







ABOUT 161ST STREET - CONCOURSE

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

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.

moderate-income neighborhoods.

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

This CDNA features the commercial corridors of 161st Street, 165th Street, 167th Street, Morris Avenue, Sheridan Avenue, and River Avenue, and was conducted in partnership with the 161st Street Business Improvement District (BID) between September 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 **200 surveys** and various stakeholder meetings with neighborhood merchants, shoppers, workers, property owners, and residents.

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Background

Located in the southwest section of the Bronx, 161st Street-Concourse is home to many of the borough's major civic and cultural institutions. Key local destinations include Yankee Stadium, Bronx County Courthouse, Bronx Hall of Justice, Bronx Museum of the Arts, Bronx Terminal Market, The Hip Hop Museum, and the Bronx Children's Museum. The neighborhood intersects with the Grand Concourse, Concourse Village, Highbridge, and Melrose sections of the South Bronx.

The Bronx's key boulevard, the Grand Concourse, runs directly through the neighborhood and reflects the area's rich history. The Grand Concourse was designed by French engineer Louis Aloys Risse to connect different sections of the borough and was modeled on the Champs-Élysées in Paris. This development spurred the construction of new residential buildings, and the thoroughfare opened to traffic in 1909. The area soon became a destination for upwardly mobile Jewish and Italian immigrant families seeking more comfortable housing options compared to tenement apartments in Manhattan, and the Roosevelt administration would later refer to the area as "the Park Avenue of the Middle Class." In 1923 the Yankees built their new stadium on the western edge of the neighborhood, drawing more attention and further economic investment. Starting in the 1950s the area's demographics began to change, resulting in the neighborhood being home to primarily Black and Hispanic residents. With the rise of Urban Renewal, redlining, disinvestment, and white flight in the 1960s, this once thriving area began to decline. Urban decay would ultimately engulf the South Bronx by the 1970s, leading to suffering from abandoned buildings, arson, and crime. In the following decades, community restoration took place, led by residents and community-based organizations with the support of public investments. The 1990s and 2000s ushered in reconstruction of the Grand Concourse and later led the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission to designate the area as the Grand Concourse Historic District. The neighborhood's primary commercial corridors are 161st Street, 165th Street, and 167th Street. 161st Street sees the most foot traffic due to its proximity to the stadium and municipal buildings, and a section of the corridor is marketed and maintained by a Business Improvement District (BID). 165th Street is less dense, has a strong West African influence, and is home to the Bronx Museum of the Arts, while the highest concentration of businesses catering to the Hispanic/Latino community is on 167th Street. Jerome Avenue and the historic Grand Concourse serve as the main thoroughfares in the district.

Recent developments such as the construction of the new Yankee Stadium, the Jerome Avenue neighborhood plan, and the revitalization of the Bronx Terminal Market have brought additional investment to the neighborhood but also raised concerns about displacement.

Neighborhood Demographics

See more on page 16

The 161st Street-Concourse neighborhood is densely populated with approximately 74,110 residents and has historically been home to many immigrant communities. Currently, a large portion of the population is comprised of immigrants from the Dominican Republic and West African countries. 57% of residents are of Hispanic/Latino origin, 35% are Black, 4.5% are White, and 1.5% are Asian, with 32% of the residents living below the poverty line.

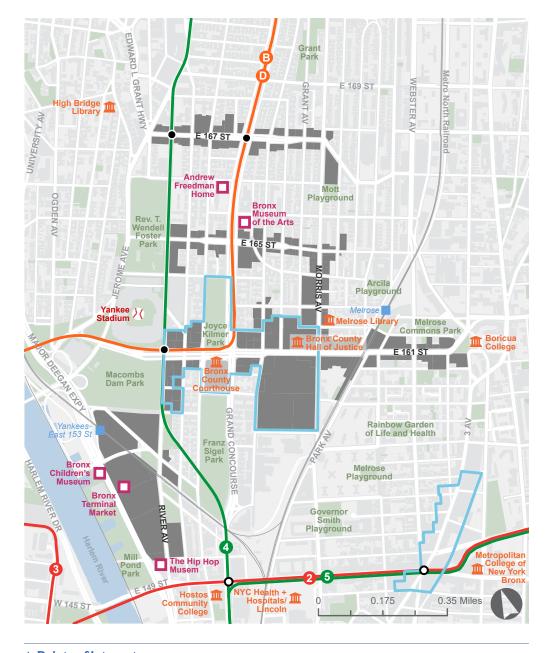
Future Opportunities

See more on page 5

Recent developments within the district highlight the value of the local history and culture. The redesign of 161st Street in the early 2000s has led to the creation of new public spaces, including Lou Gehrig Plaza. Other major redevelopments in the area include the \$300 million proposal for Bronx Point – a mixed-use development with 1,045 affordable housing units, The Hip Hop Museum, public spaces, performance spaces, and a movie theater. To capitalize on these investments in housing, cultural, and public spaces, future partnerships must prioritize quality-of-life issues, beautification of the district, and activation of current public spaces. Leveraging these investments and marketing the uniqueness of the Bronx Capitol District can help create a cohesive identity - bridging together the needs and characteristics of the residential, cultural, municipal, and sports institutions.

NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

161st Street - Concourse



■ Notable Places











▲ Points of Interest

Notable Places

Assessed Commercial Corridors

Parks and Public Spaces

M

Metro North Station

Business Improvement Districts

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Public Facilities

Neighborhood Events

Bronx Night Market

The Bronx Vegan Bazaar

Halloween Fun in the 161

Make Music New York

Movie Nights in Joyce Kilmer Park

Merchant & Community Groups

161st Street BID

Bridge Builders

BronxWorks

Bronx Independent Cinema Center

The Coachman Foundation

Friends of 4 Parks Alliance

NAICA

South Bronx United

3

KEY FINDINGS & OPPORTUNITIES

Strengths

- Access to various modes of public transportation, including the 4 train on Jerome Avenue, D train on the Grand Concourse, buses that run throughout the Bronx and Washington Heights, and a Metro North Railroad station
- Public spaces in the area provide multiple options to enjoy green space
- Home to prominent cultural and civic institutions including Yankee Stadium, Bronx Borough Hall, and Civil, Family, and Criminal Courts
- Growing number of emerging economic development projects in the district, including The Hip Hop Museum, the Bronx Children's Museum, and Stadium Tennis Center at Mill Pond Park
- ► High number of active nonprofit organizations that work to support the community, such as BronxWorks, NAICA, South Bronx United, Friends of 4 Parks Alliance, and Bronx Independent Cinema Center
- Major pedestrian foot traffic due to local attractions and retail centers such as the Bronx Terminal Market and Concourse Plaza

Challenges

- Sanitation issues such as graffiti and illegal dumping persist throughout the corridor, creating the appearance of a neglected neighborhood
- Some businesses only operate during the baseball season, leaving parts of the corridor dormant which negatively impacts year-round businesses
- Quality of life concerns such as illegal smoke shops, unlicensed street vending, and the use of illegal mopeds throughout the district create perceptions of unsafe conditions for residents and merchants
- Storefront conditions for many businesses on the outskirts of the district are in need of improvements

- Lack of diversity in business types forces residents to look outside of the district for goods and services
- Limited parking availability throughout the neighborhood is a concern for both residents and merchants
- High percentage of vacant storefronts across the major corridors gives the appearance of a neighborhood in decline
- Majority of businesses are minority-owned and can experience difficulty navigating language and cultural barriers, preventing them from accessing public support

















Opportunities

- ▶ Beautify and activate public spaces such as Joyce Kilmer Park and Lou Gehrig Plaza, which are centrally located within the district and highly visible to the community
- Cultivate stronger relationships with property owners and merchants to fill vacant storefronts and attract new businesses to the community that respond to consumer needs
- ▶ Develop a district marketing strategy to unify and promote the corridor's identity as the Bronx Capitol District
- ➤ Foster stronger relationships with institutional anchors such as the New York Yankees, prominent merchants, community organizations, and government centers to guide future economic development efforts
- Enhance supplemental sanitation services to identify, report, and address sanitation and quality of life concerns such as illegal dumping and graffiti

- Explore the expansion of the 161st Street BID to increase capacity to clean, promote, and enrich the district beyond 161st Street
- Conduct outreach to share public and private resources and technical assistance with local businesses outside of the BID boundaries
- Strengthen relationships and improve communication between neighborhood merchants and local NYPD precinct to address concerns about perceptions of safety

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: 161ST STREET - CONCOURSE

Business Inventory

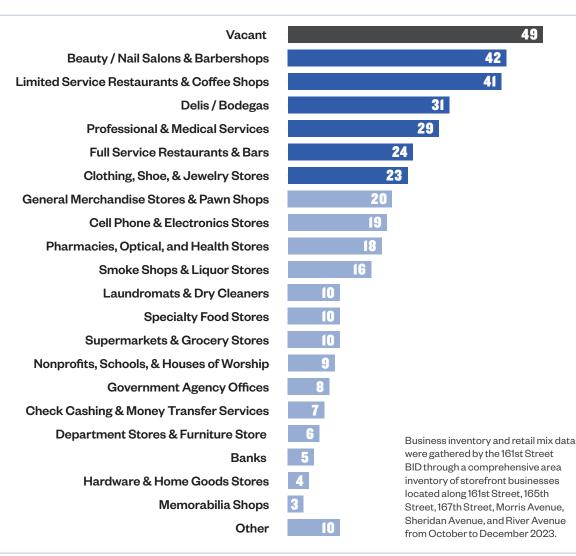
Total Number of Storefronts

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).

49

Storefront & Retail Mix



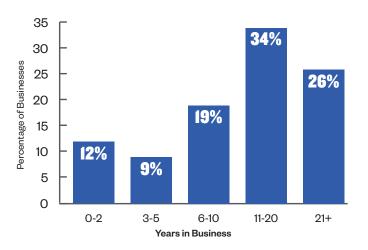




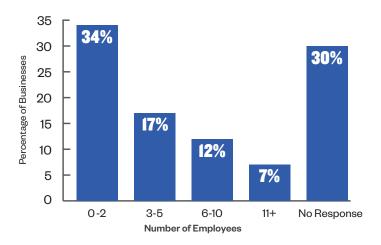


What We've Heard from IGIst Street - Concourse Merchants

How many years have you been in business here?



How many full-time employees do you have?



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

Mean

Median

Mode

Do you own or rent your property?

Rent

Does your business currently have a website?

Yes

No Response

Are you a minority or woman-owned business?

Yes

Does your business currently use social media?

No Response

If yes, are you certified as an M/WBE?

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

Improved

Stayed the

Same

Decreased

No Response

BUSINESS LANDSCAPE: 161ST STREET - CONCOURSE

What We've Heard from 161st Street - Concourse Merchants and Shoppers

What do you like about the commercial district?

"The district is a transportation hub."

"Many of the community members have been here for a long time so there is a strong sense of unity."

"Active community, diverse, greenery, public spaces."

"Sense of community despite increases in rents across the district."

"Good foot traffic through the area."

"There are lots of great/helpful people. Close to buses, close to 3rd Avenue and the city."

What makes the commercial district unique?

"Fans/people from around the world visit the district."

"Landscaping is unique in the neighborhood."

"The neighborhood is very multicultural - we are all mixed."

"Yankee Stadium, near all the courthouses, and the center of what goes on politically and business-wise in the Bronx."

"The history and culture of the South Bronx is unlike any other neighborhood in the world."

"The people connect and care about one another."

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

Response	Response
90%	50%
83%	72 %
67%	40%
65%	17%
46%	70%
13%	48%
11%	33%
10%	30%
8%	17%
6%	27 %
8%	21%
	83% 67% 65% 46% 13% 11% 10% 8%

% Merchant

% Consumer

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

"Places people want to eat and shop in. There's not much to offer, mostly lots of the same kinds of stores/delis offering the same things."

"Traffic along 161st Street is horrendous. Underpass needs beautification, and pavement of the streets/ sidewalks needs resurfacing."

"More green spaces, more trees, and a pedestrian shopping mall that prohibits car traffic."

"More public parking options not taken up by cops/court employees."

"More prompt response from law enforcement."

"More coffee shops, restaurants, and stores that cater to more than Yankee game clients."

BUSINESS OUTLOOK

161st Street - Concourse Retail Demand

Residents spent

\$3.52B

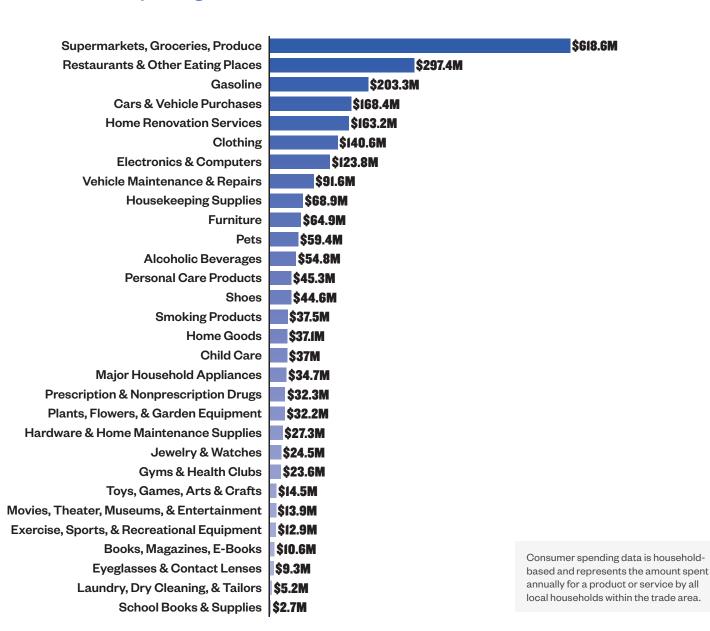
on retail goods and services in 2024

Residents will spend

\$4.16B

each year on retail goods and services by 2029

2024 Consumer Spending



BUSINESS OUTLOOK

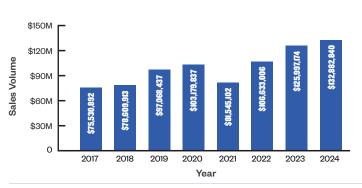
Business Trends

Change in Total Business Sales, 2017-2024

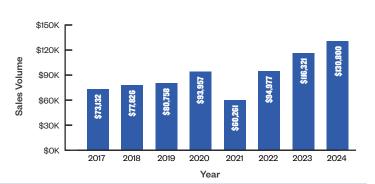
Change in Median Sales by Business, 2017-2024



161st Street - Concourse Total Business Sales



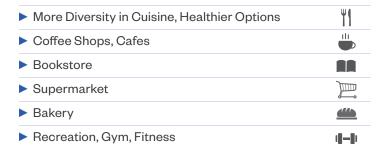
161st Street - Concourse Median Sales by Business



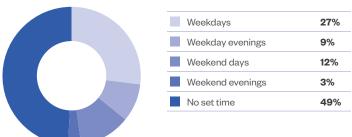
^{*}Year 2024 reflects data gathered up until March 2024. Source: Division of Tax Policy, NYC Department of Finance

What We've Heard from Shoppers

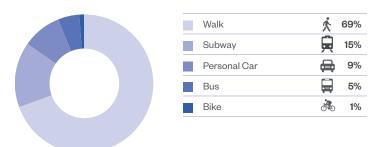
What additional types of businesses would you like to see in 161st Street - Concourse?



When do you usually shop in 161st Street - Concourse?



How do you usually travel to 161st Street - Concourse?

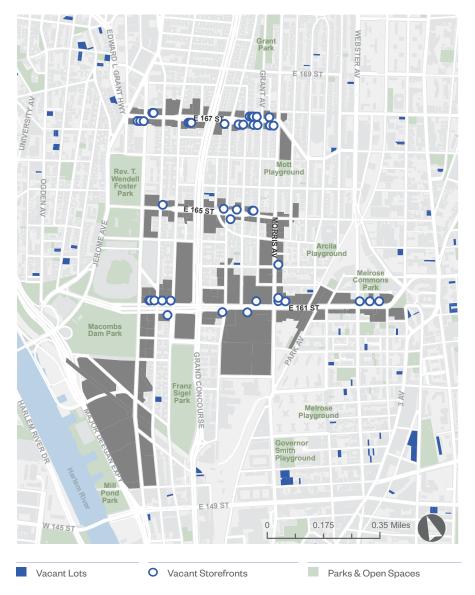


How often do you shop in 161st Street - Concourse?



PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Storefront Vacancies











An analysis of 394 storefronts along 161st Street, 165th Street, and 167th Street revealed that 34% of storefronts are in poor condition, 54% are in average condition, and 12% are in good condition.

Streetscape Observations

- Litter accumulation occurs at major intersections of the district, specifically at 161st Street and River Avenue.
- Lighting under the elevated 4 train is inadequate and creates the perception of unsafe conditions.
- ▶ Tree pits accumulate litter and are often taken over by street vendors throughout the neighborhood.
- Lou Gehrig Plaza and Joyce Kilmer Park are well-maintained by the city, and both have untapped potential for activations due to their size and cleanliness.
- Sidewalks on 167th Street between River Avenue and the Grand Concourse are congested with vendors.

- Empty shopping carts are a constant presence on River Avenue between 151st and 161st streets due to the proximity of the Bronx Terminal Market, which results in dangerous and unattractive streetscape conditions.
- ► Lack of foot traffic and poor lighting have led to a proliferation of graffiti on buildings on River Avenue between 165th and 167th streets, creating the perception of a neglected district.
- Lack of parking surrounding the NYPD 44th Precinct on 169th Street can be attributed to the large presence of police cars and personal police vehicles, creating disorder and inconvenience for residents.

DATA APPENDIX

Study Area Boundaries

Assessed Commercial Corridors

Primary data on 161st Street - Concourse storefront businesses presented on pg. 6-9 was gathered along the following commercial corridors:

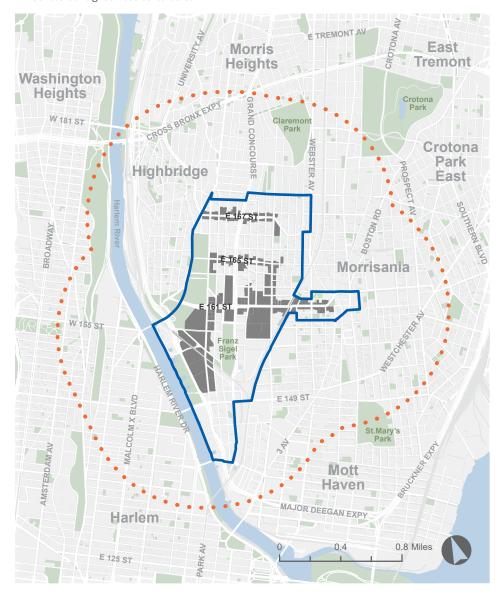
- ▶ 161st Street between River and Elton avenues
- ▶ 167th Street between River and College avenues
- ▶ River Avenue between 150th and 161st streets
- 161st Street Concourse Context Area

Demographic and employment data on pg. 12-13 represents the population within the 161st St-Concourse neighborhood context area.

- ▶ 165th Street between River and College avenues
- ► Morris Avenue between 161st and 165th streets
- ► Sheridan Avenue between 161st and 163rd streets

· Trade Area

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



Area Demographics

Total Population

74,110	161st Street - Concourse
1,443,229	Bronx
8,622,467	New York City

Population Density (per square mile)

69,278	161st Street - Concourse
33,902	Bronx
28,517	New York City

Average Household Size

2.54	161st Street - Concourse
2.64	Bronx
2.56	New York City

Car Ownership

23 .	9%	161st Street - Concourse
39.8	%	Bronx
45.3	%	New York City

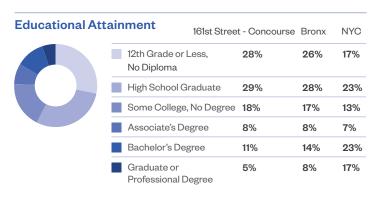
Commuting Patterns



7,925	Work in 161st Street - Concourse, live elsewhere
517	Live & Work in 161st Street - Concourse
19,773	Live in 161st Street - Concourse, work elsewhere

Area Demographics

Race/Background 161st Street - Concourse Bronx NYC Hispanic or Latino 56% 57% 29% (of any race) White alone 5% 9% 31% Black or African 35% 28% 21% American alone Asian alone 4% 14% Two or more races **2**% 3% Some other race alone 1% 1% American Indian and 0% 0% Alaska Native alone Native Hawaiian and 0% 0% 0% Other Pacific Islander



Population Age

161st Stree	et - Concourse	Bronx	NYC
Under 5 Years	6%	7%	6%
5-14 Years	14%	14%	11%
15-24 Years	14%	14%	12%
25-44 Years	29%	28%	31%
45-64 Years	25%	24%	25%
65+ Years	13%	13%	16%

Median Age

35.9	161st Street - Concourse
35	Bronx
37.5	New York City

Foreign-Born Population

35 %	161st Street - Concourse
34%	Bronx
36%	New York City

Income

Median Household Income

\$39,766	161st Street - Concourse
\$47,036	Bronx
\$76,607	New York City

Pop. Below Poverty Line

33 %	161st Street - Concourse
27%	Bronx
17%	New York City

Employment

Population in Labor Force

58 %	161st Street - Concourse
58%	Bronx
63 %	New York City

Unemployment*

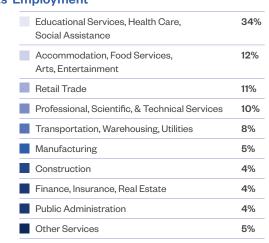
10.8%	161st Street - Concourse
11.2%	Bronx
7.6%	New York City

^{*}Note: As of May 2024, the unemployment rate is 6.3% for the Bronx and 4.9% for New York City (NYSDOL); updated neighborhood-level data for 161st Street-Concourse is not available

Local Residents' Employment

Local Jobs and Employment





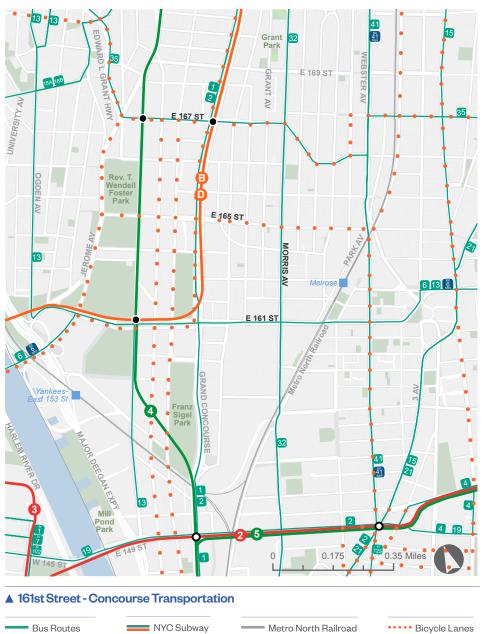
Jobs Located in 161st Street - Concourse



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Educational Services, Health Care, Social Assistance	35%
Accommodation, Food Services, Arts, Entertainment	7%
Retail Trade	14%
Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	7 %
Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities	0%
Manufacturing	2%
Construction	2%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	5%
Public Administration	24%
Other Services	1%

DATA APPENDIX

161st Street - Concourse Transportation



Average Weekday Bus Ridership (2023)	
13,117	Bx1/2
9,524	Bx19
8,659	Bx6 Local/SBS
6,939	Bx41 Local/SBS
5,978	Bx3
5,432	Bx35
5,242	Bx21
4,760	Bx13
3,915	Bx15
2,453	Bx32

Average Daily Vehicular Traffic (2023)

22,915	Grand Concourse from 161st to
	167th streets

22,402	161st Street from Grand Concourse
	to Melrose Avenue

20,306	161st Street from River Avenue
	to Grand Concourse

13,763	167th Street from Jerome
13,703	to Webster avenues

0.705	165th Street from Jerome Avenue

w/us	
8,795	to Grand Concourse

8,685	165th Street from Grand Concourse
0,000	to Morris Avenue

Pedestrian Counts

161st Street from Grand Concourse to Sheridan Avenue

2,822	Weekday Morning
5,050	Weekday Afternoon
1,287	Weekend

Average Weekday Subway Ridership (2023)

16,043	4 BD	161st Street/Yankee Stadium
5,807	4	167th Street
4,926	BD	167th Street

Recent SBS Neighborhood Investments

- Commercial Revitalization, Avenue NYC multi-year grant of \$300,000 awarded to the 161st Street BID, 2023-2026.
- Small BID Support, Small BID grant of \$75,000 awarded to the 161st Street BID, 2024.
- Small BID Support, Small BID grant awarded of \$100,000 to the 161st Street BID, 2023.

Current & Planned Developments

Bronx Point

A mixed use development with affordable housing, The Hip Hop Museum, a waterfront park, community space, and local retail.

Lower Concourse Infrastructure Investment Strategy

A \$194 million City investment to provide open space, create new connections to the waterfront, and support mixed-income housing in the Lower Concourse neighborhood.

Renovation of the Bronx Museum of the Arts

This renovation will seamlessly unite the Museum's buildings into one recognizable campus, create a continuous and fully accessible gallery loop, reorient the main entrance to the highly visible corner of 165th St and Grand Concourse, and add a new triple-height lobby space with an adjoining cafe.

Existing Plans & Studies

Jerome Avenue Neighborhood Plan, NYC Department of City Planning, 2021.

South BronxLand and Community Resource Trust, WESTAY/Nos Quedamos & NYC Mayor's Office of Environmental Remediation, 2020.

161st Street / River Avenue Rezoning: The Bronx Civic Center, NYC Department of City Planning, 2009.

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.

 $Live\ XYZ, NYC\ Store front\ Data, June\ 2024.\ SBS\ Business\ Improvement\ Districts\ Trends\ Report, FY\ 2023.$

NYC Department of Transportation. 2023. Bi-Annual Pedestrian Counts.

 $U.S. Census \, Bureau. \, 2021. \, On The Map \, Application. \, Longitudinal-Employer \, Household \, Dynamics \, Program. \, Application \, Control of the Control$

U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, using NYC Population FactFinder. Concourse Census Tracts: 59.02, 61, 63.01, 63.02, 141, 173, 175, 177.01, 179.01, 181.01, 181.02, 183.02, 195, 197

 $Photo\ Credits: Wikimedia\ Commons: randreu.\ 161 st\ Street\ BID:\ Michael\ Torres,\ Green\ Canvas\ Productions.\ NYC\ SBS:\ Eliza\ Jacobson.\ Torres,\ Green\ Canvas\ Productions.\ NYC\ SBS:\ Eliza\ Dacobson.\ Torres,\ Green\ Canvas\ Productions.\ Torres,\ Gre$

161st Street-Concourse

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 161st Street - Concourse Commercial District Needs Assessment:

Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson NYC Council Member Althea Stevens Bronx Community Board 4 161st Street BID 161st Street - Concourse Merchants 161st Street - Concourse Shoppers and Residents