



careers
businesses
neighborhoods



Brooklyn Alliance



ABOUT CANARSIE

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 **Rockaway Parkway, Flatlands Avenue, and Avenue L** in Canarsie and was conducted in partnership with **Brooklyn Alliance** between September 2021 and June 2022.

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 **200 surveys** and various stakeholder meetings with neighborhood merchants, shoppers, workers, property owners, and residents.

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Background

Located in eastern Brooklyn, Canarsie is a predominantly middle-class residential neighborhood characterized by single- and two-family homes. Bordered by Linden Boulevard, Paerdegat Basin, Fresh Creek Basin, and Jamaica Bay, the area is marked by an extensive waterfront and park network.

Originally home to Native Americans, the neighborhood's name derives from the Lenape name for the indigenous community and the local area. During the first half of the 19th century, Canarsie was a quiet fishing community. The development of the Brooklyn and Rockaway Beach Railroad, which opened in 1865, provided new access to the neighborhood and waterfront. Canarsie became a popular summer resort destination from the late 19th through early 20th centuries and was home to the Golden City Amusement Park until 1939. The amusement park shuttered to make way for the Belt Parkway, which connected the neighborhood to other parts of Brooklyn and Queens but divided the neighborhood from nearby open space along Jamaica Bay. The parkway and further infill development on former wetlands continued into the 1950s, paving the way for several large-scale residential developments, including Seaview Village and NYCHA's Breukelen Houses and Bay View Houses. The neighborhood retained a suburban feel, and attracted many Italian and Jewish immigrant families. In subsequent decades, white flight led to the neighborhood gaining a large West Indian population, and by the 1990s Canarsie became a primarily Black neighborhood.

In 2012, Canarsie was severely impacted by Hurricane Sandy, which inundated the neighborhood and left damaged homes, businesses, and infrastructure in its wake. Prior to the storm, the neighborhood was not mapped in the floodplain. In response, Canarsie has been a focus of the NYC Department of City Planning's Resilient Neighborhoods Initiative, and the City has invested in a range of projects to help the neighborhood weather future storms.

Today, the community is served by three main commercial corridors: Rockaway Parkway, Avenue L, and Flatlands Avenue. These corridors feature a bustling and diverse array of small family-owned stores, delis, restaurants, clothing stores, supermarkets, bakeries, and pharmacies that cater to local residential needs.

Neighborhood Demographics

See more on page 12

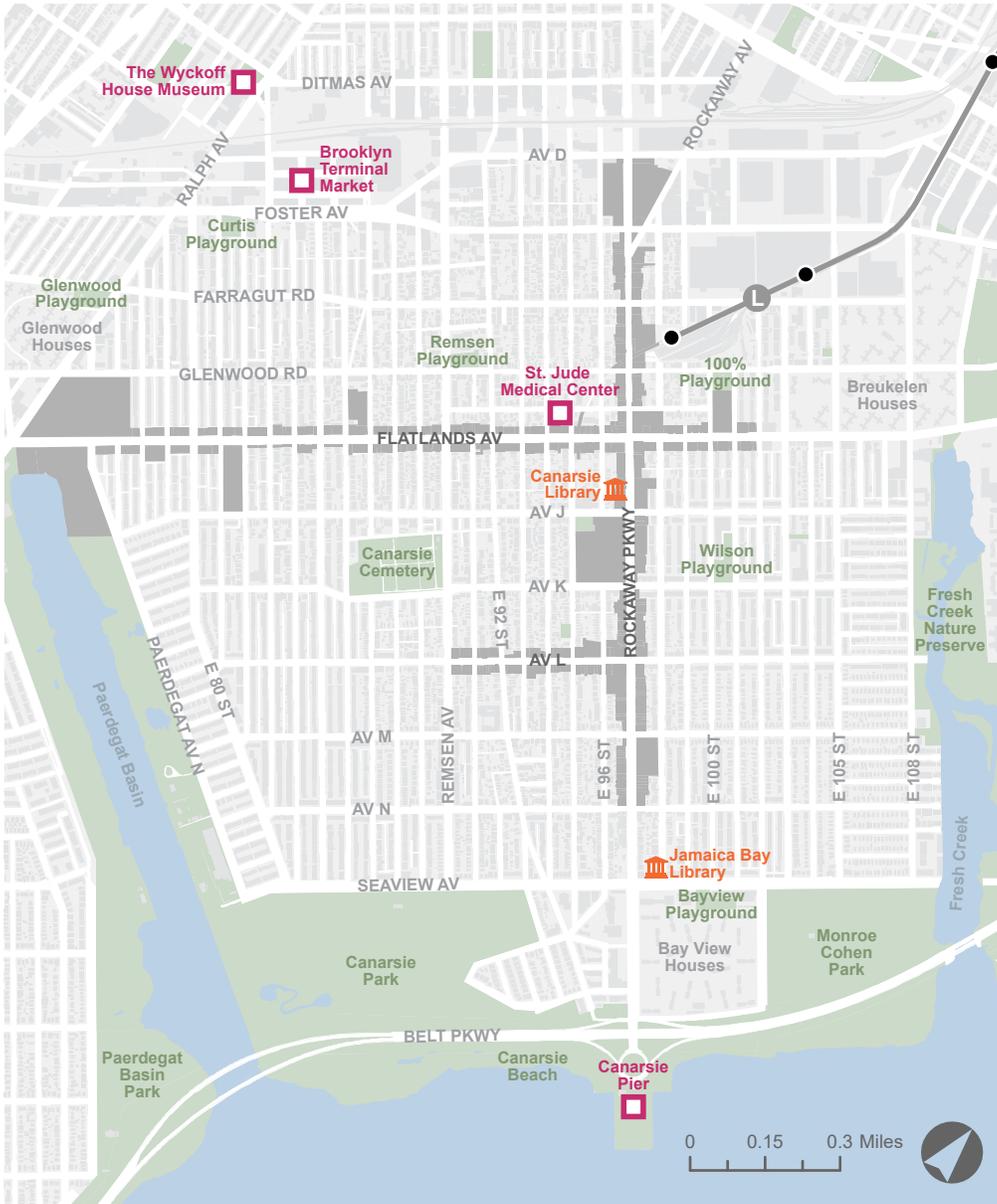
Canarsie is a large neighborhood and is home to more than 91,000 residents. The community is predominantly African American (84%), with 46% hailing from the West Indies, and approximately 8% of the population is Hispanic/Latinx. Canarsie has a median household income of \$71,393, which is \$11,000 more than that of Brooklyn. The building stock is characterized by one- and two-family detached and semi-detached homes, row houses, and local commercial corridors crisscrossing through the center of the neighborhood.

Future Opportunities

See more on page 5

Canarsie's accessibility by public transit, large Caribbean immigrant community with a network of local businesses, and high rates of homeownership signal several investment opportunities. With a wide collection of businesses, the development of a new merchants association in Canarsie offers an opportunity to collaborate across corridors and bring additional services and resources to the community.

Canarsie



▲ Points of Interest

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

Merchant & Business Groups

Rockaway Parkway Merchants Association

Neighborhood Events

- Barbados Festival Day
- Caribbean Dance and Music Festival

◀ Notable Places



Brooklyn Terminal Market



Fresh Creek Nature Preserve



Canarsie Park



The Wyckoff House Museum



Canarsie Library



Canarsie Cemetery



Canarsie Pier

KEY FINDINGS & OPPORTUNITIES

Strengths

- ▶ Accessible transportation options, including the L train and multiple bus routes, connect residents and visitors to the area's commercial corridors
- ▶ Nearby well-used public spaces, such as Canarsie Park and Pier, provide ample space for community recreation and gathering
- ▶ Longstanding and new businesses offer affordable and diverse dining and retail options, many of which reflect the neighborhood's vibrant Caribbean community
- ▶ Newly opened large chain supermarket provides more fresh produce offerings to residents and shoppers
- ▶ Located near accessible retail destinations such as the Brooklyn Terminal Market and Gateway Shopping Center
- ▶ A planned new farmer's market is set to bring additional fresh produce offerings to residents and shoppers
- ▶ Newly formed Rockaway Parkway Merchants Association has brought together local businesses to collaborate on corridor improvement projects

Challenges

- ▶ Large vacant storefront spaces with poor lighting disrupt the continuity of Flatlands Avenue and contribute to safety concerns both during the day and at night
- ▶ Traffic congestion, especially around the Rockaway Parkway subway terminal, the Belt Parkway, and large anchor businesses, creates an unpleasant and unsafe pedestrian experience
- ▶ Lack of youth programming and community centers leads to tensions between young residents and merchants
- ▶ Lack of community organizations focused on business services and inadequate public resources, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, have led to hesitation among merchants to participate in collective neighborhood improvement efforts
- ▶ Lack of litter baskets on certain corridors including Flatlands Avenue and Rockaway Parkway, as well as irregular trash pick-up and illegal dumping, contribute to trash overflowing onto streets and sidewalks
- ▶ Many storefront awnings are in poor condition throughout the district



Pop Smoke Mural



Rockaway Parkway Subway Station



Canarsie Educational Campus



New Businesses



Opportunities

- ▶ Create and launch digital marketing initiatives, such as an online business directory, to attract residents and visitors to explore neighborhood offerings
- ▶ Encourage merchants to become more active in the NYPD 69th Precinct Community Council and support violence prevention organizations to address safety concerns on commercial corridors
- ▶ Create youth job opportunities through corridor cleanup initiatives and other business support programs
- ▶ Attract new businesses to the neighborhood to meet the needs of consumers by working with property owners and landlords to market vacant spaces
- ▶ Work with local organizations to create new community programming in local open spaces
- ▶ Host Open Streets programming on Avenue L to attract more foot traffic to the area
- ▶ Build the capacity of local merchants associations to grow membership and foster opportunities for coordination among merchants, community organizations, and City agencies
- ▶ To address safety concerns, install and improve street lighting on key commercial corridors and advocate for speed bumps and additional crosswalk interventions to improve pedestrian safety on Avenue L

What's Next?

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

For more information, visit: nyc.gov/avenuenyc

BUSINESS LANDSCAPE: CANARSIE

Business Inventory

329

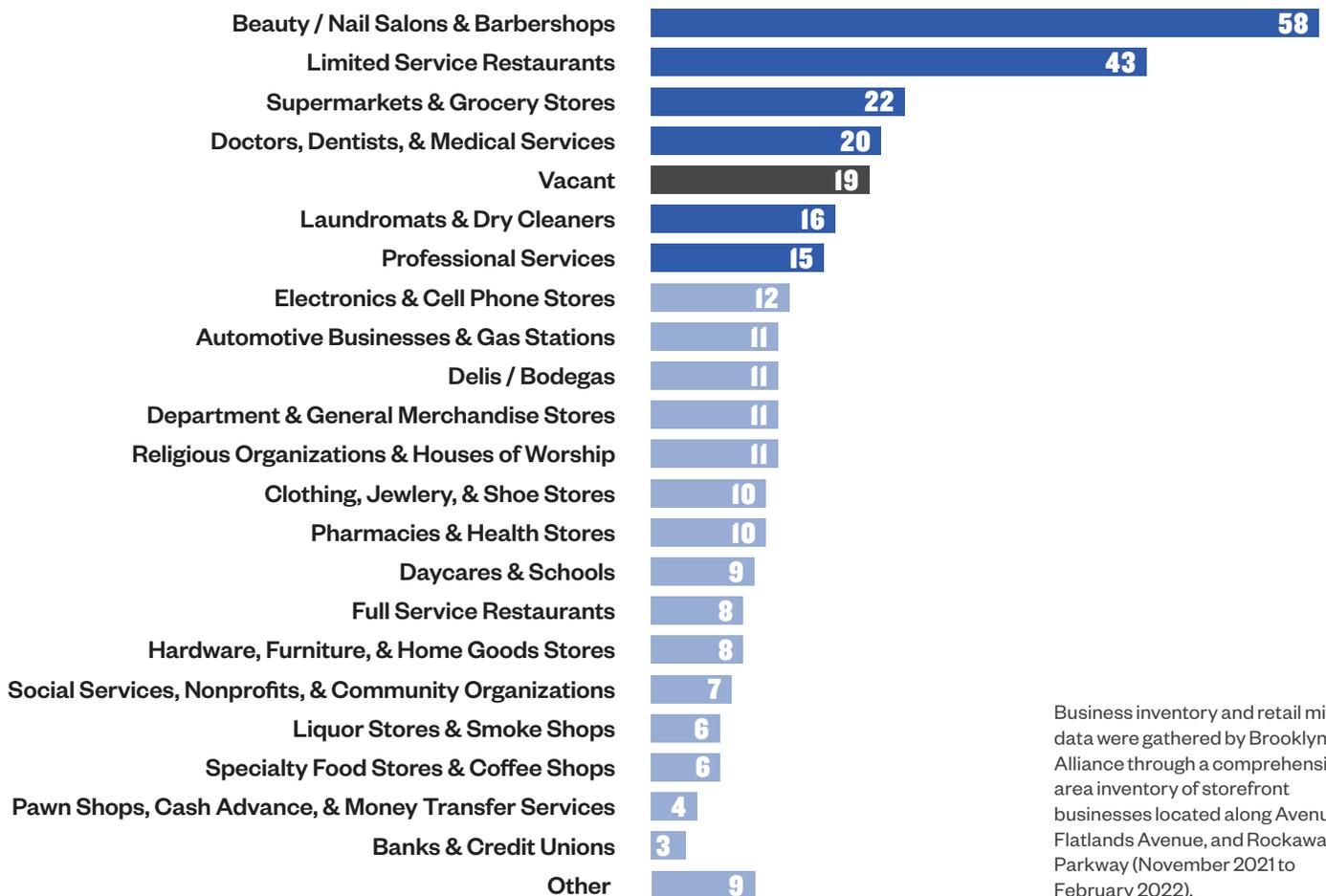
Total Number of Storefronts

5.8%

Storefront Vacancy*

Note: In 2021, New York City's 76 Business Improvement Districts reported an average ground floor vacancy rate of 13% and median ground floor vacancy rate of 11% (SBS BIDs Trends Report, FY21).

Storefront & Retail Mix

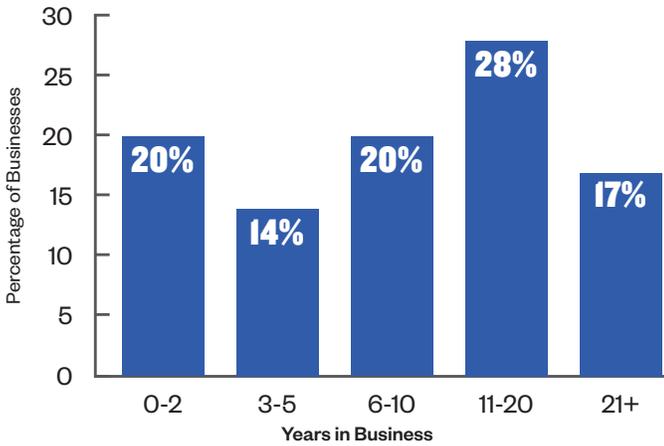


Business inventory and retail mix data were gathered by Brooklyn Alliance through a comprehensive area inventory of storefront businesses located along Avenue L, Flatlands Avenue, and Rockaway Parkway (November 2021 to February 2022).



What We've Heard from Canarsie Merchants

How many years have you been in business here?



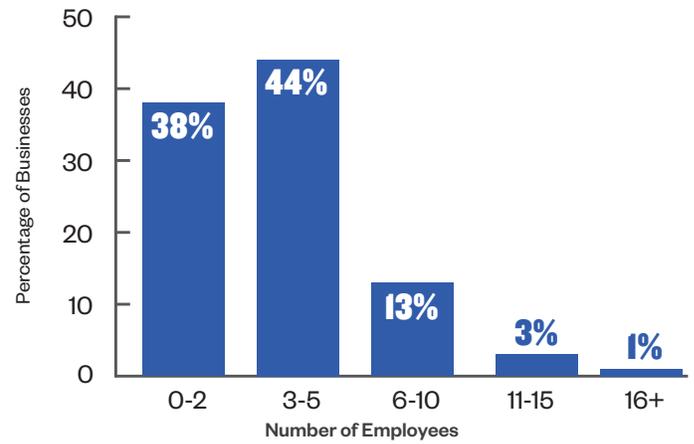
12.8
Mean

10
Median

35
Mode

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?



4.2
Mean

3
Median

2
Mode

Do you own or rent your property?



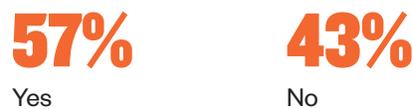
Does your business currently have a website?



Are you a minority or woman-owned business?



Does your business currently use social media?



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



Source: Based on 100 merchant surveys conducted by Brooklyn Alliance between December 2021 and June 2022.

BUSINESS LANDSCAPE

What We've Heard from Canarsie Merchants & Shoppers

What makes the Canarsie commercial district unique?

- "Energy is buzzing. Comfortable."
- "It is the heart and soul of the community."
- "Familiarity and community."
- "I grew up here. There's family businesses, I'm familiar with the area and it's always good."
- "Business diversity."
- "You always run into someone you know, and you can get anything here."
- "The proximity, accessibility, and lower cost."

What do you like about the commercial district?

- "Diverse. West-Indian. Caribbean vibes."
- "The subway is here, the precinct isn't far, and you don't have to go far to go to businesses."
- "Approachable store owners, dens of belonging, connectivity."
- "It is good and safe. We live in the neighborhood and stay in the neighborhood."
- "Brooklyn Terminal Market, Canarsie Piers, Canarsie Park-Seaview."
- "I like the open space and lack of tall buildings. I like the access to the water."

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

	% Merchant Response	% Consumer Response
▶ Safety	64%	67%
▶ Community events	32%	39%
▶ Sanitation, street cleaning	29%	47%
▶ Landscaping/beautification	28%	33%
▶ Street lighting	19%	22%
▶ Storefront improvements	18%	21%
▶ Other	18%	20%
▶ Merchant collaboration	14%	11%
▶ More open space	12%	17%
▶ Transportation improvements	11%	34%
▶ Graffiti removal	8%	16%

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

- "More advertisements."
- "Increase safety and improve merchant collaboration."
- "Cleanliness and more activities. A street fair would be nice in the summer."
- "Give community some events."
- "Clean up streets, brighten up neighborhood."
- "More artwork."
- "Shop Local Initiative."

Source: Based on 100 merchant surveys and 103 consumer surveys conducted by Brooklyn Alliance between December 2021 and June 2022.

Canarsie Retail Demand

Residents spend

\$1.83B

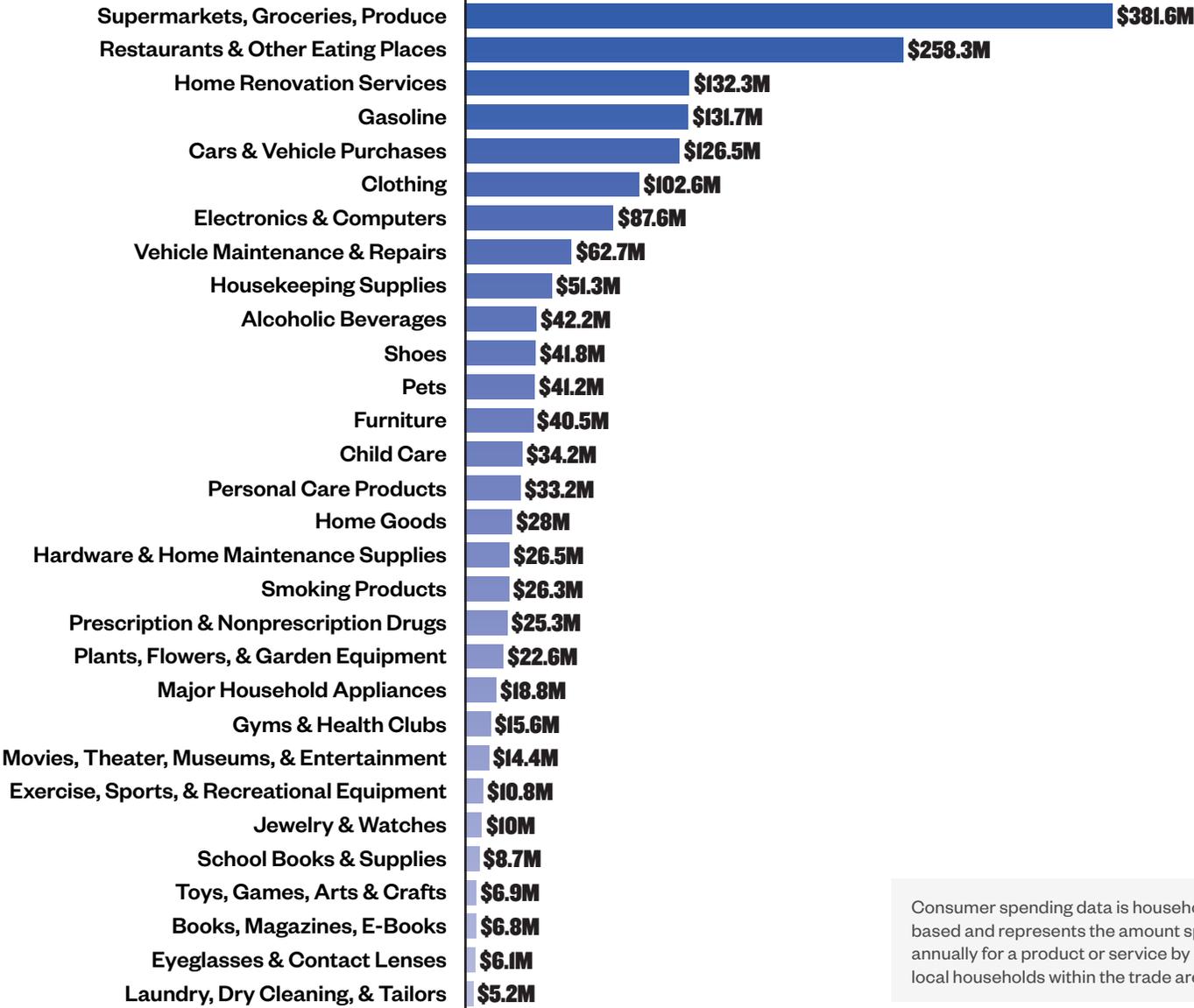
each year on retail goods and services

Residents will spend

\$2.10B

each year on retail goods and services by 2027

2022 Consumer Spending



Consumer spending data is household-based and represents the amount spent annually for a product or service by all local households within the trade area.

Source: ESRI forecasts for 2022 and 2027; Consumer Spending data are derived from the 2018 and 2019 Consumer Expenditure Surveys, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

BUSINESS OUTLOOK

Business Trends

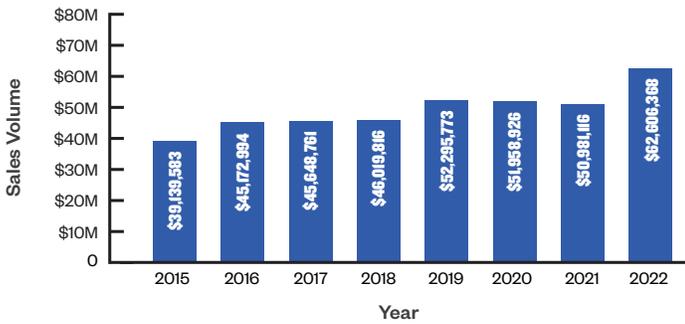
Change in Total Business Sales, 2015-2022



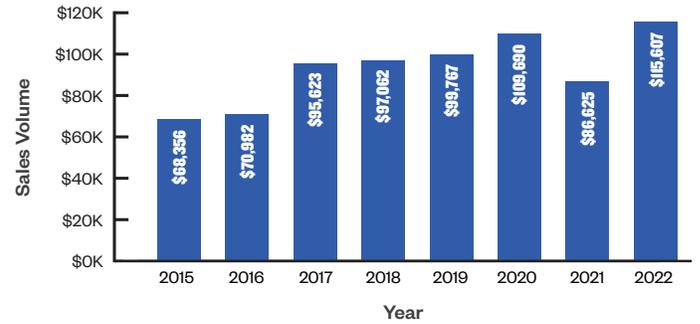
Change in Median Sales by Business, 2015-2022



Canarsie Total Business Sales*



Canarsie Sales by Business*



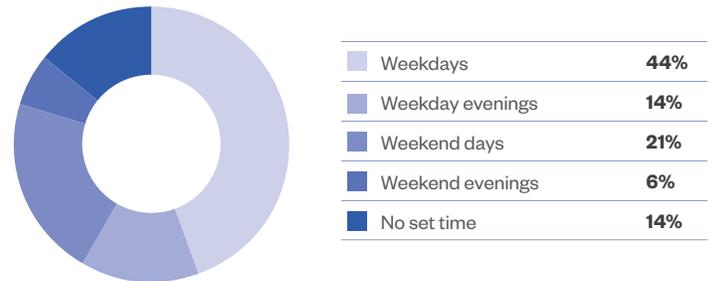
*Year 2022 reflects data gathered up until March 2022. Source: Division of Tax Policy, NYC Department of Finance

What We've Heard from Shoppers

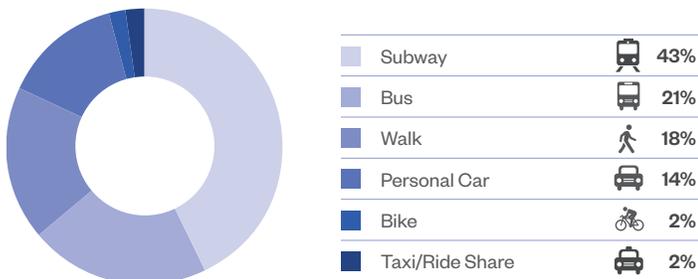
What additional types of businesses would you like to see in Canarsie?

- ▶ Supermarkets 
- ▶ Clothing 
- ▶ Pharmacies 
- ▶ Full service restaurants 
- ▶ Large national retailers 
- ▶ Coffee shops, cafes 

When do you usually shop in Canarsie?



How do you usually travel to Canarsie?

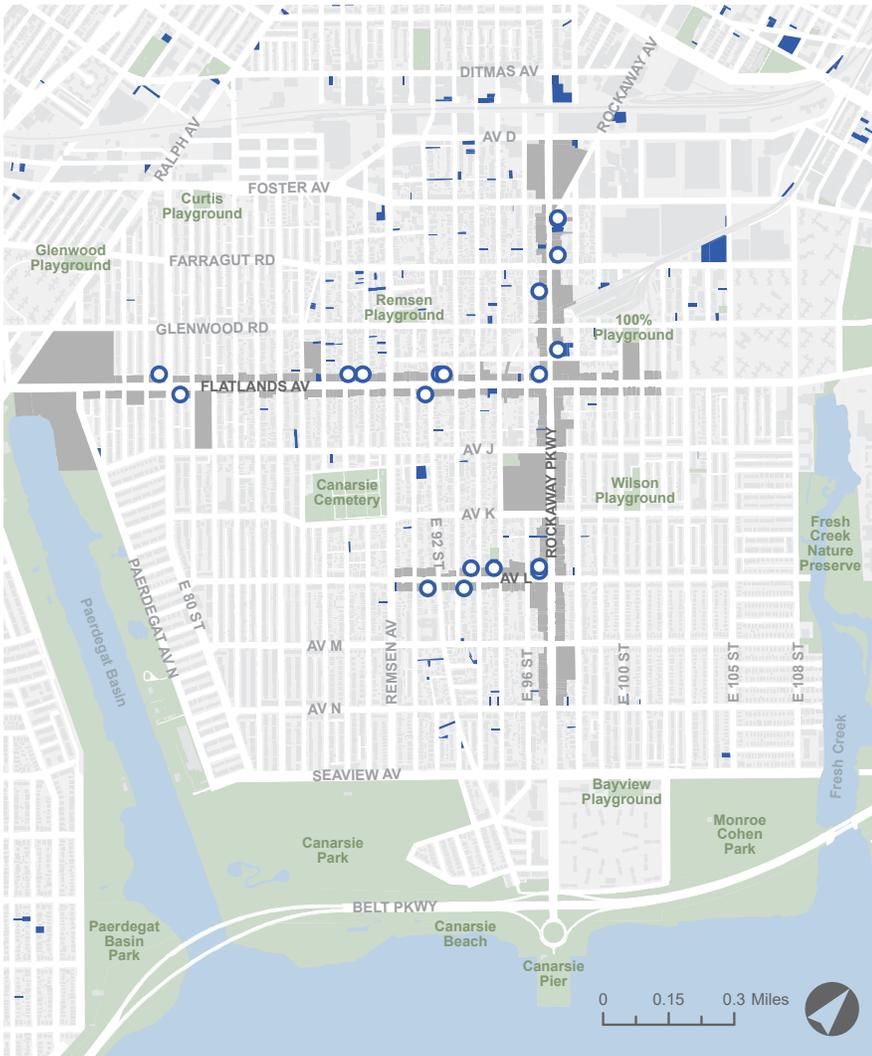


How often do you shop in Canarsie?



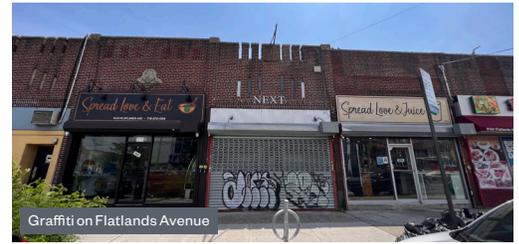
Source: Based on 103 consumer surveys conducted by Brooklyn Alliance between December 2021 and June 2022.

Storefront Vacancies



■ Vacant Lots
 ○ Vacant Storefronts
 ■ Parks & Community Gardens

An analysis of 329 storefronts along Avenue L, Flatlands Avenue, and Rockaway Parkway revealed that 13% of storefronts are in poor condition, 15% are in average condition, and 72% are in good condition.



Graffiti on Flatlands Avenue



Flooding of Dinapoli Playground



Avenue L



Graffiti on Avenue L



Mural on P.S. 207

Streetscape Observations

Avenue L

- ▶ Traffic congestion and high vehicle speeds create an unsafe environment for pedestrians.
- ▶ Bus stops on Avenue L could be enhanced with benches and shelter to protect people from the elements, especially because buses are the easiest way around Canarsie.

Flatlands Avenue

- ▶ Many large storefront vacancies have graffiti and insufficient lighting, leading to a poor sense of safety and an unfriendly pedestrian experience.
- ▶ Lack of trash cans and irregular trash pick-up contribute to trash overflowing onto streets and sidewalks.
- ▶ Public murals and well maintained tree pits enhance the streetscape for visitors and residents.

Rockaway Parkway

- ▶ Clean sidewalks and streets are found along Rockaway Parkway.
- ▶ Lack of street furniture and pedestrian space cause sidewalks to become overcrowded and unpleasant for residents.
- ▶ Inadequate wayfinding makes businesses and amenities hard to locate for visitors.

DATA APPENDIX

Study Area Boundaries

Assessed Commercial Corridors

Primary data on Canarsie storefront businesses presented on pg. 6-8 was gathered along the following commercial corridors:

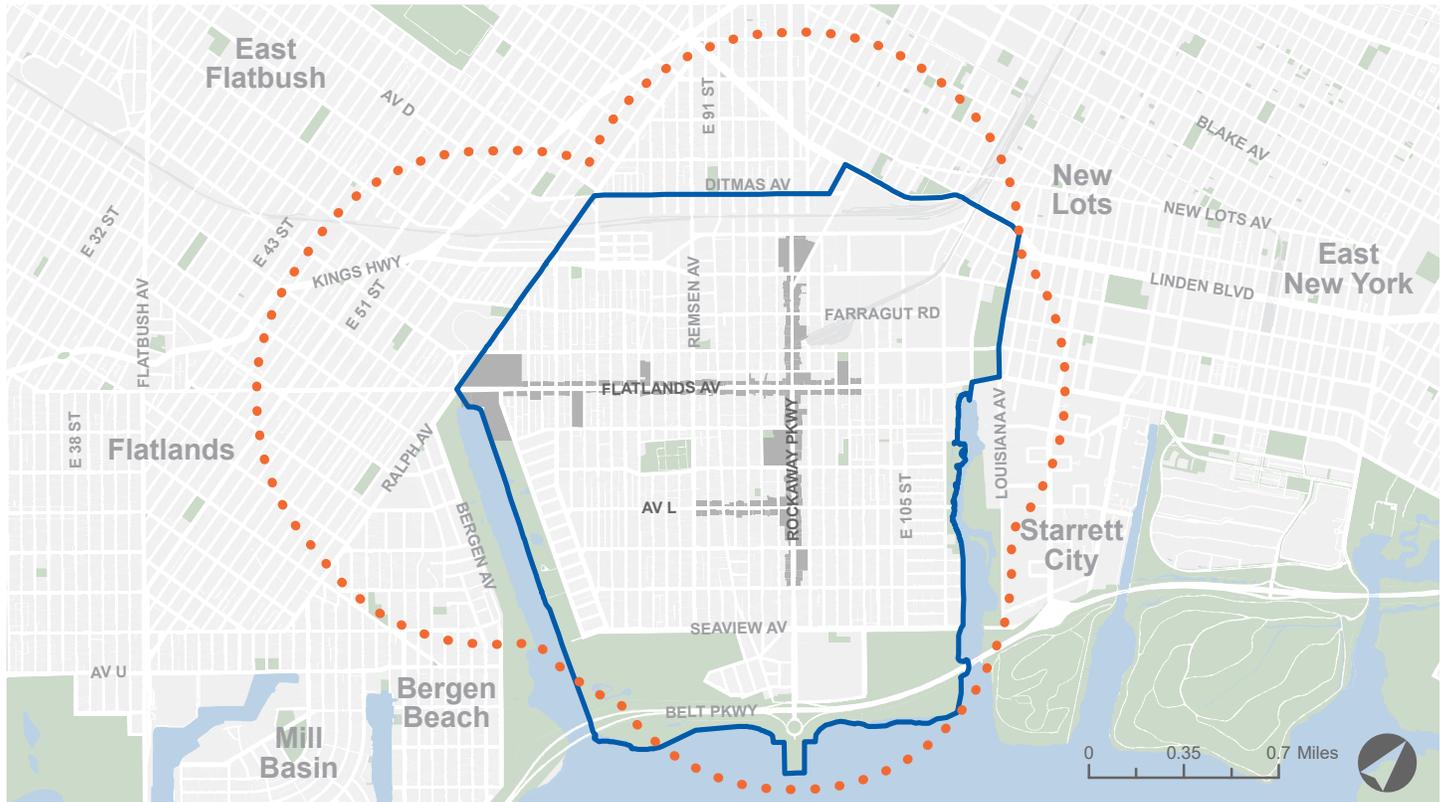
- ▶ Flatlands Avenue between Ralph Avenue and 102nd Street
- ▶ Rockaway Parkway between Avenue D and Avenue N
- ▶ Avenue L between Remsen Avenue and Rockaway Parkway

Canarsie Context Area

Demographic and employment data on pg. 12-13 represents the population within the Canarsie context area.

Trade Area

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



Area Demographics

Total Population

91,243	Canarsie
2,589,974	Brooklyn
8,419,316	New York City

Population Density (per square mile)

27,885	Canarsie
37,267	Brooklyn
27,845	New York City

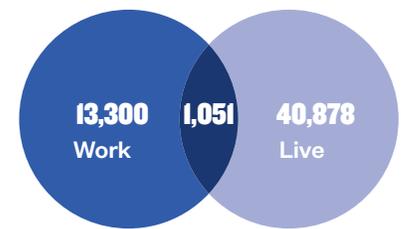
Average Household Size

2.97	Canarsie
2.66	Brooklyn
2.60	New York City

Car Ownership

65.2%	Canarsie
44.3%	Brooklyn
45.4%	New York City

Commuting Patterns



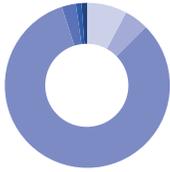
13,300 Work in Canarsie, live elsewhere

1,051 Live & Work in Canarsie

40,878 Live in Canarsie and work elsewhere

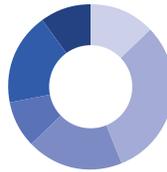
Area Demographics

Race/Background



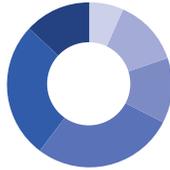
	Canarsie	Brooklyn	NYC
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	8%	19%	29%
White alone	5%	36%	32%
Black or African American alone	84%	30%	22%
Asian alone	3%	12%	14%
Two or more races	1%	2%	2%
Some other race alone	1%	0%	1%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0%	0%	0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0%	0%	0%

Educational Attainment



	Canarsie	Brooklyn	NYC
12th Grade or Less, No Diploma	13%	18%	18%
High School Graduate	31%	26%	24%
Some College, No Degree	19%	13%	14%
Associate's Degree	9%	6%	6%
Bachelor's Degree	18%	23%	22%
Graduate or Professional Degree	10%	15%	16%

Population Age



	Canarsie	Brooklyn	NYC
Under 5 Years	7%	7%	6%
5-14 Years	13%	12%	11%
15-24 Years	13%	12%	12%
25-44 Years	28%	32%	31%
45-64 Years	27%	23%	25%
65+ Years	13%	14%	15%

Median Age

37.3	Canarsie
35.2	Brooklyn
36.7	New York City

Foreign-Born Population

44%	Canarsie
36%	Brooklyn
37%	New York City

Income

Median Household Income

\$71,393	Canarsie
\$60,231	Brooklyn
\$63,998	New York City

Pop. Below Poverty Line

11%	Canarsie
16%	Brooklyn
18%	New York City

Employment

Population in Labor Force

64%	Canarsie
64%	Brooklyn
64%	New York City

Unemployment*

5.2%	Canarsie
6.2%	Brooklyn
6.3%	New York City

*Note: As of May 2022, the unemployment rate is 5.8% for Brooklyn and 5.7% for New York City (NYSDOL); updated neighborhood-level data for Canarsie is not available.

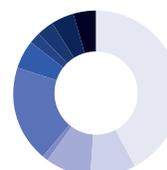
Local Jobs and Employment

Local Residents' Employment



Educational Services, Health Care, Social Assistance	42%
Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities	11%
Retail Trade	9%
Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	7%
Public Administration	6%
Accommodation, Food Services, Arts, & Entertainment	6%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	5%
Construction	5%
Other Services	3%
Manufacturing	2%

Jobs Located in Canarsie



Educational Services, Health Care, Social Assistance	38%
Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities	8%
Retail Trade	8%
Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	1%
Public Administration	17%
Accommodation, Food Services, Arts, & Entertainment	5%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	2%
Construction	3%
Other Services	4%
Manufacturing	4%

DATA APPENDIX

Canarsie Transportation



▲ Canarsie Transportation

- ▬ Bus Routes
- ▬ NYC Subway
- ⋯ Bicycle Lanes

Average Weekday Subway Ridership (2021)

3,582	L	Rockaway Parkway
1,634	L	East 105 St

Average Monthly Bus Ridership (2021)

220,664	B6
68,400	B7
231,269	B15
61,850	B17
41,630	B42
135,151	B47
113,334	B60
86,411	B82 Local/SBS
92,082	B103

Average Daily Vehicular Traffic (2019)

16,197	Rockaway Avenue between Rockaway Parkway and Linden Boulevard
12,685	Rockaway Parkway between Rockaway and Flatlands avenues
32,979	Rockaway Parkway between Flatlands Avenue and Shore Parkway
24,655	Flatlands Avenue between Ralph Avenue and Rockaway Parkway
19,600	Flatlands Avenue between Rockaway Parkway and Pennsylvania Avenue

Source: MTA 2021; NYS DOT, 2019 Annual Average Daily Traffic data.

Recent SBS Neighborhood Investments

- ▶ *Commercial Revitalization*, Avenue NYC multi-year grant of \$300,000 awarded to Brooklyn Alliance, 2021-2024.
- ▶ *COVID-19 Commercial District Support*, Strategic Impact Grant of \$20,000 awarded to LDC of East New York, 2021.

Existing Plans & Studies

- Zoning for Coastal Flood Resiliency*, NYC Department of City Planning, 2021.
- A Foodscape of Canarsie/Flatlands*, New York City Food Policy Center at Hunter College, 2020.
- Canarsie Area-wide Transportation Study*, NYC Department of Transportation, 2018.
- Resilient Neighborhoods Canarsie*, NYC Department of City Planning, 2017.
- Black Canarsie: A History*, Brooklyn Public Library - Jamaica Bay Branch Library, 2016.

Sources

- ESRI and Consumer Expenditure Surveys, Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2022 ESRI Retail Demand Outlook.
- Metropolitan Transportation Authority, 2021. Average Weekday Subway Ridership and Average Monthly Bus Ridership.
- NYS Department of Labor. May 2022. Unemployment Rate Rankings by County.
- NYS Department of Transportation. 2019 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.
- NYC Department of Small Business Services. Fiscal Year 2021. Business Improvement Districts Trends Report.
- U.S. Census Bureau. 2019. OnTheMap Application. Longitudinal-Employer Household Dynamics Program.
- U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, using NYC Population FactFinder. Canarsie Census Tracts: 1018, 1014, 1034.02, 950, 954, 956, 958, 960, 962, 964, 966, 968, 970, 974, 982, 984, 986, 988, 990, 992, 994, 996, 1028.01, 998, 1004, 1006, 1008, 1010, 1012, 1016, 1020, 1022, 1024, 1026, 1028.02, 1034.01, 1098.
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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

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Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso
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Canarsie Merchants
Canarsie Shoppers and Residents