





RiseBoro Community Partnership Brooklyn Alliance



ABOUT BUSHWICK



The Neighborhood 360° program was created by the NYC Department of Small Business Services to identify, develop and launch commercial revitalization projects in partnership with local stakeholders. Through proactive planning and targeted investments, Neighborhood 360° supports projects that strengthen and revitalize the streets, small businesses, and community-based organizations that anchor New York City neighborhoods

The Neighborhood 360°
Commercial District Needs
Assessment (CDNA) highlights
a neighborhood's existing
business landscape and
consumer characteristics.

This CDNA features
Knickerbocker Avenue and
Myrtle Avenue commercial
corridors in Bushwick, and was
conducted in partnership with the
Brooklyn Alliance and RiseBoro
Community Partnership
between January and June 2017.

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

Jump to...

Key Findings	4-5
Business Inventory	6
What Merchants Say	7-10
Business Outlook	11-12
What Shoppers Say	8,12
Physical Environment	13-15
Data Appendix	16-19

Background

Bushwick is a thriving neighborhood in Northeast Brooklyn — at the intersection of Bedford-Stuyvesant, Williamsburg, and Ridgewood — and serves as a point of convergence where New Yorkers from Brooklyn, Queens, and beyond cross paths. Once defined by its rural landscape, Bushwick experienced rapid development in the late 1800s, thanks in part to a large influx of German immigrants. With their arrival came the construction of dozens of breweries throughout the neighborhood. The industry became a defining characteristic of the area for years, with Bushwick Avenue becoming known as "Brewers Row." Bushwick later experienced a massive decline as a result of the 1977 blackout. While the neighborhood had been declining before, the devastation and disinvestment that followed the blackout severely impaired the neighborhood economically and socially for years. In the wake of this devastation, new populations and immigrant communities moved in and helped shape the Bushwick we know today — a burgeoning, primarily Spanish-speaking community with a vibrant art scene that has garnered international recognition.

Bushwick's business landscape features various commercial and industrial offerings. Located between two Industrial Business Zones (IBZs) — the North Brooklyn and Ridgewood SOMA IBZ — Bushwick's primary commercial corridors serve as both major thoroughfares for truck transport, as well as vital destinations for locals to find essential goods and services. Bushwick's built environment includes medium-density low-rise buildings, historic rowhouses, and commercial corridors with mixed-use one- to five-story buildings. While Bushwick's commercial corridors are close together, each corridor has its own unique and distinguishing characteristics.

Knickerbocker Avenue serves as a local shopping corridor for residents. Strong commercial ground floor consistency (reinforced by long-standing businesses) has resulted in a dynamic corridor with a variety of businesses from small eateries to general merchandise stores.

Myrtle Avenue is a key entry point to the commercial district. Most residents visit to run day-to-day errands, or access personal and professional services. A key feature is the elevated M train that has various access points throughout.

Neighborhood Demographics

See more on pages 16-17

Bushwick has experienced various waves of demographic shifts, from Dutch settlers to Germans, followed by Italians in the mid-20th century, African Americans, Caribbean Americans, and migrants from Spanish-speaking countries. Another significant shift between 2000 and 2010 saw the population of White residents increase by 247%, and the Asian population by 56%. Bushwick's population of more than 51,000 residents is the largest hub of Brooklyn's Hispanic-American community, with 65.7% from ethnic backgrounds such as Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and Ecuador. On commercial corridors such as Knickerbocker Avenue, you will also find a small pocket of Korean merchants that cater to the needs of locals. Over time, these diverse groups have shaped and influenced Bushwick's unique urban fabric.

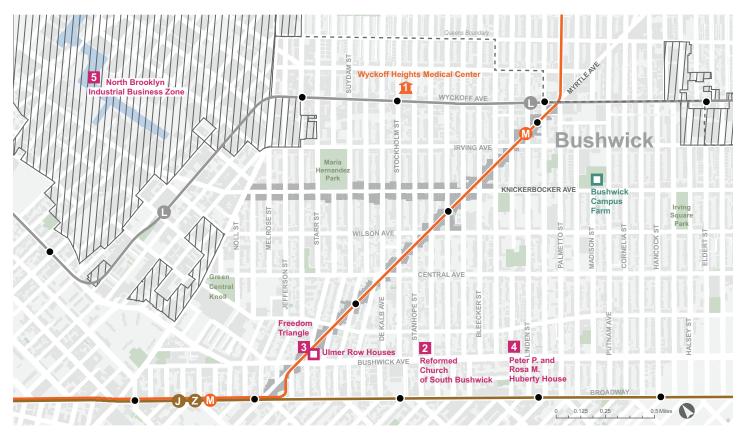
Future Opportunities

See more on pages 4-5

As Bushwick continues to experience rapid growth and change, an effort was launched to discuss and respond to community concerns about housing, jobs, and community assets. Residents, community stakeholders, Council Members, and City agencies participated in the development of a vision for Bushwick's future that takes into account the needs of existing residents and merchants. Together, innovative strategies are being developed to address land use, housing, infrastructure, transportation, community resource, and economic development opportunities.

NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

Bushwick



▲ Points of Interest

Assessed Commercial Corridors

Historic Sights & Landmarks

Public Facilities

Institutions

Industrial Business Zones (IBZs)

Neighborhood Events

¡CalabazaFest!

Plant Giveaways

RiseBoro Community Partnership Farmers Market

Broadway Merchants Association Annual Block Party

Shape Up Bushwick

Merchant & Business Groups

Broadway Merchants Association

Brooklyn Alliance

Knickerbocker Avenue Merchants Partnership (KAMP)

RiseBoro Community Partnership

▲ Notable Places













3

KEY FINDINGS & OPPORTUNITIES

Strengths

- Accessible public transportation, including the J, M, Z, and L MTA subway lines and several bus lines, including the westbound B54 into Downtown Brooklyn
- ▶ 72% of consumers access the commercial district by walking, creating an active environment and eyes on the street to reinforce positive perceptions of safety
- Proximity to 6.87 acres of active and passive recreational green space at Maria Hernandez Park
- Newly constructed Myrtle/Wyckoff and Knickerbocker Avenue Plazas enhance street life and encourage pedestrian traffic to nearby commercial corridors
- Proximity to two Industrial Business Zones that can serve as an access point for living wage local jobs
- ► Active and energetic art scene that elevates the work of local and outside artists, serving as a draw for tourism
- ▶ Deep sense of nostalgia and history among merchants and consumers, prompting many to buy and shop locally

Challenges

- ► High storefront vacancy rate (24.8%) and presence of vacant lots along Myrtle Avenue detract from the consumer experience and overall perception of the commercial corridor
- Only 2% of merchants surveyed along Myrtle Avenue own their commercial space
- Rapidly increasing market-rate rents for commercial space and few existing tools for ensuring long-term affordability for new leases and lease renewals
- Businesses struggle to keep pace with rapid demographic changes in the community

- Lack of affordable healthy food and personal care options within the commercial district
- Perceived low quality of goods on Knickerbocker and Myrtle Avenue drives consumers outside of the commercial district for their needs
- Litter and sidewalk cleanliness are visible issues throughout the commercial district
- 42% of storefronts along Knickerbocker Avenue were rated as poor due to window cluttering, worn awnings, and faded signage
- ▶ Disproportionate deterioration of storefronts along Myrtle Avenue as a result of debris falling from the elevated trains

















Opportunities

- Leverage existing outdoor markets at Maria Hernandez
 Park as a transition to traditional brick-and-mortar retail in order to develop low-barrier options for entrepreneurs
- Further explore the small business co-location model (present on both Knickerbocker and Myrtle Avenue) as a viable option for affordable retail space
- Develop an innovative wayfinding strategy to unlock access to a diverse customer base by taking advantage of Bushwick's unique geography — which is situated at the intersection of several other thriving neighborhoods
- Provide workshops and one-on-one business support either by leveraging existing network of nonprofit service providers, or through new programs — to help merchants adapt to meet the needs of residents and consumers

- Support the development of new and existing merchant associations to advocate for small businesses and commercial district needs
- Attract new businesses to vacant storefronts throughout the commercial district that meet the needs of local residents
- Support the on-going activation and programming of public plazas such as the Myrtle/Wyckoff Plaza and the Knickerbocker Avenue Plaza
- Clean and beautify sidewalks along Knickerbocker and Myrtle avenues

What's Next?

Recommendations can be used by community-based organizations to inform future programming and allocation of their resources

For more information on a range of grant programs SBS offers to help community-based organizations strengthen and revitalize commercial districts, visit: nvc.gov/neighborhoods

BUSINESS LANDSCAPE

Business Inventory

300

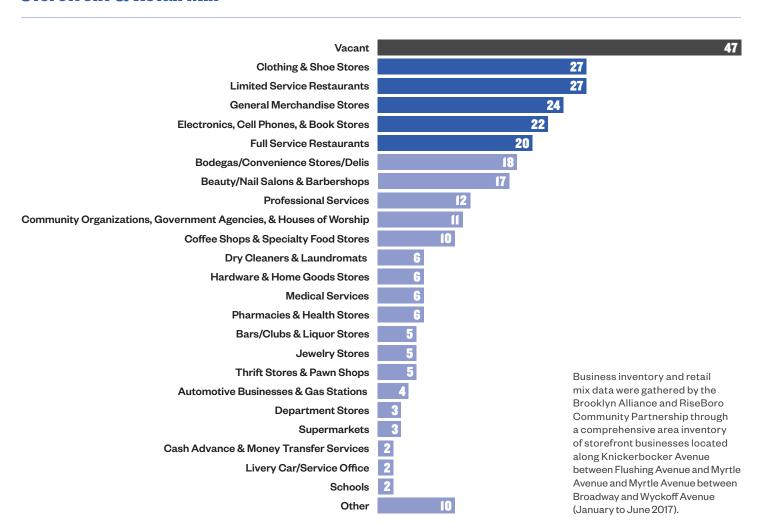
Total Number of Storefronts

15.2%

Storefront Vacancy*

*Note: In 2017, 72 of New York City's Business Improvement Districts (the 73rd, 74th, and 75th BIDs had not yet begun service in 2017) reported an average ground floor vacancy rate of 5.6% and median ground floor vacancy rate of 7.0% (SBS BIDs Trends Report, 2017).

Storefront & Retail Mix



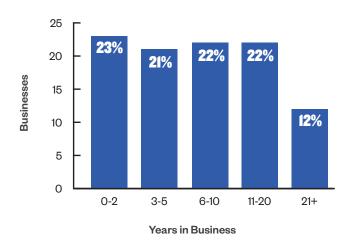






What We've Heard from Bushwick Merchants

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 employees do you have?

5 3 3
Mean Median Mode

Do you own or rent your property?

87% 7% 6%Rent Own No Response

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

18%
Improved

34%

the Same

33%

15%

Decreased N/A or No Response

What kinds of resources would help you grow your business?

% Merchant Responses

► Legal/lease support	25%
► Access to financing	20%
► Marketing support	15%
► Space improvements	15%
► New equipment	9%
► Other services	6%
► Assistance with regulatory compliance	5%
► Training for staff	5%

What are the biggest challenges facing Bushwick businesses?

% Merchant Responses ▶ Commercial rent/lease **27**% 21% ▶ Other Lack of parking/transit 12% ► Electric/water/utility bills 10% Property taxes 10% ► Government rules & regulations/fines/tickets 8% Crime/safety 6% Finding skilled workers **6**%

BUSINESS LANDSCAPE

What We've Heard from Bushwick Merchants

What would you like to see more of in this commercial district? 'More street art." "There needs to be more for families and kids, like sports and other activities." How is this district different from other commercial districts? "It has a lot of people and a diverse demographic." "Train access. Connects well to Queens." "It is a very social area with nice people." "People aren't as friendly in other neighborhoods." What do you like about this commercial district? "High foot traffic, other small businesses, and the plaza." "People from all different backgrounds." Good traffic.' "Merchants have lived in this area for over 40 years and grew up here." 'Everything is nearby.' "Regular customers are consistent."

What We've Heard from Bushwick Shoppers

What would you like to see more of in this commercial district?

"Knickerbocker Avenue stores have a lot of great deals."

"Knickerbocker Plaza is a great addition to the corridor, however the tree pits need help."

"More activities for kids are needed."

"Safety has gotten better over time."

"I would like to see more block parties and public art."

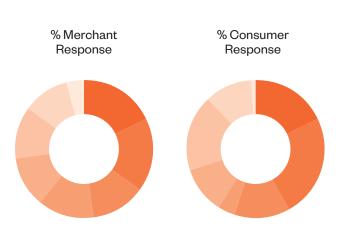
"More benches in the park."

"No more Starbucks. We need community spaces for our kids."

"More stores will make me visit more often. Knickerbocker Avenue has potential."

"More lighting at night, especially under tracks and in parks and greenspace."

What changes need to occur to attract more visitors/shoppers to the Bushwick commercial district?



		% Merchant Response	% Consumer Response
	Community Events	18%	18%
S	Sanitation	17%	24%
E	Beautification	13%	13%
N	Merchant Collaboration	13%	4%
F	Parking	12 %	11%
S	Safety	12%	18%
S	Storefront Improvements	11%	11%
	Other	4%	1%

BUSINESS LANDSCAPE

What We've Heard from Knickerbocker Avenue Merchants

Business Inventory

179
Total Storefronts

9.5% Storefront Vacancy

Do you own or rent your property?

81%

9%

10%

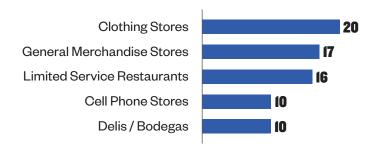
Rent

Own

No Response



Most Common Businesses



Long-Standing Businesses

	Years
► Kraupner Pharmacy (457 Knickerbocker Ave)	75
▶ Valery Deli Grocery (216 Knickerbocker Ave)	40
▶ V.I.M. (436 Knickerbocker Ave)	43
► Tony's Pizzeria (366 Knickerbocker Ave)	25+
Tony's Pizzaria & Restaurant (443 Knickerhocker Ave	25+

What We've Heard from Myrtle Avenue Merchants

Business Inventory

Total Storefronts

24.8%Storefront Vacancy

Do you own or rent your property?

98%

Rent

2%

Own

0%

No Response



Most Common Businesses



Long-Standing Businesses

► Myrtle Drugs (1454 Myrtle Ave)	32
► ICM Travel Services (1226 Myrtle Ave)	20
► Lee's Restaurant (1546 Myrtle Ave)	20
► Brooklyn Cooperative (1474 Myrtle Ave)	16
► Myrtle Liquors (1436 Myrtle Ave)	15

Years

BUSINESS OUTLOOK

Bushwick Retail Opportunity

Residents spend

\$1.98B

each year in goods and services

Local businesses make

\$1.23B

each year in retail sales

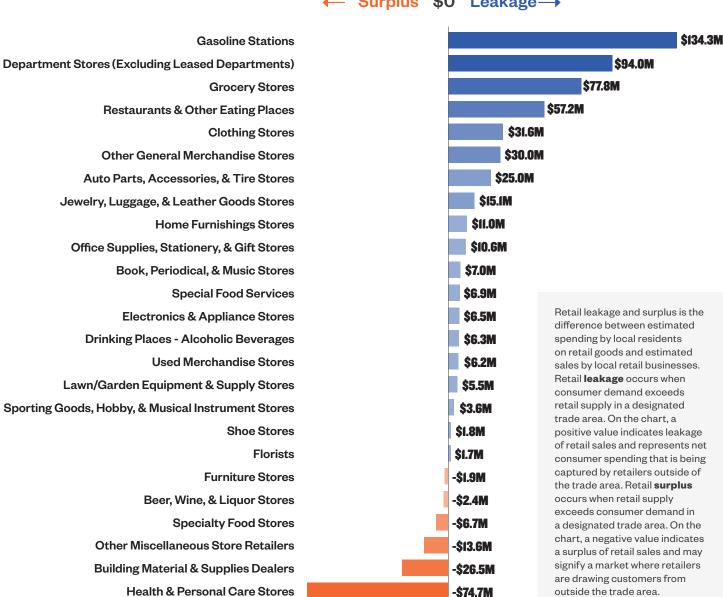
Every year,

\$753M

is spent outside the neighborhood

Retail Leakage & Surplus

← Surplus \$0 Leakage→



BUSINESS OUTLOOK

Business Trends

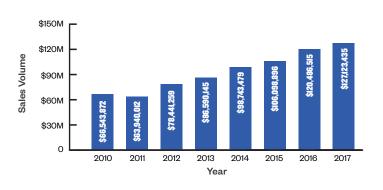
Change in Total Business Sales, 2010-2017



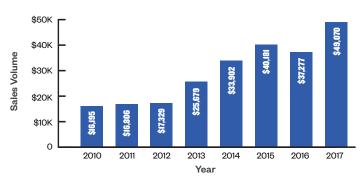
Change in Median Sales by Business, 2010-2017



Bushwick Total Business Sales



Bushwick Median Sales by Business



Source: Division of Tax Policy, NYC Department of Finance

What We've Heard from Shoppers

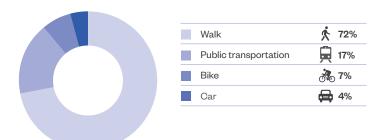
What additional types of businesses would you like to see?

► Department stores	 A
► Healthy food options	&
► Clothing stores	Ŷ
Family oriented businesses	\$
► Banks	<u></u>

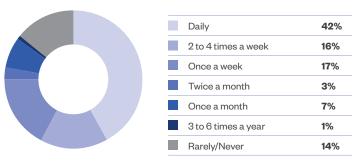
When do you typically visit Bushwick?



How do you usually get to Bushwick?

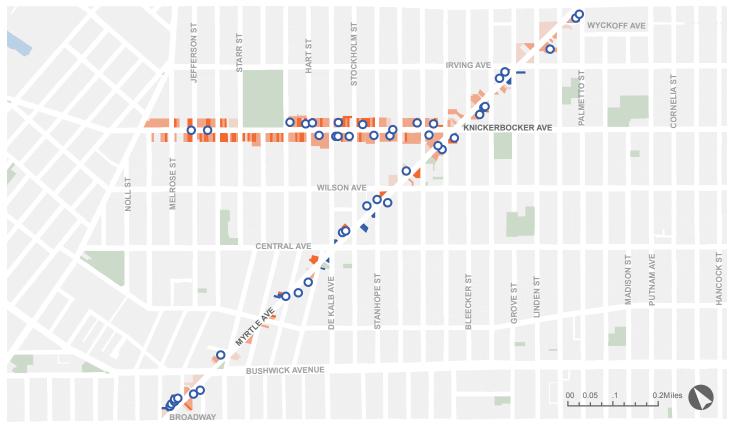


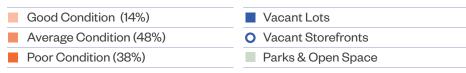
How often do you shop in Bushwick?



PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Storefront Conditions





An analysis of 256 storefronts along Knickerbocker and Myrtle avenues revealed that 38% of storefronts are in poor condition, 48% are in average condition, and 14% are in good condition.

Streetscape Observations

- Knickerbocker Avenue has a relatively low vacancy rate (9.5%). Merchants have stated that historically it was nearly impossible to find a vacant storefront along Knickerbocker Avenue.
- Overall, sidewalk and street conditions are poor. Throughout various sections of both Knickerbocker and Myrtle avenues, pedestrians experience sidewalk cracks and inconsistent elevations. The streets are filled with potholes and cracked asphalt.
- Dynamic murals along Knickerbocker Avenue between Harman and Stockholm streets illustrate the various representations of Bushwick's culture and heritage.
- Storefronts below the elevated train along Myrtle Avenue (e.g., between Irving Avenue and Menahan Street) are subjected to a disproportionate amount of debris and litter falling from the elevated train tracks.
- Negative perceptions of safety are amplified by the concentration of vacant storefronts and shade cast by the elevated train along Myrtle Avenue between Himrod Street and Greene Avenue.
- Trash maintenance has been a challenge along Knickerbocker and Myrtle avenues. Wire-frame baskets tend to overflow and drop trash onto the sidewalk. As a result, merchants are subject to fines for street litter.







PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Public Space Study: Maria Hernandez Park

Maria Hernandez Park is a celebrated asset of the Knickerbocker Avenue commercial corridor. In 1989, the park was named after Maria Hernandez, a Bushwick resident and community leader who fought to eradicate drug peddling in what was formerly known as Knickerbocker Park. Today, the park provides much needed open and green space to residents, visitors, and the Bushwick community at large. Its 6.87 acres of open and green space provide a wide array of activities, including playground access, a dog run, basketball courts, a volleyball court, a handball court, and a running path.



What is your relationship to this space?

	% Park User Responses
Live in neighborhood	73%
► Visiting	13%
► Work in neighborhood	12%
Volunteer	2%

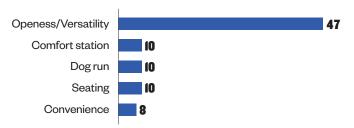
How often do you visit this park?

	% Park User Responses
▶ Daily	35%
► Weekly	35%
► Rarely	25%
► Monthly	5%

How do you typically use this park?



What do you like best about this park?



What are the top three changes/improvements you would like to see in this park?

► Cleanliness/comfort station cleanliness	31%
▶ Lighting	23%
► Safety	21%



Public Plazas

Bushwick is a densely populated community with limited, but active, public spaces, the majority of which are community plazas. These spaces are most commonly used for daily interactions and gathering spaces for friends, families, and neighbors. Open and green spaces in the Bushwick community can be further utilized through additional support for space activation, such as cultural and community programming and temporary/seasonal markets.



Knickerbocker Plaza was completed in December 2015 through the NYC Department of Transportation's NYC Plaza Program. The plaza is often referred to by locals as "el parque de los viejos" or "the old folk's park." While there is a diverse demographic that visits the plaza, its daily users are primarily retirees looking for a place to sit, socialize, eat, or relax and observe the activities taking place along the corridor. Due to its proximity to various transit nodes, the plaza experiences a significant amount of foot traffic. Its full flower beds and ample seating continue to attract locals who are welcomed by the plaza's maintenance partner, RiseBoro Community Partnership.

The Myrtle/Wyckoff Plaza

was completed in September 2016 as part of New York City's Vision Zero initiative. The plaza seeks to address pedestrian safety concerns around complicated crossings located at the intersection of Myrtle Avenue, Wyckoff Avenue, and Palmetto Street. Led by the NYC Department of Transportation with community input, the plaza was designed to better facilitate transfers between the L/M subways and Ridgewood terminal buses. Today locals, commuters, and consumers use the public plaza as a meeting point and lunch stop, among other forms of social gatherings.



Bushwick

DATA APPENDIX

Study Area Boundaries

Assessed Commercial Corridors

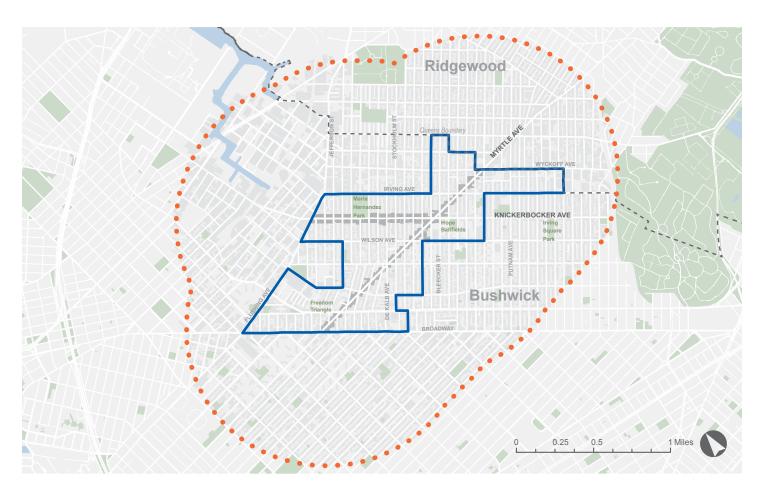
Primary data on Bushwick storefront businesses presented on pages 6 and 10 was gathered along Knickerbocker Avenue between Flushing and Myrtle avenues and Myrtle Avenue between Broadway and Wyckoff Avenue.

- Bushwick Context Area

Demographic and employment data on pg. 16-17 correspond to the Bushwick neighborhood context area.

··· Trade Area

Retail leakage, surplus, and retail opportunity data on pg. 11 correspond to the 0.75 mile trade area.



Area Demographics

Total Population	
51,455	Bushwick
2,570,801	Brooklyn
8,354,889	New York City

Population Density (per square mile)

ooklyn
w York City

Average Household Size

3.22	Bushwick
2.74	Brooklyn
2.64	New York City

Car Ownership

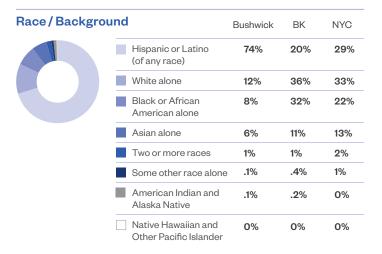
28%	Bushwick
43%	Brooklyn
45%	New York City

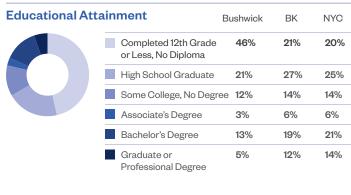
Commuting Patterns



7,201	Work in Bushwick, live elsewhere	
538	Live & Work in Bushwick	
17,170	Live in Bushwick, work elsewhere	

Area Demographics





Population Age Bushwick BK NYC Under 5 Years 5-14 Years 12% 12% 11% 14% 18% 14% 15-24 Years 25-44 Years 38% 31% 31% 45-64 Years 18% 23% 25% 65+ Years 12% 6% 13%

Median Age	
30	Bushwick
34	Brooklyn
36	New York City

Foreign-Born Population	
40%	Bushwick
38%	Brooklyn
37%	New York City

Income

Median Household Income

\$41,097	Bushwick	
\$46,958	Brooklyn	
\$52,737	New York City	

Pop. Below Poverty Line

31%	Bushwick
23%	Brooklyn
21%	New York City

Employment

Population in Labor Force

50 %	Bushwick
63%	Brooklyn
63%	New York City

Onomploymone	
13%	Bushwick
11%	Brooklyn

New York City

7%

Unemployment*

10%

Local Residents' Employment

Local Jobs and Employment



Jobs Located in Bushwick



^{*}Note: Unemployment figures are based on data from 2010-2014. As of June 2017, the unemployment rate is 4.5% for Brooklyn and 4.4% for New York City (NYSDOL); updated neighborhood-level data for Bushwick is not available.

DATA APPENDIX

Bushwick Transportation



▲ Bushwick Transportation

Bus Routes

••• Bicycle Lanes

NYC Subway

MTA Annual Bus Ridership (2016)		
3.1M	B26	
6.0M	B38	
3.9M	B52	
3.2M	B54	
2.3M	B57	
3.1M	B60	

Vehicula	r Traffic (2015)
24,573	Bushwick Avenue between Myrtle Avenue and Flushing Avenue
11,637	Broadway between Hooper Avenue and East New York Avenue
12,419	Flushing Avenue between Bushwick Avenue and Queens Co Line
4,074	Knickerbocker Avenue between Greene Avenue and Morgan Avenue
8,720	Myrtle Avenue between Bushwick Avenue and Queens Co Line
11,852	Myrtle Avenue between Kings Co Line and Cypress Hills Street
7,594	Wyckoff Avenue between Flushing Avenue and Gates Avenue
15,431	Wyckoff Avenue between Gates Avenue and Cooper Avenue

Average Weekly Subway Ridership (2016)		
6,531,453 🕒 M	Myrtle-Wyckoff Avenues	
4,017,076	DeKalb Avenue	
3,764,562 0 10 2	Myrtle Avenue	
2,894,033 🛈 🖤	Flushing Avenue	
2,563,505	Jefferson Street	
1,661,644	Kosciuszko Street	
1,288,438	Knickerbocker Avenue	
1,219,239 M	Wilson Avenue	
1,092,483 🛈 🖸	Chauncey Street	
2,117,787 ① ②	Gates Avenue	
2,101,350	Halsey Street	
1,158,274 M	Central Avenue	
672,880	Bushwick Ave-Aberdeen St	

Recent SBS Investments in the Neighborhood

- Avenue NYC merchant organizing grant of \$30,000 awarded to Brooklyn Alliance, 2017.
- Avenue NYC merchant organizing grant of \$30,000 awarded to Brooklyn Alliance, 2016.
- Avenue NYC capacity building grant of \$20,000 awarded to Brooklyn Alliance, 2015.

Current & Planned Developments

95 Evergreen Avenue

 160,000 square feet of NYC Human Resources Administration (HRA) office space with 650 jobs (in progress)

349 Suydam Street

 A mixed industrial and 100% affordable residential project, proposing the enlargement of an existing manufacturing building and includes 95 affordable housing units

605 Hart Street

 A Food Retail Expansion Program to Support Health (FRESH) supermarket development of 7,364 gross square footage in addition to 56 residential dwelling units, including 14 affordable housing units

1601 DeKalb Avenue

 A manufacturing-to-residential rezoning that will facilitate the development of a residential building with 122 affordable units

Rheingold Development

A rezoning completed in 2013 that affects the area bounded by Flushing Avenue on the north and Melrose Street and Forrest Street on the south, between Evergreen Avenue and Garden, Stanwix and Beaver streets. The development will include 1,633 residential units including 416 affordable units, commercial space, and a publicly accessible open space

Existing Plans & Studies

Myrtle/Wyckoff Plaza-Corridor Safety Improvements, NYC Department of Transportation, 2016.

Bushwick Neighborhood Plan, NYC Department of City Planning, 2016.

Bushwick Community Plan, NYC Council Members Antonio Reynoso and Rafael Espinal, 2014.

Sources

ESRI and Infogroup, Inc. October 2017 ESRI Retail MarketPlace Profile.

 $Infogroup, Inc.\,2017.\,From\,Reference USA\,database.$

 $Metropolitan \, Transportation \, Authority. \, 2016. \, Average \, Weekday \, Subway \, Ridership. \, Average \, Ridership$

NYS Department of Labor. June 2017. Unemployment Rate Rankings by County.

NYS Department of Transportation. 2015 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. The top 1% of filers were removed from sales data.

 $NYO\ Department\ of\ Small\ Business\ Services.\ Fiscal\ Year\ 2017.\ Business\ Improvement\ Districts\ Trends\ Report.$

 $U.S.\,Census\,Bureau.\,2016.\,On The Map\,Application.\,Longitudinal-Employer\,Household\,Dynamics\,Program.$

U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, 2014 American Community Survey 4-Year Estimates, using NYC Census FactFinder. Bushwick Census Tracts: 389, 391, 393, 421, 423, 427, 429, 431, 433, 439, 441.

Photo Credits: Brigette Blood, Kethia Joseph, Anderson Perez, Jose Trucios, RiseBoro Community Partnership, Magdalena Waz.



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 Bushwick Commercial District Needs Assessment:

Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams NYC Council Member Rafael Espinal NYC Council Member Antonio Reynoso Brooklyn Community Board 4 Brooklyn Alliance RiseBoro Community Partnership Bushwick Merchants Bushwick Shoppers and Residents