



# An Economic Snapshot of Coney Island and Brighton Beach

## Highlights

- Coney Island/Brighton Beach made up nearly 5 percent of Brooklyn's population in 2022, and had the most foreign-born residents from Europe among neighborhoods citywide.
- Area jobs doubled to 35,203 from 2013 to 2023, twice the rate in Brooklyn and more than five times as much as citywide.
- Increases in health care and social assistance positions together accounted for 82 percent of the 2013 to 2023 job growth.
- The number of Coney Island/Brighton Beach businesses increased by 29.9 percent to 2,474 over the review period.
- In 2022, 30 percent of area residents working within and outside the area were in the health care and social assistance sectors.
- The area had the eighth-highest level of household poverty among 55 neighborhoods citywide, and the fifth-highest child poverty level across 18 neighborhoods in Brooklyn.
- The share of cost burdened renters in the area was higher than boroughwide and citywide, while the share of cost burdened owner-occupied households was lower.
- In 2023, the share of Coney Island/Brighton Beach students in grades 3-8 scoring proficient on English Language Arts and Math exams was slightly higher than boroughwide and citywide.
- Infrastructure investment, street redesign, and construction of housing units since 2013 aligned with a 2009 area rezoning plan.
- Area investments during the review period included \$526.3 million on Coney Island Yard, the largest in the City's transit system.

Coney Island/Brighton Beach in Brooklyn has a rich history of innovation and attraction dating back to the mid-to-late 1800s. Following its success as a seaside resort destination during that time, the neighborhood has undergone transformation to remain a place to live and start a business. Efforts at revitalization have resulted in the development of more mixed-use properties and the restoration of restaurants, eateries and entertainment venues, some of which align with an area redevelopment plan approved in 2009.

The area is home to one of the largest populations of individuals 65 and over among neighborhoods citywide, and recent economic growth has been tied to serving this population. Despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, from 2013 to 2023, employment doubled, while the number of businesses grew at a higher rate than citywide. This growth was led by the health care and social assistance sector.

This growth has supported improvement in local median income and poverty levels in recent years, but these indicators still lagged citywide levels. Median household income in 2022 was \$43,146, significantly less than the nearly \$75,000 citywide. The area also had higher rates of household poverty and a greater share of renters facing housing cost burden when compared to the rest of the borough and City, although this is at least partially due to the prevalence of householders 65 and older.

As Coney Island/Brighton Beach continues to recover from the pandemic, as well as Superstorm Sandy, the City can address the area's challenges by providing support to its growing economy and advancing the completion of the 2009 rezoning and revitalization plan.

## Introduction

Coney Island/Brighton Beach is one of 55 Census-defined public use microdata areas (PUMAs) across the City and is located on a peninsula at the southwest end of Brooklyn, mostly below the Belt Parkway (see Figure 1). The area approximates and is referred to in this report as Brooklyn Community District 13 or as the Coney Island/Brighton Beach neighborhood. It includes the Coney Island-Sea Gate, Brighton Beach and Gravesend (South) micro-neighborhoods.<sup>1</sup> The only State route that traverses the area is Ocean Parkway (NY 909H), which ends at Surf Avenue from a start at Prospect Expressway (NY 27).

The modern history of Coney Island/Brighton Beach began in the 1600s when Henry Hudson landed there before navigating up the river that now bears his name.<sup>2</sup> The Coney Island part of the area became a seaside resort destination for tourists after the Civil War era, then was transformed into an amusement space starting in the 1880s. In the early years, three major parks — Steeplechase (1897), Luna (1903), and Dreamland (1904) — offered unique rides, attractions and entertainment.

The allure and uniqueness of Coney Island began to fade in the 1920s as the parks were costly to maintain, tourists were drawn to other entertainment options and competitors across the country and abroad replicated many of the area's attractions. The Great Depression saw further declines and the area was marred by fires in the 1940s. By 1964, the only remaining of the three major parks, Steeplechase, ceased operations.

Coney Island attractions were innovative, with remarkable structures such as the Switchback Railway (the nation's first roller coaster, opened in 1884 and closed during the Great Depression). There are also designated New York City landmarks such as the Cyclone Roller Coaster, the Wonder Wheel, the now defunct Parachute Jump, Childs Restaurant, and the Riegelmann Boardwalk.

Efforts to revitalize the area include the 2009 approval of a rezoning plan for the Coney Island section of the neighborhood to enable development of more mixed-use properties and amusement spaces. Most recently, Childs Restaurant was restored and reopened, with a new eatery and an open space, the Coney Island

**FIGURE 1**  
Coney Island/Brighton Beach



Amphitheater, located within the premises. The area is one of 11 proposed sites for three casino gaming licenses to be awarded in downstate New York (New York City, Long Island and Westchester County).

The Coney Island rezoning and development projects build on a history and reputation for creating memorable visitor experiences. The area is home to several beaches and parks such as Coney Island Beach and Boardwalk, Brighton Playground, and venues like the Coney Island Museum, the Abe Stark Sports Center, Maimonides Park baseball stadium (home of the Brooklyn Cyclones) and the New York Aquarium. The Aquarium was fully reopened in 2022 after a rebuild required by the effects of Superstorm Sandy and received a total of 633,105 visitors in 2023.

Coney Island/Brighton Beach also boasts signature annual events such as the Nathan’s Hot Dog Eating Contest, the Mermaid Parade and the Polar Bear Plunge. A number of businesses within the area are also part of the Alliance for Coney Island, which is focused on business growth, quality of life improvement and revitalization, and is now engaged in the planning phase of a Coney Island Business Improvement District.

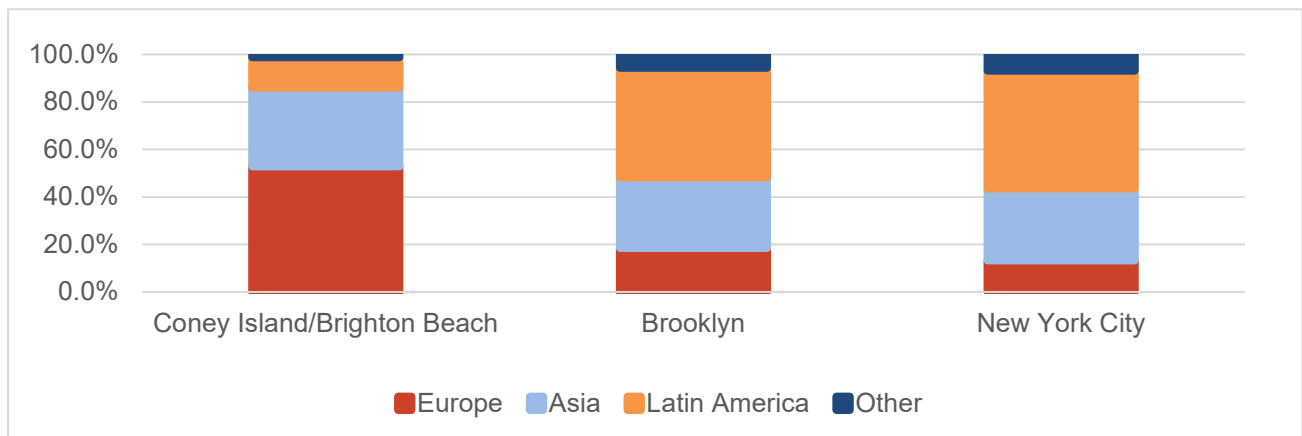
## Demography

In 2022, 119,482 residents lived in Coney Island/ Brighton Beach, less than 5 percent of the Brooklyn population. Nearly one-half (49 percent) of area residents identified as White, greater than Brooklyn and citywide shares of 36 percent and 31 percent, respectively. Another 19 percent of the neighborhood residents identified as Hispanic, while 15 percent identified as Black and 13 percent as Asian.

Neighborhood residents that were foreign-born made up 49.8 percent of the population, higher than the borough and City shares of 35.1 percent and 36.8 percent, respectively. More than one-half of the area’s foreign-born population were from Europe, compared to less than one-fifth boroughwide and an even smaller share citywide (see Figure 2).

The high share of Europeans among foreign-born residents reflects the neighborhood having the largest Ukrainian-born population (14,623) and the second largest Russian-born population (6,931) among the City’s 55 Census-defined areas.

**FIGURE 2**  
Foreign-Born Population by Region of Origin



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 1-year files; OSC analysis

The Ukrainian-born population accounted for a quarter of the neighborhood’s foreign-born population in 2022, while the Russian-born population made up 11.6 percent. These shares were much higher than citywide (2.1 percent and 1.6 percent, respectively).

Another one-third of the Coney Island/Brighton Beach foreign-born population was from Asia, a higher share than boroughwide and citywide. Foreign-born residents from Latin America and the Caribbean made up just over one-tenth, much lower than in Brooklyn and the City as a whole.

In 2022, the median age of Coney Island/Brighton Beach residents was 42.4 years, significantly higher than the median age of residents boroughwide (36.6 years) and citywide (38.4 years), and ninth-highest among the 55 Census-defined neighborhoods.

The neighborhood had a sizeable under-18 population (22.8 percent), meaning that the high median age mainly reflects the 24 percent of residents that were 65 years and over. This was second only to the share of Flushing/Murray Hill/Whitestone 65 and over residents (26 percent). For comparison, residents 65 and over made up just 15.6 percent of Brooklyn’s population and 16.7 percent of the City’s in that same year (see the Office of the State Comptroller’s, OSC, New York City population [report](#)).<sup>3</sup>

The share of Coney Island/Brighton Beach residents accessing Medicare (health insurance for those 65 and older) ranked first among the City’s Census-defined neighborhoods in 2022, and the area is home to at least three naturally occurring retirement communities (NORCs, where a high proportion of population over age 60 reside at home).<sup>4</sup>

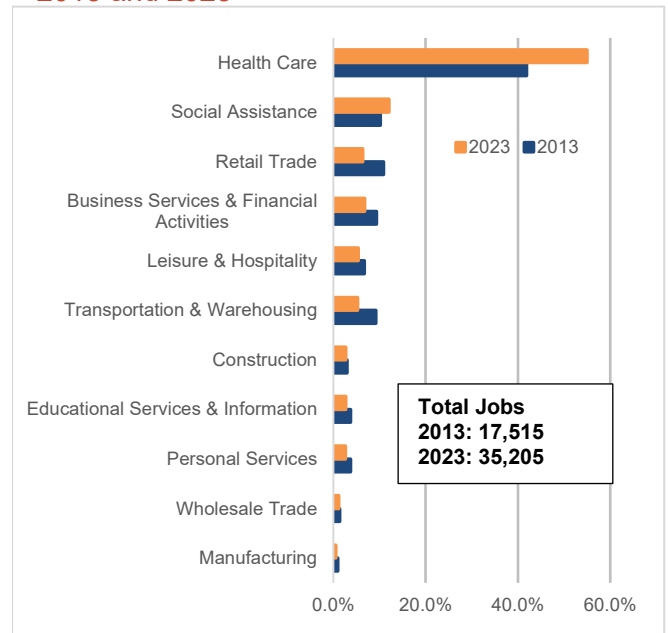
Of area residents aged 25 or older, 40.7 percent had completed at least a bachelor’s degree in 2022, a smaller share than in all of Brooklyn (42.4 percent) and the City (41.1 percent).

## Employment and Business

Over the decade ending 2023, the number of jobs in the Coney Island/Brighton Beach area rose by 101 percent to 35,203, despite a 2.5 percent pandemic-related contraction between 2019 and 2021. This was more than two times the increase in Brooklyn jobs (49.3 percent) over the same period and more than five times that citywide (18.7 percent). Employment increases in health care and social assistance accounted for 82 percent of the area’s job growth.

Job growth occurred in all sectors in the area, with the largest in educational services, health care, social assistance and business services, which each more than doubled 2013 levels. As of 2023, the health care and social assistance sectors together accounted for 67.1 percent of all Coney Island/Brighton Beach jobs by 2023 (see Figure 3), likely aided by the aging of the local population.

**FIGURE 3**  
Coney Island/Brighton Beach Jobs by Sector Shares – 2013 and 2023



Note: Construction data includes mining and utilities (less than 1 percent).  
Sources: NYS Department of Labor, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages; OSC analysis



Jobs in home health care services rose by 11,786 during the analysis period, equal to 66.6 percent of the total job increase. Individual and family services employment (such as counseling, social service, crisis and family welfare centers) also rose by 1,910 jobs. The largest decline was in nursing care facilities (1,066 jobs).

Jobs in physician's offices, disability, mental health and substance abuse facilities, community food and child care services employment all rose as well, particularly since 2019, likely due to demand impacted by the response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects.

Coney Island/Brighton Beach employment patterns showed some seasonality from 2021 to 2023, with hiring in leisure and entertainment peaking in the second quarter of each year, slowing in the third, and then contracting in the fourth and in the first quarter of the following year. The health care, social assistance, and transportation and warehousing sectors have peak employment in the third quarter, while retail trade jobs are highest in the first or second quarter of each year. Leisure and hospitality jobs are the most impacted by the seasonal changes, as the summer season ends, with employment dropping by more than 30 percent from the third quarter to the fourth quarter of each year.

Total wages paid out for area jobs more than doubled from \$609.1 million to \$1.5 billion

between 2013 and 2023, a rate similar to all of Brooklyn, and higher than citywide (65.4 percent).

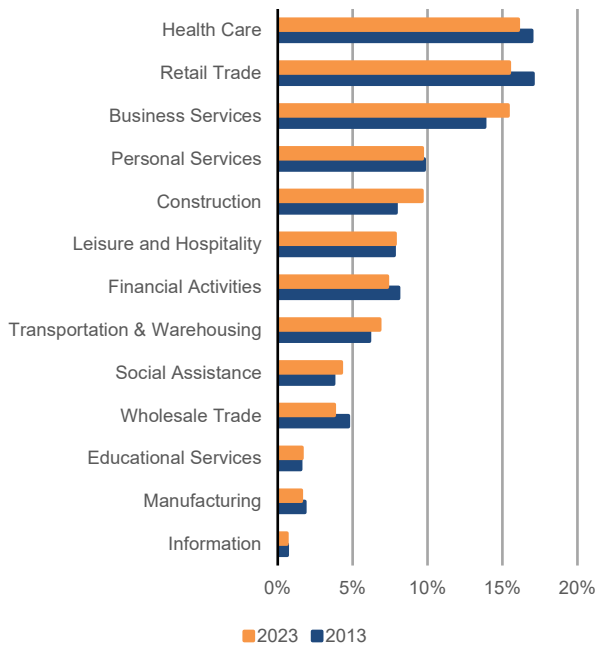
The area's average wage rose by 23.2 percent to \$42,835 over the review period. This was a significantly smaller rate of increase than that for all of Brooklyn and the City (both 39.3 percent), and may reflect the share of additional jobs in home-health care, which has an average wage that is lower than the average total.

Between 2013 and 2023, the number of businesses in Coney Island/Brighton Beach rose by 29.9 percent to 2,474, with growth in all sectors except wholesale trade (which declined by 3.7 percent). While this growth was smaller than the rate of increase in businesses boroughwide over the same period (34 percent), it was much greater than citywide (15 percent).

Business services, construction and the health care sectors made up more than one-half of the increase in area businesses over the 10 years ending 2023. Growth in the number of construction businesses in the area continued a trend that prevailed even during the 2019 to 2021 period (which includes the height of the COVID-19 pandemic) when the number of businesses in all other sectors, except social assistance and leisure and hospitality, declined.

As shares of total Coney Island/Brighton Beach businesses, the retail trade, health care and business services sectors together accounted for

**FIGURE 4**  
**Coney Island/Brighton Beach Businesses by Sector Shares – 2013 and 2023**



Note: Construction data includes mining and utilities (1 percent).  
 Sources: NYS Department of Labor, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages;  
 OSC analysis

46.9 percent in 2023, a slight decline from the combined share of 47.8 percent in 2013 (see Figure 4).

As in other areas of the City, growth in micro-businesses (those with fewer than five employees) was the main driver of the increase in the number of Coney Island/ Brighton Beach businesses in the 10-year review period, including from 2019 to 2021. This business class size increased from a share of 76.9 percent of total area businesses in 2013 to 77.2 percent in 2023.

### Resident Workforce

As of 2022, 44.2 percent of area residents aged 16 and older were employed. This was the lowest share among the 55 Census-defined neighborhoods in the City, with shares of residents employed boroughwide and citywide at 59.9 percent and 59.2 percent, respectively. Even after excluding the high share of area residents

that are 65 and over, the 57.7 percent share of residents aged 16 to 64 that were employed was the third-lowest among all 55 Census-defined neighborhoods in the City. The two areas that had the lowest shares are located in the Bronx.

Over one-half (52.4 percent) of all employed Coney Island/Brighton Beach residents worked in the health care and social assistance (30 percent), retail trade (12.7 percent), and transportation and warehousing (9.7 percent) sectors, with shares higher than in all of Brooklyn (17.9 percent, 8.9 percent and 6.1 percent, respectively) and the City (18.4 percent, 9 percent and 6.6 percent, respectively).

Of Coney Island/Brighton Beach employed residents, most had occupations in health care support (such as nursing assistants, orderlies and home health aides) with a much higher share (14 percent) than in Brooklyn (7.1 percent) and the City (6.8 percent). The occupations with the next highest shares of area working residents were office and administrative support (9.6 percent) and management (9.1 percent), which were the top two occupations among residents across the borough and the City.

Among the area’s working residents, 35.3 percent used public transportation to commute to work in 2022, compared to 43.9 percent citywide. For working residents 65 and over, the pattern was the reverse, with 44 percent using public transportation compared to 35.9 percent citywide.

### Household Income and Well-Being

The 2022 median household income in the Coney Island/Brighton Beach area was \$43,146, significantly lower than the median income for all of the borough (\$73,951) and the City (\$74,694), and among the lowest one-fifth of the 55 Census-defined neighborhoods. Among the 18 Census-defined neighborhoods in Brooklyn, the area’s median household income ranks second-lowest.

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A 28.7 percent share of area households had income below the federal poverty level in 2022, the second-highest among the 18 Census-defined neighborhoods in Brooklyn, and eighth-highest among the 55 neighborhoods citywide. The child poverty rate was 32.7 percent in 2022, the fifth-highest across the borough.

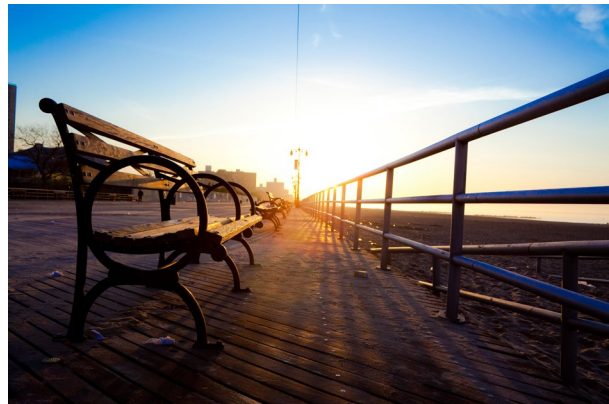
The 2022 household and child poverty rates for all of Brooklyn were 19 percent and 27.7 percent, respectively, while the citywide rates were 18.4 percent and 24.5 percent, respectively.

As with the poverty level, the 36.2 percent share of area households that were food insecure and participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in 2022 was the eighth-highest across the City's 55 Census-defined neighborhoods. That same year the shares of households participating in SNAP boroughwide and citywide were 23.1 percent and 22.1 percent, respectively.

Food insecurity within Coney Island/Brighton Beach is also reflected in the ratio of population

## Income and Well-Being Within the Neighborhood

Coney Island/Brighton Beach data for the five-year period ending 2022 shows some disparities in key indicators across the area's three micro-neighborhoods (Coney Island-Seagate, Gravesend (South) and Brighton Beach). Median household incomes in discrete census tracts with population of 2,500 or more ranged from \$20,329 to \$83,833 in Coney Island-Seagate and from \$20,908 to \$81,643 in Gravesend (South). The proportion of households with income below the federal poverty level in these two areas was 31 percent and 22.8 percent, respectively. The share of households below the federal poverty line in Brighton Beach, where median household incomes ranged from \$28,952 to \$78,468, was 27.7 percent.



to grocery retail businesses. Analysis of Department of Labor business data alongside the American Community Survey (ACS) estimates shows that the area had 2,172 residents per each food retailer, including supermarket or other grocery or specialty food retailers (such as vegetables, meat, fish) in the area. This was a much higher ratio than for all of Brooklyn, which had 1,254 residents for each such retailer.

As of 2022, 74.3 percent of households in Coney Island/Brighton Beach had broadband internet access, a share similar to boroughwide and citywide (75.4 percent and 75 percent, respectively). The area was in the bottom half by the share of households with broadband access in both the 18 Census-defined areas of Brooklyn and all 55 areas across the City.

## Housing Infrastructure and Security

Most of the area's occupied household units (75 percent) were rentals and the median rent (including gas and utilities) was \$1,401, lower than citywide and boroughwide (both \$1,688).

The area's housing market is reliant on large multi-family buildings. Of all housing units located there in 2022, 54.6 percent were in buildings of 50 or more units. This was more than two times the share of housing units in buildings of 50 or more units boroughwide (23.7 percent), and higher than the share citywide (32.8 percent).

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## Select 10-Year Trends, Brooklyn Community District 13

The Coney Island/Brighton Beach data for the area in 2022, which approximates Brooklyn Community District 13, cannot be compared with data for the area of approximation defined in 2010, (Brighton Beach/Coney Island) because of changes to the geographic boundaries by the U.S. Census Bureau over time (excluding a portion of Gravesend). However, OSC was able to make some comparisons for the period 2011 to 2021 for the previous area, which provides some insight into local socioeconomic trends over time.<sup>5</sup>

From 2011 to 2021, Community District 13, was one of the fastest growing among the City's 55 Census-defined areas that approximate the City's community districts, with an estimated population increase of 17.6 percent (the fourth-highest rate among the 55 areas). The number of occupied area housing units rose by 10.4 percent over the same period, with growth in the number of homeowner-occupied households (31.9 percent) far outpacing the increase in renter households (2.4 percent).

Over the same period, the median household income in Community District 13 grew by a greater rate (47.8 percent) than did the median income citywide (37.5 percent), and by a smaller rate than boroughwide (58 percent). In addition, the area experienced a greater reduction in the proportion of households with income below the federal poverty level (4.4 percentage points) than did Brooklyn (3.7 percentage points) and the City as a whole (1.4 percentage points).

Median household rent in Community District 13 increased by 33.9 percent from 2011 to 2021, compared to median rent increases of 46.3 percent boroughwide and 37.2 citywide. The share of area renters facing housing cost burden (spending 30 percent or more of income on rent) declined by 3.2 percentage points during the same period, a smaller reduction than boroughwide (by 4.4 points) and a greater one than citywide (by less than 1 point).

Over the same 2011 to 2021 period, the share of Community District 13 homeowners living in their own homes and facing housing cost burden declined from 38.1 percent to 31.1 percent. This was a smaller percentage point decline than in the share of owners-occupying their own homes and facing housing cost burden boroughwide (9.1 points to 38.4 percent), but larger than in the share citywide (5.7 points to 36.4 percent).

Growth in the area's median home values from 2011 to 2021 (31.6 percent) was smaller than for the borough (40.9 percent) and City (39.7 percent) during the same period.



**FIGURE 5****Percent of Households Facing Housing Cost Burdens, 2022**

Area	Renter Occupied		Homeowner Occupied	
	Burdened	Severely Burdened	Burdened	Severely Burdened
Coney Island/Brighton Beach	61.1%	42.3%	24.8%	17.3%
Brooklyn	51.1%	29.1%	36.7%	20.2%
New York City	52.1%	29.5%	35.6%	19.5%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-year files; OSC analysis

Compared to the borough and City, a higher share of rental households faced housing cost burden (spending at least 30 percent of income on housing costs), with an even greater difference between those facing severe burden, spending 50 percent or more of income on housing costs (see Figure 5). Among owners occupying their own homes, there were smaller shares facing housing cost burden and severe housing cost burden than boroughwide and citywide.

The median home value in Coney Island/Brighton Beach was \$533,500 in 2022.

Residential eviction filings and residential tenure data suggest that housing in the Coney Island/Brighton Beach area was more stable than in the rest of the City, despite the high cost burdens. As of 2023, housing court data on filings for residential evictions for non-payment of rent in Coney Island/Brighton Beach was a significantly lower share of the pre-pandemic 2019 area total than filings in Brooklyn and the City, as shares of the respective areas (see Figure 6).

**FIGURE 6****Eviction Filings for Residential Non-Payment, as Share of 2019 Evictions**

Area	2021	2022	2023
Coney Island/Brighton Beach	17.3%	31.7%	49.0%
Brooklyn	20.9%	58.4%	73.1%
NYC	22.8%	61.5%	76.5%

Sources: New York State Unified Court System; OSC analysis

**Households headed by Older Adults**

Coney Island/Brighton Beach households headed by residents aged 65 and over faced greater challenges to economic well-being in 2022, with a lower median income (\$25,040), a higher share facing poverty (31.9 percent) and higher rent-burden (65 percent) than the area households as a whole.

Tenures among Coney Island/Brighton Beach renters were longer than in the rest of the borough and City. In 2022, only 34.2 percent of renters had moved in the previous four years, compared to 41.6 percent of renters who had moved in the same period across the borough and City.

As of January 2024, New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) development book data showed 5,863 occupied units in four premises located mainly in the Coney Island sub-neighborhood and making up 11.6 percent of all Coney Island/Brighton Beach housing units and 9.5 percent of all NYCHA units boroughwide.<sup>6</sup>

As of August 16, 2024, Coney Island Houses and Coney Island I (Site 1b, known colloquially as Unity Towers), became the third and fourth sites citywide where residents voted on whether their NYCHA property should enter the Public Housing Preservation Trust, join the Permanent Affordability Commitment Together program (PACT) or remain as Section 9 housing.<sup>7</sup>

## Quality Of Life Service Needs

Compared to citywide, trends in 311 complaints from the Coney Island/Brighton Beach area suggest a need for services at the household level. January to July data for 2019 through 2024 showed that, of the top ten citywide complaints, the four fastest growing were noise pollution, unsanitary conditions and abandoned vehicles, which are generally outdoors and at the neighborhood level. On the other hand, of five top complaints originating in the Coney Island/ Brighton Beach area, the fastest growing were paint and plaster, water leaks and broken elevators, which mainly relate to inside conditions, likely within residential buildings or units.

NYCHA’s January 2024 data shows 723 units occupied by 1,472 residents across these two properties, and the physical needs assessment indicates a 20-year capital requirement of \$313.9 million for improvement of these units. The City offers the Trust and PACT arrangements as options for mobilizing funds to meet NYCHA’s capital needs.<sup>8</sup>

## Community Health

Coney Island/Brighton Beach residents are served by hospitals and health clinics in the greater south Brooklyn area, with NYC Health + Hospitals/South Brooklyn Health (previously known as Coney Island Hospital) located within the neighborhood.

South Brooklyn Health includes the newly built storm-resistant Ruth Bader Ginsberg Hospital, partially funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which was constructed after Coney Island Hospital was flooded during Hurricane Sandy in 2012 and opened in May 2023. The hospital is a designated AIDS, primary stroke, Level 2 perinatal and sexual assault forensic examiner center.

New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) data shows that residents in Coney Island had life expectancies shorter than boroughwide and in the City overall, while rates of adult avoidable hospitalizations, diabetes and hypertension, in the area were similar to boroughwide and citywide.

Coney Island/Brighton Beach residents identified the large aging population among the major health challenges in the area as of 2022, as this group requires easier access to health care, including affordable transportation for older adults that prefer in-person service to telehealth.<sup>9</sup>

## COVID-19 Cases, Deaths and Vaccination Status

At the April 2020 peak of the initial surge of the COVID-19 pandemic, Coney Island/Brighton Beach had a higher hospitalization rate than boroughwide and citywide.<sup>10</sup> As of July 2024, the area’s overall cumulative COVID-19 cases and death rates were higher than boroughwide and citywide (see Figure 7). Furthermore, the

**FIGURE 7**  
Cumulative COVID-19 Cases and Deaths

ZIP Code Area	Cases	Deaths	Case Rates	Death Rates
Brighton Beach/Coney Island/Seagate (11224)	22,518	625	48,666	1,351
Brooklyn	1,053,177	14,577	41,141	569
New York City	3,578,030	46,426	42,918	557

Note: Case rates and death rates are the cumulative number of COVID-19 cases and deaths per 100,000 residents per July 3, 2024, release. Sources: NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene; OSC analysis



COVID-19 death rate was the second-highest among all ZIP codes across the City.

By September 15, 2023, when the DOHMH stopped updating vaccination data, the share of Coney Island/Brighton Beach residents that had completed the primary series of the COVID-19 vaccine (67.8 percent) was lower than that for both the borough and City.<sup>11</sup>

## Education

Coney Island/Brighton Beach is home to 13 traditional schools and one charter school which together served 8,613 students between kindergarten and eighth grade (K-8) during the 2022-23 school year. Another nine high schools and three District 75 special education schools are also located in the area and served children from across the City.

In recent years, enrollment in Coney Island/Brighton Beach K-8 grades has declined, consistent with the citywide trend in the wake of the pandemic.

In the 2018-19 school year, prior to the pandemic, K-8 students enrolled in neighborhood schools totaled 9,378, then declined by 10.8 percent by

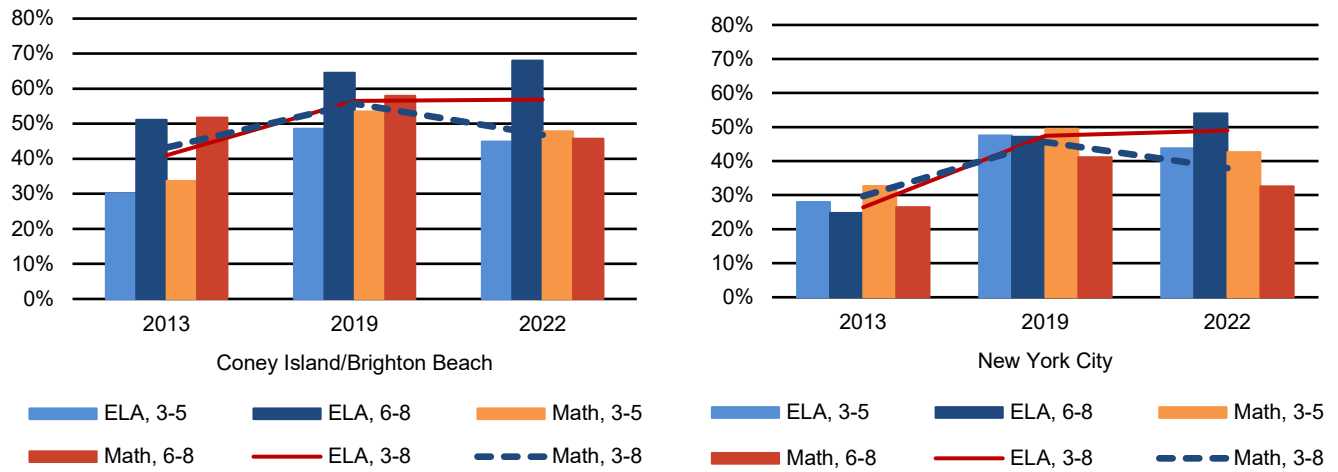
2021-22. This was in line with citywide and Brooklyn trends (which fell by 10.2 percent and 10.6 percent, respectively, over the same period). In the 2022-23 school year, however, Coney Island/Brighton Beach saw a slight recovery in K-8 enrollment while trends in Brooklyn and the City continued to decline.

According to School Construction Authority data, six of the 14 Coney Island/Brighton Beach schools serving K-8 students were overcrowded during the 2022-23 school year.<sup>12</sup> While this is a sharp contrast to the four neighborhood schools which were under 75 percent capacity, the data also suggests that the area may have some room to accommodate the State's Class Size Reduction Mandate, as it shows some 850 seats available in existing Department of Education K-8 facilities located there.<sup>13</sup>

Coney Island/Brighton Beach students' scores on the State's standardized testing trend higher than students across both Brooklyn and the City (see Figure 8). Even so, area students' proficiency on statewide English Language Arts (ELA) exams rose by a smaller rate than citywide and boroughwide.

**FIGURE 8**

**K-8 Test Scores, Coney Island/Brighton Beach (left) and New York City (right)**



Sources: NYC Department of Education; OSC analysis

Area students' ELA proficiency rates remained basically flat in 2022 (no standardized tests were administered in 2020 or 2021 due to the pandemic).

The share of Coney Island/Brighton Beach students in grades 3-8 that scored proficiently on statewide math exams rose at a similar rate as citywide between 2013 and 2019 but declined in 2022 (to 46.8 percent). This reflected the impact of the pandemic on math performance, with similar declines seen across the City.

In 2023, when scores were not comparable to previous years because the State revamped the proficiency exams, 56.6 percent of Coney Island/Brighton Beach students scored proficiently in ELA exams compared to 54.5 percent and 51.7 percent of students across the borough and the City, respectively. On the math exams, 55.4 percent of area students scored proficiently, compared to 54 percent in Brooklyn and 49.9 percent citywide.

### Crime

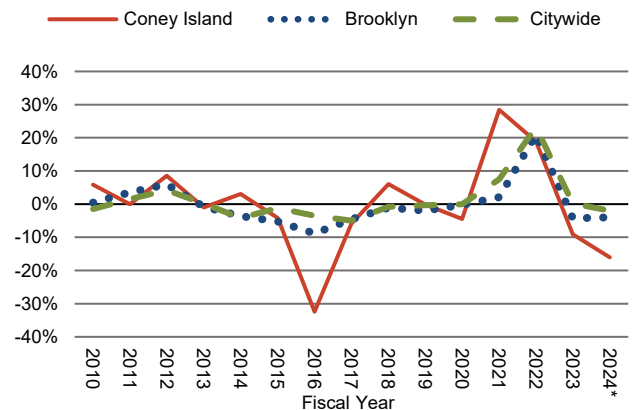
Major felony crime in the 60th Precinct, which covers Coney Island/Brighton Beach and the surrounding areas, has typically trended in the

same direction as crime at the borough level and citywide, with more pronounced percentage changes (see Figure 9).

In the decade leading up to the pandemic (2010 to 2020), major felony crime incidents in Coney Island/Brighton Beach decreased at an annual average rate of 3 percent, exceeding the decline in Brooklyn (1.7 percent) and citywide (0.9 percent). Over the following three years, major felony crime increased by a total of

**FIGURE 9**

**Year-to-Year Change in Major Felonies**



Sources: NYPD CompStat; OSC analysis

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38.8 percent, exceeding the increase in Brooklyn (18.2 percent) and citywide (32.6 percent). In 2023, the 60th Precinct recorded 1,255 major felonies, accounting for 3.9 percent of total crimes in Brooklyn in the same year.

Over the January to June period of 2024, major felony crime in the 60th Precinct declined by 16.1 percent compared to 2023 levels for the same period, with decreases in all incidents except rape and grand larceny auto (both which also rose citywide). Remaining consistent with the trend mentioned above, the current decline exceeds that in Brooklyn (4 percent) and citywide (2 percent). On a percentage basis, the 60th Precinct had the 11th greatest year-over-year decline of all 77 precincts citywide (and the fifth greatest in Brooklyn).

## Economic Development

In 2009, the New York City Council approved a rezoning plan to accommodate redevelopment, mainly in the central portion of the Coney Island/Brighton Beach area. The plan covered 19 City blocks, including nine to be rezoned to enable the introduction of new low-density multi-family developments or construction of higher density ones. There were also provisions for adding spaces, mapping new streets and building on the existing attractions to create a 27-acre amusement park and entertainment district to accommodate year-round attractions.<sup>14</sup>

A 2019 report by the City on the progress of the plan cited achievements such as infrastructure investments (including sewers for storm-water management), improved street design for better pedestrian and traffic flow and a stronger business corridor, and the completion of subway access projects on West 8th Street and on Stillwell Avenue. As of January 2024, the City had identified 797 new affordable housing units constructed in the area since passage of the plan.

Notably, Superstorm Sandy severely impacted Coney Island (as it did other areas of the City)

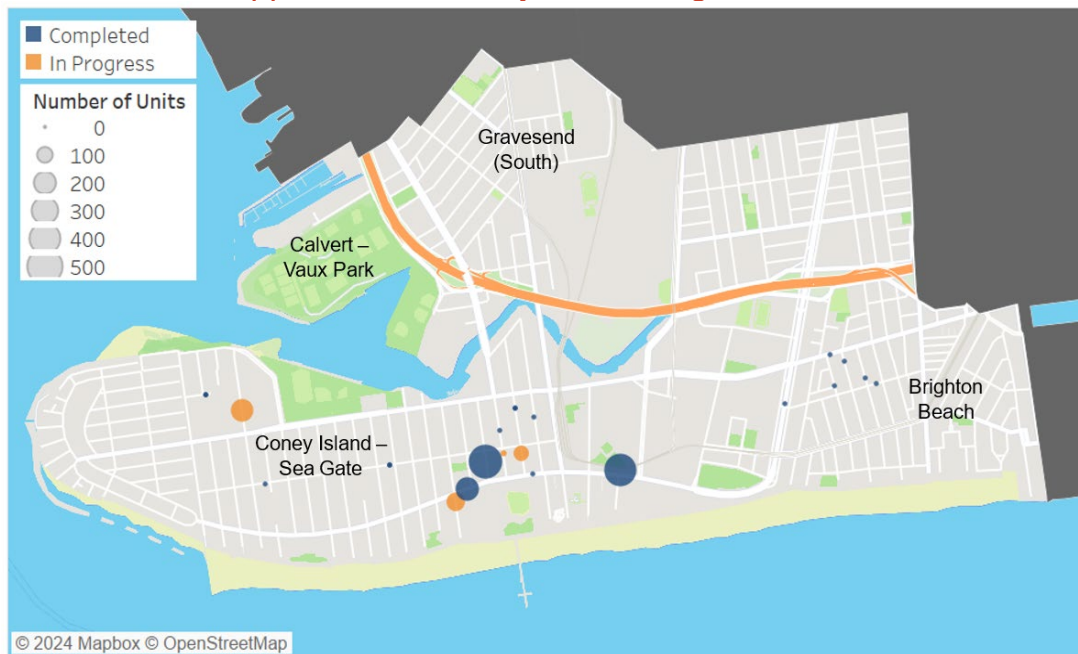
during the plan period. As a result, the pace of construction of new homes increased significantly (more than double) from 2013 onward, with all of the homes constructed in the neighborhood being located within a 100-year floodplain, the status designated to the Coney Island/Brighton Beach area by FEMA.<sup>15</sup> Construction of affordable housing units (which are normally bundled with newly constructed market price units) increased by an annual average of more than 200 percent from 2013 to 2023, compared to yearly average increases of 56 percent and 34 percent, respectively, in the borough and citywide. These units were mostly concentrated in the Coney Island-Seagate micro-neighborhood (see Figure 10).

During the review period, infrastructure investments in Coney Island/Brighton Beach also included work on the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) Coney Island Yard, which is the largest in the New York City Transit system, serving four main track lines (D, F, N, Q). The yard can hold up to 881 subway cars and facilitates car wash, maintenance, substations, signal towers, and power and communications cable support. Located near Coney Island Creek, it faces a high risk of coastal flooding, such as during Superstorm Sandy when 27 million gallons of saltwater damaged tracks and power cables.<sup>16</sup> Under the MTA's 2010-2014 capital plan, the agency spent \$166.8 million for recovery efforts



**FIGURE 10**

**Construction Permits Approved for Coney Island/Brighton Beach, 2014-2023**



Sources: New York City Department of Buildings; OSC analysis

and \$359.5 million to build storm resiliency into the yard infrastructure, part of which was funded by federal relief aid.

Work on Coney Island Yard resulted in at least 13 weeks of closure of stations along the D line south of the 50th Street Station in Brooklyn in 2021. Also, a Sea Beach N Line Renewal project resulted in extended closures of most stations on that line, south of, and including, the Brooklyn 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue station for long stretches of time during the review period. Both of these lines end at Stillwell Avenue. Despite the closures, subway ridership at area stations generally shows a faster recovery in recent months, through June 2024, than citywide.

### Looking Ahead

Coney Island/Brighton Beach has experienced substantial improvement in a number of economic indicators over the last decade, led by business and job growth between 2013 and 2023. Expansion in area jobs in the sectors of health care and social assistance (which, along with

construction were the sectors especially resilient during the height of COVID-19 pandemic), allowed the neighborhood to outperform the borough and City economically. Redevelopment activities continue at an encouraging pace, including the supply of market price and affordable housing units, improvement in street and subway infrastructure, and construction and restoration of amenities and attractions. Social issues such as crime have started to show signs of abatement as of the first half of 2024.

Despite these encouraging developments, the area faces certain challenges that City officials must recognize and monitor. While median household income increased and poverty levels declined over the 10 years ending 2021 in the similar area (Brighton Beach/Coney Island) that approximated Community District 13, the Coney Island/Brighton Beach 2022 data shows the household poverty rate exceeding the borough and City. Also, 61.1 percent of area renters spent 30 percent of their income or more on rent, a much higher share than citywide.

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The area's aging population also suggests certain issues remain of outsized importance in the neighborhood, including cost of living, transportation accessibility and the availability of health care. NORCs in the area have grown, providing a source of economic activity locally. Growth in the number of businesses and individuals that provide care is likely to continue, but the cost of these supports to a population that relies on a fixed source of income remains an important issue for residents.

Coney Island/Brighton Beach continues to recapture economic activity in leisure and hospitality, which slows substantially in the winter months. Enhancing connectivity and expanding activities along its commercial corridor should increase accessibility and therefore traffic; however, a number of attractions are outdoors and remain limited during the winter months.

Amid these challenges, and despite setbacks by Superstorm Sandy, development in the area has generally been aligned with the Coney Island rezoning and revitalization plan approved in 2009, which has fostered growth in housing units and expanded potential use of space in the area. Officials should continue to monitor development activities for continued alignment with the plan to ensure progress toward revitalizing the area and recapturing some of its early splendor while also enabling improvement in residents' quality of life.

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## Endnotes

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- <sup>1</sup> Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs) are defined by the Census Bureau to accommodate data collection and analysis below county level. There are 55 PUMAs for New York City which generally overlap but are not fully aligned with the 59 Community Districts (four NYC PUMAs each approximate two districts). As of 2022, the American Community Survey data is PUMAs are based on 2020 Census tracts (PUMA 2020), while the data for the 10-year period ending 2021 are for PUMAs based on 2010 Census tracts (PUMA 2010).
- <sup>2</sup> Public Broadcasting Station (PBS), *Coney Island. The Ups and Downs of America's First Amusement Park*, American Experience, February 4, 1991, accessed August 13, 2024, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/coney/>.
- <sup>3</sup> Office of the State Comptroller, *NYC's Shifting Population: The Latest Statistics*, Report 15-2024, December 2023, <https://www.osc.ny.gov/files/reports/osdc/pdf/report-15-2024.pdf>.
- <sup>4</sup> New York City Department for the Aging, search by location, program types or services offered, <https://a125-egovt.nyc.gov/AgingService/ProgramService/searchResult?Length=5>.
- <sup>5</sup> Because Brooklyn Community District 13 is approximated by Coney Island/Brighton Beach PUMA (PUMA 2020) as of 2022 and there are differences from the previous approximation area, Brighton Beach/Coney Island (PUMA 2010), the analysis of the neighborhood in this report includes comparisons to boroughwide and citywide data for the same year. Trend analysis in demography, income and poverty and housing cost burdens are based on data for the Brighton Beach/Coney Island PUMA (2010) for the period 2011 through 2021.
- <sup>6</sup> New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), "NYCHA Development Data Book," *NYC OpenData*, <https://data.cityofnewyork.us/Housing-Development/NYCHA-Development-Data-Book/evjd-dgpz/data>.
- <sup>7</sup> NYCHA explains that the New York City Housing Preservation Trust is a fully public entity that converts the Section 9 development into the federally funded Project-Based Section 8 program, and that the PACT program also transitions developments from Section 9 into Project-Based Section 8, where NYCHA then leases the land and buildings to private and non-profit development partners (selected based on resident input), who are to conduct the repairs, serve as the on-site property manager, and "provide enhanced social services and community programs" under the lease terms. These are seen as viable options for accessing capital for NYCHA development; see NYCHA press release, accessed April 8, 2024, <https://www.nyc.gov/site/nycha/about/press/pr-2024/pr-20240408.page>.
- <sup>8</sup> NYCHA, "NYCHA Development Data Book 2024," <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/nycha/downloads/pdf/Development-Data-Book.pdf>; "2023 Physical Needs Assessment (PNA) Data File," <https://www.nyc.gov/site/nycha/about/modernizing-properties.page>.
- <sup>9</sup> New York City Planning, Community District Profiles, Brooklyn Community District 13, Needs Statement Archive, *Statement of Community District Needs and Community Board Budget Requests: Fiscal Year 2025*, <https://communityprofiles.planning.nyc.gov/brooklyn/13>; NYC Health + Hospitals, *Community Health Needs Assessment 2022*, page 62, <https://www.nychealthandhospitals.org/publications-reports/2022-community-health-needs-assessment/>.
- <sup>10</sup> The COVID-19 hospitalization rate is defined as the rate of hospitalized cases per 100,000 people stratified by month.
- <sup>11</sup> City of New York, New York City Health portal, <https://www.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-data-vaccines.page#borough>.
- <sup>12</sup> New York City Public Schools, New York City School Construction Authority, *2022-2023 Enrollment, Capacity and Utilization Report*, <http://nycsca.org/Community/Capital-Plan-Reports-Data#Enrollment-Capacity-Utilization-69>.
- <sup>13</sup> In 2022, the State passed a law that sets class size limits for kindergarten through 12th grade, to be phased in over a five-year period beginning in 2023. By 2028, the class size limits to be reached are 20 students for kindergarten through 3rd grade, 23 students for 4th through 8th grades, and 25 students for 9th through 12th grades (or high schools); New York City Independent Budget Office, *How Would the New Limits to Class Sizes Affect New York City Schools?*, July 2023, <https://www.ibo.nyc.ny.us/iboreports/how-would-the-new-limits-to-class-sizes-affect-new-york-city-schools-july-2023.pdf>.
- <sup>14</sup> New York Law School, "Modified Coney Island Plan Approved," *Cityland: New York City Land Use News and Legal Research*, August 15, 2009, <https://www.citylandnyc.org/modified-coney-island-plan-approved/>.
- <sup>15</sup> Samantha Maldonado and Kendra Pierre-Louis, "Hurricane Sandy Devastated Coney Island 10 Years Ago. So Why Has NYC Added Almost 2,000 Homes to the Area Since?," *The City*, October 27, 2022, updated March 14, 2024, <https://www.thecity.nyc/2022/10/27/hurricane-sandy-coney-island-climate-change-development/>.
- <sup>16</sup> New York City Metropolitan Transportation Authority, *Protecting Coney Island Yard from Climate Change*, accessed August 13, 2024, [https://new.mta.info/system\\_modernization/coneyislandyard/project](https://new.mta.info/system_modernization/coneyislandyard/project).

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