



JEROME AVENUE NEIGHBORHOOD STUDY GOALS AND PRIORITIES

Bronx Community Board 4 & Community Board 5 version 6

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JEROME AVENUE NEIGHBORHOOD STUDY

Goals and Priorities

Bronx Community Board 4 and Community Board 5

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Jerome Avenue Neighborhood Study encompasses a 73-block area focused primarily along the Jerome Avenue corridor. The study includes Community District Four which includes the neighborhoods of *Concourse, Concourse Village, East Concourse, Highbridge, Mount Eden, West Concourse*, and Community District Five which includes *Fordham, Morris Heights, University Heights* and *Mount Hope*. The study area is generally bounded by E. 184th Street to the north, E. 165th Street to the south, includes portions of Edward L. Grant Highway, East 170th Street, Mount Eden Avenue, Tremont Avenue, Burnside Avenue and East 183d Street.

While not as drastic as the declines experienced in areas such as Mott Haven, Melrose, Morrisania and Hunts Point, Community Districts Four and Five experienced population decreases of 20 percent and 12 percent respectively between 1970 and 1980. Growth in Community District Four was a modest 4 percent from 1980-1990 while Community District Five experienced growth of 12 percent during the same period. From 1990-2000 each district experienced growth of 15 percent and 8 percent respectively. Overall growth was modest from 2000-2010 (5% and -0.1%). While these districts have seen tremendous growth in terms of population over the last thirty years, investment in infrastructure including *open space, schools, transportation infrastructure, job training and business development* have not kept pace. Furthermore these districts like many in the South Bronx experienced disinvestment during the 1970's and 1980's that has yet to be recaptured.

Since June 2014, Community Boards Four and Five have played in active role in the development of goals, priorities and strategies with key city agencies and community stakeholders around key topic areas including: *Economic Development, Housing, Schools & Education, Transportation Infrastructure/Connectivity, Public Safety and Health and Wellness*. While the goals and priorities outlined in the various outreach documents and summaries produced by the Department of City Planning (DCP) throughout the planning process include input and insight from both Community Boards 4 and Five, as voting bodies of the Uniform Land Use Review Process (ULURP) the Boards felt it was imperative to create a platform that specifically articulated their goals and priorities as it relates to the neighborhood plan that complements the proposed changes to land use and zoning.

The following summarizes the goals and priorities for each board as it relates to the Jerome Avenue Neighborhood Study. Please note:

- Specific programs, capital investments and expense items are specifically identified. Some are specific to each district others are more broadly focused.
- There are a number of capital projects that are underway, completed and others that are funded with a timeline forthcoming. As stated earlier investments in these districts have not kept pace with population growth, nor has there been a concerted effort to invest in these neighborhoods.
- This document represents capital and expense items that that should supplement and compliment those projects to catalyze the future vision for both.
- This is a working document and we will continue to update and enhance the document throughout the planning process.

II. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development is a top priority for both Districts and in order to improve the economic profile and social well-being of these communities and its residents it is imperative to build upon and leverage existing assets. Community District Five benefits from six commercial corridors: Fordham Road which includes the Fordham Shopping District, the third largest retail area in the City with one million square feet of retail space, South Fordham Road and South Grand Concourse Avenue, Burnside Avenue, West 183rd Street and West/East Tremont Avenue; Bronx Community College (BCC) a major educational institution and employer in the District, Morris Heights Health Center and Montefiore Hospital.

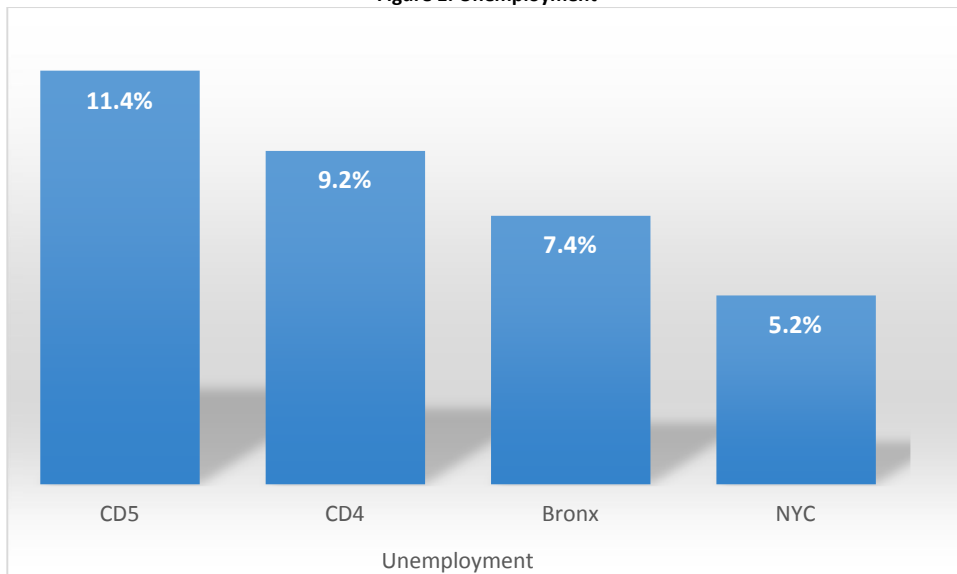
Community District Four benefits from the regional draw of the 161st Street/Capital District area which includes the Bronx County Court, Bronx Supreme Court, the 161st Street BID, waterfront access, Bronx Terminal Market which includes a million square feet of retail and Yankee Stadium which draws more than 3.5 million visitors per year. Major employers include Bronx Lebanon Hospital, the Yankees and Hostos Community College.

The continued economic growth of these areas should be pursued through a number of initiatives that will position these neighborhoods to compete for investments from both the public and private sectors as well as commercial opportunities that will ultimately enhance the socio-economic status of local residents.

Unemployment plays a key role in the socio-economic status of local residents. While unemployment both nationally and in the Bronx has hit record lows (5.5 percent and 6.6 percent) respectively, the residents of Community Districts Four and Five are still contending with this issue. Unemployment in Community District Five is a little less than 12 percent. CD4 Community District Four fairs slightly better at 9.2 percent, nonetheless underscoring the need to create jobs and economic opportunities for area residents. It should also be noted these numbers do not account for the tens of thousands of residents who are underemployed.

In order to increase the income levels and improve the socio-economic status of local residents there must be significant investments in job training, job placement, skills assessment and business development. The Department of Small Business Services (SBS) and to a lesser degree the NYC Economic Development Corporation (EDC) should play a key role in facilitating programs and policies to achieve these goals.

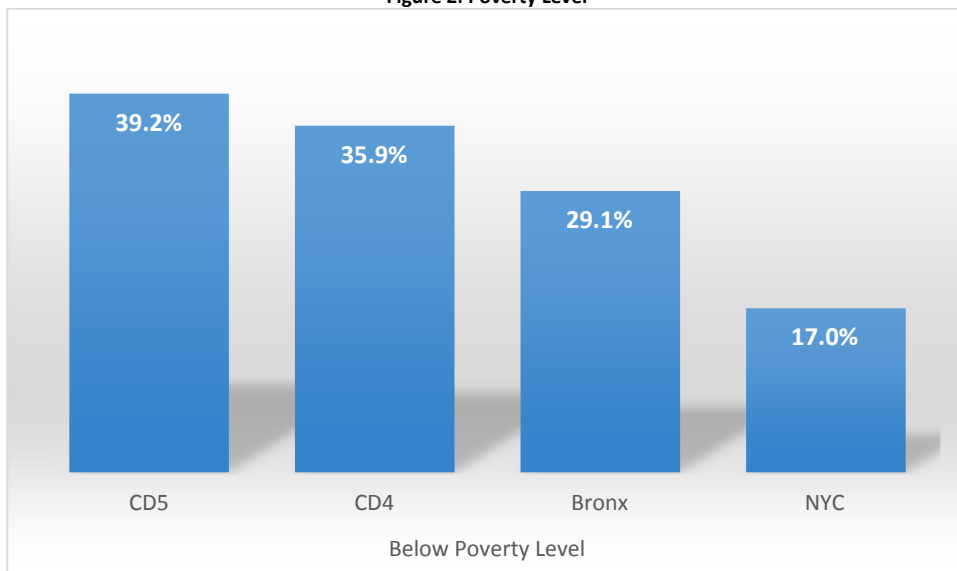
Figure 1: Unemployment



Source: US Census; ACS 2014

Although there is a range in the socio-economic makeup of residents in these areas, the percentage of households living near the poverty line and who are considered to be low-income is high. The poverty rate for both districts far exceeds that of the Bronx (29%) and NYC (17%) at 35.9 percent and 39.2 percent respectively. Furthermore, more than 45,000 households representing roughly fifty percent of total households have received Food Stamp/SNAP benefits in the past 12 months. ¹

Figure 2: Poverty Level



Source: US Census; ACS 2014

¹ U.S. Census, America Community Survey

The solution is a multi-pronged approach encompassing short-term and long-term strategies that will create more opportunities for area residents with long lasting positive effects that will elevate the socio-economic profile of both districts. Increased funding for job training and job placement initiatives are instrumental tools to effectively reverse these trends. The following are a list of proposed strategies and programs:

- Creation of a Local Employment Network for the purpose of connecting local residents to available job opportunities.
- Funding community-based organizations (i.e. Davidson Community Center, WHEDco, Bronx Works, etc.) to enable them to develop a network similar to the Lower East Employment Network for the purpose of engaging developers in the neighborhood, providing sector-specific training for local residents, screening candidates for available positions in emerging projects and making referrals where necessary.
- Localized Street Vendor Program
 - Create a pilot program with DOHMH, SBS, MOIA and DCA
 - Legitimize existing food carts operating without a license (smaller fee)
 - Ensures/promotes health and well-being by creating standards for business operation
- Leverage meeting space with BCC, Monroe, Bronx Lebanon, Bronxworks and others to host community training workshops and information sessions.
- Increased funding for Bronx Community College (BCC), Hostos, Monroe College and the Bronx Museum of the Arts and the Morris Height Health Center all of which are major employers and critical to improved education and skills training area-wide. These institutions currently provide quality education are quite strategic to the provision of quality education, skills training and certification programs in *construction, auto repair, healthcare, information technology and retail management*.
 - Increasing funding and enhancing these programs will provide a robust array of skills significant opportunities for area residents, improving their socio-economic status. Partnerships with these institutions will provide a robust array of skills training and certification programs to aid local residents across various sectors. There should be a focus on apprenticeship programs.
 - Best practices should be leveraged from institutions around the city and the region including Rockland Community College which currently offers an auto mechanic certification program. Ultimately this will help lower unemployment rate, improve families' livelihoods and their economic profile.
 - The Human Resource Administration (HRA) should partner with these institutions to provide skills training and certification programs for a pilot project of up to 150 slots for the aforementioned training programs.
 - The success of the pilot project should be tracked from inception to placement to measure the effectiveness and success of the program.
- As a result of the Commercial District Needs Assessment (CDNA) being conducted by WHEDco, SBS should conduct a series of workshops/forums for perspective business owners/entrepreneurs in the District.
- Vacant Storefront Initiative
 - Target property owners along these corridors matching them up with perspective tenants that meet the diverse retail needs of the area.
 - SBS/EDC should work with business owners to develop business plans and negotiate long-term affordable lease terms.

- Incentivize property owners with low-interest loans for building improvements and interior upgrades.
- SBS should partner with local organizations such as WhedCo, BronxWorks and others to sponsor financial literacy and business plan development seminars/workshops.
- Clean Up Day
 - Work with merchants, local organizations and residents to sponsor clean up days to promote cleanliness along and around the commercial corridors.
- Incentivize program for non-chain stores (i.e. mom and pop) to locate in these areas. This would be for businesses that address the needs identified in the CDNA. This would encourage local entrepreneurs.
- Provide incentives for healthy food businesses to locate along these corridors. This would be in addition to FRESH and Healthy Bodegas.
- Increase funding and support for US Alliance, Amalgamated Bank and other community-based financial institutions to promote financial literacy, workshops and marketing to promote services and encourage residents to utilize traditional banking services
 - There could be an opportunity to create satellite locations in other parts of both districts and/or the creation of similar financial structures under the umbrella of established CDC's.

Business Improvement District Formation (BID)

Merchants and community leaders have been actively engaged in the creation of a Business Improvement District (BID) including Burnside Avenue, East Tremont and Jerome Avenues for several years. As an interim step, we are requesting funding for a "BID Express" which would provide services analogous to a BID to property owners and merchants within the corridor with the ultimate goal to form a permanent BID. The creation of a BID would improve conditions in these neighborhoods on a number of fronts including cleanliness, retail continuity, retail diversity while creating a sense of pride, unity and ownership amongst local merchants and residents.

As stated previously, Community District Four benefits from the Bronx County Court, Bronx Supreme Court, the 161st Street BID, Harlem River waterfront access, Bronx Terminal Market and Yankee Stadium. Much of that activity is concentrated in the southern portion of the District. The neighborhood plan provides an opportunity to enhance the commercial corridors along East 167th Street, East 170th Street and Mount Eden, improve the variety and quality of retail, providing options that serve the needs of residents and visitors. Community District Four is also requesting a BID Express centered on the 170th Street corridor with the ultimate goals to create a 170th Street BID. This is a major transit hub/transfer point and has an existing merchants association.

There are currently 64 Business Improvement Districts in different neighborhoods throughout New York City. A BID, can be instrumental in making streetscape improvements and other enhancements that will transform Burnside Avenue and East 170th Street into vibrant commercial hubs.

The BID Elements include:

- Seed Money:
 - A grant of \$100,000 is being requested in facilitation of "Taste of the Burnside Avenue BID"
- Street Maintenance/Sanitation Services
 - The BID will hire a private sanitation team to sweep and reduce trash on the streets and sidewalks of the district.
- Graffiti Removal

- The BID will engage in regular graffiti removal to help make the district a more inviting place to shop.
- Retail and Marketing
 - The BID would undertake retail attraction efforts to diversify the retail needs as identified by the Commercial District Needs Assessment (CDNA). The BID would also create a multi-faceted marketing program that will give Burnside Avenue a competitive advantage in attracting shoppers to the District.
- Security Services
 - The security services proposed for the District would include but not limited to services that will assist the police force secure and continuously maintain law and order within our community.

The formation of BID's in these areas will stabilize these emerging commercial corridors, increase revenues and make these areas more marketable and attractive to future business owners, investors and entrepreneurs.

Auto Industry

Jerome Avenue is a major corridor spanning both districts currently characterized by low-scale automotive and marginal commercial enterprises. We are of the conviction that this is an opportunity for mixed-use development with active ground floor uses that enhance the neighborhood, promoting walkability and safety. The auto industry has a long history in these neighborhoods. Many businesses are utilizing streets and sidewalks to conduct oil changes, change tires and wash cars. These add to the numerous health and wellness issues including poor air-quality which exacerbates high asthma rates, impedes the ability to walk and promote healthy active living.

In order to fulfill the long-term vision to connect these neighborhoods, creating vibrant mixed-use, mixed income communities, and improve the overall health profile of area residents, the Boards respectfully request that the rezoning proposal include the four designated "preserved areas" as part of the rezoning to facilitate the potential for mixed-use residential, commercial and community facility development in the entirety of the study area. We do not feel that leaving any areas zoned C8-3 or M1-2 is beneficial to the long-term growth and sustainability of these neighborhoods, conversely this change would not result in the immediate displacement of businesses or workers nor would it preclude these uses from remaining. In fact similar zoning changes have been implemented in other parts of the City and in the Bronx including most recently the Lower Concourse Rezoning approved in 2009 which projected 3,414 units of housing to date has produced 285 and the East Fordham Road Rezoning approved in 2013 which projected 352 dwelling units and to date has resulted in no new dwelling units.² In both cases the majority of the automotive and manufacturing businesses remain.

The United Auto Merchants Association (UAMA) with funding from Council Member Vanessa Gibson, recently completed a survey of the 104 auto businesses in the Jerome Avenue Study area. Environmental issues are a major concern of area residents as it relates to the proximity of these businesses to schools, open space and residential development. There are a number of licenses and permits that are required to operate certain types of auto-related businesses. 97 percent of those surveyed indicated that they did not have any knowledge of licenses or permits.³ 23 percent of those surveyed said they did not have the required petroleum bulk permit from DEC. 20 percent of businesses indicated that they did not have an air quality permit and another 24

² Department of City Planning

³ Jerome Avenue Neighborhood Study: United Auto Merchants Association: Auto Industry Study

percent do not have the BNYFD certificate for spray painting. In addition, 21 percent of those surveyed were not registered with DEP and 20 percent did not submit their “Tier II” chemical reports. It is important to note that 85 percent of those surveyed indicated that Spanish was their preferred language and we acknowledge that language is a barrier for many of these businesses.⁴ 41 percent of businesses indicated that they needed help with compliance. In conclusion less than half of the auto businesses are in compliance based on the UAMA survey results. That being said, the preservation of the zoning is meaningless to the majority of these businesses without compliance and the associated licensing necessary to conduct business legally and safely.

Aside from the environmental concerns, these businesses are operating on very small footprints. 89 percent of businesses are operating on lots that are 5,000 square feet or less which contributes to why many businesses use the sidewalk and the street as extensions of their businesses. 95 percent of the businesses surveyed rent their space and 73 percent of those businesses have 3 years or less remaining on their lease. UAMA has been working closely with the businesses throughout this process and they are aware of the plan, the rezoning and its potential impact. 95 percent of businesses said they were not planning to move, however 84 percent said they would move if they received help and Survey results indicate that an overwhelming majority of the businesses would be willing to relocate.

The Boards support the rezoning changes as part of the neighborhood plan to promote residential, commercial and community facility development, they also recognize the critical role these businesses play in supporting families and their contributions to the local economy. Survey results indicate that many of the auto workers were not equipped with education, language or technology skills necessary to provide them with a living wage. Boards Four and Five request that the city create a comprehensive strategy of programs and incentives to support the workers and the business owners:

Short-Term

- Enable businesses to be better neighbors by offering comprehensive services related to compliance and auto-industry standards. The Department of Small Business Services (SBS) should work directly with business owners to remedy violation and licensing to increase their compliance.
- In conjunction with NYPD and CDOT conduct workshops and seminars and create literature related to parking, loading and street rules.
- Provide free legal services to business owners to negotiate lease terms.
- Provide free ESL classes at times that are convenient for workers and business owners.

Long-Term

- Develop a relocation fund which would include a package of incentives that will allow qualifying businesses to relocate to an area within the city that better fits the needs to these businesses
- Businesses must be in compliance with all rules and regulations related to the operation of their business and licenses must be up to date.
- SBS and EDC should work with qualifying businesses to develop a business plan based on the market and industry trends.
- Offer job training, skills development and job placement services to facilitate professional growth for workers and business owners. 73 percent of those surveyed indicated the auto technology training would be most helpful.

⁴ IBID

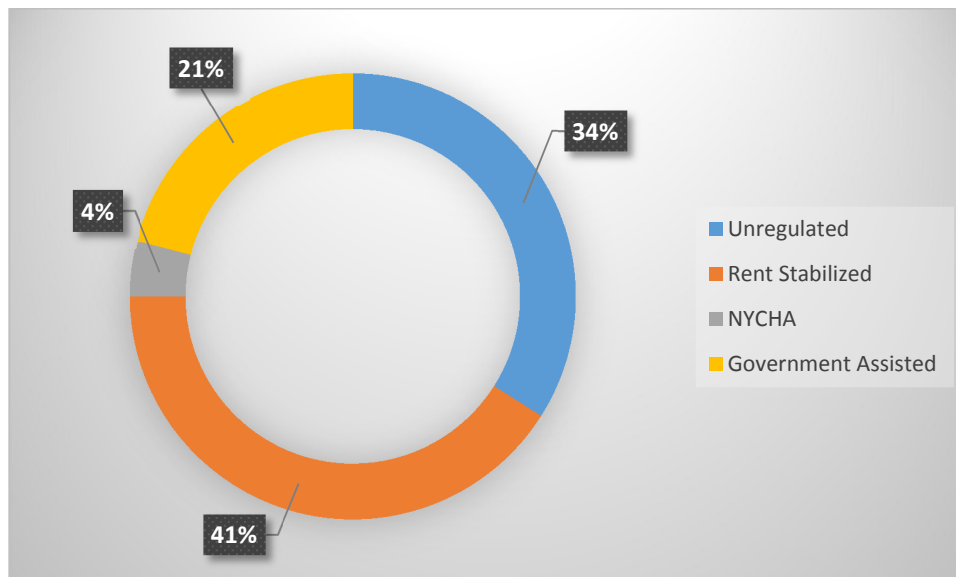
- Training should be offered for those who want to remain in the auto-industry and a program should be developed for those interested in other trades and skills training (construction, healthcare, HVAC/refrigeration)

Partnerships should be created with Bronx Community College, Hostos and others that offer similar certificates and training programs. The Local Employment Network should be utilized as a vehicle to facilitate this initiative

III. Housing

Housing New York: A Five-Borough, Ten Year Plan is Mayor de Blasio’s comprehensive plan to address the City’s affordable housing crisis. The plan seeks to invest in the development of 80,000 new income restricted units and preserve 120,000 existing affordable housing units over a ten-year period.⁵ The plan is projected to create 194,000 construction jobs and 7,100+ permanent jobs. The Housing Plan presents a tremendous opportunity to protect our most vulnerable residents, while creating opportunities for existing residents to grow within and/or return to these neighborhoods and provide permanent jobs in the construction trade. With a large inventory of stable, affordable housing stock (62 percent is regulated) we feel that a multi-pronged approach to maintain affordability for existing tenants will help support many of our low-income residents and this should be a top priority for housing as it relates to the neighborhood plan.

Figure 3: Housing Profile



Source: 2011 Housing and Vacancy Survey

Given the complexities of developing affordable housing, the fact that there is very little city-owned property in the study area and the extensive environmental remediation that will be required to redevelop these sites, construction of new affordable housing is an important goal to both Districts but a long-term one. However, this gives ample time to prepare area residents to capitalize on the thousands of permanent jobs that will be generated as a result of these developments. It should be noted that apprenticeship programs and the

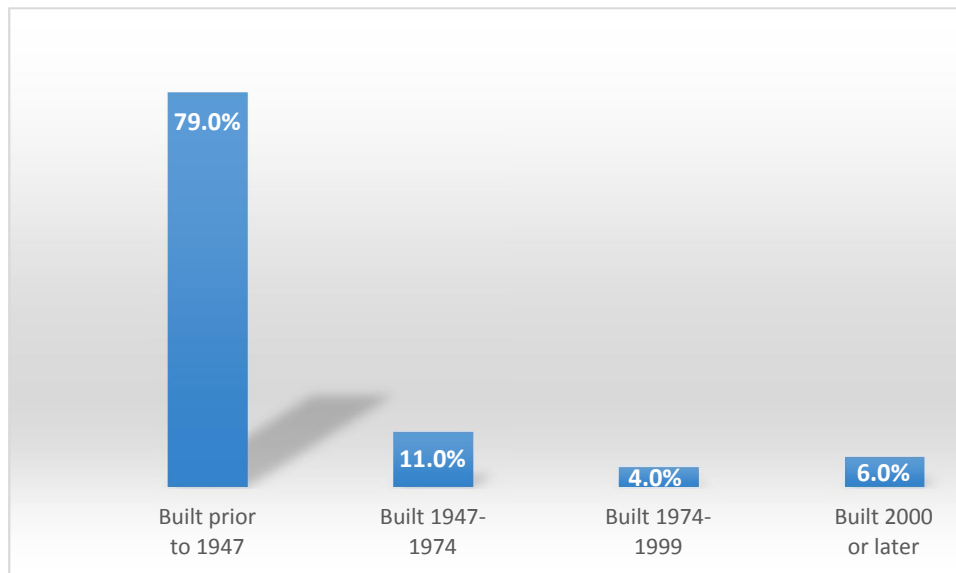
⁵ Housing New York: A Five Borough, Ten-Year Plan

development of trade skills is of the highest priority to provide economic opportunities for residents and improve their socio-economic status.

Comprehensive preservation efforts in combination with programs and policies for new construction at a range of income levels from extremely low-income (defined as those making less than \$25,150) with a focus on moderate to middle income households (defined as those making \$67,121-\$138, 435) ⁶ allows housing opportunities for existing residents at various income levels and provides room for economic growth and advancement within the districts.

The good news is that almost 80 percent of the housing stock in Community Districts 4 and 5 was built prior to 1947. However more than 93 percent of those households rent versus own leaving them vulnerable to the whims of landlords and market conditions. Home ownership rates are roughly 3.6 percent in CD5 and slightly higher at 7.1 percent in CD4. Home ownership rates in the Bronx are roughly 19.2 percent and citywide more than one third of households own their homes. Additionally, more than 55 percent of all households were “rent burdened” meaning their gross rent was more than 35 percent of their household. The City has a great opportunity to preserve affordable housing in two densely populated community districts where income is limited and the necessity for public subsidy is a matter of survival.

Figure 4: Age of Housing Stock



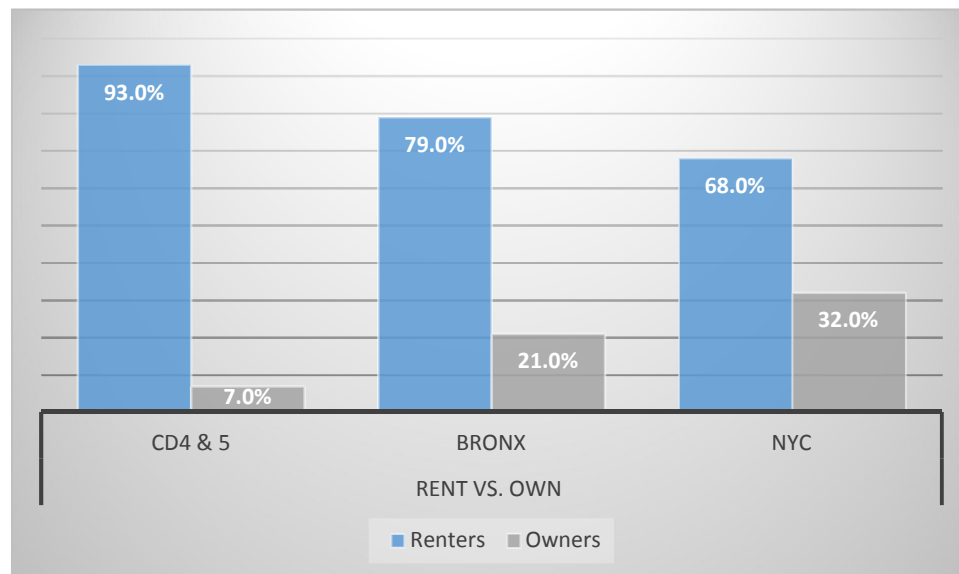
Source: 2011 Housing and Vacancy Survey

As the City plans to create new affordable housing through the rezoning of Jerome Avenue, we are advocating for adequate protection of existing residential tenants against any form of harassment. By this, the City must ensure that current residents are not being harassed by their respective landlords or even displaced from their homes. With the extraordinary number of rent stabilized and rent regulated apartments in the City the

⁶ Based on U. S Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Estimates for Area Median Income (AMI) in 2014.

displacement of these tenants would intensify the housing crisis leading to increased rents and loss. It must be noted that tenant harassment has a direct bearing on the availability of affordable housing as each time rent stabilized tenants move out of their apartments, landlords are legally allowed to increase rents by twenty percent. Not only do tenants lose a rent stabilized apartment through this process, but over time, the apartment itself is made less affordable and eventually deregulated.

Figure 5: Rent vs. Own



Source: US Census; ACS 2014

Tenant harassment can take a number of forms which include lack of services (heat, hot water etc.); threats from landlords, frivolous legal actions; non-rent fees; pressuring tenants to take buyouts, taking advantage of loopholes in the rent stabilization laws and pitting tenants against one another. Suffice it to say existing residents have been experiencing these conditions for decades and the prospect of increased land values has increased these practices.

The following are a list of recommended interventions and policies related to Anti-Displacement, Anti-Harassment and Preservation:

Anti-Displacement & Anti-Harassment

- Publicly grade landlords and publicly display such grades in their building lobbies.
- Create citywide "Certificate of No Harassment" requirements, preventing landlords who have a history of tenant harassment from obtaining certain permits from the Department of Buildings.
- HPD should create a "Zero Tolerance" policy for harassment and poor building conditions which invariably enables the City to take legal action(s) against property owners.
- Strengthen and improve its various building inspection systems which require building inspectors respond to calls within 24 hours.

- Pass legislations to allow the City take ownership of buildings as a result of landlord harassment, failure to pay code violations and the criminal use of property.
- Increase its oversight duties of landlords and monitor housing court cases, particularly in high risk displacement areas and refer same to community organizations and/or legal aid/legal services that will do additional outreach to help determine if the case is part of a larger harassment pattern.
- Facilitate a process that will ensure developers contribute resources to prevent displacement of current residents. By this, they are required to pay into an anti- where developers are building and the funding would be dedicated to community anti- displacement initiatives.
- Make key neighborhood data available for public review through the creation of a comprehensive list of evictions; tracking of housing related 311 calls and the creation of a comprehensive list of distressed buildings by neighborhoods with all public information such as building ownership, management and most recent sale date
- Create a displacement fund for community organizing initiatives in the most vulnerable areas in these neighborhood
- Provide a \$100,000 funding for a community consulting housing contract to assist tenants, homeowners and property owners.

Preservation

- Homelessness has reached historic levels in NYC. In May 2016, there were 60,067 homeless people, which includes 14,097 families and 23,298 children.⁷ We recommend the reinstatement of the *Advantage Program* and funding to the *Homeless Eviction Prevention Program* to ensure that residents secure permanent housing and decrease the number of transient individuals and families in our districts.
- HPD should be proactive in creating a comprehensive strategy to target buildings for their preservation programs.
- HPD should increase its funding for code enforcement inspectors and provide incentives to property owners to repair and retrofit their buildings in accordance with the building codes like 8A loan and Participation loan programs.
- The city should reinstate the *Neighborhood Preservation Office* to deal with code enforcement, anti-harassment and displacement. This would provide a team of individuals geographically-based to deal immediately and directly with these issues. This office could also focus on improving conditions on NYCHA campuses.
- Increase funding for the Proactive Initiative (50 buildings are currently part of the Proactive Initiative more buildings should be added).
- Enact a set of policies that create incentives that prevent speculation and displacement as well as promote affordable housing development.
- Support outreach and "*Know Your Rights*" education by community groups for the good of local residents as a way of improving communication with tenants about their rights.

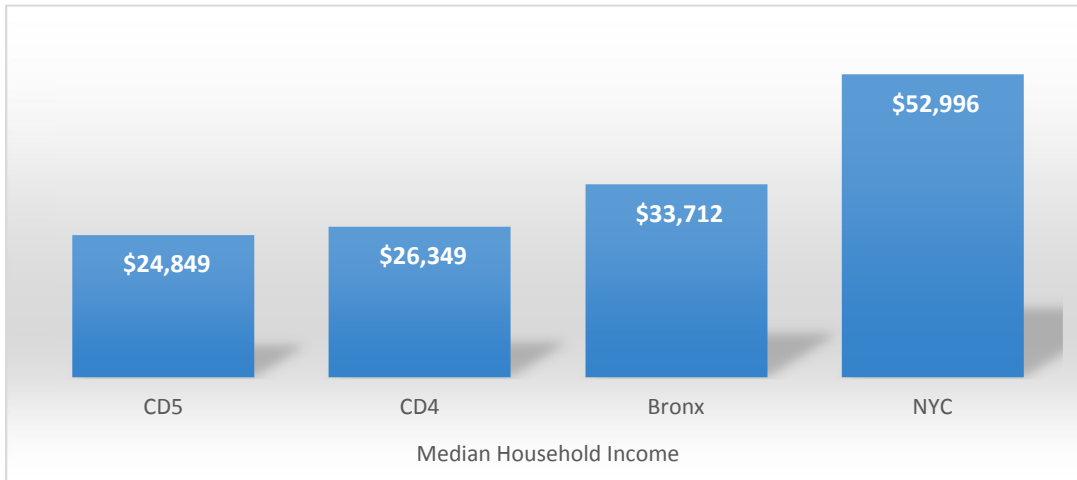
New Construction

- It should be noted that while the median income is \$24,489 in CD5 and \$26,349 in CD4 a large segment of the population is rent-burdened and challenged in other areas economically, roughly 25% of households earn more than \$50,000 a year. This is not to say that there is not a need for affordable

⁷ Coalition for the Homeless

housing at lower income tiers, but rather there is an opportunity to empower residents with the financial and educational tools to become financially independent. In order to increase the median income we need area residents be earning more. As existing residents earn more we want to ensure that we are creating opportunities for upward mobility as it relates to housing. Currently, most of the new development does not offer options for people such as recent college graduates or a two parent household who has worked themselves through college or trade school and can afford better and larger living accommodations. If we do not create more opportunities for higher income earners we will continue to discuss high unemployment and a median income that lags behind the Bronx and represents half the median income citywide.

Figure 6: Median Household Income



Source: US Census; ACS 2014

- New construction that targets a range of income levels with a concentrated focus at 80% AMI and above
 - Mix and Match
 - M2
- Commitment to local hiring for union and non-union jobs for residents of CB4/CB5
 - Secondary focus on residents of the Borough of the Bronx
 - MWBE-Commitment to hire minority and women owned businesses
- Reports from HPD/HDC on as of right projects that receive city subsidy
 - Report should be furnished quarterly
 - Should include unit and income breakdown
 - Level of subsidy
 - Construction schedule
 - Inclusion of other program elements (commercial, community facility space)
- Ground Floor Uses
 - The majority of development is anticipated to be mixed-use with active ground floor spaces.
 - Community should play role in tenanting those spaces
 - HPD should work with SBS, local merchants associations and BIDs to source candidates for these new spaces
 - Rent should be negotiated offered below market with a guaranteed rate over a 5-10 year lease period
 - SBS should provide training and resources in advance for prospective tenants

Homeownership

- Home ownership will strengthen and stabilize these neighborhoods in the future.
- HPD should focus on home ownership for small buildings including NIHOP
- HPD should create a program and strategy to work with existing rental buildings that are interested in cooperative conversion. (e.g. HDFC)

- Home ownership opportunities should be targeted along the Grand Concourse, Concourse Village West area, Yankee Stadium area, University Avenue and West Tremont Avenue.
- Existing homeowners have endured the years when the level of investment in these neighborhoods was subpar. These residents should also be the beneficiaries of the neighborhood plan.
- Homeowners should receive enhancement credits when new construction occurs within a quarter mile of their residence. These credits would be used to upgrade sidewalks, fences and improve lighting and landscaping.
- Small home owners should receive a credit for property damage related to water and sewer damage related to new construction. The City should fine the developer and checks should be issued to the home owners in question.
- Prior to commencement of any new construction or significant renovations/expansions adjacent buildings should be properly protected from damage by the developer and the areas should be baited for rats bi-weekly during the construction period.

IV. Schools/Education

Roughly 42 percent of the total population in both districts is under 18 years of age. They are ranked #5 and #7 out of all 59 Community Districts in that category. Each district is ranked near the bottom of all 59 community districts as it relates to English, language arts proficiency and mathematics. Only 14.0 percent of the students in CD5 and 12.7 percent of students in CD4 English, language arts were performing at grade level. Each district fared slightly better in math with 18.5 percent and 15.4 percent respectively. Nonetheless, they were ranked 54 and 58 out of 59 community districts in English, language arts proficiency and 58 and 53 out of 59 in math. The Bronx ranks last of all the Boroughs in each of those categories.⁸

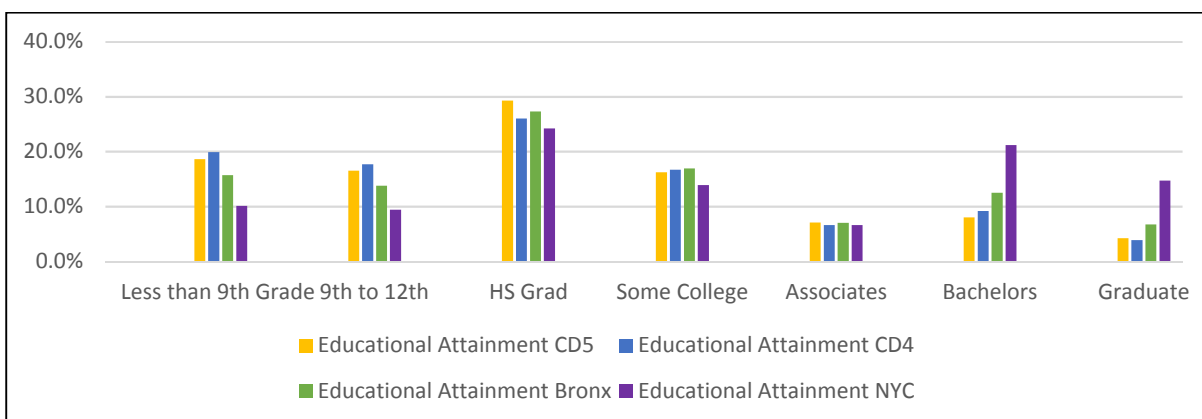
Educational attainment is one of the key indicators of success and quality of education provided and acquired by area residents. The quality of education in the Borough and both districts warrants a different lens and separate analysis that in many cases it outside the purview of this process. However, the physical condition and location of educational facilities while not the complete solution is a component of that formula. It can address issues of overcrowding and infuse state of the art facilities which in turn can positively affect how children learn and advance.

Currently the percentage of residents with less than a 9th grade education and from 9th grade to 12th grade is nearly double that of NYC. Furthermore both districts lag behind the Bronx and NYC in terms of percentage of residents with Bachelors and Graduate degrees.⁹ It is therefore imperative that the Department of Education and the School Construction Authority address the educational needs of our children.

⁸ State of New York City's Housing and Neighborhoods in 2015, NYU Furman Center

⁹ U.S. Census, America Community Survey

Figure 7: Educational Attainment



Source: US Census; ACS 2014

As new housing is developed it is crucial that the Department of Education allocate funds to provide adequate capacity at existing schools to keep pace with the influx of new residents and children.

We respectfully request the following related to schools and education:

- Construction of a high school within the Bronx Community College Campus.
- To increase English and math proficiency partnerships with Bronx High School of Science, Lehman College, Hostos College, Fordham University and Albert Einstein College of Medicine should be forged to create new innovate programs to educate our children and prepare them to compete in today’s workforce.
- There are a number of city-owned sites in Community District Four
 - A school(s) should be considered as part of redevelopment of these properties as there would be no acquisition costs for the city.
 - One or more of these sites should be evaluated for feasibility as a future school. (Lower Concourse North)
- No fewer than 1,500 additional seats should be provided for high schools in the District with 400 specifically provided for the high school located within Bronx Community College and to aid effective teaching and learning.
- The 2014-2019 SCA Capital Plan identifies 426 funded seats in School District 7 (Sub-district: Concourse) and another 572 unfunded seat in School District 9 (Sub-district: Highbridge South). Additionally, a need for 1,280 seats was identified for School District 10 (Sub-district: University Heights) with only 456 of those seats currently funded. We request funding and siting for all seats as part of the study.¹⁰
- There should be a substantial increase in the allotment of Universal Pre-K and Day Care slots up to 1,000 to support the projected increase in families and children. Parents within the District would require safe places like Child Care and After-School Care Centers and programs for their kids.
 - Universal Pre-K should be allocated on fifty percent of all new development

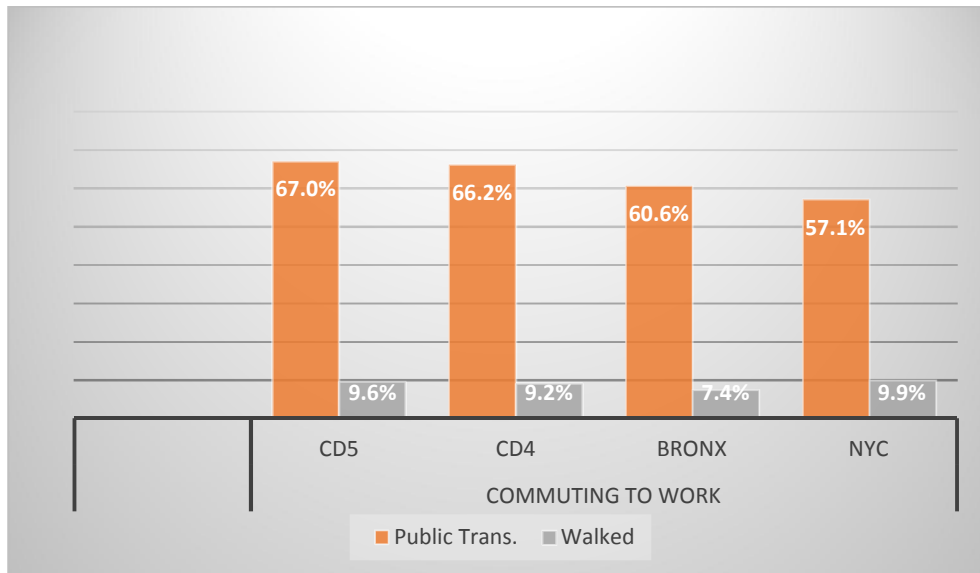
¹⁰ School Construction Authority: FY 2015-2019 Proposed Five Year Capital Plan Amendment.

V. Transportation Infrastructure/Connectivity

Access and mobility throughout the area is key. The MTA currently operates at 469 subway stations citywide and 307 bus routes. Currently there are 11 subway stops and ten bus lines running through these areas. Annually, the more than 26 million people pass through subways stations in the study area and 47 million riders utilize the bus routes.¹¹ This includes two stations in the top 200 (167th Street and 170th Streets), one station in the top 150 (Burnside) two bus routes (Bx1/2,Bx36) in the top ten and two bus routes in the top forty (Bx3, Bx11, Bx35, Bx40/42).

Nearly 68 percent of local residents, use public transportation to commute to work and for other official/personal engagements. Improvements to existing transportation infrastructure, amenities and the resurfacing and enhancement of our most vital north-south corridor - the Grand Concourse is a top priority. Additionally, access and mobility are extremely important and currently there is no elevator along the #4 line from 167th Street to East 183rd Street or the B/D from 167 Street to Fordham Road. Burnside Avenue would be the ideal location as this area is targeted for significant development in the future as well as the formation of a BID, however any location(s) between the aforementioned stations on either line would be acceptable.

Figure 8: Commuting Patterns



Source: US Census; ACS 2014

¹¹ MTA Annual Ridership 2015

The following outlines a list of infrastructure investments/improvements that are critical to fulfill the vision:

- Full rehabilitation and upgrade to underpasses at 165th, 167th, 170th, 167th Street, 174th -175th Street, Burnside Avenue and East Tremont Avenue.
 - Include painting and graffiti removal
 - New LED Lighting
 - New sidewalks
- B/D Station Enhancements/Rehabilitation:
 - East 167th Street
 - East 170th Street
 - 174th -175th Street
 - Tremont Avenue
 - 182nd-183rd Street
- A comprehensive maintenance and upkeep plan of the Grand Concourse Work (Phases I-IV)
 - Include plantings, shrubs and flowers
 - DPR is the ideal maintenance partner but there is currently only funding for Phase I
 - Include underpasses in the scope of the reconstruction of the Grand Concourse
- Maintenance and upkeep of safety enhancements at Shakespeare Avenue
- New LED lighting throughout particularly in areas with low visibility/foot traffic and high crime
- An elevator or escalator installed by MTA to better service seniors and handicapped and enhance access and mobility throughout the districts along the #4 line from 167th Street to East 183rd Street or the B/D from 167 Street to Fordham Road (ideally at Burnside Avenue Station or location deemed appropriate by MTA)
- A comprehensive assessment, plan and timeline for renovation and rehabilitation of Step Streets
 - Focus on Davidson Avenue between Featherbed Lane & Davidson Avenue, Steps Lane, West 168th Street, Anderson Avenue
- Metered parking in key locations to facilitate greater turnover
- A municipal parking lot to provide parking for area residents at reasonable rates
- Painting, lighting, seating and improved circulation and mobility around elevated stops, particularly those that are major transfer points (#4 train: 170th Street, Burnside Avenue)
- Increased bus service in areas such as Highbridge and University Heights to improve access for area residents and merchants
 - Select Bus Service on the Bx3, Bx36 or Bx18
 - Study and assessment of improved/increased service for the Bx40/41
- Constant monitoring of the conditions and repair of major thoroughfares in the district like the Grand Concourse, Fordham, University Avenue and Tremont Avenue Roads to ensure better service of the district's motoring public.
- Adequate funding (for continuous maintenance) of the major road bridge which serves as a gateway from Manhattan to the Bronx and connects Bronx Community Boards 4 and 5 as well as the Washington Bridge on West 181st Street.
- Facilitation of cleaner and improved streetscapes, especially on the Washington Bridge and Grand Concourse to ensure improved roadways and efficient transportation routes.

- Consideration and approval of a Slow Zone on University Avenue in addition to the already approved one on the Grand Concourse to act as traffic calming devices and reduce automobile and pedestrian incidents.
- "Boogie on the Boulevard" on the Grand Concourse Avenue at least once a month; just as we request additional resources for improved signage and traffic calming devices on all our major thoroughfares.

VI. Parks and Recreation

Open space and greening play an important role in the quality of life of area residents and workers in an area. Underserved areas are defined as areas of high population density in the City that are generally the greatest distance from parkland where the amount of open space per 1000 residents is currently less than 2.5 acres. Well-served areas have an open space ratio above 2.5 accounting for existing parks that contain developed recreational resources; or are located within 0.25 mile (approximately a 10-minute walk) from developed and publicly accessible portions of regional parks. Community District 5 is considered underserved in terms of open space. Community District 4 does not qualify as underserved or well-served.

The City's planning goal is based, in part, on National Recreation and Park Association guidelines of 1.25 to 2.5 acres per 1,000 residents of neighborhood parks within one-half mile, 5 to 8 acres per 1,000 residents of community parks within one to two miles, and 5 to 10 acres per 1,000 residents of regional parks within a one-hour drive of urban areas. Studies have shown that nonresidents, specifically workers, tend to use passive open space. The optimal ratio for worker populations is 0.15 acres of passive open space per 1,000 non-residents.¹²

Community District Five has an open space ratio of 0.03 and Community District Four has a ratio of 0.14. Comparatively the Bronx has an open space ratio of 0.25 and Manhattan and Staten Island have an open space ratio of 0.19.¹³ Each district has unique challenges related to open space. CD5 has a lack of open space and as a densely populated and built up area the opportunities to create new open spaces are limited. CD4 has a significant amount of open space but maintenance and upkeep is a challenge for the Borough Parks office in the district.

Community District Five priorities are as follows:

- Expedite the development of a proposed park site on 1805, Davidson Avenue, currently under the jurisdiction of the Agency for Children Services (ACS) to be transferred to the Department of City Wide Administrative Services (DCAS) for develop as open space. Currently a million dollars has been allocated for capital improvements but must these funds cannot be utilized until DPR has jurisdiction over the site.
- Develop segments of the Aqueduct trail along University and Tremont Avenues by developing a pedestrian bridge or a Step Street to reconnect the Aqueduct lands to the Aqueduct walkway. The Aqueduct Walkway runs south from Bronx District 7 on Kingsbridge Road to the boundaries of District 5.
- The development of Devanney Triangle, Mount Hope Gardens and West 184th Street, Grand Avenue Play Ground Park.
- Comfort stations at various park locations (such as Morton and Galileo Playgrounds) and for the development of instructional programming by the recreation aids and such an intervention would

¹² City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Manual 2014

¹³ Department of Parks and Recreation, Bronx Borough Office

further promote communal interaction among our residents as they will be availed the opportunities of engaging one another the more on a regular basis.

Community District Four priorities are as follows:

- The development of Corporal Fischer Park
- Completion and expansion of Grant Park
- New skating and bike surfaces for Mulally Park
- Additional areas for barbequing in existing parks (currently only permitted in Mill Pond Park)
- Free and reduced rates for tennis courts at Mill Pond Park
- The hiring of additional PEP officers to patrol and monitor the parks, particularly during Peak Season
- The hiring of additional horticulturalists to assist in the maintenance and upkeep of parks, green streets and trees throughout the District and the Borough
- CB4 Parks Administrator
 - Under the supervision of the Bronx Borough Commissioner this Individual would manage CB4 parks system wide and would be responsible for
 - Maintenance
 - Special Events
 - Recreational facilities
 - Personnel
 - Developing and help establish “Friends Of” groups to assist with maintenance, cleanup, beautification in high trafficked areas
 - Manage grant application and funding streams for special projects
 - Community relations/outreach

VII. Public Safety

Public safety in our community is a major concern and we believe more investment and efforts should be dedicated to strengthening the capacity of the police force. Community District Five still has some of the highest crime rates citywide. Another primary objective is to expedite the process of acquiring and constructing a new 46th Precinct with parking facilities. This will definitely improve police department services and consequently improve the quality of usable open space available; particularly spaces that are not highly visible and somewhat hidden parks such as Bridge Park, Echo Park, Cedar Park and Aqueduct Walkway in particular.

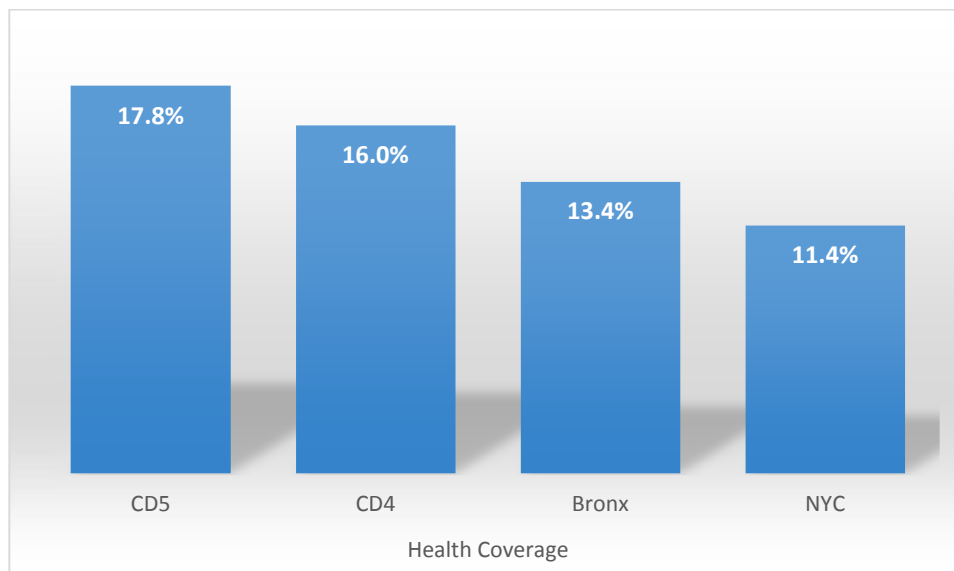
- The local Police Precinct should increase funding for the Operation Clean Hallways Program to stop indoor drug dealing and loitering as this has been a quality of life and public safety issue for our community.
- Funding should be increased for 911 emergency dispatchers to improve response time.
- Funding should be allocated for the construction of a new front entrance ramp to make the existing 46th Police Precinct ADA accessible.
- Funding should be increased for Narcotics' Enforcement and School Crossing Guards.

VIII. Health and Wellness

The following are key statistics from the 2015 Community Health Profile for Community District 4:

- Adults in Highbridge and Concourse are more likely to consume sugary drinks and much less likely to consume fruits and vegetables
- Obesity rate is three times that of Stuyvesant Town and Turtle Bay
- Diabetes 15 percent higher than NYC and five times the rate of Stuyvesant Town and Turtle Bay
- Hospitalization for asthma among children 5-14 is over one and half times the citywide rate
- Furthermore, Bronx County was recently ranked the unhealthiest of all 62 NY counties

Figure 9: Health Coverage



Source: US Census; ACS 2014

The following are key statistics from the 2015 Community Health Profile for Community District 5:

- Within Bronx, the infant mortality rate (IMR) remains extremely high for black women (including African American, African immigrants and non-Hispanic Afro-Caribbean women) in contrast to the average IMR in the borough of at the community level.
- This statistics is quite relevant for Community Board 5 since 33.7 percent of our residents are Black/African Americans.
- Between 2007 and 2009, the IMR surpassed 10 deaths per 1,000 live births for Black women under the age of 20 in the University/Morris Heights neighborhood.
- Also, Bronx Community Board 5 has the 4th highest number of asthma hospitalization in the City

CD4 benefits from a vast and active network of community-based organizations as well as Bronx Lebanon Hospital one of the largest Bronx employers and also has a number of clinics in the district. CD5 has a number of health providers in the area including the Morris Heights Health Center and Montefiore Hospital.

To address the issues related to health and wellness we would like to advocate for more funding for programs and services particularly targeted at youth and low-income families.

- Improving living conditions that contribute to asthma (mice, roaches and secondhand smoke) should be incorporated into tenant protection and preservation strategies.
- Increased funding from The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to address these two main health issues.
- Increased funding for the expansion of the Pest Control Unit for additional personnel and field inspectors Exterminators.
- Increased funding for teen pregnancy and obesity programs in our District among others.
- *Healthy Bucks and Healthy Bodegas*
 - Bodegas are prevalent throughout CD's 4 and 5. Working with bodega owners and the DOHMH to increase the availability of healthy food options is on the critical path.
- Increase funding for additional programming for fitness and exercise in district parks and recreation centers
- Ensure that all new schools built have ample indoor and outdoor space to promote physical activity
- Leverage funding and programming of Bronx Borough President's #not62 campaign
- Increase funding for DOHMH to work with DOE to improve quality and variety of school lunch program and summer lunch to increase healthy eating
- Increase education and hands on training for children and their families to promote healthy living and lifestyle
- Map and rate all full service grocery stores in the districts and plan strategically with proposed new development for siting new FRESH food stores

IX. Jerome Avenue Study Implementation Working Group

Currently the Jerome Avenue Neighborhood Study is the only *Housing NY*, neighborhood study in the Bronx. In order to ensure that capital, expense and programmatic commitments made as part of the Jerome Avenue Neighborhood Study are fulfilled, Community Boards 4 and 5 propose the creation of a working group.

The working group should be led by Bronx elected officials at all levels as some commitments are directly related to the City budget while others (transit, schools) are not completely within city control.

Other members would include a variety of community stakeholders and a representative from the key agencies:

- Department of Parks and Recreation
- Department of Transportation
- Department of Housing Preservation and Development
- Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
- Department of Small Business Services
- School Construction Authority
- Community Board Four District Manager and/or Chairperson
- Community Board Five District Manager and/or Chairperson

The Working Group would meet quarterly to chart the progress of capital commitments, programming and timelines. Additionally we recommend the development of an online tracking mechanism that would allow any interested party to chart the progress of commitments to capital, expense and programming. This could be a pilot/model that could be rolled out to track all city investments at the Borough level and Community District level.

Each agency would submit a report on all projects and programs agreed upon as part of the Neighborhood Plan for Jerome Avenue. The reports and minutes from each quarterly meeting would be made available to the public.

Appendix

Bronx Community Board 5 Section 197-a Plan Phase I Summary Report (2002)

Appendix

Jerome Avenue Transportation Study, (February 2012)

Appendix

Letter of Support Project H.I.R.E. Application, Bronx Community College (2016)