

Report - December 2023

State of the Chains, 2023

Our sixteenth annual ranking of national retailers in New York City finds a 3.1 percent downtick in chain stores across the five boroughs over the past year. This is the second-largest single-year decline in chain stores since the report began in 2008, and breaks a two-year streak of modest recovery after the unprecedented plunge of 2020.

by Sophia Annabelle Klein, Rachel Neches, and Jonathan Bowles

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Our sixteenth annual ranking of national retailers in New York City finds a 3.1 percent downtick in chain stores across the five boroughs over the past year. This is the second largest single-year decline in chain stores since we started tracking chain retailers in 2008. Only the first year of the pandemic (2020) saw a steeper contraction, and this year's decline breaks a two-year streak of modest chain store growth in New York.

Most national retailers in the city haven't come close to reaching their pre-pandemic levels. The number of chain stores in the city in November 2023 was still 13.8 percent below the total from late 2019—or 1,097 fewer stores than before the pandemic. More than half of the retailers that were featured in our 2019 *State of the Chains* report have fewer locations today than they did before the pandemic, including 11.2 percent who no longer have any stores here. Additionally, all eight of the city's largest chain retailers have fewer locations today than they did in 2019.

The pullback in chain retailers over the past year occurred even as the city experienced an increase in people returning to the office and upticks in subway ridership and tourist visits. It suggests that hybrid work—with most workers still in the office no more than three days a week—is hampering sales for many retailers, and that the growth of e-commerce is continuing to have a major impact. Indeed, for the fifth year in a row, merchandise retailers— including pharmacies, cell phone stores, and retailers selling clothing, shoes, cosmetics, and other non-food items that can be ordered online—accounted for a disproportionate share of chain stores closures.

Every borough experienced a decline in chain stores over the past year, a surprising trend since many New Yorkers are

working in their home neighborhoods multiple days a week. The Bronx had the largest percentage decline (-4.4 percent, or a net loss of 41 stores), but its year-over-year change was not significantly different than the other four boroughs, with number of chain stores dropping by 3.3 percent in Queens (a loss of 59 stores), 3.1 percent in Staten Island (-15 stores), 2.9 percent in Brooklyn (-50 stores), and 2.7 percent in Manhattan (-84 stores).

Number of Chain Stores by Borough, 2022 and 2023				
Borough	2023	2022	Change(#)	Change(%)
BRONX	891	932	-41	-4.4%
BROOKLYN	1,672	1,722	-50	-2.9%
QUEENS	1,706	1,765	-59	-3.3%
MANHATTAN	2,975	3,059	-84	-2.7%
STATEN ISLAND	465	480	-15	-3.1%
NYC	7,709	7,958	-249	-3.1%

All five boroughs are still at least 5 percent below their pre-pandemic chain store level, but, predictably, Manhattan's losses during the 2019 to 2023 period have been notably more significant. Today, Manhattan has 18.3 percent fewer chain stores than it did in 2019—or 545 fewer stores. Staten Island (still down 5.5 percent) has come the closest to reaching its pre-pandemic totals, while Brooklyn (-10.9 percent), Queens (-11.3 percent) and the Bronx (-13.8 percent) still have further to go.

For roughly five years now—beginning well before the pandemic—merchandise retailers have accounted for an outsized share of the city's chain store declines, suggesting a clear impact of e-commerce. That trend continued this year, with cell phone stores and pharmacies accounting for the greatest losses. No retailer contracted more than T-Mobile, which closed 62 stores over the past year, bringing its store total down to 171 from 233 last year. Three other cell phone chains had large store declines: Metro by T-Mobile (which declined by 26 stores, from 295 to 269), AT&T (-18, from 119 to 101), and Verizon Wireless (-9, from 97 to 88). The city's large pharmacy chains also closed dozens of stores: Rite Aid shut more than half of its store locations (reducing its footprint by 55 stores, from 109 to 54) while Duane Reade had a net decline of 16 stores (from 227 to 211) and CVS reduced its footprint by 4 stores (from 174 to 170).

But merchandise retailers selling clothing, luggage, and shoes also had notable store declines, including:

- Bed, Bath & Beyond -13 (from 13 stores to 0)
- V.I.M. -9 (from 23 stores to 14)
- Party City -7 (from 18 stores to 11)
- Guess -5 (from 8 stores to 3)
- The Children's Place -6 (from 22 stores to 16)
- Mattress Firm -6 (from 51 stores to 45)
- Foot Locker -5 (from 54 stores to 49)
- Footaction - 5 (from 6 stores to 1)

- American Eagle Outfitters -3 (from 12 stores to 9)
- rag and bone -3 (from 8 stores to 5)
- Amazon Go -3 (from 10 stores to 7)
- Charlotte Russe - 2 (from 2 stores to 0)
- Ann Taylor - 2 (from 2 stores to 0)
- BCBG Max Azria -2 (from 3 stores to 1)
- Body Shop -2 (from 6 stores to 4)
- Steve Madden -2 (from 8 stores to 6)
- Hugo Boss -2 (from 8 stores to 6)
- Michael's -2 (from 9 stores to 7)

Despite continued challenges, dozens of retailers are expanding their presence in New York. This includes many newer chains whose expansion in the city has largely occurred in the past decade, including Playa Bowls (expanding from 15 to 22 stores), Nuts Factory (from 5 to 10 stores), Orangetheory Fitness (from 23 to 29 stores), Intimissimi (from 5 to 10 stores), Kyuramen (7 to 9 stores), Naya (12 to 15 stores), Insomnia Cookies (15 to 19 stores), Alo (from 4 to 7 stores), Everytable (from 7 to 9 stores), Warby Parker (from 10 to 15 stores), Pelicana Chicken (from 8 to 10 stores), Aesop (from 11 to 13 stores), and Le Café Coffee (from 13 to 16 stores).

Three retailers had a net gain of more than 10 stores over the past year: Five Below (+21, from 11 to 32), and Nathan's Famous (+15, from 19 to 34)1 . Other retailers with significant growth over the past year include:

- Package delivery chains, including the UPS Store (an increase of 5 stores, from 96 to 101 stores) and FedEx Office (+2, from 72 to 74 stores).
- Several fast food chains that do not primarily sell burgers, including Nathan's (+15, from 19 to 34), Popeye's (+7, from 137 to 144), Taco Bell (+7, from 75 to 82), KFC (+6, from 40 to 46), Buffalo Wild Wings (+3, from 8 to 11), Wingstop (+3, from 28 to 31), Domino's (+2, from 90 to 92), and Pizza Hut (+2, from 39 to 41).
- Retailers selling ice cream, cookies, and other dessert items, including Baskin-Robbins (+7, from 175 to 182), Carvel (+5, from 60 to 65), Van Leeuwen (+5, from 21 to 26), Nuts Factory (+5, from 5 to 10), Insomnia Cookies (+4, from 15 to 19), Chip City (+2, from 12 to 14), and Paris Baguette (+4, from 26 to 30).
- Coffee chains, including Starbucks (+6, from 316 to 322), Joe Coffee (+3, from 21 to 24), Birch Coffee (+2, from 11 to 13), Le Café Coffee (+3, from 13 to 16).
- Clothing and accessories retailers, including: Intimissimi (+5, from 5 to 10), Claire's (+3, from 13 to 16), Alo (+3, from 4 to 7), and Abercrombie & Fitch (+2, from 3 to 5).

This year's *State of the Chains* report includes data on 108 retailers that we did not track in previous years, eflecting our attempt to keep pace with the changing retail landscape across the five boroughs. The retailers added this year include food retailers such as Da Long Yi Hot Pot, Little Beet, Oh K-Dog, Jollibee, Poke Works, and Cha Cha Matcha, as well as merchandise retailers like Garage, Zumiez, Laced Up, Heyday Skincare, Save Khaki United, and Everything But Water. (We added these 108 retailers last year, but this year's report is the first time we were able to track year-over-year trends for them.)

This year's report, based on data compiled from store locators between October 13, 2023, and November 29, 2023, also finds that most of the national retailers with the biggest footprints in New York saw minimal decreases in store locations since 2022. Of this year's top 15 retailers, 10 have fewer stores this year, 1 registered no change, and 4 had increases. Overall, the

top 15 retailers recorded a net change of 155 fewer stores than last year.

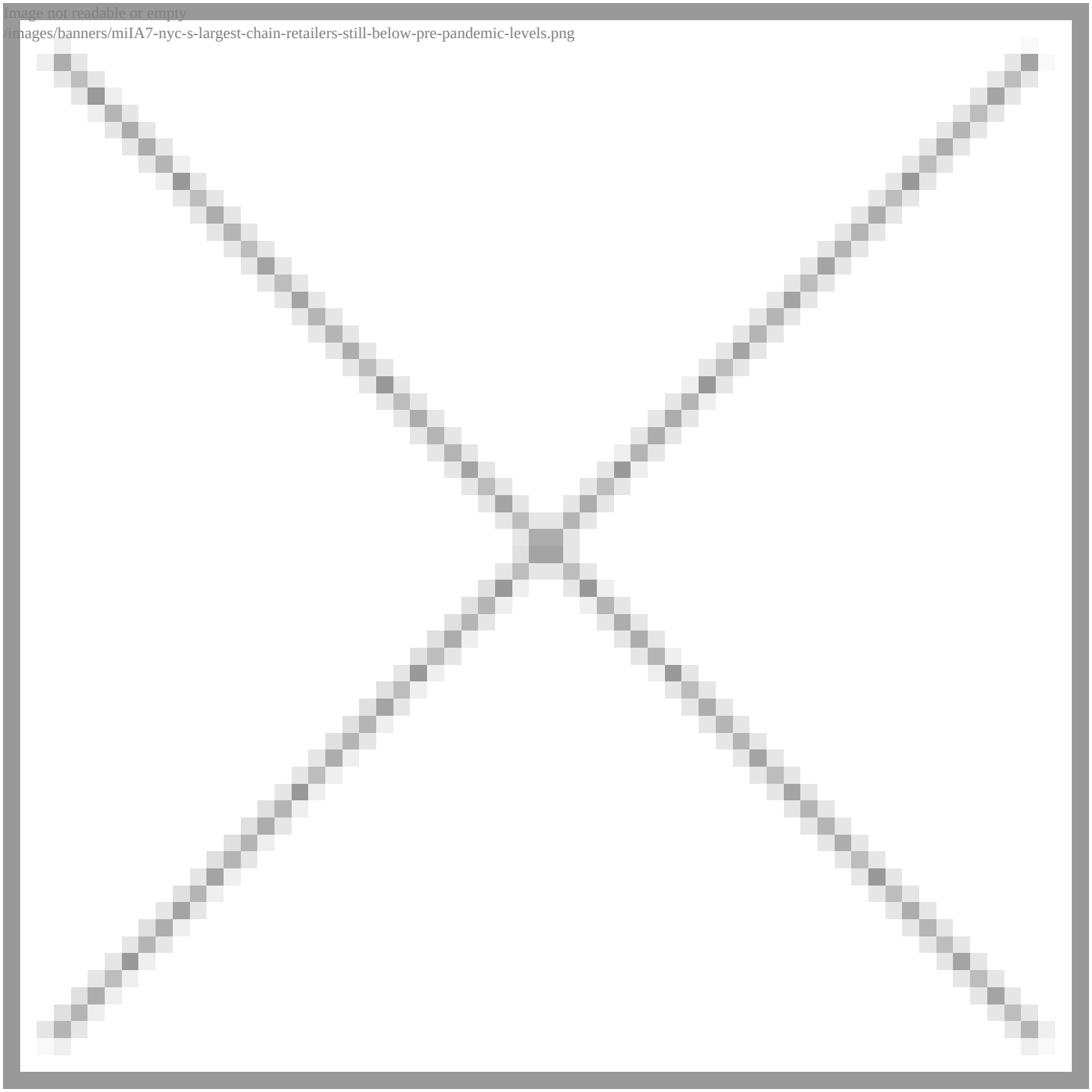
Dunkin', with 619 stores, is again the retailer with the most stores in the five boroughs, a title it has held all sixteen years since we started tracking chain store trends in New York. In 2008, the first year that this report was published, Dunkin' had just six more stores than the second-place chain (Subway). Today, Dunkin' has nearly 300 more stores than the number two retailer in the city, Starbucks, which boasts 322 store locations. This year, Dunkin' registered a net loss of 1 store and still has fewer store locations than it did before the pandemic (619 today compared to 636 in 2019).

For the second year in a row, Starbucks has the second-most chain stores in New York. Over the past year, Starbucks had a net increase of six stores, from 316 to 322. Although Starbucks still has fewer locations than it did pre-pandemic (351 in 2019), the coffee chain moved into second position on our list in 2021 by surpassing Metro by T-Mobile. This year, Metro by T-Mobile remains in third place with 269 locations, experiencing a 26-store reduction from 295 to 269.

The other retailers in the top ten include Subway (which now has 215 stores after registering a decline of 39 stores since 2022); Duane Reade (211 stores, -16); McDonald's (185 stores, -6); Baskin-Robbins (183 stores, +1), T-Mobile (171 stores, -62); CVS (170 stores, -4); and Popeye's (144 stores, +7).

Retailers Shedding the Most Stores Since Last Year

- No retailer contracted more than cell phone chain T-Mobile, which closed 62 stores over the past year, bringing its store total down to 171, from 233 last year.
- Rite Aid dropped the second-most store locations, closing 55 locations to fall to 54 from 109 last year, and filing for bankruptcy in October.
- In addition to T-Mobile, three other cellular telephone chains were among the retailers shedding the most stores: Metro by T-Mobile (-26, from 295 to 269), AT&T (-18, from 119 to 101), and Verizon Wireless (-9, from 97 to 88).
- The other stores with double-digit decreases were Subway (-39, 254 to 215), Duane Reade (-16, 227 to 211), ??Hale & Hearty Soups (-15, 15 to 0), Bed Bath & Beyond (-13, 13 to 0).
- In addition to Hale & Hearty Soups and Bed Bath & Beyond, 11 other retailers closed all their remaining New York City stores since last year: Goodlife (-3), Kmart (-3), Charlotte Russe (-2), Ann Taylor (-2), Dairy Queen (-2), Supercuts (-1), Juan Valdez (-1), Curves (-1), Original Soup Man (-1), Argo Tea Coffee (-1).



Retailers with Notable Changes Since the Pandemic

A majority of national retailers on our list still have fewer store locations than 2019. Some of the notable contractions since the pandemic include:

- Metro by T-Mobile (-199, from 468 in 2019 to 269 in 2023)
- Duane Reade (-106, from 317 in 2019 to 211 in 2023)
- T-Mobile (-74, from 245 in 2019 to 171 in 2023)
- Subway (-72, from 287 in 2019 to 215 in 2023)

- Rite Aid (-65, from 119 in 2019 to 54 in 2023)
- GNC (-53, from 99 in 2019 to 46 in 2023)
- 7-Eleven (-36, from 141 in 2019 to 105 in 2023)
- NY Sports Clubs (-36, from 53 in 2019 to 17 in 2023)
- AT&T (-35, from 136 in 2019 to 101 in 2023)
- Baskin-Robbins (-34, from 217 in 2019 to 183 in 2023)

Several national retailers have bucked the larger trends and added a significant number of stores since 2019, including:

- Taco Bell (+42, from 40 in 2019 to 82 in 2023)
- Popeye's (+39, from 105 in 2019 to 144 in 2023)
- Pizza Hut (+27, from 14 in 2019 to 41 in 2023)
- Chipotle Mexican Grill (+25, from 79 in 2019 to 104 in 2023)
- Nathan's Famous (+23, from 11 in 2019 to 34 in 2023)
- Wingstop (+21, from 10 in 2019 to 31 in 2023)
- Snipes (+21, from 26 in 2019 to 47 in 2023)
- Enterprise (+19, from 25 in 2019 to 44 in 2023)

Top Ten Chain Retailers in Each Borough

Bronx	Brooklyn	Manhattan	Queens	Staten Island
DUNKIN' (89)	DUNKIN' (136)	STARBUCKS (192)	DUNKIN' (194)	DUNKIN' (37)
METRO BY T-MOBILE (62)	METRO BY T-MOBILE (99)	DUNKIN' (163)	BASKIN-ROBBINS (65)	CVS/PHARMACY (18)
MCDONALD'S (39)	MCDONALD'S (50)	DUANE READE (89)	SUBWAY (61)	SUBWAY (16)
SUBWAY (31)	STARBUCKS (49)	SUBWAY (66)	METRO BY T-MOBILE (60)	STARBUCKS (15)
T-MOBILE (28)	POPEYE'S (48)	CVS/PHARMACY (66)	T-MOBILE (58)	METRO BY T-MOBILE (13)
POPEYE'S (27)	DUANE READE (43)	FEDEX OFFICE (61)	STARBUCKS (51)	CARVEL (12)

Top Ten Chain Retailers in Each Borough				
Bronx	Brooklyn	Manhattan	Queens	Staten Island
BASKIN-ROBBINS (26)	BASKIN-ROBBINS (42)	CHIPOTLE MEXICAN GRILL (56)	DUANE READE (51)	7-ELEVEN (10)
DUANE READE (19)	SUBWAY (41)	UPS STORE (51)	CVS/PHARMACY (42)	T-MOBILE (9)
BURGER KING (18)	T-MOBILE (38)	MCDONALD'S (48)	MCDONALD'S (42)	DUANE READE (9)
DOMINO'S PIZZA (18)	KEY FOOD (36)	BASKIN-ROBBINS (43)	7-ELEVEN (42)	VERIZON WIRELESS (9)

Borough Trends

Starbucks has more stores in Manhattan than any other national retailer, with 192 total locations. In all other boroughs, Dunkin' is the top retailer with 194 locations in Queens, 136 locations in Brooklyn, 89 locations in the Bronx, and 37 locations on Staten Island.

Brooklyn and the Bronx share the same list of top three chain retailers: Dunkin', Metro by T-Mobile, and McDonald's. The top three retailers in Queens are Dunkin', Baskin-Robbins, and Subway. Manhattan's three biggest retailers are: Starbucks, Dunkin', and Duane Reade (same from 2022). Finally, Staten Island's top three are: Dunkin', CVS, and Subway.

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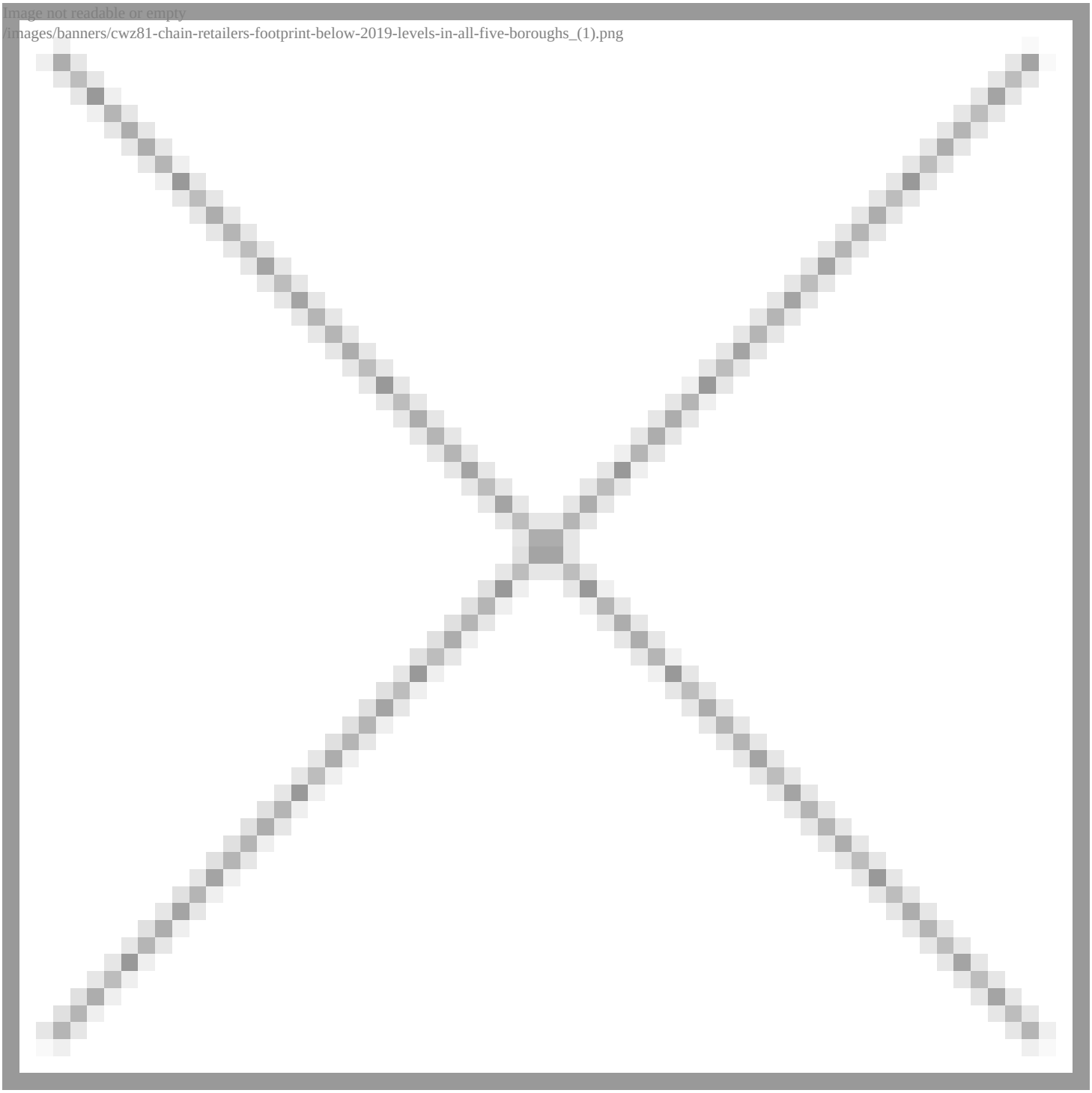

Zip Code Trends

Over the past year, 116 of the city's zip codes experienced a decline in chain stores—more than three times as many as the 32 zip codes that registered an increase in stores. Another 72 zip codes had no change in stores. This is a significant change from last year, when 67 zip codes experienced gains.

The neighborhoods with the biggest net decline in chain stores over the past year include:

- 11201 (Brooklyn Heights/Downtown Brooklyn): -13 stores (179 to 166)
- 10001 (Hudson Yards/Midtown West): -13 stores (from 223 to 210)

- 10012 (Soho/Greenwich Village): -10 stores (from 141 to 131)
- 10018 (Midtown West): -9 stores (from 131 to 122)
- 10016 (Murray Hill): -7 (from 109 to 102)
- 10010 (Flatiron): -7 stores (from 109 to 102)
- 10301 (Tompkinsville/New Brighton/Saint George): -7 (from 40 to 33)
- 10451 (High Bridge/Morrisania): -7 stores (from 64 to 57)
- 11235 (Sheepshead Bay): -7 stores (from 40 to 33)
- 10011 (Chelsea): -6 stores (from 129 to 123)

The zip codes with the most chain stores in the city are:

- 10001 (Hudson Yards/Midtown West): 210 stores (-13, down from 223)
- 10003 (East Village): 173 stores (+3, up from 170)
- 10314 (New Springville/Staten Island Mall): 172 stores (-1, down from 173)
- 10019 (Midtown West): 168 stores (+1, up from 167)
- 11201 (Brooklyn Heights/Downtown Brooklyn): 166 stores (-13, down from 179)
- 11234 (Flatlands): 147 stores (+4, up from 143)
- 11373 (Corona/Elmhurst): 142 stores (-4, down from 146)
- 10022 (Midtown East): 139 stores (-3, down from 142)
- 10036 (Midtown West): 137 stores (+1, up from 136)
- 10012 (Soho/Greenwich Village): 131 stores (-10, down from 141)

The zip code that experienced the largest increase in chain stores was 11101 (Long Island City), where eight stores (+11.9 percent) were added in 2023. Other zip codes to add the most stores over the past year were: 11234 (Flatlands, +4 stores), 10023 (Upper West Side, +4 stores), 10003 (East Village, +3 stores), and 11249 (Williamsburg, +3 stores).

Where the Change is Occuring								
Retail Chain	Category	2023	Difference	Brooklyn	Bronx	Queens	Manhattan	Staten Island
DUNKIN' DONUTS	COFFEE SHOPS	619	-1	0	-1	-1	2	-1
STARBUCKS	COFFEE SHOPS	322	6	3	-1	2	1	1
METRO BY T-MOBILE	CELLULAR TELEPHONES (SERVICES)	269	-26	-9	-7	-6	-2	-2

Where the Change is Occuring								
Retail Chain	Category	2023	Difference	Brooklyn	Bronx	Queens	Manhattan	Staten Island
SUBWAY	RESTAURANTS, FAST-FOOD	215	-39	-5	-6	-10	-18	0
DUANE READE	PHARMACIES	211	-16	-5	0	-3	-7	-1
MCDONALD'S	RESTAURANTS, FAST-FOOD	185	-6	0	-1	-3	-1	-1
BASKIN-ROBBINS	ICE CREAM	183	1	-1	0	4	-1	-1
T-MOBILE	CELLULAR TELEPHONES (SERVICES)	171	-62	-20	-16	-13	-12	-1
CVS/PHARMACY	PHARMACIES	170	-4	3	-1	-6	0	0
POPEYE'S	RESTAURANTS, FAST-FOOD	144	7	2	1	-2	3	3

Manhattan, historically the leading borough in terms of year-over-year increases by zip code, fell last year to third but regained its position as first in 2023. Of the 32 zip codes that saw a year-over-year increase from 2022 to 2023, 12 zip codes (37.5 percent) were located within Manhattan. Brooklyn and Queens followed, with 9 zip codes seeing gains (28.1 percent) and 7 zip codes seeing gains (21.8 percent), respectively. The Bronx and Staten Island each had two zip codes with year-over-year growth (6.2 percent each).

Of all national retailer locations in New York City, 38.6 percent are located within Manhattan. Queens ranks second with 22.1 percent, followed closely by Brooklyn which contains 21.7 percent of total chain store locations in the five boroughs. The Bronx contains 11.5 percent and 6 percent are in Staten Island.

Click here to read the full report and view our comprehensive rankings of national chains in New York City by their number of store locations, the number of store locations in each zip code, zip codes with the most and least number of chains, and zip codes with the most and least number of chains by borough.

Notes

1. The rise in Nathan's Famous store locations is attributed to the addition of food carts in the official store locator tool this

past year.

This report is a publication of the Center for an Urban Future (CUF). Researched and written by Sophia Annabelle Klein, Rachel Neches, and Jonathan Bowles. Edited by Eli Dvorkin.

Center for an Urban Future is a leading New York City-based think tank that generates smart and sustainable public policies to reduce inequality, increase economic mobility, and grow the economy.

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