

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT

Jointly with the

COMMITTEE ON SMALL
BUSINESS

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Thursday, April 20, 2023

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HELD AT: COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Julie Menin, Chairperson
Amanda Farías, Chairperson

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Selvena N. Brooks-Powers
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A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

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DR. KEREN:

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Jessica Walker
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Manhattan Chamber of Commerce

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2 COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS 3

2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good morning and welcome to
3 today's New York City Council hearing for the
4 Committee on Small Business joint with the Committee
5 of Economic Development. If you wish to submit
6 testimony you may at testimony@council.nyc.gov. At
7 this time please silence all electronic devices. And
8 just as a reminder, no one may approach the dais.
9 Thank you so much chairs we are ready to begin.

10 CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Good morning and welcome to
11 this joint hearing of at the New York City Council's
12 Committee on Economic Development and Small Business
13 I'm Amanda Farías, and I have the privilege of
14 chairing the Committee on Economic Development.

15 I would like to extend my thanks to the members
16 of both Committees, the Administration, and the
17 city's official tourism marketing organization,
18 formerly known as NYC & Company now known as NYC
19 Tourism + Conventions, for coming together for this
20 hearing.

21 This hearing is particularly important given the
22 vital role that the tourism industry plays in the
23 economic well being of New York City, especially its
24 small businesses. While the tourism industry at
25 large has been hit hard by the pandemic, the city's

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small businesses, many of which are dependent on
tourism have been particularly affected. Small
businesses throughout the outer boroughs play a vital
role in our city's economy. We cannot fully recover
without the success of the Bronx, Queens, Brooklyn,
and Staten Island communities.

As a Bronxite, it is important to me to
understand how the reopening of the city and the
return of tourists is impacting businesses across all
five boroughs. Over the last several years, our
committees have been at the forefront of the
Council's efforts to address the challenges facing
the city's tourism industry. We have held multiple
hearings and introduced bills aiming at improving the
city's tourist experience and the tourism economy.

We have also closely monitored the industry's
recovery during the pandemic and provided support
when necessary. In 2019, the city welcomed a record
66.6 million tourists supporting over 403,000 jobs
across the five boroughs and generating over \$71
billion in economic activity. While the COVID-19
pandemic decimated the city's tourism industry,
leading to a 67% decrease in the numbers of tourists

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in 2020, making it the city's worst year for tourism
since the 1980s.

According to recent data from NYC tourism and
conventions, the city's tourism industry has been
making a steady recovery since the height of the
pandemic. In the third quarter of 2022, the city
welcomed over 7 million visitors, a 52% increase from
the same period in 2021. Hotel occupancy rates have
also improved with an average occupancy of 70% in the
third quarter of 2022 for hotels that are currently
open, up from 50% in the same period in 2021. These
numbers paint a hopeful picture for the city's
recovery but they are still well behind the city's
peak of 16.3 million tourists in the third quarter of
2019.

Today's hearing will focus on the efforts of NYC
Tourism + Conventions and how they have helped to
improve the city's tourism economy over the last year
and a half, as indoor dining became more normalized,
museums and shows-- museums, shows, and cultural
institutions reopened and the international tourists
began to return to the city.

We will be looking at the data on tourist
numbers, hotel occupancy levels and attendance at

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shows, museums, and cultural attractions. We will
also be discussing lessons learned from the other
jurisdictions as the world continues to reopen.

As we continue to emerge from the pandemic, we
hope to ensure that the city's small businesses
particularly those in the tourism industry, are given
the support they need to recover and thrive. We are
committed to working with NYC Tourism + Conventions
and other partners to draw tourists back to New York
to ensure that its many world class attractions
recover as quickly and as safely as possible. I look
forward to a productive and informative discussion
today on the efforts being made by NYC Tourism +
Conventions towards achieving these goals.

Before we begin, I'd like to thank the Economic
Development Team here at the Council, Senior Counsel
Alex Paulenoff, Senior Policy Analyst William
Hongach, and Finance Analyst Glenn Martinelli, for
all their hard work preparing for this hearing.

I will now turn the floor over to my co-chair,
Councilmember, Julie Menin, for her opening remarks.

CHAIRPERSON MENIN: Thank you so much Chair
Farías, and good morning everyone. I'm Councilmember
Julie Menin, Chair of the Committee on Small

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Business. Thank you for joining today's joint oversight hearing with the Committees on Economic Development in Small Business to discuss tourism and its economic impact on New York City's small business.

I first of all want to thank my co-chair for all of her leadership and support in putting together today's hearing, and I want to welcome our colleagues who are here with us. I want to acknowledge Councilmember Alexa Avilés has joined us and will acknowledge other councilmembers as they join.

New York City's small businesses are vital to the life of our city. They contribute to the vibrancy and uniqueness that make New York City so special to residents and visitors alike. For more than three years, we've seen small businesses and the tourism industry struggle in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Reports show that since the beginning of the pandemic, almost 26,000 small businesses were forced to shut down permanently, and as my co-chair has stated, in 2020 our city suffered its worst year for tourism since the 1980s. But there is cause for hope, since the United States lifted its 18-month-long travel restrictions on international tourists in

November of 2021, the city's tourism sector has
enjoyed exponential growth.

According to New York City tourism and
conventions in 2022, the city reached 85% of 2019
visitation levels, and spending sector employment and
economic impact also climb back to the 85% range.

New York City tourism and conventions projects
that there will be approximately 61 million tourists
visiting the city in 2023. Small businesses in
sectors spanning recreation, food service, retail,
and more stand to contribute greatly to the
resurgence of the city's tourism industry, just as
they have contributed to the city's economy in recent
years. For example, Broadway contributed \$8.45
billion to the city's economy in the 2021 to 2022
season, and 62.5% of Broadway tickets are purchased
by tourists. A full quarter of restaurant sales
volume in the city comes from tourists, and tourists
spent \$10.5 billion at food and drinking
establishments in 2019.

In 2019 alone, tourists spent \$9.3 billion at
retail shops in New York and accounted for nearly one
fifth of all retail spending in the city.

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3 With intentional effort and collaboration among
4 government partners, business owners, advocates and
5 other stakeholders, our city's beloved small
6 businesses and the tourism sector can not only
7 rebound but redouble their efforts in making New York
8 City a world-class tourist destination.

9 Today's hearing looks to ensure that New York
10 City small businesses, particularly those in the
11 tourism industry recover and thrive as they play a
12 leading role in welcoming visitors back to our city.

13 I look forward to hearing testimony from New York
14 City Tourism + Conventions and asking questions of
15 the additional city agencies that are present today.
16 I'm eager to hear about New York City Tourism +
17 Conventions plan to incorporate small businesses into
18 their strategy, programming, and outreach. I also
19 anticipate hearing more about the relationship
20 between New York City Tourism + Conventions and the
21 New York City Department of small business services,
22 and also look forward to hearing from small
23 businesses and advocates on today's important topic.

24 Finally, I want to thank Alex Paulenoff, William
25 Hongach, Nicole Cota, and Rebecca Barilla from
central staff for the work putting together this

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2 hearing, as well as my own Chief of Staff Jonathan
3 Szott, and Legislative Director Brandon Jordan for
4 their assistance. I'll now turn it back over to my
5 co-chair. Thank you.

6 COUNSEL: Good morning Alex Polinoff, Senior
7 Counsel. Will members of the Administration who are
8 giving testimony today please raise their right
9 hands?

10 Do you swear or affirm to tell the truth, the
11 whole truth and nothing but the truth in your
12 testimony today and to respond honestly to
13 Councilmember questions?

14 ALL: I do.

15 COUNSEL: Great. Thank you so much. You may
16 begin when ready.

17 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Sorry, there's a cup of
18 coffee there's to make sure. Sorry.

19 Now's the time to read your testimony. Whenever
20 you're ready.

21 DR. KEREN: Good morning Chair Fariás, and Chair
22 Menin, and members of the Committee on Economic
23 Development and Small Business. I am Dr. Donna
24 Keren, Executive Vice President of Research and
25 Insights, and I'm joined today by Nancy Mammana,

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Chief Marketing Officer at New York City Tourism +
Conventions, testifying on behalf of our CEO Fred
Dixon. We thank you for this opportunity to share
the current status of the city's tourism and
hospitality industry, and New York City Tourism +
Convention's efforts along with our government and
private sector partners to revitalize the industry as
we work towards full economic recovery.

I'd like to provide a quick background on who we
are and what we do as an organization. New York City
Tourism + Conventions, formerly NYC & Company is the
official destination marketing organization and
Convention and Visitor's Bureau for the five boroughs
of New York City. Our mission is to maximize inbound
travel and tourism opportunities throughout the city,
build economic prosperity, and spread the dynamic
image of the five boroughs around the world. We are
a 501(C)(6), not-for-profit member organization, and
represent the interests of nearly 2000 member
businesses and organizations from across all five
boroughs. We are governed by an 85-member board of
directors representing a diverse range of businesses
from across the city. Our members range from hotels,
cultural organizations, restaurants, and attractions

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to BIDs and Chambers of Commerce. The majority of these businesses fall into the small business category with entrepreneurial owners, limited staffs and revenues. Together their memberships fund about half of our operations. We also hold a procurement contract with the city of New York to provide tourism marketing services. Excuse me.

Travel and tourism has long been a driver of economic prosperity for New York City with direct and indirect impacts across five boroughs. Prior to the pandemic, 2019 was the 10th consecutive year of growth in the number of visitors and importantly, in visitor spending, business revenues, job creation, new investments, and city tax revenue. Growth was halted as businesses shut down operations, borders were closed, and convenings of any size became impossible.

The pandemic crippled the tourism and hospitality industry, bringing normal operations to a virtual halt in March 2020. That first year hit the travel and tourism industry harder than any other sector in the city's economy. Combined domestic and international visitation dropped by 65%. Hotel demand fell by 69%. Visitor spending fell by 66%.

This translated to a 50% loss in jobs and a \$2 billion decrease in local tax revenues from our industry. More industry jobs were lost than in all the losses in finance, information, real estate, and professional and business service sectors combined.

In the second year of the pandemic, our industry fared only slightly better: International and business travel was stalled and safety regulations limited activities across all sectors. Our breakthrough began in Q4 2021, when the US reopened to international visitors from Europe and elsewhere.

Just a few weeks ago on March 15, we passed the third anniversary of the pandemic disruption. For the city's tourism and meeting sector, we are still working to return to pre-pandemic levels of visitors, spending, jobs, and tax revenue.

In a typical pre-pandemic year 2019, for example, travel and tourism supported a little over 400,000 jobs in the private sector. This was about one in ten jobs. Still an impressive number in our tech, finance, real estate and biomed-driven economy. At the end of 2022, industry jobs are still down about 35% in key sectors supported by visitor spending.

Most of those jobs are in services and small

businesses that directly interact with visitors from the moment they arrive by land, rail, or air to where they stay, what they eat, what they buy, what they do and how they move around town.

Our estimates for 2022 suggest that the industry will have recovered to about 270,000 jobs, including many in the services, wholesale, and retail businesses that provide for the industry as well as visitor accommodations, attractions, shops, and dining options.

As you may know, a significant proportion of the tourism workforce also lives in neighborhoods throughout the city. Many of them work in small businesses that provide key inputs to the visitor experience. From food wholesalers, to event specialists to local tour guides and startups, the tourism ecosystem spreads benefits at every level.

There is also a benefit every New Yorker can feel: Without the tax contributions coming from the tourism and conventions we host the average New York City household would be on the hook for another \$2,000 in state and local taxes. While the private sector in the city has surpassed the employment levels of March 2020, many of the businesses that

rely on visitor spending are still lacking however. Restaurants and bars, which rely on visitors for about one third of their patrons remain below peak employment, as remote and hybrid work reduces the weekday population around the central business and entertainment districts.

On a similar trajectory, though in smaller numbers, the arts, entertainment and recreation sector is also pacing back, but not you're reaching prior levels. Given the attraction of the city's cultural community visitors, six in ten jobs in the sector are supported by visitor spending.

As of February 2023, the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that there are 42,700 people employed in the city's accommodation sector. That's 80% of the seasonal benchmark. Active hotel inventory, the combination of new properties and reopenings, is nearly at 2019 levels, with just over 125,000 rooms serving travelers to New York City. Seasonal occupancy patterns have returned to form with midweek business travelers joining the growing international visitors, and domestic leisure travelers keep occupancy rates rising month after month. Average daily room rates are continuing to

increase, reaching \$214 on average for the first quarter of this year. Nevertheless, hotels in major cities across the country are, like New York City, still performing below their pre-pandemic levels. In the first quarter of this year, New York City hotels averaged 71.8% occupancy, still 7% below our 2019 benchmark of 77%.

Looking out to the remainder of the year and into next, New York City is facing increasing competition for all our visitor markets. Domestic visitors are looking to travel internationally again. Business travelers are still hyper cautious, as concerns about recession swirl, and other first-year meeting cities are making attractive offers to meeting planners to bring their events to Los Angeles, Dallas, Las Vegas, Orlando, Atlanta, and even Chicago. New York will remain the most popular international destination, but challenges are still ahead.

As you will hear from my colleague, Nancy Mammana in a moment, we've come through these past few years through strategic government investment in our work that allowed us to maintain our presence and messaging in key global markets, making us ready to pivot back to welcoming domestic and international

visitors into the city. This much needed government funding has expanded our marketing research and research capabilities.

Now Nancy will share our 2023 marketing campaigns and programs that continue to revitalize the travel and hospitality industry. Thank you.

MS. MAMMANA: Thank you, Donna. Good morning Councilmembers, and thank you for the opportunity to share our work.

I'd like to start by thanking our many city partners we collaborate with and look to continue partnering with moving forward, especially our close work with Deputy Mayor Maria Torres Springer's office, as well as various other city agencies.

Today's hearing comes almost exactly a month after we unveiled our new brand and name change, as you referenced, to now become New York City Tourism + Conventions. This doesn't change our mission or our portfolio of programs to drive visitation to New York City, but we want to better define what work we do. We created our new brand After embarking on a tremendous amount of research, which included in depth stakeholder interviews across our staff, global offices, Board of Directors and City Hall in addition

to over 1000 surveys with our member businesses,
residents and visitors, after which we concluded that
the name NYC & Company wasn't clearly and immediately
conveying the breadth and depth of the critical work
this organization does to power the city's economy.

Our goal is to position this rebrand as a
milestone for the organization which is an evolution
in our strategy and builds upon the work we've always
done: Showcasing authentic, aspirational five
boroughs stories to the world, now under the banner
of New York City Tourism + Conventions to lead the
industry forward. We've had very positive reception
to the new brand and logo and hope you all share our
excitement about how it positively positions the five
boroughs. We also created a color palette that
reflects New York City with the black as the primary
color which provides the basis for the secondary
color palette which is a survey of New York City
icons and associations. Thank you red, brick red,
ferry orange, locks pink, taxi yellow, Rockaway sand,
subway green, Liberty green, coffee cup blue, and
skyline blue with more added as the system develops
in the future.

I'm happy to answer any questions around the rebrand at the end but wanted you all to know that the look and feel of the marketing for our programs we produce will change while the content will largely be similar to past years.

In September of last year, we launched the refresh of our global It's Time For New York City campaign, which is the largest multi-phase global tourism marketing and advertising campaign ever created for New York City. It's Time For New York City was initially rolled out as restrictions began to lift, more people were getting vaccinated, and travel resumed in the United States and beyond. The campaign reminds visitors of the city's unrivaled energy, excitement and the abundance of endless experiences and resiliency that make New York City the most iconic destination in the world.

Designed to create urgency and FOMO, the Fear Of Missing Out, It's Time For New York City campaign has three phases and includes television, digital, outdoor media, and partnerships.

The goal of this campaign was to encourage visitors to explore the five boroughs. This latest phase ran in 18 countries with 17 unique travel

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partners including Porter Airlines in Canada, Havas
Voyages in France, Aeroméxico in Mexico, Asiana
Airlines in South Korea, MasterCard in Hong Kong, and
United Airlines in Sweden, the US, and the UK.

The results have been impressive. We have an
external research firm called SMARI conduct an
analysis on the marketing and the ROI on the domestic
campaign, which was \$352 for every dollar spent on
the advertising, and \$241 for every dollar spent
internationally. The campaigns to date have run in
two phases, and as it continues, the results continue
to compound. So far, cumulatively it has resulted in
close to \$8 billion in visitors spend, over \$820
million in tax revenue to the city, and influenced
over 3.5 million trips from July 2021 through July
2022.

The SMARI data has been a major boost to
understanding spending and the impacts of our
marketing campaigns. Funding is a crucial component
of conducting this research, and this was the first
time we were able to do so because of the federal aid
from COVID. Going forward with the PEG, we will not
have funds to do so and we will not be able to build

the momentum we're currently achieving. I'm happy to further discuss this in the Q&A.

We've continued our engagement with locals and tri-state visitors and commuters through our annual vibrancy marketing campaigns designed to help promote the energy and attractiveness of our local tourism and hospitality businesses during need periods, which historically include Q1, and July and August. Since its inception in summer of 1992, New York City Restaurant Week has been a celebration of dining, bringing people together to experience the city's fine dining and generating business for our local restaurants. On the heels of restaurant week's continued success, New York City Tourism + Conventions has relaunched its seasonal vibrancy marketing programs, including the twice annual New York City Broadway Week, Off-Broadway Week with two-for-one tickets to some of Broadway's hottest shows, as well as the shows featured at smaller theaters across the boroughs, and New York City Must-See Week offering two-for-one tickets to over 40 attractions, museums, tours, and performing arts. These programs have attracted visitors from the Tri-State Region and beyond and are economic drivers during what are

typically slower travel seasons, and help ensure that a visit to the city remains accessible to a diverse range of visitors. In October 2021, we added It's Time For Culture campaign supporting our performing arts and culture organizations in every borough. We also just announced the second year of Its Time For Culture last week, which launches in May, with nearly 100 organizations participating across the five boroughs. More on that shortly.

In January of this year, we brought back New York City Winter Outing a combination of New York City Restaurant Week, Broadway week, Must-See Week, and the second year of including New York City Hotel Week. By combining all programs on a broader platform and under one messaging umbrella we expand the reach of the message to daytrippers, and valuable overnight visitors and drive traffic and span to businesses and organizations across the city.

This year's program outperformed both 2022 and 2019 traffic and conversion benchmarks, even though we had lower budgets to market the program than in 2022. We have over 700 participants in the program, which include over 500 restaurants across the five boroughs, over 40 cultural institutions Broadway

shows and hotels. Through this program, we partnered with various city agencies, including New York City Department of Small Business Services, and the Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment. We would especially like to acknowledge the support of MOME as they once again sponsored the New York City Winter Outing. Their support helped to offset participation fees for the program as part of ongoing efforts in tourism recovery.

In conducting our outreach for participants and then Winter Outing Program, in addition to the agency partners, we worked with the chambers of commerce and BIDs across the five boroughs and also sent emails to all City Councilmembers. We're always looking for new participants for these programs and hope we can partner with both of your committees and all of your offices to get the word out about these programs in the future.

Earlier this month, we announced the return of Its Time For Culture with offerings at nearly 100 cultural events across the five boroughs available next month from May 9th to the 21st. The program comprising of seasonal events, concerts, tours, classes, family friendly programs, and more kicks off

the unofficial start of the New York City summer cultural season driving traffic to participating locations across all five boroughs. A full list of organizations-- sorry, just get myself here, excuse me -- are available on our website and we continue to support this sector and cultural tourism.

As we focus on marketing. We've also expanded our social media campaigns to focus on different sectors. We remain focused on celebrating New York City's diversity, not only in terms of our neighbors and neighborhoods, but also in the never-ending variety of things to do in the five boroughs. As we amplify New York City to our audience of over 2.7 million followers across our platforms, we have launched a variety of different series I'd like to highlight a few: #checkinNYC spotlights hotel properties across the city, #MuseumMondays highlights different cultural institutions, and #savorNYC in which different influencers visit restaurants across New York City to taste their food. And in this series we have among our most recent collaborations was a visit to New Asha Sri Lankan restaurant in Staten Island, a look at the Venezuelan Christmas table of hallacas at Patacon Pisao in Elmhurst,

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Queens, and a feature on 97-year-old Holocaust survivor, and S&S Cheesecake founder Fred Schuster in the Bronx, which went viral with almost 500,000 video plays.

A major focus of our work is connecting small businesses to the tourism industry. And for many, this is not an easy task. To remove the barriers to understanding the industry we have two major initiatives: One is Tourism Ready, which is a free educational program. The course is providing an introduction to the tourism industry and working with the travel trade for any businesses or entities in New York City that are interested in learning more. Tourism Ready 101 looks at how to bring these visitors to your neighborhoods and businesses. The program places a particular emphasis on working with the travel trade, which are third party travel sellers, packagers, and event planners. The program guides businesses through the steps to effectively work with the travel trade and help them identify methods to engage with these resellers to promote their businesses or neighborhood. We'd love support from each of your offices and identifying businesses in your districts that might be interested in this

free opportunity and happy to connect with them and add them to our mailing list. There are workshops scheduled for almost every month of the year, so there's still a lot of opportunity for participation.

Another initiative is through visits we coordinate with global travel partners, which we call reverse travel missions. Typically travel missions entail traveling to destinations with high visitation and business selling their products and sell packages to tour operators. Many small businesses do not have the time, capacity, or funds to go on travel missions with us to destinations across the world. So we coordinate reverse missions where travel partners come to New York City.

Through these coordinated visits qualified small businesses gain access to the global market with no or very little investment, along with receiving the guidance and support they need. Last year, we had our first reverse sales mission which had 17 small businesses and cultural institutions participating. For the remainder of this year into Q2 2024. We plan to have at least two of these reverse missions. Additionally, we continue to operate borough development familiarization trips for local receptive

tour operators. We coordinate these by borough to give tour operators an in-depth handful of experiences and usually coordinate a day of visits and competing 8 to 10 different sites. Today, in fact, we are hosting one of these visits in Queens, and an includes tool close to 20 small businesses and cultural institutions. These visits are critical to highlight the diversity of experiences in New York City, and to help tour operators better communicate all that we have to offer. While we celebrate the successful return of Broadway performing arts, nightlife, music, and sports venues, the industry is still challenged as not all international borders have reopened, business meetings and conferences have not fully returned.

New York City Tourism + Conventions will continue to support our industry by stimulating demand from hyperlocal regional, national and international visitors. For example, we continue to book future meetings and convention anywhere from 10 days to 10 years out depending upon the size of the event to foster the return of business travel as much as possible. However, without a stable long-term funding strategy, we will fall behind our competitors

in generating inbound travel from around the world
and the spending and tax revenue associated with it
for all five boroughs. We hope today's conversation
is the continuation of a shared interest to ensure
New York City remains one of the world's leading
destinations.

Thank you for inviting us to testify. As always,
we appreciate the Council's support of the industry
and being partners with us in this work. We're happy
to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Great, thank you so much for
your testimony. I'd like to acknowledge
Councilmembers Brooks-Powers, Riley, Gutiérrez, and
Councilmember Ung, who is virtual, have joined us
today for today's hearing.

And let's just get right into it. So I
appreciate your answers or your-- and your testimony
around the rebranding of NYCT+C. I'd like to know if
there's any major differences outside of what you've
described already, and if there are any new
responsibilities.

MS> MAMMANA: It's really just us leaning more
heavily into our role, and making it more clear that
we are in fact the destination marketing organization

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responsible for tourism marketing. So we felt it was important to clarify in our name, but our remit does not change and our mission does not change.

CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Okay. Great. And have tourism numbers improved in the city since the lows of the pandemic, and are there any specific data points that you use to track the tourism trends in New York City?

DR. KEREN: Improvement is definitely happening. We had dropped to less than 22 million visitors in 2020. We forecast that this year as-- we will be well above 61 million, and on our way to full recovery by the end of 2024. We do this by tracking through syndicated surveys, visitors, traffic in rail, air, and land, visitor spending, and hotel performance. We work with a number of third-party vendors who collect the original data and then we bring it into our analysis of the city as a whole.

CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Can you explain a little bit more about-- so it makes a lot of sense to me that you're tracking airway traffic and seeing how many folks are coming in. In terms of surveys, are you doing anonymous surveys to visitors that are coming to New York City? Are you-- are you partnering with

airlines that have surveys come up on the screen,
things like that?

DR. KEREN: That's a very good question. Thank
you. You touched the heart of my daily life.

CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: I'm interested. So tell me
all of it.

DR. KEREN: We work with two major resources for
tracking visitation at the visitor level one is a
company called DK Shifflet, which is part of a larger
entity MMGY. They conduct hundreds of thousands of
surveys in the course of the year of domestic
travelers, and one of the key questions in that
survey is, "Did you visit New York City in the last
three months?" And then if they visited New York
City, they also get asked, "Did you visit any of the
five boroughs? Please check all that apply." So we
know statistically, who is visiting not by name or
person, but what we get is an anonymous profile of
this collective of visitors during the course of the
year that allows us to understand whether they're
here for business or vacation, whether they stay in a
hotel, or they're crashing on their cousin's couch,
and who's in the travel party, what they do, et
cetera.

We have a parallel study that's actually conducted by the US Department of Commerce National Travel and Tourism Office, which is done at major US airport hubs on the outbound return travel of international visitors. And they get asked basically the same set of questions: Where are you from? Where did you go? What else did you do? How did you stay? What did you spend? And in both of these cases, because New York City is on the international side, the number one destination in the United States for international travel. Statistically, we have a very large sample. It's a very reliable sample that allows us to break it out by country of origin. We profile about 25 different origin markets that then get you used in our marketing and strategy.

On the domestic side, we compete with a couple of leisure destinations that tend to pull more family travel than New York, but we're still talking about pre-pandemic over 55 million visitors, that we can profile those markets based on their characteristics that allows us to know what's going on but also to feed into the marketing analysis.

CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: So-- And how regularly are we getting-- are we aggregating that data?

DR. KEREN: It's annual. The domestic data I see quarterly.

CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Okay.

DR. KEREN: But you always want that annual leveling out. We forecast three times a year. We work with a company called Tourism Economics, which is an Oxford Economics Company, and they forecast based on a whole variety of the other data inputs: What is happening in hotels? What's happening on Broadway? Museum attendance? Attendance at the Statue of Liberty? Bridge and tunnel traffic? Non-commuter rail traffic? Airline arrivals. So we build a forecast model that we then validate with the survey data, and these two things interact.

CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: That's great. Thank you for sharing that. And then, similarly, I suppose, how do you track the economic impact of tourism in the city? And what are if any metrics that you use to measure it?

DR. KEREN: Again, it's somewhat the same set of data inputs. Again, working with tourism economics, who have developed a proprietary in-plan model for us, we're looking at hotel revenues, the revenues in the restaurant sector, the revenues in a variety of

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3 attractions and other things together with what our
4 predictors are for visitor spending based on credit--
5 tracking credit card data, again anonymously, as well
6 as the survey data, and some things that go on that
7 economists do that, honestly, they tell me they're
8 doing.

9 CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Yeah. No, I understand.
10 Trust me. You've got to trust the economists.

11 The coalition of New York City Hospitality +
12 Tourism Recovery was established in July of 2020, to
13 bring together major stakeholders in tourism to help
14 restore the tourism sector. Is the coalition still
15 meeting regularly?

16 MS. MAMMANA: No, it is not.

17 CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Okay. And have there been
18 any-- any recent updates or from any of the coalition
19 meetings that came out?

20 MS. MAMMANA: We sunsetted the coalition last
21 year at our annual meeting in March. And so several
22 of those folks are still partners of ours, whether
23 they're on our board or in various Chambers and BIDs.
24 So we have regular interactions, as-- as appropriate
25 and as relevant as it happens, but there is no formal

followup for the coalition once we had to sort of put
a stake in the ground on when we were doing so.

CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Sure. And are there any
ongoing initiatives to attract international visitors
that have come out from the group?

MS. MAMMANA: We have begun-- At that point in
time, we're really cooking up our next version of our
global tourism campaign, which is the work that we
would have done annually anyway, with the onset of
It's Time For New York City. It came out of the
survey work that and the research we did around that
time. So it was really just us continuing our work,
and informed by what we learned at the coalition
meetings, but it was really just us kind of picking
up where we needed to when the borders opened.

CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Great. And in that
continuation, how are you folks working to revitalize
and bring visitors back to traditional tourist heavy-
neighborhoods. Are there any major new initiatives
being planned?

MS. MAMMANA: We have several tracks of campaign
work that are basically always on. We have our
vibrancy campaigns that we mentioned. For example,
the restaurant weeks, et cetera, that primarily are

targeting Tri-State, Northeast Corridor, US domestic
that happen twice per year.

Alongside that simultaneously to that, we have
what we call our Global Tourism Campaign, which
ranges from 10 to 18 markets per year. We will
partner with an-- either an airline or tour operator
in our key feeder markets. We both come together
with media, and we serve up a warm lead to that
partner. So for example, in the UK, we've worked
many times with British Airways, or British Airways
Holidays. So we'll both implement a pretty cohesive
digital campaign. We will serve them a warm lead,
someone that's interested in travel for them to
capture the booking on their channels, and then they
bring it back to us for planning. We do that on a
rolling basis every year, and making sure that we're
doing everything we can to get to the travel booking,
because we don't capture that on our website. So we
rely on the partners to do that.

CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: Yeah, so that's what I was
just going to ask. So it seems like a lot of like,
there are sets of metrics that you do have to
aggregate and then reevaluate and look at, but it's
happening with multiple partners. How do we collect

all of that? Or how does that come back to us and say that this was a successful campaign, or a successful effort?

MS. MAMMANA: There are two ways we do that. We work with the individual partners to capture their metrics. So when they work with us, we either pixel their website, and if they don't allow that, we just get the data at the end. We really want to understand if there was a lift in bookings, from their perspective. And the SMARI data that I mentioned earlier measured the campaign in the aggregate. So we've done this. We've gotten two domestic and international phases from June of 2021 to June of 2022. And that we are seeing because we continued with It's Time For New York City, and we refresh our primary visual, but we kept it as Lady Liberty, we're seeing equity in the campaign. And the results are compounding as more people see it in market. And that survey is where we're able to measure who saw the campaign, and then ultimately came and booked a trip to New York. So that is where we're seeing the return on adspend metrics, and the amount of trips and the amount of visitor spend in

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3 the aggregate in the campaign. So we've got a full
4 year of data now.

5 CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Okay, and is that the
6 numbers that you gave us here with the three--?

7 MS. MAMMANA: Yes.

8 CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Three-something 52?

9 MS. MAMMANA: Yeah.

10 DR. KEREN: Yes.

11 CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: So okay. I just have like a
12 couple things on this, just so I can better
13 understand it. You have here in the testimony ROI on
14 the domestic campaign was \$352 for every dollar
15 spent, and \$241 ROI for every dollar spent
16 internationally. The \$352 or the \$241, where's that--
17 - where are we seeing that go? Is that back to New
18 York City? Or is that-- are you looking at that,
19 saying that's the total that goes back to like an
20 individual hotel, or a local business?

21 DR. KEREN: The spending is citywide. And then
22 you look at the actual spending, and you calculate
23 what part of that spending comes back into the city
24 itself because of the city funding.

25 Because the ARPA funds and the support we've had
from the city is what is paying for that advertising

itself, the first thing you look at is: Did that advertising influence a visitor? The visitor came, how much did they spend? That goes across the entire city. And then that spending generates and supports the business revenues, the jobs, and the tax revenue that the city collects.

So you don't necessarily collect that tax revenue from the visitor. You collect it from the restaurant where the visitor ate on that meal. So it's several layers, which is why the numbers start very big.

But--

CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Got it.

DR. KEREN: --we're talking big numbers. We're talking billions of dollars and spending in a very short period of time, that these ad campaign measurements were set between a specific date range. So someone may have seen that ad last summer, and now they're traveling. There's still a carry on effect. But the measurements that we did with one of the industry's leading experts -- and they do it for all of our competitors in all the major destinations -- they are-- we drew a boundary around this and we said, "Okay, how much did this affect in this time period?" And that's what we're looking at.

CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Okay, that makes a lot more sense to me. It's across the board. It's like--

DR. KEREN: I think of it as a funnel.

CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Right.

DR. KEREN: Right? And the bottom of that funnel is the city tax revenues. That's where it goes, into the city tax revenues.

CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Right. Thank you for that explanation.

Let me see. How has the NYCT+C partnered with local businesses and attractions to promote tourism?

MS. MAMMANA: Local businesses are at the core of everything we do from the programs we mentioned all the way through to our content. So while all the programs are going on, we're-- we've got a very robust editorial and content team that produces videos, profiles, interviews. So we're showcasing them constantly. That's at the core of our remit, whether it's our social channels or our website, and we do whatever we can to promote visitation, to see that content, profiling local business owners, neighborhood guides, making sure that a visitor in New York City is really truly experiencing the vibrancy and diversity of our boroughs.

So that-- that's an ongoing engine as well alongside the programs through which our participants are encouraged to join. And again, we are always welcoming more businesses into our programs. We realize not everyone can, but we welcome that, and we are actively engaging with businesses at all times through our membership-- with our membership department to make sure we're getting the right level of participation. But our content team is separately profiling, listing, highlighting itineraries and guides and business owners throughout the five boroughs.

CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: And how are you folks either using the advertising or the marketing in a way where we are making sure tourists feel safe coming to New York City or trying to counter the, maybe, media narrative that could be out there in traveling to New York City?

MS. MAMMANA: The marketing team works very much in tandem with our global communications team to do whatever is possible to promote positive messaging in New York City, and also to educate visitors and locals as to how best to navigate the city. Where we were very much in the thick of COVID, we had-- I

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think our highest traffic page on our website was our
COVID Resources page to help visitors navigate how
best to experience the city safely, and in the best
way possible. We still have that information on our
website for those that are interested. We want to
make sure, alongside the content, that we're helping
people understand how best to navigate, how to get to
various neighborhoods, transportation, et cetera.

So that that is ongoing but our global
communications representatives make sure that they do
whatever they can to promote the positive good news
about New York City all around the world.

CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: And do you folks also
promote some of the things they can benefit from
either like, like the MetroCard, or reduced fare. Or
even just like social norms, like, walk to your right
and walk fast, things like that?

MS. MAMMANA: We do incorporate some of that.
Yes. It's very popular content.

CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Just asking. Just asking,
you know? You've got to know we're-- we're targeting
the right message here for New York City. Awesome.
That's great to know.

I recently learned -- and I'm still fact checking this, so please don't quote me on this -- but we don't have a residency requirement for the Fair Fares Program. So someone, like, traveling domestically could actually come and get a reduced fare, even if they're here for two weeks or they're here for a couple of months visiting family. So I'm wondering, on our end, are we doing best to promote some of the benefits of maybe staying for a prolonged time with getting a reduced fare? So, thank you for answering that. And if we can look more into that, that would be great.

MS. MAMMANA: Absolutely.

CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Has NYCT+C mimicked or learned from tourism initiatives and other US cities, especially with post-COVID recovery.

MS. MAMMANA: We have great relationships with our competitors. It's an interesting dynamic and the destination marketing space. We learn from each other. And we, especially during the pandemic, I think, shared quite a bit of best practices. Because the truth is, we were all experiencing the same thing. We were just at a different level,

because we're New York City and we were the epicenter in the beginning of the pandemic, as we all remember.

So I think there's a lot of communication in the industry. We-- We do what's right for New York City. But it's always good to be informed with what other destinations are doing. But we-- we all followed a bit of a similar playbook in terms of starting with a very hyperlocal targeting to our programs, fishing where the fish are, where people were, starting with locals, and then expanding outward. Beyond that we do what's right for-- for us.

CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Great. And I feel like some of this was already answered, but I'm just going to ask. What information is disseminated from the international office? Like, is the information created in response to the interests and feedback of the country's residents? And how do these offices identify interest and collect that feedback to create campaigns to visit New York?

MS. MAMMANA: The majority of what our international offices focus on are working with the trade, both from a meeting-planner perspective and travel-trade perspective. So local tour operators, travel agencies, receptive operators, meeting

planners that are making sure that the trade is fully briefed on the level of product in New York, openings, what is happening in the borough's making sure they're educated. So we do sales trainings. We bring our members into the market with us in our sales missions. We do trade shows in those markets. There are really boots on the ground to ensure that they are staying-- we're staying very close to the trade on both business and leisure to ensure that were top of mind, that we're securing leads for meetings and events, that they're just staying very close so that New York City remains top of mind as a destination. But the product updates are continual, so that they're aware that when you arrive in New York City, there are many more places to visit than some of the trade may think.

And with the pandemic, there was quite a bit of turnover, so we're very much focused on reeducation with the trade. And it's-- it's a continual process. So the offices really supplement our efforts at the corporate office to make sure that we're-- we're really staying close.

CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: Great. And I just have some questions around the international office or the

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3 office spaces that we potentially have. How many
4 brick and mortar offices do we have internationally?

5 MS. MAMMANA: We have 17 international offices.

6 CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Okay.

7 DR. KEREN: They're representatives, not
8 employees.

9 MS. MAMMANA: Correct.

10 DR. KEREN: It's a it's a consulting,
11 representative contract, not an employee.

12 CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Okay. So we have the brick
13 and mortar places are 17. And then we have
14 consultant staff that's in all of those, in each of
15 those, that you're saying?

16 DR. KEREN: Yes.

17 CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Okay. And do we have an
18 idea of how many staff we have internationally, or
19 how many people we consult with?

20 MS. MAMMANA: We can get that for you.

21 CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Sure. And then around the--
22 For me, like return on investment based on all these
23 sites and offices abroad, what does that look like?

24 DR. KEREN: I think that what we're looking at in
25 the sense of how-- One of the things we look at in
the surveys that I deal with directly, is what

percent of our key markets rely on travel agents, how many of them are influenced by destination websites, and things like that. So we have a sense as we go into the market, what's the best channel for reaching people.

When we have an actual spend, not our own resources, like the communications work or press release, or work on our digital and social channels, then that comes back to the work we did in this last year and a half of measuring the actual effect of ad budgets, and we did look at them in different countries. Different countries and populations do react differently. And that goes into the planning side. So we know which markets were the quickest to react, which markets are more likely to react to certain kinds of advertising. That's the art and science of what the marketing team does.

MS. MAMMANA: Then if I can just add to that: In many cases internationally, you're not able to reach the visitor directly through a B2C campaign, they do booked through the trade. They'll use a tour operator more so than they will book themselves. So we really need to make sure that the relationships with the travel trade, the key trade partners in that

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region are activated, and it would be a little
unwieldy for us to be able to come in and out of the
market from here on a daily basis. But it's critical
that we have that connection, otherwise, we're really
not able to reach the end consumer.

CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Okay, um, I have just like,
questions around maintaining the offices. Like the
cost of maintaining the offices, rent, overhead. Do
you folks have that stuff available today?

DR. KEREN: Are you referring to our domestic
office here?

CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: No, in our international
spaces.

DR. KEREN: No. We don't maintain those offices.

CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Okay. So--

DR. KEREN: We're-- We hire them as a
consultant.

MS. MAMMANA: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Okay. So it's at each of
those 17 offices, we have a consultant contract with
them where you could-- I could potentially go there
and have a meeting, but it isn't a brick and mortar
space that we pay for.

DR. KEREN: Correct.

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MS. MAMMANA: Correct.

CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Okay. So it's not brick and
mortar.

MS. MAMMANA: Sorry.

CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: No, no. It's okay. That's
just questions for clarification. That's why we're
here. Okay, great. And then I just have some last
budget questions, and I'll pass it over to my co-
chair.

What funding sources does NYCT+C receive besides
operating costs from the city?

MS. MAMMANA: We raise private revenue primarily
through our membership base. So the approximately
1800 to 2000 members that we have, many of which pay
dues to-- to us to market the city on their behalf.
There is some amount that we raise through
advertising on our website, as well as sponsorships.
So for example, MasterCard is currently a global
sponsor, and we're looking to renew that relationship
if-- if possible.

CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: And have those sources
changed during the pandemic to now?

MS. MAMMANA: Drastically. Yes.

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CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Okay. What was NYCT+C's
fiscal 2023 adopted budget?

MS. MAMMANA: [TO DR. KEREN] Go ahead.

DR. KEREN: So, no, I'm not-- I don't actually
have the answer. I have the notes. We can provide
more detail after...

MS. MAMMANA: So, the original budget for fiscal
year 23 totaled \$43.5 million which included \$11.2 in
nonrecurring city funding. And in fiscal year 22,
the budget was \$61.4 million, which included 30
million from the ARP funding.

So stripping out these non recurring revenues,
our budget for fiscal year 23 was \$32.3 million and
22 was \$31.4 million. Pre-pandemic, we were in the
\$40 million range. So we've-- we've experienced
decreases across the board.

CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Yeah. And have you folks
had to reconstruct its budget this fiscal year due to
projected increases in tourism numbers, or how has
the decreases that have occurred impacted the budget?
We are experiencing a peg adjustment. So we're in
the process of planning out a reduced budget now, and
we will determine how that impacts services.
Ultimately, it will result in likely a decrease in

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our media spends, which will impact our reach in the
campaigns we mentioned earlier.

CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Okay. Thank you so much for
answering your questions, and I'll turn it over to
Council-- Chair Menin.

CHAIRPERSON MENIN: Great. Thank you so much.
Before I begin, I just want to recognize
Councilmember Krishnan and Councilmember Gutiérrez
have joined us.

So you mentioned that you all are going to be
under a PEG. I want to understand a few-- in terms
of-- Obviously employee travel is an important
aspect of what you all do. Are you following
Comptrollers Directive Number 6, which limits lodging
and travel expenses?

MS. MAMMANA: My understanding is yes, we follow
all--

DR. KEREN: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON MENIN: So all NYCT+C employees are
following Comptrollers Directive Number 6, which
limits the cost of hotel, airfare, all of that?

MS. MAMMANA: Since we're not a city agency, we
don't, I believe, follow it exactly. But we do set
our own parameters for travel, which is why the

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3 international offices being on the ground makes it a
4 lot easier for us to scale back travel as needed.

5 CHAIRPERSON MENIN: Right. No, understood. I
6 mean, you're obviously a separate 501(c)(3). You're
7 not a city agency. But given that the city has
8 allocated for fiscal year 23, approximately \$31
9 million, you know, I think it's important that our
10 respective committees get that information just in
11 terms of what restrictions have you set on employee
12 travel? Because every city employee is subject to
13 this, and it's obviously tight budget time. So it's
14 incredibly important. So if you could please get to
15 the both committees that information.

16 So one of the-- I'm really interested, obviously,
17 as the Chair of the Small Business Committee in the
18 interaction between NYCT+C and small businesses. So
19 in your testimony, you indicated that you represent
20 the interest of 2000 member small businesses. So we
21 have approximately 200,000 small businesses. So
22 that's about 1% of the city's small businesses. Can
23 you speak about these 2000 members? Is there-- are
24 they being charged a fee to be a member?

25 MS. MAMMANA: The membership base is across all
businesses within tourism and hospitality within our

purview. So that that's likely why obviously, it's a smaller number. We're we remain focused on tourism and hospitality businesses, and we are welcoming more every day.

CHAIRPERSON MENIN: But is there a fee for those businesses?

MS. MAMMANA: Yeah. There are fees for some businesses. During the pandemic, we definitely waived those fees. And thanks to the support of MOME, we were able to waive them for the participation in our programs, which is typically required, and the fees scale, depending on the size of the business.

CHAIRPERSON MENIN: And what is the fee scale?

DR. KEREN: It-- I don't have the actual numbers, but it is based upon revenues of the business. So the larger, more affluent, higher revenue businesses pay a higher fee. And it is halved in the boroughs. So whatever that fee was based on your revenue, it would be half of that, to distinguish between a Manhattan-based business and a borough based business. And it comes down to, in some cases, a few hundred dollars a year. So a small business, for the marketing services that NYC Tourism + Conventions

provides would be perhaps charged \$500 to participate in this larger marketing initiative, which gives them access to all the sales possibilities, the marketing visibility, the website, the research, the networking, the business meetings, all of that comes, plus the visibility of they're the ones who are listed in-- on our website, and with direct links to the business.

So if you're looking up a restaurant that serves Sri Lankan food, there might be several in the city, but the ones who are members of NYC & Company, when you see that list, there's a direct link to their website.

CHAIRPERSON MENIN: And how many members are outside of Manhattan?

DR. KEREN: I think I have to look that up. It's a growing number every year.

CHAIRPERSON MENIN: Like a rough estimate.

DR. KEREN: It's probably about 35% to 40% at this point. Really, because of the initiative--

CHAIRPERSON MENIN: 35% to 40% are outside of Manhattan.

DR. KEREN: Yea.

CHAIRPERSON MENIN: Okay, could we get a
breakdown by borough of the--

DR. KEREN: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: I mean, my concern is that
we're-- Obviously coming out of the pandemic, we
have close to 200,000 small businesses, most of these
small businesses can never afford the fee. I
personally believe the tourism arm of the city,
particularly when it's receiving this kind of city
funding, should be promoting every small business,
you know, throughout the city without having to
charge those fees, particularly to businesses that
can't afford it.

DR. KEREN: May I ask-- I'm a little unclear. My
colleague pointed out that we promote businesses that
visitors, tourists, business travelers to the city
can benefit from. And so many of the small
businesses in this city are in retail categories that
visitors are not engaged in. They are in
neighborhoods that are very residential, and are not
directly being affected by visitation to arts and
cultural sporting events, other activities across the
borough.

And so where we are focused is on businesses that are likely to directly come in contact with a visitor, or come in contact with an entity like a hotel or a restaurant that can buy goods and services.

CHAIRPERSON MENIN: Sure. So let me clarify. So first of all, it's focused on domestic tourists, international tourists, and New Yorkers visiting these small bus-- No, I'm saying this is what I believe we should be-- Like buy local, shop local. I just want to tell you what I think we could be doing and what I know other cities' tourism arms are doing. And so this is what I'm really urging you all to do. And then really the point of the hearing and why we want to have the hearing is to try to brainstorm about how we can support more small businesses in the city.

So for example, one of the things that we did at MOME is we did walking tours of film and movie locations in all five boroughs, and then tried to get those tourists to then go to small businesses in those neighborhoods. So those are the kinds of things. I understand you might be doing it one way now, we're trying to urge you to do it now a

different way, given the pandemic, and given the fact that you're getting a very significant amount of city money, we're trying to be proactive about how can we best support the city's small businesses in every neighborhood across the city.

MS. MAMMANA: So we are doing that now. If the goal is to include more businesses in the efforts that we have current-- because we are in fact promoting walking tours as we speak, and we have times of the year where we do that. Spring is where we-- we begin to kick that off.

We're open to including as many businesses in our membership purview as possible. So we-- we do rely on our membership team, the chambers, the BIDs, and partnering with you all to engage with as many as possible. So there's definitely an openness there. It's just as many as we could physically onboard. But we do everything we can to promote our programs.

But our vibrancy campaigns happen twice a year, every year. So there's always planning that we can do. And then the in between. So we'll do a content push around shopping four times a year, walking tours, historical tours. There's always opportunities to feature more. So I guess it really

depends on-- we should brainstorm on, you know, what--
- what are we talking about. Because the busi-- the
budget has been severely challenged, our budget
hasn't been raised in 12 years, while cuts have been
ongoing. So without the additional funding we
received during the pandemic, we are not well-
resourced.

But there's work at hand that we are currently
doing, and we would love to partner with you to
expand what we're doing. But again, to Donna's
point, our purview is visitors. So that's people
visiting from 50 miles and beyond wherever they come
from. So as long as it makes sense, we're very
willing and very happy to expand the membership.

CHAIRPERSON MENIN: Yeah, I mean, I think it
would be great if you all put together a plan that,
for example, for every major destination that
tourists are going to, if they're going to the Bronx
Botanical Garden, if they're going to the Bronx Zoo,
all the small businesses that are adjacent to that,
promoting those small businesses and doing, you know,
some kind of package, so that you go to the Botanical
Garden, and then you're going to restaurants in the
neighborhood, like so that we're really partnering.

I had a meeting with-- with you all about this and what specifically, we talked about Arthur Avenue and restaurants and how to promote them and all of that. But I think it should be expanded, again to all of these neighborhoods, because of their treasures and jewels. Whether there are cultural organizations or other tourism spots that people are going to. I just don't want the small businesses then to be left out of the equation.

MS. MAMMANA: And I can assure you they are not. And we could share the various neighborhood guides that we are currently doing. We're also updating our website. So it will involve a lot more cross pollination so-- and mapping capabilities. We needed to get out of the 20th-- 20th century with our website. So we'll have a lot more mapping capability and nudging people. So if they're going to a particular attraction, nudging them toward restaurants nearby--

CHAIRPERSON MENIN: Okay.

MS. MAMMANA: --with the new infrastructure. But we are doing that today, and I'm happy to share examples of the work.

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3 CHAIRPERSON MENIN: That would be-- That would be
4 great. That would be very helpful. Which BIDs are
5 you working with in the city?

6 DR. KEREN: I think virtually all of them. I
7 counted, I think 20, BIDs and eight Chambers of
8 Commerce on our website yesterday.

9 CHAIRPERSON MENIN: You said 20 BIDs?

10 DR. KEREN: 20 BIDs and eight chambers. I don't
11 have the actual list.

12 CHAIRPERSON MENIN: Okay, I'm going to request
13 then that you-- There's 76 BIDs. If you could please
14 reach out to every single BID in the city, because
15 again, all of them have, you know, are receiving
16 tourists in some form or another. But then we want
17 to make sure that there is that interaction with the
18 small businesses.

19 DR. KEREN: I would imagine that our teams have
20 reached out. But I am sure they can do a double
21 visit.

22 CHAIRPERSON MENIN: Okay.

23 MS. CHAN: Chairwoman, just to add in that the
24 New York City Tourism + Convention Group, may
25 actually have joined our BID calls, as well as we

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featured all of their programming in our newsletter
that goes out to all the BIDs.

CHAIRPERSON MENIN: Okay. Okay. If we could
talk a little bit about advertising. Are you-- My
understanding is you're doing a lot of in house
advertising. Is 100% of your advertising handled in
house?

MS. MAMMANA: What part of that do you mean? Do
you mean--

CHAIRPERSON MENIN: Well, in other words, are you
partnering with any of the-- we've got some of the
greatest ad agencies, creatively, in New York City?
Are you working with any external ad agencies or is
everything handled in house?

MS. MAMMANA: We handle the creative development
in house. The media buying we use an external agency
for.

CHAIRPERSON MENIN: Right. I just mean-- Because
one of the things I think that's been very successful
in the past is when some of the ad agencies pro bono
have been advising some city agencies. So if that is
something that could be looked at. Again, you know,
I mean, one of the things that comes to mind from my
work I did at MOME is the made-- the iconic Made in

New York logo that Radical Media designed. You know, going to some of these ad firms, seeing if they will work with the city pro bono to do really outside-of-the-box advertising and marketing campaign to bring more tourists to the city, and specifically to focus on the small businesses would be, I think, a great thing to do.

MS. MAMMANA: We have many folks that have come from those large agencies in house in our organization. So you know, while we've had offers of pro bono work during the pandemic, it never turns out the way it was proposed in reality. So we-- we have the creative development work well handled. We just won two Emmys last year for our content, and a Webby and two Shorties are on the table now. We're good there. Where we're challenged is the media dollars to push it out. So there it's-- it's not surprising that you may not have seen a lot of the content, because it's really about the distribution of that content. And where-- where our budgets are challenged is in the media dollars to promote it. So creatively, we're actually fine. It's just more on the broader side of the distribution.

CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: And what about using celebrities? Colorado has a very innovative campaign that they're running right now using celebrities to visit the state. What-- I mean after 911, obviously, there was, you know, really strong marketing to visit New York. What are you doing in terms of that?

MS. MAMMANA: During the pandemic, we reached out to several celebrities to help promote itineraries in their favorite neighborhoods, and we had about 30 of them from across-- across all sectors of entertainment on our website.

Since then, it's-- it's difficult to receive truly pro bono work in working with celebrities. I have a lot of experience with that. It's-- It's expensive. We're always open to more pro bono relationships. But at the peak of the pandemic, when folks were very interested in helping New York City, we, I think, tapped into that nicely with-- with the itineraries.

And since then we're really relying on the power of the travel partners to book those trips in New York. And as we've seen, it's been very effective for the last year.

CHAIRPERSON MENIN: Okay, I just want to-- before turning to my colleagues for questions, I just have some questions in terms of SBS. What is the nature of the relationship then between NYCT+C and SBS in terms of helping to promote small businesses?

MS. CHAN: Thank you very much for that question. We're really happy to be partnering with this great sister agency. And what we do is we cross-promote each other. So all of their campaigns, NYC Restaurant Week, all the other campaigns that they do, but also their neighborhood guides, we actually feature all of these on our website, and they help cross promote our Shop Your City Campaign, which we're really pleased to say that, you know, we took it last year to shop your city, we built the website, we added the maps that were done not only by neighborhood, but by owner demographics. And then we expanded it to be Small Business Week last year when we went to five boroughs in five days. And we were really so pleased with what we what we did, because we reached 3000 businesses on the ground. We walked the corridors of the five-- the five neighborhoods we are in. We went to 500 businesses during that week and let them know about SBS services.

This month-- This year, we're going to do something different, and I'm really happy to say we're doing small business month. We're going to celebrate the entire month of May. And we're not only celebrating each of the neighborhoods in their corridors, but we're actually also spotlighting the different services that SBS provides.

So I really look forward to sharing the Small Business month calendar with you. I encourage all of you to join us what I think is going to be a really fantastic month. And I know that our friends over at New York City Tourism + Convention will also be cross-promoting. And prior to this, we've been brainstorming as to how we could work together to feature an event with them during the month. So it's going to be really great collaborative, and it's a lot of partnerships, and I can't wait to talk to you more about it.

CHAIRPERSON MENIN: Okay, great. In terms of information that is at various tourist booths and things like that, how many languages is that information in?

MS. MAMMANA: I'm not sure which visitor centers. We don't operate any visitor centers. We have

branded, and then we help supply the visitor center inside of Macy's Herald Square. Other than that-- And there-- We also partner with the Empire State Building and their observatory, providing content in their video blades.

CHAIRPERSON MENIN: But are you giving brochures and stuff at major cultural destinations, museums, things like that?

MS. MAMMANA: We publish a map twice a year that's promoted everywhere through its distribution throughout the five boroughs, and wherever appropriate, in places like Grand Central Station and all the airports.

But it's really more about producing digital guides at this point. Not many-- Not as many folks are interested in carrying booklets anymore. So we have paused our visitor guide. But we're promoting everything on our website and have designed it in a way that it can be used mobiley, and mobile first, and 60% of our website traffic is from mobile. So we're really more focused on getting more scale and awareness around things from a digital standpoint. But we do-- we do produce the map twice a year.

CHAIRPERSON MENIN: And can you get that map to
us so we see that?

MS. MAMMANA: Sure.

CHAIRPERSON MENIN: I think that would be
helpful. A couple more questions for SBS and then I
want to call on our colleagues to ask questions. Is
SBS tracking the number of tourists that are coming
to businesses overall? I mean, how what kind of data
metrics in terms of tourism is SBS keeping?

MS. CHAN: Thank you for the question. We're
actually not tracking it ourselves. We're working
with our partners and using their data. It's really
quite amazing data that we've seen from them, and so
we rely on them.

CHAIRPERSON MENIN: Okay. Okay, I have-- I
actually have a lot more questions, but let me open
it up at this point to colleagues who might have
questions.

Okay. Okay. Majority Whip Selvena Brooks-Power.
Thanks.

COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you Chairs.
And thank you for the testimony. It was interesting
to hear the acknowledgement that target communities
that are not necessarily residential, however, under

the past administration with de Blasio he was known for opening hotels in those types of communities, which are now shelters, but here we are.

So I'll start with the question of what funding sources does NYCT+C receive besides operating costs from the city? How have these resources changed also in the pandemic?

While you look for the answer--

Okay, go ahead. Because I have a limited amount of time.

MS. MAMMANA: Yeah. Yeah, so we have multiple private funding sources, all of which were negatively impacted by the pandemic. The largest individual source of funding comes from our membership organizations, the hotels, restaurants, retailers, and attractions that we mentioned earlier, who contribute membership dues, participate in our programs, and co-pay exhibitor fees at trade shows admissions, and purchase advertising on our website and guides. Total revenues from these members, pre-pandemic was in the region of \$9.3 million, and it went down to \$3.7 million in fiscal year 22.

COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. And then how does NYCT+C factor in equity as it considers

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which businesses to recruit and partner with, and do
you have a breakdown of member businesses sorted by
borough?

MS. MAMMANA: We can provide that to you.
Absolutely.

COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: But you don't-- you
don't have it right now?

MS. MAMMANA: Not right now.

COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Okay. Do you also
have a breakdown of member business owners sorted by
race, ethnicity, and gender?

MS. MAMMANA: I don't believe we have it sorted
in that manner, but we can-- we can try to do that.

COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Okay. And when
seeking to partner with businesses, does NYCT+C do
targeted outreach to businesses, and outer borough
communities, and communities of color?

MS. MAMMANA: Do we target those businesses?

DR. KEREN: Yes.

MS. MAMMANA: Absolutely. I'll be happy to send
you links to the most recent series we are in the
process of completing called Local Legends. It is
just the newest example of how we approach our
content, where we profile various neighborhoods, in

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the outer boroughs to really-- through the eyes of
what we are calling the sort of "mayors" of those
neighborhoods. So folks in neighborhoods who either
own local businesses or have lived in that area for
some time, who really show us around their kind of
view of the neighborhood, and highlighting local
businesses that they want the world to know about.

And those are the those are the pieces of content
that we recently won the Emmys for last year. They
have been very well received with, I think, we're
going to about 4 million views. We've done one piece
of-- a six minute video, one per borough, and we're
looking at ways that we can resuscitate that series
after the next one launches. We've so far featured
Washington Heights, Staten Island, Mott Haven, and
we're going to Flatbush next.

COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you. Does
NYCT+C-- Like, are you required to follow the
city's MWBE participation guidelines at all?

MS. MAMMANA: No, we are not.

COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Okay. Do you track
MWBE participation?

MS. MAMMANA: Our membership team, absolutely.
And we work every day between our government affairs

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department, our membership department, and our content team to make sure that we are actively engaging MWBE businesses, so our-- and businesses that are based in New York City, of course, as well as the content that we showcase, that we are ensuring that it is equitable and diverse coverage and making sure we're representing the fabric of New York City accurately and with-- with the right amount of equity, inclusion, and diversity.

COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: So in your collaboration with the businesses, particularly the small businesses, what does that look like?

MS. MAMMANA: The participation in our programs? Our goal is to drive awareness, visibility, and sales to our local businesses. So everything we do is designed with that in mind, from the content we produce to push out into the world to our editorial content on our website, to our programs.

COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: I'm sorry, but for the like small businesses specifically. Because I know earlier you mentioned that there's a difference in scale in terms of their membership dues, for example. So when you're collaborating with the small businesses, does that get factored in? Is it

accounted for, from NYCT+C to kind of adjust so that they can get proper, I guess, engagement as well?

MS. MAMMANA: The-- What we were referencing earlier in terms of our content and campaigns doesn't correlate to the amount of money a member is paying us, if I'm understanding correctly.

Once-- Once we are engaged with a business, we look for every possible opportunity to showcase them. It's-- It's really up to us to make sure that a visitor has the richest experience. And we aim to push people out into the every neighborhood and borough on a daily basis. So everything we do is an attempt to engage as many businesses as we can that a tourist might be interested in experiencing. So we don't have regard for how much a business is paying us, or if they're paying us. We-- We did pro bono many businesses during the pandemic. And because of the support of MOME, we were able to afford to do that.

The funding we received has since been spent. So we don't we don't distinguish between who was paying us more in member dues. We make sure that we engage as much as possible with every business that's a member of NYC & Company and make sure that borough-

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by-borough, sector-by-sector, we're incorporating
them as much as we can.

COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Can I just ask one
more question chair?

CHAIRPERSON MENIN: Of course.

COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Does NYCT+C survey
small businesses, and if so on what?

DR. KEREN: We conduct a series-- a regular
series of surveys of our members on what their needs
and activities are and how we can help them. During
the pandemic, that regular cycle was interrupted for
a variety of reasons, partly because people did not
have the leisure time to answer a survey even online.

The cycle will resume probably in the second half
of this year, where we're looking at our-- the
businesses that are engaged with the travel sector,
the ones who are likely to benefit from someone
visiting their neighborhood, visiting the city, who
needs something as part of their experience of New
York. To survey the entire small business sector is
far outside our remit in terms of attracting visitors
to New York City.

COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON MENIN: Thank you. And Councilmember
Avilés?

COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: Thank you Chairs, for
holding this important hearing. And thank you for
being here. Um, can you talk to us a little bit
about what the challenges are to getting to a full
tourism recovery across all five boroughs?

Or specifically rather-- well, let me-- I'll let
you answer that.

MS. MAMMANA: I think there are a few. I think
we are all feeling the loss of the Chinese visitor.
They were in our top five markets previous to the
pandemic. And without that return, we were-- we're
very much focused on diversifying our approach, and
focusing on other emerging markets where we are
seeing growth like Brazil, India, Mexico, but that
obviously has impacted many major destinations. But
we are we are continuing to again diversify.

We also have seen great growth and far-- farther
out U.S. domestics and more of the long-haul markets,
U.S. domestic. So we're just diversifying the
marketing approach and the media targeting approach
accordingly. We are seeing steady improvement.

I also think we are a little bit behind with regard to business events and travel. So that's continuing to rebound. So we're watching it and we're continuing to push in those areas, but they're not quite back to pre-pandemic levels. So I feel like that's-- that's where we're seeing the primary amount of the shortfall.

COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: And what are you doing in response to-- to get back to those to those levels?

MS. MAMMANA: We're diversifying our approach. We're focusing on other markets to replace what we have lost with China. So we've now got campaigns in 18 markets, and we're doubling down where we are seeing growth. So the-- the markets that I just mentioned -- for example, India, Mexico, Brazil, Australia -- we're seeing great growth there; long-haul domestic, where we didn't really focus as much pre-pandemic, we've doubled down on those campaigns.

So the campaigns that we do with travel partners like United Airlines and beyond, that is where we've really made sure that any funding we have received has been converted to working dollars to support those campaigns. The power and what we do is in the media. And where we are now currently experiencing

the shortfall, because all of the all of the recovery funding we receive has been spent on those campaigns. That is where we're most concerned with maintaining the momentum we have achieved, because we have achieved momentum. And we know that through our-- our research that we've recently concluded.

COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: I'm certainly delighted to hear that the numbers are rebounding. Often the hearings are a lot of doom.

Can you-- Is that rebounding across New York City? And I represent-- I represent district 38 in Brooklyn, so I'll ask more specifically, but are you seeing the same levels of rebounding in the outer boroughs?

DR. KEREN: We believe we are in terms of the way we're seeing activity and spending. One of the resources we rely on is anonymous credit card spending data that we get in a contract with Visa, and it tells us which countries and which markets visitors come from by borough, and where they are in the boroughs. And we've seen some very dynamic recoveries. Some of it is connected to visiting friends and relatives, and exploring neighborhoods where your friends and relatives live. So the

different communities that are connected globally to
New York is benefit for us.

The Dominican community in the Bronx was very
active during the pandemic, as visitors could come.
Some of the Caribbean communities in Brooklyn, the
Hispanic and South American communities in Queens,
and so on. That's one of the ways we look at it.

It is-- There are also additional challenges that
are far outside any of us in this room, which is for
many of our international markets, the ability to get
a travel visa to enter the U.S. has become extremely
time consuming, in addition to difficult and
expensive. And so for many of the markets we're
targeting, this is now a major delay. Our colleague,
Alexandra Silversmith is actually in Washington,
trying to remind the government that these visa
application processes are affecting everyone and the
travel. As much of a third of the Chinese market is
likely to be without a visa. Current people who had
a visa no longer have a viable visa. The same is
happening in Brazil, in Colombia, and in a number of
key markets where people can't even enter the U.S.,
even if they want to visit New York City. So we're
working on a different front to address that as well.

COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: Thank you. [BELL RINGS]

Wow, the time went quickly. In particular, what I didn't hear was any partnership with the cruise industry. Now I do-- I represent district 38, which includes Red Hook, which includes the Brooklyn Cruise Terminal. The business community there has been fighting tooth and nail to get something as meager as a sign to let the cruise the folks that come off the cruise line to know that there is a community there with a number of small businesses. They have yet to receive, not so much as a sign on that terminal. It's been a longstanding battle.

The business community of small businesses have been willing to pay for things themselves and make their own signs, but we have a cruise terminal with no signage at all. In fact, the last sign there is Marty Markowitz.

It-- I don't even know what to say about how we manage tourism when we-- we have this giant cruise terminal that welcomes people, and then we put them on a bus straight to Manhattan. They don't even know that there's a vibrant community there with arts and small businesses and wonderful restaurants that are within walking distance.

MS. KEREN: I think two things. It's my understanding that the terminal is managed by EDC. We do not manage it. Our development teams do work with the cruise lines, and encourage them to essentially shop local and build out. Again, when New York is a home port, it means that it's locals getting on the ship to sail somewhere else. And then they get off the ship, they get in their car, and they drive home.

When New York is a destination port, those are the companies and tour operators that we do educate about what's available. But signage at the terminal itself is an EDC question.

COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: So these are destination ports. There's no signage.

DR. KEREN: They're both.

COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: There's no kiosk, welcoming people to the various opportunities.

DR. KEREN: Yeah. It's not us. I mean, we'd have to [inaudible] it.

COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: So there's no collaboration? There's no collaboration with EDC on - on this at all?

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DR. KEREN: I don't know that there-- there is,
at this moment. We can double check.

COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: It seems like a giant gap
to not have collaboration with EDC for cruise
terminals when we're the destination.

MS. MAMMANA: We can reach out to EDC and follow
up with them.

COUNCILMEMBER AVILÉS: Great because my community
is-- is utterly upset that there is no-- they're not
connected to any economic opportunity for a cruise
industry that just pollutes its ports and takes
people and moves them to Manhattan. Like we are
entirely left out of that equation. So we'd love to
follow up some more about that.

And you know, in this area, just-- not to
belabor, but there is no-- Red Hook is a small
community. here is no business-- there is no BID,
but there is a Business Alliance and they have been
knocking on every door only to be ignored. And I
would encourage you all to absolutely reach out, and
they should not be paying any fees to participate in
New York City Tourism.

I guess-- I guess that's it, I will follow up
some more.

CHAIRPERSON MENIN: Okay, I want to echo what Councilmember Avilés said. I mean, I think again, there's got to be collaboration, I don't think it's a good enough answer to say, "Oh, this is EDCs problem." I mean, we're all here to try to work collaboratively together. And so I definitely want to echo what the Councilmember is saying. I think it would be great if there could be some kind of event that is really promoting small businesses around Red Hook. And you know, doing some kind of maybe it's a walking tour, maybe it's something, food tastings at restaurants.

But we this is really one of the things that we want to get out of this hearing is to try to think outside of the box of what can be done to help the city's struggling small businesses. I think that's a very perfect example.

But I do have some more questions. Okay.

How often does NYCT+C receive calls or inquiries from tourists asking about small businesses or where to go?

DR. KEREN: It's funny. There used to be a lot more of them. When I started 20 years ago, they were regular and all the time. Now we get a number of

emails, but people have become really quite competent and comfortable with their phone devices. And they Google things, and they check our website, and they look around, and do it quite independently.

We still get an occasional email that shows up in various offices of ours, and then we will-- I'll answer my phone. My phone number is one of those that's on the website. And so I get those calls. And there's no specific system for it. But it's people who still need to talk to somebody to ask a question. It's not any-- It's not a particularly high number at this point. It has dropped off significantly because people have become more comfortable with this.

CHAIRPERSON MENIN: And in terms of social media, are you all using social media to promote the city small businesses?

MS. MAMMANA: Absolutely. Almost on a daily basis.

CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: And are you only promoting those that are paying the fee?

MS. MAMMANA: No.

DR. KEREN: No.

CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: So all-- So other-- So how
are they-- How are these other businesses selected,
in terms of being promoted?

MS. MAMMANA: We focus on our member base. And
again, not every member is even paying a due right
now because of the pandemic implications, and we're
able to support that because of the support we
receive from MOME. So we're doing it on a content
strategy basis. So if we decide we're featuring
culturals, like we are about to embark upon for the
next four weeks, it's our team doing the research and
working with our membership department to understand
what might be of interest, how do we craft those into
guides? Who are we featuring? It's a creative
decision that is informed by the work between our
government affairs and our membership department is
doing to determine what is our-- It's really making
sure that our members are at the forefront of our
messaging.

CHAIRPERSON MENIN: And in terms of the cultural
campaign, what's the borough-by-borough breakdown of
the cultural organizations?

MS. MAMMANA: I'm happy to follow up with that.
I don't have it handy.

2 CHAIRPERSON MENIN: Okay. Yeah.

3 MS. MAMMANA: There are 100 organizations total,
4 and they are-- we are five borough.

5 CHAIRPERSON MENIN: Okay, yeah. If you could
6 provide that. And then what is the plan-- Since
7 there is this cultural campaign, what's the plan then
8 to integrate small businesses that might be adjacent
9 to those cultural organizations?

10 MS. MAMMANA: The program is designed to
11 highlight the participants in the program. So
12 they're each encouraged to offer some sort of a
13 unique offering, whether that's a behind the scenes
14 tour, or a talkback, or whatever it may be. We're
15 driving traffic to those locations. While folks are
16 on the website looking at those locations, they will
17 see suggestions for other places to go during their
18 visit. But it's designed to highlight the businesses
19 that we are featuring.

20 CHAIRPERSON MENIN: And the NYC Go Local
21 Campaign: Is that still running?

22 MS. MAMMANA: We evolved that campaign into our
23 Local Legend Series, which is the series, the six-
24 minute films that I mentioned earlier. Those are out
25 in the wild, and we are driving traffic back to our

neighborhood guides. And we have several content packages: The Black Experience In NYC, The Latino Experience In NYC, and The Asian Experience IN NYC. That's all integrated within that content. So as we push-- That content is designed to drive interest and traffic back to the website where all that information lives. So it's neighborhood guides, it's all the experience packages, and everything in between, and we drive visitors in between those pages.

CHAIRPERSON MENIN: And is there any way to measure datametrically how many small businesses can benefit from that kind of advertising? And if so which ones?

MS. MAMMANA: We have through our Google Analytics an understanding of the traffic each page of the website is receiving and the clicks out to those business pages.

So again, it depends on if there's a-- if there's a defined offering, like It's Time For Culture or Restaurant Week, we measure the clicks out and for example, open table metrics, so we can see who is getting the most traffic. And then the businesses ultimately will need to give us sales metrics. But

we can measure as far as we take it, which is the
click out to either buy or reserve. And yes, we have
that by-- by business.

And what about Restaurant Week-- Month? And how
do you measure those datametrics? And can you talk
about how many-- could you talk about the borough
breakdown of restaurants there?

MS. MAMMANA: Yeah, I didn't bring any of the
borough breakdown. But we're happy to-- to follow up
with that, because our borough participation and
Restaurant Week is growing every program. But we are
actively looking for more participants with every
program.

CHAIRPERSON MENIN: Yes. I'm hearing some
concern from some colleagues about that. I mean, I
think it's super important to work with the BIDs. So
for those neighborhoods where you don't have
restaurants working with the BIDs, working with the
borough Chambers of Commerce to identify restaurants.

MS. MAMMANA: We-- Yes, and we do that currently,
through-- between our government affairs group and
our membership team, we are actively doing that
today. It's-- It's kind of-- Having come from the
restaurant industry, it's-- it's a little difficult

to get anyone to focus on having to do paperwork and enroll in these programs. So it's definitely not for a lack of trying. We actually try to partner with local media to promote the program and engagement and participation even further. But again, that's where we want the further partnership with the Council, because we do want more participation. It's just we're actively recruiting at all times and trying to promote the program. And because it happens every year, it's a little bit easier, hopefully to plan ahead.

CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Yeah, I mean, I'd appreciate any partnership with that. I know we've already spoken about the global campaign and the Restaurant Week, because in District 18, we didn't have a single-- unfortunately, we didn't have a single restaurant that was participating. I just wanted to ask, just before we move away from the-- the local Go Local Campaign effort, Councilmember Avilés had to run with she wanted to follow up with: For the Shop Your City efforts that we're doing, Red Hook was not included at all in that effort. And she wanted some clarification on: How are neighborhoods selected and supported in the Shop Your City.

MS. CHAN: So Shop Your City is our website, and any business can go on and register to be part of the maps. We promote everyone through there. Last year, was the first time we launched a big celebration across the boroughs. So we were really looking at some of the communities that have been not as well served.

So last year, in Brooklyn, we were in the Black and Caribbean community in Bed Stuy, we were in little Sri Lanka in Staten Island, we were in Chinatown in Manhattan, Little Colombia in Queens, and Little Yemen in the Bronx. So it wasn't that we left any neighborhood out, but we're just building and we're growing each-- each time. For example, this year, we're going to be in Far Rockaway talking about resiliency during Small Business Month. It's going to be a full calendar of events, we really look forward to working with the Council and promoting it and actually hoping that you join us for some of these.

MS. MAMMANA: Excuse me, Councilmembers, I do now have the participation by borough for our last two Restaurant Week campaigns, if you'd like.

CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Okay.

MS. MAMMANA: For-- For summer of 2022, which was free for all participants, we had 12 restaurants in the Bronx, 68 in Brooklyn, 33 in Queens, 12 in Staten Island, and 546 in Manhattan, 42 of which were in upper Manhattan.

And in winter 2023, which was free for the first 50 participants in each region, we had a 12 in the Bronx, 51 in Brooklyn, 32 in Queens, 14 in Staten Island, and 423 in Manhattan, 23 of which were in upper Manhattan. So we're happy to email this to if that's easier.

CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: Yeah. That would be really helpful.

CHAIRPERSON MENIN: Yeah, I think it's obviously going to take a concerted effort, a team effort to make sure that more restaurants in other neighborhoods are participating. So I think we'll definitely talk to our colleagues about that, because we want to see as many restaurants participate as possible. So that's so important.

MS. MAMMANA: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON MENIN: So I don't have any more questions. I just want to say thank you very much for your testimony. We really want to partner with

you. We're very excited about the possibility of increasing promotion to the small businesses. And so we want to be partners to you in all of that, as do, I know, our colleagues.

CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Yeah, thank you so much for coming in today. And I want to reiterate the sentiments that Chair Menin has expressed. We want to be able to get our businesses out there, and more recognition. We want people to come into our neighborhoods respectively, and we want to work with you to do that. And I will now kick it over to Committee Counsel. Thank you.

MS. MAMMANA: Thank you.

COUNSEL: Thank you Chairs. We will now turn to public testimony. For in-person panelists, please come up to the dais once your name has been called. For virtual panelists, we will be calling individuals one by one to testify. We will be limiting public testimony today to three minutes each, so please begin once the sergeant has started the timer.

Councilmembers who have questions for a particular panelist should raise their hands and council members who are here virtually please use the Zoom raise hand function and your name will be

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2 called. For virtual panelists, once your name is
3 called a member of our staff will unmute you and the
4 Sergeant At Arms will set the timer to give you the
5 go ahead to begin. Please wait for the Sergeant to
6 announce you may begin before delivering your
7 testimony.

8 I'm going to send it back to the chair for a
9 moment.

10 CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: I'd like to like the record
11 to reflect that we've been joined we've been joined
12 by Councilmembers Cabán and Kagan. Thank you.

13 COUNSEL: The first panel we will call today is
14 Reba Shang and Raul Rivera. Please come up to the
15 dais.

16 CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: I'd also like to acknowledge
17 you've been joined by Councilmember Velázquez.

18 COUNSEL: Reba Shang, you may begin when you're
19 ready.

20 CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Turn on your mic, button.

21 MS. SHANG: Hello.

22 CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Got it. Okay.

23 MS. SHANG: Thank you Committee Chairs Farías and
24 Menin, the Economic Development Committee and the
25 Small Business Committee for holding this hearing.

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My name is Reba Shang and I'm the Senior Coordinator of Small Business Programs at the Asian American Federation. Through our Small Business Program we've worked directly with hundreds of Asian-owned small businesses throughout New York City. Our small businesses were the first to be pitched into crisis in 2020. And since then, as the city works towards economic recovery, the commercial corridors we serve in neighborhoods like Flushing, Jackson Heights, Elmhurst, and Sunset Park are still struggling. This is why we urge the Committee to devote resources to promoting tourism and the city's ethnic commercial corridors, especially in outer boroughs. We propose that the Council do this first by promoting interborough travel to local New Yorkers. Similar to SBS's Shop Your City Campaign the city should advertise its immigrant neighborhoods as exciting local day-trip destinations for New Yorkers, as global cuisines and culture has become more popular than ever. New York City's abundance of authentic ethnic businesses should be recognized as one of our greatest resources. Moreover, SBS's work on campaigns like Shop Your City show that the agency has already produced relevant marketing materials.

AF, last year, for example, collaborated with SBS on a promotional video featuring Murray Hill, Queens, a neighborhood that is home to the last truly authentic stronghold of the Korean diaspora.

We would like to see SBS better leverage existing marketing materials like this video series, which capitalize on the local knowledge of community based organizations like ours. A wider public campaign would also boost the city's still-lagging MTA ridership by encouraging local New Yorkers to get back on the train and to take advantage of cross-borough bus routes. For example, bus shelter and train apps can feature the neighborhoods that are accessible by various routes.

This also ties into our second related proposal: That SBS work directly with NYCT+C in order to better promote outer borough and immigrant neighborhoods to tourists. NYCT+C last year ran a campaign called NYC Like A New Yorker, which aimed to spotlight outer boroughs by featuring one borough per month and a press release. The campaign like Shop Your City primarily targeted local New Yorkers. The coexistence of SBS Shop Your City and NYCT+C's NYC Like A New Yorker campaign speaks to a ripe

opportunity for cross agency collaboration. A collaboration between these two agencies could be extremely fruitful to advancing the goals of both. Promotional materials focusing on immigrant commercial corridors could and should be added to NYC & Co's advertising targeted towards national and international visitors as well. Such advertising would not just be a matter of paying lip service to diversity, but a real potential economic boon for the city.

NYCT+C is increasingly targeting Asian markets as travelers from this region spent increasing amounts of money on tourism. And for these tourists, the diasporic strongholds of NYC represent a fascinating kind of cultural tourism. travelers from Korea are interested to see the last genuine diasporic strongholds, and the same may be said of visitors from China in Sunset Park, or of India in Jackson Heights.

As travelers from these countries look to New York City more as a tourist spot, we hope to see the city's definition of its tourist attractions expand accordingly.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. And we look forward to continuing to work closely together.

COUNSEL: Mr. Rivera, you may begin when ready.

MR. RIVERA: Thank you. Good afternoon. My name is Raul Rivera. I'm a New York City TLC driver. I'm a TLC driver advocate. Forgive me if I ramble a little bit. I didn't write anything down. You might be wondering why a taxi drivers here at the Council. Well, I just want to bring a little bit of clarity to the Council. I want you guys to understand that we have 175,000 small business owners. Those small business owners are immigrants. 90% of them are immigrants, people of color with a language barrier. The taxi driver, the Uber driver, the Lyft driver, the TLC driver here in New York City. These are small business owners. They get attacked, they get marginalized. We are trying to get meetings with our Councilmembers. It's like pulling teeth. And I speak English. You understand what I'm saying when I asked for a meeting, when I send the email. I have to go outside and bang on your door, pull out a bullhorn and start yelling just to get meetings.

1 The drivers are being ignored. I am a driver
2
3 myself. I'm a native New Yorker. I was almost
4 killed in an accident driving 12 hours a day in the
5 city. And I want you to remember this: Very
6 important. Very, very important to drivers just
7 received a raise from the TLC. Uber sued the TLC to
8 stop that raise. And I tell everybody, but nobody
9 wants to listen. The Seattle Uber driver, the
10 Seattle Uber driver makes more money than the New
11 York City Uber driver here. It doesn't make any
12 sense. Does it cost more money to live in Seattle
13 than in New York? I don't think so. They're making
14 more than the driver here. The formula that TLC is
15 using to give us a pay raise is not correct. They
16 failed in court. When Uber sued, they won. They
17 went and did something else. And we got a small
18 raise. We got 15 cents. The Uber driver got 15
19 cents.

20 When-- when the tourists is coming here to the
21 city who you think is taking them to the destination.
22 You take a tourist is getting on a bus on a train
23 with loads and loads of luggage? No. They're
24 calling the Uber driver. We are the first person
25 they see once they land. Once they get here we are

the first people they see and we talk to them. And
we give them tips where to go, how to be safe.

We want more respect for the driver. We want our
meetings. If we send you an e-mail, you're a
Councilmember. You have to represent your district.
Every district has drivers. You don't even have to
check. We're not just taxi drivers. We are New
Yorkers, and we are small business owners we demand
respect. Thank you.

[BACKGROUND VOICE]

COUNSEL: Thank you Mr. Rivera.

[BACKGROUND VOICE]

COUNSEL: Thank you. We'll now move to the
virtual portion of this testimony today. The first
panelist up is Jessica Walker.

Please wait for the Sergeant to announce the
timer before you begin.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time has begun.

MS. WALKER: Hi. Good afternoon. I'm Jessica
Walker. I'm the president of the Manhattan Chamber
of Commerce. And our organization is a convener
voice and advocate for the 100,000-plus businesses
across Manhattan.

Thank you for doing the hearing. I think-- I definitely wanted to stay on just to make it known that I think this is a very important topic.

Obviously tourists are an important customer base for small businesses throughout the five boroughs. But they play an outsized role in Manhattan, particularly now, when we're facing the significant losses of office workers who are working remotely.

And data shows that we are approaching the new normal. Employers think that the new normal in terms of occupancy rates is going to be 56% in New York City. So we really do need the customer traffic from tourists to make up for the losses of what's happening with office workers.

Just three points I want to make today: One, lots of great discussion today in terms of the need for great marketing. I think there's a lot more we could be doing to try to highlight legacy businesses throughout the five boroughs. Certainly we should be giving-- I think we should extend the free participation for restaurants, small business restaurants in Restaurant Week. So there's a lot that we can be doing there.

Two: I do believe we do need to as a city continue to innovate, continue to compete. We're very supportive of bringing a casino to Manhattan, for example. We were supportive of the building of the Staten Island Wheel that did not go through. But there's just a number of things that we could be doing that could be very exciting for the city to really draw in millions and millions more tourists quickly.

And then three: I just always want to make it be known that that we do need to continue to-- to support small businesses. We are not out of the woods yet in terms of the recovery from the COVID crisis. Many small businesses have taken on a great deal of debt, and so even though things seem to be getting better many are still struggling. So I just urge everybody to continue to find different solutions. We are, of course, supportive of trying to eliminate the commercial rent tax for restaurants and retail shops in Manhattan. We are supportive of expanding the Small Business Resource Network, which the City Council has been very supportive of through the Five Borough Chamber Alliance. We have been-- through that program throughout the five boroughs, we

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2 have helped maybe 30,000 small businesses in the last
3 two and a half years. And I'm happy and proud to say
4 that 77% of those helped were MWBEs. And so we do
5 want to continue to keep that program going.

6 But again, these are just some of the ideas. I
7 just-- But again, I just wanted to say that this is a
8 very important topic, particularly for Manhattan and
9 I'm happy to work with you on solutions. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Thank you so much. If
11 there's anyone else that didn't get an opportunity to
12 testify whether it's virtually or in person -- but
13 there's no one here -- let us know now. Seeing
14 none... Do any of you have anything to say? No?

15 All right. This is a adjourned.

16 [GAVEL]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date 04/25/2023