

Testimony of Wilma Alonso – Executive Director, Fordham Road BID
City Council Finance Committee Public Hearing 10/7/14

Good Morning To all,

The Fordham Road BID was established in 2005. Since then, through our core services (sanitation, marketing / promotions, and capital improvement projects) the Fordham Road commercial corridor has been transformed into a robust fast growing economic engine: the largest & prime shopping destination of the borough with over 300 stores. The BID promotes Fordham Road's unique character and its accessibility as a major attraction. Our overall marketing campaign includes a wide range of programs and events, discount programs, sidewalk sales, seasonal events, and our holiday promotions, all of which have definitively helped to increase sales and attract shoppers to experience Fordham Road.

In 2012, the Fordham Road BID seized the opportunity to offer its core services and increase commercial vibrancy to the eastern portion of Fordham Road by expanding its boundaries to include *E. Fordham Road from Third Avenue to Washington Avenue; Washington Avenue from E. Fordham Road to 189th Street; and 189th Street from Washington Avenue to Park Avenue*. By doing so, the major commercial office and retail anchor of One Fordham Plaza and the central public plaza of Fordham Plaza will be added into the BID.

The BID conducted extensive community outreach for this expansion by hosting numerous public meetings and presentations with area stakeholders seeking for their input & support. Through these efforts, we achieved full support from One Fordham Plaza LLC, Bronx Community Boards 5, 6 & 7, Applebee's (Apple-Metro), Saint Barnabas Hospital, Union Health Community Center, The Four Bronx Institutions Alliance (Bronx Zoo, Botanical Gardens, Montefiore Hospital and Fordham University) just to mention a few.

We strongly believe that local businesses, residents, and visitors will benefit from the addition of these properties to the Fordham Road BID boundaries. Our strong commitment and innovative approach is a major part of our role in this community. I would like to ask all of you to vote in favor of the Fordham Road BID expansion.

BLAISE BACKER STATEMENT
BEFORE CITY COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE

October 7, 2014

Good morning Chair Ferreras and members of the Finance Committee. I am Blaise Backer, Deputy Commissioner of Neighborhood Development at the Department of Small Business Services (SBS). I am joined today by my Assistant Commissioner, James Mettham, and Director for BID Development, Patrick Cammack.

SBS supports the expansion and amendments to the district plan of the Fordham Road Business Improvement District (BID) in the Borough of the Bronx. The Fordham Road BID has successfully completed the planning and outreach work consistent with SBS program rules. In addition, SBS has reviewed the boundaries of the proposed expansion and found them to be acceptable.

Geographically, the existing BID includes properties generally bounded by E 192nd Street to the north, Jerome Avenue to the West, E 189th Street to the south, and Webster Avenue to the east. The proposed expansion would extend the district to include properties bounded by East Fordham Road to the north, Washington Avenue to the east, East 189th Street to the south, and Park Avenue to the west. The expansion would integrate two significant assets:

- One Fordham Plaza, a 14-story office building opened in 1986 with over 25 non-profit, government, and for-profit tenants, and
- Fordham Plaza, which is being renovated and the BID expects to enter into a maintenance agreement with the Department of Transportation.

The proposed expansion area is within City Council District 15, which is represented by Councilmember Ritchie Torres. The existing BID is located in Bronx Community Boards 5, 6, and 7, and the expansion area is represented by Community Board 6. All three community boards support the proposed expansion and district plan amendments.

The Fordham Road BID will extend the same security, sanitation and promotion services that are provided in the existing BID to the expanded area.

SBS worked with the BID on developing the proposed increase to the annual assessment of the district from \$625,000 to \$670,000, extended boundaries, and to change the method of assessment to include a maximum assessment for an individual property.

As required by law, the Fordham Road BID mailed the summary of the City Council Resolution, no less than 10 days and no more than 30 days before today's hearing, to the following parties:

- To each owner of real property within the proposed district at the address shown on the latest City assessment roll,
- to such other persons as are registered with the City to receive tax bills concerning real property within the district, and
- to tenants of each building within the proposed district.

In addition, SBS arranged for the publication of a copy of the summary of the Resolution at least once in the City Record, and the BID published in a newspaper having general circulation in the District a notice stating the time and place of the public hearing and stating the increase in the amount to be expended annually in the district.

I would also like to acknowledge that members of the BID staff and board of directors are present today to testify and answer any questions about the specifics of the BID plan.

At this time, we are happy to take any questions.

Thank you.

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573 EAST FORDHAM ROAD
BRONX, NEW YORK 10458-5018
Tel: (718) 933-5111
Fax: (718) 367-7648
e-mail: arcreealty@aol.com

Testimony of David Rose - Chairperson of BID and President of AUTOMOTIVE REALTY CORP (BID member)

Fordham Road BID – City Council Public Hearing - 10/7/14

Good Morning.

My name is David Rose, Chairperson of the Fordham BID and President of AUTOMOTIVE REALTY CORP (a member of the BID). Thank you for this opportunity to testify in connection with the expansion of the BID to include the proposed boundaries.

At this time, I would like to register the endorsement and support of AUTOMOTIVE REALTY CORP for the expansion to include the proposed boundaries.

In 2004, I testified in front of the City Council Finance Committee in favor of the creation of the BID and am thankful for its creation and the positive impact it has had on the commercial corridor known as Fordham Road. I have been doing business on Fordham road since 1999, and my family since 1948. I can see on a daily basis the tremendous impact the Fordham Road BID has had on the District. Our streets and buildings are cleaner, our merchants feel a greater sense of safety and pride and business is improving and expanding. The vision of making Fordham road, the outdoor mall, a cleaner, safer brighter and more desirable place to shop continues. Business participation has been consistently rising with many stores joining the vast array of BID marketing programs and events.

AUTOMOTIVE REALTY CORP owns two (2) properties in the existing boundaries – 327 East Fordham road and 2490-2500 Webster Avenue. The second property is adjacent to the open space known as Fordham Plaza which up until now has been an eyesore and

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BRONX, NEW YORK 10458-5018
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Fax: (718) 367-7648
e-mail: arcreealty@aol.com

detriment to our property and soon to be another major enhancement to the district. This property will greatly benefit by the completed park which will substantially enhance the area.

As property owner and BID chairman, I strongly support the expansion as it will include 2 properties that were in the original boundaries of the BID during the first days of its planning and which are logically part of the BID. It will improve the surrounding area and further strengthen the district by adding the businesses in the expansion area to our programs. The businesses in 1 Fordham Plaza have been asking to participate in our programs for quite some time now.

So, in conclusion, I believe that the expansion, if approved, will build on the strength of Fordham Road Retail, keep it a desirable place to shop, and attract new shoppers and their families.

I thank you again for the honor and opportunity to speak today and ask for the unanimous approval of the City Council Finance Committee on the proposed expansion of the Fordham Road Business Improvement District.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 10/7/14

(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: Wilma Alonso

Address: 2488 Grand Concourse, Bx NY 10458

I represent: Fordham Road BID

Address: 2488 Gr. Concourse, 413 Bx NY 10458

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 10/7/14

(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: M. Blaise Backer

Address: _____

I represent: NKC Small Business Services

Address: 110 William St., 8th Flr

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 10/7/14

(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: DAVID ROSE

Address: 573 EAST FORDHAM RD, BRONX

I represent: FORDHAM BID & AUTOMOTIVE REACTY

Address: 573 EAST FORDHAM RD, BRONX NY 10458

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms