

Guido Rodriguez

I have lived in Washington Heights my entire life. My parents moved in when I was younger. From my point of view, I see Washington Heights as a very capable neighborhood with lots of potentials. Being that Washington Heights is a low-income minority neighborhood with a lot of Hispanic citizens it has a considerably lower crime rate compared to other low-income minority neighborhoods. Washington Heights is filled with lots of Hispanic culture with many friendly and pleasant people to interact with daily. One of the troubling issues I see with my community is the lack of business success as well as the lack of help from our local government to expand our economic growth. Without the help from our legislatures, my neighborhood will continue to struggle as these unaffordable lease prices hinder the potential for small businesses in my area.

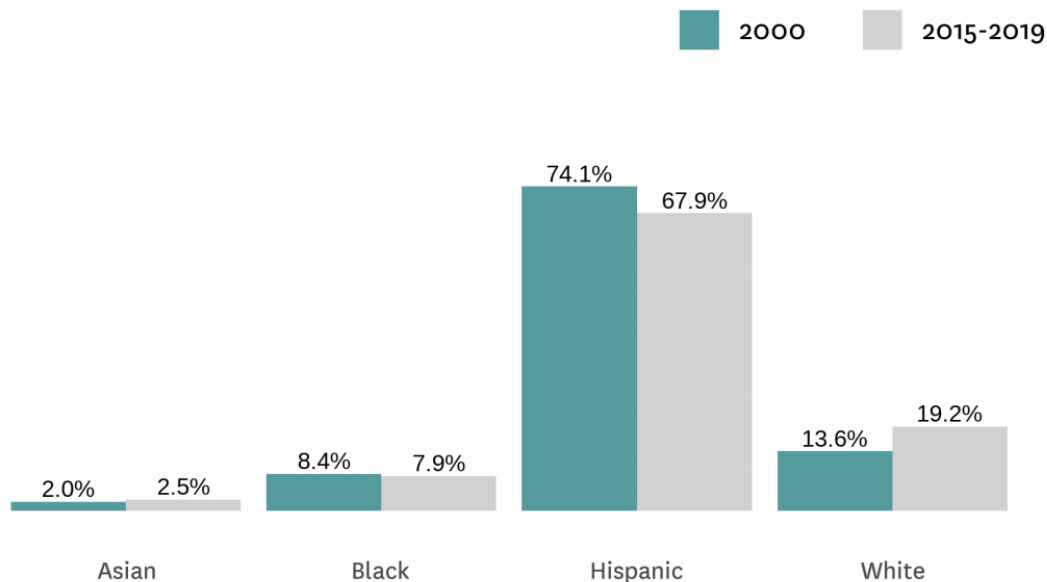
Walking down the streets around the areas of Washington Heights you will see a concerning number of businesses closed down. These closed down businesses are then replaced with other small businesses hopeful to succeed but eventually end up failing as well. It's demoralizing to a community to see its small businesses fail knowing how much potential is available in the area. Unfortunately because of the high lease prices and low income, these businesses are trying to survive until they can't anymore. Now I see commercial gentrification taking place in my community as our small businesses are being replaced with more monopolized businesses such as fast food chains, banks, supermarket chains, etc. These businesses with large capital are the only ones that can survive in my neighborhood and are replacing those that fail. While there are some benefits to having these businesses, including more stable jobs they don't help improve the growth of the community as a whole as any other businesses that open will compete with a company with way more capital and power.



As we see here with these images a number of different businesses in my neighborhood have failed and have not re-opened. These were only a couple of the businesses shown that have failed as there are considerably more. These businesses were all in close radius of each other and as we can see some of the covers of the business covers have started to rot. This shows how other people are hesitant to start a new business knowing the chances of it becoming successful are low. They have just let their businesses fail and left them there. I believe this is one of the reasons why commercial gentrification is in progress in my neighborhood as high-capital businesses are taking advantage of all the space available to them. It has become depressing seeing all these businesses left behind in my neighborhood as it shows the lack of income and care from our government leaders.

As I referred to above most of the racial composition in Washington heights Is Hispanic. It has been mostly Hispanic since the 2000s showing how prevalent Hispanics were in my neighborhood. In the New York City data profiles, it states Washington heights has a population of around 204,096 gotten from data around 2019. This image from this data shows the percentage of Hispanics around 67.9 percent significantly higher than other races. It is important to know the ethnic composition in my neighborhood as I feel it relates strongly to my community. Being a minority neighborhood we can infer it is likely to have less success and businesses than say a white neighborhood.

## Racial and Ethnic Composition of Washington Heights/Inwood



Sources: Census (2000) and American Community Survey (2019), Furman Center

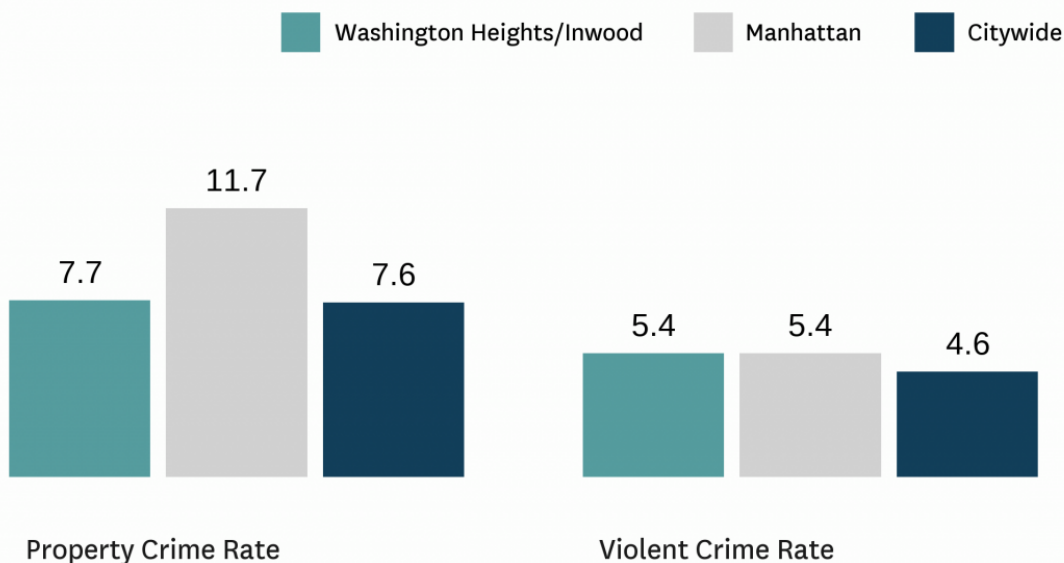
Below is a chart indicating the income and poverty in Washington heights which is crucial when explaining the economy and business potential in my neighborhood. The importance of income shows how much people have the funds to start a business as well as how much people have the money to purchase products from a business. It is very important for a business to look at the average income of a neighborhood before spending their time and money starting a business in a specific area. If an area has a low income, businesses that have expensive products are less likely to attract customers as people are not willing to pay for something they can't afford. As we can see below the average income for my neighborhood in 2021 was right around 50 thousand a year. Which is above the poverty level and in my opinion a solid amount considering people describe it as a low-income neighborhood. However, the poverty rate is around 30 percent in my neighborhood which is a significant number and I feel it is a reason for the lack of business success. As I explained above businesses cant attract sales if the population is struggling to make money.

Income diversity ratio		5.5	4.7	5.7		
Median household income (2021\$)	\$49,54	\$43,03	\$49,960	\$56,23		
Median household income, homeowners (2021\$)		\$81,14	\$118,32	\$95,31		
Median household income, renters (2021\$)		\$40,43	\$46,410	\$53,06		
Poverty rate	29.8%	28.1%	19.5%	15.5%		
Poverty rate, population aged 65+		21.2%	22.0%	29.2%		
Poverty rate, population under 18 years old		43.3%	26.5%	17.4%		

Moving on I would like to discuss the crime statistics in my neighborhood as it is a statistic businesses take into consideration when moving in. The chart below indicates the serious crime rates in Washington heights including property and violent crime. Having a high crime area will definitely affect businesses as the lack of customers will increase because of fear of entering an area as well as the lack of citizens starting a business. When it comes to the statistics of

Washington heights we can see that Washington heights has an about-average property crime rate compared to the rest of the city which shows at times crimes can occur but not significantly more than in any other neighborhood. When it comes to the violent crime rate it has averaged out to the rest of Manhattan but more Than the city. While these statistics show that crimes can occur higher than the rest of the city based on my personal experience I rarely hear of crimes that have been committed in my neighborhood.

### Serious Crime Rate Per 1,000 Residents, 2021



Sources: New York City Police Department, NYU Furman Center

Finally, I would like to see the only way I can see businesses succeed in my neighborhood is by lowering the lease prices and more help from our local government when it comes to business loans, grants, and any other option that can give these small businesses time to grow and develop.



