



PORT RICHMOND STATEN ISLAND

Commercial District Needs Assessment



careers
businesses
neighborhoods



La Colmena
Staten Island Business Outreach Center



ABOUT PORT RICHMOND



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

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

This CDNA features the **Port Richmond Avenue** and **Forest Avenue** commercial corridors in **Staten Island**, and was conducted in partnership with **La Colmena** between July 2023 and June 2024. Merchant surveys were also conducted with the assistance of **Staten Island Business Outreach Center** and the **Forest Avenue BID**.

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

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Background

Port Richmond is one of Staten Island's historic communities along the North Shore's waterfront. Bordered by the Kill Van Kull, this neighborhood was a hub for the Staten Island Whaling Company in the 19th century and home to industrial manufacturers including lumber yards, linseed oil processing, and cloth dyeing in the 20th century. Port Richmond has had different waves of immigration throughout its history, including large Dutch, Irish, and Italian communities, and more recent arrivals have contributed to a large Hispanic and West African population. Since then, there have been shifts in the profile of the communities and businesses that call Port Richmond home.

The neighborhood's main commercial corridors of Port Richmond Avenue and Forest Avenue reflect decades of transitions and survival. Disinvestment in public transportation since the 1950s has impacted the vibrancy of these neighborhoods, including the discontinuation of ferry service to New Jersey in 1962 and the end of the Staten Island Rapid Transit passenger and freight rail line in 1953. Starting in the 1930s, Port Richmond was graded as hazardous for banks and mortgages based on a discriminatory practice known as "redlining" that resulted in public and private capital being redirected away from the neighborhood because it was comprised of Black and immigrant communities. These policies have had intergenerational impacts on Port Richmond, including segregation and the prevention of generational wealth development through property ownership and new business development.

Port Richmond Avenue was once the premier shopping district on the island. It was referred to as the "5th Avenue of Staten Island" until commercial activity migrated south due to the construction of the Staten Island Mall in the 1970s. Today, it is a destination for Hispanic goods and services, including authentic Mexican food, products, and produce. Forest Avenue's diverse built environment houses long-standing retail businesses, healthcare practices, restaurants, community organizations, and social services. Both commercial corridors are lined with multigenerational family-run businesses who make it a point to keep their services accessible by offering translation and affordable professional services that support the largely immigrant population.

Neighborhood Demographics

See more on page 12

Port Richmond has a population of 20,354. 78% of the local population own cars, which is lower than that of Staten Island (85%). Spanish words will serenade you as you step foot in Port Richmond. 40% of the population identifies as Hispanic, with 45% of that number identifying as Mexican and 29% as Puerto Rican. More than 24% of the total population are foreign-born, which is similar to Staten Island overall but lower than that of New York City. In the last decade, there has been a 4% increase in the Asian population.

Future Opportunities

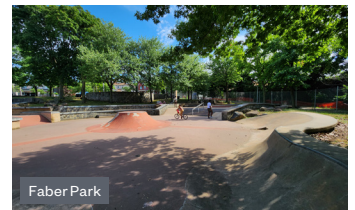
See more on page 5

Multiple public and private efforts are underway to guide the ongoing revitalization of Port Richmond. The North Shore 2030 report, developed in 2012 and updated based on ongoing stakeholder engagement, outlined much of the ongoing infrastructure and capital investments in progress in Port Richmond. The report's community-driven strategies include fostering community centers and job generation, reconnecting people with the waterfront, and improving mobility. The Port Richmond Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) study builds on the work of North Shore 2030 by outlining land use and zoning changes to establish a mixed-use district along Richmond Terrace, improve resiliency for coastal flood risk, and develop transportation improvements in the neighborhood. The resulting BOA designation enables Port Richmond to access additional state and federal funding for revitalization efforts. In 2019, the MTA launched an effort to analyze public transit alternatives for the North Shore, with the plans anchored in Port Richmond. Other recent public projects have explored strategies to foster more mixed-use construction and develop proactive tidal and coastal flooding mitigation in the neighborhood. Along with these public investments, Port Richmond stands to benefit from the ongoing dedicated efforts led by local merchants, residents, and community organizations to continue to enhance the Port Richmond commercial district.

Port Richmond



◀ Notable Places



▲ Points of Interest

- Assessed Commercial Corridors
- Parks and Public Spaces
- Notable Places
- Public Facilities

Neighborhood Events

- Cinco de Mayo Festival
- Memorial Day Parade
- Mexican Independence Day Parade
- Port Richmond Holiday Tree Lighting
- Forest Avenue St. Patrick's Day Parade

Merchant & Community Groups

- Camelot
- Catholic Charities of Staten Island
- Community Health Action of Staten Island
- El Centro del Inmigrante
- Historic Port Richmond Preservation Association

- Make the Road New York
- Northfield Community LDC
- Port Richmond North Shore Alliance
- Project Hospitality
- The Salvation Army Port Richmond Corps

KEY FINDINGS & OPPORTUNITIES

Strengths

- ▶ Home to an entrepreneurial multigeneration immigrant community showcased through the dining options, specialty stores, and professional businesses that offer culturally relevant services
- ▶ Dedicated community-based organizations offer social services and are devoted to revitalizing the neighborhood through marketing, events, and business support
- ▶ Rich neighborhood history and preserved historic landmarks
- ▶ Hub for immigrant services such as language classes, OSHA training, and other resources for people from across the borough and New York City
- ▶ Street parades and cultural festivals throughout the year celebrate the unique cultural diversity of the neighborhood
- ▶ Businesses have a solid base of clients committed to shopping locally, and these relationships transcend beyond owner-customer relations to friendships
- ▶ Waterfront location is an untapped potential for more recreational spaces
- ▶ Business owners collaborate with community-based organizations to help them navigate government services despite skepticism and concerns about changing immigration policies

Challenges

- ▶ Port Richmond commuters face some of the longest commutes to work in the city. A significant portion of the community relies on public transit or alternative modes to get around
- ▶ Poor perceptions of safety at night due to inadequate lighting, low storefront activity, and low foot traffic
- ▶ Inconsistent business hours result in storefront gates being down at odd hours and an appearance of high vacancy rates
- ▶ Considerable traffic congestion during peak hours along Forest Avenue
- ▶ There is a strong demand for small businesses that offer arts and crafts, entertainment, and recreational options
- ▶ Merchants experience language and cultural barriers to accessing business support programs and navigating government regulations
- ▶ Despite local community efforts to keep the neighborhood clean, there is still a high volume of litter throughout Port Richmond Avenue
- ▶ Mistrust between older generations of residents and newer immigrant-owned businesses affects economic activity in the area





Opportunities

- ▶ Host art and cultural community events to attract shoppers and highlight the neighborhood’s rich history and culture
- ▶ Connect merchants to available business support services in the language that they prefer and in a culturally relevant manner
- ▶ Create programs that focus on street cleaning and beautification, and launch a creative campaign to keep the streets clean and brighten them at night
- ▶ Develop a district marketing campaign that encourages residents to shop locally and promotes the district to a wider audience
- ▶ Work with merchants and property owners to develop a storefront improvement program along Port Richmond Avenue
- ▶ Explore creative uses of vacant storefronts that would allow for communal activities, events, and pop-up shops
- ▶ Partner with city agencies to explore solutions to parking challenges and traffic congestion
- ▶ Attract new types of businesses to diversify the commercial offerings of the district in areas where there is lower foot traffic and vacant spaces
- ▶ Foster stronger connections between different local cultural communities and build bridges between long-standing residents and newer businesses

Want to Learn More?

SBS offers a range of grant programs to help community-based organizations strengthen and revitalize commercial districts.

For more information, visit: nyc.gov/neighborhoods

BUSINESS LANDSCAPE: PORT RICHMOND

Business Inventory

392

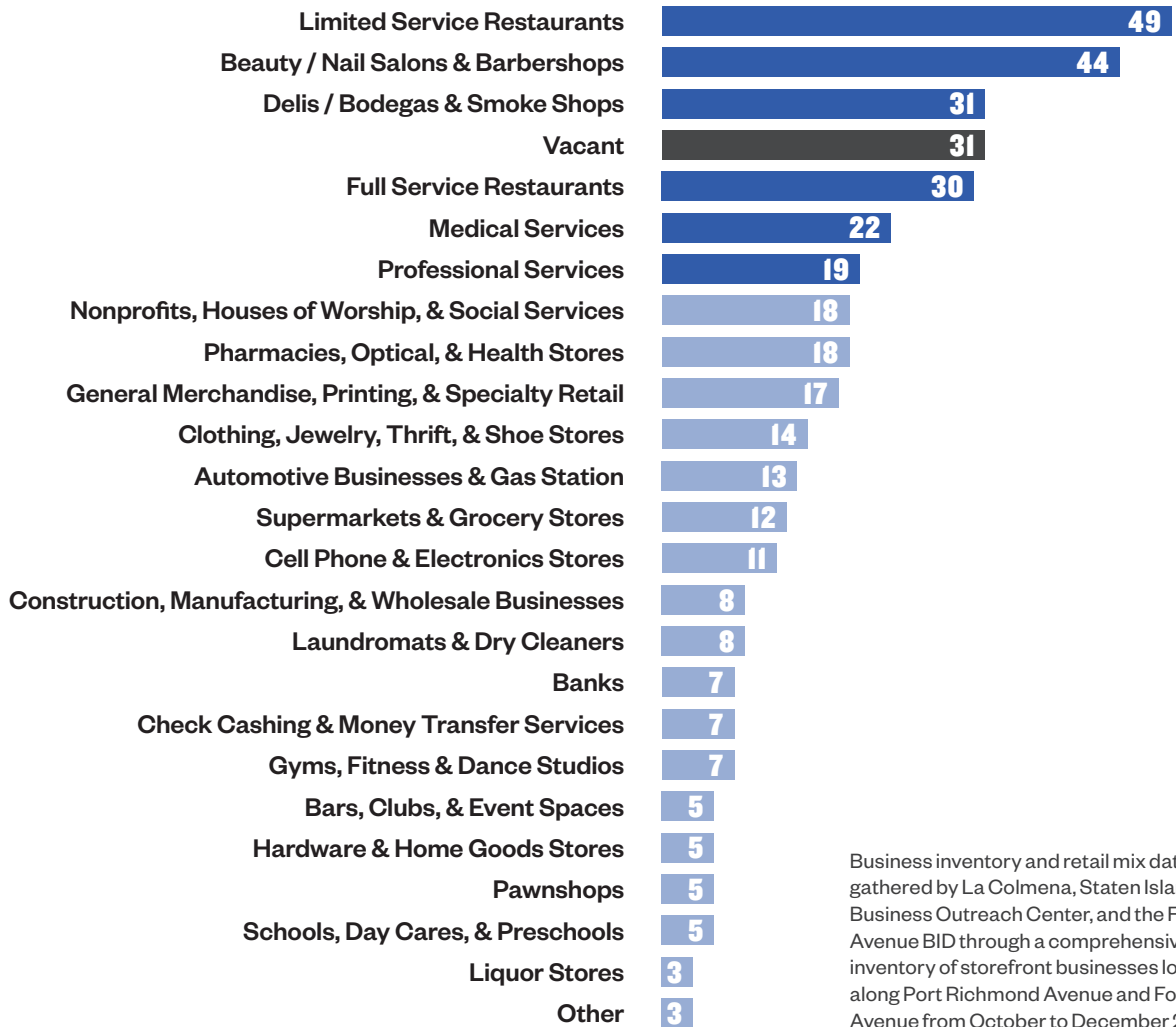
Total Number of Storefronts

7.9%

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

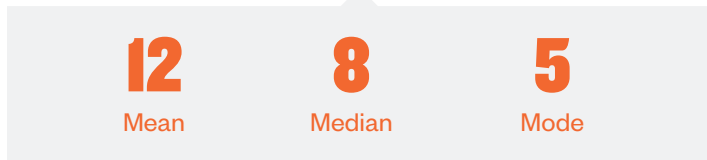
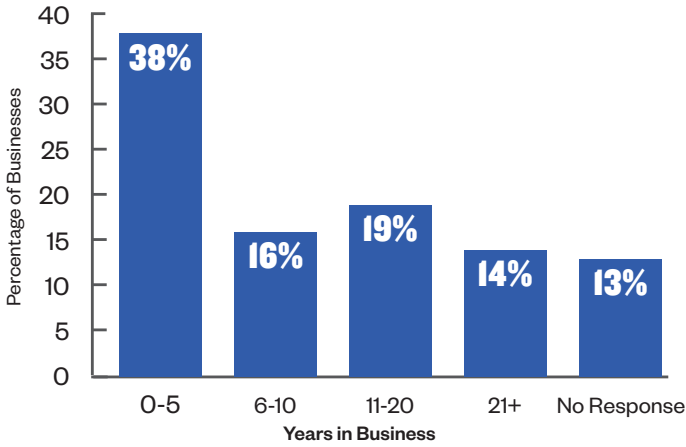


Business inventory and retail mix data were gathered by La Colmena, Staten Island Business Outreach Center, and the Forest Avenue BID through a comprehensive area inventory of storefront businesses located along Port Richmond Avenue and Forest Avenue from October to December 2023.



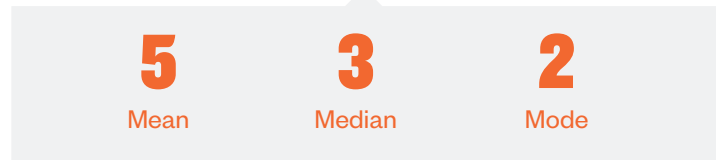
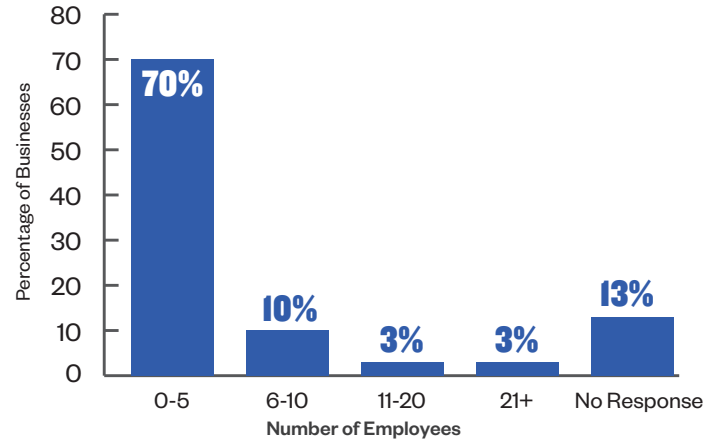
What We've Heard from Port Richmond Merchants

How many years have you been in business here?



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

How many full-time employees do you have?



Do you own or rent your property?



Does your business currently have a website?



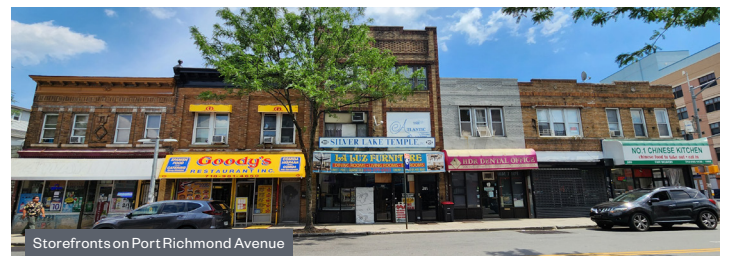
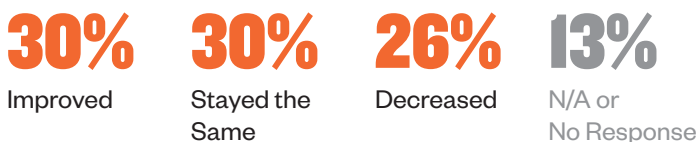
Are you a minority or woman-owned business?



Does your business currently use social media?



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



Source: Based on 201 merchant surveys conducted by La Colmena, Staten Island Business Outreach Center, and Forest Avenue BID in Fall 2023 and Winter 2024.

BUSINESS LANDSCAPE: PORT RICHMOND

What We've Heard from Port Richmond Merchants and Shoppers

What do you like about the commercial district?

"I like the people here."

"It has potential because of the foot traffic."

"Access to Forest Avenue, being among other small businesses, neighborhood location is great, near schools."

"Not difficult to work here. It's exciting seeing new products coming in for whichever season from other businesses."

"It appeals to Hispanic people. We have similar businesses on Hylan Boulevard but people still come here for Hispanic products."

"I like the hustle and bustle."

What makes the Port Richmond commercial district unique?

"Mi gente. I can function here without speaking English and no one cares if your English is not good."

"The neighborhood is friendly to immigrants, has more affordable housing than other parts of the city, and has good access to social services."

"We have an incredibly strong, loyal, and committed community of local people who are members at my studio."

"Area is very diverse. You have new home owners, renters, blue collar workers, and all different types of cultural backgrounds."

"It is easily accessible by walking. Sometimes to go somewhere in North Shore I have to get in my car, but around here I can just walk."

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

	% Merchant Response	% Consumer Response
▶ Safety	59%	17%
▶ Landscaping/Beautification	46%	18%
▶ Community Events	38%	22%
▶ Sanitation, Street cleaning	36%	22%
▶ Street Lighting	27%	13%
▶ Merchant Collaboration	21%	12%
▶ Storefront Improvements	21%	12%
▶ Transportation Improvements	16%	12%
▶ Graffiti Removal	14%	7%
▶ More Open Space	14%	13%
▶ Other	11%	8%

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

"Cleaner streets with more plants, more sanitation bins."

"Better public transportation. Some of us drive cars but to get here, our staff takes the bus. If they miss the bus, they're already late because it takes a long time for the next bus to come."

"I would like to see more youth-oriented businesses in the area so they have a place to hang out without spending a lot of money."

"We need more community events. The best way to stop crime is with more social services and events."

"Racial hate crime issues here need to be addressed."

"Improve marketing and social media of the small businesses."

Source: Based on 201 merchant surveys and 301 consumer surveys conducted by La Colmena in Fall 2023 and Winter 2024. Staten Island Business Outreach Center and Forest Avenue BID assisted La Colmena in conducting Merchant Surveys on Forest Avenue

Port Richmond Retail Demand

Residents spent

\$936M

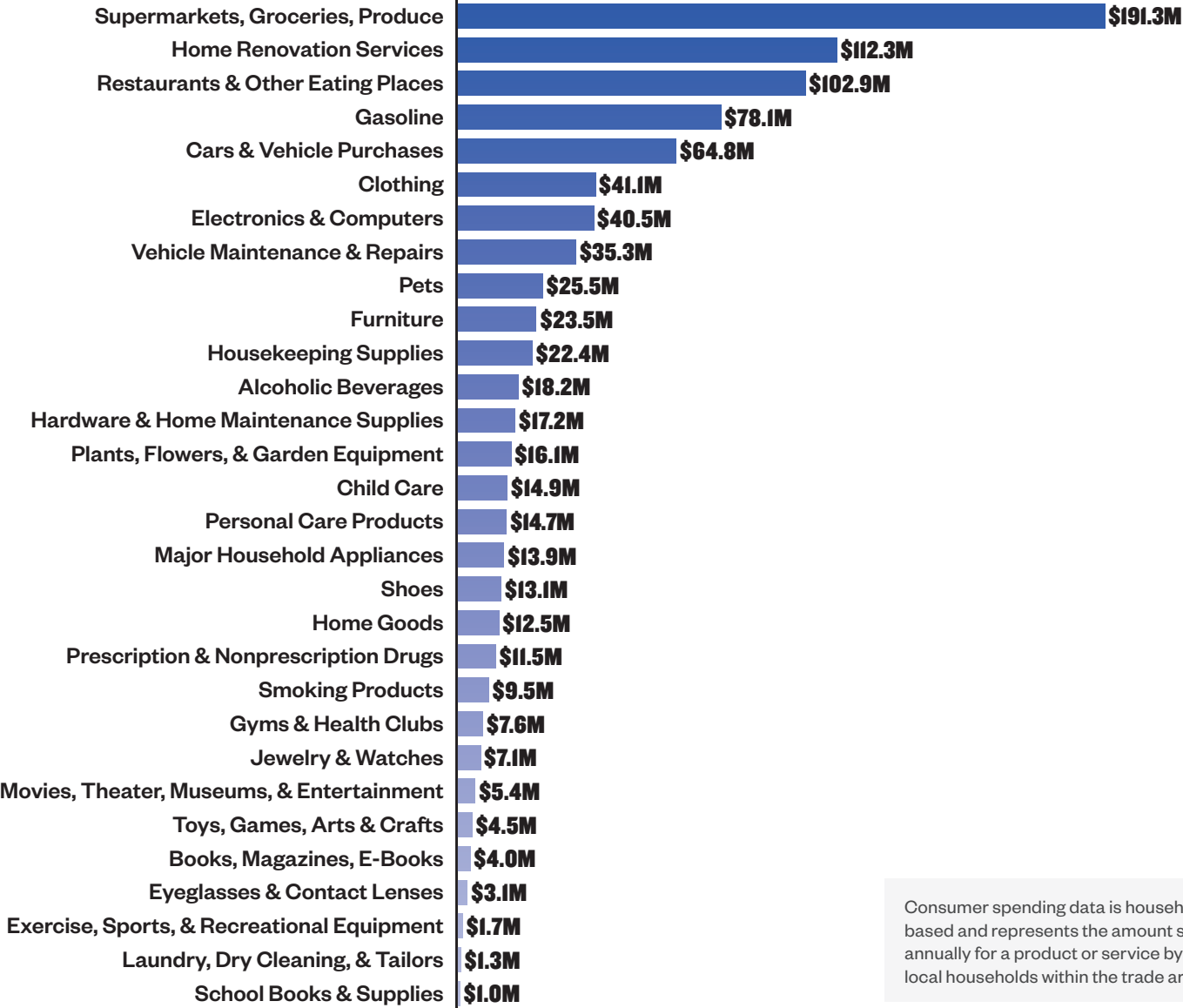
on retail goods and services in 2024

Residents will spend

\$1.10B

each year on retail goods and services by 2029

2024 Consumer Spending



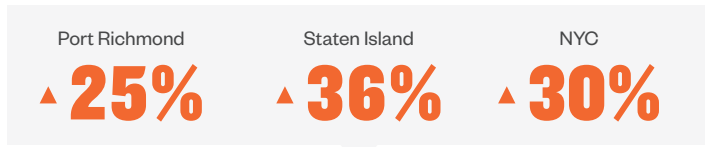
Consumer spending data is household-based and represents the amount spent annually for a product or service by all local households within the trade area.

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

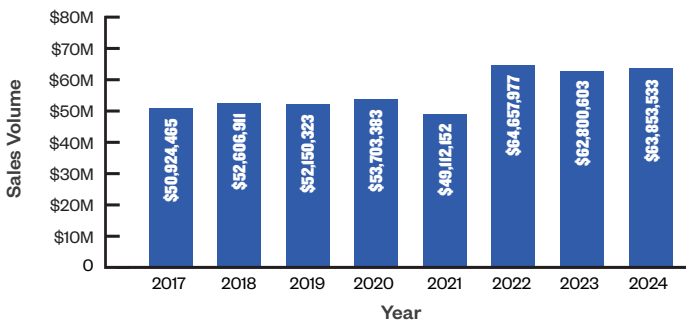
BUSINESS OUTLOOK

Business Trends

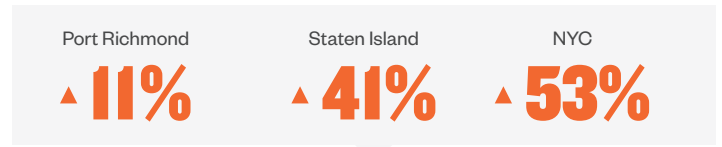
Change in Total Business Sales, 2017-2024



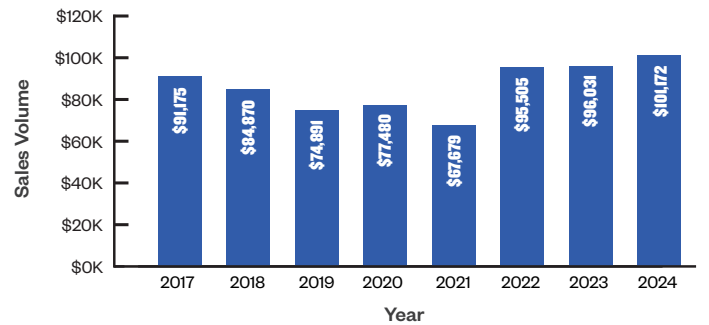
Port Richmond Total Business Sales



Change in Median Sales by Business, 2017-2024









Port Richmond Median Sales by Business



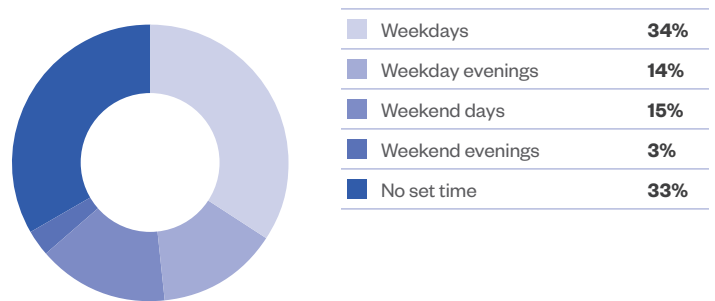
*Year 2024 reflects data gathered up until March 2024. Source: Division of Tax Policy, NYC Department of Finance

What We've Heard from Shoppers

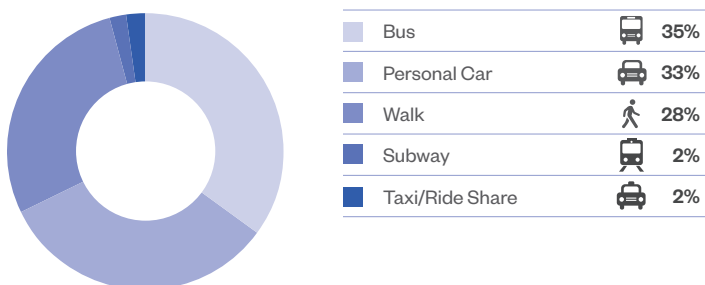
What additional types of businesses would you like to see in Port Richmond?

- ▶ More diverse restaurants & food options 
- ▶ Clothing stores 
- ▶ Youth activities & community spaces 
- ▶ Cafes 
- ▶ Bakery 
- ▶ Supermarket 

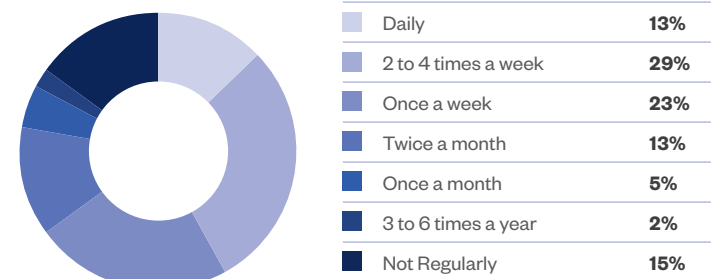
When do you usually shop in Port Richmond?



How do you usually travel to Port Richmond?

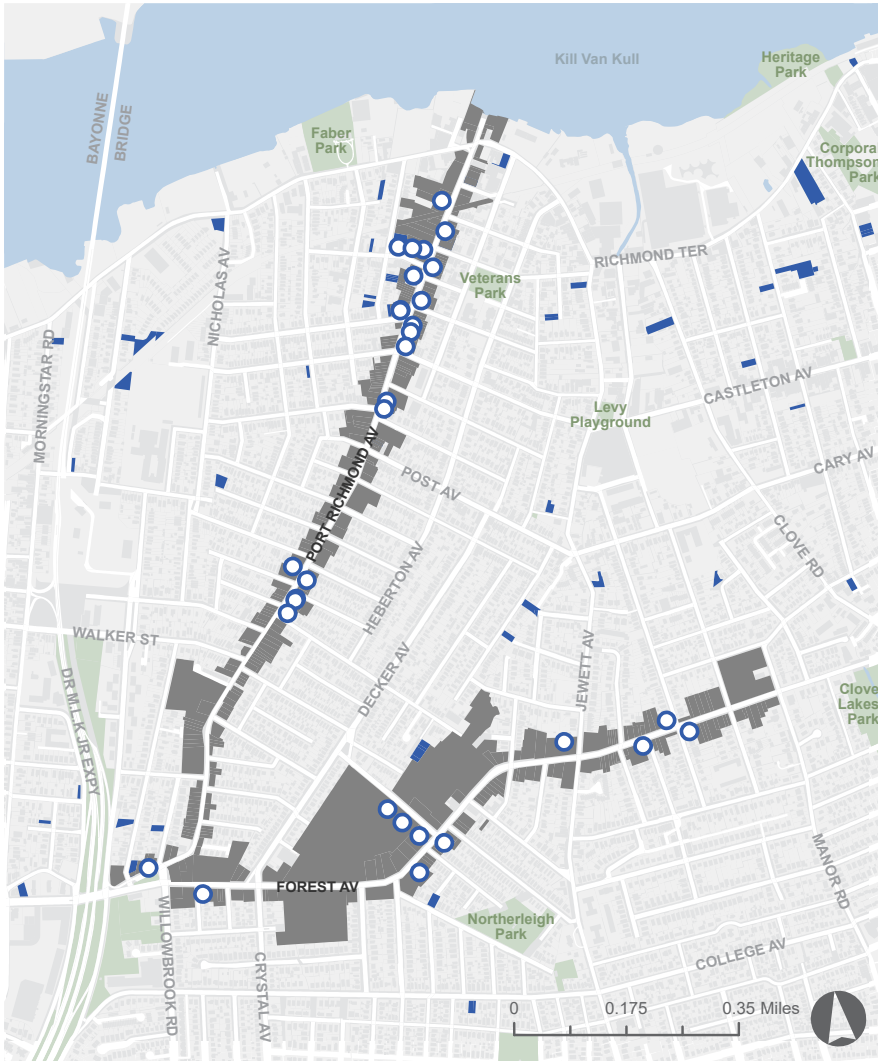


How often do you shop in Port Richmond?



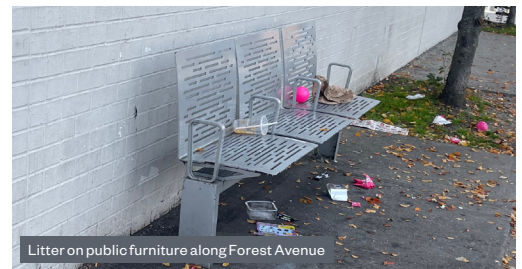
Source: Based on 301 consumer surveys conducted by La Colmena in Fall 2023 and Winter 2024.

Storefront Vacancies



■ Vacant Lots ○ Vacant Storefronts ■ Parks & Open Spaces

An analysis of 392 storefronts along Port Richmond Avenue and Forest Avenue revealed that 7% of storefronts are in poor condition, 23% are in average condition, and 70% are in good condition.



Streetscape Observations

- ▶ Murals on Port Richmond draw locals to nearby shops, but there is no street furniture along the corridor.
- ▶ Flyers stapled to trees and utility posts add to the visual clutter of the neighborhood.
- ▶ Both commercial corridors need additional street lighting, especially Port Richmond Avenue which is significantly darker at night than Forest Avenue.
- ▶ Port Richmond Avenue accumulates significant amounts of litter on sidewalks and in the tree pits. The corridor also lacks a sufficient number of litter baskets.
- ▶ Port Richmond Avenue has challenging sidewalks for pedestrians. The sidewalks along Walker Street and Willowbrook Road are very narrow compared to other parts of Staten Island.
- ▶ The lack of traffic calming measures along Forest Avenue makes it feel unsafe for pedestrians.

DATA APPENDIX

Study Area Boundaries

■ Assessed Commercial Corridors

Primary data on Port Richmond storefront businesses presented on pg. 6-8 was gathered along the following commercial corridors:

- ▶ Port Richmond Avenue between Richmond Terrace and Forest Avenue
- ▶ Forest Avenue between Manor Road and Port Richmond Avenue

— Port Richmond Context Area

Demographic and employment data on pg. 12-13 represents the population within the Port Richmond neighborhood context area.

••• Trade Area

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



Area Demographics

Total Population

20,354	Port Richmond
492,925	Staten Island
8,622,467	New York City

Population Density (per square mile)

16,854	Port Richmond
8,499	Staten Island
28,517	New York City

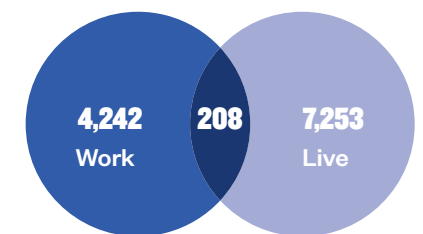
Average Household Size

3.03	Port Richmond
2.86	Staten Island
2.56	New York City

Car Ownership

78.0%	Port Richmond
85.0%	Staten Island
45.3%	New York City

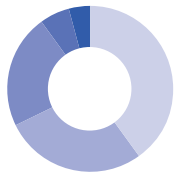
Commuting Patterns



4,242	Work in Port Richmond, live elsewhere
208	Live & Work in Port Richmond
7,253	Live in Port Richmond, work elsewhere

Area Demographics

Race/Background



	Port Richmond	SI	NYC
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	40%	19%	29%
White alone	28%	58%	31%
Black or African American alone	22%	9%	21%
Asian alone	6%	11%	14%
Two or more races	4%	2%	3%
Some other race alone	0%	1%	1%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0%	0%	0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0%	0%	0%

Educational Attainment



	Port Richmond	SI	NYC
12th Grade or Less, No Diploma	13%	11%	17%
High School Graduate	32%	30%	23%
Some College, No Degree	15%	16%	13%
Associate's Degree	8%	7%	7%
Bachelor's Degree	20%	21%	23%
Graduate or Professional Degree	12%	14%	17%

Population Age



	Port Richmond	SI	NYC
Under 5 Years	9%	6%	6%
5-14 Years	14%	12%	11%
15-24 Years	14%	12%	12%
25-44 Years	28%	26%	31%
45-64 Years	26%	28%	25%
65+ Years	9%	16%	16%

Median Age

35.2	Port Richmond
40.3	Staten Island
37.5	New York City

Foreign-Born Population

24%	Port Richmond
25%	Staten Island
36%	New York City

Income

Median Household Income

\$77,046	Port Richmond
\$96,185	Staten Island
\$76,607	New York City

Pop. Below Poverty Line

14%	Port Richmond
10%	Staten Island
17%	New York City

Employment

Population in Labor Force

60%	Port Richmond
60%	Staten Island
63%	New York City

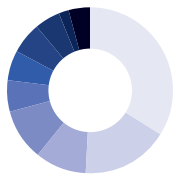
Unemployment*

8.3%	Port Richmond
5.4%	Staten Island
7.6%	New York City

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

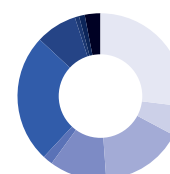
Local Jobs and Employment

Local Residents' Employment



Educational Services, Health Care, Social Assistance	34%
Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	17%
Retail Trade	10%
Construction	10%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	6%
Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities	6%
Accommodation, Food Services, Arts, Entertainment	6%
Public Administration	5%
Manufacturing	2%
Other Services	4%

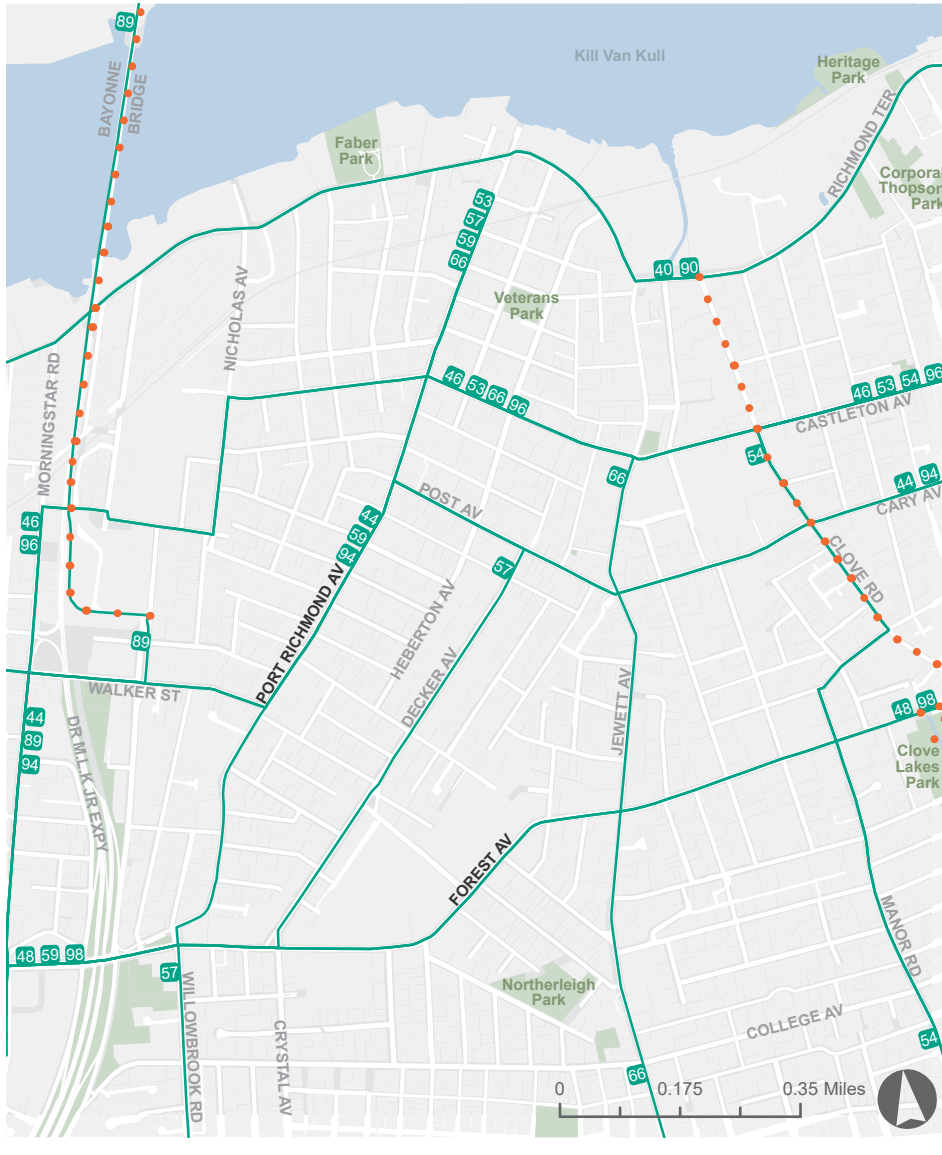
Jobs Located in Port Richmond



Educational Services, Health Care, Social Assistance	27%
Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	6%
Retail Trade	16%
Construction	11%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	2%
Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities	25%
Accommodation, Food Services, Arts, Entertainment	8%
Public Administration	1%
Manufacturing	1%
Other Services	3%

DATA APPENDIX

Port Richmond Transportation



▲ Port Richmond Transportation

- Bus Routes
- Bicycle Lanes

Average Weekday Bus Ridership (2023)

4,851	S53
3,043	S44/94
2,898	S48/S98
2,096	S46/S96
1,697	S40/S90
1,713	S59
1,468	SIM3
711	S66
691	S57
644	SIM30
463	S54
371	SIM35

Average Daily Vehicular Traffic (2023)

19,638	Forest Avenue between Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Expressway and Jewett Avenue
14,701	Forest Avenue between Jewett Avenue and Broadway
13,067	Richmond Terrace between Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Expressway and Jewett Avenue
10,320	Port Richmond Avenue between Trantor Place and Richmond Terrace
9,506	Decker Avenue between Forest and Post avenues
6,881	Jewett Avenue between Forest Avenue and Richmond Terrace
1,134	Orange Avenue between Port Richmond and Decker avenues
947	Villa Avenue between Forest Avenue and Walker Street



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

Recent SBS Neighborhood Investments

- ▶ *Neighborhood 360° Grant*, multi-year grant of \$450,000 awarded to La Colmena, 2024-2027.
- ▶ *Public Realm Grant*, Commercial Canvas single-year grant of \$50,000 awarded to La Colmena, 2024-2025.
- ▶ *Strategic Impact Grant*, single-year CDNA grant of \$80,000 awarded to La Colmena, 2023-2024.
- ▶ *BID Exploration*, Grant of \$20,000 awarded to Staten Island Business Outreach Center, 2024.
- ▶ *BID Exploration*, Grant of \$20,000 awarded to Northfield Community Local Development Corporation, 2023.

Existing Plans & Studies

Richmond Terrace Existing Conditions Report, NYC Department of Planning, 2023.

Port Richmond-Mariners Harbor Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Report, Northfield Community Local Development Corporation and New York State Department of State, 2019.

North Shore Alternatives Analysis Study and Staten Island Bus Study, Metropolitan Transportation Authority, 2019.

North Shore 2030: Improving and Reconnecting the North Shore's Unique and Historic Assets, NYC Department of City Planning and NYC Economic Development Corporation, 2011.

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.

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.

LiveXYZ Storefront Vacancy Data, June 2024.

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. Port Richmond Census Tracts 207.1, 207.2, 213, 247, 201, 141

Photo Credits: La Colmena: Emili Prado, Emily Chavela, Evelin Caballero Omana, and Judith Prado. NYC SBS: Zaxx Abraham.



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 Port Richmond Commercial District Needs Assessment:

Staten Island Borough President Vito J. Fossella
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