

# JEROME-GUN HILL BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

11/2/2012

ANNUAL REPORT 2011-2012

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# JEROME-GUN HILL BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

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## SECTION I. DISTRICT BACKGROUND AND REVIEW OF FISCAL YEAR 2012 ACTIVITIES

### District Background

The Mosholu-Jerome-East Gun Hill Road Business Improvement District (BID), also known as the Jerome-Gun Hill BID is currently one of sixty-seven BID's throughout New York City and one of nine BIDs in the Bronx. The BID is located in Norwood, and serves one of the most ethnically diverse populations in the city, and continues to be a vibrant retail commercial district. Its catchment area includes; Jerome Avenue between Mosholu Parkway and East Gun Hill Road and East Gun Hill Road between Jerome and Webster Avenues; with smaller portions of East 208<sup>th</sup> Street, Mosholu Parkway, Dekalb Avenue and property which fronts on Webster Avenue.

Since January 1997, the BID has been serving over 250 businesses that range in size from small retail shops to local and national food and retail chains and banks such as Rite Aid, GameStop, Keyfood Supermarket, Petland Discount, Chase Bank, Porta Bella Men's Fashions, Pretty Girl Inc. Women's Clothing, Payless Shoes, and GNC. The BID is managed by the Mosholu Preservation Corporation (MPC), a support corporation of Montefiore Medical Center.

I must mention that none of these accomplishments would have been made possible foremost without the cooperation of our merchants, property owners, city agencies, and the constant guidance and support of our BID's Board of Directors, the NYC Department of Small Business Services under the direction of Commissioner Robert Walsh, the office of Mayor Michael Bloomberg, the Mosholu Preservation Corporation, our staff, and supporters.

Throughout New York City, BIDs have become in many cases the determining factor of whether business districts survive. In addition, they are often the deciding factor of the viability and stability of many communities. BIDs have become an integral part of the city's fabric and the City's current administration has been a great supporter of the creation of BIDs and provide much appreciated support to existing BIDs. With 67 BIDs in operation and a steady number of merchants groups and property owners interested in forming them, BIDs have become increasingly popular and many times necessary in order to promote economic and commercial growth throughout the City.

### Neighborhood Needs Assessment

Within the past year, along its Jerome Avenue Corridor, the BID attracted a number of new businesses including Galaxy Electronics, Paradise Pawn Brokers, Mikey's Kids Clothing Outlet Center, the El Valle Restaurant, and the Monti Diner. Along the East Gun Hill Road corridor, new businesses included Dunkin

Donuts, MetroPCS and the My Dreams Photo Studio. In addition to welcoming these new businesses to the district, the BID also provided assistance, guidance, and support to numerous other businesses within the district. The trend continues where we see fewer 99 cent and general discount stores opening within the district, and have continued the practice of speaking to neighborhood residents and shoppers to get their feedback on the type of stores they would like to see in the BID, such as sit down restaurants like the Monti Diner. The feedback and information we gather is used to make recommendations to property owners and brokers to suggest new establishments.

While FY 2012 saw the addition of Dunkin Donuts as one of the BID's new businesses, it also saw the departure of Foot Locker from the district. Some noteworthy developments within the district include the restoration of a building that experienced a significant fire in August of 2011. This fire resulted in the temporary closure of two small businesses and the loss of some services to a third. The BID's Executive Director played a key role in the restoration of these impacted businesses. In addition, the BID also received notification from the New York City Department of Transportation stating it will be upgrading all existing street lights on Jerome Avenue from East Mosholu Parkway North to Bainbridge Avenue in response to the BID's direct request for a lighting assessment. Both developments will prove to have long lasting and positive impacts on the district as the restoration provided code upgrades for several of the impacted small businesses, and the improvement of the street lighting along the BID's Jerome Avenue corridor will provide a safer environment in the evening hours allowing businesses to remain open later, and shoppers to have greater access to shop in an even safer environment. This combined with enhancements to some of the BID's security cameras will further enhance the area's shopping experience.

#### ***Existing Problems & Needs:***

Presently, businesses within the Jerome-Gun Hill Business Improvement District continue to demonstrate resilience in the face of the challenging economic climate. A key need which the BID has sought to address using technology include the lack of an Internet presence for many of the BID's small businesses. The BID's launching of a website, and its creation of a Facebook page that has started to grow in viewership have allowed many of the BID's businesses to be showcased to more members of the community. The BID is also working to increase its outreach and communication to the BID's 250 businesses by working to establish connections and creating relationships with surrounding colleges and universities. Through these relationships, the BID hopes to attract interns and volunteers who will aid in the support of merchant outreach and also provide administrative support to the BID.

### **Review of Accomplishments**

#### **Goals**

##### ***Goal #1-BID Map:***

Due to unforeseen increased costs related to the production of the BID's map and guide, the BID map project timeline and content was modified. The final version of the BID's map and guide features a short summary of "What is a BID", and includes a list of all retail shops and community resources with contact information, "outposts" of Montefiore Medical Center sites and a copy of the local MTA subway and bus routes. The number of languages was reduced to accommodate the projects budget. Final versions of the map and guide will be distributed throughout the district in FY 2013.

**Goal #2-Jerome Gun Hill BID Website:**

We were successful in securing the domain name ([www.jeromegunhillbid.org](http://www.jeromegunhillbid.org)) in addition to identifying and securing Bluehost as the webhost for the BID's newly created webpage. The website was formally launched during FY 2012 and content is being added and updated. The website is being positioned as an online resource to the many retailers throughout the Jerome Gun Hill Business Improvement District. In conjunction with the website, the BID saw the launch of its Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/JGHBID>)

The BID's Facebook page and website were used jointly to promote BID programs and neighborhood events such as the BID's Annual Fall Festival. The BID's newly designed free standing website along with the BID's Facebook page are integral parts of the BID's Marketing Plan that was created in June of 2011 through assistance from an SBS Marketing consultant, Nancy Schwartz and Company. These online resources will continue to assist the BID's efforts to increase and enhance the communication and information needs of both consumers and merchants of the Jerome-Gun Hill BID area. We will enhance the website so that it will be a vehicle to provide critical updates related to the efforts of the Jerome Gun Hill Business Improvement District to enhance the shopping experience throughout the district. The site will further continue to serve as an electronic portal for communication with the leadership of the Jerome-Gun Hill BID, its merchants, vendors, and customers. We also plan to enhance ad revenue potential via our web presence through promotions and other online resources.

**Goal #3-Design and Install a new set of Banners for the BID**

In efforts to further enhance the shopping experience of the Jerome-Gun Hill BID, and to help provide a sense of place to the district, the BID worked to design banners in conjunction with numerous BID merchants and supporters. Banner designs were finalized in the latter part of FY 2012 and final banners are scheduled to be erected in the summer of 2012. Banners provided the opportunity for local businesses to showcase their presence to shoppers throughout the district, creating an atmosphere whose aesthetics are conducive to shopping.

**Goal #4- Expansion of BID Security Camera Program:**

As part of our continued plan to improve security throughout the district, the BID was successful in upgrading the existing hardware and software for its existing security camera network providing an enhanced level of security along both Jerome Avenue and East Gun Hill Road corridors of the district. Presently, the BID is conducting an assessment of what would be needed to increase the level of surveillance of the BID's camera network by the officers and leadership of the 52<sup>nd</sup> NYPD Police Precinct, where BID cameras are currently connected and monitored. This upgrade will also include the installation of new hardware in additional departments of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Precinct including the Precinct's Detective Squad and Front Desk. Making its security camera network available to additional departments within the 52<sup>nd</sup> Precinct, the BID will further increase the level of real time security for the district. In addition to these enhancements, locations are being assessed for the installation of additional security cameras on additional buildings throughout the district.

**Goal #5- Increase the Assessment Fees for the Jerome-Gun Hill Business Improvement District:**

The BID was successful in securing a \$50,000 increase in its assessment fee taking the BID's assessment from \$209,000 to \$259,000 for the first time since its creation in 1996. The assessment fee increase has allowed further resources to be made available for projects that have continued to help the Jerome-Hill BID thrive and grow such as the expansion of the BID's marketing and advertising efforts and the planned enhancements to the BID's network of security cameras.

### **Other Activities Taken on in FY 2012**

- The BID's Executive Director successfully completed the SBS/Coro Neighborhood Leadership Fellowship Program. This 5 month intensive course provided invaluable networking and leadership training that provided learning and relationships that further enhanced the ability to successfully accomplish the goals for the Fiscal Year.
- FY 2012 saw the continued increase in the communication between the BID's leadership and merchants. During the Fiscal Year, the BID's Executive Director utilized skills and knowledge obtained from the SBS/Coro Neighborhood Leadership Fellowship implement new strategies to engage stakeholders throughout the Business Improvement District. By daily walks through the district and directly assisting business owners with a variety of issues, such as addressing fines, illegal vending, graffiti, sanitation concerns, signage, advertising, and various other issues, the BID's Executive Director has continued to increase the level of familiarity and awareness by business owners about the resources and services provided by the Business Improvement District.
- The BID's Executive Director provided testimony at two key City Council Hearings related to BID corridors. This included testimony to the New York City Council Sub-Committees on Small Business and Consumer Affairs regarding the benefits of Holiday marketing and promotion efforts to the BID's small businesses and in relation to proposed legislation regarding the illegal and dangerous practices of some street vendors.
- This Fiscal Year saw the production of the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Jerome Gun Hill BID's Fall Festival which helps promote the businesses within the Jerome-Gun Hill BID. The festival was created as a way to give back to the community, especially our youth and allow us to celebrate our culturally diverse neighborhood and rich historic past. The 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Fall Festival, deemed another great success, attracted an estimated 35,000 participants in addition to over 100 vendors, the Radio Disney Van, sports contests, and a music stage with over 25 performers.
- The BID's Executive Director provided Grand Jury testimony introducing into evidence footage from one of the BID's upgraded security cameras that proved instrumental in the apprehension of two extremely violent felons from the BID's streets.

### **Review of Activities Data (See Attached)**

**SECTION II. LOOKING AHEAD: FISCAL YEAR 2013 GOALS*****Goal #1-BID Map:***

While there have been challenges presented in finalizing the production of the BID's map and guide, production and distribution of the guide to area residents will be a key goal for the 2103 fiscal year. As an enhancement to the map and guide, a shopping discount for numerous participating businesses was incorporated into the final version. The map and guide will be used to further leverage other shopping campaigns throughout the district and will further increase communication between consumers and business owners in the district. The map will include a listing of BID retail shops and community resources with contact information, "outposts" of Montefiore Medical Center sites, and a copy of the official MTA subway and Metro North maps to further enhance the map's usefulness to business owners and consumers alike.

***Goal #2-Enhancement of the Jerome Gun Hill BID's Website and Online Presence:***

During its next phase of development, the BID's website will be enhanced with new content and resources for area shoppers. We will continue the development of the website to further leverage other BID marketing and promotion campaigns such as helping our print promotions reach a boarder audience, communicating information about real time events in the district, leveraging content and communication from the BID's Facebook page, and serving as a gateway for communication between the BID, consumers, and business owners. The next phase of development include our plan to grow the website with the implementation of information links and portals that will allow consumers, merchants, board members, and staff to be kept updated on BID happenings on an ongoing basis. The website will continue to provide critical updates related to the happenings of the Jerome-Gun Hill BID. Next stages of development of the BID's online presence will also include information sharing between the BID's webpage and the BID's Facebook page. An assessment will also be conducted to determine how to proceed with the BID's overall online marketing and promotion efforts. The ability to further increase the online presence of area businesses that do not currently have a presence using the BID's online resources will be explored.

***Goal #3- Install of newly designed Banners for the BID***

In efforts to further enhance the shopping experience of the Jerome-Gun Hill BID, and to help provide a sense of place to the district, the BID will finalize the installation of over 30 banners that were designed during FY 2012 in conjunction with 18 BID businesses and sponsors. Banners designs were finalized in the latter part of FY 2012 and will be erected in the summer of 2012. These banners will provide the opportunity for local businesses to showcase their presence to shoppers throughout the district, creating an atmosphere whose aesthetics are conducive to shopping, and will hang throughout the district for a six month period.

***Goal #4- Expansion of BID Security Camera Program:***

After completing the hardware and software upgrades of the BID's existing security cameras, BID leadership will follow up on the acquisition and installation of additional security cameras at strategic locations within the district. The BID also plans to upgrade the number of monitors and computers at the 52<sup>nd</sup> Precinct that will increase the ability of the NYPD to better monitor BID activities in real time.

***Goal #5- Increase marketing and promotion efforts:***

In efforts to build on the creation of the BID's online resources, we will create new marketing and promotional campaigns that will include the creation of new BID television commercials in both English and Spanish, conduct a Holiday Tree Lighting to kick off the BID's Winter Holiday shopping season, the creation of new shopping circulars to promote Holiday sales, and the design of a calendar featuring BID businesses that can be used to market and promote the district year round.

### SECTION III. CONTRACTS

**See Attached**

### SECTION IV. ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

→ *BID Board of Directors*

The BID's Board of Directors, and a community resident, comprise a 15 member board, which includes a majority of property owners that meets approximately 6 times a year to conduct the business of the BID. The board members are well versed in business, government and property ownership and bring a wealth of experience to the board.

→ ***Executive Director***

The BID's current Executive Director, Michael Lambert, works at the discretion of the BID Board of Directors under a contract with the Mosholu Preservation Corporation, managers of the BID. Prior to his role as Executive Director of the Jerome Gun Hill Business Improvement District, Mr. Lambert served in numerous capacities related to community focused ambulatory health care delivery for programs at Montefiore Medical Center, including the roles of Program Director for the day to day oversight of one of the country's largest community based mobile health care programs for homeless children and families, and Administrator for numerous medical services in both inpatient and ambulatory settings with the former Montefiore Medical Center-Albert Einstein College of Medicine Health Services program on Rikers Island, where he supervised numerous multi-disciplinary teams and also served as program liaison to numerous government agencies at the local, State, and Federal level. In each of these prior roles, Mr. Lambert was responsible for the management of the program's support systems, including fiscal and quality control systems, data collection and reporting systems, medical records management systems, and integrated, multi-disciplinary, health care delivery teams.

Mr. Lambert holds an MBA in Health Care Administration from the Baruch College Zicklin Business School-Mt. Sinai Medical Center Program of the City University of New York, where he was the recipient of a Public Health Scholarship. He also holds a B.S. in Electrical Engineering from Polytechnic University in New York, currently NYU-Poly. Mr. Lambert is also a Past President of the New York Association for Ambulatory Care (NYAAC), a member organization that provides networking opportunities and seminars on critical topics affecting ambulatory health care programs across New York City, and surrounding areas.

→ ***Montefiore Medical Center Annual Staff Development Exercises***

The BID's Executive Director, Michael Lambert takes part in year round staff and organizational development activities under the direction of MPC (managers of the BID), and Montefiore Medical Center as its affiliate. These development exercises are offered on an ongoing basis as part of the medical center's team building, staff development, service delivery, and commitment to ensuring the highest caliber of associate development at all levels. In addition, the Executive Director is currently working with numerous departments and partners within Montefiore and the BID's surrounding community to ensure the best synergy for all involved. In 2012, Mr. Lambert also successfully completed the SBS/CORO Neighborhood Leadership Fellowship Program (NL2012), where he learned new methods and developed numerous relationships that proved instrumental to his work as the BID's Executive Director. Mr. Lambert is also a regular attendee of meetings of the New York BID Association, where best practice and other key information for effective management of business improvement districts is often shared.

→ ***Mosholu Preservation Corporation Annual Staff Development Workshops & Bi-weekly Meetings***

As part of the MPC's staff development efforts, the BID's Executive Director participates in bi-weekly staff meetings at MPC's offices where information sharing and planning takes place between the staff members and President of the corporation. Under the leadership of Roberto Garcia, Executive Director of the Mosholu Preservation Corporation which manages the BID, a direct connection exists between the BID and Montefiore Medical Center, where Mr. Garcia also holds the title of Senior Director of Community Relations and Government Affairs. The Mosholu Preservation Corporation, an affiliate of Montefiore Medical Center, has conducted a variety of economic development related activities at 5 additional commercial corridors within the areas around the medical center.



→ ***College Interns***

Since the BID's Executive Director is the only employee of the organization, we utilize college interns as an effective way to assist with efforts to provide additional outreach services to our constituency. The interns meet with the Executive Director in addition to accompanying him on outreach and informational gathering efforts. They also assist with maintaining data and delivering/mail information and materials to merchants and property owners throughout the district. Interns also play a key role in the follow up of projects that benefit all BID stakeholders.