

GREATER OPPORTUNITY THROUGH
COMMUNITY-GUIDED INVESTMENT

JAMAICA
NOW
NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

FIVE-YEAR PROGRESS REPORT



Melinda Katz
Queen Saegye Park

NYC

Jamaica is a thriving center for arts, culture, and commerce—a vibrant community home to more than 150,000 residents, as well as civic and educational institutions.

Jamaica is also a major commercial business district and transportation hub with regional connections. Served by more than 50 city and regional bus lines, four subway lines, 10 LIRR lines, and the AirTrain to JFK International Airport, transportation has been key to Jamaica's growth and connectivity.



Rendering of The Crossing at Jamaica Station, a new mixed-use residential development at Archer Avenue and Sutphin Boulevard

The 2007 City-sponsored Jamaica Plan rezoning sought to increase growth and opportunity in transit-rich downtown by providing for a mix of residential, business, and community activities and encouraging the development of affordable housing. Since the rezoning, **24 unique developments** have been completed in the downtown, comprising more than **550 affordable and 650 market-rate homes** for New Yorkers; **500,000 square feet of commercial space**, including ground-floor retail opportunities; and over **550 hotel rooms**. An additional **31 developments** are in various stages of construction and tenancy, which will bring more than **1,350 affordable and 1,200 market-rate units, as well as nearly 1,500 additional hotel rooms**. The Jamaica NOW Neighborhood Action Plan was the pivotal next step in realizing the full potential of the zoning framework established in 2007 to increase growth and economic opportunity for Jamaica residents and visitors alike.

In Spring 2014, Queens Borough President Katz, in coordination with the City of New York, began the Jamaica NOW Neighborhood planning initiative, with the goal of identifying community priorities and creating a coordinated and equitable community economic development strategy. The initiative brought together residents, nonprofit and faith-based organizations, private firms, industry experts, policymakers, and City government leaders to discuss priority issues, opportunities, challenges, and project ideas centered around one mission—strengthening Jamaica. Over the course of 30 meetings and two public conferences, the initiative culminated in the creation of the Jamaica NOW Neighborhood Action Plan, a \$153 million strategic economic development investment.

Over the past five years, the community and the City have made enormous strides toward the fulfillment of the 26 projects outlined in the Jamaica NOW Neighborhood Action Plan, many of which have been completed.

Under the leadership of Queens Borough President Melinda Katz, the Jamaica NOW Leadership Council, comprising a diverse set of community stakeholders, was created to guide the Action Plan's implementation, provide oversight, and share information with the broader community.

Under the leadership of co-chairs Ian Harris and Tameka Pierre-Louis, the Jamaica NOW Leadership Council has worked closely with City government to set the wheels in motion for the 26 investments and secured two more in the process, making it 28 investments in Jamaica.

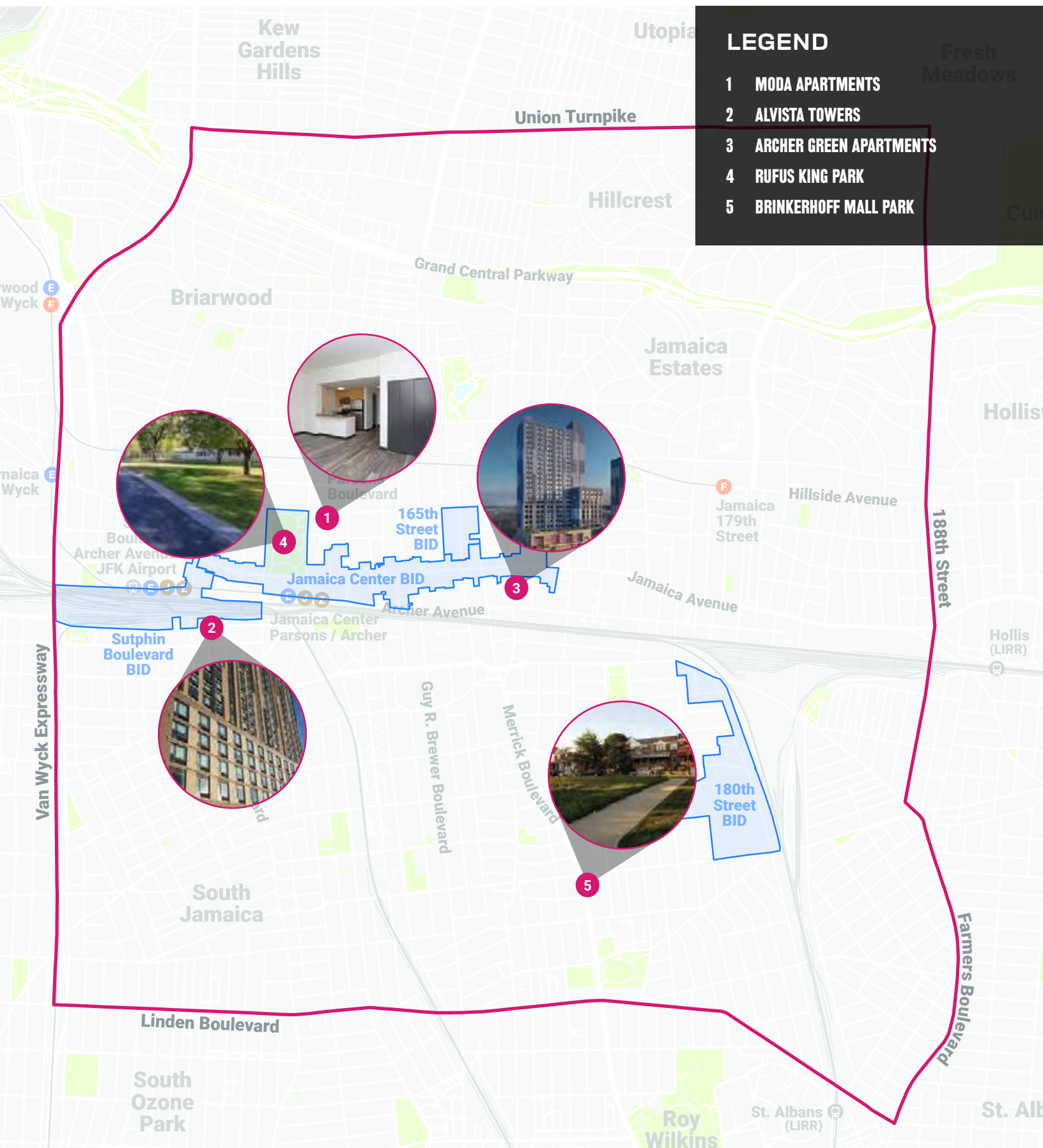


The Jamaica NOW Leadership Council

JAMAICA NOW LEADERSHIP COUNCIL:

COLLABORATING TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY

JAMAICA NOW FOCUS AREA



“Since the launch of the innovative \$153 million **Jamaica NOW Neighborhood Action Plan**, Jamaica’s emergence as **a modern hub of entrepreneurship, ingenuity, culture, and tourism** has been a boon to all those who live and work in this historic neighborhood.”

Melinda Katz
Queens Borough President



Jamaica NOW Leadership Council – 2018

The Jamaica NOW Neighborhood Action Plan focused on **four core goals**—increasing access to quality jobs and small business support; promoting commercial growth and economic development; improving livability; and increasing awareness of Jamaica through marketing efforts. The following provides key updates on the progress that has been made to date.

**FIVE YEARS OF
PROGRESS**



Graduate of Jamaica FEASTS program

“Thriving small business corridors help foster vibrant neighborhoods across our city.”

Gregg Bishop

Commissioner of the NYC Department of Small Business Services

CORE GOAL 1

INCREASING ACCESS TO
QUALITY JOBS,
SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESS

- **The Jamaica FEASTS** (Food Entrepreneurship and Services Training Space) program, launched by the Queens Public Library’s Job & Business Academy as part of the Action Plan, teaches entrepreneurs how to launch a food business, including everything from menu planning, permits, and small business loans, to marketing and back-of-house management. Since its launch the program has graduated 90 entrepreneurs—mostly minorities and women—with 87 percent officially registered in New York City. The program has expanded across the borough to Long Island City, Flushing, and Far Rockaway, while maintaining a strong presence in the Jamaica Central Library Branch.
- 611 Jamaica youths participated in the **Summer Youth Employment Program** in 2019, strengthening the connections between school-year instruction and summer career exploration.
- The Department of Small Business Services (SBS) continues to connect Jamaica residents with workforce opportunities through the local **Workforce1** center, providing residents with opportunities to succeed in growing sectors like healthcare through the New York Alliance for Careers in Healthcare (NYACH). During the 2018-2019 school year, 14 Hillcrest High School students participated in internships at healthcare employers including Northwell Health, New York State Veterans Nursing Home at St. Albans, the Child Center of New York, and Wellth.
- Since the launch of the Action Plan, 28 students from Thomas A. Edison High School in Jamaica and 23 students from the High School for Construction Trades, Engineering, and Architecture in Ozone Park have been served through the **Scholars at Work** and **Career Exploration** programs, helping students become career-ready graduates.



Students of the Jamaica FEASTS program

- Jamaica NOW Leadership Council participants have also served on the Industry Partnerships Advisory Councils established in sectors including Healthcare (NYACH), Tech (Tech Talent Pipeline), Food Service & Hospitality, Industrial, and Construction, aligned with the City's Career Pathways framework.
- Healthcare: NYACH's council includes several trade associations that represent healthcare employers in Jamaica. To support workforce development in the field, NYACH worked closely with Sunnyside Community Services, a large home healthcare provider serving parts of Jamaica that has participated in enhanced Home Health Aide training. Furthermore, as part of **Apprentice NYC**, NYACH's Citywide Nurse Residency Program launched in December 2018 with 28 public and safety-net hospitals, including Jamaica Hospital Medical Center. The initiative provides new graduate nurses with a year-long residency that develops confidence and competence in clinical abilities and judgment, builds a peer support network, and exposes nurses to evidence-based practice in the workplace.
- Tech: Since 2016, York College students have been connected to CUNY Tech Prep, a program made possible through the Tech Talent Pipeline. CUNY Tech Prep is a year-long Fullstack JavaScript program for CUNY computer science majors to learn in-demand technologies, master professional soft skills, and land tech jobs in NYC. Queens College also recently joined seven additional college partners in the CUNY 2X Tech initiative, which aims to double the number of qualified tech graduates by 2022.

- Queens Library has purchased equipment and supplies with Department of Information Technology & Telecommunications funds to support Google Coding programming, which has helped expand adult coding classes; complete Google CS classes, Girls Who Code sessions, Computer Training in Bengali sessions, and staff training sessions in Google CS curriculum; and form teen and adult coding clubs.
- The Jamaica NOW Leadership Council connected with JobNet, a program that provides work training for youth, and made referrals of more than 300 of Jamaica's businesses to this organization. The JobNet team will continue to explore internship and externship opportunities with the businesses in Jamaica and looks forward to continued partnership with the Jamaica NOW Leadership Council.



Jamaica FEASTS Graduation Ceremony

90 Applicants

graduated from Jamaica FEASTS and 87 percent officially registered in New York City.

CORE GOAL 2

PROMOTING COMMERCIAL GROWTH AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Since the launch of the Jamaica NOW Neighborhood Action Plan, improvements to seven storefronts have been completed along Sutphin Boulevard, with 32 additional storefronts on Liberty and Jamaica Avenues expected to be completed in the coming years.
- Through an SBS-awarded Avenue NYC grant, the Jamaica Center Business Improvement District (BID) was able to hire a full-time program manager, conduct an in-depth Commercial District Needs Assessment (CDNA) and implement commercial revitalization programming and services in downtown Jamaica. Through the CDNA process, the Jamaica Center BID conducted corridor assessments, merchant surveys, and consumer surveys to determine strengths, opportunities, and challenges of major commercial corridors in Jamaica.
- The Jamaica NOW Neighborhood Action Plan proposed unification of the BIDs. Through the Jamaica NOW Leadership Council's work, all three of the BIDs have been working closely through the Jamaica NOW Leadership Council on ways to collaborate. They enjoy a strong relationship and will continue to explore ways to partner on behalf of the business community in Jamaica.

Seven

small business storefronts improved with 32 expected to be completed in coming years along Sutphin Boulevard, Liberty Avenue, and Jamaica Avenue corridors.



“The resurgence of Downtown Jamaica is a critical part of sustainable growth in New York City.”

Tameka Pierre-Louis

Jamaica NOW Leadership
Council Co-Chair



Mayor de Blasio discussing City investments in Jamaica on Sutphin Boulevard.



Street improvement and new pedestrian plaza in Downtown Jamaica

- The Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) coordinated with the cultural organizations of Jamaica and Hester Street Collaborative to determine how the neighborhood's cultural and arts institutions could work together.
- The Department of Transportation (DOT) is creating a vibrant streetscape and full capital build-out on Parsons Boulevard, as well as streetscape recommendations for other streets in Downtown Jamaica. DOT is also working with MTA Bus and NYCT Bus to improve bus operations and pedestrian experience on Archer Avenue.
- York College has been a key stakeholder with representation on the Jamaica NOW Leadership Council, and the City remains committed to its offer for technical assistance for the START-UP NY program or other efforts that would benefit the campus or curriculum.
- The Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) has been working with private property owners to redevelop vacant sites in Downtown Jamaica into mixed-use developments that will provide new retail space and affordable housing for a range of income levels. HPD has financed roughly 1,600 units since 2014.

- Through a partnership between the City and developer OMNI, a dilapidated NYPD garage is being transformed into **Archer Green, a 100 percent affordable housing development** with community space and local-serving retail. The development is on pace for summer 2021 completion.
- Downtown Jamaica is a Vision Zero priority area. In an effort to create safer streets for all users, DOT has implemented over 30 Street Improvement Projects to create a safer pedestrian environment, while better organizing traffic flow for vehicles and buses. Project elements include pedestrian refuge islands, street-marking upgrades, signal-timing changes, one-way conversions, and improved bus lanes, among other Vision Zero treatments.
- DOT has installed **14 WalkNYC pedestrian wayfinders** and six Q44 SBS wayfinders throughout the community.
- DOT and MTA/NYCT launched Jamaica-Flushing-Bronx Select Bus Service in November 2015 to improve transportation in high-demand corridors.



Rendering of new Archer Green affordable housing development

“Jamaica’s diversity, close-knit neighborhood fabric, and anchor institutions provide a strong foundation for tremendous growth and opportunity.”

Bill de Blasio
Mayor

\$2.1 Million

invested in parks across Jamaica, including Brinkerhoff Mall Park and Rufus King Park.

CORE GOAL 3

IMPROVING LIVABILITY



Temporary art installation at Rufus King Park

- The City is expanding homeownership and multifamily affordable rental properties with the designation of **Infinite Horizons**, a Queens-based MWBE (minority and women-owned business enterprise) developer; FG-PH Corporation; and Briarwood Organization, to create **67 new affordable homes** in Jamaica for extremely low, very low, low, and moderate-income households.
- As part of the effort to provide homeowners, tenants, and property owners with resources about affordable housing and tenant protection, HPD has held several resource fairs and tabling events in Jamaica. Homeowners can also obtain foreclosure representation, deed theft prevention, and other financial assistance services from CNYCN, NHS-Jamaica, and other providers.
- To improve the safety and security of the neighborhood, **111 NYPD surveillance cameras** have been installed throughout Jamaica.
- **Eighteen LinkNYC kiosks have been installed** along Jamaica Avenue between Sutphin Boulevard and 169th Street, with **23 additional sites under consideration**. The kiosks provide access to free WiFi, while local companies—30 to date—can receive free advertising on the kiosk screens near their stores.
- The Department of Health & Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) continues to work to reduce health risks related to cardiovascular disease in the Jamaica community, providing residents with services through the National Diabetes Prevention Program and engaging clinics and community pharmacies in hypertension management and diabetes prevention. DOHMH is working to develop and distribute Community Health Worker training resources, while supporting Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) sales at farmers markets through the Health Bucks SNAP Incentive Program.

- NYC Parks has completed considerable construction to Rufus King Park and the historic King Manor, including improvements to the pathways, spray showers, gazebo, and roof, with work on the HVAC and chimney, which started in fall 2019. Work on the south lawn and park fence is slated to begin in spring 2020.
- NYC Parks renovated and upgraded **Brinkerhoff Mall**, a 0.4-acre park along Merrick Boulevard, providing better quality greenspace to the community.
- NYCEDC is re-evaluating the scope for the revitalization of **Station Plaza** at the intersection of Sutphin Boulevard and Archer Avenue, as part of a broader suite of infrastructure investments, including the Sutphin Boulevard Underpass and Atlantic Avenue Extension, to improve circulation and community experience along this corridor.
- Jamaica's sewer network has received significant improvements, with four sewer extension projects completed, and five other projects in varying stages of progress.



Historic King Manor, which was rehabilitated as part of the Action Plan

CORE GOAL 4

TELLING JAMAICA'S STORY

- In July 2019, the “**Jamaica Is**” marketing campaign was launched in bus shelters and LinkNYC kiosks across the city. The 13-week campaign promoted the neighborhood’s history, eclectic restaurants, local arts, and small businesses as a destination for families, innovation, and culture. Jamaica was also featured in NYC & Company’s highly popular “**See Your City**” campaign, which inspires and motivates New Yorkers and tourists to explore the diverse neighborhoods throughout the five boroughs. NYC & Company also helped the Jamaica NOW Leadership Council design a new logo to help brand Jamaica.
- As part of their successful **Tourism Ready program**, NYC & Company partnered with the Jamaica NOW Leadership Council and the Jamaica Arts Alliance to provide local businesses with a how-to session on becoming prepared to work with the tourism industry.



New Jamaica logo designed by NYC & Company and the Jamaica NOW Leadership Council

“The ‘Jamaica Is’ campaign amplified the work of the Jamaica NOW Leadership Council, while enlightening others on the rich history, culture, and bustling business district Downtown Jamaica has to offer.”

Ian Harris

Jamaica NOW Leadership Council
Co-Chair



Example of “Jamaica Is” marketing campaign in LinkNYC kiosk



Examples of "Jamaica Is" marketing campaign, which ran across the city in July of 2019

Continuing the Conversation

While much progress has been made, there is still work to be done. The City looks forward to continued collaboration with the Jamaica community to advance future efforts.

To learn more, visit:
jamaicanyc.queensbp.org/
or edc.nyc/JamaicaPlanning

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Clyde Vanel

New York City Council Members

Adrienne Adams

Rory Lancman

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Additional participants in the Jamaica NOW Neighborhood Planning

Initiative include:

165th Street Business Improvement District, 180th Street Business Improvement District, Jamaica Center Business Improvement District, Sutphin Boulevard Business Improvement District, A Better Jamaica, A Better Way Family & Community Center, Addislaigh Park Civic Association, Alliance of South Asian American Laborers, America Works, Antioch Baptist Church, Brinkerhoff Action Associates, Inc., Center for Integration & Advancement for New Americans, Center for New York City Neighborhoods, Chhaya Community Development Corporation, Citizens Housing & Planning Council, Community Healthcare Network of New York City, Cultural Collaborative Jamaica, Damian Family Care Center, Edge School of the Art, Exploring the Metropolis, Farmers Boulevard Community Development Corporation, First Presbyterian Church in Jamaica, Fortune Society, Goodwill Industries of Greater New York & Northern New Jersey, Greater Allen Development Corporation, Greater Triangular Civic Association, Indo-Caribbean Alliance, Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning, Jamaica Hospital, Jamaica Muslim Center, Jamaica Performing Arts Center, Jamaica YMCA, King Manor, LaGuardia Community College Adult & Continuing Education, Mutual Housing Association of New York, Neighborhood Housing Services Jamaica, New York Alliance for Careers in Healthcare, Queens College, Queens Council on the Arts, Queens Economic Development Corporation, Queens Hospital, Queens Legal Services, Queens Library, Queens Workforce1 Center, SelfHelp, Sikh Cultural Society, Sunnyside Community Services, Inc., The Jamaica Young Professionals, The Jamaica Youth Leaders, The Tate Group, Upwardly Global, Visiting Nurse Service of New York, and Y-Roads.

Instrumental in the creation of the Action Plan include:

Borough President Melinda Katz, Former Deputy Mayor Alicia Glen, NYCEDC, CUNY/York College, The Greater Jamaica Development Corporation, The Regional Plan Association, US Representative Gregory Meeks, New York State Senators Leroy Comrie and James Sanders, New York State Assembly Members Barbara Clark, Vivian Cook, William Scarborough, Michele Titus, and David Weprin; New York City Council Members Rory Lancman, I. Daneek Miller, Donovan J. Richards, and Mark Weprin; Queens Community Boards 8, 12, and 13; and a consortium of City agencies including the Department of City Planning, Department of Design and Construction, Department of Education, Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Department of Housing Preservation and Development, Department of Parks and Recreation, New York City Police Department, Department of Small Business Services, Taxi and Limousine Commission, Department of Transportation, Department of Youth and Community Development, and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority.



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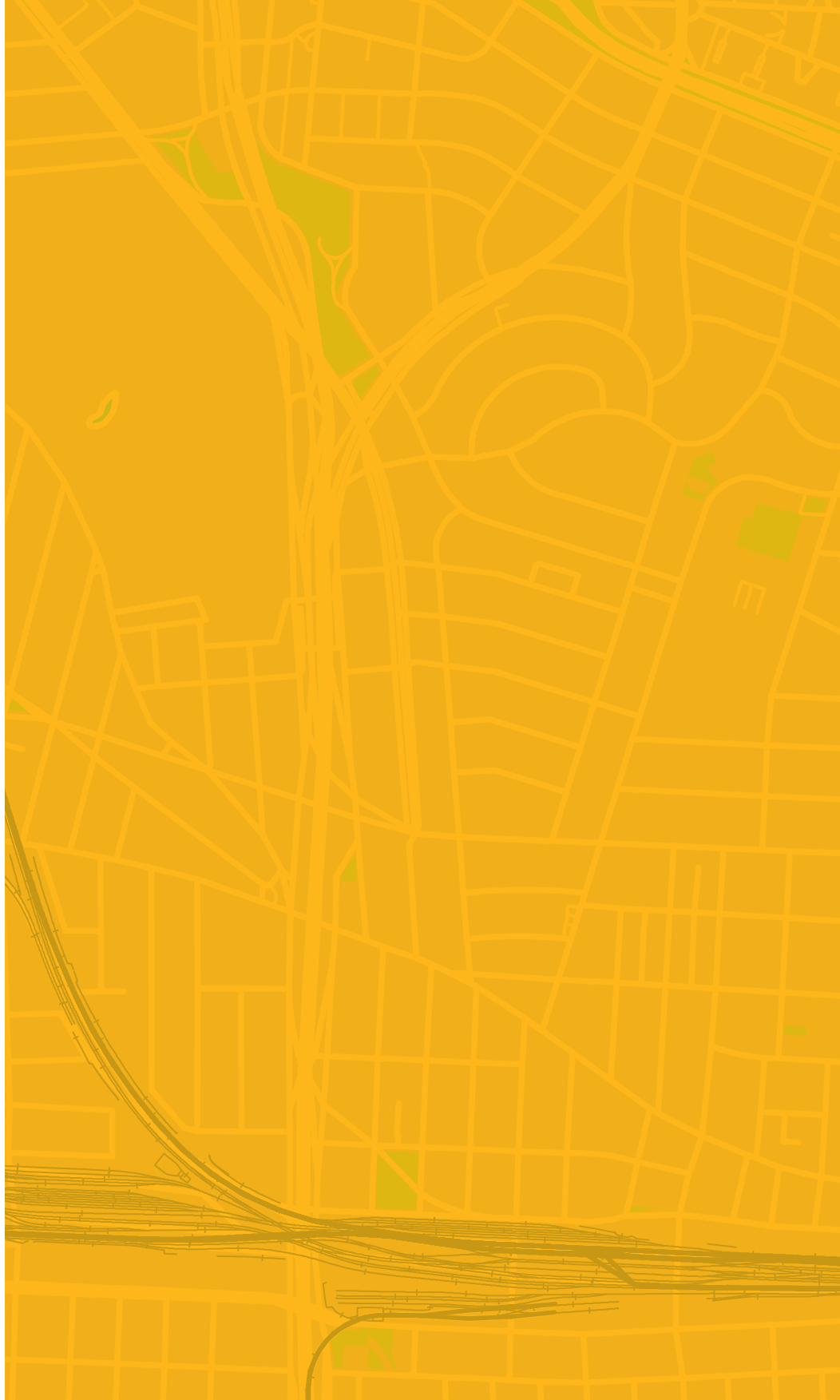


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