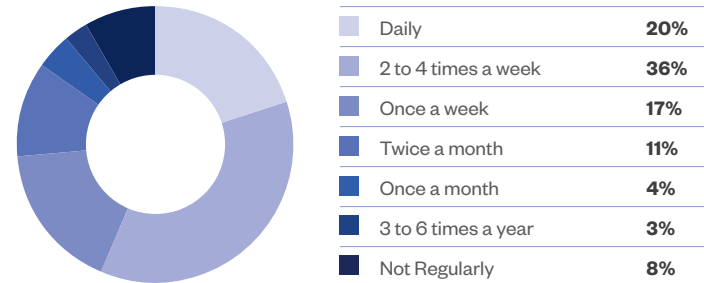
When do you usually shop in Borough Park?



How do you usually travel to Borough Park?

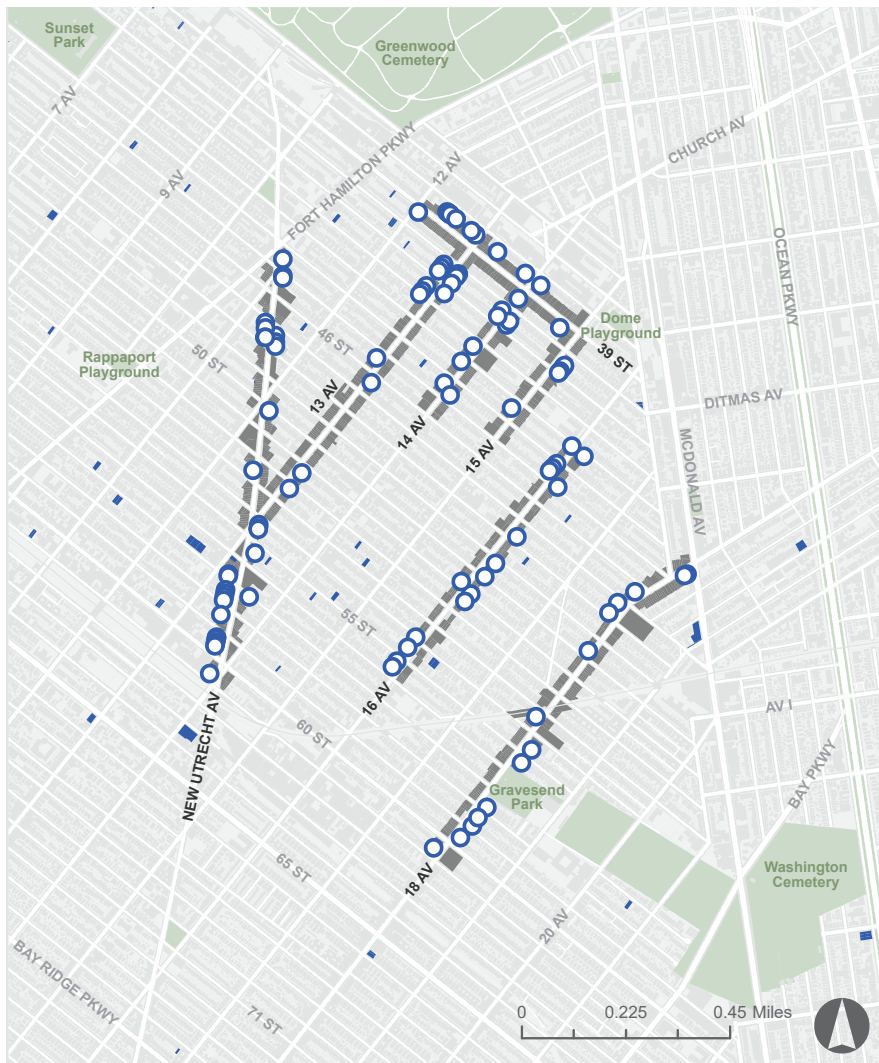


How often do you shop in Borough Park?



Source: Based on 230 consumer surveys conducted by Boro Park Jewish Community Council in Fall 2024 and Winter 2025.

Storefront Vacancies

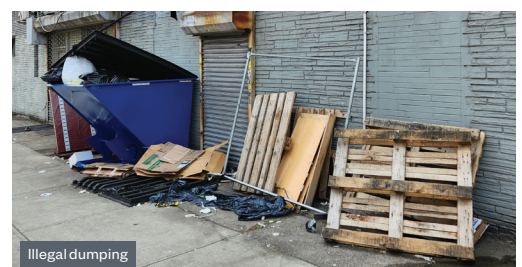


■ Vacant Lots ○ Vacant Storefronts ■ Parks & Open Spaces

An analysis of 899 storefronts along 39th Street, 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, 18th, and New Utrecht avenues revealed that 53% of storefronts are in poor condition, 22% are in average condition, and 24% are in good condition.

Streetscape Observations

- Litter is a persistent issue across much of the neighborhood, especially on corridors with a high concentration of food establishments
- 39th Street suffers from high commercial vacancy rates, poorly maintained sidewalks, and widespread graffiti, contributing to a perception of disinvestment
- Many corridors lack adequate greenery and tree cover, and numerous empty tree pits are filled with weeds and debris
- During peak seasons, sidewalks become significantly congested due to delivery vehicles and merchandise placed outside stores, limiting pedestrian mobility and creating safety concerns
- New Utrecht Avenue, in part due to the elevated train infrastructure, struggles with low lighting, inactive storefronts, illegal dumping, and the presence of ghost kitchens, contributing to a diminished sense of safety



DATA APPENDIX

Study Area Boundaries

Assessed Commercial Corridors
Primary data on Borough Park storefront businesses presented on pg. 6-9 was gathered along the following commercial corridors:
▶ 39th Street between 12th and 15th avenues
▶ 13th Avenue between New Utrecht Avenue and 38th Street
▶ 14th Avenue between 46th and 39th streets
▶ 15th Avenue between 45th Street and 38th Avenue
▶ 16th Avenue between 56th and 43rd streets
▶ 18th Avenue between 61st Street and McDonald Avenue
▶ New Utrecht Avenue between 61st Street and Ft. Hamilton Parkway

Borough Park Context Area
Demographic and employment data on pg. 12-13 represents the population within the Borough Park neighborhood context area.

Trade Area
Consumer spending data on pg. 9 corresponds to the 0.75 mile trade area.



Area Demographics

Total Population

97,340

Borough Park

2,646,306

Brooklyn

8,516,202

New York City

Population Density (per square mile)

57,605

Borough Park

38,078

Brooklyn

28,165

New York City

Average Household Size

4.2

Borough Park

2.57

Brooklyn

2.51

New York City

Car Ownership

48.2%

Borough Park

44.3%

Brooklyn

45.1%

New York City

Commuting Patterns

45,169

Work

8,955

Live & Work in Borough Park

20,473

Live in Borough Park, work elsewhere

45,169

Work in Borough Park, live elsewhere

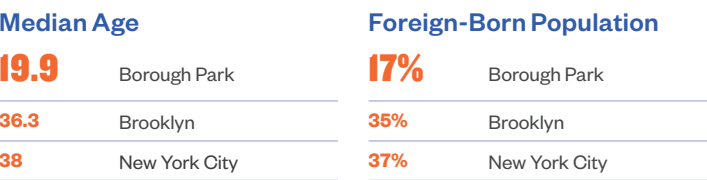
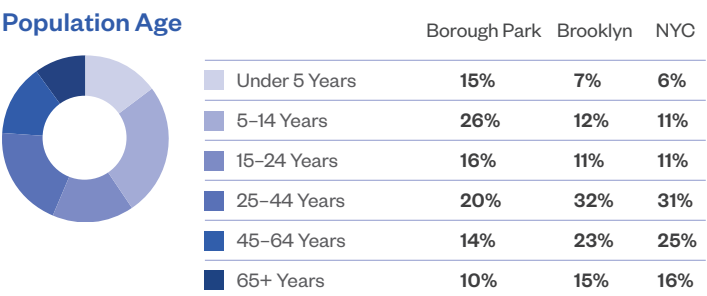
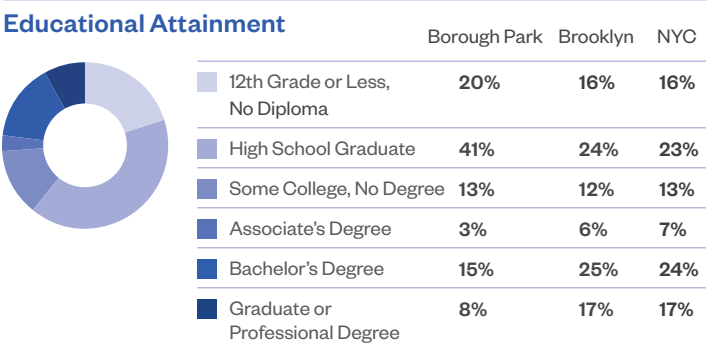
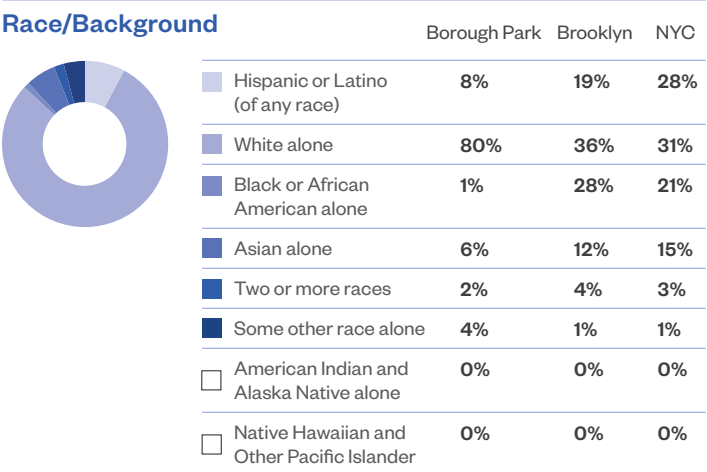
8,955

Live & Work in Borough Park

20,473

Live in Borough Park, work elsewhere

Area Demographics



Income

Median Household Income	Pop. Below Poverty Line
<div>\$55,390</div> <div>Borough Park</div>	<div>32%</div> <div>Borough Park</div>
<div>\$78,548</div> <div>Brooklyn</div>	<div>19%</div> <div>Brooklyn</div>
<div>\$79,713</div> <div>New York City</div>	<div>17%</div> <div>New York City</div>

Employment

Population in Labor Force	Unemployment*
<div>56%</div> <div>Borough Park</div>	<div>7.7%</div> <div>Borough Park</div>
<div>64%</div> <div>Brooklyn</div>	<div>7.5%</div> <div>Brooklyn</div>
<div>63%</div> <div>New York City</div>	<div>7.7%</div> <div>New York City</div>

*Note: As of April 2025, the unemployment rate is 4.7% for Brooklyn and 4.6% for New York City (NYSDOL); updated neighborhood-level data for Borough Park is not available.

Local Jobs and Employment



Source: US Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey; 2020 OnTheMap Application; NYS Department of Labor, May 2023.

DATA APPENDIX

Borough Park Transportation



▲ Borough Park Transportation



Average Daily Bus Ridership (2024)

12,518	B35	3,724	B16
10,751	B8	3,276	B67
8,541	B9	2,881	B69
6,951	B11		

Average Weekday Subway Ridership (2024)

6,136	F G	Church Avenue
3,625	N D	New Utrecht Avenue / 62 Street
3,578	N	18 Avenue
2,929	D	Fort Hamilton Parkway
2,854	F	Ditmas Avenue
2,508	D	50 Street
2,450	F	18 Avenue
1,386	D	55 Street

Average Daily Vehicular Traffic (2024)

10,495	60th Street from 14th to 17th avenues
9,591	17th Avenue from 60th to 53rd streets
9,383	15th Avenue from 62nd Street to Dahill Road
8,672	18th Avenue from 62nd to 55th streets
8,483	16th Avenue from 57th Street to Dahill Road
7,690	14th Avenue from 50th Street to Church Avenue
7,459	13th Avenue from 60th St to 36th streets
7,153	New Utrecht Avenue from 60th Street to 9th Avenue
5,748	18th Avenue from 55th to 50th streets
5,495	14th Avenue from 60th to 50th streets
5,463	39th Street from Dahill Road to 14th Avenue
4,420	39th Street from 14th Avenue to Ft. Hamilton Parkway
3,949	12th Avenue from 61st to 37th streets

Source: MTA 2024; NYS DOT, 2024 Annual Average Daily Traffic data.

Recent SBS Neighborhood Investments

▶ *Commercial Revitalization, Avenue NYC multi-year grant of \$300,000 awarded to Boro Park Jewish Community Council, 2024-2027.*

Current & Planned Developments

Brooklyn Yards

▶ A mixed use development of 14 buildings, including 81 affordable housing units, constructed over an active rail line.

1547 60th Street

▶ A manufacturing-to-mixed use development that will house multiple commercial units and a community facility.

Existing Plans & Studies

Foodscape: Borough Park, New York City Food Policy Center at Hunter College, 2017.

Sources

ESRI and Consumer Expenditure Surveys, Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2025 ESRI Retail Demand Outlook.

Metropolitan Transportation Authority, 2024. Average Weekday Subway Ridership and Average Monthly Bus Ridership.

NYS Department of Labor. May 2025. Unemployment Rate Rankings by County.

NYS Department of Transportation. 2024 Annual Average Daily Traffic, using Traffic Data Viewer.

NYC Department of Finance, Division of Tax Policy, using data from NYS Department of Taxation and Finance. Business sales are reported by tax year, which runs from March 1st to February 28th. Sales data are compiled from sales tax returns, which are rolled up by tax filer within a year, excluding returns with negative sales amounts. For each year, each tax filer is reported according to the address listed on their latest return. Large outliers were removed from the analysis, and the top 5% of filers from Manhattan and the top 1% of filers from the outer boroughs by sales were removed.

Live XYZ, NYC Storefront Data, June 2025. Average and median storefront vacancy rates were determined through an SBS analysis of each commercial corridor in New York City.

U.S. Census Bureau. 2022. OnTheMap Application. Longitudinal-Employer Household Dynamics Program.

U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, 2019-2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, using NYC Population FactFinder. Borough Park Census Tracts: 192, 214, 216, 218, 220, 222, 224, 226, 228, 230, 232, 234, 236, 238, 240, 242, 244, 464, 468, 470, 472, 474, 476, 478

Photo Credits: NYC SBS: Shaine Stuhlmuller.

ABOUT SBS

The NYC Department of Small Business Services helps unlock economic potential and create economic security for all New Yorkers by connecting New Yorkers to good jobs, creating stronger businesses, and building a fairer economy in neighborhoods across the five boroughs.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to recognize and thank the following individuals and organizations for their contributions to the development of the Borough Park Commercial District Needs Assessment:

Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso
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