

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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HELD AT: COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL

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Amanda Farías, Chairperson

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A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

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1 COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT Jointly with the
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 FARIÁS: 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 Fariás, 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

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

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

17 We have also closely monitored the industry's
18 recovery during the pandemic and provided support
19 when necessary. In 2019, the city welcomed a record
20 66.6 million tourists supporting over 403,000 jobs
21 across the five boroughs and generating over \$71
22 billion in economic activity. While the COVID-19
23 pandemic decimated the city's tourism industry,
24 leading to a 67% decrease in the numbers of tourists
25

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 Business. Thank you for joining today's joint
2 oversight hearing with the Committees on Economic
3 Development in Small Business to discuss tourism and
4 its economic impact on New York City's small
5 business.
6

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

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

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

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

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

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

1
2 With intentional effort and collaboration among
3 government partners, business owners, advocates and
4 other stakeholders, our city's beloved small
5 businesses and the tourism sector can not only
6 rebound but redouble their efforts in making New York
7 City a world-class tourist destination.

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

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

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

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

5
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,

1 Chief Marketing Officer at New York City Tourism +
2 Conventions, testifying on behalf of our CEO Fred
3 Dixon. We thank you for this opportunity to share
4 the current status of the city's tourism and
5 hospitality industry, and New York City Tourism +
6 Convention's efforts along with our government and
7 private sector partners to revitalize the industry as
8 we work towards full economic recovery.
9

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

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

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

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

1 This translated to a 50% loss in jobs and a \$2
2 billion decrease in local tax revenues from our
3 industry. More industry jobs were lost than in all
4 the losses in finance, information, real estate, and
5 professional and business service sectors combined.
6

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

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

18 In a typical pre-pandemic year 2019, for example,
19 travel and tourism supported a little over 400,000
20 jobs in the private sector. This was about one in
21 ten jobs. Still an impressive number in our tech,
22 finance, real estate and biomed-driven economy. At
23 the end of 2022, industry jobs are still down about
24 35% in key sectors supported by visitor spending.
25 Most of those jobs are in services and small

1 businesses that directly interact with visitors from
2 the moment they arrive by land, rail, or air to where
3 they stay, what they eat, what they buy, what they do
4 and how they move around town.
5

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

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

19 There is also a benefit every New Yorker can
20 feel: Without the tax contributions coming from the
21 tourism and conventions we host the average New York
22 City household would be on the hook for another
23 \$2,000 in state and local taxes. While the private
24 sector in the city has surpassed the employment
25 levels of March 2020, many of the businesses that

1 rely on visitor spending are still lacking however.
2
3 Restaurants and bars, which rely on visitors for
4 about one third of their patrons remain below peak
5 employment, as remote and hybrid work reduces the
6 weekday population around the central business and
7 entertainment districts.

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

14 As of February 2023, the Bureau of Labor
15 Statistics estimates that there are 42,700 people
16 employed in the city's accommodation sector. That's
17 80% of the seasonal benchmark. Active hotel
18 inventory, the combination of new properties and
19 reopenings, is nearly at 2019 levels, with just over
20 125,000 rooms serving travelers to New York City.
21 Seasonal occupancy patterns have returned to form
22 with midweek business travelers joining the growing
23 international visitors, and domestic leisure
24 travelers keep occupancy rates rising month after
25 month. Average daily room rates are continuing to

1 increase, reaching \$214 on average for the first
2 quarter of this year. Nevertheless, hotels in major
3 cities across the country are, like New York City,
4 still performing below their pre-pandemic levels. In
5 the first quarter of this year, New York City hotels
6 averaged 71.8% occupancy, still 7% below our 2019
7 benchmark of 77%.
8

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

20 As you will hear from my colleague, Nancy Mammana
21 in a moment, we've come through these past few years
22 through strategic government investment in our work
23 that allowed us to maintain our presence and
24 messaging in key global markets, making us ready to
25 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

1 to over 1000 surveys with our member businesses,
2 residents and visitors, after which we concluded that
3 the name NYC & Company wasn't clearly and immediately
4 conveying the breadth and depth of the critical work
5 this organization does to power the city's economy.
6

7 Our goal is to position this rebrand as a
8 milestone for the organization which is an evolution
9 in our strategy and builds upon the work we've always
10 done: Showcasing authentic, aspirational five
11 boroughs stories to the world, now under the banner
12 of New York City Tourism + Conventions to lead the
13 industry forward. We've had very positive reception
14 to the new brand and logo and hope you all share our
15 excitement about how it positively positions the five
16 boroughs. We also created a color palette that
17 reflects New York City with the black as the primary
18 color which provides the basis for the secondary
19 color palette which is a survey of New York City
20 icons and associations. Thank you red, brick red,
21 ferry orange, locks pink, taxi yellow, Rockaway sand,
22 subway green, Liberty green, coffee cup blue, and
23 skyline blue with more added as the system develops
24 in the future.
25

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

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

6 The results have been impressive. We have an
7 external research firm called SMARI conduct an
8 analysis on the marketing and the ROI on the domestic
9 campaign, which was \$352 for every dollar spent on
10 the advertising, and \$241 for every dollar spent
11 internationally. The campaigns to date have run in
12 two phases, and as it continues, the results continue
13 to compound. So far, cumulatively it has resulted in
14 close to \$8 billion in visitors spend, over \$820
15 million in tax revenue to the city, and influenced
16 over 3.5 million trips from July 2021 through July
17 2022.

18 The SMARI data has been a major boost to
19 understanding spending and the impacts of our
20 marketing campaigns. Funding is a crucial component
21 of conducting this research, and this was the first
22 time we were able to do so because of the federal aid
23 from COVID. Going forward with the PEG, we will not
24 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

1 typically slower travel seasons, and help ensure that
2 a visit to the city remains accessible to a diverse
3 range of visitors. In October 2021, we added It's
4 Time For Culture campaign supporting our performing
5 arts and culture organizations in every borough. We
6 also just announced the second year of Its Time For
7 Culture last week, which launches in May, with nearly
8 100 organizations participating across the five
9 boroughs. More on that shortly.

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

20 This year's program outperformed both 2022 and
21 2019 traffic and conversion benchmarks, even though
22 we had lower budgets to market the program than in
23 2022. We have over 700 participants in the program,
24 which include over 500 restaurants across the five
25 boroughs, over 40 cultural institutions Broadway

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

17 Through these coordinated visits qualified small
18 businesses gain access to the global market with no
19 or very little investment, along with receiving the
20 guidance and support they need. Last year, we had
21 our first reverse sales mission which had 17 small
22 businesses and cultural institutions participating.
23 For the remainder of this year into Q2 2024. We plan
24 to have at least two of these reverse missions.

25 Additionally, we continue to operate borough
development familiarization trips for local receptive

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 responsible for tourism marketing. So we felt it was
2 important to clarify in our name, but our remit does
3 not change and our mission does not change.
4

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

10 DR. KEREN: Improvement is definitely happening.
11 We had dropped to less than 22 million visitors in
12 2020. We forecast that this year as-- we will be
13 well above 61 million, and on our way to full
14 recovery by the end of 2024. We do this by tracking
15 through syndicated surveys, visitors, traffic in
16 rail, air, and land, visitor spending, and hotel
17 performance. We work with a number of third-party
18 vendors who collect the original data and then we
19 bring it into our analysis of the city as a whole.

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

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

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

6 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: I'm interested. So tell me
7 all of it.

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

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

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

24 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: So-- And how regularly are
25 we getting-- are we aggregating that data?

1 DR. KEREN: It's annual. The domestic data I see
2
3 quarterly.

4 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Okay.

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

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

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

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

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

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

15 MS. MAMMANA: No, it is not.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 all of that? Or how does that come back to us and
2 say that this was a successful campaign, or a
3 successful effort?
4

5 MS. MAMMANA: There are two ways we do that. We
6 work with the individual partners to capture their
7 metrics. So when they work with us, we either pixel
8 their website, and if they don't allow that, we just
9 get the data at the end. We really want to
10 understand if there was a lift in bookings, from
11 their perspective. And the SMARI data that I
12 mentioned earlier measured the campaign in the
13 aggregate. So we've done this. We've gotten two
14 domestic and international phases from June of 2021
15 to June of 2022. And that we are seeing because we
16 continued with It's Time For New York City, and we
17 refresh our primary visual, but we kept it as Lady
18 Liberty, we're seeing equity in the campaign. And
19 the results are compounding as more people see it in
20 market. And that survey is where we're able to
21 measure who saw the campaign, and then ultimately
22 came and booked a trip to New York. So that is where
23 we're seeing the return on adspend metrics, and the
24 amount of trips and the amount of visitor spend in
25

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

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

6 MS. MAMMANA: Yes.

7 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Three-something 52?

8 MS. MAMMANA: Yeah.

9 DR. KEREN: Yes.

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

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

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

1 itself, the first thing you look at is: Did that
2 advertising influence a visitor? The visitor came,
3 how much did they spend? That goes across the entire
4 city. And then that spending generates and supports
5 the business revenues, the jobs, and the tax revenue
6 that the city collects.
7

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

12 But--

13 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: Got it.

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

CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: 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 FARIÁS: 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 FARIÁS: 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

20 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Just asking. Just asking,
21 you know? You've got to know we're-- we're targeting
22 the right message here for New York City. Awesome.
23 That's great to know.
24

1
2 I recently learned -- and I'm still fact checking
3 this, so please don't quote me on this -- but we
4 don't have a residency requirement for the Fair Fares
5 Program. So someone, like, traveling domestically
6 could actually come and get a reduced fare, even if
7 they're here for two weeks or they're here for a
8 couple of months visiting family. So I'm wondering,
9 on our end, are we doing best to promote some of the
10 benefits of maybe staying for a prolonged time with
11 getting a reduced fare? So, thank you for answering
12 that. And if we can look more into that, that would
13 be great.

14 MS. MAMMANA: Absolutely.

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

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

25

1 because we're New York City and we were the epicenter
2 in the beginning of the pandemic, as we all remember.
3

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

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

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

1
2 planners that are making sure that the trade is fully
3 briefed on the level of product in New York,
4 openings, what is happening in the borough's making
5 sure they're educated. So we do sales trainings. We
6 bring our members into the market with us in our
7 sales missions. We do trade shows in those markets.
8 There are really boots on the ground to ensure that
9 they are staying-- we're staying very close to the
10 trade on both business and leisure to ensure that
11 were top of mind, that we're securing leads for
12 meetings and events, that they're just staying very
13 close so that New York City remains top of mind as a
14 destination. But the product updates are continual,
15 so that they're aware that when you arrive in New
16 York City, there are many more places to visit than
17 some of the trade may think.

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

24 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Great. And I just have some
25 questions around the international office or the

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

4 MS. MAMMANA: We have 17 international offices.

5 CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Okay.

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

8 MS. MAMMANA: Correct.

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

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

15 DR. KEREN: Yes.

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

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

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

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

1 percent of our key markets rely on travel agents, how
2 many of them are influenced by destination websites,
3 and things like that. So we have a sense as we go
4 into the market, what's the best channel for reaching
5 people.
6

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

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

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

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

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

13 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: No, in our international
14 spaces.

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

16 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Okay. So--

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

19 MS. MAMMANA: Yeah.

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

25 DR. KEREN: Correct.

2 MS. MAMMANA: Correct.

3 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Okay. So it's not brick and
4 mortar.

5 MS. MAMMANA: Sorry.

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

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

13 MS. MAMMANA: We raise private revenue primarily
14 through our membership base. So the approximately
15 1800 to 2000 members that we have, many of which pay
16 dues to-- to us to market the city on their behalf.
17 There is some amount that we raise through
18 advertising on our website, as well as sponsorships.
19 So for example, MasterCard is currently a global
20 sponsor, and we're looking to renew that relationship
21 if-- if possible.

22 CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: And have those sources
23 changed during the pandemic to now?

24 MS. MAMMANA: Drastically. Yes.

25

CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: 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 FARIÁS: 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

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

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

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

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

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

19 DR. KEREN: Yes.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5
6 CHAIRPERSON MENIN: But is there a fee for those
7 businesses?

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

15 CHAIRPERSON MENIN: And what is the fee scale?

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

1 provides would be perhaps charged \$500 to participate
2 in this larger marketing initiative, which gives them
3 access to all the sales possibilities, the marketing
4 visibility, the website, the research, the
5 networking, the business meetings, all of that comes,
6 plus the visibility of they're the ones who are
7 listed in-- on our website, and with direct links to
8 the business.
9

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

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

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

19 CHAIRPERSON MENIN: Like a rough estimate.

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

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

24 DR. KEREN: Yea.
25

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

DR. KEREN: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 I had a meeting with-- with you all about this and
2 what specifically, we talked about Arthur Avenue and
3 restaurants and how to promote them and all of that.
4 But I think it should be expanded, again to all of
5 these neighborhoods, because of their treasures and
6 jewels. Whether there are cultural organizations or
7 other tourism spots that people are going to. I just
8 don't want the small businesses then to be left out
9 of the equation.
10

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

21 CHAIRPERSON MENIN: Okay.

22 MS. MAMMANA: --with the new infrastructure. But
23 we are doing that today, and I'm happy to share
24 examples of the work.
25

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

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

8 CHAIRPERSON MENIN: You said 20 BIDs?

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

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

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

21 CHAIRPERSON MENIN: Okay.

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

1 featured all of their programming in our newsletter
2 that goes out to all the BIDs.
3

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

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

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

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

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

1 New York logo that Radical Media designed. You know,
2 going to some of these ad firms, seeing if they will
3 work with the city pro bono to do really outside-of-
4 the-box advertising and marketing campaign to bring
5 more tourists to the city, and specifically to focus
6 on the small businesses would be, I think, a great
7 thing to do.
8

9 MS. MAMMANA: We have many folks that have come
10 from those large agencies in house in our
11 organization. So you know, while we've had offers of
12 pro bono work during the pandemic, it never turns out
13 the way it was proposed in reality. So we-- we have
14 the creative development work well handled. We just
15 won two Emmys last year for our content, and a Webby
16 and two Shorties are on the table now. We're good
17 there. Where we're challenged is the media dollars
18 to push it out. So there it's-- it's not surprising
19 that you may not have seen a lot of the content,
20 because it's really about the distribution of that
21 content. And where-- where our budgets are
22 challenged is in the media dollars to promote it. So
23 creatively, we're actually fine. It's just more on
24 the broader side of the distribution.
25

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

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

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

21 And since then we're really relying on the power
22 of the travel partners to book those trips in New
23 York. And as we've seen, it's been very effective
24 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.

1 This month-- This year, we're going to do
2
3 something different, and I'm really happy to say
4 we're doing small business month. We're going to
5 celebrate the entire month of May. And we're not
6 only celebrating each of the neighborhoods in their
7 corridors, but we're actually also spotlighting the
8 different services that SBS provides.

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

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

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

1 branded, and then we help supply the visitor center
2 inside of Macy's Herald Square. Other than that--
3 And there-- We also partner with the Empire State
4 Building and their observatory, providing content in
5 their video blades.
6

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

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

15 But it's really more about producing digital
16 guides at this point. Not many-- Not as many folks
17 are interested in carrying booklets anymore. So we
18 have paused our visitor guide. But we're promoting
19 everything on our website and have designed it in a
20 way that it can be used mobiley, and mobile first,
21 and 60% of our website traffic is from mobile. So
22 we're really more focused on getting more scale and
23 awareness around things from a digital standpoint.
24 But we do-- we do produce the map twice a year.
25

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

4 MS. MAMMANA: Sure.

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

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

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

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

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

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

4
5 So I'll start with the question of what funding
6 sources does NYCT+C receive besides operating costs
7 from the city? How have these resources changed also
8 in the pandemic?

9 While you look for the answer--

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

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

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

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

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

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

9 MS. MAMMANA: Not right now.

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

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

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

19 MS. MAMMANA: Do we target those businesses?

20 DR. KEREN: Yes.

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

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

8
9 And those are the those are the pieces of content
10 that we recently won the Emmys for last year. They
11 have been very well received with, I think, we're
12 going to about 4 million views. We've done one piece
13 of-- a six minute video, one per borough, and we're
14 looking at ways that we can resuscitate that series
15 after the next one launches. We've so far featured
16 Washington Heights, Staten Island, Mott Haven, and
17 we're going to Flatbush next.

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

21 MS. MAMMANA: No, we are not.

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

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

1
2 department, our membership department, and our
3 content team to make sure that we are actively
4 engaging MWBE businesses, so our-- and businesses
5 that are based in New York City, of course, as well
6 as the content that we showcase, that we are ensuring
7 that it is equitable and diverse coverage and making
8 sure we're representing the fabric of New York City
9 accurately and with-- with the right amount of
10 equity, inclusion, and diversity.

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

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

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

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

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

7
8 Once-- Once we are engaged with a business, we
9 look for every possible opportunity to showcase them.
10 It's-- It's really up to us to make sure that a
11 visitor has the richest experience. And we aim to
12 push people out into the every neighborhood and
13 borough on a daily basis. So everything we do is an
14 attempt to engage as many businesses as we can that a
15 tourist might be interested in experiencing. So we
16 don't have regard for how much a business is paying
17 us, or if they're paying us. We-- We did pro bono
18 many businesses during the pandemic. And because of
19 the support of MOME, we were able to afford to do
20 that.

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

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

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

6 CHAIRPERSON MENIN: Of course.

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

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

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

24 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON MENIN: Thank you. And Councilmember
3 Avilés?

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

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

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

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

1
2 I also think we are a little bit behind with
3 regard to business events and travel. So that's
4 continuing to rebound. So we're watching it and
5 we're continuing to push in those areas, but they're
6 not quite back to pre-pandemic levels. So I feel
7 like that's-- that's where we're seeing the primary
8 amount of the shortfall.

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

11 MS. MAMMANA: We're diversifying our approach.
12 We're focusing on other markets to replace what we
13 have lost with China. So we've now got campaigns in
14 18 markets, and we're doubling down where we are
15 seeing growth. So the-- the markets that I just
16 mentioned -- for example, India, Mexico, Brazil,
17 Australia -- we're seeing great growth there; long-
18 haul domestic, where we didn't really focus as much
19 pre-pandemic, we've doubled down on those campaigns.

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

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

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

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

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

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

3
4 The Dominican community in the Bronx was very
5 active during the pandemic, as visitors could come.
6 Some of the Caribbean communities in Brooklyn, the
7 Hispanic and South American communities in Queens,
8 and so on. That's one of the ways we look at it.

9 It is-- There are also additional challenges that
10 are far outside any of us in this room, which is for
11 many of our international markets, the ability to get
12 a travel visa to enter the U.S. has become extremely
13 time consuming, in addition to difficult and
14 expensive. And so for many of the markets we're
15 targeting, this is now a major delay. Our colleague,
16 Alexandra Silversmith is actually in Washington,
17 trying to remind the government that these visa
18 application processes are affecting everyone and the
19 travel. As much of a third of the Chinese market is
20 likely to be without a visa. Current people who had
21 a visa no longer have a viable visa. The same is
22 happening in Brazil, in Colombia, and in a number of
23 key markets where people can't even enter the U.S.,
24 even if they want to visit New York City. So we're
25 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.

1
2 MS. KEREN: I think two things. It's my
3 understanding that the terminal is managed by EDC.
4 We do not manage it. Our development teams do work
5 with the cruise lines, and encourage them to
6 essentially shop local and build out. Again, when
7 New York is a home port, it means that it's locals
8 getting on the ship to sail somewhere else. And then
9 they get off the ship, they get in their car, and
10 they drive home.

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

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

17 DR. KEREN: They're both.

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

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

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

25

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

19 But I do have some more questions. Okay.

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

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

1 emails, but people have become really quite competent
2 and comfortable with their phone devices. And they
3 Google things, and they check our website, and they
4 look around, and do it quite independently.
5

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

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

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

21 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: And are you only promoting
22 those that are paying the fee?

23 MS. MAMMANA: No.

24 DR. KEREN: No.

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

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

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

24 MS. MAMMANA: I'm happy to follow up with that.
25 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

1 neighborhood guides. And we have several content
2 packages: The Black Experience In NYC, The Latino
3 Experience In NYC, and The Asian Experience IN NYC.
4 That's all integrated within that content. So as we
5 push-- That content is designed to drive interest and
6 traffic back to the website where all that
7 information lives. So it's neighborhood guides, it's
8 all the experience packages, and everything in
9 between, and we drive visitors in between those
10 pages.
11

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

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

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

1 we can measure as far as we take it, which is the
2 click out to either buy or reserve. And yes, we have
3 that by-- by business.
4

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

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

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

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

1 to get anyone to focus on having to do paperwork and
2 enroll in these programs. So it's definitely not for
3 a lack of trying. We actually try to partner with
4 local media to promote the program and engagement and
5 participation even further. But again, that's where
6 we want the further partnership with the Council,
7 because we do want more participation. It's just
8 we're actively recruiting at all times and trying to
9 promote the program. And because it happens every
10 year, it's a little bit easier, hopefully to plan
11 ahead.
12

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

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

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

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

25 CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Okay.

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

7 And in winter 2023, which was free for the first
8 50 participants in each region, we had a 12 in the
9 Bronx, 51 in Brooklyn, 32 in Queens, 14 in Staten
10 Island, and 423 in Manhattan, 23 of which were in
11 upper Manhattan. So we're happy to email this to if
12 that's easier.

13 CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: Yeah. That would be really
14 helpful.

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

22 MS. MAMMANA: Thank you.

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

1 you. We're very excited about the possibility of
2 increasing promotion to the small businesses. And so
3 we want to be partners to you in all of that, as do,
4 I know, our colleagues.
5

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

14 MS. MAMMANA: Thank you.

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

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

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.

1 My name is Reba Shang and I'm the Senior Coordinator
2 of Small Business Programs at the Asian American
3 Federation. Through our Small Business Program we've
4 worked directly with hundreds of Asian-owned small
5 businesses throughout New York City. Our small
6 businesses were the first to be pitched into crisis
7 in 2020. And since then, as the city works towards
8 economic recovery, the commercial corridors we serve
9 in neighborhoods like Flushing, Jackson Heights,
10 Elmhurst, and Sunset Park are still struggling. This
11 is why we urge the Committee to devote resources to
12 promoting tourism and the city's ethnic commercial
13 corridors, especially in outer boroughs. We propose
14 that the Council do this first by promoting
15 interborough travel to local New Yorkers. Similar to
16 SBS's Shop Your City Campaign the city should
17 advertise its immigrant neighborhoods as exciting
18 local day-trip destinations for New Yorkers, as
19 global cuisines and culture has become more popular
20 than ever. New York City's abundance of authentic
21 ethnic businesses should be recognized as one of our
22 greatest resources. Moreover, SBS's work on
23 campaigns like Shop Your City show that the agency
24 has already produced relevant marketing materials.
25

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

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

15 This also ties into our second related proposal:
16 That SBS work directly with NYCT+C in order to better
17 promote outer borough and immigrant neighborhoods to
18 tourists. NYCT+C last year ran a campaign called NYC
19 Like A New Yorker, which aimed to spotlight outer
20 boroughs by featuring one borough per month and a
21 press release. The campaign like Shop Your City
22 primarily targeted local New Yorkers. The
23 coexistence of SBS Shop Your City and NYCT+C's NYC
24 Like A New Yorker campaign speaks to a ripe
25

1
2 opportunity for cross agency collaboration. A
3 collaboration between these two agencies could be
4 extremely fruitful to advancing the goals of both.
5 Promotional materials focusing on immigrant
6 commercial corridors could and should be added to NYC
7 & Co's advertising targeted towards national and
8 international visitors as well. Such advertising
9 would not just be a matter of paying lip service to
10 diversity, but a real potential economic boon for the
11 city.

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

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

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

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

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

1
2 The drivers are being ignored. I am a driver
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

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

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

12 [BACKGROUND VOICE]

13 COUNSEL: Thank you Mr. Rivera.

14 [BACKGROUND VOICE]

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

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

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time has begun.

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

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

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

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

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

1
2 Two: I do believe we do need to as a city
3 continue to innovate, continue to compete. We're
4 very supportive of bringing a casino to Manhattan,
5 for example. We were supportive of the building of
6 the Staten Island Wheel that did not go through. But
7 there's just a number of things that we could be
8 doing that could be very exciting for the city to
9 really draw in millions and millions more tourists
10 quickly.

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

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 FARIÁS: 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