



JEROME AVENUE THE BRONX

Commercial District Needs Assessment



NYC
Small Business
Services

Bill de Blasio
Mayor
Gregg Bishop
Commissioner



WHEDco
Davidson Community Center



ABOUT JEROME AVENUE



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 **East 183rd Street, Burnside Avenue, Tremont Avenue, Cromwell Avenue, Inwood Avenue, 170th Street, and 167th Street** commercial corridors that run alongside **Jerome Avenue**, and was conducted in partnership with **Davidson Community Center** and the **Women's Housing and Economic Development Corporation (WHEDco)** between December 2015 and July 2016.

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 **852 surveys and 15 stakeholder meetings** with neighborhood merchants, shoppers, workers, property owners, and residents.

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Background

The Jerome Avenue corridor is a 73-block area that serves as a major transit corridor in the West Bronx. The corridor connects several densely populated neighborhoods, including West Concourse, Highbridge, Morris Heights, University Heights, and Mt. Eden. At the street level, Jerome Avenue is defined by its low-scale industrial and automotive-related businesses and by the elevated 4 train that traverses the length of the corridor north and south. The elevated structure's columns stand on the Jerome Avenue roadbed, making for a distinctive streetscape environment where trains, cars, trucks, buses, and pedestrians intermingle in a play of activity and sound.

Jerome Avenue is bisected by the Cross Bronx Expressway. Built between 1948 and 1972, the Cross Bronx Expressway creates a physical barrier for West Bronx residents and local retailers. Despite this challenge, the Cross Bronx Expressway's nearby intersection with the Major Deegan Expressway has made Jerome Avenue a convenient location for automotive businesses to service motorists entering and exiting both highways. There are a wide variety of automotive-related businesses along the Jerome Avenue corridor, including vehicle and parts dealerships, automotive repair and body shops, automotive glass replacement services, and electronic equipment retailers that specialize in sound, alarm, navigation, and entertainment systems.

There are several vibrant community-serving commercial and retail corridors that run perpendicular to Jerome Avenue at East 167th Street, East 170th Street, Mount Eden Avenue, Edward L. Grant Highway, Tremont Avenue, Burnside Avenue, and 183rd Street. These local shopping nodes consist of long-standing "mom & pop" retail and restaurants, many of which cater to the flourishing immigrant communities of the West Bronx. In particular, Burnside Avenue is a bustling retail corridor with many stores and restaurants that serve the West African and Latin American communities of Morris Heights and University Heights, and connects Jerome Avenue to Bronx Community College to the west as well as the Grand Concourse in the east.

Neighborhood Demographics

See more on page 14

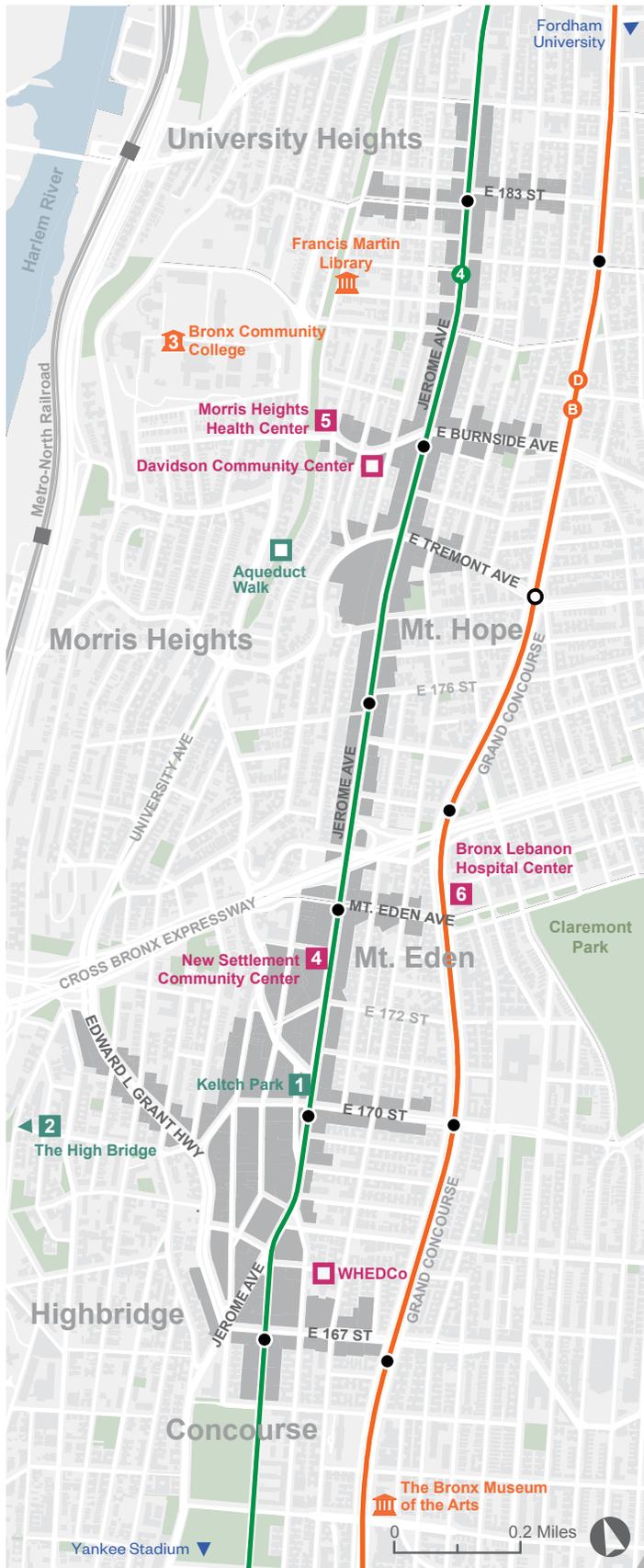
Jerome Avenue has long been a diverse and welcoming community to immigrant families. Today there are more than 290,000 residents living within a quarter mile of Jerome Avenue, 43% of whom are foreign-born, a larger immigrant community compared to both the Bronx (29%) and New York City as a whole (37%). While the local population is mostly Latino and African American, the area has seen a growing number of West African, Dominican, and Mexican families plant roots in the community. It is just as common to hear Spanish as English in the streets and in local businesses, and many of the area's vibrant small businesses are immigrant-owned and operated.

Future Opportunities

See more on page 5

The Jerome Avenue corridor knits together many neighborhoods in the West Bronx, from the Concourse to Fordham Heights. Several entertainment venues are at the doorstep of Jerome Avenue, like Yankee Stadium, which attracts more than 3 million visitors annually, and the Bronx Museum of the Arts, which provides the area with accessible, world-class exhibitions. As an active transit corridor lined with neighborhood-serving stores, Jerome connects these anchors to educational institutions further north, including Bronx Community College and Fordham University. The retail nodes are busy, diverse, and home to high concentrations of long-standing businesses that can adapt to serve a growing community.

Jerome Avenue



Points of Interest

- Assessed Commercial Corridors
- Parks & Public Spaces
- Public Facilities
- Healthcare & Community Institutions

Notable Places



Neighborhood Events



Merchant & Business Groups

- Burnside Avenue Merchant Association
- 170th Street Merchant Association

- United Auto Merchants Association (UAMA)
- WHEDCo
- Davidson Community Center

KEY FINDINGS & OPPORTUNITIES

Strengths

- ▶ Vibrant commercial corridors and retail nodes with very low retail vacancy (5%)
- ▶ Active transportation connections along Jerome Avenue and the Grand Concourse, as well as the Cross Bronx Expressway
- ▶ Long-standing businesses in place for 10+ years, with many established merchants optimistic about their plans
- ▶ Diverse ethnic and cultural communities, including stores that are owned by immigrants from Latin and West African countries
- ▶ Unique concentration of automotive businesses, which draw customers in from outside the neighborhood
- ▶ Active and well-organized neighborhood advocacy groups, as well as community support for small businesses

Challenges

- ▶ Numerous pedestrian safety concerns for residents and shoppers, including dangerous intersections and poor quality sidewalks
- ▶ The corridor is dominated by the elevated train, which contributes to constant noise, concentrations of litter at subway entrances, and a lack of lighting and street trees
- ▶ Significant parking challenges throughout the corridor for both residents and business owners
- ▶ Open, green space is limited, with uninviting entrances
- ▶ Public spaces, such as plazas, parks, and step streets that are not well maintained
- ▶ Concerns about public safety, especially at night
- ▶ The vast majority of businesses rent their commercial space and are vulnerable to rising lease rates
- ▶ Local retailers in need of new tips and tools for marketing their merchandise
- ▶ Many automotive businesses park cars on the sidewalk and create dangerous obstructions for pedestrians



Jerome Avenue and E. 170th Street Corridor



Bronx Community College Hall of Fame for Great Americans



Burnside Avenue Corridor



Keltch Park



Opportunities

- ▶ Develop and market a “shop & buy” local campaign to promote and highlight long-standing “mom & pop” retailers
- ▶ Cultivate relationships with institutional anchors such as Bronx Community College and Morris Heights Health Center to enhance connectivity along West Burnside Avenue
- ▶ Install temporary lighting, seating, and street furniture to activate space under the elevated train on Jerome Avenue
- ▶ Bolster local community events and street fairs to create greater customer awareness and drive additional foot traffic to the commercial corridors
- ▶ Revitalize and maintain step streets throughout the corridor with arts programming and other active uses
- ▶ Engage the community to develop a corridor beautification/cleaning program centered on Burnside-Tremont, Devanney Triangle, and Townsend Walk
- ▶ Strengthen existing merchant associations to expand outreach, recruitment and business advocacy
- ▶ Evaluate the feasibility of Burnside Avenue Business Improvement District (BID)
- ▶ Create a “Safe Place” program to visibly designate local businesses where residents can seek refuge when they feel unsafe
- ▶ Explore opportunities to revive Inwood Park, Jerome Playground, Keltch Park, and Mullaly Park as active green spaces that are open to the community

What's Next?

To address these key findings and opportunities, Neighborhood 360° Grants will be made available by SBS to not-for-profit organizations.

For more information, visit: nyc.gov/neighborhood360

BUSINESS LANDSCAPE: JEROME AVENUE

Business Inventory

775

Total Number of Storefronts

5.4%

Storefront Vacancy*

*Note: In 2015, New York City's 69 Business Improvement Districts reported an average ground floor vacancy rate of 8.3% and median ground floor vacancy rate of 5.6% (SBS BIDs Trends Report, 2015).

Storefront & Retail Mix



Despite an abundance of cash advance and money transfer services, the commercial corridors in Jerome lack financial institutions, such as banks and credit unions that serve both residential and commercial needs.

Business inventory and retail mix data were gathered by Davidson Community Center and WHEDco through a comprehensive inventory of storefront businesses located along East 183rd Street, Burnside Avenue, Tremont Avenue, 170th Street, Mt. Eden Avenue, 167th Street and Jerome Avenue between 167th Street and 183rd Street. (December 2015 to May 2016)



E. 170th Street Corridor



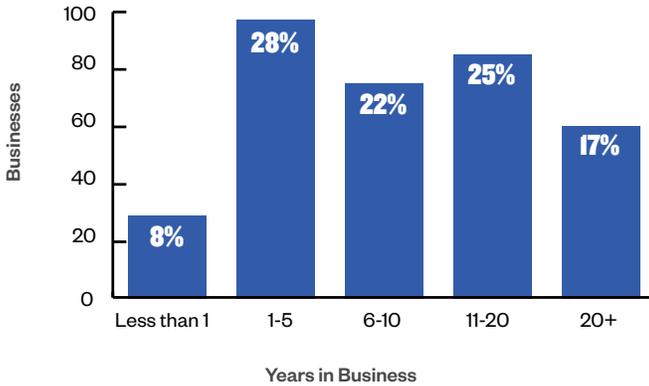
Burnside Avenue Corridor



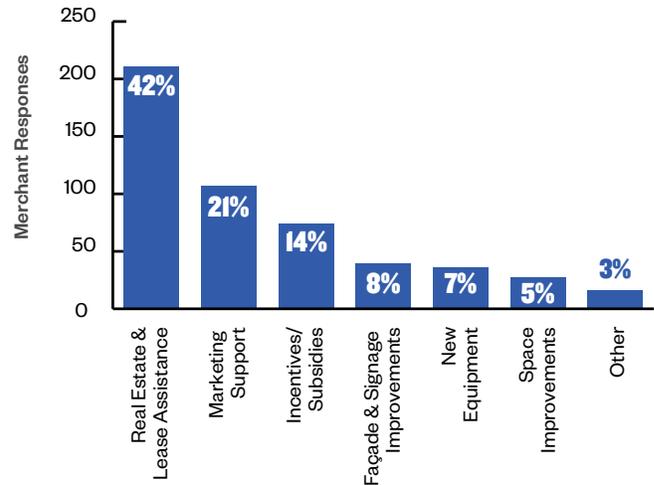
W. Tremont Avenue

What We've Heard from Jerome Avenue Merchants

How many years have you been in business here?



What kinds of resources would help you grow your business?



Do you own or rent your property?



Do you have plans to:

	% Merchant Responses
Grow	41%
Remain	46%
Relocate	6%
Close	1%
N/A or No Response	6%

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



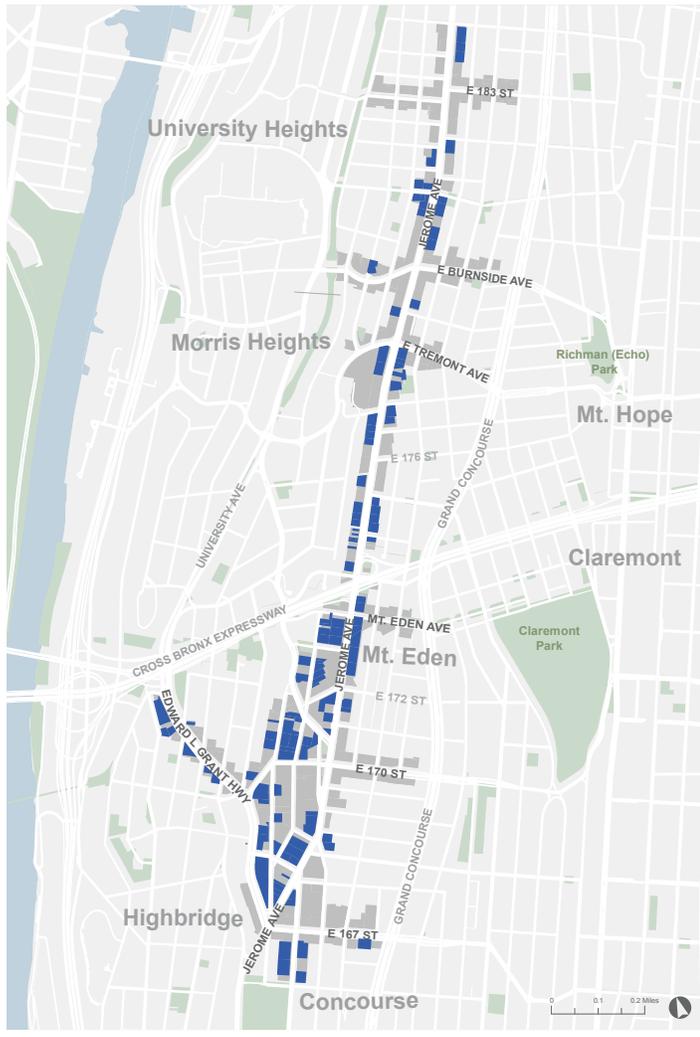
What changes need to occur on Jerome Avenue to bring more people to your shop or use your services?

- ▶ Safety improvements, including more street lighting
- ▶ Area beautification, cleaner streets and sidewalks, less litter
- ▶ Enhancements to streets and sidewalks to improve pedestrian safety
- ▶ Street infrastructure to improve traffic and better parking regulation
- ▶ Improved storefronts and façades

Source: Based on 355 merchant surveys conducted by Davidson Community Center and WHEDco in Winter - Spring 2016.

BUSINESS LANDSCAPE

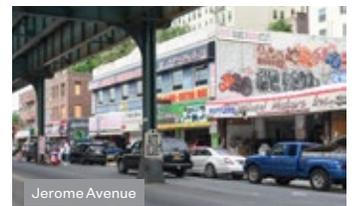
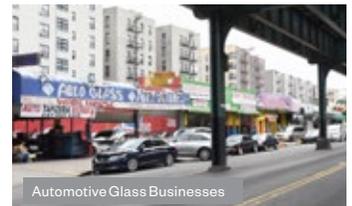
Jerome Avenue Automotive Businesses



■ Automotive Business Locations

There are approximately 200 automotive businesses in the area, making them the most visible type of storefront business.

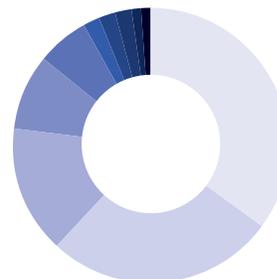
Jerome Avenue's proximity to major regional highways and its low-scale industrial and heavy commercial uses have led to a large concentration of automotive-related businesses.



What We've Heard from Automotive Businesses

- ▶ An analysis of 100+ merchant surveys and a study of auto businesses conducted by United Auto Merchants Association revealed the most pressing issue for automotive business owners is obtaining assistance to maintain proper compliance with city regulations.
- ▶ More than 95% of automotive business owners rent their space. These tenants are potentially vulnerable at lease expiration.
- ▶ Spanish is the primary language spoken. More business assistance and regulatory instructions are needed in Spanish.

What types of automotive businesses are located along Jerome Avenue?



General Automotive Repair	35%
Auto Parts/Accessories Stores	27%
Parking Lots	15%
Auto Body/Paint/Interior Shops	9%
Livery/Car Services	6%
Automotive Dealers	2%
Car Wash	2%
Gas Stations	2%
Towing Services	1%
Automotive Services	1%

Source: Based on 355 merchant surveys conducted by Davidson Community Center and WHEDco in Winter - Spring 2016, NYC Department of City Planning Field Survey of Automotive Businesses, Jerome Avenue Study, 2014; United Auto Merchants Association Survey, Winter - Spring 2016.

BUSINESS LANDSCAPE: JEROME AVENUE

What We've Heard from Jerome Avenue Merchants

What changes need to occur to bring more people to your shop or use your services?

"We need to fix the streets."

"We need more interaction with local police."

"More parking – customers cannot find a place to park their car."

"More variety – right now there are too many of the same type of business."

"It's dirty – cleaners are needed."

"There is a lot of traffic and there needs to be structure to control traffic."

What do you like about the commercial corridor?

"Family-oriented."

"This is a true business corridor. The Avenue also allows our companies to work without disturbing the neighbors and other residents."

"The community, and unity. Everyone knows you."

"A very commercial area – easy access. Everyone knows about Jerome Avenue!"

"Friendly and uplifting."

"Accessible to customers."

"The culture is always changing and growing."

What do businesses need?

"More lighting is necessary. Parking is also a main concern – my customers find it difficult to park at the shop."

"More security and police presence on the corridor, especially at night."

"Help attracting more customers."

"Street improvements."

"Financial assistance for businesses in the area."

"More advertisement in this area."

"Retail diversity in the shopping district."

How is this area different from other shopping districts?

"Not as expensive as other neighborhoods."

"This place mostly gets local neighbors as customers, but other neighborhoods are more attractive to visitors."

"Rent is cheaper here."

"It does not have the financial support of other districts."

"This is an area strictly for auto repairs."

BUSINESS OUTLOOK

Jerome Retail Opportunity

Residents spend

\$2.60B

each year in goods and services

Local businesses make

\$1.99B

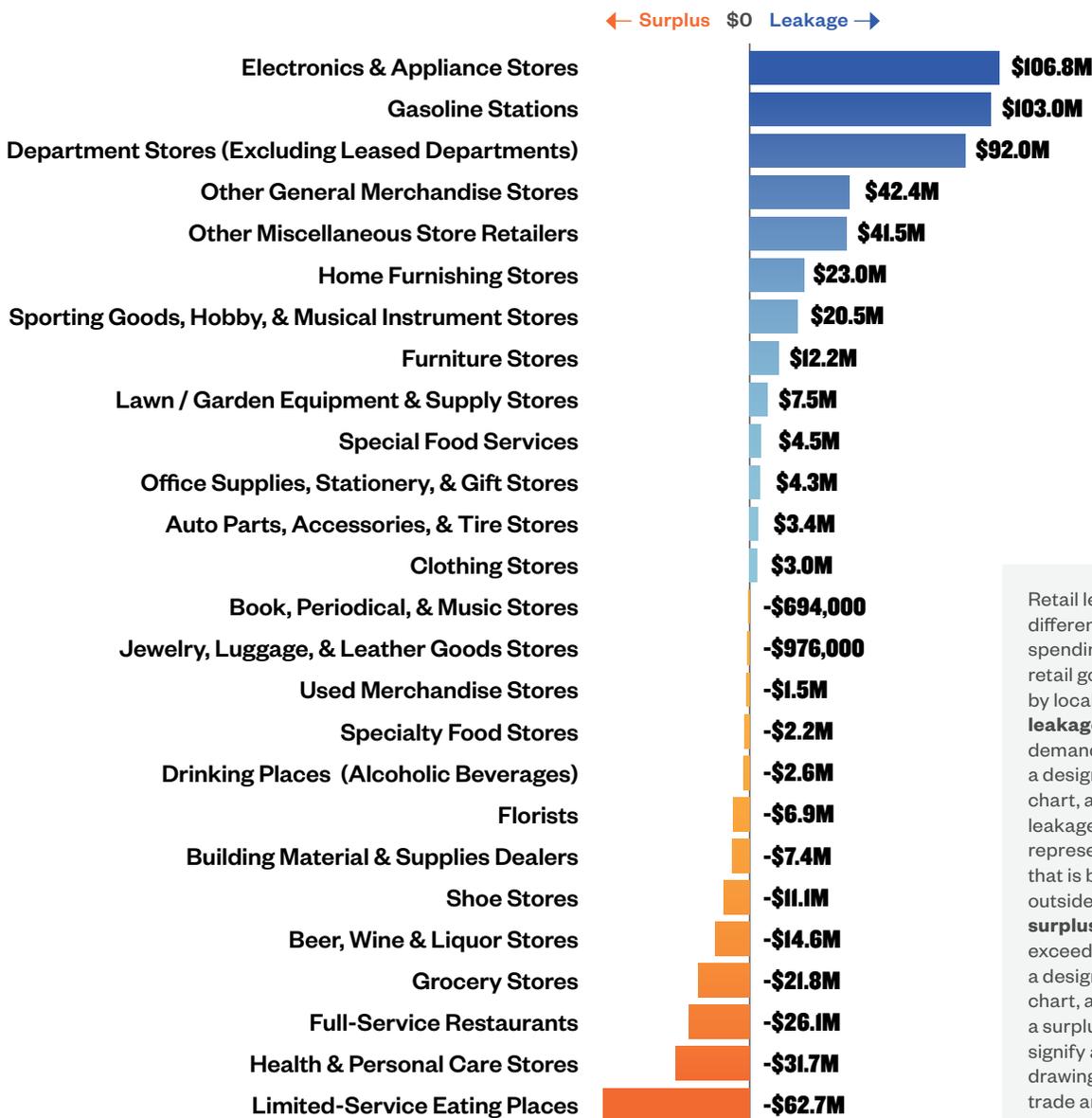
each year in retail sales

Every year,

\$612M

is spent outside the neighborhood

Retail Leakage & Surplus



Retail leakage and surplus is the difference between estimated spending by local residents on retail goods and estimated sales by local retail businesses. Retail **leakage** occurs when consumer demand exceeds retail supply in a designated trade area. On the chart, a positive value indicates leakage of retail sales and represents net consumer spending that is being captured by retailers outside of the trade area. Retail **surplus** occurs when retail supply exceeds consumer demand in a designated trade area. On the chart, a negative value indicates a surplus of retail sales and may signify a market where retailers are drawing customers from outside the trade area.

Source: ESRI and Infogroup, August 2016.

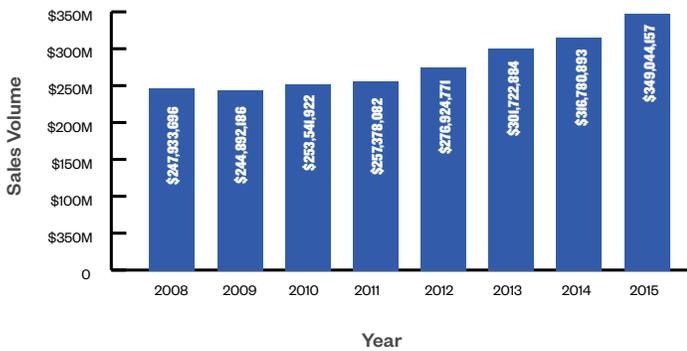
BUSINESS OUTLOOK

Business Trends

Change in Total Business Sales, 2008-2015



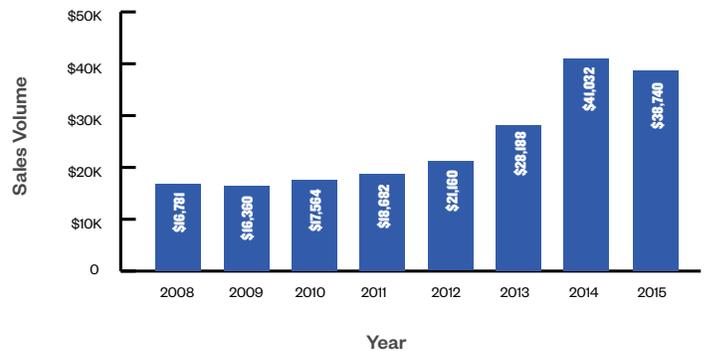
Jerome Total Business Sales



Change in Median Sales by Business, 2008-2015



Jerome Median Sales by Business



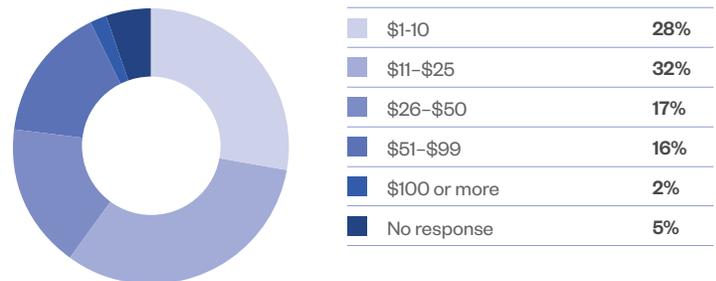
Source: Division of Tax Policy, NYC Department of Finance

What We've Heard from Shoppers

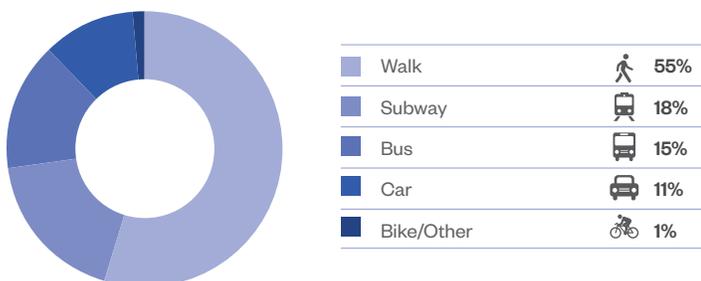
What additional types of businesses would you like to see?

- ▶ Clothing and shoe stores 
- ▶ Slow dining restaurants 
- ▶ Healthy food markets 
- ▶ Fitness and health 
- ▶ Banking and tax services 

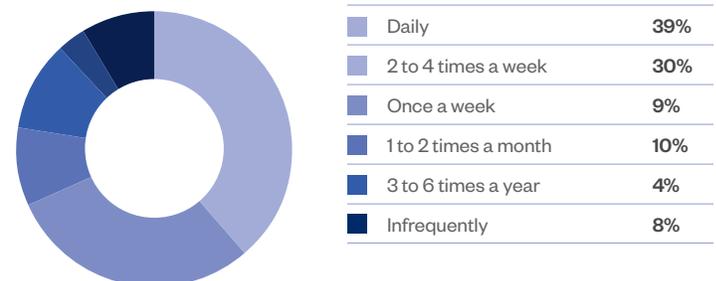
How much are you spending at businesses in the Jerome Avenue shopping district today?



How do you usually get to the Jerome Avenue shopping district?



How often do you visit the Jerome Avenue shopping district?



Source: Based on 497 consumer surveys conducted by Davidson Community Center and WHEDoo in Winter - Spring 2016.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Streetscape Observations



Cross Bronx Expressway



Elevated Train Columns and Parking



Jerome Avenue Intersection



Litter



Step Streets



Vacant Storefronts

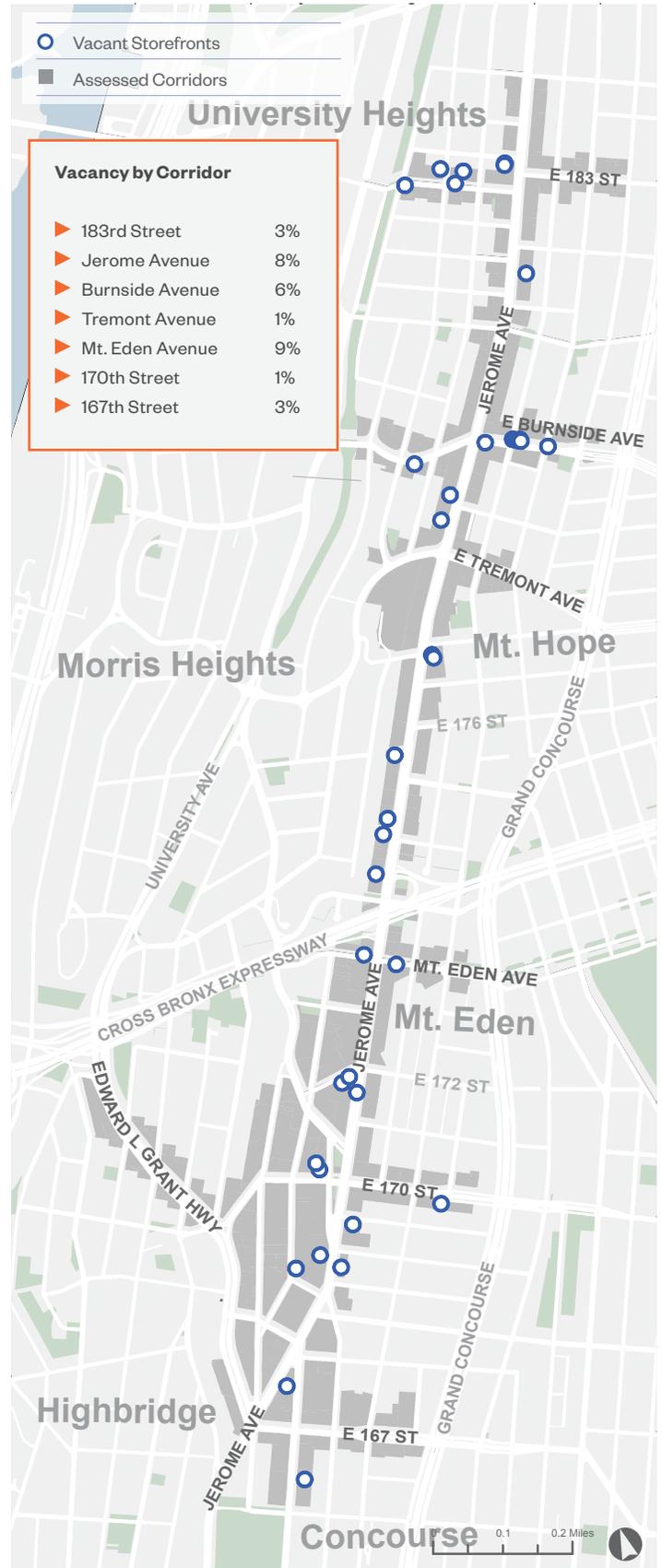
Neighborhood-Wide

- ▶ Poor street and sidewalk conditions exist across the neighborhood. Many intersections lack clear pedestrian crossings, and double-parking in the street and on sidewalks is a consistent issue reported by shoppers and merchants.
- ▶ The step streets along the corridor are a unique asset, but there are large variations in the quality and maintenance of each street.
- ▶ The Cross Bronx Expressway creates a real physical barrier that disconnects Jerome Avenue.

Jerome Avenue Under the Elevated Train

- ▶ The dominant physical presence of the elevated train over Jerome Avenue leaves much of the corridor shaded during the day and very dark at night.
- ▶ There is inadequate lighting under the elevated due to infrequent lamp posts and stores with opaque façades that close early in the evening.
- ▶ Litter and sidewalk cleanliness issues are most visible at the intersections where train entrances are stationed.
- ▶ The columns that support the elevated train create blind corners and dangerous crossings for cars and pedestrians.

Vacant Storefronts



DATA APPENDIX

Study Area Boundaries

■ Assessed Commercial Corridors

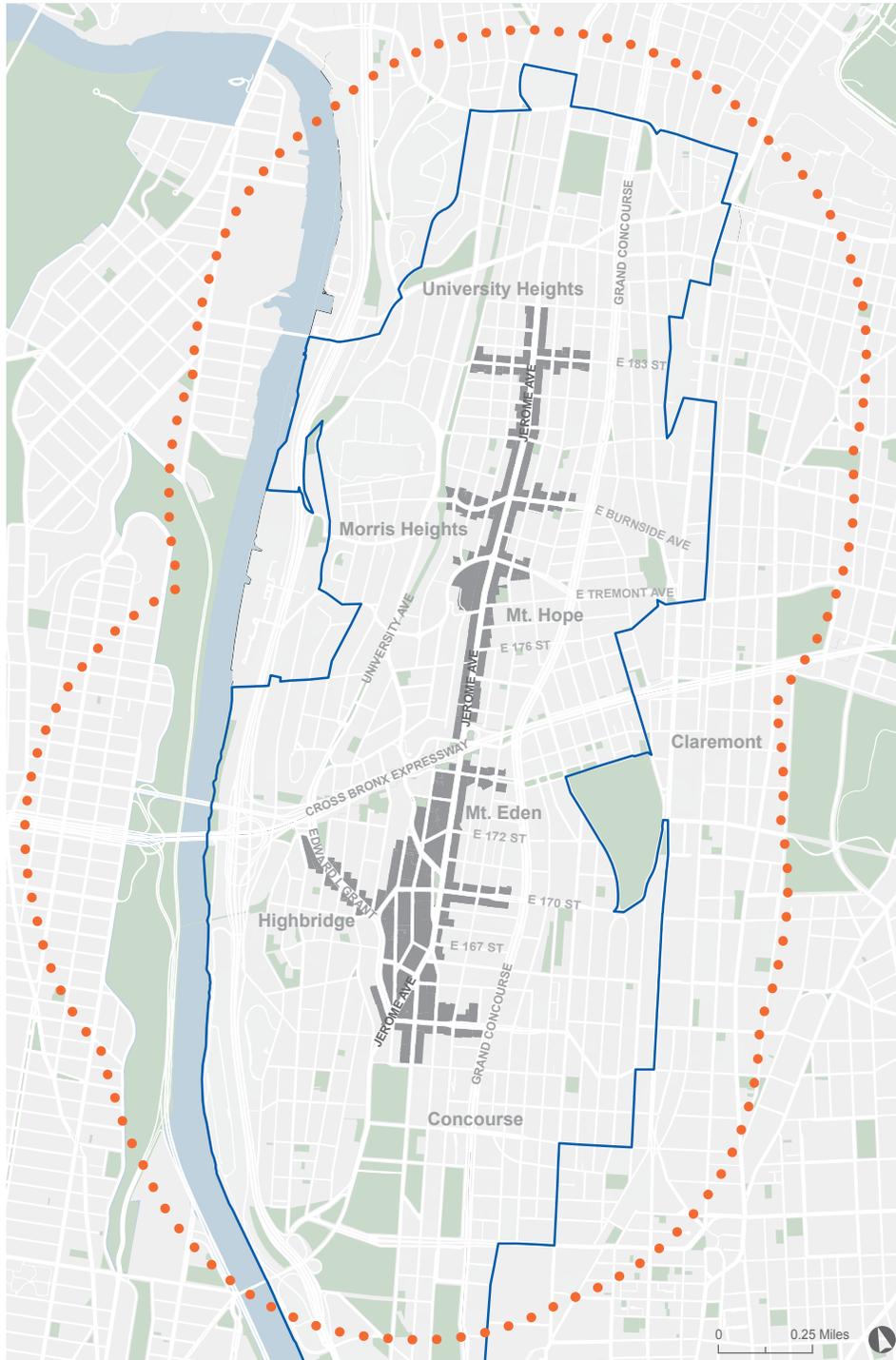
Primary data on Jerome Avenue storefront businesses presented on pg. 6-7 was gathered along E. 183rd St., Burnside Ave., Tremont Ave., 170th St., Mt. Eden Ave., 167th St. and Jerome Ave. between 167th St. and 183rd St.

■ Jerome Context Area

Demographic and employment data on pg. 13-14 represents the population within the Jerome neighborhood context area.

●●● Trade Area

Retail leakage, surplus, and retail opportunity data on pg. 10 corresponds with the 0.75 mile trade area.



Area Demographics

Total Population

290,588	Jerome
1,397,315	The Bronx
8,268,999	New York City

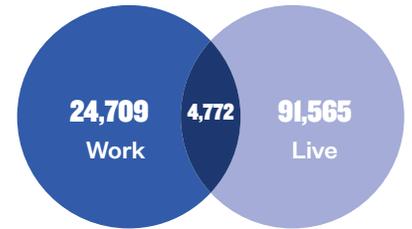
Population Density (per square mile)

83,965	Jerome
33,000	The Bronx
27,027	New York City

Average Household Size

3.0	Jerome
2.9	The Bronx
2.6	New York City

Commuting Patterns



24,709	Work in Jerome, live elsewhere
4,772	Live & Work in Jerome
91,565	Live in Jerome, work elsewhere

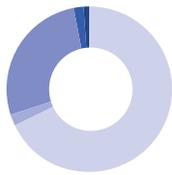
Car Ownership

26%	Jerome
40%	The Bronx
45%	New York City

DATA APPENDIX

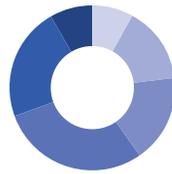
Area Demographics

Race / Background



	Jerome	BX	NYC
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	68%	54%	29%
White alone	2%	11%	33%
Black or African American alone	27%	30%	23%
Asian alone	2%	4%	13%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0%	0%	0%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0%	0%	0%
Some other race alone	0%	0%	1%
Two or more races	1%	1%	1%

Population Age



	Jerome	BX	NYC
Under 5 Years	8%	8%	7%
5-14 Years	15%	14%	11%
15-24 Years	18%	16%	14%
25-44 Years	29%	28%	31%
45-64 Years	22%	23%	25%
65+ Years	8%	11%	12%

Income

Median Household Income

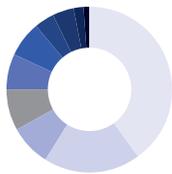
\$26,743	Jerome
\$34,300	The Bronx
\$52,259	New York City

Pop. Below Poverty Line

38%	Jerome
29%	The Bronx
20%	New York City

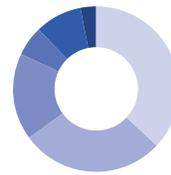
Local Jobs and Employment

Local Residents' Employment



Educational Services, Health Care, Social Assistance	40%
Retail Trade	19%
Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities	8%
Other	8%
Accommodation, Food Services, Arts, Entertainment	7%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	7%
Public Administration	4%
Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	4%
Manufacturing	2%
Construction	1%

Educational Attainment



	Jerome	BX	NYC
12th Grade or Less, No Diploma	37%	30%	20%
High School Graduate	28%	28%	25%
Some College, No Degree	17%	17%	15%
Associate's Degree	6%	7%	6%
Bachelor's Degree	9%	12%	20%
Graduate or Professional Degree	3%	6%	14%

Median Age

30.8	Jerome
33.1	The Bronx
35.6	New York City

Foreign-Born Population

43%	Jerome
29%	The Bronx
37%	New York City

Employment

Population in Labor Force

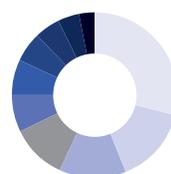
61%	Jerome
63%	The Bronx
63%	New York City

Unemployment*

18%	Jerome
15.2%	The Bronx
10.6%	New York City

*Note: The unemployment rate for the Bronx is at 7% and New York City is at 5.1%, as of June 2016 (NYSDOL); updated neighborhood-level data for Jerome Avenue is not available.

Jobs Located in Jerome



Educational Services, Health Care, Social Assistance	29%
Retail Trade	15%
Accommodation, Food Services, Arts, Entertainment	13%
Other	11%
Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities	7%
Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	7%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	6%
Construction	5%
Manufacturing	4%
Public Administration	3%

Sources: US Census Bureau, 2009-2013 American Community Survey and 2014 OnTheMap Application.

SBS Investments in the Neighborhood

▶ *Neighborhood 360 Fellowship Host Organization*, awarded to Women's Housing and Economic Development Corporation (WHEDco), 2016.

▶ *Burnside Avenue Merchant Organizing*, Avenue NYC merchant organizing grant of \$25,000 awarded to Davidson Community Center, 2011.

Existing Plans & Studies

Jerome Avenue Neighborhood Planning Study, NYC Department of City Planning, 2016 (in progress).

Policy Platform, The Bronx Coalition for a Community Vision, 2015.

Sources

ESRI and Infogroup, Inc. August 2016 ESRI Retail MarketPlace Profile.

Infogroup, Inc. 2016. From ReferenceUSA database.

Metropolitan Transportation Authority. 2015. Average Weekday Subway Ridership.

NYS Department of Labor. June 2016. Unemployment Rate Rankings by County.

NYS Department of Transportation. 2014 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.

NYC Department of Small Business Services. Fiscal Year 2015. Business Improvement Districts Trends Report.

NYC Department of City Planning. Field Survey, Jerome Avenue Neighborhood Planning Study 2015. United Auto Merchants Association, Auto Business Survey, 2016.

NYC Department of Transportation. May 2016. Bi-Annual Pedestrian Counts.

US Census Bureau. 2014. OnTheMap Application. Longitudinal-Employer Household Dynamics Program (LEHD). Commuting Pattern data is representative of LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics for the second quarter of 2014. LEHD data is based on different administrative sources, primarily Unemployment Insurance (UI) earnings data and the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), and other censuses/surveys. In this context, only the highest paying job that is held over two consecutive quarters by an individual worker is counted toward worker flows into, out of, and within the context area.

U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, 2013 American Community Survey 4-Year Estimates, using NYC Census FactFinder. Bronx Census Tracts 63, 175, 177.01, 177.02, 179.01, 179.02, 183.02, 181.01, 181.02, 189, 193, 195, 197, 199, 201, 205.01, 211, 213.02, 219, 221.01, 221.02, 225, 223, 209, 213.01, 215.02, 217, 227.02, 227.01, 227.03, 229.02, 229.01, 233.02, 233.01, 215.01, 245.01, 243, 241, 235.02, 251, 239, 237.04, 235.01, 237.03, 245.02, 249, 253, 183.01, 59.02, 205.02, 255, 257, 263, 265, 379, 381, 383.01, 399.02, 399.01, 401

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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

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

Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.
NYC Council Member Fernando Cabrera
NYC Council Member Vanessa Gibson
Bronx Community Boards 4 and 5
Davidson Community Center
Women's Housing and Economic Development Corporation (WHEDco)
Burnside Avenue Merchant Association
Morris Heights Health Center
Community Action for Safe Apartments (CASA)
United Auto Merchants Association (UAMA)
Bronx Documentary Center
BronxWorks
The Bronx Coalition for A Community Vision
The Pratt Center for Community Development
Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)
Jerome Avenue Merchants
Jerome Avenue Shoppers and Residents