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## Borough Arts Group Eyes Vacated Bank Property

Bronx Council on the Arts studying the possibility of purchasing a former Westchester Square Bank Building

by Patrick Rocchio

Bronx Council on the Arts may soon take an even more active role in the revitalization of Westchester Square. It is currently in talks to purchase a building that was formally a Washington Mutual bank branch.

The non-profit group dedicated to promoting the arts in the borough runs several programs, including a writer's workshop and arts and crafts classes, at the Westchester Square Library at 2521 Glebe Avenue, and Huntington Free Library at 9 Westchester Square.

The council is now studying the possibility of purchasing 2700 E. Tremont Avenue, which was closed when WaMu merged with JPMorgan Chase bank.

"We are in the midst of negotiations to take on the building that was formally a WaMu branch; we are still in the early stages of doing our due diligence in terms of buying the building," said Ed Friedman, deputy director for Bronx Council on the Arts. "We had a walk through recently, and we want to make sure this building is right for us."

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**Ed Friedman**

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John Bonizio, president of the Association of Merchants and Business Professionals of Westchester Square, said that he thought the former bank with its high ceilings and spaciousness would be a good fit for BCA.



Bronx Council on the Arts may soon call this former bank building on Westchester Square home. The non-profit is looking into purchasing the building for office and programming space.

*Photo by Victor Chu*

"Bronx Council on the Arts is looking into moving into the old WaMu branch," Bonizio said. "It is going to be a very significant addition to what is going on in Westchester Square because it is going to bring significant cultural and artistic activity to the area."

Bringing the artistic community to Westchester Square is one thing the merchants are doing, in addition to forming a Business Improvement District, to keep the square a healthy, growing shopping hub.

"We are really confident that our programs on Westchester Square will continue to be successful," Friedman said. "We are fortunate that we have the merchants, government, and the arts coming together."

For more information on Bronx Council on the Arts, call (718) 931-9500 or visit [www.bronxarts.com](http://www.bronxarts.com). ■