



EAST NEW YORK - NEW LOTS BROOKLYN

Commercial District Needs Assessment



NYC
Small Business
Services

careers
businesses
neighborhoods

in
partnership
with

Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation



ABOUT EAST NEW YORK - NEW LOTS

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 **New Lots Avenue, Livonia Avenue, Sutter Avenue,** and **Van Sinderen Avenue**, in **East New York - New Lots**, and was conducted in partnership with **Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation** between July 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.

The central area of East New York near New Lots Avenue is embodied by resilience, resistance, and revitalization. Bordered by Canarsie, Starrett City, and Brownsville, the community has mobilized their strong civic spirit, turned vacant lots into community gardens, and celebrated their pride in place. The East New York - New Lots commercial district is located near Broadway Junction, and its proximity to this transportation hub, coupled with many decades of ardent community organizing, has sustained the economic activity in the neighborhood.

Throughout the 20th century, East New York - New Lots was an industrial hub for assembly line factories and steel manufacturing. Economic growth attracted skilled workers of German, Italian, and Jewish descent. By the 1940s, an influx of African Americans moved to the neighborhood seeking employment in local factories, following their escape from racial violence and discrimination in the South. Soon afterwards, a large wave of Puerto Ricans arrived to the area as a result of World War II-related economic hardships in Puerto Rico and the US government's efforts to ease labor shortages in cities. In the subsequent decades, racially biased real estate practices such as blockbusting and redlining fueled disinvestment and white flight, leading to growing crime, gang activity, and racial tension. Long-standing businesses, factories, and financial institutions closed, and many of the immigrant ethnic shopkeepers, alarmed by the real estate speculation and crime, moved out of the area en masse. Disinvestment and neglect from public institutions in the 1970s and 1980s reduced economic opportunities for both shoppers and business owners in East New York - New Lots. Despite these challenges, local residents endured and rebuilt their community.

Today, East New York - New Lots is capitalizing on its strong social capital to keep the commercial district thriving. The neighborhood is served by the commercial corridors of New Lots, Livonia, and Sutter avenues and is interchangeably referred to as East New York or East New York- New Lots by the community. New Lots Avenue's bustling stretch of diverse retail options comprise some of the oldest multigenerational, family-owned businesses in the neighborhood. It is also home to many community-based organizations, including United Community Centers which leads the East New York Farms! urban agriculture project that has a youth internship program and the largest youth-run farmers market in the country. Both Livonia and Sutter avenues have a mix of residential and commercial activity, and feature hair and beauty supply stores as well as medical and professional services in between stretches of housing. The East Brooklyn Industrial Business Zone lies at the end of Sutter Avenue and several blocks of Van Sinderen Avenue, offering significant economic opportunities for local businesses and employment for jobseekers across New York City. The East New York Oral History Project, a grassroots initiative that chronicles the history of the neighborhood, documents the many efforts to attract businesses and economic activity to the neighborhood, as well as education, childcare, health services, and youth programs.

Neighborhood Demographics

See more on page 12

East New York - New Lots is home to 102,058 people. 63% of the population is Black, many of whom have family connections to the South, and 27% of the population is Hispanic, primarily Puerto Rican and Dominican. New Lots has a poverty rate of 23%, which is higher the citywide rate of 17%, and only 16% have a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 41% citywide. The neighborhood benefits from its youth and optimism. 24% of the local population is under the age of 18, which is higher than that of Brooklyn (22%) and New York City (20%).

Future Opportunities

See more on page 5

The East New York Neighborhood Plan published in 2016 committed \$267 million in neighborhood investments to promote affordable housing, economic development, and improved community resources. A decade later, the community continues to work to uphold the commitments in this plan through advocacy and grassroots organizing, including commitments to strengthen the Industrial Business Zone and bring new investments to the commercial district. The commercial district's stability is aided by the persistent efforts of community groups that work to fill vacant storefronts, advocate for a diverse mix of retail offerings, and ensure that East New York - New Lots acts on opportunities to foster community-led economic development.

In This Report

Existing conditions, business data, and qualitative depictions of the neighborhood were gathered from more than **184 surveys** and various stakeholder meetings with neighborhood merchants, shoppers, workers, property owners, and residents.

Jump to...

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East New York - New Lots



◀ Notable Places



▲ Points of Interest

- Assessed Commercial Corridors
- Parks and Public Spaces
- Public Facilities
- Notable Places
- Business Improvement District

Neighborhood Events

- Culture of Business Fair
- East New York Black Inventors Youth Parade
- East New York Farmers Markets Weekends
- Juneteenth Parade and Festival
- What's Growing in East New York! Garden Tours

Merchant & Community Groups

- Cypress Hills Business Partners
- Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation/United Community Centers
- East Brooklyn Business Improvement District
- East New York Restoration Local Development Corporation
- Innovative Resilience East Brooklyn Village Inc.
- Local Development Corporation of East New York

KEY FINDINGS & OPPORTUNITIES

Strengths

- ▶ Many local businesses enjoy a loyal long-term customer base with continued patronage
- ▶ Strong sense of civic pride among residents, businesses, and local institutions, with substantial interest among entrepreneurs in joining a merchants association
- ▶ Multiple businesses have been operating in the neighborhood for decades and have deep roots in African American and Hispanic immigrant communities, with the oldest business open since 1949
- ▶ A large concentration of religious organizations, nonprofits, and community-based organizations serve the neighborhood and provide trainings, healthcare, and social services
- ▶ 74% of local businesses are minority or woman-owned, reflecting the diversity of the neighborhood
- ▶ Highly accessible and located near transportation hubs that provide a variety of public transit options including bus, subway, the Long Island Rail Road, and the planned Interborough Express

Challenges

- ▶ Merchants have limited marketing and social media expertise, which affects their ability to attract new customers and establish a digital presence
- ▶ Inconsistent business hours of stores on all four corridors limit commercial opportunities, and storefront gates closed at odd hours further adds to the appearance of already high vacancy rates
- ▶ Illegal dumping and littering near commercial intersections detract from the overall cleanliness of the district
- ▶ Negative perceptions of crime and public safety contribute to shorter business hours and fewer shoppers on retail corridors
- ▶ The neighborhood suffers from a 21% storefront vacancy rate, with the highest vacancy rate along Van Sinderen Avenue (81%)
- ▶ There is a need for more visible district signage and wayfinding connecting the different corridors to each other and linking East New York - New Lots to nearby transit options
- ▶ Vacant and poorly maintained storefronts reduce pedestrian activity throughout the day and detract from the corridor appeal

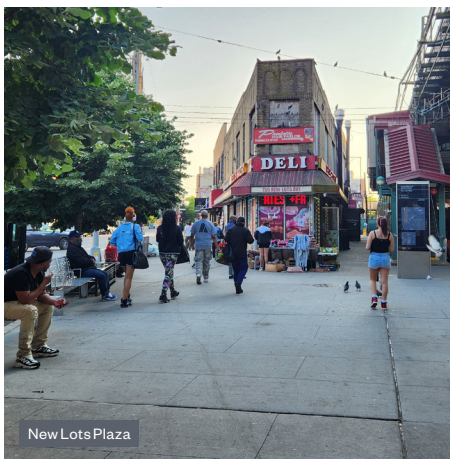




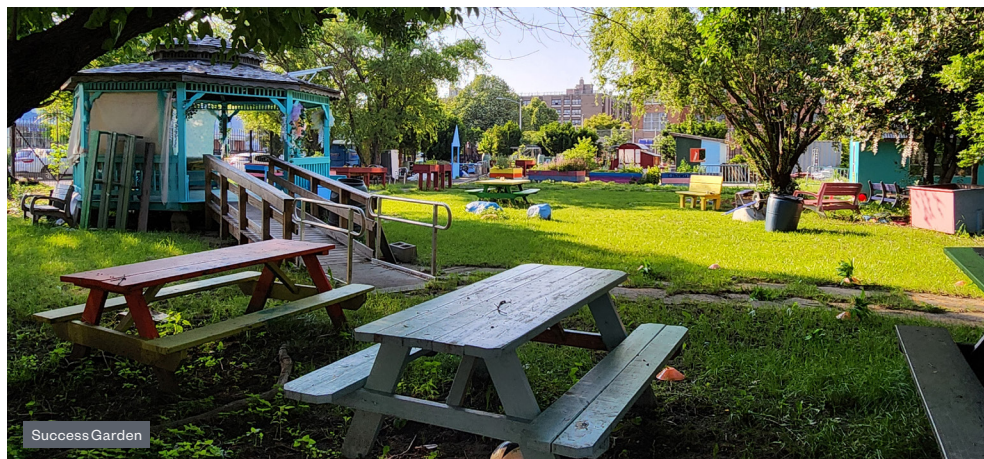
New Lots Avenue



Local Bodega Cat



New Lots Plaza



Success Garden

Opportunities

- ▶ Leverage local interest to start a merchants association and build a leadership base to pool knowledge and resources for long-term commercial revitalization
- ▶ Host events in community gardens and public spaces to celebrate the rich history and local businesses of East New York - New Lots
- ▶ Improve sanitation conditions by developing a comprehensive strategy that capitalizes on the neighborhood's strong community organizing efforts
- ▶ Work with merchants and property owners to develop a storefront improvement program
- ▶ Create mentorship and internship programs that connect youth with city agencies, professionals, and small businesses
- ▶ Collaborate with local nonprofits and merchants to help business owners obtain Minority and/or Women-owned Business Enterprise (M/WBE) certification
- ▶ Build the marketing skills of local merchants and develop districtwide shop local marketing campaigns with related programming and events

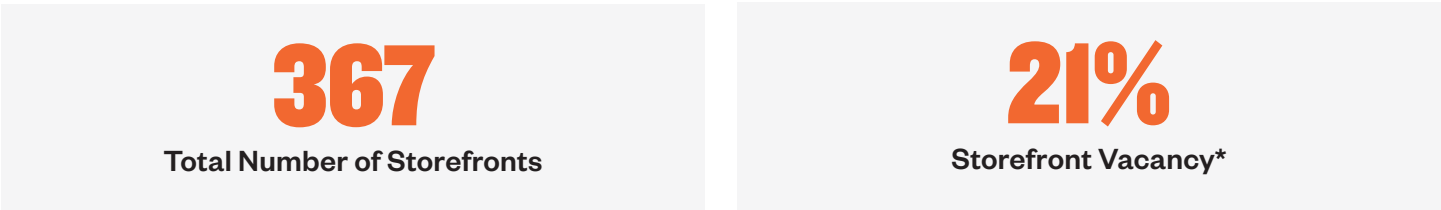
What's Next?

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

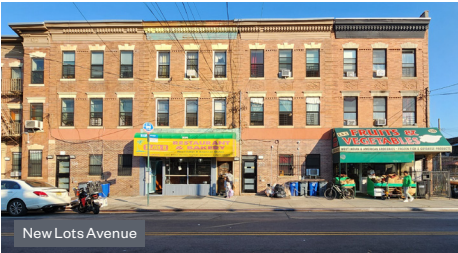
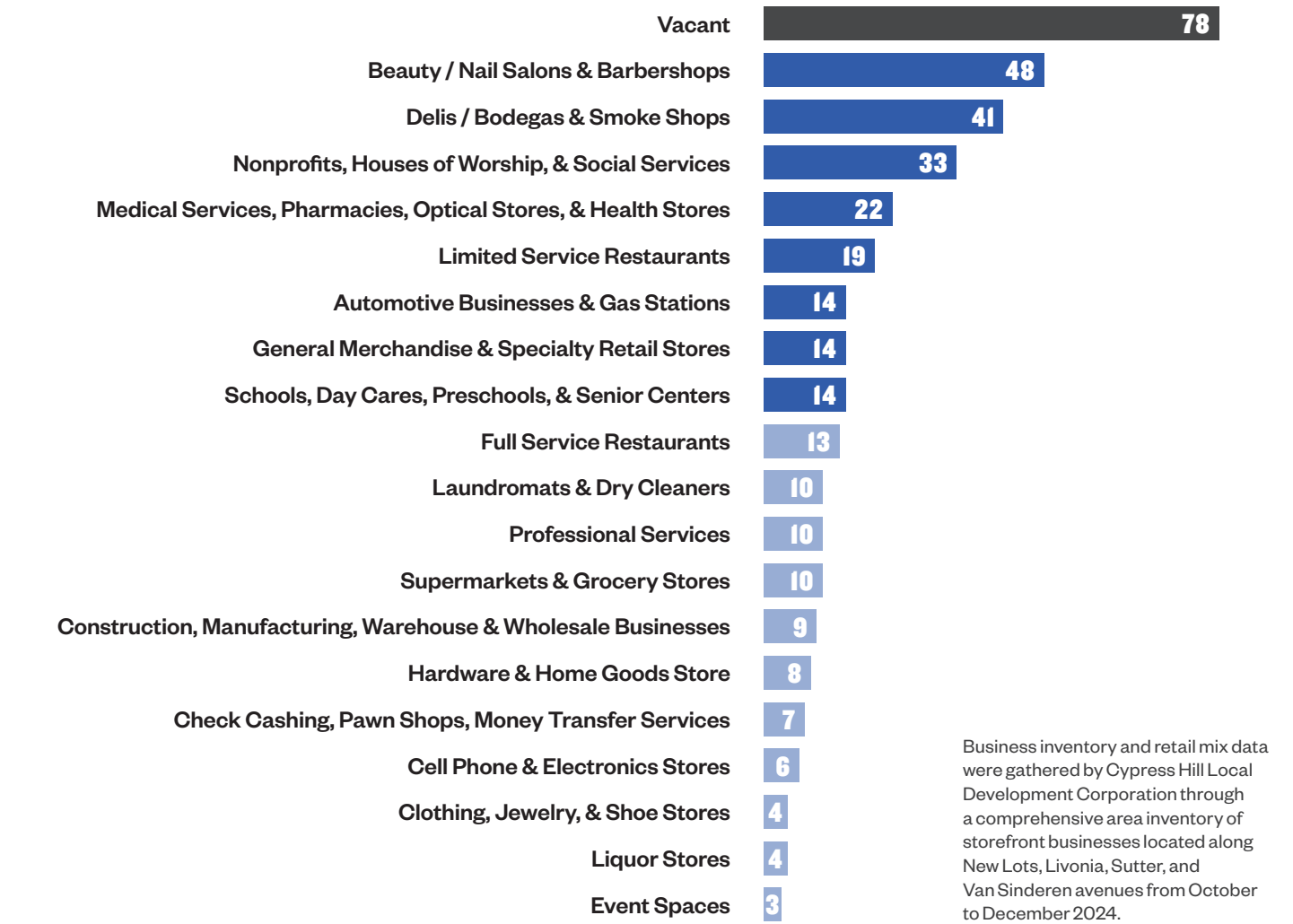
BUSINESS LANDSCAPE: EAST NEW YORK - NEW LOTS

Business Inventory



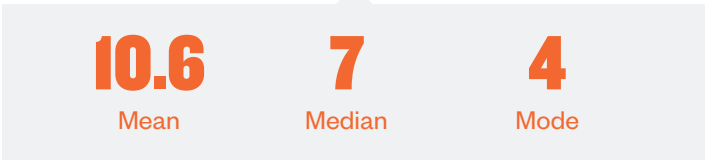
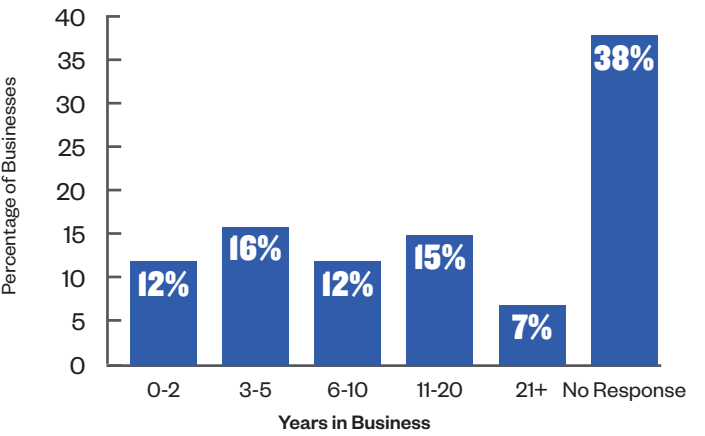
**Note: As of June 2025, New York City's commercial corridors have an average storefront vacancy of 12.1% and median storefront vacancy of 10.9% (LiveXYZ).

Storefront & Retail Mix



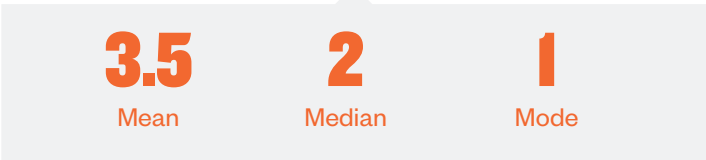
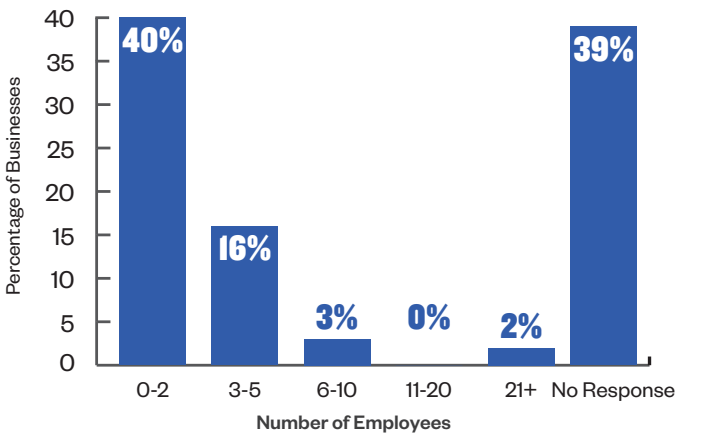
What We've Heard from East New York - New Lots Merchants

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 a minority or woman-owned business?



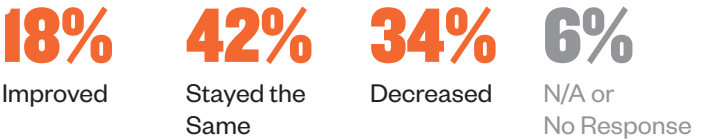
Does your business currently have a website?



Does your business currently use social media?



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



What kinds of resources would help you grow your business?

	% Merchant Responses
▶ Marketing Support	87%
▶ Access to Financing	66%
▶ Space Improvements	53%
▶ New Equipment	52%
▶ Training for Staff	19%
▶ Regulatory Compliance Assistance	11%
▶ Lease Support	7%
▶ Legal Services	7%
▶ Other	5%

Source: Based on 122 merchant surveys conducted by Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation in Fall 2024 and Winter 2025.

BUSINESS LANDSCAPE

What We've Heard from East New York - New Lots Merchants and Shoppers

What do you like about the commercial district?

"Customers are loyal and will tell their friends and family about us."

"It just is. It doesn't pretend to be something fancy."

"It used to be the worst in the 1980s. It's so much safer now and we don't have to go far to buy basic everyday things."

"It's a beautiful community."

"It's ours. It's my home. It's easy to belong because the ethnic stuff I need is here."

What makes the East New York - New Lots commercial district unique?

"I've worked around Brooklyn. Solid base of customers like no other. When they like you, they come back again and again."

"Rough at the start but they become the friendliest when they get to know you."

"The people in the area, the regular customers, essence of the community is still here."

"The community engagement and the business owners support each other through informal merchant organizing."

"I see the people sending money to their home country and then these family members visit or move here. New Lots is a good place for reunions like that."

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

	% Merchant Response	% Consumer Response
▶ Safety	66%	67%
▶ Graffiti Removal	53%	41%
▶ Landscaping/Beautification	53%	65%
▶ Sanitation, Street Cleaning	47%	70%
▶ Storefront Improvements	37%	54%
▶ Community Events	30%	51%
▶ Merchant Collaboration	30%	41%
▶ Transportation Improvements	30%	43%
▶ Street Lighting	24%	64%
▶ More Open Space	16%	35%
▶ Other	3%	7%

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

"Can we encourage stores to have consistent hours? Longer business hours as well."

"There needs to be more safety."

"Let's address illegal dumping and get storefront upgrades."

"We need more lighting on the streets."

"We have a lot of summer activities. More events should happen in spring and fall."

"Businesses with child-friendly options."

Source: Based on 122 merchant surveys and 162 consumer surveys conducted by Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation in Fall 2024 and Winter 2025.

East New York - New Lots Retail Demand

Residents spent

\$1.36B

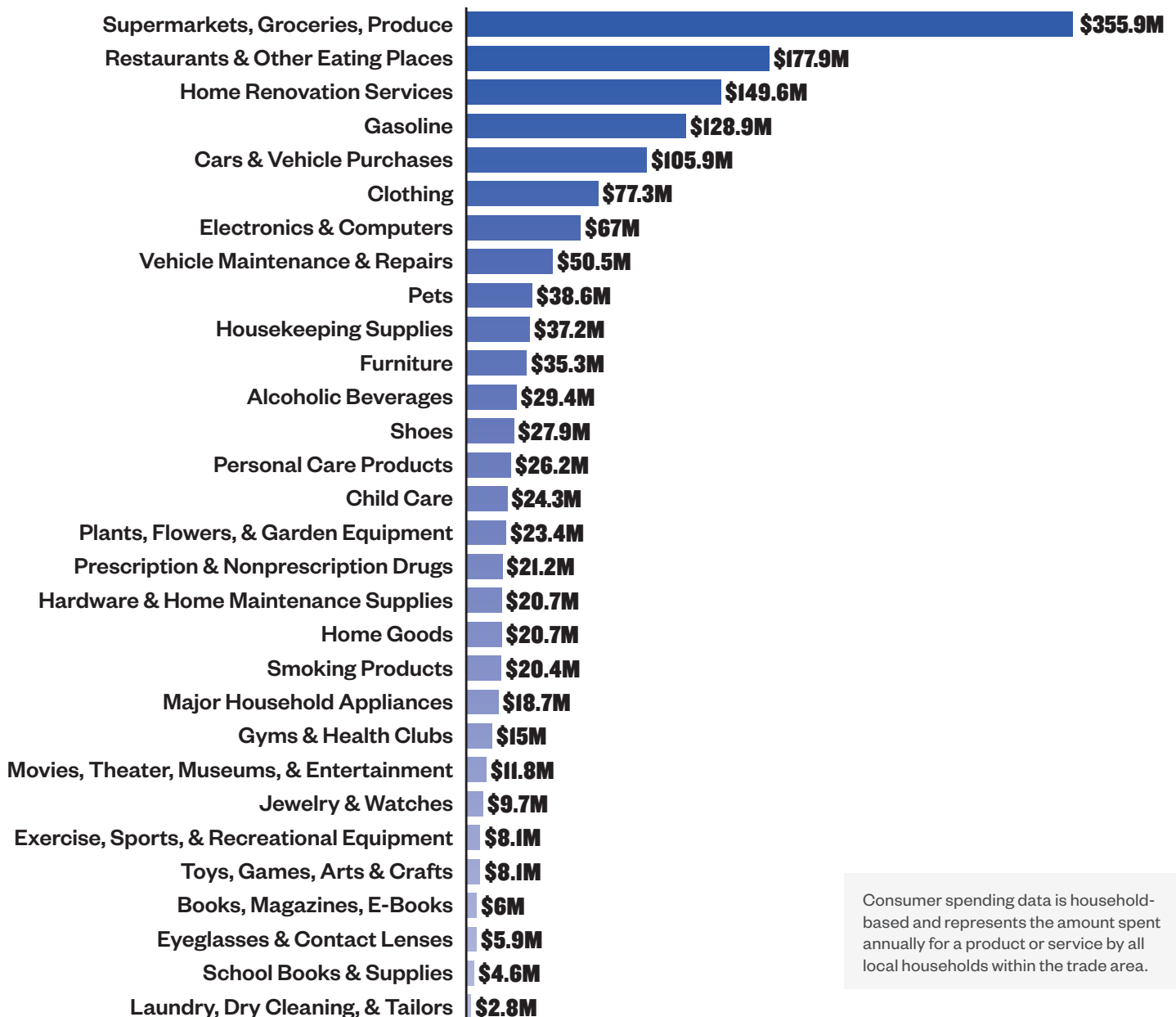
on retail goods and services in 2025

Residents will spend

\$1.53B

each year on retail goods and services by 2030

2025 Consumer Spending

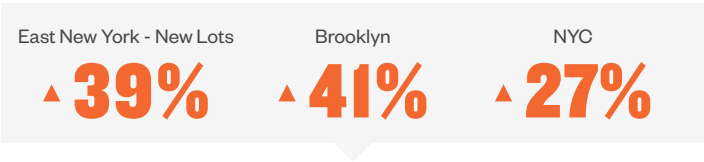


Consumer spending data is household-based and represents the amount spent annually for a product or service by all local households within the trade area.

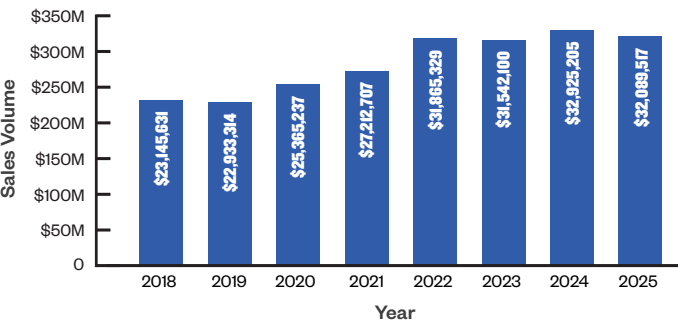
BUSINESS OUTLOOK

Business Trends

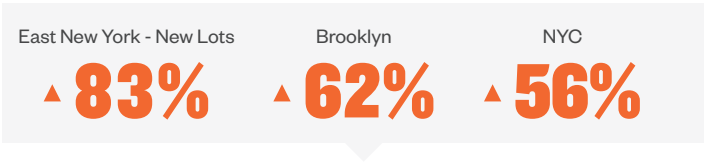
Change in Total Business Sales, 2018-2025



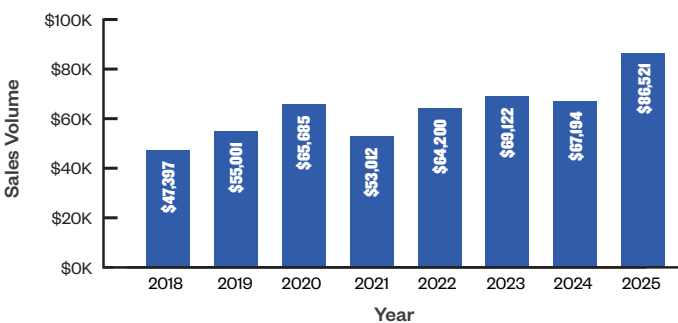
East New York - New Lots Total Business Sales



Change in Median Sales by Business, 2017-2025








East New York - New Lots Median Sales by Business



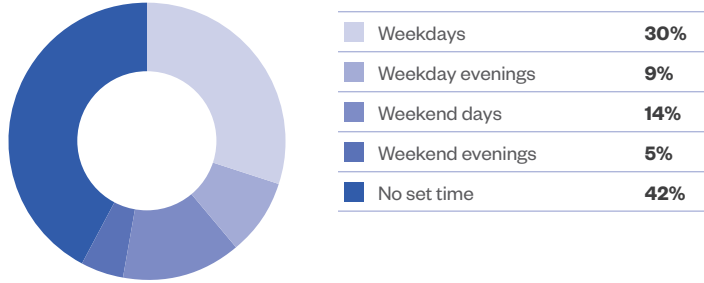
*Year 2025 reflects data gathered up until March 2025. Source: Division of Tax Policy, NYC Department of Finance

What We've Heard from Shoppers

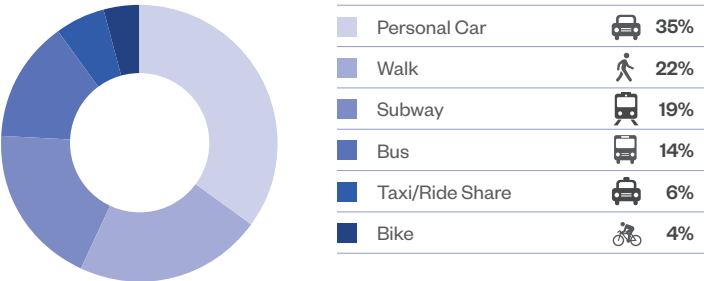
What additional types of businesses would you like to see in East New York - New Lots?

- ▶ Affordable healthier food options 
- ▶ Senior and youth-oriented activities 
- ▶ Cafes, bars, wine shops 
- ▶ Clothing stores, gift shops, specialty stores 
- ▶ Arts and culture, event spaces 

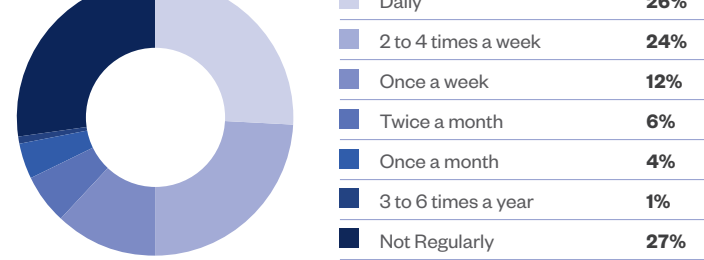
When do you usually shop in East New York - New Lots?



How do you usually travel to East New York - New Lots?

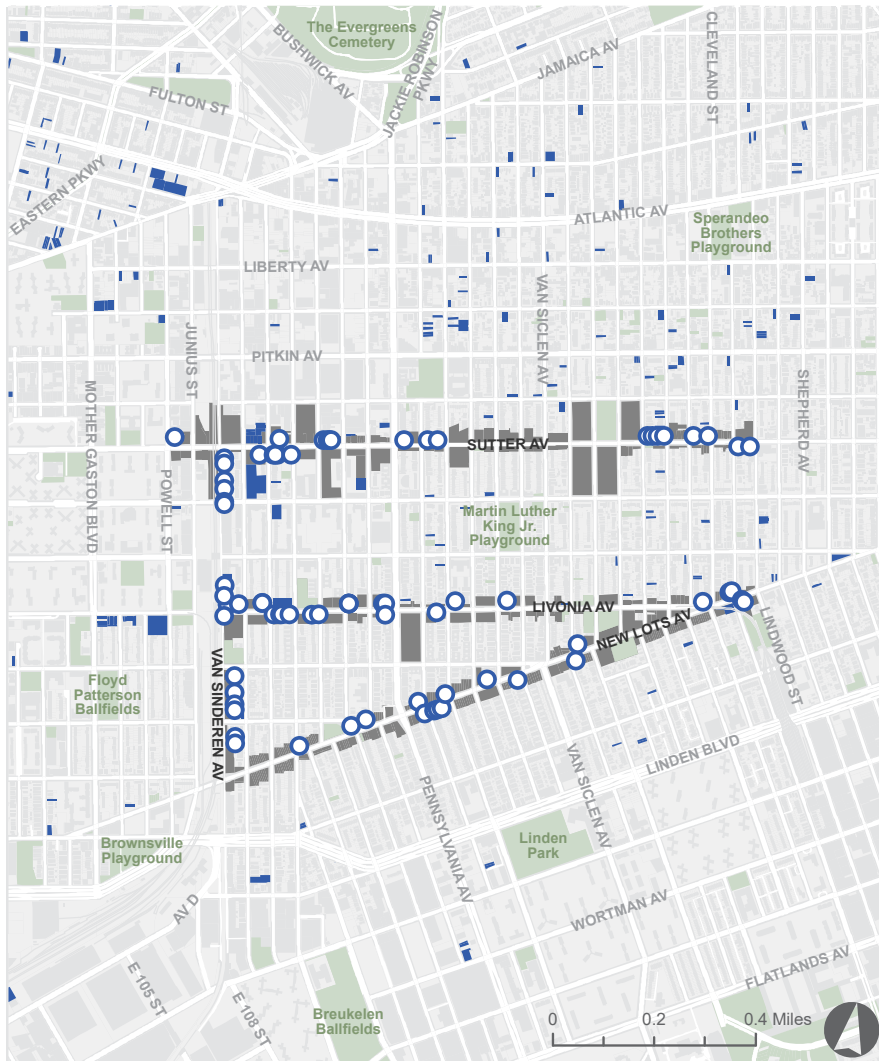


How often do you shop in East New York - New Lots?



Source: Based on 162 consumer surveys conducted by Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation in Fall 2024 and Winter 2025.

Storefront Vacancies

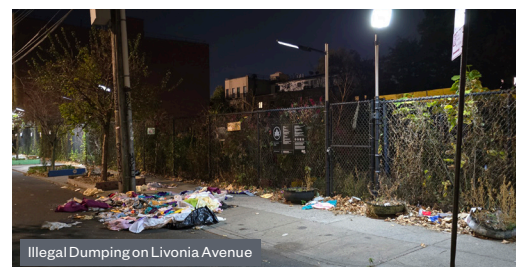
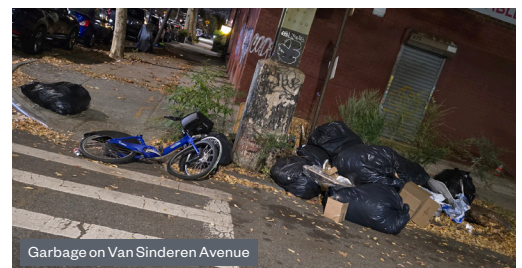
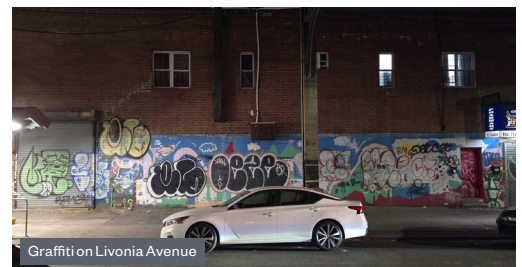


■ Vacant Lots ○ Vacant Storefronts ■ Parks & Open Spaces

An analysis of 367 storefronts along New Lots, Livonia, Sutter, and Van Sinderen avenues revealed that 24% of storefronts are in poor condition, 25% are in average condition, and 50% are in good condition.

Streetscape Observations

- ▶ Sidewalk litter, complaints about overflowing litter baskets, and other sanitation issues are prevalent on the commercial corridors, especially in front of vacant storefronts and vacant lots
- ▶ Uneven roadways, with some sections caving in along Sutter and Livonia avenues, pose safety issues to road users
- ▶ High retail vacancy rate and several vacant lots disrupt the continuity of all four corridors
- ▶ The dominant physical presence of the elevated train over Livonia Avenue leaves much of the corridor shaded during the day and affects perceptions of safety at night
- ▶ Graffiti is frequently seen tagged on construction sites and storefront gates, especially on those that have been vacant for months



DATA APPENDIX

Study Area Boundaries

Assessed Commercial Corridors

Primary data on East New York - New Lots storefront businesses presented on pg. 6-9 was gathered along the following commercial corridors:

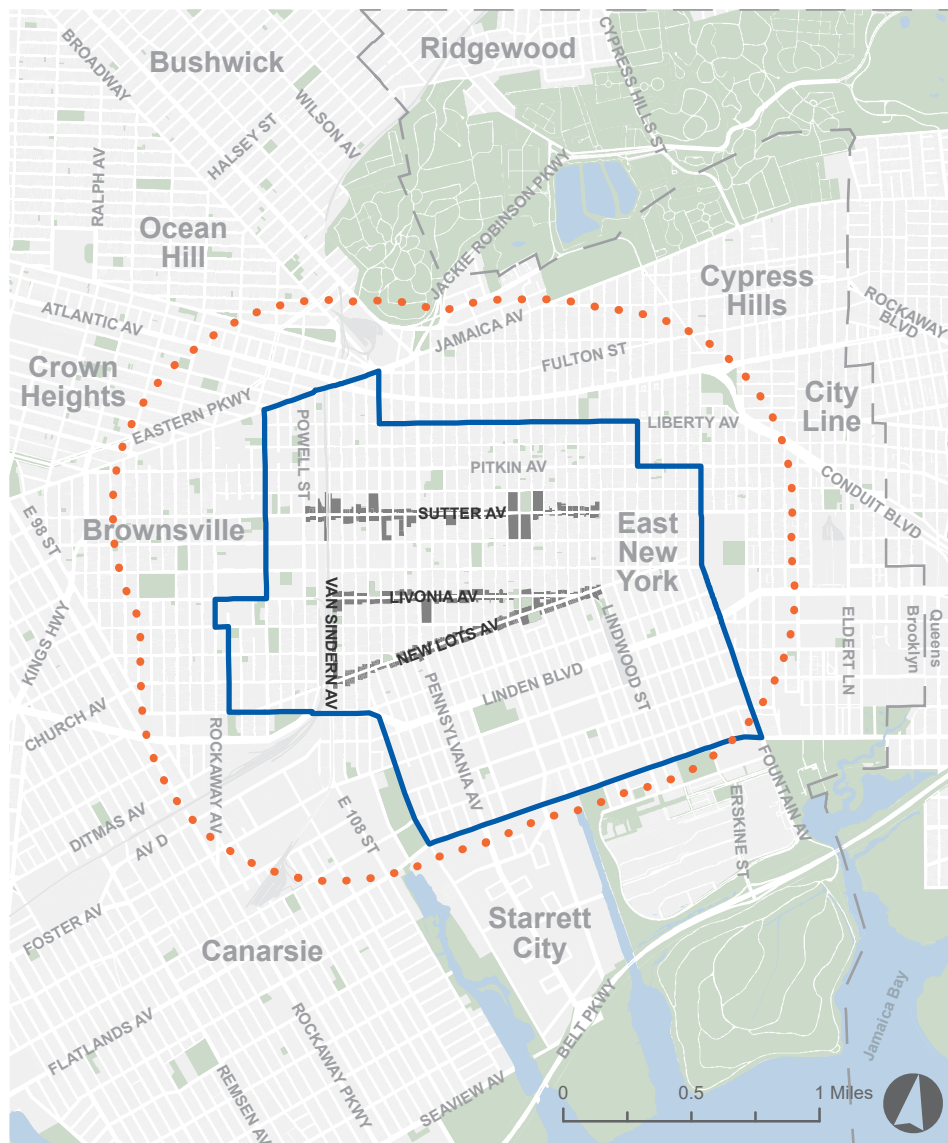
- ▶ New Lots Avenue between Linwood Street and Van Sinderen Avenue
- ▶ Livonia Avenue between Linwood Street and Van Sinderen Avenue
- ▶ Sutter Avenue between Linwood Street and Van Sinderen Avenue
- ▶ Van Sinderen Avenue between Sutter and New Lots avenues

East New York - New Lots Context Area

Demographic and employment data on pg. 12-14 represents the population within the East New York - New Lots neighborhood context area.

Trade Area

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



Area Demographics

Total Population

102,058	East New York - New Lots
2,646,306	Brooklyn
8,516,202	New York City

Population Density (per square mile)

20,701	East New York - New Lots
38,078	Brooklyn
28,165	New York City

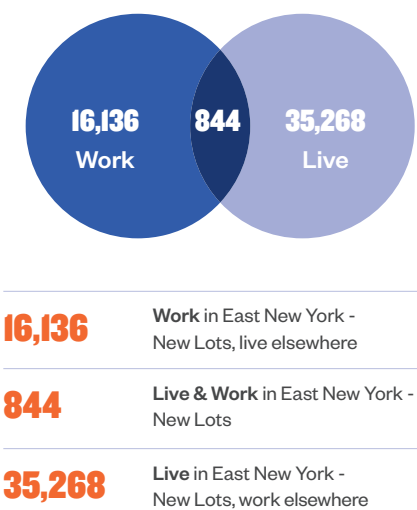
Average Household Size

2.57	East New York - New Lots
2.57	Brooklyn
2.51	New York City

Car Ownership

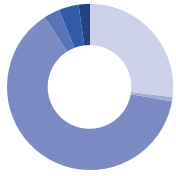
37.9%	East New York - New Lots
44.3%	Brooklyn
45.1%	New York City

Commuting Patterns



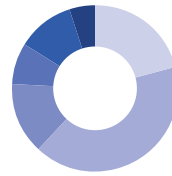
Area Demographics

Race/Background



	East New York - New Lots	Brooklyn	NYC
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	27%	19%	28%
White alone	1%	36%	31%
Black or African American alone	63%	28%	21%
Asian alone	3%	12%	15%
Two or more races	4%	4%	3%
Some other race alone	2%	1%	1%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0%	0%	0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0%	0%	0%

Educational Attainment



	East New York - New Lots	Brooklyn	NYC
12th Grade or Less, No Diploma	21%	16%	16%
High School Graduate	41%	24%	23%
Some College, No Degree	14%	12%	13%
Associate's Degree	8%	6%	7%
Bachelor's Degree	11%	25%	24%
Graduate or Professional Degree	5%	17%	17%

Population Age



	East New York - New Lots	Brooklyn	NYC
Under 5 Years	7%	7%	6%
5-14 Years	14%	12%	11%
15-24 Years	12%	11%	11%
25-44 Years	29%	32%	31%
45-64 Years	23%	23%	25%
65+ Years	15%	15%	16%

Median Age

36.1	East New York - New Lots
36.3	Brooklyn
38	New York City

Foreign-Born Population

30%	East New York - New Lots
35%	Brooklyn
37%	New York City

Income

Median Household Income

\$49,951	East New York - New Lots
\$78,548	Brooklyn
\$79,713	New York City

Pop. Below Poverty Line

23%	East New York - New Lots
19%	Brooklyn
17%	New York City

Employment

Population in Labor Force

56%	East New York - New Lots
64%	Brooklyn
63%	New York City

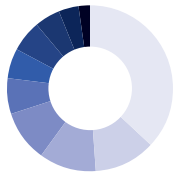
Unemployment*

11.3%	East New York - New Lots
7.5%	Brooklyn
7.7%	New York City

*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 East New York - New Lots is not available.

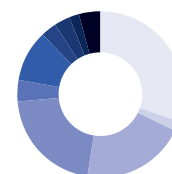
Local Jobs and Employment

Local Residents' Employment



Educational Services, Health Care, Social Assistance	37%
Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	12%
Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities	11%
Retail Trade	10%
Accommodation, Food Services, Arts, Entertainment	7%
Construction	6%
Public Administration	6%
Other Services	5%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	4%
Manufacturing	2%

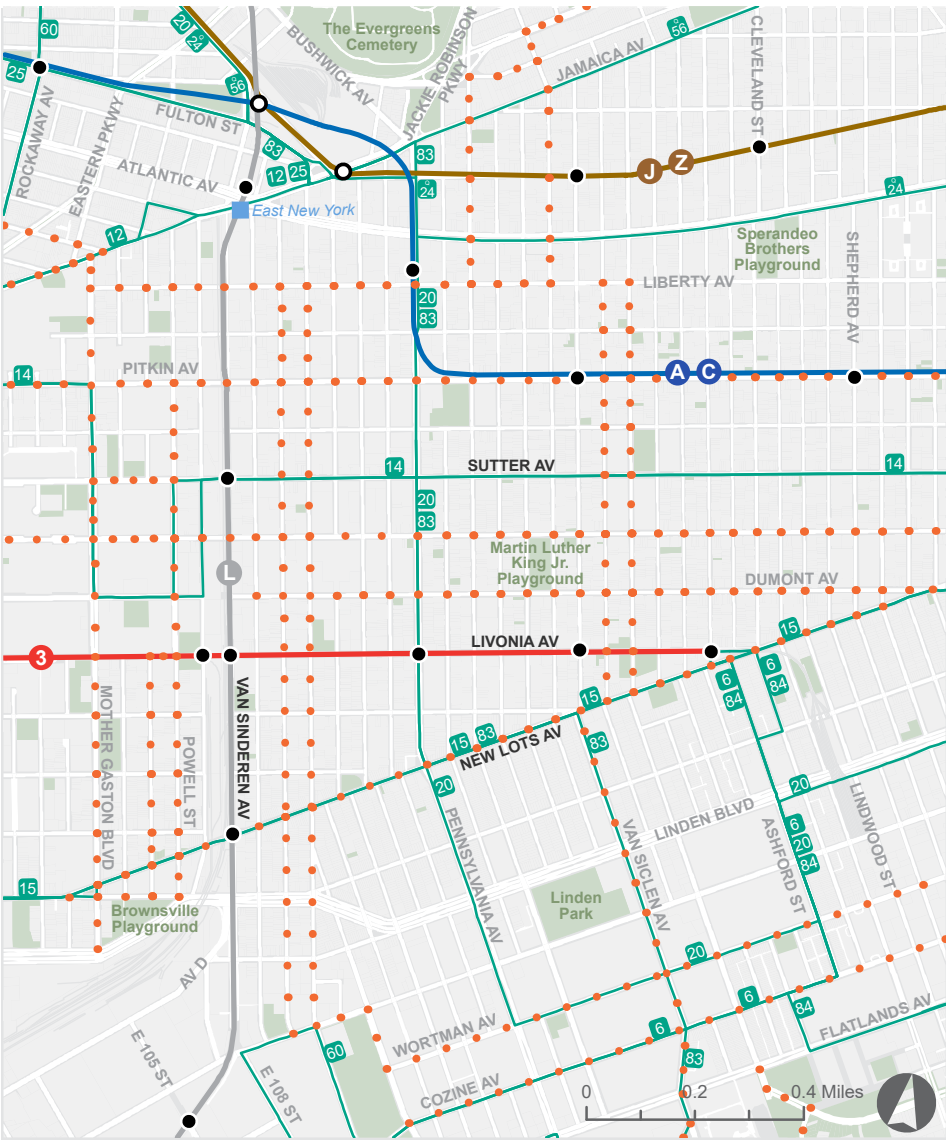
Jobs Located in East New York - New Lots



Educational Services, Health Care, Social Assistance	30%
Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	2%
Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities	20%
Retail Trade	21%
Accommodation, Food Services, Arts, Entertainment	4%
Construction	3%
Public Administration	10%
Other Services	3%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	2%
Manufacturing	4%

DATA APPENDIX

East New York - New Lots Transportation



▲ East New York - New Lots Transportation



Average Weekday Bus Ridership (2024)

17,119	B6	2,472	B14
12,518	B35	1,623	B60
7,184	B15	254	B84
2,950	B83		

Average Weekday Subway Ridership (2024)

3,257	3	New Lots Avenue
2,541	3	Pennsylvania Avenue
2,301	L	New Lots Avenue
1,877	L	Livonia Avenue
1,819	L	Sutter Avenue
1,784	C	Van Sicten Avenue
1,741	C	Shepherd Avenue
1,706	J Z	Van Sicten Avenue
1,558	3	Van Sicten Avenue

Average Daily Vehicular Traffic (2024)

27,299	Pennsylvania Avenue from Linden Boulevard to Atlantic Avenue
9,750	Pitkin Avenue from Alabama Avenue to Conduit Boulevard
7,641	Sutter Avenue from Mother Gaston Boulevard to Alabama Avenue
5,150	New Lots Avenue from Hegeman Avenue to Dumont Avenue
4,149	Sutter Avenue from Alabama Avenue to South Conduit Avenue
3,586	Dumont Avenue from New Lots Avenue to Van Sinderen Avenue
2,200	Schenk Avenue from New Lots Avenue to Jamaica Avenue
1,622	Berriman Street from Linden Boulevard to Atlantic Avenue
1,380	Cleveland Street from Linden Boulevard to Atlantic Avenue
1,249	Bradford Street from Jamaica Avenue to Linden Boulevard

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 Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation, 2024-2027.*

Existing Plans & Studies

East New York Industrial Business Zone Sites RFP, New York City Economic Development Corporation, 2024.

East New York Industrial Business Zone Van Sinderen Avenue Streetscape Improvements, NYC Department of Transportation, 2024.

Broadway Junction and East New York Public Spending Tracker, New York City Economic Development Corporation, 2024.

East New York Neighborhood Plan Update, NYC Department of City Planning, 2021.

East New York Industrial Business Zone Plan, NYC Economic Development Corporation, 2016.

East New York Housing Plan, NYC Department of City Planning, 2015.

Sustainable Communities East New York, NYC Department of City Planning, 2014.

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.

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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.

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