



The South Bronx: An Economic Snapshot

Highlights

- From 2011 to 2021, the native and foreign-born populations in the South Bronx rose by 8.7 percent and 5.2 percent, respectively.
- Foreign-born residents (mostly from Latin America and the Caribbean) made up 32 percent of the area's population in 2021.
- Private sector jobs in the South Bronx grew by 6.3 percent (4,679) in 2022, reversing some of the earlier COVID-related losses.
- Jobs in Hunts Point/Longwood/Melrose, home to the Hunts Point Food Distribution Center, accounted for 21 percent of all borough jobs and 63 percent of area jobs.
- The health care and social assistance and the wholesale and retail trade sectors made up more than one-half of all jobs.
- The area was one of the hardest-hit by COVID-19, and 78 percent of residents were fully vaccinated by January 2023.
- The area's median household income rose by 31 percent from 2011 to 2021, more than boroughwide but less than citywide rates.
- Median rents increased by 42 percent over the decade, similar to the citywide rate.
- A higher share of area renters (62 percent) spent 30 percent or more of household income on rent than citywide (52 percent).
- Area student enrollment fell at a lower rate (6.8 percent) than citywide (9.3 percent).
- Efforts to improve the area's infrastructure include projects focusing on storm surge and energy resilience for the Hunts Point Peninsula and studies of ways to cap the Cross Bronx Expressway.

The South Bronx has undergone a period of revitalization that has enabled it to thrive as a cultural hotspot within the Bronx and New York City. More than one-quarter (27 percent) of the borough's residents lived in the area in 2021. Between 2011 and 2021 the South Bronx population rose faster (7.5 percent) than boroughwide (6.8 percent). Business activity also grew, as the number of establishments increased by 20 percent from 2011 to 2022. Despite facing a greater COVID-19 pandemic-related setback to business activity than citywide, growth in the area eclipsed that of the borough (17.9 percent) and City (18 percent). Businesses were helped through the crisis in part by significant levels of pandemic relief. Households also saw some improvement, with a larger reduction in poverty by 2021 than boroughwide and citywide.

In April 2020, the entire South Bronx area was included in a list of 33 communities citywide considered as hardest hit by the pandemic and having high percentages of economic and health disparities. These included air pollutant levels and hospitalizations for asthma that were higher than in other areas of the City. By January 2023, however, the area's cumulative COVID-19 case and death rates were lower than boroughwide and citywide.

South Bronx residents continue to face chronic health, economic and environmental challenges, and the City is seeking to address these issues while boosting economic growth. Recent and ongoing efforts toward this end include the Hunts Point Interstate Access Improvement Project for better traffic flow and air quality, and a new study on improvements to the Cross Bronx Expressway for the community's benefit. Continued focus on community benefits and active partnership among City departments, community-based organizations, and State and federal leaders, is critical for the long-term success of the South Bronx.

Introduction

The area of the Bronx south of the Cross Bronx Expressway (Interstate 95), and west of the Bronx River, is referred to throughout this report as the South Bronx (see Figure 1). The area includes the complete Census-defined neighborhoods of Hunts Point/Longwood/Melrose and Concourse/Highbridge/Mount Eden, and about one-half the neighborhood of Belmont/Crotona Park East/East Tremont.¹ These are almost contiguous with Bronx community districts one through four, and include most of ZIP code areas 10451, 10452, 10454, 10455, 10456, 10457, 10459 and 10474.

The most recent major transformation of the South Bronx has been marked by three phases, with the first beginning in the 1950s when planners and developers pushed to replace one- and two-family homes with multi-unit towers, some of which accommodated an expanded public housing stock. This phase was punctuated by construction of I-95 from 1948 to 1972, as well as the Major Deegan (I-87) and Bruckner (I-278) Expressways, completed in 1956 and 1973, respectively. These connected to older infrastructure such as the Triborough, Madison

Avenue, Third Avenue and Willis Avenue Bridges that linked the South Bronx to the rest of the City. During this period, the area experienced disinvestment and decay.²

The second phase started in the mid-1980s, and was marked by reinvestment and revitalization driven mainly by residents and advocates, and enabled by government policies. One of the main outcomes of this phase was the community-led formulation of the Melrose Commons Urban Renewal Plan in 1994.

The third phase of change (since 2003) in the South Bronx builds on cultural revitalization and continued development of commerce in the area. Projects include the construction of the Universal Hip Hop and Bronx Children's Museums, as well as further development of shopping areas at Southern Boulevard, The Hub and Bronx Terminal Market.

Some notable South Bronx locations are Yankee Stadium and the Hunts Point Food Distribution Center, 329 acres of [food and beverage distribution businesses](#) inclusive of three major markets: the Hunts Point Cooperative Market, the New Fulton Fish Market, and the Terminal Market.³ As a peninsula waterfront area, Hunts Point faces storm surge risk and extreme heat, which can result in power outages that impede food distribution. Efforts to improve the area's resiliency have been underway since 2013.⁴

FIGURE 1
The South Bronx



Demographic Trends

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the number of South Bronx residents grew by 7.5 percent from 2011 to 2021, when it made up 27 percent of the total borough population.⁵ The Belmont/Crotona Park East/East Tremont area south of I-95 had the largest population increase (17.5 percent) while Hunts Point/Longwood/Melrose had the smallest (3.7 percent).

The area's population growth rate between 2011 and 2021 was higher than that for the borough (6.8 percent) and similar to citywide, As of 2021,

South Bronx residents were mainly Hispanic (64 percent) and Black (31 percent), almost the same as in 2011. Foreign-born residents made up 32 percent of the population, and grew more slowly (5.2 percent) over the period than native residents (8.7 percent). This pattern of a smaller increase in foreign-born residents is similar to citywide but different from boroughwide.

Residents from Latin America and the Caribbean made up 80 percent of all foreign-born residents, while those from Africa made up 16 percent. These shares were higher than boroughwide (76 percent and 11 percent, respectively) and substantially higher than for the City overall (50 percent and 5 percent, respectively).

Driven by an increase in the share of the population that was 65 and over, the median age of South Bronx residents increased by three years to 32.8 years between 2011 and 2021. This figure was lower than the median ages for the borough (34.8 years) and the City (37.8 years).

As of 2021, 14 percent of South Bronx residents 25 and over had at least a bachelor's degree, a much lower share than boroughwide (21 percent) and citywide (40 percent). The share of South Bronx residents with this achievement level was

4.2 percentage points higher than in 2011, a greater improvement than the 3.1 percentage point increase for the borough yet lagging behind the 5.9 percentage point increase citywide.

Business and Employment

By 2022, the South Bronx had 20 percent more businesses than in 2011, a higher growth rate than boroughwide and citywide (see Figure 2). The number of area businesses rose from 2011 to 2019, prior to the onset of the pandemic, with the highest growth experienced in the Belmont/Crotona Park East/East Tremont (part) area. Business growth in the area slowed significantly from 2019 to 2021, then increased in 2022. Financial services and leisure and hospitality businesses accounted for one-third of the growth in 2022.

While some businesses were forced to close because of the pandemic, others had access to loans that enabled them to stay afloat. As of April 23, 2023, the latest date for which [Paycheck Protection Program](#) (PPP) data is available, South Bronx businesses had received \$710 million in loans. More than one-half (56.3 percent) of this total was disbursed to

FIGURE 2
Private Sector Businesses

Area	2011	2019	2021	2022	Change			
					2011-2019	2019-2021	2021-2022	2011-2022
Hunts Point/Longwood/Melrose	2,616	2,942	2,959	3,007	12.5%	0.6%	1.6%	15.0%
Concourse/Highbridge/Mount Eden	1,430	1,664	1,627	1,698	16.4%	-2.3%	4.4%	18.7%
Belmont/Crotona Park East/East Tremont (part)	627	827	872	900	31.9%	5.4%	3.2%	43.6%
South Bronx	4,672	5,433	5,458	5,605	16.3%	0.5%	2.7%	20.0%
Bronx	16,378	18,316	18,803	19,308	11.8%	2.7%	2.7%	17.9%
New York City	238,504	272,098	275,279	281,253	14.1%	1.2%	2.3%	18.0%

Sources: NYS Department of Labor; OSC analysis

businesses in the Hunts Point/Longwood/Melrose neighborhood.

The number of PPP loans to South Bronx businesses comprised 40 percent of all PPP loans to the borough, higher than the 32 percent share of all Bronx businesses registered in the area in 2020. The share of area loans forgiven so far (90 percent) was higher than boroughwide (89 percent) and lower than citywide (92 percent).

Federal pandemic relief provided to the area also included \$32 million under the [Restaurant Revitalization Fund](#) (RRF), 46 percent of the total disbursed to eateries across the borough. Of all area restaurants that received RRF grants, 98 percent were in Historically Underutilized Business Zones (HUBZones), and 74 percent were in low- or moderate-income (LMI) areas, which can overlap. The comparable shares of RRF grants disbursed to eateries in HUBZones and LMI areas across the borough were 68 percent and 60 percent, respectively.⁶

While emergency federal funding for COVID-19 relief for businesses has expired, the State funded two programs to provide small businesses in the South Bronx and across the State with further support in their continued recovery. These are the NYS Small Business Seed Funding Grant (now closed) and the COVID-19 Capital Costs Tax Credit Programs (closing September 30, 2023).⁷

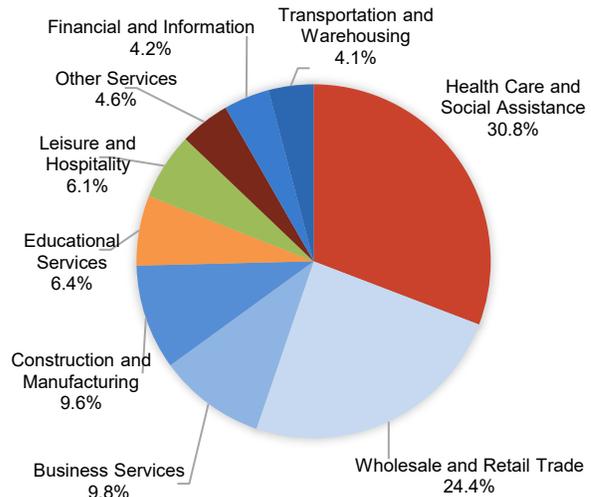
Employment and Job Creation

The number of jobs in the South Bronx rose by 17.5 percent (11,017) from 2011 to 2021, with a 27.3 percent increase up to 2019, followed by a 7.7 percent (6,150) decline from 2019 to 2021. Area jobs rose by 6.3 percent (4,679) in 2022, reversing some of the pandemic-related losses.

As of 2022, the South Bronx accounted for almost one-third (78,476) of all private sector jobs boroughwide, with the largest share (21 percent) being in Hunts Point/Longwood/Melrose (49,546

or 63 percent of area total). Health care and social assistance, and wholesale and retail trade together accounted for more than one-half of all South Bronx jobs (see Figure 3).

FIGURE 3
South Bronx Employment Shares by Sector, 2022



Sources: NYS Department of Labor; OSC analysis

At the neighborhood level, 29 percent of jobs in Hunts Point/Longwood/Melrose were in the wholesale and retail trade sectors while the health care and social services sector accounted for a further 30 percent, as well as 46 percent in Belmont/Crotona Park East/East Tremont.

Total private sector wages in the South Bronx area increased from \$2.7 billion to \$4.9 billion (77 percent) from 2011 to 2022. The growth was higher than the rate of increase in total wages paid across the borough (57 percent) and the City (69 percent). Average wages in the area rose by 42 percent, from \$43,700 to \$61,800, over the same period, with the largest increase in the Concourse/Highbridge/Mount Eden neighborhood (64 percent), and the smallest in the Hunts Point/Longwood/Melrose neighborhood (33 percent).

The rates of average wage increases in the South Bronx were highest for the business services (68 percent), social assistance (59 percent) and

leisure and hospitality (58 percent) sectors. These were also the sectors with the highest growth boroughwide.

Community and Environmental Health and Pandemic Impact

New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) data shows that residents in all neighborhoods in the South Bronx had life expectancies shorter than in the City overall, and higher rates of avoidable hospitalizations than borough and citywide.⁸ In terms of health care access, South Bronx residents rely especially on NYC Health + Hospitals/Lincoln, which serves the Hunts Point-Mott Haven and Highbridge-Morrisania communities. The hospital has one of the most active emergency departments in the country, and is a Center of Excellence for its trauma, stroke, breast, and AIDS centers, and diabetes education and management program.

In recent years, the City has also attempted to expand basic care in the South Bronx by establishing the Tremont Health Action Center located just north of I-95. This is one of three neighborhood health action centers, established by the DOHMH in 2017. These centers were formed to accommodate partnerships with community-based organizations to provide health care and social services for improved physical and mental health and well-being.

COVID-19 and Comorbidities

It is now established that certain pre-existing conditions such as asthma, hypertension and other heart conditions can increase the likelihood of sickness from COVID-19. Data from prior to the pandemic suggests levels of hypertension were higher in Mott Haven, Melrose, Hunts Point and Longwood than in the rest of the Bronx and New York City. Premature death from heart disease was elevated when compared to the Bronx and the City generally for each of the neighborhoods in the area.

South Bronx residents have long been impacted by asthma, a chronic respiratory disease with symptoms that include coughing, wheezing and chest tightness. Two communities, Hunts Point-Mott Haven and Highbridge-Morrisania, are included in areas dubbed “asthma alley” and ranked among the worst across the City for levels of air pollutants.⁹ Poor air quality is a major factor contributing to asthma. One measure, levels of particulate matter (PM2.5), has declined in both areas from 9.6 mcg/m³ in 2015 to less than 7.0 mcg/m³ in 2021.¹⁰ However, the levels remain elevated compared to boroughwide and citywide.¹¹ South Bronx residents also experience other environmental hazards that impact morbidity and quality of life, such as extreme heat. The City’s Heat Vulnerability Index tool shows the area’s communities scored at five, the highest in the range.¹²

COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations and Deaths

All eight South Bronx ZIP code areas were among those in 33 communities across the City identified by the Task Force on Racial Inclusion and Equity (TRIE) as hardest hit by the pandemic and having high percentages of other health and socioeconomic disparities.¹³ Compared to other areas of the City where the impact of COVID-19 varied widely despite close proximity, differences in COVID-related outcomes across South Bronx communities were smaller.

During the initial surge of the pandemic, COVID-19 hospitalizations peaked in April 2020, with the largest rate of hospitalizations occurring among people living in the Bronx as compared to the other boroughs. Within the borough, the South Bronx was home to some of the highest rates, with three of the ZIP code areas being among the top 10 boroughwide.¹⁴

Following the initial surge, there were multiple waves of COVID-19 infection driven by new variants, with the most dominant, Omicron, bringing sharp increases in the citywide seven-day positivity rate (the percentage of

FIGURE 4
Cumulative COVID-19 Cases and Deaths

ZIP Code Area	Cases	Deaths	Case Rates	Death Rates
Claremont/Morrisania (10456)	32,586	559	34,966	600
Concourse/Highbridge (10452)	28,381	389	37,734	517
Belmont/Claremont/Mount Hope/Tremont (10457)	26,912	369	36,505	501
Concourse/Melrose (10451)	21,759	318	45,937	671
Charlotte Gardens/Hunts Point (10459)	19,476	320	40,683	668
Mott Haven (10455)	17,362	242	41,443	578
Mott Haven/Port Morris (10454)	16,369	239	43,270	632
Hunts Point (10474)	4,167	53	34,796	443
South Bronx	167,012	2,489	38,925	580
Bronx	580,187	8,610	40,910	607
New York City	3,399,310	45,656	40,775	548

Note: Data as of November 16, 2023. Case rates and death rates are the cumulative number of COVID-19 cases and deaths per 100,000 residents.

Sources: NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene; OSC analysis

people tested who had positive results). The rate peaked at 34.7 percent citywide in early January 2022. The rate in the Bronx peaked at 41.2 percent. In the South Bronx, the increases occurred in all eight ZIP code areas, with rates in six exceeding that in the borough overall.¹⁵

Although one half of the South Bronx ZIP code areas were among those with the ten highest number of cases across the borough, the cumulative COVID-19 case rate for the area was lower than boroughwide and citywide as of November 2023, while the death rate was lower than boroughwide (see Figure 4).

COVID-19 Vaccinations

In September 2021, the City launched the Public Health Corps to work with community groups and public health workers to prioritize vaccinations in the hardest hit communities, such as those identified by the TRIE.¹⁶ A 78 percent share of all eligible TRIE community residents being fully vaccinated was reached by January 5, 2023, and in the South Bronx, by January 19, 2023 (larger than the borough share of 77 percent and smaller than the citywide share of 81 percent).

Income and Housing

The South Bronx median household income rose by a larger rate from 2011 to 2021 than did the borough (see Figure 5).¹⁷ The area's median income remained lower than boroughwide and citywide. Hunts Point/Longwood/Melrose had the lowest (\$27,885) among all neighborhoods in the City.

FIGURE 5
Median Household Incomes

Area	2011	2021	Change
South Bronx	\$24,742	32,381	30.9%
Bronx	\$34,744	43,726	25.9%
New York City	\$51,270	70,663	37.8%

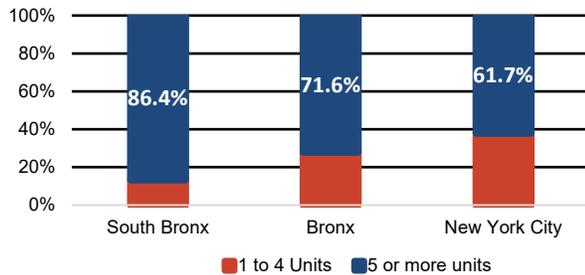
Note: Data for five-year periods ending each of years cited.
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-year files; OSC analysis

Between 2011 and 2021, the share of South Bronx households below the federal poverty level declined from 39.7 percent to 36.3 percent, a greater reduction (3.4 percentage points) than boroughwide (0.9 percentage points) and citywide (1.4 percentage points). The rate of child poverty declined by 5.7 percentage points (to 45 percent), greater than the reduction boroughwide (4.7 percentage points to 34.4 percent) and citywide (5.0 percentage points to 23.2 percent).

Housing

In the South Bronx, a greater share of households (86.4 percent) were located in large, multi-unit buildings of 5 or more units than boroughwide and citywide (see Figure 6).

FIGURE 6
Shares of Residential Units by Structure Size, 2021



Note: For five-year period ending 2021.
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-year files; OSC analysis

About 32 percent of all Bronx households in buildings of five or more units were in the South Bronx.

In 2021, 141,022 (27 percent) of all occupied residential units in the borough were in the South Bronx. This was a 17.6 percent growth from 2011, well above the 10.5 percent increase boroughwide.

Of the total occupied units in the area, 93 percent (130,573) were rentals, and the remainder were owner-occupied. While the South Bronx median rent of \$1,006 (excluding gas and utilities) was lower than the median for rentals boroughwide (\$1,180) and citywide (\$1,455), it was 42 percent higher than in 2011. This increase was greater than across the borough (39 percent) and smaller than citywide (44 percent).

The share of South Bronx households that are considered rent burdened (spend 30 percent or more of income on rent) in 2021 was larger than that for the borough, and much larger than that for the City as a whole (see Figure 7). The pattern was the same for the share facing severe rent burden (50 percent or more of income on rent).

FIGURE 7
Shares of Residents Facing Rent Burden

Area	2011	2021	Difference
Rent Burden			
South Bronx	58%	62%	4%
Bronx	56%	60%	4%
New York City	52%	52%	0%
Severe Rent Burden			
South Bronx	34%	36%	2%
Bronx	33%	34%	1%
New York City	28%	28%	0%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-year files; OSC analysis

Compared to 2011, increases in the shares of South Bronx households facing rent burden and severe rent burden were greater than citywide.

The high shares of rent-burdened households are partly reflected in increases in the market values of apartments over the last few years. The City's FY 2024 final property tax assessment roll showed that the median market value for apartments in the area rose more (19.3 percent) than boroughwide (15.5 percent) and citywide (5.7 percent) since FY 2020, suggesting affordable housing is even further out of reach for many residents.

In 2021, residential units in the South Bronx included 20,748 New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) units, accounting for 49 percent of all NYCHA units in the Bronx. The borough has the third highest number of NYCHA units (41,982) after Brooklyn (61,483) and Manhattan (55,621).

As of May 30, 2023, South Bronx households accounted for 35,422 applications approved for payment under the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP).¹⁸ The area made up 38 percent of all Bronx ERAP applications paid, reflecting generally lower incomes and higher rent burdens. The ERAP closed as of January 20, 2023, and any new funding is being used to process applications in the pipeline.

Even with ERAP support, residential eviction filings for non-payment of rent across the City

rose steadily after the expiration of an eviction moratorium and the reopening of housing courts in early 2021. As shares of total eviction filings for the first ten months of 2019, filings for the same period rose from 22 percent and 23 percent respectively for the South Bronx and the City as a whole, to 58 percent. Over the same period of 2023, eviction filings in the South Bronx grew at an even faster pace than the City, amounting to 79 percent of total filings from January to October 2019, compared to 73 percent citywide.

Food Insecurity

Between 2011 and 2021, there was a much smaller increase (0.3 percentage points) in the share of South Bronx households participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) than boroughwide (4.4 percent). Even so, the share of area households participating in SNAP in 2021 (47 percent) was much larger than the share across the borough (36 percent) and the City (19 percent).

The level of food insecurity in the South Bronx continued during the COVID-19 pandemic. While much of the response was community-driven, the City also implemented policies that made it easier to apply for and maintain benefits remotely. Additionally, since March 2020, the federal government has provided a supplemental monthly benefit in the amount of \$95 per SNAP household. As of February 2023, this [supplement](#) is no longer being issued.¹⁹

Broadband Internet

In 2021, 40 percent of South Bronx households had no broadband internet subscription, higher than the shares of 36 percent of all borough households, and 27 percent citywide. The share of households without access was highest in Hunts Point/Longwood/Melrose (42 percent).

During the early phase of the pandemic, community service providers drove efforts to improve broadband connectivity for South Bronx

residents by installing independent networks. Later, the City and State engaged in efforts to increase access to broadband for NYCHA residents and the federal government launched the Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB) program to enable access by lower-income residents.²⁰ The EBB has since been replaced by the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), which had 58,100 South Bronx subscribers as of August 2022. This total represented 41.5 percent of 140,100 ACP subscribers boroughwide.

Residents in the Workforce

In 2021, 49 percent of the South Bronx population ages 16 and over were employed, lower than the comparable shares of 52 percent for the borough and 59 percent for the City as a whole. The highest shares of employed area residents worked in the health care and social assistance (26 percent), retail and business services (11 percent each) and accommodation and food services (10 percent) sectors. These were also the top-four employment sectors for the borough, accounting for 54 percent of all Bronx employment compared to 57 percent in the area.

As with the borough as a whole, health care support and office and administrative support were among the top three occupations of area residents. However, while sales and related positions rounded out the top three occupations across the borough, building and grounds cleaning and maintenance was the third highest occupation for South Bronx residents.

In 2021, employed residents spent an average of 43 minutes commuting to work, compared to 45 minutes for all working borough residents and 41 minutes for City workers. A larger share of the area's workers relied on public transportation (64 percent) or walked to work (9.8 percent) than the share of those boroughwide (56.1 percent and 7.2 percent, respectively). As of March 2023, [subway ridership](#) was at 90 percent of March 2019 levels in two of the area's three neighborhoods, well above the citywide level.²¹

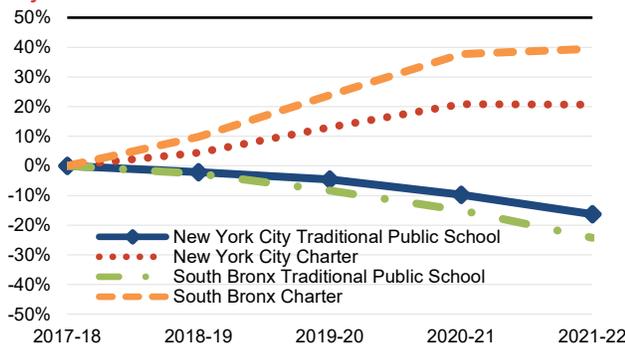
Education

New York City Department of Education records show the South Bronx had 136 local public schools with 48,395 kindergarten through eighth grade (K-8) students enrolled in the 2021-22 school year (the most recent year for which data is available). About one-third of these grade schools are charters (more than twice the citywide share) that served 20,608 K-8 students. A total of 22,674 children attended high schools located in the area in 2021-22. There were also 1,777 preschoolers and 763 3-year-olds (3-K).

Students with disabilities and English Language Learners accounted for 25.3 percent and 17.6 percent, respectively, of the South Bronx total in 2021-22, higher shares than citywide (20.6 percent and 13.9 percent, respectively).

The pandemic had a negative impact on student enrollment in area schools, exacerbating existing trends just as it did across the City and in school districts around the country. Even so, enrollment loss was not as high as it was elsewhere in the City. Records show a 6.8 percent decline in K-8 enrollment (to 48,427) from 2019-20 to 2020-21, compared to a 9.3 percent reduction citywide. Despite the overall K-8 losses, South Bronx K-8 charter school enrollment grew by 12.7 percent as several new schools opened. For non-charter schools, K-8 enrollment fell by 17.4 percent over the same period (see Figure 8).²²

FIGURE 8
Adjusted Annual K-8 Student Enrollment Trend



Sources: NYC Department of Education; OSC analysis

FIGURE 9
Shares of Students With Proficient Exam Scores

Grade Level	Shares			Percentage Points Change	
	2013	2019	2022	2013-2019	2019-2022
South Bronx					
English Language Arts					
3-5	12.4%	32.5%	23.8%	20.1	-8.7
6-8	10.2%	29.3%	38.2%	19.1	8.9
Math					
3-5	14.0%	32.4%	20.9%	18.4	-11.5
6-8	12.2%	24.1%	15.6%	11.9	-8.5
New York City					
English Language Arts					
3-5	28.0%	47.5%	43.8%	19.5	-3.7
6-8	24.8%	47.2%	54.0%	22.4	6.8
Math					
3-5	32.7%	49.5%	42.6%	16.8	-6.9
6-8	26.5%	41.1%	32.6%	14.6	-8.5

Note: Excludes charter schools.

Sources: NYC Department of Education; OSC analysis

The pandemic also impacted student learning outcomes in the South Bronx, as it did across the nation. Between 2013 and 2019, before the onset of the pandemic, the share of area students who were rated “proficient” on statewide mathematics tests administered to grades three through eight (3-8) had trended steadily upward, more than doubling to reach 28.4 percent. When test administration resumed in 2022, after a hiatus due to the pandemic, the share who scored proficient in math fell to 18.3 percent, the lowest level since 2015.

The trend for citywide grades 3-8 math scores was similar, rising from 29.6 percent proficient in 2013 to 45.6 percent in 2019, then falling to 37.9 percent in 2022. Proficiency losses in English language arts exams were greater in younger grades, while math proficiency suffered across all grades, similar to the trend experienced citywide (see Figure 9).

Crime

Major felony crimes in the South Bronx precincts (40, 41, 42, 44) rose by 17 percent during the decade prior to the pandemic (2009-2019), but

increased 45 percent between 2019 and 2022, to reach the highest level in more than two decades. In comparison, major felonies decreased citywide by 10 percent during 2009 to 2019, then increased by 32 percent from 2019 to 2022, to reach the highest level since 2006.

In 2022, major felony crime in the South Bronx rose by 26 percent when compared to 2021. This was larger than boroughwide (21 percent) and citywide (23 percent). Every category rose except for murder (32 percent decline), with burglaries and auto theft being the highest (58 percent and 62 percent, respectively).

Despite moderate declines in most felonies in the South Bronx for the first ten months of 2023, there were increases in felony assaults (10 percent) and auto theft (up 31 percent). As a result, major felony crime in the area during this period of 2023 was more than three percent higher than for the same period of 2022, with murders slightly lower (2.4 percent).

Economic Development

Ongoing development projects include construction of mixed-use or commercial facilities such as Bronx Point (Melrose), The Peninsula (at the site of the former Spofford Juvenile detention facility in Hunts Point), and the multi-story Bronx Logistics Center (Port Morris/Hunts Point), set to be the largest warehouse in the City.

Ongoing and planned South Bronx infrastructure projects include the Hunts Point Interstate Access Improvement Project, to improve traffic flow and reduce emissions, and the Hunts Point Metro-North station. The station is one of four being constructed as part of the Penn Station Access project to connect the east side of the Bronx with the west side of Manhattan. Some ongoing infrastructure work located in the South Bronx have clear citywide and statewide benefits as well, such as construction of anaerobic digesters for wastewater treatment and the NYS Regional Food Hub.²³

Most recently, the City announced the launch of a community-driven study of ways to cap the Cross Bronx Expressway to reduce noise and pollution and better connect Bronx communities. The study is funded by a federal grant and is a collaboration between City and State agencies, residents, community groups and stakeholders. There was also federal, State and local funding to support cultural projects such as the Universal Hip Hop Museum and the Bronx Children's Museum.

Looking Ahead

The continued economic development of the South Bronx and its cultural resurgence suggest some success in revitalization efforts led by New York State and the City, aided by federal funding, and developed in tandem with community groups and area residents. Between 2011 and 2021, the area's median household income rose, while the share of residents in poverty declined, and a larger percent attained bachelor's degrees and jobs than boroughwide.

The pandemic set back some of the gains in employment and educational outcomes and has left the area with continued challenges. These lingering issues are evident in local community board priorities, with affordable housing, quality of life issues (including crime) and chronic health conditions listed among the issues of highest need in the area's four community districts.²⁴ South Bronx residents have also raised the need to address environmental hazards such as poor air quality, extreme heat and flooding.²⁵

Local and State measures to improve quality of life and encourage business development in the South Bronx, such as infrastructure investment, post-pandemic grant funding and new business development programs, will be important for returning to the area's pre-pandemic growth trajectory. The borough, City and State must continue to advance this development in partnership with South Bronx residents, who have been the strongest advocates for preserving the area through renewal and revitalization.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ These are Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs) as defined and applied by the U.S. Census Bureau, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/guidance/geo-areas/pumas.html>. The PUMAs, and part thereof, that make up the South Bronx here include the micro-neighborhoods of Mott Haven, Hunts Point, Melrose, Port Morris, Concourse Village and Crotona Park East. PUMAs largely cover, but are not contiguous with, Community Districts.
- ² This period was marked by frequent fires between the 1970s and 1980s that destroyed most of the area's housing stock. For more details on the history of the area, see Jill Jonnes, *South Bronx Rising: The Rise, Fall and Resurrection of an American City*, Third Edition, Fordham University Press. Preface, Foreword, Introduction.
- ³ Office of the New York State Comptroller (OSC), An Economic Snapshot of the Hunts Point Food Distribution Center, December 2008, <https://www.osc.state.ny.us/files/reports/osdc/pdf/huntspoint-2008.pdf>.
- ⁴ NYC Economic Development Corporation. *Hunts Point Resiliency: Feasibility Study, 2016-2019*, <https://edc.nyc/sites/default/files/2020-05/NYCEDC-Hunts-Point-Resiliency-Study-05-2020.pdf>.
- ⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2007-2011 and 2017-2021 5-year estimates. Unless otherwise specified, reference to data for any one year is to ACS estimates for the five-year period ending in that year, and analyses of trends between any two years is for the five-year period ending in the years indicated. The ACS 5-year data files are used because they contain census-tract level data and so allow for formulation of measures for households in Bronx Community District 3, which lies mostly south of the Cross Bronx Expressway (I-95).
- ⁶ Almost all of the South Bronx falls within the set of Historically Underused Business Zones (HUBZones), targeted for award of at least 3 percent of federal contracts to classified companies each year.
- ⁷ Empire State Development, <https://nyseedgrant.com/> and <https://esd.ny.gov/covid-19-capital-costs-tax-credit>.
- ⁸ New York City Department of Health, *Community Health Profiles*. For health data in this section, neighborhoods are categorized by community districts (201 Mott Haven and Melrose, 202 Hunts Point and Longwood, 203 Morrisania and Crotona, and 204 Highbridge and Concourse).
- ⁹ Communities in this section are defined by United Hospital Fund which classifies New York City into 42 neighborhoods or communities, comprised of contiguous ZIP codes. Overall, children ages 0-17 years living in the Hunts Point-Mott-Haven and Highbridge-Morrisania communities experience higher rates of asthma-related hospitalizations than other communities or neighborhoods across the City. For more details on "asthma alley" reference, see <https://www.healthline.com/health/asthma/barriers-to-breath-health-disparities#A-condition-exacerbated-by-allergens-and-poor-air-quality>.
- ¹⁰ New York City Environmental and Health Data Portal, <https://a816-dohbesp.nyc.gov/IndicatorPublic/beta/neighborhood-reports/#Outdoorreport>. Particulate matter (PM2.5) or Fine Particles, "refers to tiny particles or droplets in the air that are two and one-half microns or less in width." The measure mcg/m3 is micrograms per cubic meter of air. https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/indoors/air/pmq_a.htm#:~:text=The%20term%20fine%20particles%2C%20or,25%2C000%20microns%20in%20an%20inch.
- ¹¹ World Health Organization, "What are the WHO Air Quality Guidelines?," <https://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/what-are-the-who-air-quality-guidelines>.
- ¹² New York City, Environmental and Health Data Portal, "Interactive Heat Vulnerability Index," <https://a816-dohbesp.nyc.gov/IndicatorPublic/beta/key-topics/climatehealth/hvi/>. Factors included in the index are surface temperature, green space, access to air conditioning and share of residents that are low income or Black and non-Latino.
- ¹³ The City's Taskforce on Racial Inclusion & Equity (TRIE) was launched in the first year of the pandemic to ensure an effective response to the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on communities of color.
- ¹⁴ COVID-19 hospitalization rate data available at the ZIP code level is defined as the rate of hospitalized cases per 100,000 people stratified by month.
- ¹⁵ Data for this series is not available before August 8, 2020.
- ¹⁶ New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, <https://www.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/neighborhood-health/public-health-corps.page>. To date, everyone aged 6-months and older is eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine and a bivalent booster dose. Bivalent vaccine boosters are designed for the original COVID-19 virus and Omicron subvariants.
- ¹⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, ACS, 2007-2011 and 2017-2021 5-year estimates. See endnote 5.
- ¹⁸ New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, New York State Emergency Rental Assistance Program Reports, *County by Zip Code ERAP Application Counts*, <https://otda.ny.gov/programs/emergency-rental-assistance/program-reports.asp>.
- ¹⁹ OSC, *New Yorkers in Need: Food Insecurity and Nutritional Assistance Programs*, March 2023, <https://www.osc.state.ny.us/reports/new-yorkers-need-food-insecurity-and-nutritional-assistance-programs>.

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- ²⁰ OSC, “Recent New York City Broadband Policies,” *Availability, Access and Affordability: Understanding Broadband Challenges in New York State*, September 2021, <https://www.osc.state.ny.us/reports/availability-access-and-affordability-understanding-broadband-challenges-new-york-state>.
- ²¹ OSC, *Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on Subway Ridership in New York City*, <https://www.osc.state.ny.us/reports/osdc/impact-covid-19-pandemic-subway-ridership-new-york-city>. Ridership levels for each month are measured by total exits as a percent of total in the corresponding month of 2019.
- ²² Citywide, traditional public schools lost 12.3 percent of K-8 enrollment over the same period compared to 6.7 percent growth in charter schools.
- ²³ New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYC EDC), “Grow NYC, State, City and Elected Officials Break Ground on New York State Regional Food Hub,” press release, March 25, 2021, <https://edc.nyc/press-release/grownyc-breaks-ground-on-ny-state-regional-food-hub-in-bronx>.
- ²⁴ NYC Planning, *Community District Profiles*, <https://communityprofiles.planning.nyc.gov/bronx/1#community-board>. See documents for fiscal year 2024 at “Needs Statement Archives” link for each of Community Boards 1, 2, 3 and 4.
- ²⁵ NYC EDC, *Hunts Point Forward: A Vision for the Future*, Final Report, June 2022, p. 32. <https://huntspointforward.nyc/>.

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