Morris Park and Van Nest
Commercial District Needs Assessment
Preliminary Findings
Avenue NYC Program Overview
Neighborhood Context
Retail Mix & Vacancy
Storefront & Streetscape Conditions
Merchant & Consumer Survey Highlights
COVID19 Impact
Strengths / Challenges / Opportunities
Avenue NYC Program Context

Avenue NYC Commercial Revitalization Grants fund community-based development organizations (CBDOs) to carry out programs targeting commercial districts in low- and moderate-income communities.

Year 1 - CDNA Report

Community Capacity Inventory

Business Inventory

Merchant & Consumer Surveys from individual merchants, consumers and property owners in English, Spanish, and Arabic

Data Analysis
Neighborhood Context

Population: 45,457
Foreign Born Population: 32.1%

4 Different Corridors
50+ Blocks
Key Takeaways

The study area includes a mix of low- to high-density corridors with multi-generational businesses that have deep engagement roots in the community.

Each commercial corridor has a unique identity and serves a particular niche within the local economy.

Both merchants and consumers believe community programming and public space activation would attract more people to the commercial corridors.
Business Inventory
Retail Mix

**Total Businesses Surveyed**
- Morris Park Avenue: 208
- White Plains Road: 110
- Williamsbridge Road: 100
- Lydig Ave: 74

**Overall Vacancy Rate**
- 8.4%

### Top 5 Categories of Businesses by Corridor

**Morris Park Avenue**
- Professional Services
- Beauty/Nail Salons & Barber Shops
- Limited Service Restaurants
- Full Service Restaurants
- Bodegas, Delis, & Convenience

**White Plains Road**
- Clothing & Shoe Stores
- Cell Phone & Electronics Stores
- Limited & Full Service Restaurants
- Beauty/ Nail Salons & Barber Shops
- Pharmacies, Optical & Health Stores

**Williamsbridge Road**
- Professional Services
- Doctors, Dentists, & Medical Services
- Limited & Full Service Restaurants
- Beauty/Nail Salons & Barber Shops
- Bodegas, Delis, & Convenience

**Lydig Ave**
- Full & Limited Service Restaurants
- Beauty/ Nail Salons & Barbershops
- Doctors, Dentists & Medical Services
- Bodegas, Delis, & Convenience
- Supermarkets & Groceries
Storefront Observations

- 50% Excellent or Very Good Condition
- 30% Fair Condition
- 20% Poor/Needs Improvement Condition
Streetscape Observations
Merchant Survey Takeaways

- Top three challenges include lack of parking/transit, government regulations and crime and safety
- More parking, increased safety and supplemental sanitation would attract more visitors and shoppers to the district

Total Merchants Surveyed: 281
Merchants Have Been in Business for 5+ Years: 75%
Impact of COVID-19 on our Small Businesses

75% Decrease in Sales

18% Struggled to meet rent in full

- Applied for Federal Assistance: 48.48%
- Drawn Down Cash Reserves: 56.36%
- Used Personal Savings: 50.30%
- Applied for a Grant: 7.88%
- Applied for Another Loan: 10.91%
- Used a Line of Credit: 11.52%
- Business Interruption Insurance: 3.64%
Consumer Survey Highlights

561
Total Consumers Surveyed

87%
Consumers Surveyed Live in the Area

COVID-19 Impact on Shopping Activity

- 47.04% Less Shopping
- 30.83% Same Amount of Shopping
- 22.13% More Shopping
Consumer Survey Highlights

“This neighborhood makes me feel at home”

“I like how safe it is & how everyone respects each other”

“Small businesses make it more personal”

“The people make this neighborhood unique”
Strengths

1. Resilient small businesses with long-standing roots in the community, driven by the close-knit and engaged residential population that supports the local economy of the neighborhood.

2. Diverse ethnic community with growing numbers of culturally relevant businesses and professional services.

3. Walkable and pedestrian-friendly commercial corridors that offer a comfortable shopping experience.
Challenges

1. Limited access to public transportation makes it hard for non-local visitors to reach certain parts of the area.

2. Lack of accessible, central public spaces make it challenging to have a reliable anchor location for socializing, celebrating events and building community.

3. Insufficient street lighting under the elevated train on White Plains Road and lack of nightly activity along industrial corridors lead to perceptions of safety concerns.
Develop shopping guides and wayfinding materials to direct more visitors from the nearby Bronx Zoo and New York Botanical Garden to the neighborhood’s commercial corridors.

Widely activate district playgrounds, parks and green spaces further for community and cultural events.

Develop marketing campaigns and interventions that highlight the neighborhood’s unique restaurants in an accessible way, highlighting the unique features of the ethnic mix.

Explore technological interventions, such as LinkNYC kiosks, to disseminate community updates and relevant information in an accessible way, while providing free Wi-Fi.
Thank you!

Selam Yemeru
pm.morrisparkbid@gmail.com
[646-799-1980]

Community feedback welcome!
Future Developments in the District

East Bronx E-Scooter Pilot Zone

Bronx Metro North Expansion