

COLUMBUS-AMSTERDAM BID: 1984-PRESENT



1984 Exploratory committee headed by Joe Center is formed to discuss BID creation in partnership with Valley Restoration LDC.

Board of directors formed, Joe LaRocca, an Amsterdam Ave property owner, becomes Chair.

1987 First contract created with the City: Lenape-Bloemendael District Management Association AKA Columbus-Amsterdam BID is officially formed!

Major projects (1987-1997):

Tree planting

Tree guard installation

Lighting installation

Youth Hostel restoration

Logo created by David Garner

Graffiti removal

1997 Columbus-Amsterdam BID becomes independent from Valley Restoration LDC





1998 Peter Arndtsen replaces Maria Soto when she retires as district manager. In order to pull the BID out of a financial crisis, costs are reduced by scaling back the sanitation schedule and coordinating with businesses to take on afternoon sidewalk cleaning.

Began partnership with police and 24th Precinct community council (and later, neighborhood coordination officers) to improve public safety.

(1998-2000) Started Summer Youth Employment program for street sweeping and formed a new sanitation crew with Goddard Riverside's Green Keepers. New lighting projects are created in collaboration with ConED, property owners, and merchants. Installed historic fixtures on buildings and continued to put up lights through the following years.

(1998, 2005) Over 80 bike racks installed by the BID by working with the community board liaison and the biking unit of DOT.

1999 Signature yellow awning with BID logo, phone number, and address placed on storefront.

First EVENTS calendar created in June! Eventually, over 11,000 were being printed and distributed monthly until the 2020 pandemic.

(1999-2019) Produced Holiday Wish List to highlight community groups in the area and items needed to sustain and improve their services.

(1999-2005) Supported annual DEBNA Plant-a-thons by connecting with local flower shops and providing transportation.

2000 BID works with the Parks department to develop a new standard 5x10 tree bed. The BID's proposal for a new tree guard design and expanded tree beds is officially permitted by the city. New guards are funded by the Manhattan Borough President Virginia Fields with a grant of \$100,000 for 90 beds in the neighborhood.

(2000-2009) Peter supported La Perla Community Garden as treasurer and eventually president by connecting the organization with local schools and daycares, hosting holiday events, overseeing the installation of a new pathway in the garden, and preventing the sale of the statue in the garden.

(2000-2002) BID focuses on solidifying a community identity by creating branded festival banners and highlighting local history, character, and traditions to capture the essence of people in the neighborhood.

Asked Columbia to stop printing guidebooks for new students that warned them not to go south of 110th st.

BID joins Winifred Armstrong and the Park West History Group. Gil Tauber and the BID start neighborhood "Walk and Talks" that tell the story of the area, which soon becomes popular and now occurs monthly with Jim Mackin.

Started promoting development of thrift and antique shops, retail stores, classes, and special events to attract people to the neighborhood. BID makes efforts to improve storefronts, install historic retractable awnings, and subsidize costs of improvements for businesses and property owners.



2001 Worked with Trees NY to promote the Citizen Pruner program in order for locals to become involved in the maintenance and beautification of new street trees.

Shopper's guide is published by the BID, which lists over 200 businesses on Columbus and Amsterdam avenues in order to promote shopping locally.

(2001-present) Food and Drink guide, later renamed to Restaurant Guide is published monthly by the BID to encourage residents to eat locally. A running list is now available online that is updated quarterly.

2002 Began painting over dark, graffitied gates with a light copper patina to increase visibility at night and promote neighborhood cohesion.

(2002-2015) Hosted Mexican Independence Day celebrations by partnering with local restaurant sponsors and creating educational materials about the holiday. These events featured music, paper flower making, and a Grito de Dolores, or "cry of independence" that commemorates the Mexican War of Independence.



2003 Launched official BID website with Chuck Tice to keep community members up to date on events in the neighborhood. The EVENTS calendar is made available both online through the website and continued to be distributed throughout the area until March 2020.

(2003-2020) Supported the annual MLK Day Interfaith Peace Walk, an annual gathering of different religious congregations for a march and day of prayer at the Franciscan Community Center on 96th st. The BID facilitated communications between the different religious centers to coordinate the event together.

(2003-2005) In partnership with Duke Ellington Boulevard Neighborhood Association (DEBNA), the BID hosted an annual music festival on 106th st for one day over the summer. It featured local performers and two different stages for all day music.

2004 Worked with city council member Phil Reed and the Parks department to renovate the Happy Warriors playground. The same model was used to construct the Booker T. Washington and Frederick Douglass parks.

(2004-2020) Partnered with local restaurants and community organizations in the neighborhood to host Dia de los Muertos celebrations, which featured family crafting activities and storytelling.



2007 The BID increased its street presence by purchasing wrought-iron waste baskets and coordinating with businesses to sponsor pickup and maintenance.

2008 BID is awarded the Prestigious Statewide Award by NY State's Program VESID, celebrating the employment of individuals with disabilities. Columbus-Amsterdam BID worked closely with the local employment program of the Goddard Riverside Community Center to provide jobs for those with mental illness reentering the workforce.

(2008-2019) In collaboration with DOT's Weekend Walks program, Columbus-Amsterdam BID begins hosting seasonal Family Days. During these events, the streets between 106th and 110th were closed off for pedestrian use. Local organizations sponsored activities like art, dance, exercise, music, and education.

Angelo Romano, a neighborhood artist, begins creating work for the BID and participating in Family Days. His piece "Family Days" depicts one of these events where he exhibits his work and guides families through making their own art.



2009 In conjunction with Assembly Member Danny O’Donnell’s office, Community Board 7, and the Municipal Art Society, Pratt’s Graduate Department of City and Regional Planning undertook a 2-year study in collaboration with the BID to create a series of proposals to enhance senior services, youth programs, and open spaces in Manhattan Valley. The BID provided guidance on the history of the neighborhood, introduced students to community members, and facilitated community meetings.

2010 FY2010 street cleaning team reported 363 days of sanitation services, 530 instances of graffiti removal, and over 9000 garbage bags collected.

The Minerva Bernardino Greenstreet, designed and funded by the NYC Parks Department in collaboration with Dominican Sunday, Community Board 7, and council member Phil Reed, is commissioned. The space functions to direct the flow of traffic, absorb rainwater, and beautify the street.

2012 The BID promoted Gale Brewer’s proposed “Mom and Pop” rezoning by hosting community meetings, neighborhood tours, and communications with stakeholders in support of protecting small businesses and slowing corporate development in the area.



2013 Partnered with the Manhattan Borough Commissioner and Dept of Transportation to promote walking and biking safety by installing bike racks, pedestrian islands, bike lanes, and shorter crossing distances. The BID worked as a mediator between local businesses and DOT to determine truck parking hours and spaces that would be impacted by bike lane installation.

(2013-2017) Distributed educational materials about safety for bikers and walkers. Aimed to educate drivers about sharing the roads with new bike lanes.

2014 The BID office space becomes a temporary satellite office for city councilmember Mark Levine's staff in order to provide community services and act as a liaison to the area.

(2014-2017) As a part of Family Days, the BID hosts Taste of Bloomingdale, an event that promotes local restaurants by creating a "Flavor Passport" for community members to fill out by patronizing businesses that serve foods of different cultures and nationalities.





2015 (2015-2021) Hosted Diwali celebrations intermittently through partnership with Roti Roll and Suite. The BID provided lanterns, a map, and educational materials about the holiday for the restaurant to display.

2017 Supported the Yemeni deli worker strike during which around a dozen bodegas in the BID were closed to raise awareness about the famine and drought in Yemen caused by its civil war. The BID created an informational package that detailed the crisis to be posted by business owners to educate their patrons.

2018 The BID designed and installed a wayfinding kiosk on 103rd and Amsterdam Avenue with a map of notable sites, a list of important New Yorkers from the Bloomingdale neighborhood, and a brief history of the area.

(2018-2020) Participated in neighborhood Lunar New Year celebration by providing lanterns and educational materials about the holiday to local restaurants, and by promoting restaurants celebrating the New Year on social media.

2019 Awarded a \$76,000 grant to plant 25 trees and provide new tree guards from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to reduce excess stormwater in the sewage system.

Awarded the Jessie Crawford Community Service Award by Three Parks Independent Democrats for the management of the BID and its work with youth in the neighborhood.

Highlighted profiles of long-standing (30+ years) businesses in the neighborhood.

2020 Coordinated volunteers for stewardship of trees funded by the 2019 tree planting grant.

(2020-present) NYC DOT begins its Open Streets program, and the BID begins hosting weekly events on closed avenues. Similar to Family Days, Open Streets events are targeted toward local families and include a wide range of activities like art, exercise, and storytelling.





2021 Collaborated with other BIDs to promote “Small Business Sweeties” during Valentine’s season by creating signage for businesses to display and producing a media package that local businesses could use to post on their social media or websites.

Joined BIDs from all five boroughs to promote “Small Business Wonder Women” in order to highlight women-owned businesses during women’s history month.



2022 Worked with local artists throughout the year to produce multiple exhibitions and performances in the neighborhood. This included a collaboration with Jody Sperling from Time Lapse Dance at the BID’s 2nd annual Eco-Arts Festival, regular performances by the Sunny Daze jazz trio at Open Streets events, and a mural and photo series by Jennifer Pliego displayed at the Anibal Avilas playground.