NORWOOD & BEDFORD PARK THE BRONX

Commercial District Needs Assessment

NYC Small Business Services

Bill de Blasio
Mayor

Gregg Bishop
Commissioner

in partnership with

Mosholu Preservation Corporation

ABOUT NORWOOD & BEDFORD PARK

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 **Webster Avenue**, **Bainbridge Avenue**, and **East 204th Street** commercial corridors in **Norwood** and **Bedford Park**, and was conducted in partnership with the **Mosholu Preservation Corporation** between August 2018 and January 2019.

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

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Background

Norwood and Bedford Park are located in the Northwestern section of the Bronx. Nestled between the Woodlawn Cemetery and Conservatory to the north and the New York Botanical Garden to the south. On the west is the Mosholu Parkway serving as a connector to Van Cortlandt Park and the Botanical Garden. The parkway abuts key commercial corridors that gives this historic community a "Main Street" feel. Extending from the Williamsbridge Oval down Bainbridge Avenue through East 204th Street and swinging westward on Webster Avenue towards Fordham Road, the 1.5 mile commercial corridor running through Norwood and Bedford Park hosts an active small business community, supporting unique shopping and dining options that showcase the diverse cultures of Northwest Bronx residents. Its proximity to the Metro-North Railroad, the local D subway line, and various bus routes provides convenient access to Manhattan, areas of New York State, and Connecticut. Anchor Bronx institutions including Montefiore Medical Center, Fordham University, the New York Botanical Garden, and the Bronx County Historical Society, as well as the vast parkland throughout the area contribute to the vitality of these two communities. One example of this is Frank Frisch Field, named after baseball player Frankie Frisch — the "Fordham Flash" — who played with the New York Giants and St. Louis Cardinals from 1919 to 1937. The park is one of the many green spaces that helps maintain the "small town" feel of this Bronx neighborhood.

The rich history of the Norwood and Bedford Park communities is illustrated by distinctive architecture, long-standing community organizations, and stories of immigration and resettlement. This area went through a series of changes throughout the turn of the century. During the Civil War, the area was Westchester County farmland and was later transformed into suburban counties. With the arrival of Irish immigrants, the Norwood community became known as "Little Belfast," while Bedford Park had an even mix of both an Irish and Italian population. Today, traces of "Little Belfast" can still be found along Bainbridge Avenue. The Irish taverns of Bedford Park are now home to a growing Latin, Bangladeshi, and Albanian communities.Both neighborhoods served as a refuge for immigrants in the late 20th century.

See more on page 12

Neighborhood Demographics

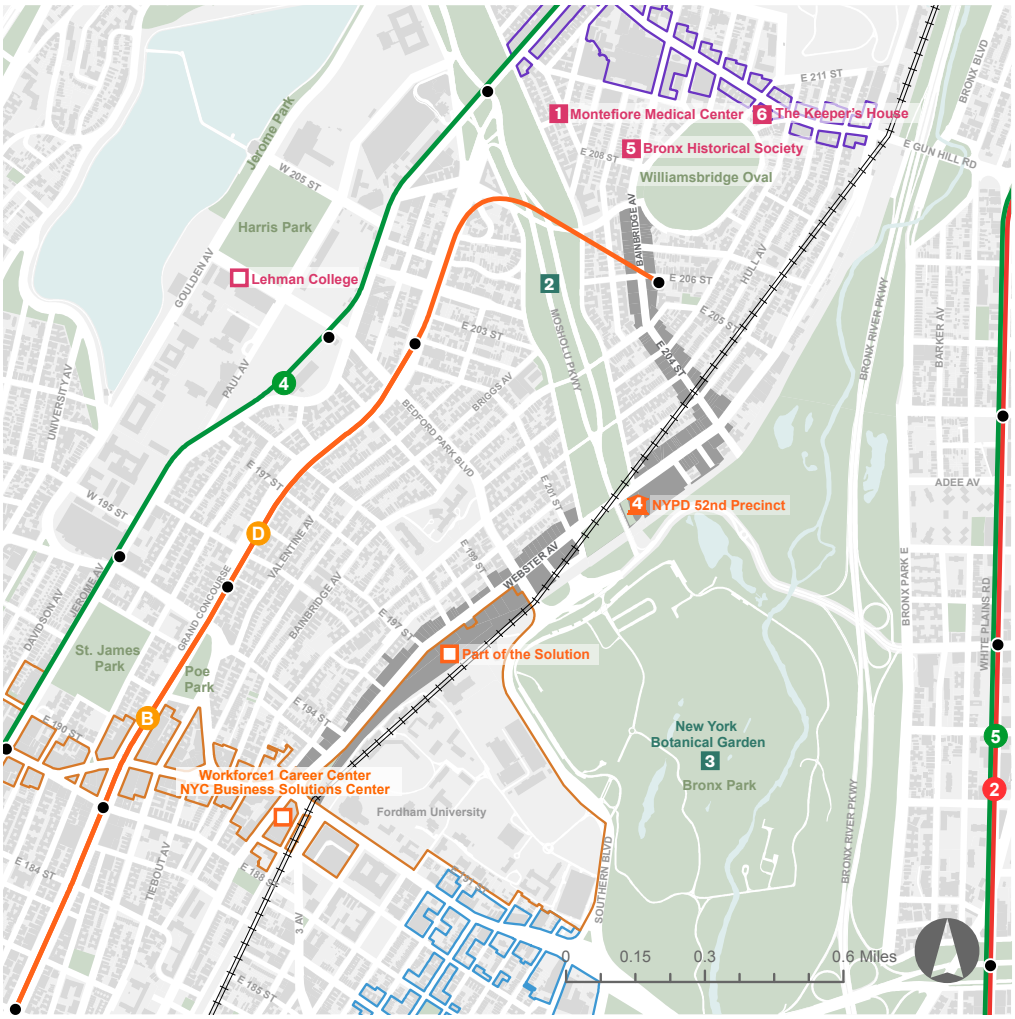
More than 73,624 residents from diverse ethnic backgrounds call Norwood and Bedford Park home. Its convenient access to transit and affordable housing make it a destination for newcomers and long-term New Yorkers. About 66% of residents identify as Hispanic or Latino, and 40% of Norwood and Bedford Park residents were born outside of the United States, demonstrating the area's long-standing tradition of supporting immigrant and foreign-born communities.

See more on page 5

Future Opportunities

In 2011, the Webster Avenue/Bedford Park/Norwood Rezoning was adopted, allowing for residential development along the Webster Avenue corridor where it previously was not permitted and preserving the existing character of the adjacent residential areas. The rezoning also addressed the commercial needs of the community today, allowing for neighborhood-serving retail, specialty stores, and office uses, and would preclude the semi-industrial uses that were previously allowed. It also included a commitment to promote inclusionary housing practices within the Norwood community to incentivize development and improved access to affordable housing through the Inclusionary Housing Program.

Norwood & Bedford Park



Notable Places

Points of Interest

- Assessed Commercial Corridors
- Belmont Business Improvement District
- Community Institutions & Landmarks
- Fordham Road Business Improvement District
- Green Space
- Jerome Gun Hill Business Improvement District
- Public Facilities

Neighborhood Events

Octoberfest-NYC DOT Weekend Walk

Summer Streets-NYC DOT Weekend Walk

Webster Avenue Halloween Parade

Merchant & Community Groups

52nd Precinct Community Council

Bedford Mosholu Community Association

Friends of Mosholu Parkland

Friends of the Williamsbridge Oval

Guerinos Against Graffiti

Northwest Merchants Association

Part of The Solution (POTS)

KEY FINDINGS & OPPORTUNITIES

Strengths

- Long-standing local businesses throughout the commercial corridor create a strong sense of identity and community in Norwood
- Highly accessible transit options, including Metro North, the D and 4 subway lines, and multiple bus lines, help the corridor serve as a as a major transportation hub for the Northwest Bronx
- Well-preserved architecture celebrates the history of the Northwest Bronx and contributes to the walkability of the neighborhood
- New development with retail space along Webster Avenue creates an opportunity to attract new businesses
- High population density along and adjacent to the commercial corridor, including nearby Montefiore Medical Center, supports the vitality of the district
- Community-based organizations, property owners, and local merchant groups are active and engaged in the Norwood community and dedicated to supporting place-based improvements

Challenges

- Perceptions of safety are poor, especially at night, acting as a detriment to walkability and small business stewardship
- There is a lack of affordable, healthy food options within the corridor, leading residents and consumers to dine outside of the commercial district
- Clusters of vacant storefronts along Bainbridge Avenue and E. 204th Street disrupt the continuity of the retail corridor and negatively impact the walkability of the neighborhood
- Lack of parking and traffic congestion along the commercial corridor deter consumers from shopping in the district
- Many local merchants lack marketing knowledge and experience and do not have an online presence
- Limited retail options along the corridor fail to meet the needs of residents
- Amid increasing commercial rents on the corridor, some merchants report that landlords are unwilling to give leases of more than a year
- Underused local parks and plazas suffer from a lack of recreational activities and community programming

Webster Avenue Mural

205th Street Subway Station

Bainbridge Avenue Storefronts

204th Street Storefronts

Williamsbridge Oval

Bainbridge Avenue Storefronts

Botanical Garden Metro Station - Metro-North Railroad

New York Botanical Garden

Opportunities

- Improve lighting along the commercial corridor to tackle safety concerns. Partner with the police precinct located on Webster Avenue to foster trust between the community and merchants
- Clean, beautify, and maintain streets and sidewalks to encourage residents to shop locally and leverage foot traffic from anchor institutions
- In partnership with local entrepreneurs and property owners, develop retail attraction programming to reduce the corridor vacancy rate and increase access to goods and services for residents
- Create district marketing campaigns, including a Shop Local initiative, for the commercial corridor to connect residents with small businesses
- Support merchant collaboration efforts across the corridor to organize small business owners and reduce turnover rate in the district
- Increase the level of engagement between area institutions (such as Fordham University, the New York Botanical Garden, and the Bronx Zoo) and the commercial corridor to encourage local purchasing, place-based programming, and improved community relations
- Enhance programming in and access to corridor greenspace, creating opportunity for residents to use local parks for civic meetings and public events
- Help merchants from both ends of the corridor consolidate their organizing efforts so they can better represent, serve, and advocate for the corridor as a unified whole

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

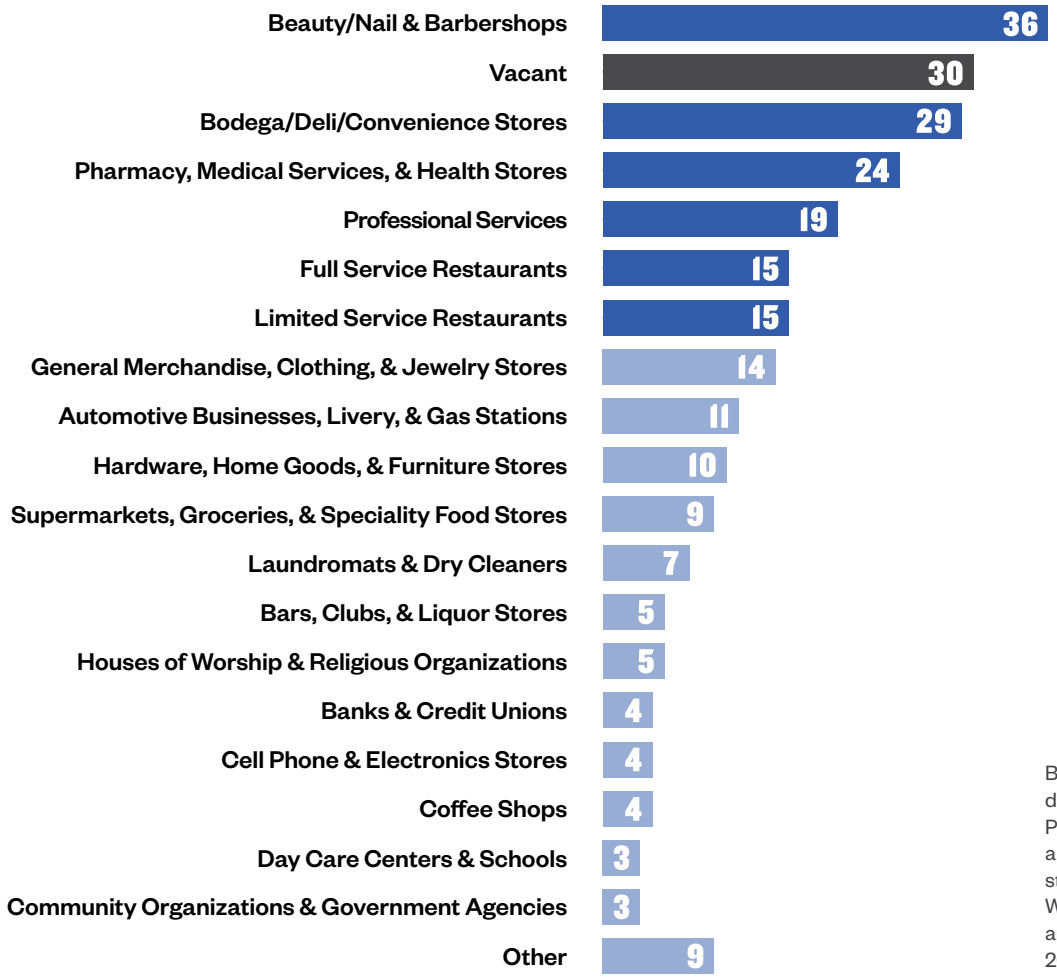
Business Inventory

256
Total Number of Storefronts

9%
Storefront Vacancy*

* Note: In 2018, New York City's 75 Business Improvement Districts reported an average ground floor vacancy rate of 8.9% and a median ground floor vacancy rate of 7.3% (SBS BIDs Trends Report, 2018).

Storefront & Retail Mix



Business inventory and retail mix data were gathered by Mosholu Preservation Corporation through a comprehensive area inventory of storefront businesses located along Webster Avenue, E. 204th Street, and Bainbridge Avenue. (October 2018)

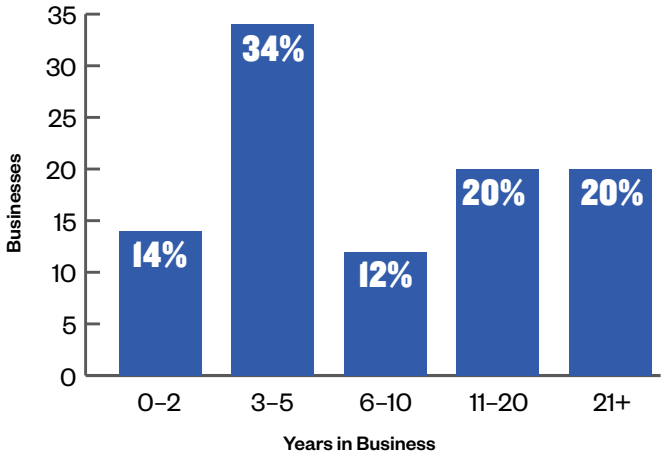
Rulay Lounge on Webster Avenue

Hillside Meat Market on 204th Street

Confectionaires on Webster Avenue

What We've Heard from Norwood & Bedford Park Merchants

How many years have you been in business here?



13	8	3
Mean	Median	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 employees do you have?

3	2	2
Mean	Median	Mode

Do you own or rent your property?

92%	8%
Rent	Own

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

20%	51%	29%	0%
Improved	Stayed the Same	Decreased	N/A or No Response

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

	% Merchant Responses
Landscaping/beautification	18%
Parking	17%
Sanitation	15%
Community events	13%
Safety	13%
Street lighting	12%
Business to business communication	7%
Storefront improvements	5%

What kinds of resources would help you grow your business?

	% Merchant Responses
Marketing support	35%
Space improvements	18%
Financing	17%
Legal/lease support	11%
New equipment	9%
Assistance with regulatory compliance	5%
Training for staff	4%
Other services	1%

Source: Based on 64 merchant surveys conducted by Mosholu Preservation Corporation in Fall 2018.

BUSINESS LANDSCAPE

What We've Heard from Norwood & Bedford Park Merchants

What would you suggest to improve the commercial district for residents, pedestrians, and shoppers?

"The people in this district are very welcoming and come together in times of need."

"We need more advertising and press about the area to attract new businesses."

"The businesses in the area are good, but each should think about how they look when customers walk in - cleanliness and organization are important."

What do you like about the commercial corridor?

"Residents are good people, area seems to be on the up."

"It's a progressive area, a lot of cultural diversity."

"Transportation options galore."

"We've been here forever. It's a great neighborhood and a good place to be."

"Everybody knows everybody. It's a nice area - you always have the regulars."

"There are a lot of business owners who take great care of the area."

"People care for each other."

What would you say are the most pressing needs of businesses on this corridor?

"The corridor needs more street and sidewalk cleaning."

"Parking, parking, parking!"

"Less construction on the street or at least notify community sooner."

"Increased support for small business expansion."

"Visibility, attracting people who are close enough to shop ... but don't know what businesses are here."

What We've Heard from Norwood & Bedford Park Shoppers

What would you suggest to improve the commercial district for residents, pedestrians, and shoppers?

"Better quality stores that sell clothes, shoes, etc..."

"Better signage throughout the corridor."

"Businesses should become better connected to area schools, like Fordham, to be local suppliers for student meal plans."

"Merchants should work together in collaboration."

"We need more variety in business choices, especially bars and restaurants."

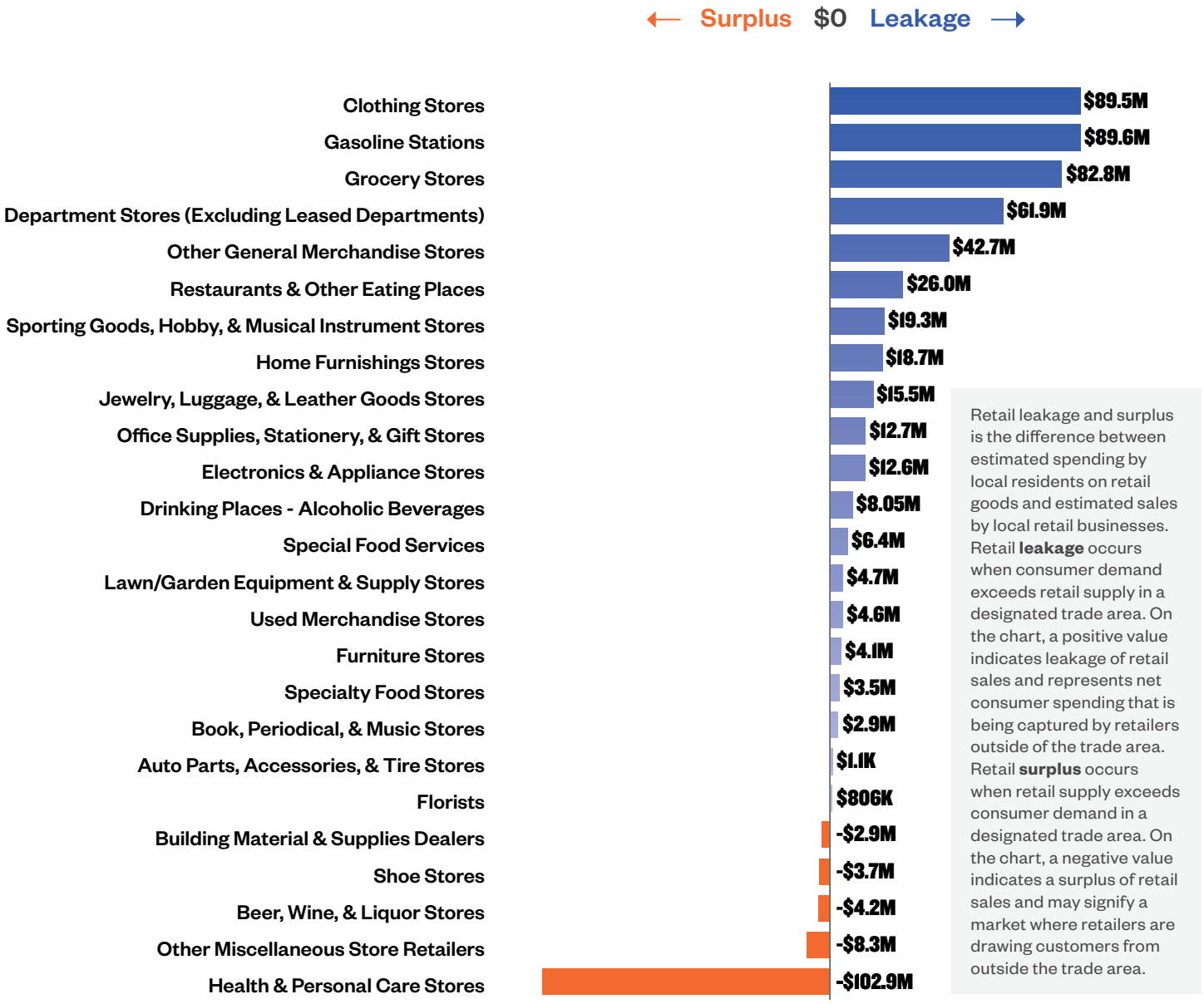
Norwood & Bedford Park Retail Opportunity

Residents spend
$1.6M
each year in goods and services

Local businesses make
$996.2M
each year in retail sales

Every year,
$554.8M
is spent outside the neighborhood

Retail Leakage & Surplus



Retail leakage and surplus is the difference between estimated spending by local residents on retail goods and estimated sales by local retail businesses. Retail **leakage** occurs when consumer demand exceeds retail supply in a designated trade area. On the chart, a positive value indicates leakage of retail sales and represents net consumer spending that is being captured by retailers outside of the trade area. Retail **surplus** occurs when retail supply exceeds consumer demand in a designated trade area. On the chart, a negative value indicates a surplus of retail sales and may signify a market where retailers are drawing customers from outside the trade area.

Source: ESRI and Infogroup, February 2019.

BUSINESS OUTLOOK

Business Trends

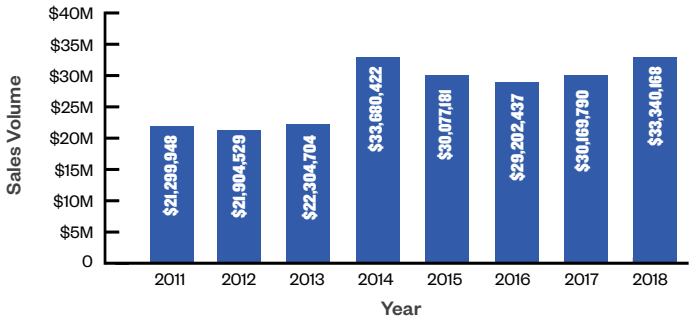
Change in Total Business Sales, 2010-2018

Norwood & Bedford Park	Bronx	NYC
▲ 57%	▲ 41%	▲ 61%

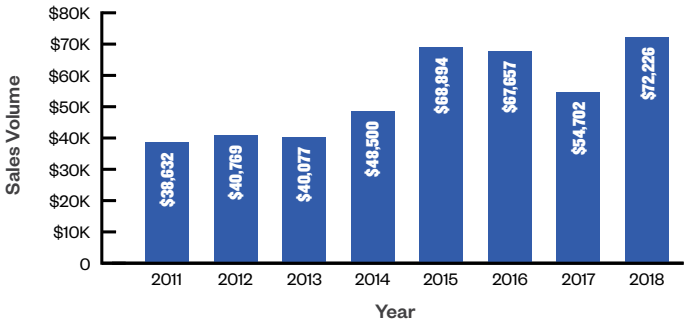
Change in Median Sales by Business, 2010-2018

Norwood & Bedford Park	Bronx	NYC
▲ 87%	▲ 136%	▲ 150%

Norwood & Bedford Park Total Business Sales



Norwood & Bedford Park Median Sales by Business



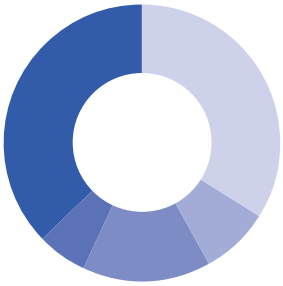
Source: Division of Tax Policy, NYC Department of Finance

What We've Heard from Shoppers

What additional types of businesses would you like to see in Norwood & Bedford Park?

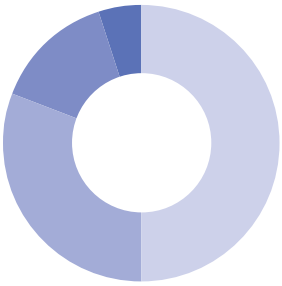
- Restaurants
- Clothing stores
- Coffee shops
- Healthy food options

When do you usually shop in Norwood & Bedford Park?



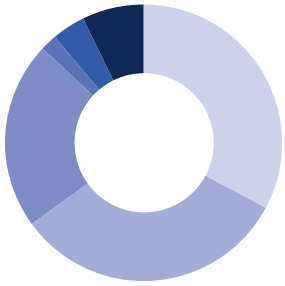
Weekdays	34%
Weekday Evenings	8%
Weekend Days	15%
Weekend Evenings	6%
No Set Time	37%

How do you usually get to Norwood & Bedford Park?



Walk	50%
Public transportation	31%
Car	14%
Ride share	5%
Bike	0%

How often do you shop in Norwood & Bedford Park?



Daily	33%
2 to 4 times a week	32%
Once a week	22%
Twice a month	2%
Once a month	4%
3 to 6 times a year	0%
Rarely/Never	7%

Source: Based on 189 consumer surveys conducted by Mosholu Preservation Corporation in Fall 2018.

Storefront Vacancies

Vacant Lots | Vacant Storefronts | Parks & Open Spaces

An analysis of 254 storefronts along Webster Avenue, E. 204th Street, and Bainbridge Avenue revealed that 36% of storefronts are in poor condition, 60% are in average condition, and 4% are in good condition

Streetscape Observations

- Litter collects along Webster Avenue and near the Metro-North Railroad stop, creating a hazard for pedestrians.
- Tree pits collect litter which can be an eyesore to residents and consumers.
- Shortage of litter baskets along Webster Avenue and throughout the commercial district makes it challenging for pedestrians to responsibly dispose of their waste.
- There is a lack of street furniture, such as benches, throughout the corridor.
- Street lighting is lacking throughout the corridor, which deters local residents from shopping in the evening.

DATA APPENDIX

Study Area Boundaries

Assessed Commercial Corridors

Primary data on Norwood & Bedford Park storefront businesses presented on pg. 6-8 was gathered along Webster Avenue, E. 204th Street, and Bainbridge Avenue.

Norwood & Bedford Park Context Area

Demographic and employment data on pg. 12-13 correspond to the Norwood & Bedford Park context area.

Trade Area

Retail leakage, surplus, and retail opportunity data on pg. 9 correspond to the 0.75 mile trade area.

Area Demographics

Total Population

73,624	Norwood & Bedford Park
1,436,785	Bronx
8,461,961	New York City

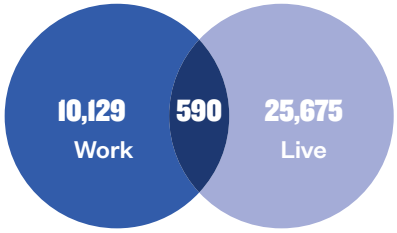
Population Density (per square mile)

34,232	Norwood & Bedford Park
33,750	Bronx
27,986	New York City

Average Household Size

2.84	Norwood & Bedford Park
2.84	Bronx
2.65	New York City

Commuting Patterns



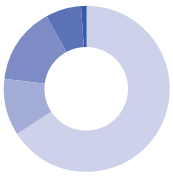
10,129	**Work** in Norwood & Bedford Park live elsewhere
590	**Live & Work** in Norwood & Bedford Park
25,675	**Live** in Norwood & Bedford Park, work elsewhere

Car Ownership

30%	Norwood & Bedford Park
41%	Bronx
45%	New York City

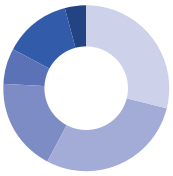
Area Demographics

Race/Background



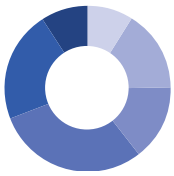
	Norwood & Bedford Park	Bronx	NYC
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	66%	55%	29%
White alone	11%	10%	32%
Black or African American alone	15%	29%	22%
Asian alone	7%	4%	14%
Two or more races	1%	1%	2%
Some other race alone	0%	1%	1%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0%	0%	0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0%	0%	0%

Educational Attainment



	Norwood & Bedford Park	Bronx	NYC
12th Grade or Less, No Diploma	29%	30%	19%
High School Graduate	29%	27%	24%
Some College, No Degree	18%	18%	14%
Associate's Degree	7%	7%	7%
Bachelor's Degree	13%	12%	21%
Graduate or Professional Degree	4%	6%	15%

Population Age



	Norwood & Bedford Park	Bronx	NYC
Under 5 Years	9%	7%	6%
5–14 Years	14%	14%	11%
15–24 Years	18%	16%	13%
25–44 Years	30%	28%	32%
45–64 Years	22%	24%	25%
65+ Years	7%	11%	13%

Median Age

30.6	Norwood & Bedford Park
33.3	Bronx
35.9	New York City

Foreign-Born Population

40%	Norwood & Bedford Park
35%	Bronx
37%	New York City

Income

Median Household Income

$33,874	Norwood
$35,302	Bronx
$55,191	New York City

Pop. Below Poverty Line

30%	Norwood & Bedford Park
28%	Bronx
20%	New York City

Employment

Population in Labor Force

63%	Norwood & Bedford Park
60%	Bronx
64%	New York City

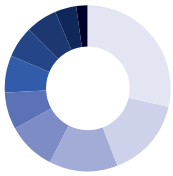
Unemployment*

14.2%	Norwood & Bedford Park
12.7%	Bronx
8.6%	New York City

Note: Unemployment figures on based on data from 2012-2016. As of November 2018, the unemployment rate is 5.1% for the Bronx and 3.7% for New York City (NYSDOL); updated neighborhood-level data for Norwood & Bedford Park is not available.

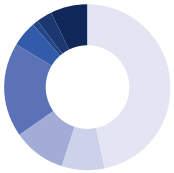
Local Jobs and Employment

Local Residents' Employment



Educational Services, Health Care, Social Assistance	28%
Retail Trade	15%
Accommodation, Food Services, Arts, Entertainment	13%
Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	9%
Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities	7%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	7%
Construction	6%
Other Services	6%
Manufacturing	4%
Public Administration	2%

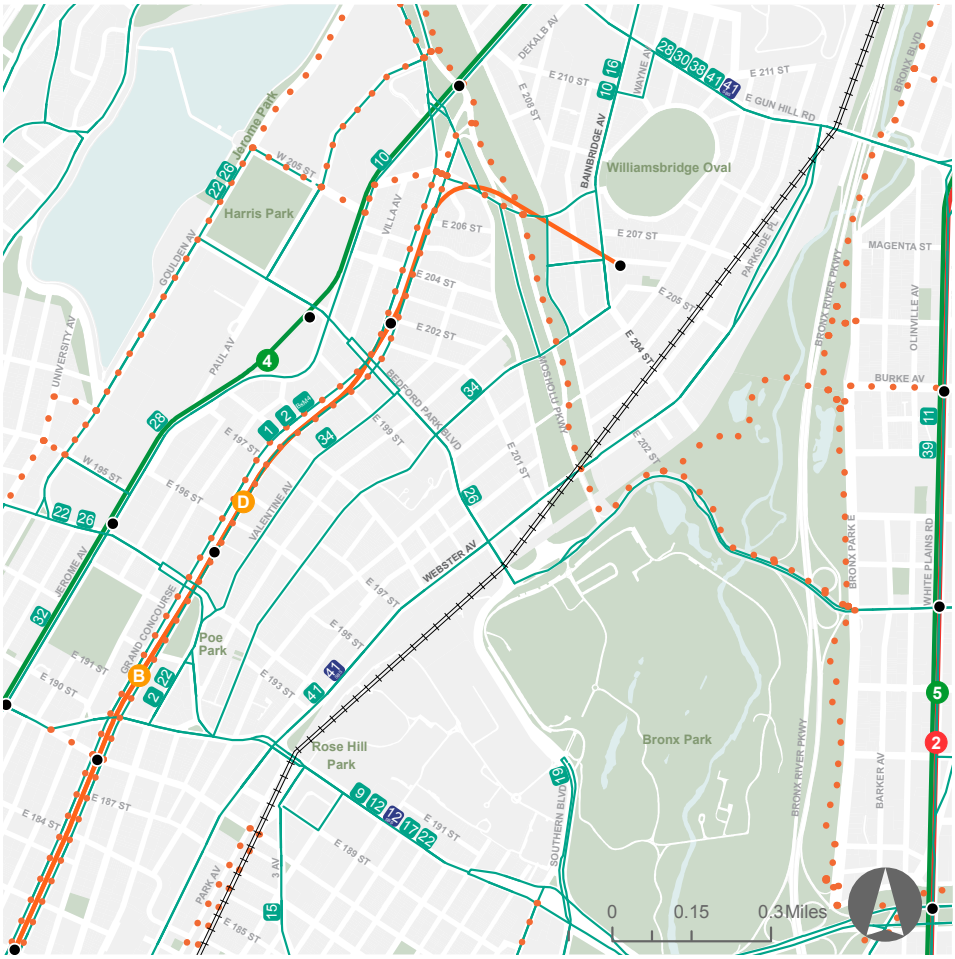
Jobs Located in Norwood & Bedford Park



Educational Services, Health Care, Social Assistance	46%
Retail Trade	8%
Accommodation, Food Services, Arts, Entertainment	10%
Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	0%
Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities	18%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	5%
Construction	1%
Other Services	3%
Manufacturing	0%
Public Administration	7%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey; 2015 OnTheMap Application; NYS Department of Labor, June 2017.

DATA APPENDIX



▲ Norwood & Bedford Park Transportation

- Bus Routes
- NYC Subway
- Bicycle Lanes
- Long Island Rail Road

Average Weekday Subway Ridership (2017)

3,466	2 5	Burke Avenue
5,403	2 5	Allerton Avenue
9,173	2 5	Pelham Parkway
8,770	4	Mosholu Parkway
5,649	4	Bedford Park Boulevard - Lehman College
9,783	4	Kingsbridge Road
11,503	4	Fordham Road
8,751	D	Norwood - 205 Street
7,066	B D	Bedford Park Boulevard
8,237	B D	Kingsbridge Road
12,054	B D	Fordham Road
4,990	B D	182-183 Streets

Pedestrian Counts

East Fordham Road between Valentine and Tiebout avenues

2,783	Weekday Morning (7 - 9 a.m.)
12,388	Weekday Afternoon (4 - 7 p.m.)
7,076	Weekend (12 - 2 p.m.)

Vehicular Traffic

39,545 Approximate average daily vehicles traveling throughout the study area.

MTA Annual Bus Ridership (2017)

10.3M	Bx1/Bx2
8M	Bx9
3.2M	Bx10
14.9M	Bx12-SBS
8.5M	Bx19
2.3M	Bx26
4.6M	Bx28/38
1.8M	Bx32
8.8M	Bx36
4.8M	Bx39
6.8M	Bx41
6.8M	Bx41-SBS

Sources: MTA 2017; NYS DOT, 2015 Annual Average Daily Traffic data.

Recent SBS Investments in the Neighborhood

- *Commercial Revitalization*, Avenue NYC multi-year grant, awarded to Mosholu Preservation Corporation, 2018-2020.
- *Neighborhood 360° Fellowship Host Organization,* awarded to the Jerome Gun Hill BID, 2019.
- *Business Attraction*, Avenue NYC grant of $30,000 awarded to the Jerome Gun Hill BID, 2018.
- *Merchant Organizing*, Avenue NYC grant of $30,000 awarded to Mosholu Preservation Corporation, 2018.
- *Business Attraction and Retention*, Avenue NYC grant of $25,000 awarded to the Jerome Gun Hill BID, 2016.
- *Merchant Organizing*, Avenue NYC grant of $25,000 awarded to Mosholu Preservation Corporation, 2016.
- *Capacity Building and Merchant Organizing*, Avenue NYC grant of $45,000 awarded to Mosholu Preservation Corporation, 2015.

Existing Plans & Studies

Sustainable Communities in the Bronx: Leveraging Regional Rail for Access Growth and Opportunity, NYC Department of City Planning, 2014.

Webster Avenue/Bedford Park/Norwood Rezoning, NYC Department of City Planning, 2011.

Sources

ESRI and Infogroup, Inc. 2019 ESRI Retail MarketPlace Profile.

Metropolitan Transportation Authority. 2017. Average Weekday Subway Ridership.

NYS Department of Labor. June 2016. Unemployment Rate Rankings by County.

NYS Department of Transportation. 2010/2011 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.

NYC Department of Transportation. December 2017. Bi-Annual Pedestrian Counts.

U.S. Census Bureau. 2015. OnTheMap Application. Longitudinal-Employer Household Dynamics Program.

U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, 2016 American Community Survey 4-Year Estimates, using NYC Census FactFinder. Norwood Census Tracts: 405.02, 413, 405.01, 423, 429.02, 403.02, 429.01, 425, 399.01, 397, 407.02, 415, 419, 334.

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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.

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