



About the Community

Intervale Green is located on a formerly vacant lot in the Charlotte Gardens Urban Renewal Area in Bronx Community District 3. Almost half of families with children in the community district live in poverty. High school graduation rates are low and overcrowding in housing is a problem. Opportunities for healthy and active living are compromised by a low open space ratio, despite the presence of 100+ acre Crotona Park.

The neighborhood where Intervale Green is located is known as Crotona East/Morrisania and it has a complex history of cultural significance, blight, and neglect.

- **Post WWI:** The area begins to flourish and is heavily populated with Eastern European and Jewish residents, with the aid of mass transit. Cultural offerings abound with live music and theatre seats on nearby Freeman Street, Southern Boulevard, and Boston Road.
- **1960s-1970s:** “White flight” occurs with the housing boom in the suburbs and as the minority Black and Puerto Rican population in the inner city grows. The economic crisis hits. The housing stock is depleted. There is vast disinvestment by banks and the real estate industry. Government officials diminish services—social services, sanitation, etc.—until the community becomes virtually uninhabitable. More residents of all races move out. Crime is a major concern: gangs battle over turf and police are corrupt. Arson becomes common as greedy slumlords set their apartment buildings on fire for insurance money. “The Bronx is burning” comes to typify the borough. Firefighters arrive only after buildings have burned enough to be deemed uninhabitable and must be demolished.
- **1977:** President Carter visits nearby Charlotte Street to see the devastation of the South Bronx. Left behind are razed remains and vacant lots where a vibrant community once stood. The area brings shame to officials as it comes to embody urban blight worldwide. He vows to rebuild. But help is slow in coming.
- **1980:** Presidential Candidate Ronald Reagan also visits Charlotte Street and vows to rebuild, with little outcome. Charlotte Street becomes known as the *street of broken promises*. The building(s) on the Intervale Green site are demolished. The triangular lot would remain vacant, dumped on and contaminated for more than 25 years. Also in 1980, Edward Logue of the South Bronx Development Organization unveils his plans to develop Charlotte Gardens one block north of our site, at NYC Mayor Ed Koch’s request. Originally 90 (presently 89) detached ranch style single-family homes in a Levittown-like subdivision, the plans meet with some criticism for its low-density, suburban feel.
- **1981:** The area remains a barren wasteland. It is featured in Paul Newman’s gritty crime drama “Fort Apache The Bronx”, further cementing its image of blight and devastation.

- **Early to Mid-1980s:** Construction begins on Charlotte Gardens. Massive amounts of rubble and debris are found that are too expensive to clear. The debris is compressed and the pre-manufactured homes are built over it. Homes are sold from \$47,800 to \$53,800. Urban Development Action Grant, LISC, and Chemical Bank help make it affordable to homeowners. Mid-Bronx Desperadoes cosponsors the project. The average family income for an applicant is over \$30,000.
- **Mid- to Late-1980s:** With the unexpected success of homeownership in the blighted community, MBD builds a new two-story, 111 townhouse development (150 originally projected) on Intervale Avenue between Home Street and Jennings Street. Homes are complete with awnings, parking pads, and entrance ways. They are sold at \$90,000 to \$123,000 after a \$25,000 federal subsidy. Units are offered at higher than anticipated prices because of difficult terrain, a problem similar to that of Charlotte Gardens.
- **1990s-2000s:** The Charlotte Gardens and Salters Square developments bring a level of stability to the area. The area remains relatively low in density but population begins to increase as more housing developments slowly come online. Some vacant lots and dilapidated buildings remain and crime continues. Burnt out cars and empty sidewalks cause the specter of neglect to persist over the area.
- **2004-2005:** WHEDCo looks for a new development site after over eight years of providing affordable housing and social services at its award-winning flagship building, Urban Horizons, the former Morrisania hospital in Bronx CD4. After a successful proposal effort, WHEDCo is awarded the city-owned triangular vacant lot between Louis Niñé Boulevard and Intervale Avenue in early 2005.
- **Late 2005-2006:** Construction begins but is almost immediately delayed because of the discovery of several feet of contaminated soil, gushing pools of contaminated water, oil spills from underground oil storage tanks, and difficult terrain for constructing the buildings' foundation. Construction of 128-unit Intervale Green and 46-unit Louis Niñé House begins in late 2006 after almost one year of delays and \$1 million of extra costs.
- **2006-2007:** WHEDCo expands its award-winning after-school program to nearby PS2, and in 2007, launches community development initiatives for commercial revitalization and community safety in Crotona East, with support from the NYC Department of Small Business Services and the blue moon fund.
- **May 2008 to August 2008:** Through leasing partner Phipps CDC, WHEDCo begins to accept applications for the apartments at Intervale Green. Over 5,000 applications are received and Phipps begins the applicant screening and lease up process. WHEDCo undertakes the marketing process for the leasing of the commercial spaces.
- **January 2009:** Construction of Intervale Green is completed. A celebratory Open House event enables representatives from government, the private sector, the community, and WHEDCo friends and supporters to tour the building. Apartments are 60% leased up with the remainder in progress. The South Bronx prepares to welcome 128 new families to a historic community, a glowing symbol of urban rebirth.