

## A City of Neighborhoods

New York City  
Neighborhood  
Development  
Newsletter

2012  
ISSUE #1



Elizabeth de León (bottom right) and the Neighborhood Development Team

### Dear Friends,

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the NYC Department of Small Business Service (SBS) Neighborhood Development Division (NDD) Newsletter! NDD is charged with ensuring the long-term vitality of the city's diverse commercial districts by creating opportunities for small businesses and the communities they serve. As I write this letter, it is early September, and NYC neighborhoods are transitioning into a new season and school year. Throughout the fall months, I often think of the vital role that merchants play in the lives of their local communities, who depend on them to smooth this transition. Here at NDD, we've been working hard to ensure that these corridors are safe, clean and flourishing all year round. We have assembled an extraordinary team of urban planners, management professionals, and policy experts who are committed to working with community leaders to establish and promote thriving retail corridors.

As Mayor Bloomberg has reminded us throughout his tenure, small businesses are the economic engine that has sustained New York City during these difficult financial times. Thanks to his leadership, the city now has 67 Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), the largest network in the country. NDD has crafted several innovative programs geared towards promoting and facilitating the formation of BIDs, and we continue to support local organizations in their

neighborhood redevelopment efforts. In June, we partnered with Deputy Mayor Robert K. Steel to launch BID Challenge, which will provide funding for BIDs with innovative plans for strengthening their neighborhoods and attracting more jobs and investment. We also established BID Express, which will serve as another avenue for merchant organizations and local stakeholders to establish a BID.

In addition to BID initiatives, NDD provides a range of services for non-profit organizations, merchant associations and local development corporations looking to enhance their commercial corridors. Our Avenue NYC Program enables these entities to implement commercial revitalization initiatives in their districts; our retail leasing program provides them with targeted technical assistance; and we also provide capacity building and support services for organizations throughout the city.

This newsletter seeks to highlight some of the many initiatives the NDD team has been pursuing. Together we can strengthen our commercial resources and develop new strategies for future growth. When we invest in our neighborhoods, we invest in our neighbors, and that is a sure formula for success!

Best regards,

**Elizabeth de León**

Deputy Commissioner,  
SBS Neighborhood Development

2012

Neighborhood  
Achievement  
Awards

BRONX  
STATEN ISLAND  
BROOKLYN  
MANHATTAN  
QUEENS  
**NYC**



Deputy Mayor Steel and Commissioner Walsh with the 2012 winners

## Neighborhood Achievement Awards

On July 10, 2012, Deputy Mayor Robert Steel and Commissioner Rob Walsh presented the Neighborhood Achievement Awards to 17 recipients at a reception at Gracie Mansion. The Awards honor the individuals, businesses, and groups who share SBS' commitment to building neighborhoods, creating jobs, and making opportunities for New Yorkers. Awards were presented in ten categories:

- The BID Innovation Award
- The Entrepreneur Award
- Norman Buchbinder Neighborhood Beautification Award
- The Adaptive Reuse/Preservation Award
- The Cultural Award
- The Leadership Award
- The Small Business of the Year Award
- The Partnership Award
- The M/WBE Advocate of the Year Award
- The Workforce Innovation Award

**The BID Innovation Award** recognizes a Business Improvement District that goes above and beyond in delivering its core mission, and successfully revitalizes its community through partnerships that improve parks, schools, and the entire neighborhood. This year's award recipient was the **Alliance for Downtown New York**, which undertook a streetscape improvement that included distinctive street name signs and wayfinding to area attractions and transit stations. As a result of this investment, the BID is responsible for maintaining over 500 new street signs, 170 wayfinding elements, and over 300 streetscape elements. By developing a Handheld Infrastructure Tracking System with an electronic survey method that is easy to analyze, produces maps, and yields easy-to-understand data, they make sure proper maintenance is possible.

**The Norman Buchbinder Neighborhood Beautification Award** recognizes an individual, business or organization that has highlighted and enhanced the look and feel of a neighborhood, thereby increasing visitation or economic activity. The award is presented in memory of Norman Buchbinder, a co-founder of the Union Square partnership, the city's first BID, and founder of the Village Alliance BID. This year's recipient was the **Downtown Brooklyn Partnership**, which, together with the Fulton Mall Improvement Association, oversaw the expansion of Albee Square from a 6,000 sq. ft. underutilized space into a vibrant 27,000 sq. ft. public plaza that has become a center of activity for Fulton Street and surrounding businesses. The Partnership is currently pursuing a plan to expand food options and establish an artisanal market in the plaza.

To learn more about the awards, visit [www.nyc.gov/sbsawards](http://www.nyc.gov/sbsawards).



Alliance for Downtown New York



Downtown Brooklyn Partnership



# Neighborhood Leadership Program

The Neighborhood Leadership Program is an innovative partnership between SBS and the Coro New York Leadership Center. The program provides a cohort of 20 individuals from Local Development Corporations across the city with the opportunity to develop their leadership skills, hone their commercial revitalization expertise, and learn new ways to pioneer change in their organizations and communities. This five-month leadership training program provides participants with exposure to key stakeholders and resources critical to implementing effective commercial revitalization efforts and offers innovative relationship and management strategies. In addition, the program teaches the skills needed to drive retail sales and support small businesses, including small business services, marketing and placemaking, and business attraction to improve retail mix.

Each participant in the program also undertakes a project to initiate change in their communities during the course of the program and beyond. Some projects focus on activating public place and modifying the physical environment in their community. For example, Meredith Phillips Almeida, the Deputy Director of the Myrtle Avenue Revitalization Project in Brooklyn, engaged local stakeholders to make a 17-block area in Fort Greene and Clinton Hill safer and greener. In

doing so, the organization is addressing multiple issues: improving pedestrian safety and access to public transit; a need for additional, usable public space in the community; remediation of a blighted area that has long been an eyesore; and the scarcity of resources to fund these improvements.

Other projects focus on building the capacity of local merchant groups, such as the project undertaken by Rebeca Ramirez, Commercial Revitalization Manager at the Heart of Brooklyn. Rebeca is working on a strategic plan for the local merchant association to help determine the future of the organization. This includes developing concrete tools that will help the association develop next steps towards sustainability and self-reliance.

While SBS celebrated the graduation of its second class from the Neighborhood Leadership Program in May 2012, the participants continue to use their new skills to create change in their communities.

Applications for the Neighborhood Leadership Program will be accepted beginning October 1, 2012. For more information, please visit [www.nyc.gov/neighborhoodleadership](http://www.nyc.gov/neighborhoodleadership).



“The program was incredibly crucial for me to learn to be a new leader of a BID. I have had the opportunity to get to know amazing colleagues with whom I will continue to collaborate.”

**Artineh Havan**

Executive Director,  
Grand Street BID



“This program has provided me with tools, resources, and relationships that allow me to make better decisions that impact the outcome of my projects.”

**Michael Lambert**

Deputy Director,  
Mosholu Preservation  
Corporation (MPC)



Commissioner Walsh and program staff with 2012 program graduates



# Business Improvement District Spotlights

## 82ND STREET PARTNERSHIP

The 82nd Street Partnership has much to celebrate in what has been a remarkably productive and exciting rebuilding year for this Jackson Heights and Elmhurst Business Improvement District. In early 2012, with leadership from local Council Members Julissa Ferreras and Daniel Dromm, and support from SBS Commissioner Rob Walsh, the partnership brought on a recent graduate of the Neighborhood Leadership Program, Seth Taylor, and immediately launched a 100 Day Action Plan to improve quality of life conditions in this busy commercial corridor. With a completely revamped set of core services, the 82nd Street Partnership has succeeded in implementing a sophisticated graffiti removal program.

To rebrand itself, the 82nd Street Partnership unveiled **a new company logo and uniform**, installed 22 custom-designed light pole banners, launched its website [82ndStreet.org](http://82ndStreet.org), and built an engaged social media audience. This past summer, the 82nd Street Partnership set out to lead a community visioning process to redesign a park space into a dynamically programmed public space at Dunningham Triangle. With its upcoming inaugural food and music festival, Viva Comida!, and a major public art installation in the works, 82nd Street has much to look forward to in the coming months!

Jamaica Center BID, NYC'S largest Urban Fashion District, presents:

# COME TO FASHION. COME TO LIFE.

A RED CARPET EVENING OF FASHION AND ENTERTAINMENT.

APRIL 21, 2012 : 6-9PM  
Jamaica Performing Arts Center  
153-10 Jamaica Ave  
Jamaica, NY 11432

RSVP REQUIRED  
Get your complimentary ticket today  
at [www.jamaicacenter.org](http://www.jamaicacenter.org)

Promotional material for the Jamaica Center BID's interactive fashion show

## JAMAICA CENTER

On April 21, 2012, downtown Jamaica Queens held its first-ever interactive fashion show hosted by the Jamaica Center Business Improvement District (JCBID). Titled “**Come to Fashion. Come to Life.**,” the showcase was an opportunity for local residents, business owners, and government officials to promote business opportunities in Jamaica and discuss the ways in which the thriving retail corridor could be improved. JCBID also sponsored a series of Girls’ Night Out celebrations at local restaurants to promote emerging

designer labels and the small businesses in the area. Laurel Brown, Executive Director of the JCBID, said, “Jamaica Center teems with style, and so we thought an event like this only makes sense. Jamaica is home to jazz legends, hip-hop greats, and an array of cultures that span the globe – and all influence the local fashion flair. We are excited to work closely with local partners such as Applebee’s, Milani and Barefoot Wine & Bubbly® on this fashion exhibition, which brings to life the energetic culture that is Jamaica Center.”

## 82nd Street Partnership branding



Free solar-powered cell phone charging stations in DUMBO



> continued

## FULTON AREA BUSINESS ALLIANCE

The Fulton Area Business Alliance organizes a monthly event in the outdoor public spaces and pedestrian plazas of Fulton Street in Fort Greene and Clinton Hill. FAB Fridays features free live concerts; games, arts & crafts and activities for kids; outdoor performances; and showcases from local cultural and arts organizations.

Held during the summer months, the BID has held five FAB Fridays this year, each of which profiled a specific event. The **FAB Friday held in April coincided with Earth Day weekend**, and consisted of

activities with partners from GrowNYC and the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. May's event celebrated BAM's DanceAfrica's 35 year anniversary with music at three outdoor locations, as well as events that celebrated African traditions and culture. The event in June collaborated with SONYA (South of the Navy Yard Artists) to promote visual arts, and the August event, a tribute to "Soul Train," included a dance party complete with a Soul Train dance floor. According to the BID: "FAB Fridays fills Fulton Street with music and good vibes – a great way for merchants, shoppers and residents to greet the weekend."

### FAB Friday Earth Day celebration



**FAB FRIDAYS**  
FORT GREENE CLINTON HILL  
• FULTON STREET •  
\*\*\*  
**CELEBRATE EARTH DAY**  
FRIDAY, APRIL 20, 2012  
LIVE MUSIC ON THE STREET / CONCERTS FOR KIDS  
ARTS & CRAFTS & GAMES / SPECIAL OFFERS AND PROMOTIONS  
SCHEDULED EVENTS  
10:00-11:00AM  
FREE CONCERT FOR KIDS  
JON SAMSON  
Putnam Triangle Plaza  
5:00-8:00PM  
FREE CONCERTS  
FIFTH NATION  
Fowler Square  
3:00-6:00PM  
FREE KID'S ARTS, CRAFTS  
ACTIVITIES AND GAMES  
Putnam Triangle Plaza  
DJ: BARRY BLENDS  
Fulton/Vanderbilt  
MICHAEL HILL'S BLUES MOB  
Putnam Triangle Plaza



## DUMBO BID

The DUMBO BID has been partnering with local organizations to provide tech-oriented services and organize innovative events. In August, the BID partnered with Pensa, an industrial design firm, to offer **free solar-powered cell phone charging** to its residents and visitors. The chargers were installed on umbrellas and tables located in the Pearl Street Triangle plaza, allowing visitors to plug their phone in using only a USB cord. According to the BID, "This is an awesome example of one of our companies working to give back to the neighborhood – and a great way to further brand DUMBO as the tech-forward neighborhood in NYC."

The BID also worked with Loossecubes, a DUMBO-based office sharing company, to transform the archway under the Manhattan Bridge into a co-working lab. The BID provided free WiFi and beverage to event-goers, who spent the afternoon working on the picnic tables set up under the archway. The BID is planning on holding the event every Thursday until the end of August.

In addition, the BID's website, DUMBO.is, will receive a merit award from the International Downtown Association (IDA) at its national conference in November.

## Welcome new BIDs!

### Westchester Square



The Westchester Square BID will now be the anchor to the fast growing economic expansion of the Northeast Bronx.

### Atlantic Avenue



Representing over 300 businesses in Brooklyn, the Atlantic Avenue BID is dedicated to creating a thriving boulevard where there is "Always More to Explore."

### Chinatown



Home to some of the most historic portions of New York, such as the original jewelry district, 5-Points, and the Bowery, Chinatown has become the 9th Chinatown to organize a BID in North America.



# Avenue NYC – Revitalizing NYC's Commercial Corridors

Since 1980, the Avenue NYC grant program has been a key source of commercial revitalization funding for local economic development organizations throughout the City. In Fiscal Year 2012, 48 Avenue NYC-funded organizations attracted a total of 99 new businesses to their commercial corridors, created 4 new merchants associations and revitalized another 12, and **improved 22 storefront façades**. In 2013, Avenue NYC will distribute \$1.6 million to 45 local development

corporations in all boroughs, and provide program planning assistance.

In FY 2012, Avenue NYC awarded the Women's Housing and Economic Development Corporation (WHEDCo) Business Attraction and Merchant Organizing grants to advertise Bronx's growing Crotona East trade area to retailers and brokers, and convince business owners to collaborate in a new merchant association. With these funds, WHEDCo attracted 14 new businesses, reducing the commercial vacancy rate

to 13%, and enabled the commercial corridor to capture a portion of the \$9.7 million dollars in specialty food leakage. The new Merchant Association grew its membership to 30 merchants and launched a Shop Local campaign that in one month drew 150 shoppers to participating stores. In FY 2013, WHEDCo will use Avenue NYC funds to attract Bronx-based retailers in clothing and other high priority retail categories, strengthen the capacity of the Southern Boulevard Merchant Association, and connect area 'mom and pop' shops to business development tools.



Storefront improvement on Myrtle Avenue in Clinton Hill - before & after

Last year Avenue NYC also funded the Pratt Area Community Council (PACC) in Business Attraction. PACC staff hosted 'Rolling Up the Gates' events, where potential entrepreneurs toured vacant retail spaces in Brooklyn's Fulton Street retail market. With Avenue NYC funds, PACC upgraded this event to include business development workshops for business owners. The R.U.G. Program had more than 500 participants and assisted more than 25 small businesses open both in and out of the organization's catchment areas. This year, PACC will use Avenue NYC funds to expand the services of its R.U.G. Program in order to continue to reduce the vacancy rate.

## BID Challenge

**BID Challenge** is a new initiative developed to encourage innovation and creativity in neighborhood development programs with BIDs across the five boroughs. BID Challenge awards, ranging up to \$75,000, will be allocated to BIDs that present the most inventive and impactful economic development and revitalization programs that would

otherwise not be achieved due to limited organizational capacity and/or funding.

The BID Challenge is intended to spark new ideas and approaches to matters that are of great concern to local neighborhoods and commercial corridors. This competitive process

will help identify innovative ideas that can then be replicated across the City to improve a business environment or solve neighborhood problems.

NYC BIDs with assessments under \$1,000,000 were eligible to submit their applications by September 14.

For questions, contact us at [bidchallenge@sbs.nyc.gov](mailto:bidchallenge@sbs.nyc.gov).





# Neighborhood Retail Recruitment Program

The SBS Neighborhood Retail Recruitment Program, a joint effort with retail attraction experts at JGSC Group, provides neighborhoods with targeted technical assistance to help identify the range of retailers that can be supported by their local markets. Neighborhood representatives receive in-depth analyses on their markets and demographics, district-wide leasing plans, district marketing materials, and a set of pre-qualified prospects in order to begin their outreach campaigns.

As part of this program, SBS teamed up with Northfield Community Local Development Corporation in Staten Island to develop a **comprehensive retail attraction strategy for Port Richmond Avenue**. The strategy addresses the current vacant commercial properties in the district, analyzes the district's former concentration of furniture and furnishing-related stores, and contemplates redevelopment that might occur as a result of New York

City's North Shore 2030 vision study. The strategy recognizes that this retail district must serve the daily needs of established local residents and attract destination-shopping visitors. SBS, in partnership with Northfield Community Local Development Corporation and the JGSC Group, is now implementing the strategy, which aims to clean up and market the district as well as attract new restaurants and home furnishing stores to the area.



Come see the future.



Retail attraction collateral for Port Richmond Avenue

**We're looking for a good furniture store.  
In fact, we're looking for several.**



## BID Express

**BID Express** is a new administrative cost-sharing model that will help smaller neighborhoods and commercial corridors across New York City form BIDs.

Many smaller BIDs can spend as much as 45% of their budgets on administrative costs. This has created a significant barrier to entry for some areas of the City that have expressed

interest in starting a BID. BID Express provides a solution.

Through BID Express, commercial corridors interested in BID formation now have the option to hire a centralized management group to operate the BID. By focusing solely on sanitation and maintenance services and centralizing management, BID

Express BIDs will find the cost savings necessary to make forming a BID possible for areas of New York City that have been unable to in the past.

To take advantage of this new way to form a BID or for more information on BID Express, contact us at [bidexpress@sbs.nyc.gov](mailto:bidexpress@sbs.nyc.gov).





## Neighborhood Development

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#### NDD/SBS INITIATIVES

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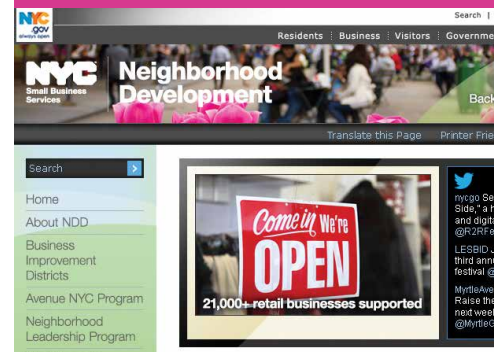
#### NEWEST BIDS

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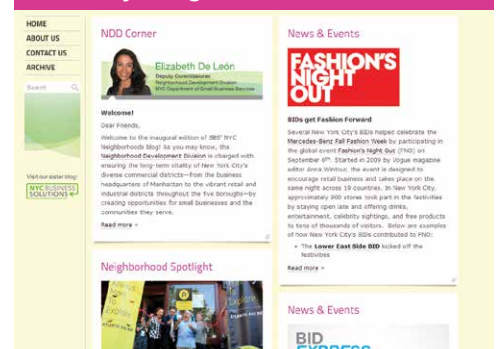
#### BID SPOTLIGHTS

#### NYC.gov/neighborhoods



#### NEWLY REVAMPED WEBSITE

#### www.nycneighborhoods.tumblr.com



#### ANNOUNCING OUR NEW BLOG