

NEW YORK POST

CHEER THE BRONX

August 26, 2007 -- The Yankees have climbed back into the playoff race, and it's showing at the box office: The team has already posted 35 sellout home games.

Unbeknownst to many fans, however, an even more impressive turnaround is happening right across the street, where construction on the new Yankee Stadium is a monument to economic renewal in the South Bronx.

Gotham's development boom, it seems, is leaving no vacant lot unmolested - and that includes neighborhoods that were not too long ago a national symbol of urban decay.

The Post reported recently that total investment in new development in The Bronx reached \$965 million in the first six months of this year, a number equal to investment for *all of 2005* - and more than *double 2002's* total.

Taken together, the past six years have seen the construction of nearly 34,000 housing units in the borough.

These are striking numbers, but even more striking is how they came about: The Bronx's boom is the direct result of the tough policing started in the Giuliani years and largely continued under the present administration.

The numbers don't lie: In the six police precincts roughly covering the South Bronx - center of both the erstwhile malaise and the current boom - major crime is down around 70 percent since 1993.

That number is consistent with the drop in the borough as a whole.

Of course, many other factors are at work, too.

Most notably, the development boom engulfing Manhattan has pushed a growing population ever further north (as well as east, west and south) in search of housing it can afford.

And it's also no surprise that the crime rate has continued to drop, as development has increased opportunity in the area.

But the safe streets came first - a necessary condition for developers and retailers to opt to take risks on the area.

Without question, this boom was built on the firm foundation of no-nonsense policing - and on the hard work of the men and women of the NYPD.

New Yorkers would do well to remember this: There was nothing inevitable about the good times the city now enjoys.

Sure, the old prophets of inevitable decline were equally misguided - there was no good reason that a city of such natural advantages and everyday entrepreneurial energy *couldn't* thrive. But that energy had to be unlocked, and now it must be protected.

And protection means, first and foremost, a large and vigilant police force.

Mayor Bloomberg deserves the thanks of all New Yorkers for continuing the successful policies of his predecessor. At the same time, however, one wonders how much longer it will be before the city is lulled back into complacency.

But for now, let's hear it for the booming Bronx. Its resurgence should be cause to remember - rather than an excuse to forget - how far New York has come.

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