

ANNUAL REPORT FY20



A Note from our Executive Director

Dear Reader,

2020 has been a period of unprecedented change and disruption. This Annual Report provides a summary of Jamaica Center BID's activities in the last fiscal year 2019-2020, which includes our activities from before the pandemic, as well as our initial response to the pandemic and the economic turmoil that followed.

In summer & fall of 2019, we were busy strategizing how to warmly welcome incoming residents in the new developments to their hometown neighborhood shopping corridor: Jamaica Avenue. We were excited to implement a storefront window visual merchandising program, continue our business networking happy hours, and to launch a full series of engaging public events designed to delight and draw shoppers downtown and into our local businesses. At our February board meeting (the last in-person meeting our organization would hold for an exceptionally long time) it was evident that change was on the horizon and what we had planned over the prior summer no longer applied. Abundant use of hand sanitizer was passed around the table, and an unusual air of seriousness and uncertainty filled the room. Two weeks later, stay-at-home orders were implemented and everyone's way of life and doing business completely changed. Our team, like so many others, pivoted to working from home. While some of our core programming remained unchanged (like our sanitation services), our robust event calendar was replaced instead with a robust coronavirus response, our plans of helping businesses improve their storefront window merchandising changed to helping them continue keeping their doors open during an economically perilous time, and our focus shifted from producing whimsical marketing collateral to confronting health and quality-of-life issues that mushroomed in Queens and along our commercial corridors.

There was tremendous loss of life this year: across the world, in New York City, and particularly in neighborhoods such as the one our BID (Business Improvement District) services in southeast Queens. Livelihoods were also lost, or severely threatened. Our greatest sympathy goes to our neighbors, friends and even Board members who lost someone dear to this virus and to those businesses who had to shut their doors. We at the BID will never forget the toll this virus played on the members and businesses of this City, and we are committed to helping New York rebound, both emotionally and economically in the years to come.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Furioli Executive Director



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A Year of Challenge, And Resiliency

COVID-19 Response and Business Support

In early March it was evident we would need to work from home. Just days before NY State announced the stay-at-home orders, our team bustled around the office gathering paperwork, supplies and important files. Our BID staff would not be idle while at home (putting together puzzles or cleaning closets). We knew our business community would rely on us to be a reliable, accessible, and supportive resource for them. We settled into our home offices, learned the fundamentals of zoom, and immediately set up daily 2 p.m. "situation room" calls to stay abreast of the latest firehose of information coming from our city and state partners and fellow business support organizations, and to best determine how to help our commercial community. We linked arms with other economic development organizations, forming weekly info exchange meetings and online forums to share and exchange info about the latest directives. We created and continue to regularly update and maintain a **COVID-19 webpage** providing our property owner members and their business tenants the latest information about executive orders, loans, grants, and industry-specific information (for example information about Open Streets, Open Restaurants, or the City's latest initiative, called Open Retail), and pushed the same into our social media and weekly e-newsletters. Our Executive Director appeared on Senator James Sanders and (former) Council Member Rory Lancman's digital town halls to share this vital information as well. We provided 25 of our small businesses with personal one-to-one help and referrals on matters such as **PPP** (Payroll Protection Program), **EIDL** (Economic Injury Disaster Loan) grants, the NY Forward Loan, and the NYC SBS small business grant and loan program.

In the spring, we maintained a **list of essential businesses** that were open on Jamaica Avenue, and as restrictions lifted, continued to update, and promote that list as more businesses were allowed to reopen. We served as a **PPE** (**Personal Protective Equipment**) **distribution partner** for Southeast Queens businesses, distributing **5,200 pieces of PPE** to businesses

on our corridor and throughout southeast Queens between February and July. We also launched a Shop Local pledge campaign, reminding residents that our local businesses need our shopping dollars now more than ever.

They say that necessity breeds innovation, and this could not have been truer when it came to the development of our JBID-Alerts! emergency cell phone notification program. We have always prioritized local visits into our stores to check in and distribute important business information...but when the pandemic forced businesses to close so rapidly, our team initially struggled to disseminate quickly changing and critical business information to our local merchant community. We devised a **cell** phone notification program where our local businesses and property owners could sign up to receive emergency notifications right to their cell phone from our BID in times of emergency. JBID-Alerts! quickly became one of the best tools in our tool kit for business recovery. Currently, we have over 100 businesses or property owners/managers enrolled, with more signing up each week.

Equitable & Inclusive Support

2020 also sparked conversations about diversity, equality, and inclusion, and as one of New York City's most diverse neighborhoods in Queens (the nation's most diverse county), our BID was committed to listening and participating in these discussions and taking action where we could. Alongside many other community groups, our team participated in the painting of the **Black Lives Matter mural** on Jamaica Avenue and attended the mural's celebration. We also assisted New York City's Department of Small Business Services with their launch event for their Black entrepreneurship "BENYC" report over the summer. We were pleased to help several of our corridor's exceptional Black entrepreneurs, including Henry's Carrot Cakes and Make **Me Over Beauty Bar** receive a speaking role at the BENYC event. We also attended and participated in the 103rd Precinct's Community Conversations series, bringing police and community stakeholders together for enhanced dialogue around unconscious bias, policing and other critical matters.

Traditional Services

It was not a year for "business as usual", but much of our usual business did continue:

Sanitation

Our sanitation team were the true **heroes** of the BID this year. Classified as "essential," our workers continued to show up, even in the height of the pandemic, to clean the streets and importantly, to sanitize street furniture and high-touch surfaces such as trash cans. In FY20 our uniformed subcontracted sanitation team spent 16,655 hours cleaning the streets, removing 24,337 instances of graffiti, servicing 101 trash receptacles, and collecting **37,447 bags of trash**. Bundled against the elements, which included face masks this year, the BID's "Clean Team" maintained their services during the frigid days of winter and braved summer's sweltering heat and the coronavirus to clean tree pits and transform grime to sparkling sidewalks through periodic power washing.

Streetscape Improvements

In summer, with assistance from the NYC Tree Trust (a division of NYC Department of Parks & Recreation), we conducted a **full analysis of all the trees and tree pits** on Jamaica Avenue & Union Hall Street. We then identified those pits which posed the most significant risks for pedestrian safety and reached out to (former) Council Member Rory Lancman (District 24) for support in repairing them. Thanks to our advocacy, the Council Member allocated **\$10,000 in funding** to the Horticultural Society to fix several tree pits on the Avenue, to occur in FY21.

We also invited a skilled horologist to examine our **historic and landmarked street clock** at the corner of Union Hall Street and Jamaica Avenue. We are now working closely with Council Member I. Daneek Miller's office (District 27), the

Queens Borough President's office, NYC Department of Transportation (DOT), NYC Department of Small Business Services (SBS) and Greater Jamaica Development Corporation (GJDC) to develop a plan and secure additional funding to restore this clock to its historic glory. Council Member Miller (District 27) has provided a generous grant to begin this work and we are hopeful we can secure the matching funds and necessary City agency support required to implement the project soon.





Marketing, Promotions, and Events

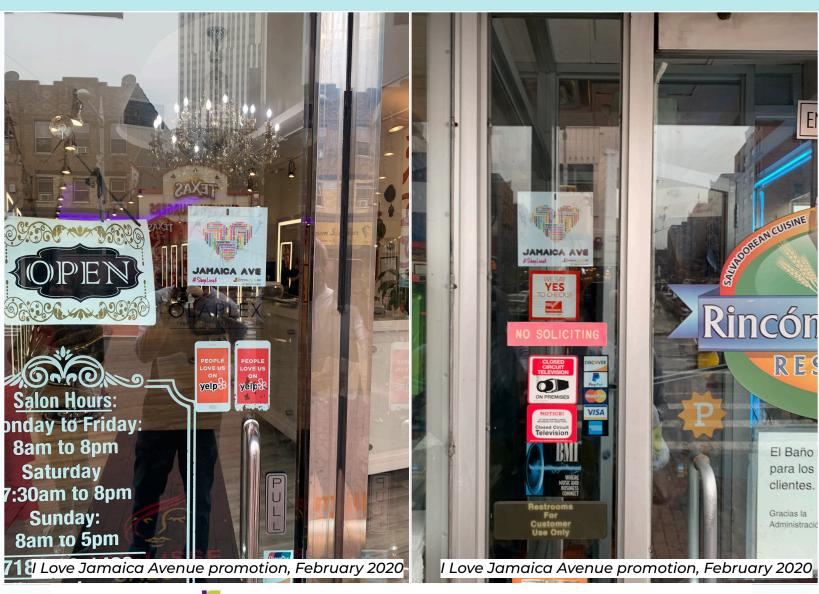
Pre-pandemic we launched two district marketing campaigns. In December Jamaica Avenue became the "Procrastination **Station**" a judgment-free and supportive haven for last-minute holiday shoppers. Designed to offer a last-minute uptick in business patronage right before the **holidays**, our team encouraged shoppers who had procrastinated on their holiday purchases to visit the Avenue, enticing them with **pop-up visits** from our mascot snowman, Mr. Jammy, and a live brass band. Many unsuspecting shoppers were approached by our team and handed a seasonal gift bag filled with winter treats and BID swag as a "thank you" for shopping downtown. We **curated an** electronic last-minute Gift Giver's Idea **Guide**, which highlighted **46 businesses** to make shopping a cinch, and activated one of our vacant downtown storefronts with an ugly **sweater contest** to round out the fun.

Just before Valentine's Day, we launched our first-ever "I Love Jamaica Avenue" loyalty campaign to promote a love local and buy local mindset amongst our Southeast Queens neighbors. We adorned 75 businesses with "I Love Jamaica Avenue" decals and ran another online campaign promoting 27 local businesses, the first of many efforts to come designed to remind locals to support their local merchants and economy instead of the nearby shopping mall or far-removed online retailers.

In the spring, we said farewell to our old website and launched an improved **jamaica**. **nyc**, revealing a fresh and user-friendly interface, designed to help visitors, businesses and shoppers easily find what they need. We also updated our **online business directory**. This new website was, and remains, instrumental in helping us disseminate critical information regarding the pandemic and related federal, state, and city regulations; executive orders; loans; grants; and industry-specific information to our property and business owners.









HOME SEE & DO SHOP DO BUSINESS NEWS ABOUT US

About Us



Much of Downtown Jamaica's commercial district is managed, beautified, and promoted by the nonpro-Jamaica Center Business Improvement District "BID". Our nonprofit seeks to make the Jamaica Centel business district a thriving business hub and an enjoyable destination to shop, work, live and visit.

Founded in 1979

Our BID's core programming includes the following strategic initiative:

		Board Members & Staff
ŀ	Fulcases	Key Programs
	Enhance Ensure the district is attractive, welcoming, safe, clean and graffiti-free.	Get Involved
		BID Members

Jamaica Center BID's new website launched in Summer 2020



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Financials:

Our current Fiscal Year runs from July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021.

We are required to conduct an annual audit by a certified external auditor each year and to submit these documents to New York City's Department of Small Business Services and the Comptroller of the City of New York. Our FY20 annual audit was prepared by Lyle Bauer of Cipriani and Bauer, LLC.

A copy of our most 990's (financial documents prepared for the Internal Revenue Service and the public) are always available at GuideStar.org. Simply search "Jamaica Center Improvement Association, Inc." or scan the QR code.





2019-2020 Board of Directors:

Michael Hirschhorn, President Jenel Management

Aaron Schwartz, Vice President Francmen Realty LLC

Michael Mattone, Secretary Mattone Group

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Jerry Black, Board Member Parsco Realty

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Daniel Kulka, Board Member K/L Realty

Sari Kulka, Board Member KJL Realty

Jonathan Guzman, Board Member *Carter's*

Farrukh Raghib, Board Member Raymour & Flanigan

Public Representatives:

Honorable Bill de Blasio Mayor of the City of New York (represented by NYC Dept. of SBS Commissioner Jonnel Doris)

Honorable Scott M. Stringer Comptroller of the City of New York

Honorable Donovan Richards
President of the Borough of Queens

Council Member I. Daneek Miller District 27

Council Member – Vacant District 24

Executive Staff:

Jennifer Furioli
Executive Director

Jahnavi Aluri Program Manager

Fred Green
Administration and Operations Manager

Trey Jenkins *Director of Marketing and Business Services*



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