



BRADHURST

MANHATTAN

Commercial District Needs Assessment



careers
businesses
neighborhoods



Harlem Congregations for
Community Improvement



ABOUT BRADHURST

Background

Avenue NYC is a competitive grant program created by the **NYC Department of Small Business Services** to fund and build the capacity of community-based development organizations to execute commercial revitalization initiatives. Avenue NYC is funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, which targets investments in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods.

Avenue NYC Commercial Revitalization grants provide multi-year commitments aimed at building the capacity of partner organizations to better understand neighborhood needs, develop impactful programs, and sustain their work in the community for at least three years.

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

This CDNA features the **145th Street, Frederick Douglass Boulevard, Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard, Macombs Place, and 155th Street** commercial corridors in **Bradhurst**, and was conducted in partnership with **Harlem Congregations for Community Improvement** between October 2023 and June 2024.

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

Jump to...

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Located in northern Harlem, Bradhurst is bustling with cultural diversity, a vibrant history, and strong community ties. Bordered by the Harlem River to the northeast, Bradhurst is surrounded by the other historic neighborhoods of Sugar Hill and Strivers Row. With a reputation for resiliency and a legendary athletic past and present, Bradhurst presents opportunities for both economic and community development.

Since the 1920s, Bradhurst has been at the forefront of housing reform in New York City. To alleviate the housing crisis in Harlem, the Dunbar Apartments were one of the first cooperatives built specifically for the African American community. The Harlem River Houses were subsequently built as one of the city's earliest public housing developments, and both complexes are now designated New York City Landmarks. Beginning in the 1960s, the neighborhood suffered from disinvestment and a decline in adequate housing, leading Bradhurst to become a center of community-driven redevelopment and reinvestment. During the 1990s, community organizations worked with the city to rehabilitate buildings and reinvest in affordable housing, laying the foundation for current affordable living and commercial opportunities in the neighborhood.

Bradhurst was once home to the historic Polo Grounds, the stadium that housed the New York Giants baseball team. Today, sports lovers continue to flock to Bradhurst for annual basketball tournaments at Holcombe Rucker Park during the summer, a tradition dating back to the 1950s, which helped launched the careers of many notable players including Julius "Dr. J" Erving and Wilt Chamberlain. Jackie Robinson Park, one of Harlem's four historic parks, also serves as a neighborhood anchor for community programming and recreation.

Connections to multiple subway and bus routes make Bradhurst accessible from various points throughout the city. Centered around 145th Street, the neighborhood's commercial district extends across Frederick Douglass Boulevard, Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard, and St. Nicholas Avenue. These corridors offer a mixture of delis, restaurants, beauty salons, and other retail stores, many of which have served the community for generations.

Neighborhood Demographics

See more on page 13

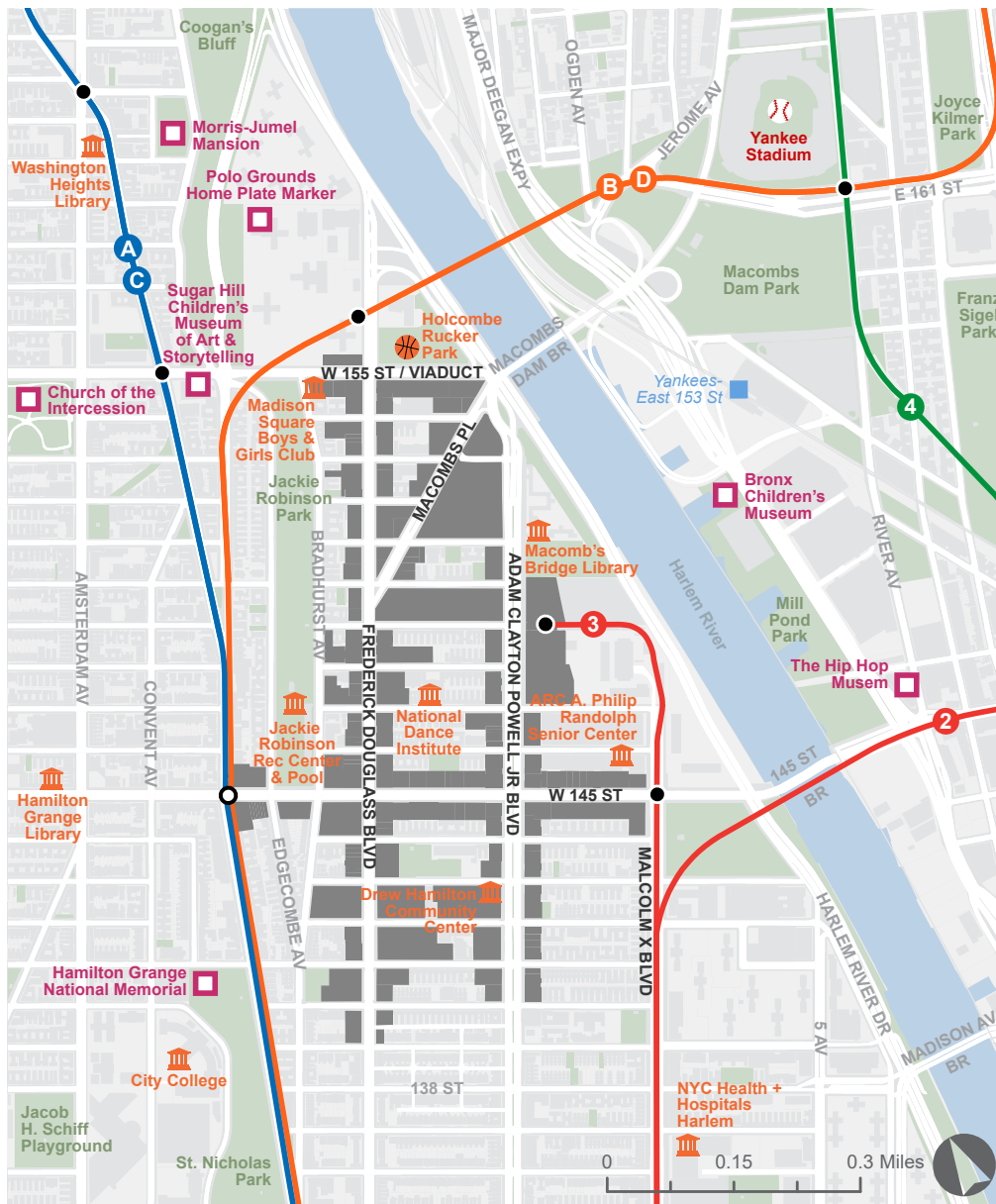
Home to more than 50,000 residents, Bradhurst is a predominately Black neighborhood (56%) with a growing Hispanic population (30%). 24% of Bradhurst's residents are foreign-born, coming from countries across Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean and contributing to the neighborhood's vast diversity of local businesses. Bradhurst's youth comprise 20% of the population, significantly higher than that of Manhattan (14%).

Future Opportunities

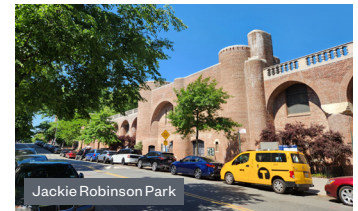
See more on page 5

In 2022, Bradhurst was designated a Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) and received more than \$500,000 in funding from the New York State BOA Program. With this designation, the neighborhood will benefit from opportunities for revitalization and economic growth. Bradhurst's residents, many of whom have generational ties to the neighborhood, are vocal about the need for more youth-centered programming and investments that better serve the community. This sense of pride will be essential in ensuring that new developments benefit longstanding Bradhurst businesses and residents.

Bradhurst



◀ Notable Places



▲ Points of Interest

- Assessed Commercial Corridors
- Parks and Public Spaces
- Arts & Cultural Destinations
- Public Facilities

Neighborhood Events

- HCCI Day of Unity at Jackie Robinson Park
- Jackie Robinson Day Festival
- NYC Multicultural Festival
- Polo Grounds Family Day
- Ralph Rangel Houses Family Day
- Rucker Park Streetball

Merchant & Community Groups

- Bradhurst Merchants Association
- The Doe Fund
- Frederick Douglass Boulevard Community Garden
- Jackie Robinson Park Conservancy
- Madison Square Boys & Girls Club
- Polo Grounds Police Athletic League
- Street Corner Resources

KEY FINDINGS & OPPORTUNITIES

Strengths

- ▶ Convenient transportation access with multiple subway lines, bus routes, the Henry Hudson Parkway to the west, and Harlem River Drive to the east
- ▶ Available commercial storefront spaces offer a range in size and price that are suitable for a diverse mix of retail
- ▶ Significant historic landmarks like Holcombe Rucker Park and Polo Grounds and nearby attractions like The Hip Hop Museum and Yankee Stadium draw visitors from across the city
- ▶ Wide streets and sidewalks under the 155th Street Viaduct and on Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard create opportunities for community programming and events
- ▶ A high concentration of Black-owned businesses and mom-and-pop shops reflects the diversity of the neighborhood and contributes to a strong sense of community pride
- ▶ An abundance of parks and green spaces throughout Bradhurst offer opportunities for recreation and encourage shoppers to spend time in the commercial district during warmer months

Challenges

- ▶ Increasing commercial rents prevent merchants from providing affordable prices to customers and have forced some longstanding and new merchants to close their businesses
- ▶ Sanitation issues and illegal dumping on the sidewalk present challenges for maintaining corridor cleanliness and diminish the sense of community pride
- ▶ A lack of diversity in business types including healthy food options and sit-down restaurants discourages residents from shopping locally and reflects residents' health concerns
- ▶ Poor storefront conditions, empty lots, and a notably higher commercial vacancy rate than the city- and borough-wide averages discourage shoppers from spending time in the commercial district
- ▶ Community members have expressed concern over a lack of youth-centered businesses and activities given the significantly high youth population
- ▶ Open spaces around Macombs Triangle and under the 155th Street Viaduct are underutilized and lack programming





Opportunities

- ▶ Provide new recreational and employment opportunities for young people through programming and merchant partnerships
- ▶ Engage local business owners to grow and build the capacity of the Bradhurst Merchants Association, which will enable them to pool resources and advocate for increased protections for small businesses
- ▶ Activate underutilized space under the 155th Street Viaduct with community events that celebrate the neighborhood's history and draw residents to the commercial corridors
- ▶ Collaborate with city agencies, residents, and merchants to implement new sanitation programs and promote cleaner streets
- ▶ Launch district marketing initiatives that showcase the business offerings in the neighborhood for residents and visitors
- ▶ Improve connectivity to nearby neighborhoods by expanding waterfront access for residents and visitors
- ▶ Attract new business types to fill vacant storefronts and respond to local consumer demand
- ▶ Enhance community pride and increase perceptions of safety with beautification efforts, landscaping, and improved street lighting
- ▶ Install new wayfinding to foster stronger pedestrian connections to surrounding neighborhoods and highlight historic sites such as Holcombe Rucker Park and Polo Grounds
- ▶ Support entrepreneurs seeking to launch or grow their businesses by establishing new incubator spaces and connections to public and private resources

What's Next?

To address these key findings and opportunities, Avenue NYC Grants have been awarded by SBS to nonprofit organizations. For more information, visit: nyc.gov/avenuenyc

BUSINESS LANDSCAPE: BRADHURST

Business Inventory

302

Total Number of Storefronts

18.9%

Storefront Vacancy*

*Note: As of June 2024, New York City's 75 Business Improvement Districts have an average storefront vacancy rate of 12.8% and median storefront vacancy rate of 11.8% (LiveXYZ).

Storefront & Retail Mix



Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard has the highest storefront vacancy rate (22%) in the commercial district.

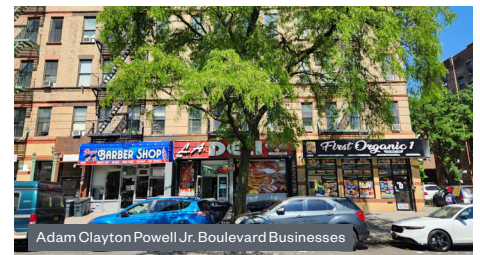
Business inventory and retail mix data were gathered by Harlem Congregations for Community Improvement through a comprehensive area inventory of storefront businesses located along 145th Street, Frederick Douglass Boulevard, Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard, Macombs Place, and 155th Street from October to December 2023.



Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard



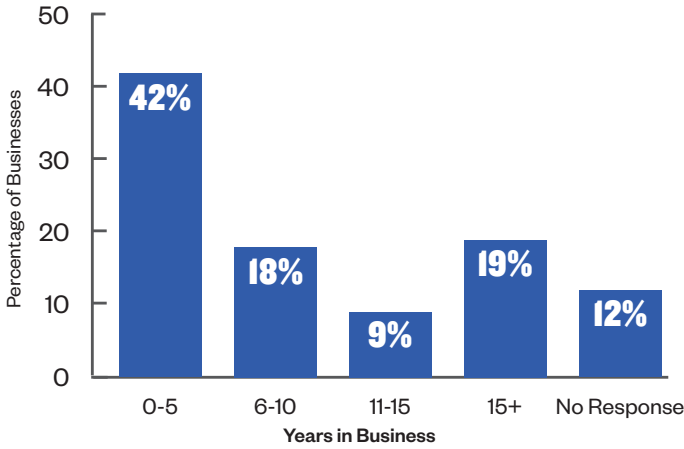
145th Street



Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard Businesses

What We've Heard from Bradhurst Merchants

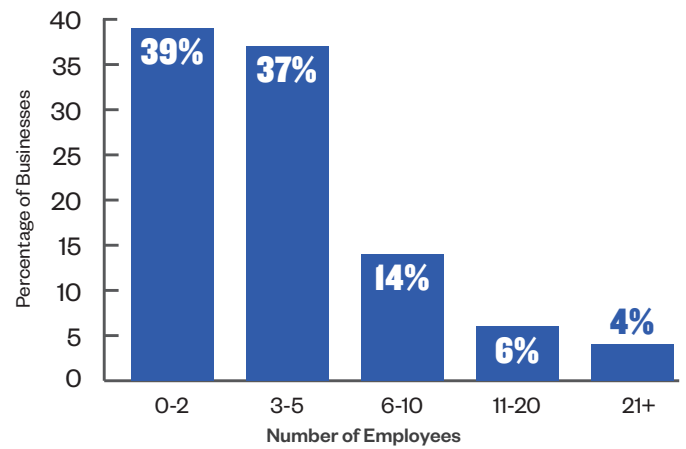
How many years have you been in business here?



10 Mean
7 Median
3 Mode

Note: The mean is the average of all responses, the median is the middle number when all responses are arranged in ascending order, and the mode is the most common response.

How many full-time employees do you have?



Do you own or rent your property?

91% Rent
2% Own
7% No Response

Are you a minority or woman-owned business?

70% Yes
23% No
7% No Response

Does your business currently have a website?

41% Yes
52% No
7% No Response

Are you currently a member of a merchants association?

11% Yes
74% No
15% No Response

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

30% Improved
24% Stayed the Same
33% Decreased
13% N/A or No Response

What kinds of resources would help you grow your business?

Resource	% Merchant Responses
Marketing Support	53%
Access to Financing	46%
New Equipment	27%
Lease Support	25%
Space Improvements	19%
Training for Staff	14%
Legal Services	11%
Regulatory Compliance Assistance	6%
Other	3%

Source: Based on 100 merchant surveys conducted by Harlem Congregations for Community Improvement in Fall 2023 and Winter 2024.

BUSINESS LANDSCAPE: BRADHURST

What We've Heard from Bradhurst Merchants and Shoppers

What do you like about the commercial district?

- "The diversity, history, and accessibility."
- "The area is always active, very convenient and is a transportation hub."
- "The community looks out for each other."
- "Friendly business owners, great service, long hours of operation."
- "The neighborhood offers many cultural opportunities, especially to local residents."
- "It's a historic neighborhood, the architecture and the green space."

What makes the Bradhurst commercial district unique?

- "The open space, it's not cluttered by skyscrapers like in the city."
- "Strong local community."
- "The way things liven up in the summer time."
- "Harlem has its own heartbeat."
- "The availability and variety of businesses."
- "Close to the George Washington and Triborough bridges; subway and buses are convenient."
- "I love that the neighborhood has maintained Black-owned historical businesses."

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

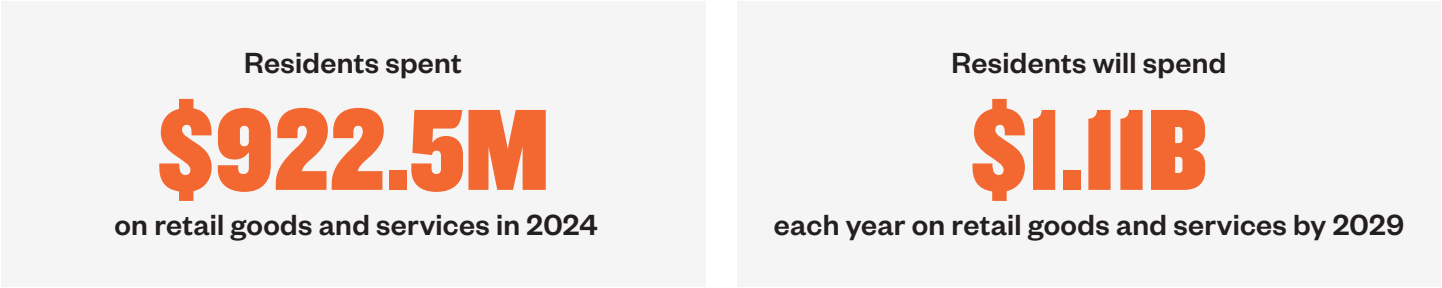
	% Merchant Response	% Consumer Response
▶ Safety	57%	54%
▶ Sanitation	43%	65%
▶ Community Events	33%	44%
▶ Landscaping/Beautification	32%	56%
▶ Merchant Collaboration	25%	26%
▶ Street Lighting	23%	36%
▶ Storefront Improvements	16%	30%
▶ More Open Space	15%	20%
▶ Graffiti Removal	13%	12%
▶ Transportation Improvements	11%	19%
▶ Other	4%	7%

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

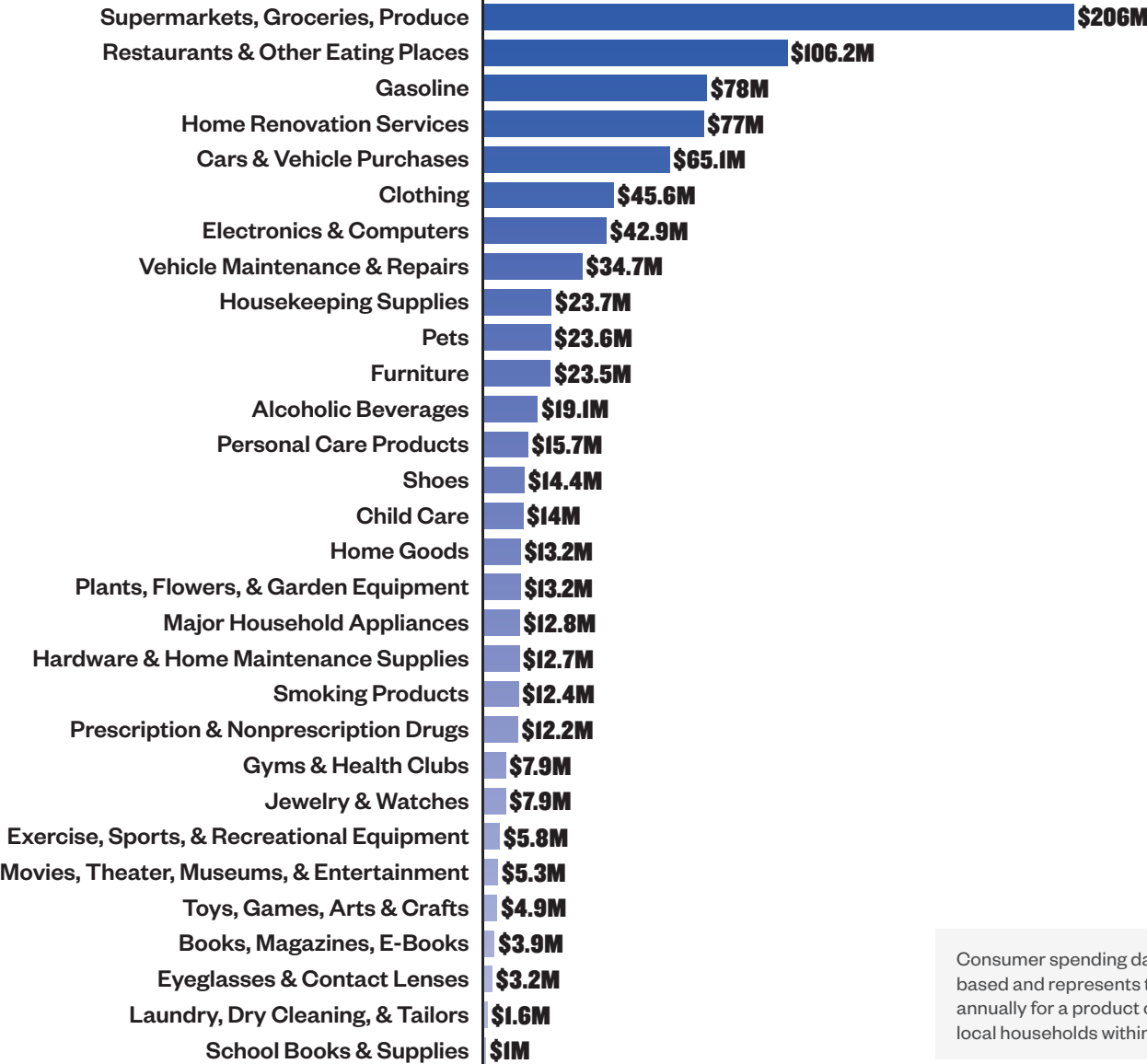
- "The scaffolding needs to go down so people can see the businesses."
- "Preserve mom and pops and Black-owned businesses."
- "More lighting is a must. More restrooms and areas to sit."
- "I'd like to see more recreational spaces for young people, especially given that there are so many families here."
- "Spreading more awareness of what businesses are in the area."
- "We need more community events, cultural activities, and support for artists."

Source: Based on 100 merchant surveys and 189 consumer surveys conducted by Harlem Congregations for Community Improvement in Fall 2023 and Winter 2024.

Bradhurst Retail Demand



2024 Consumer Spending



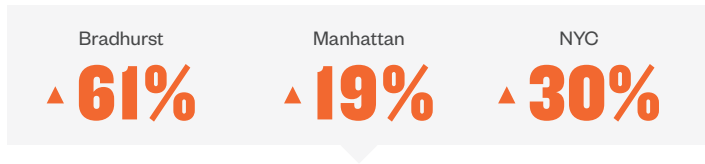
Consumer spending data is household-based and represents the amount spent annually for a product or service by all local households within the trade area.

Source: Esri forecasts for 2024 and 2029; Consumer Spending data are derived from the 2021 and 2022 Consumer Expenditure Surveys, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

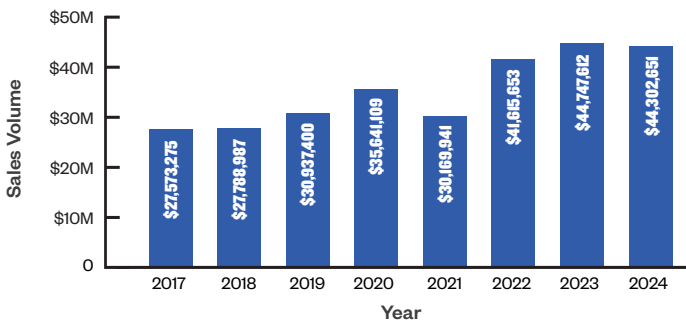
BUSINESS OUTLOOK

Business Trends

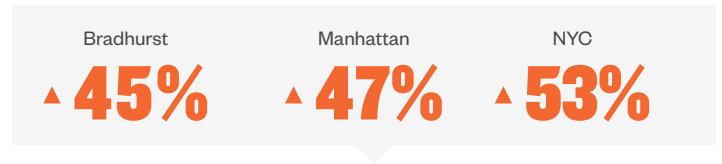
Change in Total Business Sales, 2017-2024



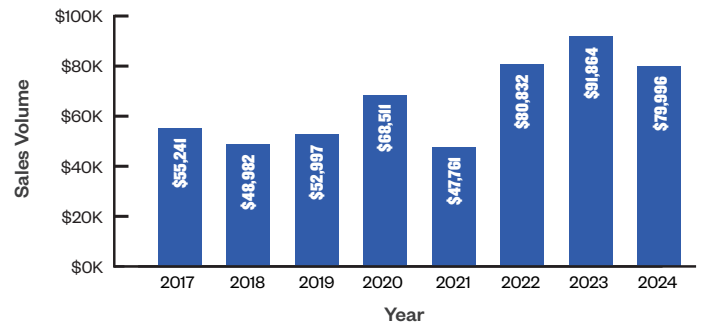
Bradhurst Total Business Sales



Change in Median Sales by Business, 2017-2024



Bradhurst Median Sales by Business



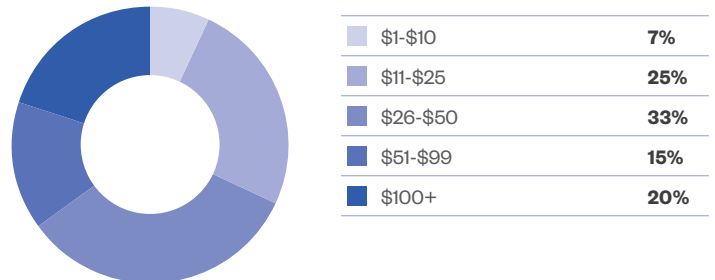
*Year 2024 reflects data gathered up until March 2024. Source: Division of Tax Policy, NYC Department of Finance

What We've Heard from Shoppers

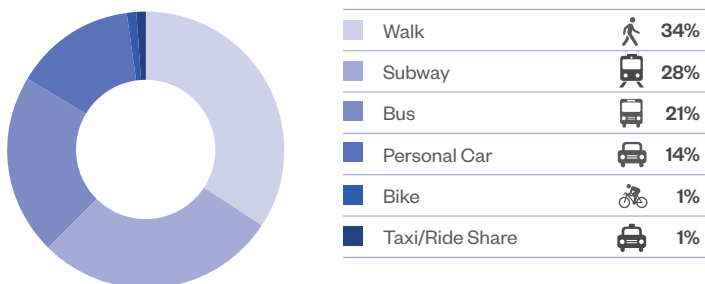
What additional types of businesses would you like to see in Bradhurst?

- ▶ A wider variety of full service restaurants 
- ▶ Clothing stores 
- ▶ Specialty food stores & healthy food options 
- ▶ Youth services & recreation 
- ▶ Cafes, bakeries, & juice bars 
- ▶ Art, music, & cultural spaces 

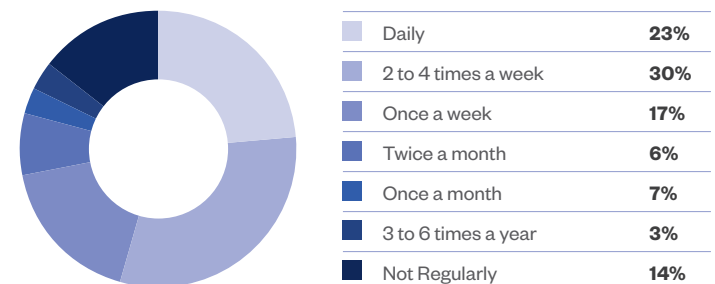
How much do you typically spend when you shop in Bradhurst?



How do you usually travel to Bradhurst?

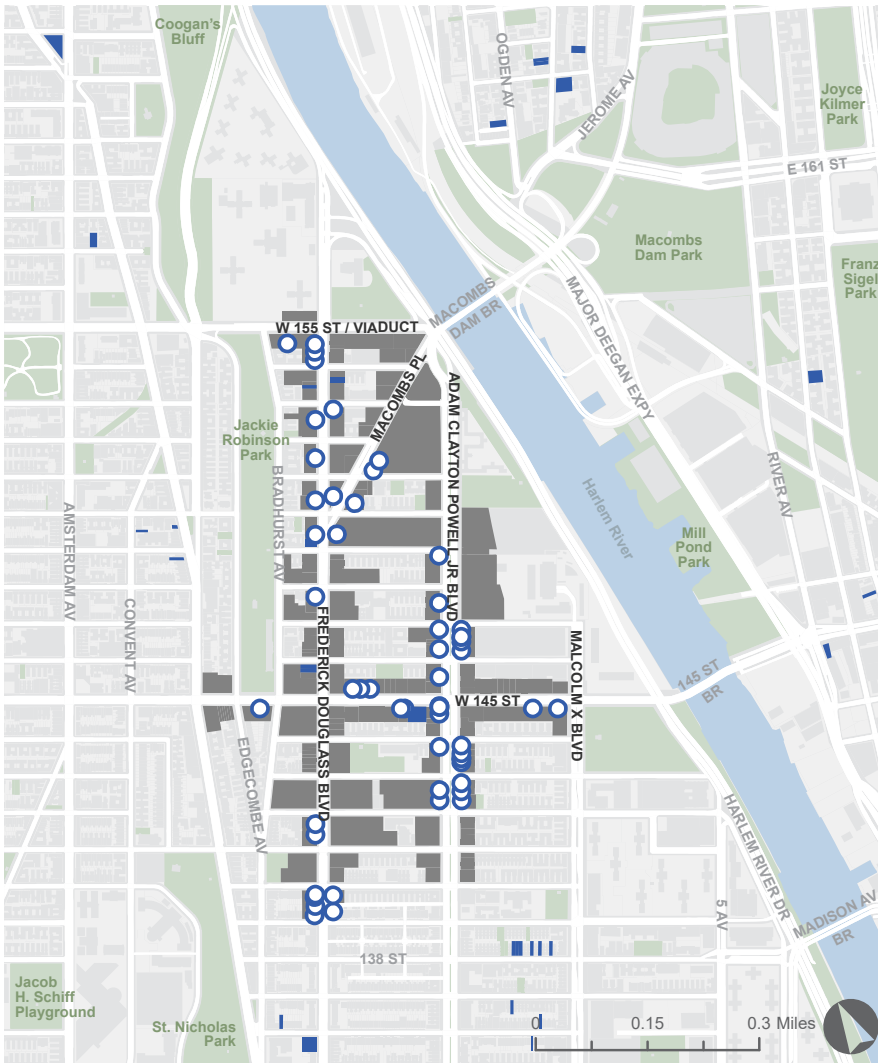


How often do you shop in Bradhurst?



Source: Based on 189 consumer surveys conducted by Harlem Congregations for Community Improvement in Fall 2023 and Winter 2024.

Storefront Vacancies

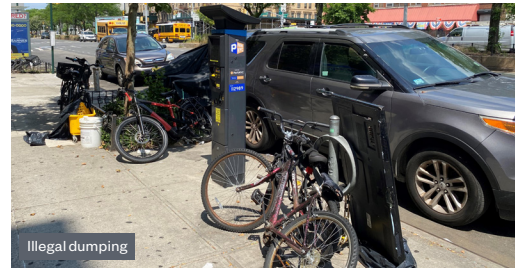


■ Vacant Lots
 ○ Vacant Storefronts
 ■ Parks & Open Spaces

An analysis of 302 storefronts along 145th Street, Frederick Douglass Boulevard, Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard, Macombs Place, and 155th Street revealed that 6% of storefronts are in poor condition, 30% are in average condition, and 64% are in good condition.

Streetscape Observations

- ▶ Dog waste, litter, and illegal dumping on the sidewalks create an unappealing shopping environment; additional trash cans and bottle recycling stations could promote cleaner streets
- ▶ Increased street lighting along 145th Street and Lenox Avenue would improve perceptions of safety and encourage more commercial activity at night
- ▶ Tree pits and gardens located near seating areas and benches throughout the neighborhood would benefit from regular maintenance and plantings
- ▶ Traffic congestion due to deliveries and double parking along 145th Street and Frederick Douglass Boulevard impede pedestrian mobility and safety
- ▶ Vacancies across the commercial district lead to poorly maintained storefronts and hinder retail continuity
- ▶ With low levels of traffic on 155th Street, the road below the Viaduct stands out as a promising site for physical and programmatic improvements to promote pedestrian activation



Illegal dumping



West 145th Street



Under the 156th Street Viaduct



Macombs Triangle



Cars parked on Frederick Douglass Boulevard Sidewalk

DATA APPENDIX

Study Area Boundaries

Assessed Commercial Corridors

Primary data on Bradhurst storefront businesses presented on pg. 6-9 was gathered along the following commercial corridors:

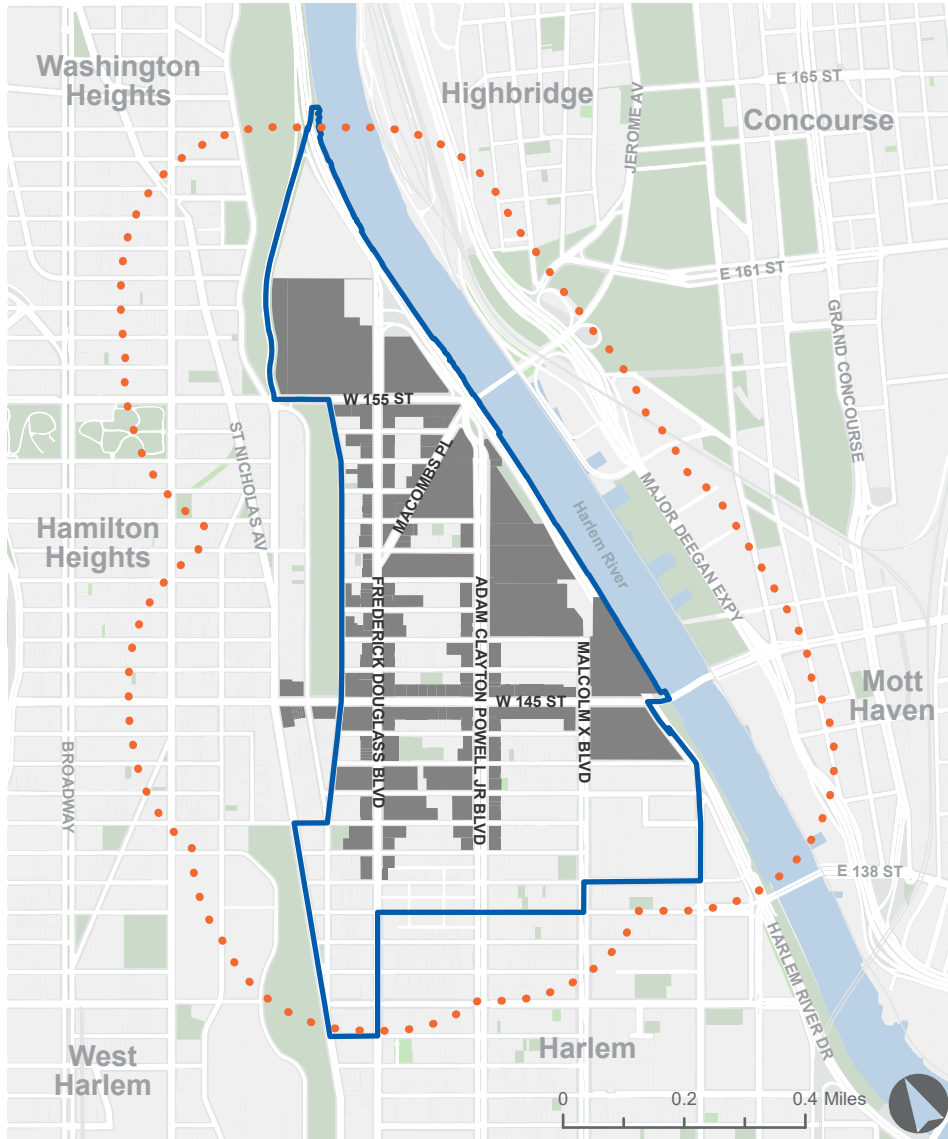
- ▶ 145th Street between St. Nicholas Avenue and Harlem River Drive
- ▶ Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard between 140th Street and Harlem River Drive
- ▶ Frederick Douglass Boulevard between 139th Street and Harlem River Drive
- ▶ Macombs Place between Frederick Douglass Boulevard and Harlem River Drive

Bradhurst Context Area

Demographic and employment data on pg. 12-14 represents the population within the Bradhurst context area.

Trade Area

Consumer spending data on pg. 9 corresponds to the 0.25 mile trade area.



Area Demographics

Total Population

52,473	Bradhurst
1,645,867	Manhattan
8,622,467	New York City

Population Density (per square mile)

105,606	Bradhurst
72,093	Manhattan
28,517	New York City

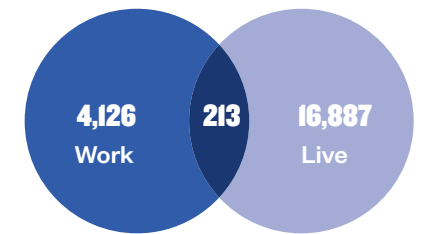
Average Household Size

2.31	Bradhurst
2.04	Manhattan
2.56	New York City

Car Ownership

21.2%	Bradhurst
22.1%	Manhattan
45.3%	New York City

Commuting Patterns



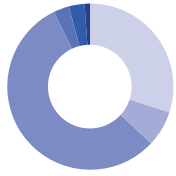
4,126 Work in Bradhurst, live elsewhere

213 Live & Work in Bradhurst

16,887 Live in Bradhurst, work elsewhere

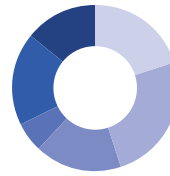
Area Demographics

Race/Background



	Bradhurst	Manhattan	NYC
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	30%	26%	29%
White alone	7%	46%	31%
Black or African American alone	56%	12%	21%
Asian alone	3%	12%	14%
Two or more races	3%	3%	3%
Some other race alone	1%	1%	1%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0%	0%	0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0%	0%	0%

Educational Attainment



	Bradhurst	Manhattan	NYC
12th Grade or Less, No Diploma	20%	12%	17%
High School Graduate	25%	12%	23%
Some College, No Degree	17%	10%	13%
Associate's Degree	6%	4%	7%
Bachelor's Degree	18%	32%	23%
Graduate or Professional Degree	14%	30%	17%

Population Age



	Bradhurst	Manhattan	NYC
Under 5 Years	7%	5%	6%
5-14 Years	10%	8%	11%
15-24 Years	11%	11%	12%
25-44 Years	32%	36%	31%
45-64 Years	29%	24%	25%
65+ Years	12%	17%	16%

Median Age

38.1	Bradhurst
38.5	Manhattan
37.5	New York City

Foreign-Born Population

24%	Bradhurst
28%	Manhattan
36%	New York City

Income

Median Household Income

\$46,987	Bradhurst
\$99,880	Manhattan
\$76,607	New York City

Pop. Below Poverty Line

28%	Bradhurst
16%	Manhattan
17%	New York City

Employment

Population in Labor Force

62%	Bradhurst
67%	Manhattan
63%	New York City

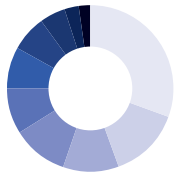
Unemployment*

14.4%	Bradhurst
6.8%	Manhattan
7.6%	New York City

*Note: As of May 2024, the unemployment rate is 4.4% for Manhattan and 4.9% for New York City (NYSDOL); updated neighborhood-level data for Bradhurst is not available.

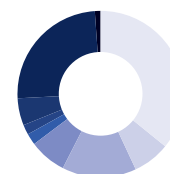
Local Jobs and Employment

Local Residents' Employment



Educational Services, Health Care, Social Assistance	31%
Accommodation, Food Services, Arts, Entertainment	14%
Retail Trade	11%
Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	11%
Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities	9%
Other Services	8%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	7%
Public Administration	5%
Construction	3%
Manufacturing	2%

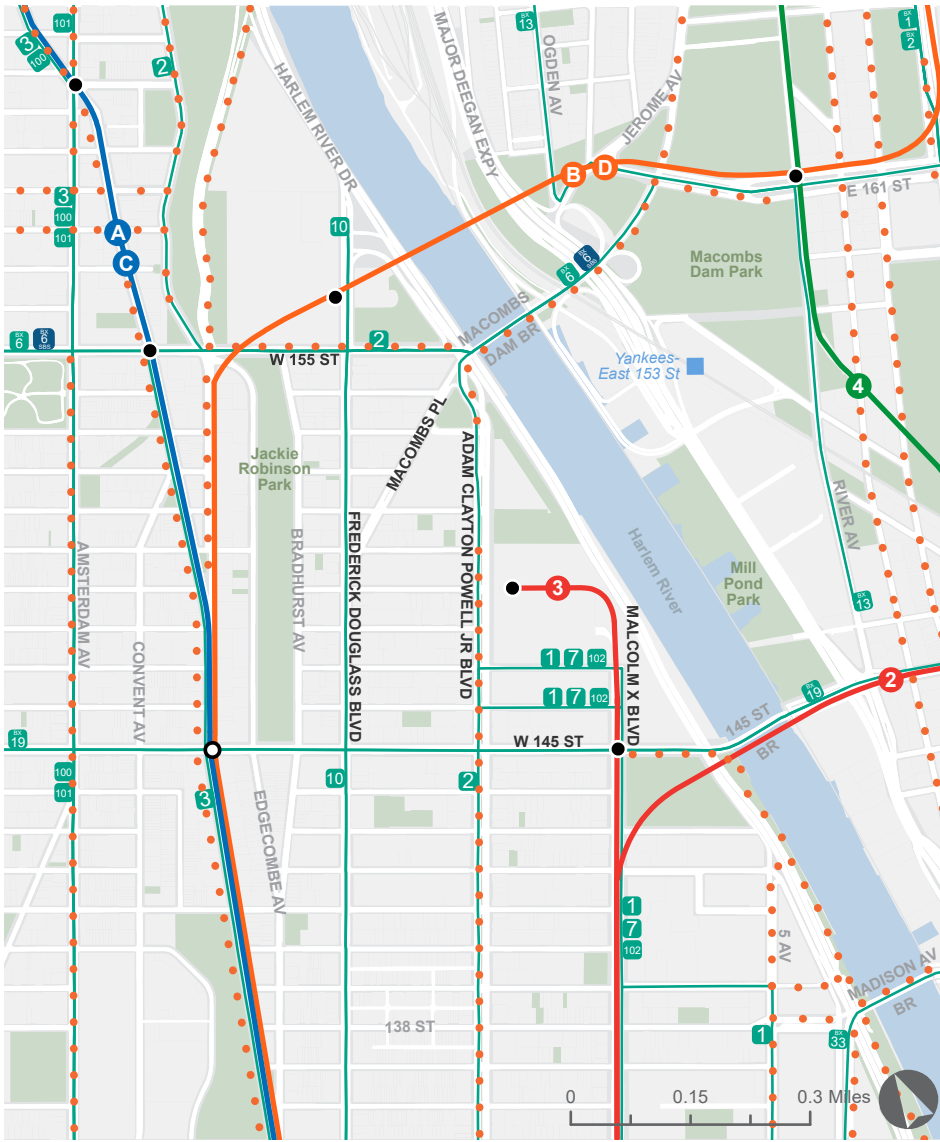
Jobs Located in Bradhurst



Educational Services, Health Care, Social Assistance	43%
Accommodation, Food Services, Arts, Entertainment	12%
Retail Trade	10%
Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	7%
Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities	0%
Other Services	6%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	9%
Public Administration	10%
Construction	3%
Manufacturing	0%

DATA APPENDIX

Bradhurst Transportation



▲ Bradhurst Transportation



Average Weekday Subway Ridership (2023)

14,613	A C B D	145 St
2,172	3	148 St
1,920	B D	155 St
1,890	3	145 St

Average Weekday Bus Ridership (2023)

9,524	Bx19
8,659	Bx6
8,381	M102
7,362	M1
7,328	M7
6,609	M2
3,328	M10

Average Daily Vehicular Traffic (2023)

25,254	W 155 Street from Harlem River Drive W to Macombs Dam Bridge
16,528	Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard from Central Park N to Macombs Place
13,904	W 145 Street from Riverside Drive to Harlem River Drive
13,183	Frederick Douglass Boulevard from W 125 to W 155 streets
12,798	Frederick Douglass Boulevard from W 155 Street to Harlem River Drive
5,159	Macombs Place from Frederick Douglass Boulevard to Macombs Dam Bridge
4,901	Lenox Avenue from W 145 to W 147 streets
2,878	W 147 Street from Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard to Lenox Avenue

Source: MTA 2023; NYS DOT, 2023 Annual Average Daily Traffic data.

Recent SBS Neighborhood Investments

- ▶ *Commercial Revitalization*, Avenue NYC multi-year grant of \$300,000 awarded to Harlem Congregations for Community Improvement, 2023-2026.
- ▶ *COVID-19 Commercial District Support*, Strategic Impact Grant of \$20,000 awarded to Frederick Douglass Boulevard Alliance, 2021.

Existing Plans & Studies

Manhattan Waterfront Greenway, NYC Economic Development Corporation, Ongoing.

Bradhurst Revitalization: BOA Step 2 Study, Harlem Congregations for Community Improvement, 2020.

Black-Owned Small Business Survivors of Business Gentrification in the Bradhurst Neighborhood of Harlem, New York, Malcolm Punter, 2019.

Vision Plan for a Resilient East Harlem, NYC Parks and NYC Mayor's Office of Recovery, 2019.

Harlem River Waterfront Study, NYC Department of City Planning, 2017.

Harlem/Morningside Heights Transportation Study, NYC Department of City Planning, 2005.

Sources

ESRI and Consumer Expenditure Surveys, Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2024 ESRI Retail Demand Outlook.

Metropolitan Transportation Authority, 2023. Average Weekday Subway Ridership and Average Monthly Bus Ridership.

NYS Department of Labor. May 2024. Unemployment Rate Rankings by County.

NYS Department of Transportation. 2023 Annual Average Daily Traffic, using Traffic Data Viewer.

NYC Department of Finance, Division of Tax Policy, using data from NYS Department of Taxation and Finance. Business sales are reported by tax year, which runs from March 1st to February 28th. Sales data are compiled from sales tax returns, which are rolled up by tax filer within a year, excluding returns with negative sales amounts. For each year, each tax filer is reported according to the address listed on their latest return. Large outliers were removed from the analysis, and the top 5% of filers from Manhattan and the top 1% of filers from the outer boroughs by sales were removed.

Live XYZ, NYC Storefront Data, June 2024. SBS Business Improvement Districts Trends Report, FY 2023.

U.S. Census Bureau. 2021. OnTheMap Application. Longitudinal-Employer Household Dynamics Program.

U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, using NYC Population FactFinder. Bradhurst Census Tracts: 214, 221.02, 230, 232, 234, 235.02, 236, 243.02, 259

Photo Credits: Harlem Congregations for Community Improvement: Dyenaba Laguda. National Dance Institute: Eduardo Patino. NYC Parks. NYC SBS: Shaine Stuhlmuller.

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 Bradhurst Commercial District Needs Assessment:

Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine
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Bradhurst Merchants
Bradhurst Shoppers and Residents