

BRIGHTON BEACH

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY RESILIENCY

FINAL REPORT ■ FEBRUARY 2016

BRIGHTON NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION
LOCAL INITIATIVES SUPPORT CORPORATION NYC
HESTER STREET COLLABORATIVE

Funded by Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) NYC



BRIGHTON
NEIGHBORHOOD
ASSOCIATION

LISC
New York City



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INTRODUCTION

Brighton Beach, located on one of the nation's most iconic urban beach fronts, has long been a neighborhood of immigrants. Following the fall of the Soviet Union, a wave of Russian immigrants settled in Brighton Beach. More recently, new groups of Latin American and South Asian immigrants have come to call Brighton Beach home. In 2012, Brighton Beach was hit hard by Hurricane Sandy. While life has returned to normal for most New Yorkers, many in Brighton Beach are still struggling to recover fully from the effects of the storm.

Three years have passed since Sandy hit New York City. Located on the shoreline, Brighton Beach suffered severe flooding, extended loss of services and extensive property damage. Hundreds of residents were displaced, most temporarily, some permanently. The effects of the storm on the neighborhood were exacerbated by high concentrations of poverty, linguistic isolation, and other symptoms of vulnerability.

In late 2015, Brighton Neighborhood Association (BNA), a long-time non-profit neighborhood anchor, sought to understand why it has taken so long for the neighborhood to get back on its feet. Most importantly, BNA worked closely with neighborhood residents to come up with innovative solutions to persistent problems, many of which existed in Brighton Beach long before the storm.

With the support of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation New York City (LISC NYC) and Hester Street Collaborative (HSC), BNA surveyed and interviewed hundreds of local residents in three languages in order to identify community needs and priorities and to get a sense of the kinds of programs, projects and policies they most want and need to make the neighborhood a safer, more equitable and vibrant place to live. Together, we developed the foundation for a community-based resiliency plan.

This report begins with an overview of the history of BNA and a description of the services they provide. That is followed by a snapshot of the Brighton Beach community - demographics, health indicators and other relevant data that start to paint a picture of who makes up this community and the kinds of challenges they face. Finally, to put some of the residents' ideas into action, we developed an illustrated building scenario for a potential development site - a municipal parking lot located near the shore.

History: Brighton Neighborhood Association (BNA) has been serving the Brighton Beach community for almost forty years. The founding of the organization dates back to 1977, when Pat Singer, current Executive Director of BNA, rallied her neighbors to address housing abandonment and neighborhood blight which were severely affecting the community. To combat these issues, a group of residents staged a demonstration at the key neighborhood intersections of Brighton Beach and Coney Island Avenues. For four hours, approximately 500 demonstrators - many in wheelchairs, walkers or aided by canes - protested the deterioration of the neighborhood and its services. BNA's founding was a key outcome of this protest.¹⁹

BNA Services: Since its founding almost forty years ago, BNA has grown to provide a range of services and programs to neighborhood residents. The commitment to the neighborhood including a tenacious but flexible adaptability to changing conditions has resulted in a positive impact in the Brighton Beach neighborhood. Since their founding in the late 70's, BNA has been an anchor in the community, combatting the disinvestment and the resulting deterioration the neighborhood faced. BNA proved to be a critical resource in lifting up the community when up to 15 feet of sea and sewer water severely damaged the neighborhood during Hurricane Sandy. Their services include:

- Educate tenants on tenant laws and housing rights;
- Helping homeowners secure government low-interest loans;
- Assistance with settling of landlord-tenant disputes;
- Assisting in retrofitting buildings for accessibility (ADA compliance);
- Tenant organizing to address building-wide problems and quality of life issues;
- Connection of residents to entitlement programs such as subsidized housing, food stamps and/or Section 8.

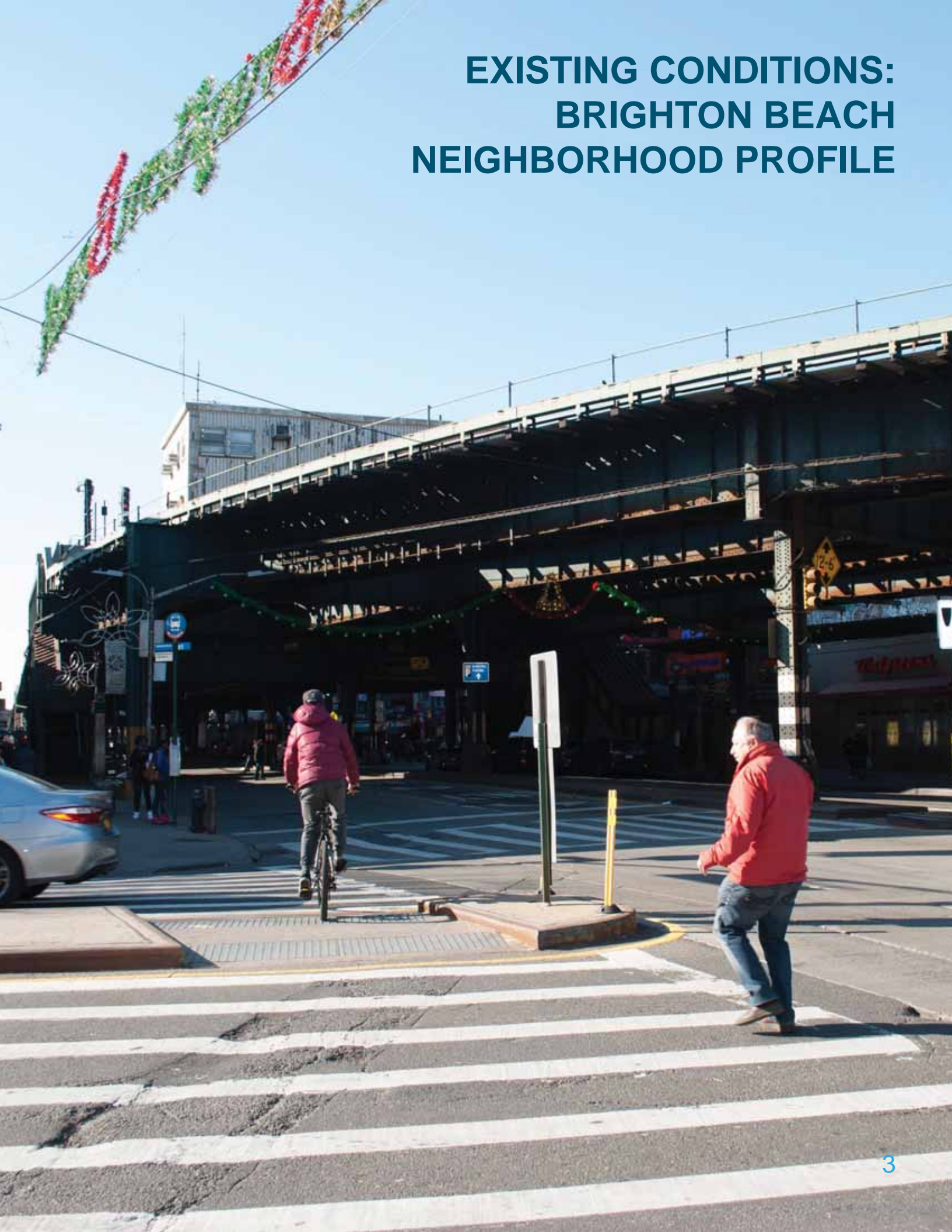
BNA is visited by over 2,00 residents a year, mostly tenants, asking for help to sustain their homes, put food on their table and in the case of Brighton's large immigrant population, navigate their new homeland.

Sandy Aftermath: Immediately after Hurricane Sandy, BNA focused its attention on the many Brighton Beach residents in dire need of food, shelter, and information. The organization served as a trusted community resource in a time of desperate need. After a few months of attending to emergency needs, BNA shifted their focus to hurricane recovery efforts. Supported by capacity-building funding from LISC, BNA connected local homeowners to a wide variety of recovery resources including:

- Translation services for the large Russian and Spanish speaking populations;
- Referrals to other social service providers specializing in assistance to survivors of disaster;
- Reliable and real time connections to vital recovery programming such as the Neighborhood Revitalization NYC Mold Treatment Program, NRNYC Single Family Repair Program, and NYC Build it Back Multifamily Program.

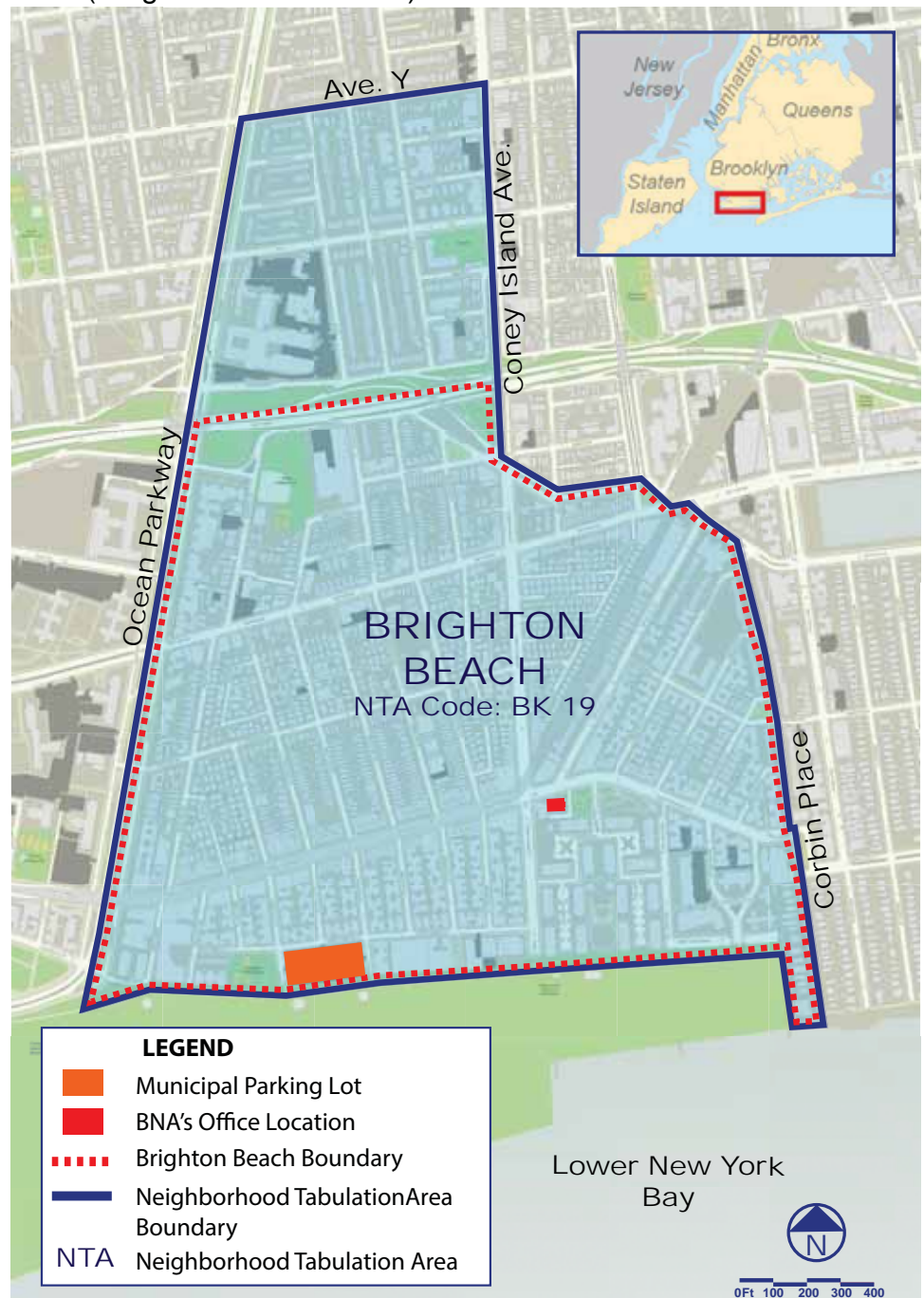
Under its long-standing and committed leadership, BNA has served as a pillar in the community of Brighton Beach for nearly four decades.

EXISTING CONDITIONS: BRIGHTON BEACH NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILE



LOCATION

Brighton Beach is located in the southernmost part of Brooklyn, in the middle of Coney Island peninsula. The peninsula was formerly an island, filled in for the construction of the Belt Parkway before World War II. The neighborhood is bordered by Coney Island to the west (at Ocean Parkway), Manhattan Beach to the east (at Corbin Place), Gravesend to the north (Belt Parkway), and the Atlantic Ocean to the south (Riegelmann Boardwalk).



Brighton Beach Neighborhood Map, NYC Department of City Planning

BNA uses the geographic boundaries of Brighton Beach as the catchment area for the services they provide to community residents. However, the data described in this report are based on the New York City Department of City Planning Neighborhood Tabulation Areas (NTA) which has a slightly larger geographic extent, shown in dark blue on the map on page 4. The NTA data captures all of Brighton Beach as well as a 14 block area to the immediate north.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Brighton Beach has a total population of 35,547 residents, the majority of whom are white, foreign born, female, and older than the city average. The median age is 46 years old, significantly older than the median age of Brooklyn (33) and New York City as a whole (36). Nearly a third (30.3%) of Brighton Beach residents are 60 years old and over, close to three times higher than the borough-wide senior population (12%). The average family size is 3 people.

Russian immigrants who arrived in the late 1980s and 1990s, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, make up the majority of the local population. However, during the last decade, Brighton Beach has seen a significant increase in the number of Asian and Hispanic residents. Seventy percent of local residents are white, 15% Hispanic, 13% Asian, and 1% African-American. Close to 70% of residents are foreign born² and 60% of residents report that they speak English less than “very well” or don’t speak English at all³.

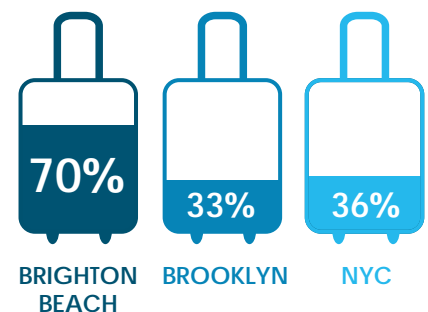


Russian Market on Brighton Beach Avenue (part of neighborhood Business Improvement District)

MEDIAN AGE

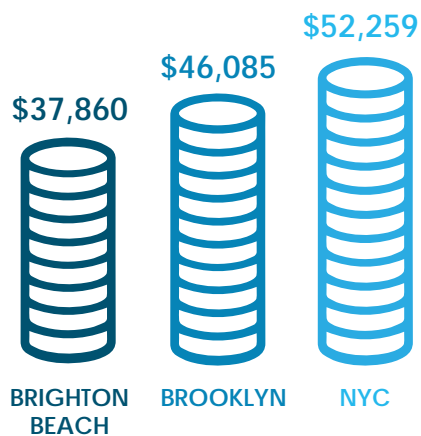


FOREIGN BORN RESIDENTS

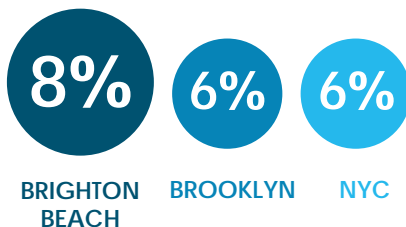


RESIDENTS LIVING
BELOW POVERTY LEVELBRIGHTON
BEACH:
33%NYC:
20%

MEDIAN INCOME



UNEMPLOYMENT



ECONOMY

A third of Brighton Beach residents live below the poverty line, compared with 20% of residents citywide⁵. The median household income in Brighton Beach is \$37,860⁵ compared with \$46,085⁶ for Brooklyn and \$52,259⁶ for New York City.

Brighton Beach has a high unemployment rate of 8%⁶ compared to 6% for Brooklyn and 6% citywide⁷. Close to three quarters (70%) of residents receive some form of financial support, including cash assistance (TANF), SNAP, SSI and Medicaid.

An infusion of new foreign residents in the area in the late 1990s brought new economic power to a shopping stretch located on Brighton Beach Avenue under the elevated train. Twenty years ago, this stretch was littered with empty storefronts as a result of disinvestment and abandonment. Today, this commercial corridor is supported by the Brighton Business Improvement District (BID), whose boundaries are Brighton Beach Avenue from Ocean Parkway to Brighton 15th street, approximately twenty-five blocks.

Given its location on the edge of the Atlantic Ocean, Brighton Beach attracts many tourists in the summer, although significantly less than its neighbor, Coney Island. While the tourist economy is undoubtedly a boon for the neighborhood, the summer tourism season is short and there is untapped spending potential of local residents not served by businesses focused exclusively on the tourist trade. Attracting tourists in the off-season and developing the non-tourism local economy would undoubtedly pay off for the local economy.



Brighton Beach Business Improvement District Map, source: Brighton Beach BID.

HEALTH

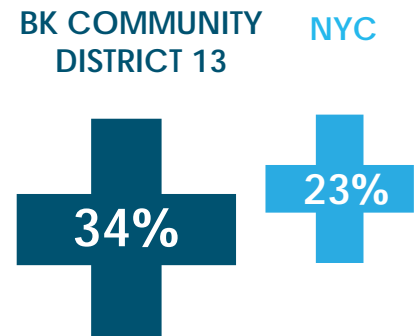
Brighton Beach is part of Brooklyn Community District 13 (CD 13), which includes Coney Island, Sea Gate, West Brighton, and some portions of Gravesend and Homecrest. A large portion of the CD 13 community struggles with persistent physical and mental health problems. According to NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's (DOHMH) 2013 NYC Community Health Survey, almost 34% of CD 13 residents self-reported poor general health, compared to 23% City-wide, making CD 13 the fifth highest in the City for that indicator.

At 12%, CD 13 has the highest serious psychological distress rate in the City, more than twice that of New York City as a whole (5%). Data suggests that mental health is a persistent problem in the neighborhood that goes largely untreated. Over 20% of residents have a history of depression, and close to 7% have been newly diagnosed with depression. While 1 in 5 residents have a history of depression, only 30% of residents with mental health problems receive counseling or treatment.

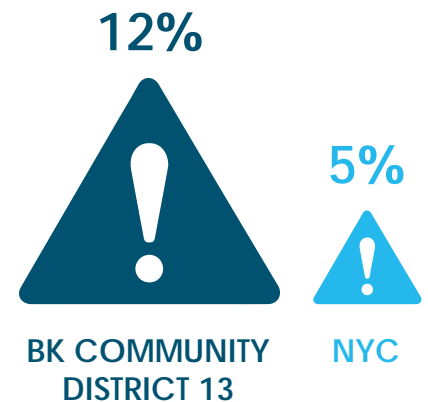
CD 13 ranks fifth highest in the City for high blood pressure with 36% of the adult population suffering from the condition, compared to 29% city-wide. High blood pressure and high cholesterol contribute to heart disease.

Brighton Beach has a breathtaking waterfront with a famous boardwalk that is ideal for long walks and local exercise clubs. However, over half (51%) of Coney Island and Brighton Beach residents do not engage in the minimum recommended amount of physical activity per week (at least 150 minutes). Over a third (35%) of residents do not exercise at all, making CD 13 the fourth least physically active neighborhood in the city. Additionally, 32% of Brighton Beach and Coney Island adults classify as obese. They are surpassed only by Canarsie, East Harlem, Pelham Bay-Throgs Neck and the South Bronx.

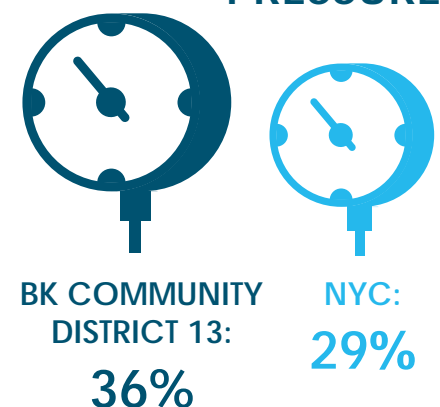
POOR GENERAL HEALTH



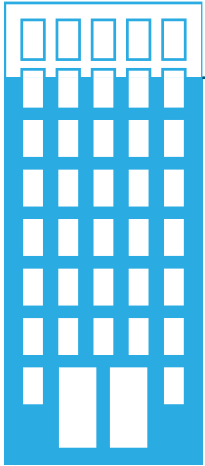
PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS



HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

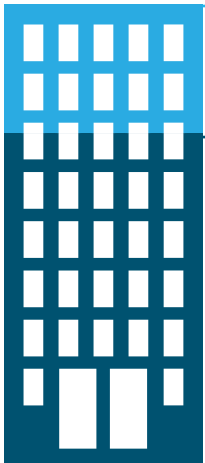


AGING BUILDING STOCK



85% OF
BRIGHTON
BEACH
HOUSING
WAS BUILT
BETWEEN
1939-1969

HOUSING TENURE



OWNER
OCCUPIED:
29%

RENTER
OCCUPIED:
71%

HIGH RISE APARTMENT BUILDING

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Brighton Beach's architecture is a mix of private houses and large condominium and co-op towers. The real estate market offers a variety of units, from economical studios to stunning multi-bedroom penthouses with direct ocean views, located in prestigious full-service complexes. In the inland areas, the neighborhood consists of single-family frame houses along the side streets, with brick mixed-use buildings along the avenues.

Brighton Beach has a diverse inventory of housing typologies including: historic bungalows, prewar mid-rise multi-family buildings, tower-in-the-park high rise apartment buildings, 1 to 3 family attached, semi-detached, and detached homes, and new multi-family buildings. Close to 85% of the Brighton Beach housing stock was built between 1939 and 1969.

By and large, the second wave of immigrants to Brighton Beach - Latinos and South Asians - as well as the African-American population live in the northern sector of the neighborhood (Neptune Avenue and north to the Highway). The white and Russian population are concentrated in the southern sector.

The neighborhood's diversity is reflected in the built environment: a mix of temples, mosques, and churches within each district.





**HISTORIC
BUNGALOW**

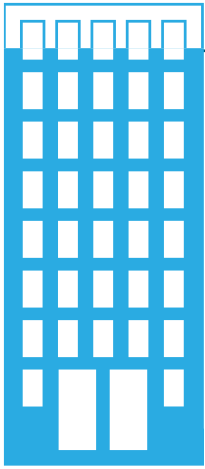


**PRE-WAR
MULTI-FAMILY
BUILDING**



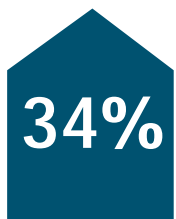
**NEW
MULTI-FAMILY
BUILDING**

HOUSING UNITS

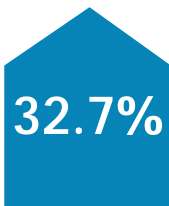


**90% OF
BRIGHTON
BEACH
HOUSING IS
OCCUPIED**

RENT BURDEN



**BRIGHTON
BEACH**



BROOKLYN

HOUSING BY BEDROOM

**STUDIO:
13%**

1 BR: 41%

2 BR: 30%

**3+ BR:
41%**

HOUSING

Brighton Beach has an estimated 15,273 total housing units, 90% of which are occupied and 10% of which are vacant⁸. Close to three-quarters (71.4%) of the housing units are either one or two bedroom apartments.

Renters make up over 70% of the population, with homeownership at 30%. The median monthly rent is \$965⁵ compared with \$1,378⁹ in Brooklyn. While paying lower rents than many of their neighbors, a third of CD 13 residents still struggle to make ends meet: 34% of residents are rent burdened (paying over 30% of their annual income in rent), about the same as residents borough-wide (33%).

Developers recently have bought up some of the one and two family homes located on side streets in order to demolish the houses to make room for co-ops. However, as the demographics indicate, there is a high need for additional senior housing, senior centers and nursing homes to serve the aging local population.

Brighton Beach was a magnet for summertime escape during the end of the 19th Century because of the beach, hotels, and bungalow colonies, among other amenities. Today, the iconic bungalows do not have landmark status or other designation to protect from demolition and re-development. Real estate pressures have led some bungalows to be converted into year-round homes. Additionally, some homes have been abandoned due to severe damage after Superstorm



Oceana Luxury Condominium, courtesy of Brighton Neighborhood Association (BNA)

Sandy. Still others were razed to create high-rise modern buildings. For example, the iconic Brighton Beach baths were demolished and replaced by the 'Oceana Development,' a high-rise and high-end residential building. The unique architectural character of Brighton Beach is at risk due to development pressures.

OPEN SPACE

Brighton Beach residents have access to the Coney Island Beach and boardwalk, one of the most famous oceanfront recreation areas in the US. Since Hurricane Sandy, Brighton Beach has undergone a number of capital projects to restore this open space and also to make the City more resilient. Brighton Beach residents once again have access to fresh ocean air and sandy beaches and also new basketball courts, game equipment, picnic areas and other amenities. Brighton Beach has a network of playgrounds scattered around the



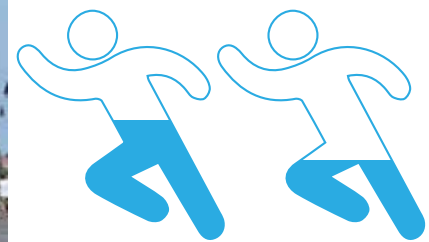
Riegelmann Boardwalk, courtesy of Teri Tynes via Flickr

neighborhood: Tilyou, Brighton, PS 209 and Grady Playgrounds. Those four playgrounds provide access to areas reserved for toddlers, young children, and their caregivers. The playgrounds include comfort stations, swings, seesaws, slides, jungle gyms, basketball courts, and handball courts. The northern, and largest playground, Grady Playground, also has bleachers, track and field facilities, picnic tables, game tables, fences and water fountains.

According to New Yorkers for Parks' open space standards, Brighton Beach has an adequate amount of open space per resident, thanks largely to the beach. There is, however, a lack of diversity in the open space available to the local community. As an example, the

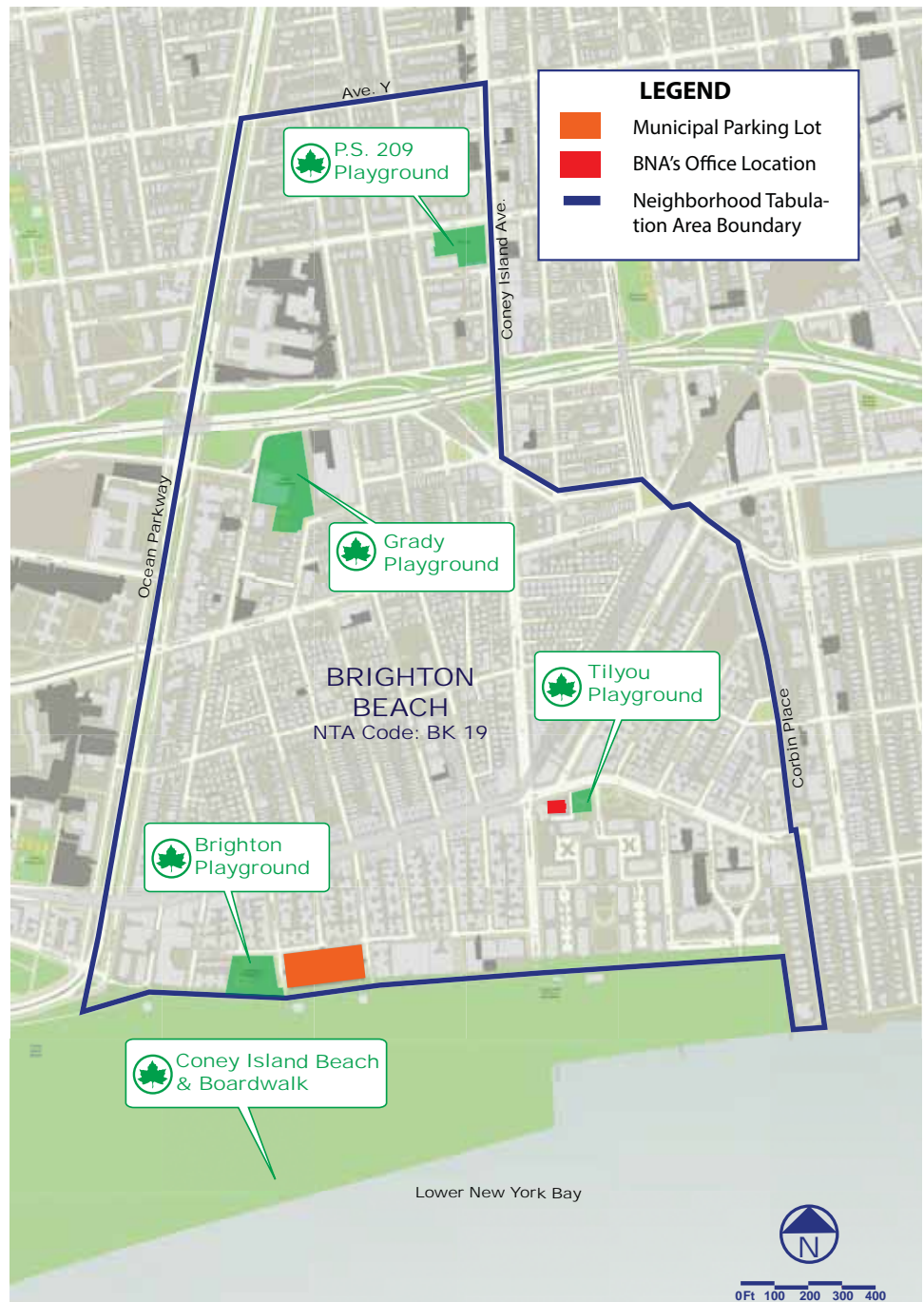
There is no special designation to protect historic bungalows from predator real estate developers.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



51%
OF RESIDENTS
EXERCISE
LESS THAN 2.5
HOURS PER
WEEK

35%
OF RESIDENTS
DO NOT
EXERCISE AT
ALL



Brighton Beach Open Space Map, NYC Department of Parks & Recreation

neighborhood does not have a single community garden. This is particularly important for Brighton Beach, with one of the oldest populations in the city. With so many local seniors, adequate green and open space with age-appropriate programming, would be a significant benefit.

Brighton Beach streets are among some of the city's most dangerous for cyclists. Between 2009 to 2013, there were 1,689 car crashes¹¹.



Brighton Playground

Cyclists are the most vulnerable in those crashes: one of the factors that contributes to the number of fatalities are limited and disconnected bike lanes.

Brighton Beach is also surrounded by Jamaica Bay, part of the Gateway National Recreation Area. The neighborhood doesn't have a designated bike route to connect with Jamaica Bay¹². As a result, accessibility to this beautiful, green, open space presents a real challenge to local residents, especially those without cars.



Brighton Beach Bike Map, source: 2015 NYC Bike Map by NYC DOT.

TRANSPORTATION

Brighton Beach is well-connected to both Brooklyn and Manhattan by public transportation: the B and Q trains and five local bus lines (B1, B4, B36, B49, and B68) serve the neighborhood. It takes approximately 25 minutes by train to reach Downtown Brooklyn and about 40 minutes by train to Lower Manhattan from Brighton Beach during rush hour¹³. The Q and B trains run through the middle of the neighborhood, connecting Brighton residents to the Coney Island depot and, from there, to the D, F, and N train lines.

The **B** train was rated the worst performing line in the subway system in 2015



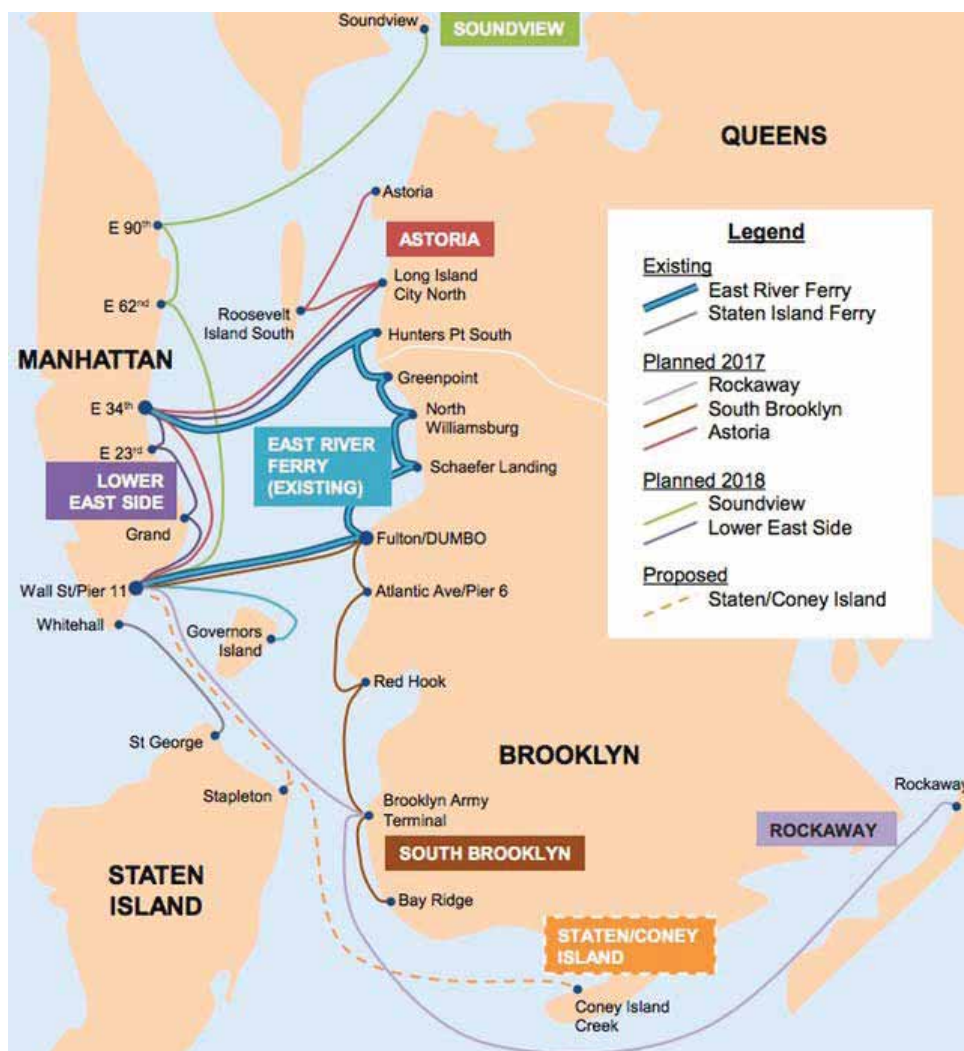
Brighton Beach Subway Station

However, the trains that directly serve Brighton Beach offer various challenges: the Q runs least often, is least clean and is one of the most crowded trains during rush hour¹⁴. At the same time, the B line has a below-average amount of daytime service, doesn't run at night and its cars break down more often than the MTA average. The B and Q lines are tied for 13th best of the 19 subway lines that were rated¹³. Moreover, local train stations do not comply with ADA standards for handicapped accessibility making access next to impossible for disabled residents as well as seniors and families with infants and very young children.

Shore Parkway (the south-central section of Belt Parkway) provides a direct route to Manhattan, Staten Island, and JFK airport, while Ocean Parkway, Coney Island Avenue, and Ocean Avenue are

among the fastest ways to reach central Brooklyn. When possible, community residents largely rely on private cars for transportation both inside and outside of the neighborhood. As a result, traffic congestion is a frequent neighborhood complaint: the improvement of key street intersections, better signage, and increased parking are longstanding problems.

Transportation by ferry possibly could help solve a number of problems – from improved connectivity to traffic and parking problems. Currently, however, the new citywide ferry initiative does not contemplate Brighton Beach as a hub in the proposed network.



Map courtesy of http://gothamist.com/2015/02/04/expanded_ferry_map_nyc.php

CRIME AND SAFETY

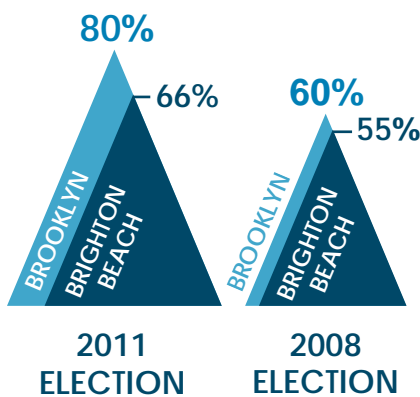
In recent years, Brighton Beach has experienced dramatic improvement in public safety. The 60th Precinct, which serves CD 13, has seen a considerable decline in the rates of violent, property and felony crimes: the rates in CD 13 are the lowest in all of Brooklyn.

During the warm months, Brighton Beach experiences a spike in population, creating a spike in public safety needs. During the summer, traffic enforcement is stretched to the limit, and Park Enforcement Patrol workers are minimal. Transit and Housing Police are busy. After-midnight shifts, especially during the weekend, count on a relatively small number of police officers to cover a wide range of difficult sites such as parks, the boardwalk, Brighton Beach Avenue, the high-rise districts, and the amusement area ¹⁵.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Brighton Beach's grassroots organizations have advocated for positive change in the neighborhood since the late 1970's. Nevertheless, local participation in electoral politics is fairly low. During the 2011 election, only 66% of CD 13 residents were registered to vote, compared with 80% for Brooklyn as a whole ¹⁶. Over half (55%) of CD 13 residents registered to vote participated in the 2008 presidential election, compared with just over 60% for all of Brooklyn ¹⁶.

ELIGIBLE VOTERS REGISTERED



Regardless of the low voter turnout, Brighton Beach has a history of mobilizing community residents to advocate for change. During the 1950s and 1960s, the number of senior citizens and low-income residents in the neighborhood increased. During the city's financial crisis in the 1970s, many civil service workers living in the neighborhood moved away. At the same time, large numbers of middle-class families migrated to the suburbs.

As a result of all these factors, many homes were converted into single-room-occupancy (SRO) dwellings. Landlords refused to keep up their buildings. The elderly were attacked by youth gangs, many of whom were involved with drugs. Abandoned buildings were burned and rapid population loss created fear in the community ¹⁸.

In response to rising crime and disinvestment, the community banded together organized by local leaders and community organizations like BNA to advocate for change. As a result, the neighborhood has changed significantly since those days.

Today, crime has declined precipitously and a number of faith-based and other non-profit organizations provide services and advocacy support.



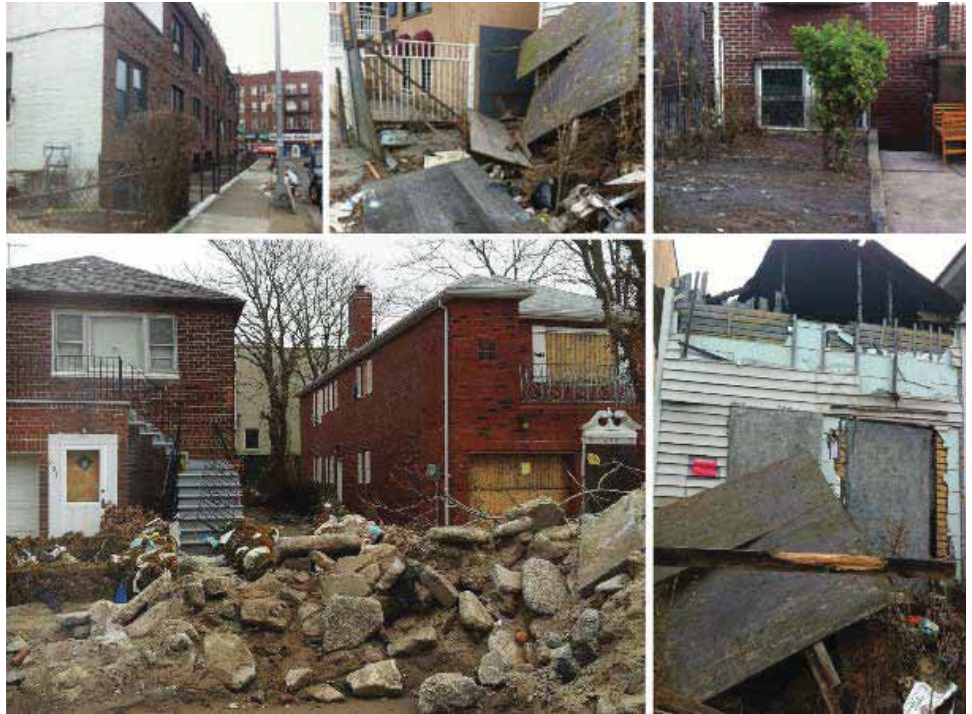
Brighton Beach Neighborhood festival (1985) and BNA Executive Director Pat Singer with former NYC Mayor Ed Koch (1979), photos courtesy of BNA

RESILIENCY

Brighton Beach enjoys open space, views and recreational opportunities as a result of its oceanfront location. At the same time, Brighton Beach was one of the communities hardest hit by Hurricane Sandy. As per the NYC Hurricane Contingency Plan, there are six flood zones that define hurricane risk with zone 1 being the most at risk to flooding and other risks of climate change, and zone 6, the least. Most of Brighton Beach is located either in zone 1 or 2. As a result, the majority of residents will be ordered to evacuate in the event of an emergency. In addition, Brighton Beach is ranked as a high-risk flood zone according to FEMA.

During Hurricane Sandy, the majority of buildings in the community experienced some level of flooding. The homes closest to the waterfront fared worst, with inundation of approximately 9 to 15 feet of water. The majority of local residents did not have electricity for nearly a month after Sandy. In addition, there was no heat and hot water. NYC Sanitation was not able to collect garbage for weeks because of street flooding. Gas leaks generated environmental concern among the residents and many small homeowners and multifamily property owners lost their heating systems entirely because of basement flooding. As a result of the flooding, mold became a persistent problem in the neighborhood.

Local businesses also were paralyzed by the lack of power and other utilities. In the immediate storm aftermath, access to food and other



Damage from Super-storm Sandy, photo courtesy of The Post-Sandy Neighborhood Assessment Project Report by Architecture for the Humanity NY

essential goods was extremely challenging. Today, some community facilities, such as day-care centers, are still severely storm-damaged. Consequently, families are not able to receive these vital social services. Some local schools are still awaiting post-storm repairs and provisional solutions have been implemented.



Flooding during Super-storm Sandy, photo courtesy of Mr. Railfan via Photobucket

Moreover, infrastructure repairs for ongoing and persistent flooding are still outstanding. Back-up sewers and catch basins need to be installed or repaired.

In addition to damage to property, the health and wellbeing of local residents was also deeply affected by the storm. Community members suffered post-traumatic stress. Seniors, one of the most vulnerable populations, were made more vulnerable both during and after the storm and had to rely on family and local non-profit organizations for help.



Damage from Super-storm Sandy, photo courtesy of The Post-Sandy Neighborhood Assessment Project Report by Architecture for the Humanity NY

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES AND FINDINGS



COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

As part of this study, Brighton Beach residents were surveyed and interviewed to learn more about the kinds of programs and resources they most want and need. The community survey and the focus interviews engaged community residents around three key topics: 1) recovery, preparation and resiliency; 2) needed services; and, 3) needed community facilities.

SURVEY PROCESS

The community survey was conducted by HSC and Brighton Neighborhood Association (BNA) staff members for a period of two months. In order to capture the ethnic diversity of Brighton Beach, the survey was provided to community residents in English, Spanish and Russian and was available for people who either live, work, own property, go to school or receive services in Brighton Beach. Most surveys were administered during key community events or existing BNA programs.

SURVEY FINDINGS

DEMOGRAPHICS

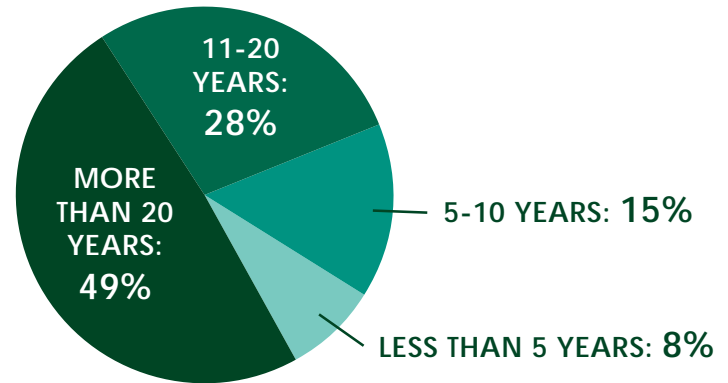


EARN LESS THAN \$25,000 A YEAR: **88%**

EARN \$25K
OR MORE
PER YEAR:
12%

Almost 90% of
survey respondents
earn less than
\$25,000 per year

Two thirds of survey respondents have lived in Brighton Beach for more than 10 years



More than half of survey respondents are over 60 years old



NEIGHBORHOOD ISSUES

Survey respondents said that their biggest concerns about the neighborhood are:



AVAILABILITY OF
SAFE, AFFORDABLE
HOUSING:
28%

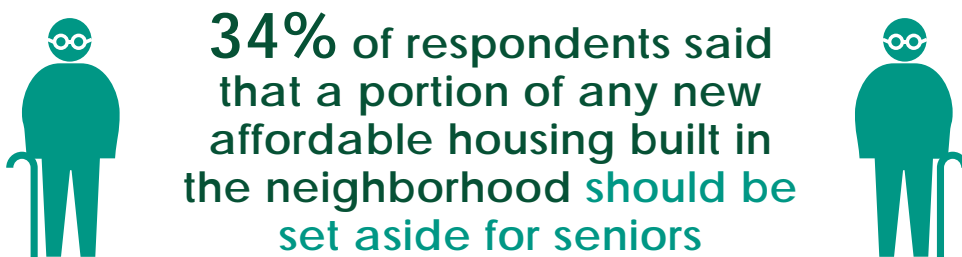


LACK OF
PARKING:
24%

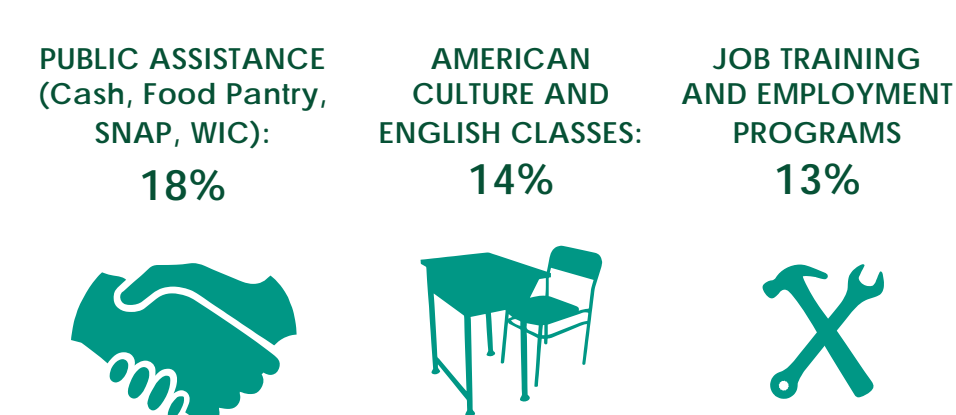


LACK OF JOB
OPPORTUNITIES
10%

Survey respondents said that the most pressing issues facing Brighton Beach are:



The **SOCIAL SERVICES** that respondents would most like to see are:



The **COMMUNITY FACILITIES** that respondents would most like to see are:

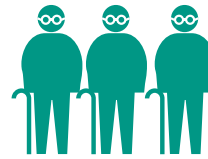
NATURAL DISASTER
EMERGENCY CENTER

29%



SENIOR
CENTER

15%



COMMUNITY CENTER
(With art/education
programs):

11%



The **RETAIL BUSINESSES** that respondents say are the most needed additions:

GROCERY STORES:

29%



RESTAURANTS
OR CAFES:

29%



FARMER'S
MARKET:

12%



DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

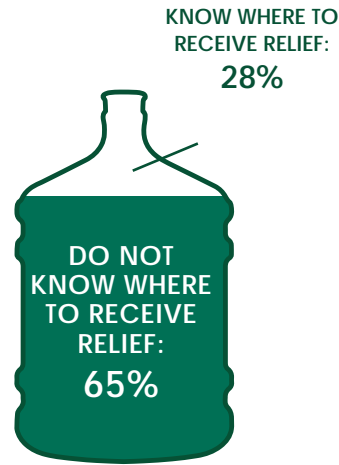


65% of respondents feel that Brighton Beach is not ready to respond to a natural disaster,

and **43%** feel that the City has done nothing to help the neighborhood prepare for the next disaster.

61% of respondents said that they would **NOT** know where to go or what to do in the event of a natural disaster,

and **72%** say that they would **NOT** know where to receive relief services.



INTERVIEW PROCESS

HSC and BNA staff members conducted focus interviews with key community residents identified by BNA. The objective of these interviews was to get a general understanding of the challenges faced by local residents - both historic and current. The interviews were conducted in English, Spanish and Russian with the help of translators.

INTERVIEW FINDINGS

CRITICAL PROBLEMS that affect the neighborhood:

1. Lack of activities for residents of all ages.
2. Traffic congestion.

Issues TO BE ADDRESSED in Brighton Beach:

1. High concentration of homeless adults with mental health problems on the boardwalk.
2. Overcrowded residences in substandard conditions.
3. Increased poverty level of the new wave of immigrants in the neighborhood.

Preferred types of COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT:

1. Quality apparel stores
2. Home goods store
3. Movie theater & leisure facilities

The biggest CHALLENGE community residents face POST - SANDY:

1. Lack of access to basic resources such as food, water, heating, and electricity.
2. Lack of a clear structure of communication with government agencies.
3. Emotional distress and language barriers.

STEPS NEEDED to improve disaster preparation, immediate response and/or long term recovery:

1. Evacuation plan tailored to the neighborhood.
2. A flood response guide for small homeowners.
3. A resource guide for homeowners.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Through community surveys and the key focus interviews, the study identified key challenges and issues in the Brighton Beach neighborhood. During a collaborative brainstorming session, residents discussed community-based strategies and solutions and made the following recommendations:

HOUSING

- Ensure city-owned land is developed with subsidies and a programmatic commitment to build housing at affordability levels and apartment sizes that reflect the needs of existing residents of the neighborhood. New housing should also prioritize seniors, veterans and younger families who are currently living in the neighborhood.
- Encourage a neighborhood demographic make-up that is diverse in age by creating affordable housing for young families.

ECONOMIC + WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Secure funding for job training and education that prepares local residents for jobs.
- Secure funding to support merchant organizing and one-on-one business counseling and education, loan packaging, and legal advice and representation.
- Identify funding for capital improvements on the commercial corridor for streetscape and lighting upgrades.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES + RESOURCES

- Develop a community center and a senior center to offer comprehensive services for children, adults and the elderly, including arts & culture, physical activity and leisure activities.
- Identify city, state and federal funding to encourage and to incentivize the development of grocery stores (i. e. the City's FRESH program).
- Develop a permanent Community Emergency Center that can provide resources for people in need such as a food pantry, medical supplies, psychological counseling, flood related information, etc.
- Implement programs to help recent immigrants such as classes in ESL and American culture, translation assistance, legal assistance, immigration assistance and enrollment in financial support (SNAP, WIC, Cash Assistance, etc).

TRANSPORTATION + MOBILITY

- Improve connectivity by adding alternative modes of transportation in Brighton Beach such as the ferry initiative.
- Improve public transportation, such as upgrading and increasing the frequency of the B/Q train.
- Invest in increased accessibility at key subway stations – elevators, escalators and/or ramps to expand access for vulnerable populations (i.e. seniors, pregnant women, small children), improve the flow of commuter traffic, and increase station safety.
- Explore ways to address the lack of parking spaces and to request that new development on City-owned land provide parking spaces for community residents.

RESILIENCY

- Create an emergency plan for natural disasters tailored to the needs of community residents of Brighton Beach.
- Conduct ongoing education and awareness campaigns in order to remind people about the impact of Sandy.
- Provide training for residents about how to shelter in place: what supplies to have and/or what action to take if you don't have power, water, heat, etc.
- Advocate that all emergency information is available in at least English, Spanish and Russian.
- Create a clear communication plan with the city to allow easy access to information and supplies for distribution in case of emergency.

- Develop an alternative power system that is independent and networked through the installation of green energy and other backup power that can also serve as an everyday net energy infrastructure for the community.
- Develop alternative telecommunication networks such as a solar-powered community Wi-Fi network.
- Make a mandatory regulation that mechanical rooms in newly constructed buildings be located above the flood zone.
- Improve official communication with residents before, during and after a natural disaster. Ensure that seniors, people with disabilities and people with limited English proficiency get the information they need.
- Improve government communication with local organizations, work to ensure relief efforts are coordinated and that disaster preparedness plans are complementing one another.
- Create a resource guide for homeowners with information on services and businesses that maybe required in a post-disaster situation, for example, home-repair contractors, boiler rental companies, mold mitigation contractors, etc.
- Create a public subsidy for small home repair programs to help low-income homeowners upgrade the living condition of their homes and adapt their housing to floods.

SITE DEVELOPMENT SCENARIO: MUNICIPAL PARKING LOT



SITE DESCRIPTION

The Brighton Beach Municipal Parking Lot is located near the Rapid Transit B line and accommodates short-term parking on the Brighton Beach Avenue shopping strip. Parking is controlled by Muni Meters and quarterly parking permits. Because of its proximity to the boardwalk and the beach, it is ideally situated for use during hot summer days. The parking facility provides space for the disabled; the maximum stay is five hours and provides capacity for 312 parked cars.

This municipal parking lot is located on publicly-owned land and represents a great opportunity for development that reflects neighborhood need. This study strongly suggests that the development of this lot should maintain its parking capacity in order to avoid hurting small businesses located on Brighton Beach Avenue. At the same time, the development potential of the lot should be maximized to meet the identified needs in the neighborhood.

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Site:	Brighton Beach Municipal Parking Lot
Address:	311 Boardwalk East / 312 -323 Brightwater Court, Brooklyn, NY 11235
Block No.:	8687
Lot No.:	20 & 50
Lot Dimensions:	Lot 20: 460'x104' Lot 50: 460'x100'
Lot Sizes:	Lot 20: 47,840 SF Lot 50: 46,000 SF
Current Zoning:	R7-1
Owner:	New York City Department of Transportation
Community Board:	Brooklyn CB13
City Council:	Chaim Deutsch, 48th District
NYS Assembly:	Steven Cymbrowitz, NYS Assembly District 45th Pamela Harris, NYS Assembly District 46th
NYS Senate:	Diane J. Savino, NYS Senate District 23th

SITE CONTEXT



Building site 1: 41,820sq. ft.

Building site 2: 41,820 sq. ft.

DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The site is approximately 94,000 sf and is zoned for R7-1 development. Based on the allowable Floor Area Ratio of 3.44 and the open space ratio requirements, the site could yield approximately 323,000 GSF of residential, and 16,280 GSF of Community Facility Space.

The residential square footage could yield 322 units, which if developed as affordable units, would address the needs identified by the community. Additionally a new development could be used to create a much needed Community Center, as well as provide office space for community institutions. As parking is in high demand, the development scenario replaces the existing parking currently on the lot. While envisioned as one development, this scenario illustrates two buildings to maintain visual corridors and improve access for surrounding neighborhoods to the boardwalk and waterfront. This also meets open space requirements.

Total Lot Area:	93, 843 sq. ft.
Zoning:	R7-1
FAR:	3.44
Open Space Ratio:	15.50
Potential Residential Uses:	322, 809 sq. ft.
Potential Residential Units:	322
Required off-street Parking:	163
Potential Parking Lot Facility:	87, 320 sq. ft.
Potential Community Facilities & Institutions:	16, 280 sq. ft.
Required Open Space:	50, 035 sq. ft.

PROGRAM BREAK DOWN

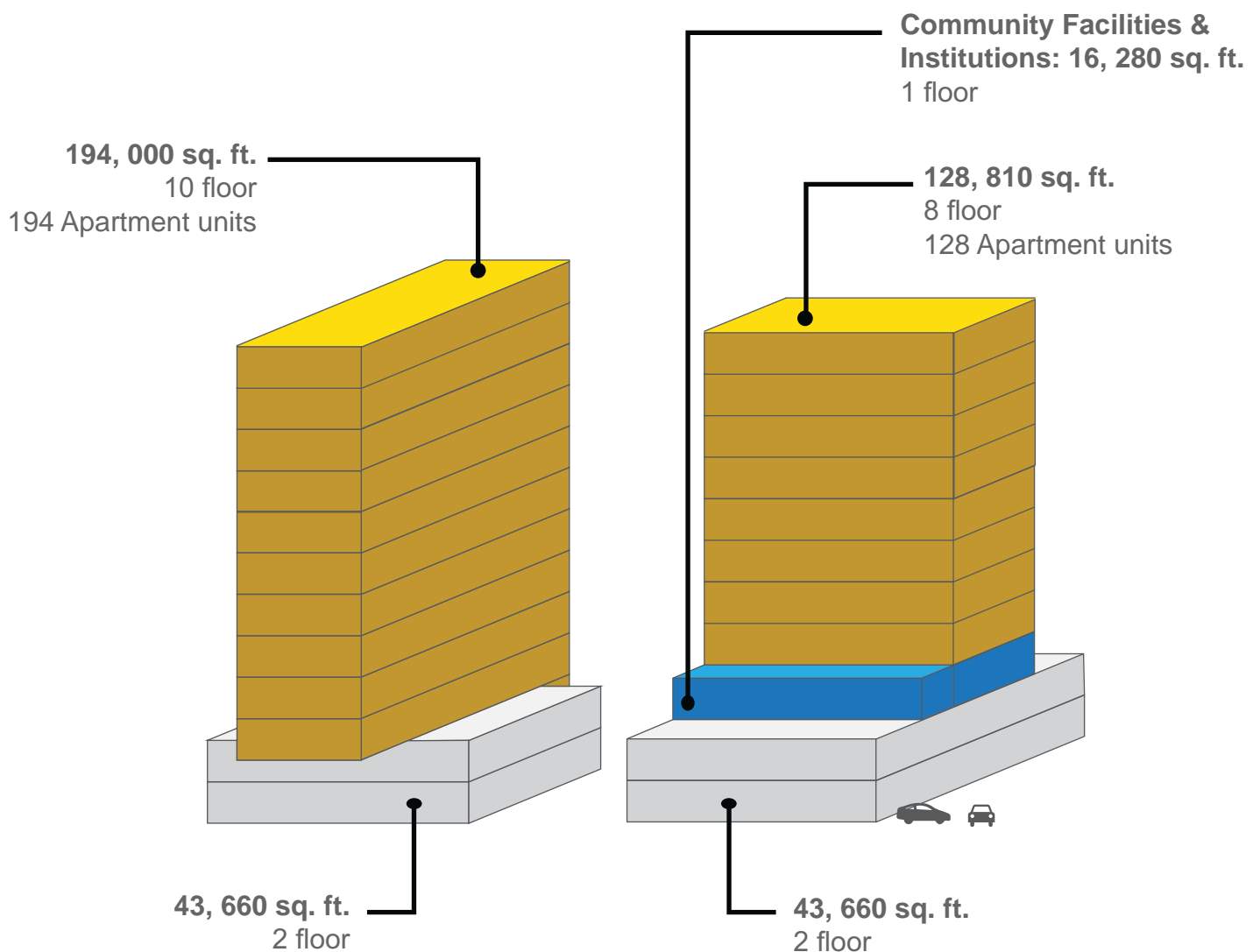
● **Residential: 322,810 SF or about 322 apartments**

● **Community Facility Space: 16,280 SF**

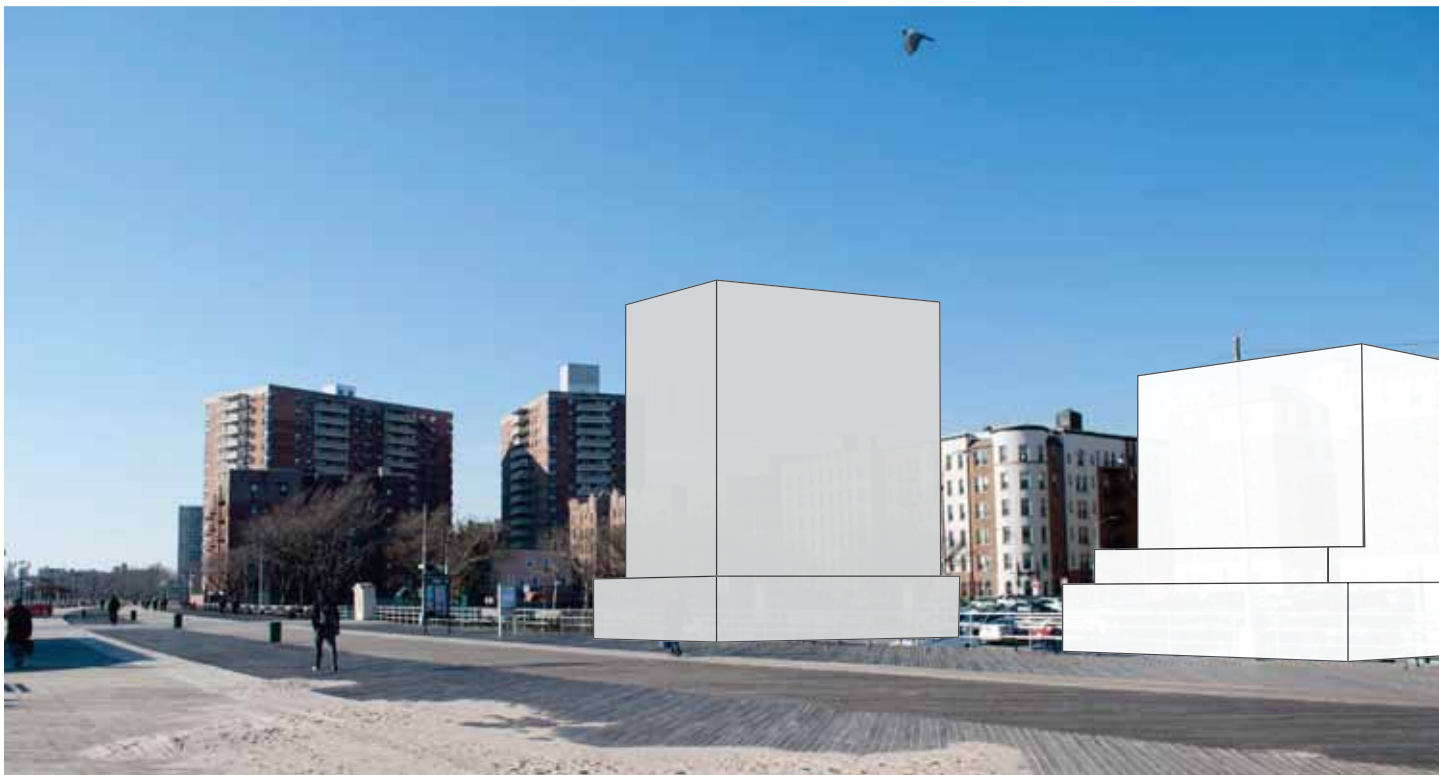
This is sufficient space for a full-service community center (10,000 sf) and office space for one or more neighborhood organizations.

● **Parking Facilities: 87,320 SF or 300 parking spaces**

The current lot includes 312 spaces. Further study is required to determine parking needs for this proposed development.



BUILDING MASSING IN NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT



NEXT STEPS

Brighton Beach residents have a unique opportunity to directly impact how City-owned land is developed and used. This study took the first step down towards that goal, analyzing existing neighborhood conditions and mapping community needs and priorities. In order to develop a vision for future development, local residents, non-profits, small business owners, faith-based communities and other stakeholders should be engaged by City agencies and local elected officials in a visioning process that tackles the transformation of Brighton Beach into a stronger, more equitable, healthy and vibrant place to live and work.

Many waterfront neighborhoods are undergoing similar processes and serve as valuable precedents for resident-led planning and development. For this particular site, a comprehensive and community engaged process might include the following steps:

- Phase I: Engage residents in a visioning process (surveys, workshops, etc.) to develop a plan for the future development of the site.
- Phase II: Work with the City to issue an Request for Proposals (RFP) for the site that prioritizes the community vision for the site.
- Phase III: Pair community-based organization/s and experienced community developers to work together on proposals for the site.
- Phase IV: Review + select proposals, using the community-led vision as a guide.

CONCLUSION

The Brighton Beach neighborhood is a dynamic and historic part of New York City with huge physical and locational assets. At the same time, the neighborhood's waterfront location makes it vulnerable to storm events. As this study has illustrated, the neighborhood's socially vulnerable and aging population is also impacted by a dire need for affordable housing in the face of development pressures and additional resources and services for existing seniors. Addressing the community's needs to connect residents to disaster recovery and planning resources will be key to ensuring that residents are not as severely impacted by storm events in the future. Furthermore, the redevelopment of the municipal parking lot to create additional affordable housing for residents can also address an urgent need. These actions are key to ensuring that Brighton Beach continues to thrive as a diverse, vibrant and healthy waterfront community.

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CONTRIBUTORS

HESTER STREET COLLABORATIVE

Nisha Baliga
Yakima E. Pena
Anna Pelavin

BRIGHTON NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION INC

Pat Singer

LOCAL INITIATIVES SUPPORT CORPORATION (LISC) NEW YORK CITY

Robert Beach



BRIGHTON
NEIGHBORHOOD
ASSOCIATION



PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

BRIGHTON NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION INC

1002 Brighton Beach Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11235
718-891-0800
www.brightonbeach.com



**BRIGHTON
NEIGHBORHOOD
ASSOCIATION**

Brighton Neighborhood Association Inc. (BNA) is a community-based nonprofit organization with the mission of

maintaining the quality of life of Brighton Beach residents by preserving the unique characteristics of Brighton Beach while working to become a viable community for the 21st century. BNA was founded in 1977 to address housing abandonment and neighborhood blight in the community, which suffered a state of decline. The organization specializes in Housing Advocacy, Landlord/Tenant Assistance, Homeowner Counseling, Tenant Organization, Social Services, Health Advocacy, Immigrant Outreach, and Youth Services.

HESTER STREET COLLABORATIVE

www.hesterstreet.org



Hester Street Collaborative (HSC) provides participatory planning, design and development technical assistance to community-based organizations, government agencies, and private firms throughout New York City and the U.S. Founded in 2002, our mission is to provide the tools, information and inspiration under-served communities most need to participate meaningfully in the shape of their built environment.

HSC believes that the built environment is a crucial nexus in the struggle for social justice. We work to create transformational processes – inclusive, innovative, hands-on, community engagement that develops skills, builds power and strengthens community resilience – that result in **transformational places** – concrete resources that maximize community benefit. Our goal is the equitable, sustainable and resilient planning, design and development of under-served communities where community residents lead the way.

LOCAL INITIATIVES SUPPORT CORPORATION (LISC) NEW YORK CITY

www.lisc.org/nyc/



Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) New York City is dedicated to helping low-income New York City

neighborhoods become healthy communities of choices – good places to live, do business, work and raise families. LISC has thirty years of experience developing the infrastructure of community-based organizations by providing technical and financial assistance; building capacity of local institution to respond to changing community needs; sharing best practices to maximize precious resources; and brokering collaboration among its vast network of partners – government, nonprofit, and corporate – to tackle issues on the community level.

Over the last 30+ years, LISC New York City has invested \$2.3 billion in more than 75 New York City community development corporations (CDCs) and other local groups, leveraging an additional \$5 billion in public and private dollars, financing the construction or rehabilitation of more than 34,600 homes and more than 1.6 million square feet of retail and community space. In the wake of Hurricane Sandy, LISC has provided nearly \$2 million in capacity building funding to enable community – based partners in Brooklyn, Queens, and State Island to assist residents to recover from the storm; administered a \$15 million Multifamily Home Repair Program that has completed rehabilitations on 23 properties and has approximately 90 in the pipeline.