



Dear Belmont BID Members,

The Belmont Business Improvement District (BID) is proud to represent one of the city's most beloved and long-established culturally authentic communities. The Belmont BID is dedicated to promoting business development and improving our area's quality of life. We are proud to continue to share our community's vibrant culture and authenticity, which has prospered through changing times.

The BID's undertaking would not be possible without our board of directors and the commitment and dedication of our BID members whom I acknowledge and thank. Our neighborhood saw growth with a variety of new businesses opening in the district, who I'd like to officially welcome. I thank our BID staff, Executive Director, Alyssa Tucker, and Operations Manager, Elias Rivera.

The Belmont BID remains grateful to Mayor Adams and his City Hall staff, Congressman Torres, Bronx Borough President Gibson, and Council Member Feliz. We thank all the city agencies and organizations that serve our community. We are appreciative of our community partners The Bronx Zoo, The New York Botanical Garden, Fordham University, SBH Health System, and Monroe University. We are thankful for the endeavors and support of Nicholas & Lence Communications, the BID's strategic partner on influential initiatives relating to public relations and government affairs.



Please read on for some of the highlights of a busy and exciting year. In 2025 the BID will continue its efforts in making the community a great place to work, visit, and live, and we remain committed to supporting and advocating for our members and neighborhood.

Thank you for your support and for allowing the BID to continue our work.

Wishing you all a happy and healthy 2025!

Peter Madonia  
Chairman  
Belmont Business Improvement District

## Fordham Road Busway

In 2023, the BID's most significant issue was the Department of Transportation's Fordham Road - Inwood Bus Priority proposal, a busway and traffic reduction plan on Fordham Road and Pelham Parkway, that would have closed Fordham Road to private vehicular traffic and significantly impacted ingress and egress to our neighborhood, surrounding business districts, and cultural institutions. Along with community partners, we forcefully raised economical, safety, health, and environmental concerns and strongly advocated against the proposal with elected officials and community partners. Our concerns, data, and arguments were heard and we were notified DOT would instead demarcate the existing bus lane in red paint, install more fixed cameras, and strengthen enforcement methods.

Once the existing bus lane was repainted and enforcement was stepped up, bus speeds went from what the DOT and the Rider's Alliance claimed were **4 m.p.h.** to what the Rider's Alliance itself admitted were **over 9 m.p.h.** — well above the borough-wide average. From January through August, NYPD issued nearly **2,000** Fordham Road bus lane violations and completed nearly two dozen tows.

We have continued to be vigilant and have advocated for increased, targeted enforcement so that bus speeds continue to increase. Just as we have noticed enforcement being initiated to support congestion pricing, we encourage the same for the existing Fordham Road bus lane, and all bus lanes, to ensure they remain clear so bus speeds improve. The BID also requested transparency on how bus speeds are studied, and updated speed data as it becomes available.

For three years, this has been a time-consuming challenge for our staff and board, however it is crucial that this ill-conceived plan to close Fordham Road to traffic remain shelved so our ecosystem can conduct business and flourish.

- [What Happened to the Bus Lanes New Yorkers Were Promised?](#) (New York Times)
- [Letter Shows MTA, DOT at Odds Over Fordham Road Bus Lane](#) (NY1)
- [Letter to the Editor: Adding Bus Lanes Isn't Right for Every Neighborhood](#) (Crain's NY Business)



## **Supplemental Public Safety & Sanitation Services**

As one of the busiest and best-known communities in New York City, the BID dedicates a significant amount of its resources to supplemental public safety and sanitation services to ensure visitors feel welcome and safe in a clean environment. Every day, our public safety officers, Elias and/or AJ, manage safety and security tasks which include **district patrol, addressing aggressive panhandling, managing traffic, reporting homeless individuals and unlicensed vending, monitoring security cameras, and coordinating with the NYPD.** During the holidays, our presence on the street increases as a show of force and to **help with traffic flow.**

Our sanitation team, Mason, Michael, and Joshua, improve the cleanliness of our community daily by providing supplemental services such as **street and curb sweeping, maintaining litter baskets, leaf blowing, and shoveling snow.** The team also **covered graffiti** on lampposts, mailboxes, and utility infrastructure over the course of the year.

**Before**



**After**



## **Trash Containerization**

The New York City Department of Sanitation (DSNY) has recently informed all BIDs across New York City that **BIDs may no longer set trash bags (consisting of the public trash that we sweep and clean up) on the sidewalk by corner baskets for DSNY to pick up, as we currently do.** Instead, the options for BIDs to get bags off the street are on-street containers, movable wheelie bins on the sidewalk, or carting to a sanitation garage. While we understand the City's goal to get bags off the street, this would be a tremendous operational and financial burden for the Belmont BID and many other BIDs. Further, we take great exception to DSNY's plans to fine BIDs (if we're observed placing bags on the sidewalk) for the work we do to help keep the city clean.

As this initiative develops, we will keep you updated, however, the Belmont BID does not believe it is a good use of our assessment to spend your money on trash containers (we estimate at least 12 enclosures and containers would be needed, totaling \$42,528, nearly 10% of our annual assessment) or costly carting services. More so, **on-street containers would take away parking spaces,** and we don't believe any of our members would want trash containers in front of their properties. Moveable wheelie bins would contribute to sidewalk clutter and present operational challenges for our small sanitation team as setting out and collecting the bins each shift would take away from the time the team is meant to be cleaning. This means less of our district would be swept daily.

There are a myriad of concerns and questions surrounding DSNY's initiative in regards to logistics, siting, and liability. With costly fines set to begin August 1, the Belmont BID is exploring its options to determine what may

work in our district. However, there is a real possibility that the BID will have no choice but to cease our supplemental sanitation services. I can assure you, stopping our sanitation services is not what we want; it would be a disservice to our members, community, and visitors. However, it is important our members know that **the voluntary work the BID does, and our members pay for, is a supplemental service, not a replacement for what DSNY is responsible for** with a \$2-billion budget and workforce of nearly 10,000.

For now, the Belmont BID will continue to provide our supplemental sanitation services, but it remains important our property owners and businesses continue to clean around their buildings. It is a simple but powerful way to enhance our community.

### ***Annual Events & Programming***

The BID's mission is to promote and expand the economic well-being of the business community, and we had a busy year doing just that as we showcased the neighborhood's best attributes through exciting events and initiatives, including:

#### **SPRING, SUMMER & FALL | Performances from A Cappella Quartet 'The Belmont 4'**

Delighting visitors with doo-wop hits and vintage attire.

#### **JUNE 4-9 | Westchester Magazine's Annual Wine & Food Festival**

The BID's targeted demographic sampled fare from our distinguished eateries and learned more about the community.

#### **SUMMER | Lamppost Banner Program Relaunch**

Placed dozens of bright, branded lamppost banners throughout our district to increase awareness of the neighborhood and highlight the businesses that are vested in our community.

#### **JUNE & JULY | UEFA EURO2024 Watch Parties**

Financially supported and collaborated with Mark Gjonaj to bring lively watch parties to our streets for the soccer championship.

- [Soccer fans take over Bronx Little Italy for Euro 2024](#) (News 12 Bronx)

#### **AUGUST 9 | Blue Knights LEMC New York Chapter 2 Law Enforcement Motorcycle Club Annual Visit**

#### **OCTOBER | Italian American Heritage Month Celebrations**

Proudly partnered with Bronx Borough President Gibson for her Italian American Celebration at the Bronx Zoo, shared the inspiring histories of our small businesses to our extensive social media following, supported the Bronx Columbus Day Parade in Morris Park, and observed Columbus Day with live Italian music in the neighborhood.

#### **SEPT 8 | Ferragosto Festival**

With nearly 30,000 attendees!

- [A Giant Italian Food & Culture Festival Is Coming To The Bronx's Little Italy This September](#) (Secret NYC)
- [Ferragosto Festival Returns to the Bronx](#) (NY1)
- [Thousands flock to the Bronx's Little Italy for a festive 27th annual Ferragosto](#) (Bronx Times)





**\* SECRET  
NYC**

**BRONX***Times*

**NOV 30 | Small Business Saturday Celebrations**

Distributed giveaways to local businesses and promoted the importance of supporting small businesses.



**DEC 4 | "Culinary Conversations" Panel**

The BID participated in the panel hosted by The Bronx Economic Development Corp. and 1010 WINS, and spoke about our historic district, our exquisite eateries and authentic offerings, and the importance of being accessible to visitors and customers.



**DEC 7 | Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony**

- Covered by [ABC](#), [NY1](#), [CBS](#), [PIX11](#), [News 12 Bronx](#) and others!



### DECEMBER | Holiday Activities

The holiday spirit was unmistakable all December long as visitors shopped and dined under our dazzling holiday light displays, and Santa and Traditional Victorian Dickens-inspired Carolers strolled our busy sidewalks.

Over the course of the year, we **distributed tens of thousands of marketing materials** including the beloved Official Merchant Calendar, Ferragosto journal, event posters and palm cards, and merchant directory and map. We were also honored to partner with elected officials, city agencies, and various organizations to support an array of **community initiatives** including Back to School Giveaways, Family Fun Days, The Gjergj Kastrioti Skenderbeu Street Fair, Thanksgiving Turkey Distributions, and Holiday Toy Drives.

### *Belmont BID in the News*

In an effort to increase our brand awareness and garner positive press coverage, the BID continued to work with our strategic PR and communications agency, Nicholas & Lence Communications (NLC), to promote our businesses and neighborhood. Our unique stories secured a tremendous amount of **press coverage on national and local news networks and various online and print publications** that are archived on our website. Here are a few highlights:

- Forbes | [Celebrate St. Joseph's Day With Specialty Pastries From The Bronx's Little Italy Bakeries](#)
- Bronx Times | [Celebrating Albanian culture in the Bronx's Little Italy](#)
- YES Network | [Mere on the Move: Clarke Schmidt and Meredith visit Arthur Ave](#)
- NY Daily News | [Op-ed: NYC film permits should remain with biz experts](#)
- ABC 7 NY | [Neighborhood Eats: Casa Della Mozzarella on Arthur Avenue's family history](#)

Another promotional tool the BID uses is social media. Our daily vibrant posts provide our businesses and community with fantastic exposure and promotion.



**380,000+**  
Total Followers

## Little Italy in the Bronx Products & Contribution

To enhance and advance our brand beyond our region to a national and even international audience, in 2018, we partnered with Summer Garden Foods to launch the Little Italy in the Bronx brand, **available in over 5,000 stores** nationwide and in Canada.

Last year, the company was purchased by Lassonde, a family-owned business and leader in the food processing industry that has vowed to grow our brand. The publicly traded company has **greater marketing and distribution resources** that are already being allocated. The recently updated label and cap design, plus tweaked recipe reformulations, launched this past summer to beautiful reviews at the New York Fancy Food Show. Their social media launch featured videos highlighting our neighborhood and local businesses.

It is important to remind our members that a portion of sales of the products continue to be contributed to our organization to help preserve the traditions of our community. Specifically, these **contribution amounts help fund the supplemental services and initiatives we provide**. For example, in Fiscal Year 2024, the BID received \$71,570.70 – this is equivalent to an additional **16%** of our annual BID assessment, or slightly over **50%** of the cost of our public safety services. The contribution remains an essential alternative source of revenue to help fund our services and operations without having to ask the City and our members for an assessment increase, which we haven't done over the past nine years.



## Grants

Despite rising costs for BID initiatives, another one of the ways we have managed to increase our financial resources is by applying for grants. In Fiscal Year 2024 (July 2023-June 2024), the BID was awarded **\$105,000** in grants, and **\$125,000** in Fiscal Year 2025 (July 2024-June 2025). The BID remains thankful to Council Member Feliz, the City Council, and the Department of Small Business Services for their continued support of the community.

## A Better Belmont

The BID exists to support and enhance both our business community and the community at large. Over the course of the year, the BID continued our work for the betterment of small businesses and the community with city agencies, institutions, and organizations. This included, but was not limited to:

### NYPD 48<sup>th</sup> Precinct & Public Safety Initiatives:

- Advocated on the importance of increased police officer presence resulting in the return of the **Business Neighborhood Coordination Officers** program.
- Partnered with the Crime Prevention Division to offer our members **free security surveys**.
- Met with the Neighborhood Coordination Officers and members to address their concerns regarding Bronx Food Co. on Hoffman St.
- Hosted Coffee with a Cop, giving our members the opportunity to share their district concerns, and develop relationships with our Community Affairs Officers.
- Reported and removed unlicensed and/or derelict vehicles and e-bikes.

- Reported quality of life issues (illegal smoke shops, unlicensed vending, drug activity, homelessness and emotionally disturbed person) to relevant agencies.
- Met with the Bronx District Attorney, NYPD, and Bronx BIDs to discuss the challenges and opportunities to increase safety in the Bronx.
- Signed on to the DA's letter to the Governor, Majority Leader and Speaker, and all the NYS Senators and Bronx Assemblymembers urging them to **tighten cannabis and retail theft laws**.
- Bronx BIDs met with Council Member Feliz, Chairman of the Small Business Committee, on advocating for district resources and meaningful change on quality of life issues.
- Partnered with Fordham University's Public Safety Department on **Ram Path**.
- Signed on to the Retail Worker Safety Act opposition letter from the Retail Council of NY State.



Coffee with a Cop | May 7, 2024

**The Department of Transportation:**

- Continuing conversations on Fordham Rd bus speed data and increasing bus speeds through **enforcement** endeavors.
- Working to find new locations for metered parking to **increase visitor turnover**.
- Requested that DOT orchestrate more frequent **interagency cleanup efforts** as it relates to the Fordham Rd underpass, median, and adjacent areas.
- Requested street lighting, paving, meter, and damaged signs repairs.

**The Department of Sanitation:** Addressing illegal dumping and improper disposal, requesting targeted cleanups, and replacing missing trash bins.

**The Parks Department:** Having members from their Arts & Antiquities division restore and repair the Columbus sculpture in D'Auria Murphy Triangle after it was vandalized. The BID contributed to the cost of repair and wrote to NYPD to consider the installation of security cameras for protection.

**Community Board 6:** On valuable input for land use and liquor and marijuana dispensary licenses.

**The New York City Fire Department and Department of Buildings:** On the safety, development, and maintenance of local properties.

**Graffiti Free NYC:** On graffiti removal on properties within the district.

Throughout the year, the BID was in constant communication with our members, keeping them informed and assisting them with regulations and mandates from the City and the State, grants and loans, marketing and promotional opportunities, and various services available through public and private entities. These endeavors included, but were not limited to:



- Clearly explaining the rules, application process, and enforcement deadlines for **Dining Out NYC**, and helping eateries apply.
- Ensuring members were informed about the updated **trash containerization guidance** for businesses, updated **credit card surcharges regulations**, updated **SLA advisory** about municipal space altercation applications as part of Dining Out NYC, and **Corporate Transparency Act** filing and subsequent delay.
- Supporting initiatives to help businesses prosper like the NYC Funds Finder, business training courses, and business violation resources.
- Sharing opportunities to participate in NYC Tourism + Conventions **Restaurant Week**, The Bronx Tourism Council's **Savor the Bronx** Restaurant Week, and The Bronx Night Market.
- Hosting district walkthroughs with the **Department of Small Business Services** about the free commercial lease assistance program and Dining Out NYC.
- Hosting a district walkthrough on education surrounding inspections with the **Department of Consumer Affairs & Workers Protection**.
- Sharing opportunities for free advertising in **LinkNYC** and inclusion in New York State's **Historic Business Preservation Registry**.
- Working with the **Bronx Tourism Council** to promote establishments in the district as part of their Tour De Bronx after party.
- Working with **Fordham University** to ensure our business directory and map were distributed to incoming freshmen and to families and friends during family weekend.