

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
JOINTLY WITH CULTURAL AFFAIRS,  
LIBRARIES, AND INTERNATIONAL  
INTERGROUP RELATIONS

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November 15, 2021  
Start: 10:17 a.m.  
Recess: 12:23 p.m.

HELD AT: Remote Hearing, Virtual Room 1

B E F O R E: Paul A. Vallone  
Chairperson - Economic Development

Jimmy Van Bramer  
Chairperson - Cultural Affairs

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Paul Vallone  
Inez D. Barron  
Robert E. Cornegy, Jr.  
Mark Gjonaj  
Peter A. Koo  
Brad S. Lander  
Farah N. Louis  
Keith Powers

Jimmy Van Bramer  
Laurie A. Cumbo  
Darma V. Diaz  
James F. Gennaro  
Mark Gjonaj

Francisco P. Moya

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

Donna Keren  
Executive Vice President of Research and  
Insight  
New York City & Company

Nancy Mammana  
Chief Marketing Officer  
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Sheelah Feinberg  
Deputy Commissioner  
Department of Cultural Affairs

Bianca Sosa  
Assistant Vice President of Portfolio  
Management  
New York City Economic Development  
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Thomas Ferrugia

Sanne Wright

Sarah Cecilia Bukowski

Lisa Alpert

Barbara Blair

@



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1  
2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: PC recording underway.

3 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Cloud recording  
4 rolling.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Backup is rolling.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Sergeant Martinez, you  
7 may begin with your opening statement.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS MARTINEZ: Good morning  
9 and welcome to today's remote New York City Council  
10 hearing of the Committee on Economic Development  
11 jointly with the Committee on Cultural Affairs,  
12 Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations.  
13 At this time would all panelists please turn on their  
14 video. To minimize disruption, please silence your  
15 electronic devices, and if you wish to submit  
16 testimony you may do so at [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov).  
17 Once again, that's [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov). Thank  
18 you for your consideration. We are ready to begin.

19 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: All right, we're  
20 ready to roll, Sergeant?

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS MARTINEZ: Yes, sir.

22 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: All right. Good  
23 morning, everyone [gavel] and a big thank you to our  
24 security team, Carl and the sergeants. You know, you  
25 guys had to take on many roles and now you're

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1  
2 technology experts on top of everything else. So,  
3 ah, we thank you for keeping us safe when we were in  
4 City Hall and also keeping these virtual hearings  
5 moving, not an easy task, especially with this crew  
6 that's on board. Look at Jimmy, now you're ready to  
7 go, so you guys are in big trouble. So good morning,  
8 welcome everyone to this joint hearing between the  
9 New York City Council Committees on Economic  
10 Development and Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and  
11 International Intergroup Relations. Today is Monday,  
12 November 15, 2021. My name is Paul Vallone and I  
13 have had the privilege of chairing the Committee on  
14 Economic Development. I'd also like to extend my  
15 thanks to my dear friend and cochair, Jimmy Van  
16 Bramer, who is here this morning with his entire, ah,  
17 council crew is joining with him, as well as the  
18 members of both committees, the administration, and  
19 the city's official tourism and marketing  
20 organization, New York City & Company, for coming  
21 together to hold this hearing, which we've been doing  
22 for over the last four years. We have been joined by  
23 a whole bunch of great council members this morning.  
24 We have Council Member Barron, Cornegy, Darma Diaz,  
25 Majority Leader Laurie Cumbo, Jim Gennaro I see on,

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1 Peter Koo, Council Member Gjonaj, Louis, Moya, and  
2 Powers. Ah, OK. So this hearing marks the  
3 culmination of several tourism-related hearings that  
4 these two committees have held throughout the course  
5 of this council session. I believe I can speak for  
6 both committees when I say we take tremendous pride  
7 in directing the council's attention towards the  
8 tourism sector over the last four years, a sector of  
9 the economy that drives so much economic activity in  
10 our, in our city, but often was overlooked as it  
11 straddled several different areas of the city's  
12 workforce. I can say that between Council Member Van  
13 Bramer and I it is no longer overlooked. In fact, we  
14 made it a priority for the budget and for  
15 legislation. Over the last four years our two  
16 communities have been here to address the issues  
17 facing the tourism industry and art, beginning with  
18 the offsite hearing, which we really enjoyed, at the  
19 TWA Hotel showroom on the 86th floor of One World  
20 Trade. Several bills aimed at improving the city's  
21 tourist experience and the tourism economy and  
22 continuing through the darkest days of the pandemic  
23 and the gradual recovery we have been going through  
24 at this point. The goal of today's hearing is to  
25

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2 hear from our colleagues at New York City & Company  
3 and the Department of Cultural Affairs about how  
4 their efforts have improved the tourist economy and  
5 the city over the last year and a half, but  
6 specifically how those efforts have born fruit during  
7 the course of the last quarter. As indoor dining has  
8 become more normalized, museums, shows, and cultural  
9 institutions have reopened with international tourism  
10 that just began this month. The last time our two  
11 committees met on this topic was in September 2020,  
12 when vaccines were not yet available and the  
13 prospects for a return to a normal seemed bleak back  
14 in those. In the year since, over 87% of city adults  
15 have received at least one dose of the vaccine and  
16 [inaudible] indoor dining, cultural attractions is as  
17 simple as showing a vaccine card. And let me say it  
18 for the crew that's on and thank you because in those  
19 darkest days it was this crew that really did lead  
20 the way, ah, when everyone was looking for what to do  
21 first, not next, but first. Um, and EDC, New York &  
22 Company, ah, and these great teams that are here, ah,  
23 worked tirelessly to make sure the city did see the  
24 light that is happening now. Ah, just last week the  
25 city's airports celebrated the return of vaccinated

1  
2 international tourists and major attractions, like  
3 Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall offered to admit  
4 travelers with any vaccine approved by the WHO, not  
5 just those authorized for use by the CDC. It seems  
6 like things are starting to improve and return to  
7 some state of normal. And we on the committees are  
8 looking for a bit of a deeper dive into that new  
9 data. Some of the questions for today's hearing,  
10 well how has the reopening driven up tourist numbers,  
11 how close are hotel occupancy levels to return back  
12 to normal, what sort of attendance are we seeing in  
13 the city's many shows, museums, and cultural  
14 attractions? Also, what lessons can we learn from  
15 other countries as they have been reopening across  
16 the globe. The United States may have lagged in  
17 permitting international tourists to come back, but  
18 that doesn't mean we can't hit the ground running and  
19 getting tourists here now, that we are once again  
20 open for business. We on the committees would like  
21 to reiterate our support for New York City & Company  
22 and the herculean efforts it has undertaken through  
23 this crisis in keeping New York's tourist economy  
24 above water. Our hope is as we begin to emerge from  
25 the pandemic is that New York City & Company and its

1  
2 many partners can continue to draw tourists back to  
3 New York and ensure that its many world-class  
4 attractions recover as quickly and safely as  
5 possible. With that said, I'd like to acknowledge  
6 the economic development team here at the council,  
7 committee counsel Alex Polinoff with his shiny new  
8 beard, policy analyst William Harnot, and finance  
9 analyst Alia Ali, who she has been stood by our side  
10 for all these years, and commend them on all their  
11 hard work preparing for this hearing through the  
12 entire session. In addition, I have my chief of  
13 staff, Jonathan Shud, my deputy chief of staff,  
14 Amanda Zarr, and my legislative director, Kevin  
15 Kopakowski, who has been tirelessly keeping me  
16 sounding and looking good over these last four years.  
17 I will now turn the floor over to my cochair, Council  
18 Member Jimmy Van Bramer, and a friend of the Vallone  
19 family for a very long time. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
21 much, ah, Chair Vallone, and indeed it is always a  
22 pleasure to work alongside, ah, yourself. As you  
23 alluded to, I am a son of Astoria, Queens, and, ah,  
24 grew up knowing, ah, Speaker Peter Vallone as my  
25 local council member and, ah, my mother is among the

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1 many people who actually adore, ah, Speaker Vallone,  
2 but, ah, I am, ah, grateful for your service and the  
3 work that we've done together, ah, and your  
4 friendship. Ah, you, ah, acknowledged all the  
5 members of the Cultural Affairs Committee, ah, and I  
6 thank them and, of course, all the council members  
7 who've joined us here today. Ah, as Chair Vallone  
8 mentioned, we have had a laser-like focus on tourism  
9 and you cannot talk about, ah, tourism in the City of  
10 New York without, of course, talking about culture  
11 and the arts because they are, ah, so interwoven and  
12 so linked, and we all remember, ah, those dark days  
13 in March of 2020, ah, when everything began the  
14 painful process of shutting down, all in-person  
15 programming, performances, and, ah, and while  
16 cultural never closed and the culture [inaudible]  
17 quickly, ah, sprung up and the arts community, ah,  
18 banded together, ah, we saw something that we thought  
19 we never see, ah, which is the stage at Carnegie  
20 Hall, ah, go dark, and, ah, the halls of the Met and  
21 so many of our local outer borough cultural arts  
22 organizations, um, not see, ah, people admiring the  
23 arts, the performances, the shows that of course  
24 impacted artists, ah, and those folks, many of whom,  
25

1  
2 ah, lost their sources of income, ah, because the  
3 arts is such an incredible driver of employment and  
4 economic activity. Um, but we are also seeing, ah,  
5 which is so exciting, ah, a rebirth and I was there,  
6 ah, along with my husband, Dan, at Carnegie Hall's,  
7 ah, opening night, ah, just a few weeks ago, and, ah,  
8 it was magical in all the ways that culture and the  
9 arts makes New York City a magical place. Ah, we  
10 wore tuxedos that night and we took the train in, and  
11 as we were getting off it the stop, ah, at Carnegie  
12 there were two women looking at us from across the  
13 train and as we got up they said you guys look  
14 really, really great tonight, like where are you  
15 going, and we said we're going to Carnegie Hall. And  
16 I told folks that night at the, at the reception,  
17 it's one of those moments that happens in New York  
18 City, right, and it doesn't happen unless we're open,  
19 it doesn't happen unless the arts are thriving and  
20 folks are going to Carnegie Hall. Um, I also wanted  
21 to share a personal story 'cause my, my husband's  
22 niece and best friend are visiting this weekend, so  
23 we've had two 21-year-olds call in the house, ah, for  
24 four days, and, ah...

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2 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: I know that feeling  
3 well [laughs].

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: [laughs] I know  
5 you do. Um, and, ah, and it's been great. So they  
6 were able to, ah, ah, go to the Met on Saturday.  
7 They're at, um, Ellis Island today. But in addition  
8 to that, of course, they went shopping in, in  
9 Brooklyn and, ah, we've taken them out to eat, ah,  
10 all over Queens, and that's what happens when people  
11 come to New York, right? They, they enjoy the city.  
12 Ah, they take in all of the cultural offerings. They  
13 also shop. They drive the, ah, economy, um, jobs of  
14 course come back. So it's, um, it's been a difficult  
15 stretch for everyone on, ah, this call and in this  
16 hearing. But, ah, so much is possible now and that's  
17 why it's so important for us to continue the work  
18 that Chair Vallone and I have done and focusing on  
19 tourism and, um, and, ah, the success story that it,  
20 it was before, ah, the pandemic and, ah, the success  
21 story that I believe it will be again. Um, and so  
22 it's very exciting to think about the fact that we'll  
23 get back to 60, 65 million tourists, ah, a year in  
24 the City of New York and what that means, ah, in  
25 terms of jobs and economic, ah, development. But,

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1  
2 ah, for now I just want to thank, ah, everyone before  
3 they get into their testimony and we get into our  
4 questions, for everything they've done in keeping  
5 this city, ah, alive. Ah, I want to also thank in  
6 particular my legislative director, Jack Branonvich,  
7 my chief of staff, Matt Wallace, and our committee's,  
8 ah, principle, ah, finance analyst, Alia Ali, who  
9 already got a great shout-out from Chair Vallone, but  
10 our policy analyst, Christie Dwyer is on, ah, the  
11 call and she's equally wonderful, as is our committee  
12 counsel, Brenda McKinney, who is of course taking  
13 care of two amazing little, ah, babies, ah, that have  
14 just joined us in the world. So, ah, we send love to  
15 Brenda and the family, and with that I will turn it  
16 back over to Chair Vallone.

17 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Well, I think, ah,  
18 Alex is back to the council so we can continue on  
19 with the format, and we can swear in our first  
20 panelists, and thank you, Chair Jimmy Van Bramer.  
21 Looking forward to today's hearing. Yeah, I think  
22 that Jimmy mentioned is right, this is, this topic  
23 has been the number one hearing between both  
24 committees for during our term together, which shows  
25 you how, ah, important these topics and these issues

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1  
2 have been individually to us, as the council, and for  
3 the city. Um, no other hearing topic has been heard  
4 as much as this, as we went before the pandemic,  
5 during the pandemic, and now as we come out of it.  
6 Alex, [inaudible].

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair.

8 Ah, as the chairs mentioned, I'm Alex Polinoff,  
9 Counsel to the Economic Development Committee of the  
10 New York City Council and I'll be the moderator for  
11 today's hearing. Before we begin testimony, I just  
12 want to remind everyone that you will be on mute  
13 until you are called upon to testify, at which point  
14 you will be unmuted by the host. Members of the  
15 administration and New York City Company who are  
16 testifying will not be needed during the question or  
17 answer portion of administration testimony. I will  
18 be calling on panelists to testify in order, so  
19 please listen for your name to be called. The first  
20 panelist to give testimony today will be Donna Keren,  
21 executive vice president of research and insight at  
22 New York City & Company, ah, and New York City &  
23 Company's chief marketing officer, Nancy Mammana,  
24 will also be available for questioning as well.  
25 Deputy Commissioner Sheelah Feinberg from the

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1 Department of Cultural Affairs and Assistant Vice  
2 President of Portfolio Management, Bianca Sosa, at  
3 the New York City Economic Development Corporation  
4 will also be available for questioning. I will call  
5 upon each of you shortly for the oath, and then again  
6 when it is time to begin your testimony. During the  
7 hearing if council members would like to ask a  
8 question of the administration or of a specific  
9 panelist, please use the Zoom raise hand function and  
10 we will call on you in order. We will be limiting  
11 council member questions to five minutes, which  
12 includes the time it takes to answer those questions.  
13 Ah, please note that for the ease of this virtual  
14 hearing we will not be permitting a second round of  
15 questions for each panelist outside of the committee  
16 chairs. All hearing participants should submit  
17 written testimony to [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov) if you  
18 have not already done so. The deadline for written  
19 testimony is 72 hours after the hearing. Before we  
20 begin the testimony period I will administer the  
21 oath. To all members of the administration who will  
22 be offering testimony or will be available for  
23 questions, please raise your right hand now. I will  
24 read you the oath and then call on each of you  
25

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1 individually for a response. Do you swear or affirm  
2 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but  
3 the truth before this committee and to respond  
4 honestly to council member questions? Executive Vice  
5 President Keren?  
6

7 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT KEREN: I do.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chief Marketing  
9 Officer Mammana?

10 CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER MAMMANA: Yes, I  
11 do.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Deputy Commissioner  
13 Feinberg?

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FEINBERG: Yes, I do.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Assistant Vice  
16 President Sosa?

17 ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT SOSA: Yes, I  
18 do.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Executive  
20 Vice President Keren, you may begin your testimony  
21 when ready.

22 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT KEREN: Thank  
23 you. Good morning, Chairman Vallone, Chairman Van  
24 Bramer, and members of the committees on Economic  
25 Development and Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and

1 International Intergroup Relations, as well as  
2 members of the City Council. I am Dr. Donna Keren,  
3 executive vice president of research and insights and  
4 I'm joined today by Nancy Mammana, our chief  
5 marketing officer at NYC & Company, testifying on  
6 behalf of our CEO, Fred Dixon. We thank you for this  
7 opportunity to share the current status of the city's  
8 tourism and hospitality industry and NYC & Company's  
9 efforts along with our government and private sector  
10 partners to resuscitate the industry as we work  
11 towards economic recovery. I would like to provide a  
12 quick background on who we are and what we do as an  
13 organization. NYC & Company is the official  
14 destiny's, excuse me, destination marketing and  
15 tourism organization as well as a convention  
16 elicitor's bureau for the five boroughs of New York  
17 City. Our mission is to maximize inbound travel and  
18 tourism opportunities through the city, build  
19 economic prosperity, and spread the dynamic image of  
20 the five boroughs around the world. We are a  
21 501(c)(6) private, not-for-profit member organization  
22 and represent the interests of nearly 2000 member  
23 businesses and organizations from the five boroughs.  
24 We are governed by an 85-member board of directors,  
25

1  
2 representing a diverse range of businesses from  
3 across the city. Our members ranges from hotels,  
4 cultural organizations, restaurants, and attractions,  
5 to BIDs and chambers of commerce. Together they fund  
6 about half our operations. We also hold a  
7 procurement contract with the Department of Small  
8 Business Services to provide the City of New York  
9 with certain tourism marketing services. Travel and  
10 tourism has long been a driver of economic prosperity  
11 for New York City with direct and indirect impacts in  
12 all five boroughs. 2019 marked the 10th consecutive  
13 year of growth in the number of visitors, and  
14 importantly in visitor spending, business revenues,  
15 job creation, new investments, and city tax revenue.  
16 However, the pandemic crippled the tourism and  
17 hospitality industry once normal operations came to a  
18 halt. Our global community fractured as borders were  
19 closed and convenings of any size became impossible.  
20 Let me give you a snapshot of the economic costs and  
21 losses the city endured during the first year of the  
22 pandemic. Combined domestic and international  
23 visitation dropped by 65% and visitor spending  
24 decreased by 66%. This translated to a greater than  
25 50% loss in jobs and a 2 billion dollar decrease in

1 local tax revenues from all sources. Tourism-  
2 supported hotel room demand, always a leading  
3 indicator for economic impact, fell by 69% in  
4 calendar 2020. Hotel taxes, down by at least 500  
5 million to the general fund. These enormous losses  
6 were aggravated by the closing of the US borders as  
7 international markets account for 50% of room nights  
8 and almost half of all visitor spending across the  
9 city. Given this reduction in visitation and  
10 spending since March 2020, especially by overnight  
11 travel and international visitors, the city's leisure  
12 and hospitality sector has lost more jobs than the  
13 finance, information, real estate, and professional  
14 and business services sectors combined. Leisure and  
15 hospitality jobs were down by 50%, which represents  
16 over 230,000 jobs lost last year. As you may know, a  
17 significant proportion of the tourism work force also  
18 lives in neighborhoods throughout the city. Many of  
19 them work in small businesses that provide key inputs  
20 to the visitor experience, from wholesalers to event  
21 specialists to local tour guides and startups. The  
22 tourism ecosystem spreads benefits at every level.  
23 Restaurants and bars, which rely on visitors for  
24 about one-third of their revenues have been most  
25

1 affected in terms of actual number of jobs lost, a  
2 loss of at least 105,000 jobs as of September this  
3 year, still down by more than one-third from their  
4 2019 peaks. It was good news when seated dining  
5 became available and then indoor dining returned.  
6 The industry has been adding jobs, but remains at  
7 risk, at risk as the winter weather returns. On the  
8 other hand, though smaller in numbers, the arts,  
9 entertainment, cultural, and recreation sector has  
10 been hardest hit. Given the attraction of the city's  
11 cultural community to visitors, six in 10 jobs in the  
12 sector are supported by visitor spending. As a  
13 result, in September, even as Broadway, live events,  
14 and museums are open across the boroughs, jobs in  
15 this sector remain at historic lows. 25,000 jobs  
16 below 2019 levels, that's 28% below benchmark. This  
17 sector remains critical to the city's image and  
18 recovery. Active hotel inventory also remains down  
19 compared to prepandemic levels, even as new hotels  
20 have opened and properties across the five boroughs  
21 have reopened to visitors. The employment situation  
22 in this sector remains 32% below 2019 levels, hitting  
23 just 219,000 jobs in September this year, still more  
24 than 100,000 jobs below earlier levels. The return  
25

1 of domestic visitors has driven occupancy rates to an  
2 annual average of just 55%. The sector remains at  
3 risk as the recovery of business and internal travel  
4 will take several years to regain peak levels.

5 Throughout these uncertain times NYC & Company  
6 remains pivotal to the city and the industry by  
7 connecting, convening, and supporting critical  
8 sectors of the economy from the earliest days of the  
9 pandemic. In June 2020 we brought together key  
10 stakeholders from across sectors and the boroughs,  
11 including public health partners, to establish the  
12 Coalition for New York City Hospitality and Tourism  
13 Recovery. The first objective of the coalition was  
14 to create a tourism recovery plan and in July 2020 we  
15 released All In NYC, the roadmap for tourism's  
16 reimagining a recovery. Utilizing our strength as  
17 the city's destination marketing organization, major  
18 components of this plan included our continuing local  
19 and resident revitalization campaign, All in NYC, our  
20 health initiative, Stay Well NYC Pledge, tactics for  
21 a renewed commitment to diversity and inclusivity,  
22 and especially in lifting up New York City's BIPOC,  
23 black, indigenous, people of color communities. We  
24 put hyper local exploration and experiences along  
25

1 with staycation messaging at the forefront of our  
2 initiatives until domestic business and ultimately  
3 international travel could resume. As the US opens  
4 our borders to international markets, New York City  
5 is regaining its rightful place as the top  
6 international destination, bringing global visitors  
7 who stay longer and do more dining, shopping,  
8 visiting museums and historic sites, and attending  
9 live performances for sporting events in the city.  
10 Through strategic government investment in our work  
11 we've been able to maintain our presence and  
12 messaging in key global markets, ready to pivot to  
13 welcoming domestic and internal visitors once again.  
14 This much-needed government funding has expanded our  
15 marketing reach and research capabilities.  
16 Therefore, we are grateful to Senate Majority Leader  
17 Schumer for ensuring New York City received  
18 significant funds from the American Rescue Plan. We  
19 would like to thank the mayor for making an historic  
20 investment in our work and Chairman Vallone for  
21 speaking at the mayor's presser announcing the city's  
22 first investment interest in recovery. Now Nancy  
23 Mammana will share our 2021 marketing campaigns and  
24

1  
2 vibrancy programs that continue to revitalize the  
3 travel and tourism industry. Nancy?

4 CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER MAMMANA: Good  
5 morning, and thank you for the opportunity to share  
6 our work with you today. On June 24 we launched our  
7 global It's Time For New York City campaign, which is  
8 the largest, multiphased, global tourism, marketing,  
9 and advertising campaign ever created for New York  
10 City. It's Time For New York City was rolled out as  
11 restrictions began to lift, more people were getting  
12 vaccinated, and travel resumed in the US and beyond.  
13 The campaign reminds visitors of the city's unrivaled  
14 energy, and the abundance of endless experiences and  
15 resiliency that make New York City the most iconic  
16 destination in the world. Designed to create urgency  
17 and FOMO, the fear of missing out, It's Time For New  
18 York City campaign has three phases. It includes  
19 television, digital, outdoor media, and partnerships  
20 of several types. To date, the three commercials  
21 have launched, asking first where were you in the  
22 summer of 2021, followed by Lights Up, which  
23 celebrates the fall return of Broadway, performing  
24 arts, and culture, and our third, highlighting the  
25 holiday season, which just launched the first week of

1  
2 November. The mayor continues to show his support by  
3 including us in his pressers to showcase our  
4 commercials and celebrate the return of tourism and  
5 vitality to the city. In addition to our media, we  
6 have joined forces with important travel partners to  
7 drive actionable results. We began in June with a  
8 partnership with AAA, targeting the northeast drive  
9 market, followed by American Airlines in July,  
10 targeting the longer haul US domestic market, and  
11 Amtrak targeting the [inaudible] corridor from  
12 October to Q1 of next year. We also followed up our  
13 2020 New York City Misses You Too out of home camp  
14 internationally, with a New York City is Ready For  
15 You creative messaging which replaced it in the UK,  
16 Mexico, Japan, and Sweden, in part to help fulfill  
17 our contractual requirement with the city to utilize  
18 our [inaudible] media allocation, but also to help  
19 keep New York City top of mind as travelers begin  
20 considering their next destination. When the federal  
21 government announced a November 8 reopening to  
22 vaccinated travelers we immediately began expanding  
23 our efforts by developing international media camps  
24 and partnerships with airlines and tour operators in  
25 key markets. Those partnerships include British

1 Airways, which launched in London on November 8, and  
2 then Qatar Airlines in Canada, Aeromexico in Mexico,  
3 CBC in Brazil, and six other partnerships that will  
4 be live by Q4 2021. Other markets will follow in Q1  
5 of next year. Throughout the pandemic we have  
6 continued our engagement with locals and tristate  
7 visitors and commuters through our annual vibrancy  
8 campaigns designed to help promote the energy and  
9 attractiveness of our local tourism and hospitality  
10 businesses during need periods. Since its inception  
11 in summer 1992, New York City Restaurant Week, held  
12 in both January and February as well as July and  
13 August, has been a celebration of dining, bringing  
14 people together for a shared experience of food,  
15 drinks, and camaraderie. Taking into consideration  
16 the vulnerability of the restaurant industry, we made  
17 it economically feasible for any restaurant to  
18 participate, receiving the largest number of five  
19 borough participants ever. On the heels of  
20 Restaurant Week's continued success, New York City &  
21 Company has launched seasonal vibrancy programs,  
22 including the twice-annual Broadway week and New York  
23 City Off Broadway Week with 2-for-1 tickets to some  
24 of the hottest shows in town, as well as those shows  
25

1  
2 at Broadway and smaller theaters across the boroughs,  
3 as well as NYC Must See Week, which offers 2-for-1  
4 tickets to nearly 70 attractions, museums, tours, and  
5 performing arts. These programs have attracted  
6 visitors from the tristate region and beyond and are  
7 economic drivers during what is typically a slower  
8 period. We are continuing that with It's Time For  
9 Culture, which just wrapped in October, which was  
10 really designed to highlight all the variety of  
11 cultural attractions available to throughout the five  
12 boroughs, large and small. And we are also following  
13 up with a push around our local businesses and  
14 holiday shopping and retail this November and  
15 December. In January we will also be bringing back  
16 New York City Winter Outing, which is a combination  
17 of NYC Restaurant Week, Broadway Week, Must See Week,  
18 and the newly added NYC Hotel Week, which we will  
19 begin promoting in December for planning purposes.  
20 By combining all programs into our broader platform  
21 and under one messaging umbrella, we expand the reach  
22 of the message to drive day trip, as well as valuable  
23 overnight visitors and traffic to these businesses  
24 across the city. As we rejoice with the successful  
25 return of Broadway, performing arts, nightlife,

1 music, and sports venues, the industry is still  
2 challenged as not all international borders have  
3 reopened, business meetings and conferences have not  
4 fully returned, and the coronavirus variants remain a  
5 threat to our new normal. NYC & Company will  
6 continue to support our industry by stimulating  
7 demand from hyper local, regional, national, and now  
8 international visitors. This will required continue  
9 smart policy-making and investment from our  
10 government partners, as well as sharing in real-time  
11 public health guidelines with all of our audiences.  
12 We knew this would be a marathon and not a sprint,  
13 and are steeled for the long road ahead to a full  
14 economic recovery. However, without a stable long-  
15 term funding strategy we will fall behind our  
16 competitors, affecting our mission to build economic  
17 prosperity and share all that each borough has to  
18 offer around the world. Thank you for allowing this  
19 time to testify. As always, we appreciate the  
20 council's support of the industry and being partners  
21 with us in this work. We are happy to answer any  
22 questions you may have. Thank you.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Ms. Keren  
25 and Ms. Mammana. I will now turn it over to

1  
2 questions from the chairs. Ah, panelists from the  
3 administration, please stay unmuted if possible  
4 during this question and answer period, and a  
5 reminder to both chairs that you will be in control  
6 of muting and unmuting yourself during this period.  
7 Ah, thank you. Chair Vallone, you may begin.

8 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Thank you, Alex.

9 Ah, thank you Dr. Keren and Nancy. Boy, that was a  
10 lot of information [laughs]. Thank you very much,  
11 and that's how you get prepared for a hearing. Um,  
12 you know, in some respects it's not fair, right,  
13 because Broadway just reopened this Labor Day. In  
14 November we just international tourists come back, so  
15 it's, it's difficult for us to say, OK, tell us where  
16 we are and let's, let's hope it's all back to 100%.  
17 Clearly it's not, but we, we thank you so much  
18 because when the entire country and the world shut  
19 down so much of it turned to you and your team, um,  
20 who also was devastated with budget cuts and employee  
21 cuts, and yet through that you managed with the  
22 [inaudible] New York and now with the new campaign,  
23 um, with the three phases that, ah, Nancy just talked  
24 about, I think those are some of the bright lights  
25 that will bring us back. Ah, I really wanted to give

1  
2 this time for you to, to elaborate on some of that  
3 data that you gave us, and because it is Council  
4 Member Van Bramer and I, as we come to the end of our  
5 terms, as much as we don't want to go, we're kind of  
6 being have to go, there will be new chairs and what I  
7 hope to do is lay that format for the future chairs  
8 to take this type of hearing and the amount of work  
9 we've done together to keep the momentum going and  
10 keep the development of the new partnership, 'cause I  
11 really think it is a new partnership between  
12 government and the work that you've been doing. In  
13 the beginning we had to kind of wrap our hands around  
14 all the things, ah, New York & Company and EDC were  
15 doing within the tourism and hospitality and  
16 cultural. Um, but now it's, it's the synchronicity  
17 between City Hall and those agencies. And I don't,  
18 I'd hate for that to go backwards. So I think it's  
19 so important for today's hearing and the hearings and  
20 work we've done before, and as Chair Van Bramer will  
21 say also with his questions that we take the steps  
22 and continue forward. So I guess for, for the New  
23 York & Company team, how would you envision that  
24 governmental relation that we've kind of nurtured  
25 together through City Hall? What is that you need to

1  
2 continue the rebound from, ah, you as city partner to  
3 make sure that the rebound continues?

4 CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER MAMMANA: I, I  
5 think at, at the most basic level, ah, it would be  
6 really just supporting these businesses in any way  
7 you can as a New Yorker. Um, that is at the core and  
8 that is something we live and breath every day as  
9 well, ah, to patronize these businesses and also  
10 anything you could do to help support our messaging  
11 and amplify what we're doing. Everything in our  
12 channels you'll see us promoting local businesses  
13 across our network, ah, in every borough, and really  
14 anything you could to tag us and support our, and  
15 amplify our messaging, ah, is, is truly grateful.  
16 We, we agree and we've made amazing progress and have  
17 seen incredible collaboration and partnership with  
18 our partners at DCLA and EDC, and with the council,  
19 and we also look forward to continuing that momentum.  
20 It's critical as we move forward and it's been  
21 amazing to see, especially over the last, ah, year,  
22 ah, of, of how we've really come together. We, and  
23 we have seen that we are stronger as a combined  
24 voice. Ah, so we, we also look forward to that  
25 continuing.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: You know, and  
3 Nancy, I guess one of the things that we could  
4 continue immediately is the work with our fellow New  
5 Yorkers and, and within the tristate and the domestic  
6 visitation, do you think we reached, you know, I  
7 guess where are we, since international just started,  
8 it's really not there, I mean, we can kind of, ah,  
9 take some shots at what we think [inaudible] where do  
10 we think we are with the numbers with domestic  
11 visitation into the city? And have we reached the  
12 pre-pandemic numbers and like where are we today and  
13 how can we reach that maximum, 'cause we're gonna  
14 still be so dependent on our fellow New Yorkers in,  
15 in the tristate to come back to New York.

16 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT KEREN: Ah, let  
17 me take this, a small stab at that. We have come  
18 back quite remarkably, particularly in the second  
19 half of this year as the rate of vaccination has  
20 spread in our city, in our region, and across the  
21 country. We are having as many of our members in  
22 arts and culture, in dining, and other, ah, parts of  
23 the city will tell you very strong weekend  
24 performance, that is a drive market and local coming  
25 into the city for what we have on offer. We will

1  
2 take at least another year or two to fully complement  
3 the domestic market, the long-haul traveler who needs  
4 to fly here, the business traveler who is dealing not  
5 only with the pandemic but also with the concerns of  
6 their corporations and management about spending.  
7 And this is a pattern that will take us a couple of  
8 years, but we have certainly opened the faucet and  
9 are seeing the positive results of the collective  
10 efforts of our government partners in supporting the  
11 pandemic safety and our business partners in travel  
12 and tourism as they have adopted these same policies  
13 and practices.

14 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: So you think,  
15 Doctor, that maybe within a year or two we'll, we'll  
16 hopefully get back to where our domestic numbers were  
17 pre-pandemic?

18 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT KEREN: Ah, my  
19 current forecast is domestic will be breaking through  
20 old records before the end of 2023. Um, things can  
21 always turn out faster.

22 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: If, if the families  
23 of myself and Council Member Van Bramer are any  
24 example we shall be hitting those numbers sooner  
25 rather than later.

COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT JOINTLY WITH 33  
CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES, AND INTERNATIONAL  
1 INTERGROUP RELATIONS

2 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT KEREN: [laughs]

3 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Since [inaudible].

4 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT KEREN: We will  
5 encourage you to encourage your families.

6 CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER MAMMANA:

7 [laughs] Thank you for that.

8 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Yeah, holidays are  
9 right around the corner and we're already getting the  
10 what are we doing in the next three to four weeks, so  
11 we have that already to go. Um, I would say you just  
12 brought up some of the business partners and so much  
13 of that is dependent on the hotel industry and  
14 there's so many subsectors within you have to keep  
15 your handle on. Um, do you see, I'm still some very  
16 high vacancy rates, I guess, within the hotel  
17 industry. Some, some of the complaints or some of  
18 the concerns during the pandemic were the state and  
19 not so much city, but state and city, ah, limitations  
20 and regulations that made it so difficult to, to rent  
21 out, ah, event space and, and bring in folks, and we  
22 know there's vacancy and there were, there, ah, were  
23 different type of vaccination requirements and  
24 different type of meeting requirements and  
25 limitations. Do you see that there are still some,

1  
2 um, limitations on a state level and/or the city that  
3 we could help in, in not so much removing or easing,  
4 or are we back to pre-pandemic of the, the  
5 limitations that were set by government?

6 CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER MAMMANA: Do you  
7 want to take that one?

8 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT KEREN: I think  
9 that there, the, I have to say that I would need to  
10 get back to on some of the very specific changes,  
11 things that are still in development. But we are  
12 seeing that events are taking place at the Javits  
13 Center. Meetings and events are taking place in  
14 large venues across the city. The, ah, mandates for  
15 vaccination and mask wearing in our arts and cultural  
16 institutions has gone from what we have observed  
17 outside of that particular institution seems to be  
18 going very well. And it does appear that our  
19 travelers, for the most part, have adjusted to that,  
20 that they will show proof of vaccination, that they  
21 will in fact stay masked in a theater or a museum,  
22 and limit the time they have their masks down in and  
23 indoor dining establishment.

24 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: So it's, it's, it's  
25 a work in progress. But if we could figure there,

1  
2 'cause I know that, that one limitation, ah, would  
3 limit 50 people into a, um, meeting hall was  
4 disastrous for some of our hotels and some of our  
5 local venues. Even Jacob Javits, that couldn't bring  
6 that, and the easing of that type of restriction is,  
7 is monumental in trying to bring those groups back.  
8 Do you, do you see, I guess, the, even with Jacob  
9 Javits, I know there's just, I think there's less  
10 than 20 different events planned for the year. Um,  
11 is, I guess, is most of those domestic bookings and  
12 we, we're not able to tap into the international  
13 bookings yet. Um, when do we see hopefully that we  
14 can start seeing some of our fellow travelers from  
15 across the world and Europe come back to us?

16 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT KEREN: I think  
17 with the government opening to vaccinated  
18 international travelers with a negative test we will  
19 begin to see both the buyers and sellers, the  
20 attendees and the exhibitors at these large events  
21 begin to pick up, um, and we know that our  
22 development team and the Javits and our member hotels  
23 are working very hard on attracting the kind of  
24 business that will help support New York City travel  
25 and tourism.

1  
2           CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: I think those are,  
3 and I guess, Nancy, if there's anything in there that  
4 you can add into, I, I think with the unemployment  
5 rates and, and the vacancy rates, um, where they are,  
6 right, this is, this is a critical time to, to turn  
7 that, turn that around. Do you see anything, I guess  
8 the partnership, for one, is, is key and we  
9 [inaudible] that. But the bringing back of the jobs  
10 that have been at such a low rate I think, I think,  
11 ah, Doctor mentioned, is still over 200,000 for those  
12 who, within the industry that are unemployment. What  
13 is a key factor of bringing back those who were  
14 previously employed in the sector but now is still  
15 having those lower rates? I know with tourism  
16 increases that will be alleviated. But I, I don't  
17 know how much longer some of those folks can wait.  
18 So is, with some of the stimulus funding and some of  
19 the federal and state programs that are coming in, is  
20 there anything short term that we can see to maybe  
21 help those who are, are still unemployment in this  
22 sector?

23           CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER MAMMANA: Yeah, I  
24 think from our perspective what we've been waiting  
25 for to complete the puzzle has just occurred with the

1 international border reopening. That is really the  
2 missing piece. Um, we, we just can't get to full  
3 recovery without that. With international travelers  
4 historically being 20% of the visitation and room  
5 nights with 50% of the spend, it has had an enormous  
6 impact, as we all know. So now that that's occurred,  
7 we really have, ah, dove in with, um, with a pretty  
8 robust plan of partnerships, ah, across travel  
9 partners in, in our key markets and beyond to help  
10 generate that traffic back. So we've got 10  
11 partnerships in the making with all of our key feeder  
12 markets with either airlines or tour operators.  
13 Clearly it's the leisure segment first, but there is  
14 a lot of pent-up demand and we're very bullish about  
15 what we're hearing from British Airways with the  
16 first partnership to roll out. You may have seen our  
17 event that we had last Monday. A lot of, a lot of  
18 interest. I think their routes, from what we're  
19 understanding, from them are sold out for the holiday  
20 season. So we do think we're, we're, we're on our  
21 way back. We've taken that last step of the  
22 concentric circle approach. We, we finally see the  
23 last circle. So that, that's, we're in the  
24 beginning, I think, of what we might begin to see  
25

1  
2 some, some real change and impact with that. It may  
3 take several months for us to completely bear out,  
4 but we do think [inaudible] difference, ah, this  
5 holiday season and into, into next year. So really  
6 that's what we've been waiting for.

7 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Yeah, I think  
8 that's why we said at the beginning it's, it's kind  
9 of unfair since a lot of this has just started in the  
10 last quarter to kind of, to hope for it perfectly  
11 back to 100%. We know that's not the case. But I  
12 guess we're trying to create that groundwork with,  
13 through either legislation and/or budget and that  
14 partnership to make sure that turnaround is as  
15 quickly as possible. I, I don't want, especially  
16 even budget, right, I mean, your, the budget for New  
17 York & Company was, was devastated as, as this  
18 progression through the pandemic and, and back, and  
19 you guys have had to do this on small staff. Um,  
20 have you been able to, to revamp and recover a little  
21 bit through your own budget and through some of the  
22 stimulus funding and funding that's come through?  
23 And I guess where are you today based on how  
24 difficult it got about a year ago?

1  
2 CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER MAMMANA: The,  
3 the stimulus funding that we received was a, was a  
4 game changer for us. Um, it absolutely has helped  
5 bolster our effort and do things that we have not  
6 been able to do in the past. We, we always had  
7 partnerships with international airlines and tour  
8 operators, but not to this scale and depth. Ah,  
9 we've not done television advertising, at least not  
10 in several years. Um, so all of this work is largely  
11 because of the, of the funds that we were, ah, lucky  
12 enough to receive. So we are, ah, yeah, it was a  
13 game changer for us, and it did allow us to hire back  
14 some of our staff, not all, but enough to have the  
15 resources to do the work. And we expect that to  
16 continue taking us through to, due to, ah, with those  
17 campaigns, so with regard to future ways of, of  
18 continuing the momentum, ah, as we know that the  
19 recovery will be ongoing after that, but, ah, but it  
20 absolutely has allowed us to go very deep and wide  
21 with our efforts, ah, because of that funding, and it  
22 definitely, um, it made us, ah, a lot more, I think,  
23 impactful in terms of the reach, ah, that we were  
24 able to achieve because of that campaign, and really,  
25 ah, delve into media outlets in countries at a level

1 that we had not been able to previously do. So, so  
2 we're very fortunate and really just looking ahead at  
3 how we can maintain the momentum after that.  
4

5 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Do you think that  
6 the funding will carry over to next year for, for  
7 continued uses in the budget or are we gonna reach a,  
8 a point where that won't be the case?

9 CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER MAMMANA: Yeah,  
10 it's, it's meant to carry our international efforts,  
11 so we have reserved some to continue into next year,  
12 just based on the timing of the border reopening.  
13 So, ah, it should sunset in June. Um, after that  
14 we'll, we'll need to look at other ways to, to try,  
15 um, maintain that level and then some, ah, on a, on a  
16 more consistent basis. But, ah, we were, we were  
17 intending for, for much of that and we had reserved,  
18 ah, some of those funds to make sure that we were  
19 getting it to market internationally when the time  
20 was right. So, so now we're, we're in the process of  
21 deploying that. But, yeah, I think, I think through  
22 June we'll be, we'll be spending those funds.

23 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Well now you know  
24 why we were working so hard to try to get some  
25 additional revenue, ah, streams for...

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CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER MAMMANA: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: ...New York &  
Company. I know EDC is with us today and I'm gonna  
ask them at the very end, just a couple minutes, on  
how they envision their budget through assisting,  
because so much of the work you do is dependent on  
that budget, and I was always trying to work, um,  
with your team to try to find other avenues so that  
if a day like this did come, thank God for the  
stimulus. But I, I wanted to be able to give you  
that continually, 'cause we can't have you, ah, so,  
at a depleted force. We need someone [inaudible] and  
I think I'll just, since as you mentioned, a new  
campaign, I remember standing in, in, ah, Bay Plaza  
talking about the All In New York and telling  
everyone to come to Bell Boulevard and back to New  
York City and as Jimmy did in, in his district and we  
were all saying come on back, and that played a big  
part saying, letting people know it's OK just to come  
back outside, and then to come back to businesses.  
And now you mentioned that It's Time For New York  
City campaign. Is, is the All In campaign, um,  
transitioned into the new campaign, or is there any  
segments that are left over, and did you have any

1  
2 like file numbers from your All In, is there anything  
3 that you wanted to expand on that?

4 CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER MAMMANA: We, we  
5 did transition from All In into It's Time. Ah, but  
6 we are still seeing some social content using the All  
7 In NYC hashtag, that was really designed for locals.  
8 As you know, at that time we were very much talking  
9 to our residents to steal them and to celebrate their  
10 resiliency and then as we opened up, ah, to speak to  
11 visitors we, we just kind of evolved into It's Time,  
12 which is really outward, more outwardly facing, and  
13 it was really designed to give folks the permission  
14 to visit. We did quite a bit of market research,  
15 qualitative and quantitative, and at that time the  
16 biggest hurdle was that people were not sure if  
17 everything was open and if they should come and if it  
18 was time to come and, you know, what, what would be  
19 open when they arrived, and there was a lot of  
20 confusion and there was some, ah, hesitancy. So we  
21 went very hard, ah, with that message with It's Time  
22 to very much, ah, come forward with the fact that it  
23 is time to visit and give them the permission to come  
24 now while we could still capitalize on the summer  
25 season. So if you see all the content, it's, it's

1 almost in real time that we've [inaudible] all around  
2 the boroughs with what is happening now to  
3 demonstrate the vibrancy. We wanted to show people,  
4 not tell people, ah, and it was very much about, um,  
5 making sure people were aware of what was happening,  
6 that they understood our protocols, but that they  
7 should come now. And we, we, we knew that we needed  
8 to maintain a very aggressive message to stay top of  
9 mind for travelers who at that time were perhaps  
10 looking to go to beaches and mountains and things  
11 like that. You know, we wanted to make sure they  
12 knew that what you really want to do, you probably  
13 had enough of being alone, you really want to come  
14 here where the vibrancy, ah, is and where the people  
15 are and all the energy is that you've been craving.  
16 So the content in the campaign is a very different  
17 one from All In. Ah, so we did open it up and we do  
18 imagine continuing to use this likely through the end  
19 of next year, um, and then obviously we'll look  
20 forward into an evolved message after that. But  
21 it's, it's, ah, broad and simple enough, as All In  
22 was meant to be to encapsulate a lot of different  
23 messages and extend into a lot of different  
24 campaigns. So, again, It's Time For Culture just  
25

1  
2 launched in October and we'll be continuing to house  
3 everything we do under It's Time, um, for, for at  
4 least in through next year and then we'll, we'll look  
5 to shift messaging, hopefully again to, ah, a  
6 different message when It's Time is no longer need  
7 and we look, we look forward to that.

8 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Well, you know, and  
9 I, I know Chair Van Bramer is going to have so many  
10 questions on, on, on the micro level. On the macro  
11 level there's so many things we talked about. But so  
12 many of his bills were, were, were instrumental in  
13 getting the Open Streets, ah, cultural programs to  
14 benefit also. We saw the opportunity for that. Ah,  
15 we benefitted that and some of that is a direct  
16 partnership between city government and, and EDC and  
17 New York & Company. So those are, are direct things  
18 that we can work on together to make sure that, that  
19 the good parts of those programs continue and how we  
20 can make them better. Um, I'll just, I saw that Tom  
21 [inaudible] is here from the Broadway League and I  
22 see Time Square Alliance, and they both put some  
23 great testimony in and I just want to, I guess, for  
24 the fact that we have the first panel when, when you  
25 look at their testimony, I know Tom is gonna mention

1  
2 it, it's, it's surprisingly similar in, in the  
3 positives and, and what they see as some of the local  
4 constraints, I guess, in bringing us back to 100%.  
5 And the two, the thing I noticed on both was the  
6 first that was mentioned for Ms. Wright and for Tom  
7 was that the city is safe and welcoming. And I, I  
8 know it is such a difficult task for NYC & Company,  
9 but it does bring forth the partnership with BIDs and  
10 the local [inaudible] departments and the city to,  
11 to, to provide that type of environment. Do you, I  
12 just want to give you a minute to what your thoughts  
13 might be on how we can help to continue to diverse  
14 that level of comfort and safety that's needed within  
15 the tourism industry. I know that, um, both Keith  
16 Bowers and I were, were very excited enacting 1811,  
17 which gave Time Square Alliance and the local  
18 industry to, to kind of zone correctly and, and have  
19 some control over the local streets. How, how do you  
20 envision, I guess, to keep that momentum going? Do  
21 you see, um, some of those partnerships with to  
22 provide that, that safety and comfort level that is  
23 needed for the tourism industry?

24 CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER MAMMANA:

25 Apologies. Is that, is that meant for us?

2 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Yeah, I think it's,  
3 it's, it's for, for you, um, because you're working  
4 with such, these great partners like the Broadway  
5 League and Time Square Alliance, and all of the folks  
6 that comprise, ah, parts of the, the local part of  
7 piece of the puzzle for tourism and cultural affairs.  
8 Um, their testimony is bringing up their concern  
9 about making sure the city is safe and welcoming.  
10 That is the first thing in both of their testimonies,  
11 ah, talk about as well as funding, and, and the  
12 partnership for that. I just wanted to get your  
13 thoughts on, on providing that, because obviously as,  
14 as the city transitions back into full capacity,  
15 providing and taking back streets and taking back  
16 hotel rooms and taking back that safety component, I  
17 guess what do you envision for 2022 to continue to  
18 provide that, that safety level that's so part of,  
19 ah, the tourism industry?

20 CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER MAMMANA: Yeah,  
21 ah, obviously it is critical for us and we, we do  
22 get, ah, quite a bit of feedback from our travel  
23 partners as well as consumers. So continuing the  
24 efforts to maintain safety is, is core to our message  
25 and we, we absolutely have, ah, become a repository

1  
2 for the most up-to-date information for travelers on  
3 our website. There are, the most trafficked pages on  
4 our site have been our coronavirus resources, ah, and  
5 information updates. So our, our travelers in  
6 interested. At times they are confused. So we, we  
7 take special care to explain exactly what is  
8 happening here, and we want to make sure they are  
9 getting a very accurate picture. We've done man on  
10 the street interviews with people waiting on line for  
11 Broadway shows, ah, so that they can speak directly  
12 to potential travelers on how great an experience  
13 they're having and how wonderful it's been, you know,  
14 walking the street of Time Square and wherever it is  
15 they are, US Open, Bronx Zoo, we, we put them out all  
16 over the boroughs. We want people to know what is  
17 really happening here, ah, and also I think the  
18 efforts we've made from, from the coronavirus  
19 perspective and, and how we maintained their levels  
20 and how we've really led the way and that part of the  
21 recovery. Travelers are appreciative of that. And  
22 they, ah, I think from even a meeting planner  
23 perspective, I mean, these are things that we are  
24 touting as a city, ah, because the, the folks that  
25 are out there traveling now, they, they need, they

1  
2 want to know and they care. So those types of  
3 things, just like sustainability, those are the  
4 things that travelers really look to. Um, so we, we  
5 heavily promote the strides that we are making. Ah,  
6 the, the safety piece is something obviously, that it  
7 is something we are watching and we, we, we try to  
8 make sure that we are communicating as openly as we  
9 can with travelers to let them know what's, what's  
10 happening. But, yes, it's absolutely, it's top of  
11 mind for us and for travelers.

12 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: And I, I thank you  
13 for that, because the, the coordination and  
14 cooperation, um, it can't be voices from different  
15 aspects. It has to be a joint force. So as council  
16 members and as legislators, when hear that voice then  
17 we take action. So I think the, the better that we  
18 can focus on those topics together so [inaudible]  
19 public safety is sometimes not thought about in this  
20 sector and it has to be. So I think it's important  
21 to have your voice and those here. And I think the  
22 last thing I'm just gonna, just for EDC, is Bianca  
23 still here from, from EDC? There you are, hiding.  
24 Um, I guess your role in this, you know, New York &  
25 Company's laid out a, a, a vision to bring us back,

1 and it's from domestic, international, um, and so  
2 much of that falls within the umbrella of the great  
3 Economic Development Corporation. So, I guess,  
4 where, where do you see and how are you partnering  
5 with New York & Company and, and the different  
6 components of the tourism and hospitality sectors,  
7 um, for, for the end of this quarter and beyond?

9 ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT SOSA: Sure.

10 Um, I think similarly to what, ah, Donna and Nancy  
11 said, that we, we did partner closely with the All In  
12 NYC campaign, um, last year and I think going forward  
13 EDC's tourism, I think sector, um, we're kind of  
14 limited. Um, but we do, you know we did restart  
15 cruises at the terminals and we also are running  
16 public markets in, in the different boroughs. So,  
17 um, we're looking forward to continuing with  
18 [inaudible].

19 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Well, is, is there  
20 an aspect, you know, EDC's broad planning and  
21 projects, capital, local, and, and the development of  
22 different industries, obviously that will affect the  
23 different components within the hospitality sectors.  
24 Do you see any capital projects or different funding  
25 plan that could benefit the tourism industry going

1 forward? Because so much of the New York & Company  
2 and their partners were, were, survived on, on  
3 different funding that came through on the federal  
4 level and stimulus funding. But I, I like to make  
5 sure that that stream is continued beyond stimulus  
6 funding, because so much of the budget is dependent  
7 on tourism in New York City and sometimes we forget  
8 that. So I think EDC's role will be instrumental  
9 and, and once that funding package ends that we can  
10 make sure that New York & Company has the ability to  
11 go forward. I just, I, I guess your vision for that  
12 and do you see any change in budgetary approach or  
13 different ways that EDC can affect or assist that  
14 industry?  
15

16 ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT SOSA: Yeah, I  
17 think we're still doing kind of a comprehensive  
18 lesson learned from COVID and how it's affected EDC's  
19 budget. Um, and we're gonna, I think, you know, try  
20 and incorporate what we've learned from COVID and how  
21 tourism and, you know, where are budget, um, maybe is  
22 at risk going forward, um.

23 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Yeah, I think,  
24 Bianca, that would be, I think that would be a key  
25 partnership. I think what we just heard through,

1  
2 through the, the first panel is, is making sure that  
3 city agencies, city government, EDC, and the folks  
4 that make the hospitality, tourism, um, industry so  
5 vibrant, EDC has to be, ah, part and parcel of that  
6 going forward with your budget, your assistance, and  
7 how the capital is planned, how the local programming  
8 is planned, how the five boroughs are envisioned, how  
9 we go beyond Manhattan, as Jimmy and I have always  
10 fought to bring Queens into the picture beyond and  
11 that has happened, you know, these last [inaudible]  
12 to 12 years that has definitely happened. It's the  
13 breadth of it has reached the outer boroughs finally.  
14 That's, that's what I see [inaudible], ah, future  
15 within that. I think that's, the great work that you  
16 do, um, has to be partnered with these, these  
17 conversations that Doctor and Nancy have put together  
18 for us, and that would be my hope. OK, so, Chair Van  
19 Bramer, I, ah, I'm sorry about that. But there was  
20 so much to, so many different components of this  
21 hearing and I just would feel negligent if we didn't  
22 touch all of them. So I appreciate your patience on  
23 that. I happily turn it over to you, and then for  
24 the panels that right after, once Chair Van Bramer is  
25 finished we're gonna go right to the panels, and I

1  
2 know some of the testimony has been submitted and any  
3 of the council members want to jump and raise a hand,  
4 ah, Council Member Van Bramer and I will, will let  
5 you speak at that point. So, Chair Van Bramer, it's  
6 all yours.

7 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you, ah,  
8 Chair Vallone. I love your passion for this work and  
9 it comes through in, in your questioning and, ah, I  
10 share that. And, again, we, we've done a lot of  
11 great work together, ah, and made this a top priority  
12 together. So I really appreciate your partnership  
13 and your friendship, ah, um, Chair Vallone. Ah, I,  
14 I, um, you know, I, I remember a few years ago I  
15 told, ah, Fred Dixon, ah, this story. My husband and  
16 I were in Amsterdam and we were thrilled to see  
17 advertisements for, ah, folks to come to New York  
18 City that were particularly to Pride Month. Um, and,  
19 ah, it made us very happy. I think I took a photo of  
20 it and texted it to Fred and said thank you for your  
21 this ad, we're here in Amsterdam, ah, I'm very, ah,  
22 very proud of the moment of our city and NYC &  
23 Company. Um, but it calls to mind the, what I assume  
24 is, is, is a plan and a, and a ramp-up of advertising  
25 overseas to remind folks that we're open and that

1 Broadway is open, our, our major culturals are open,  
2 and, ah, and of course our, um, Queens and Brooklyn  
3 and neighborhood-based, ah, arts groups are open as  
4 well. But maybe NYC & Company can talk a little bit  
5 about that, that plan, that ramp-up, that strategy  
6 to, ah, to have those, as, as we saw and I think  
7 outside of the Van Gogh, ah, Museum, ah, ah, that day  
8 several years ago in Amsterdam.

10 CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER MAMMANA: Yeah,  
11 absolutely, um, thank you for that. We have, we have  
12 basically two phases to our out-of-home media. So  
13 previously, prior to the grant that we received we  
14 were very forward with the out-of-home media. That  
15 drove our international partnerships. This year  
16 because of the additional funding that's been a, a  
17 great sort of awareness building overlay to the media  
18 that we can now offer those partners. So we do  
19 expect to have a lot more ROI to the campaigns, which  
20 is, which is great. Ah, but we do have some creative  
21 up live, if you, if you saw the NYC Misses You  
22 creative internationally, we have quite a bit of that  
23 running, just while we were sort of, again, keeping  
24 the flame burning for our international visitors.  
25 We've replaced that with New York City Is Ready To

1  
2 Welcome You as we begin to, to develop these  
3 international partnerships that I mentioned. So the  
4 first one just went live last week. We're pretty  
5 sure you'll, you'll see our signage all over London.  
6 We have quite a bit of inventory in London. Then  
7 we'll be closely followed by Canada, Mexico. We're,  
8 we're in discussions with several other partners in  
9 Germany, Korea, and so on. So we will have 10  
10 partnerships in 10 international countries, ah,  
11 through to the end of the year launching and it will  
12 continue into Q1 with some markets that we're  
13 obviously watching but they're not ready to execute,  
14 like Australia and China. We are reserving and just  
15 trying to keep the, you know, the, the button ready  
16 to push when, when those markets are ready. But  
17 we've got, we've got at least 10 going live. So  
18 we've been in conversations with our international  
19 partners for some time, as we sort of were hurry up  
20 and waiting for this day, and then once November 8  
21 was announced we went fairly full force. So, ah, you  
22 will see our signage everywhere once again, um,  
23 within the next month to two months we will be live  
24 in 10 markets. Ah, but right now you, you, you,

1 that, that signage is up in London and then it will  
2 stagger as these partnerships are, are completed.

3  
4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Ah, that's  
5 great, thank you. And is that a direct spend or is,  
6 is that, as you mentioned through partnerships,  
7 'cause this gets to your budget, right? So how much  
8 of that is, is direct spend that's tied to your  
9 budget and how much of that is, is agreements,  
10 partnerships, ah, you know, your working with other  
11 folks and getting that space, but it's not  
12 necessarily, um, a real heavy lift on the budgetary  
13 side?

14 CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER MAMMANA: The,  
15 the out of home in particular is within our existing  
16 GC to CO inventory, so that is not an incremental  
17 spend, but we are layering on the value to give over  
18 to the partner. We are then making a direct spend  
19 out of the, ah, out, out of the stimulus funds to the  
20 partner as well as the media that will drive  
21 attention to that partnership. So it's, it's just  
22 allowing it to be a lot more robust, the more we can  
23 promote to the, to the airline or tour operators  
24 following, so coming, being able to come to the table  
25 with a digital buy with that partner, ah, it

1 absolutely allows us to generate a lot more  
2 awareness, where normally it would be a very small  
3 investment plus the out of home. So we are  
4 deploying, ah, a significant amount of the, of the  
5 funding that we received as working dollars in media,  
6 direct with the partner in many cases, and also in  
7 third-party media in the market to drive awareness  
8 around the combined efforts. So we try to create a,  
9 a very integrated ecosystem with the partner. So we  
10 will advertise in the region, serve up what we call a  
11 warm lead, ah, someone who's, you know, activity  
12 we're kind of tracking online. If we think that  
13 they're expressing an interest in travel we'll send  
14 that lead over to the partner websites, so for  
15 example, British Airways site, for them to book their  
16 trip to New York, and then they'll send that person  
17 back to us for planning purposes on things to do and  
18 tickets to buy, etcetera, etcetera. So, ah, so the  
19 money has been, being, ah, directed to those source  
20 of efforts. So either on the, on the partners  
21 channels as well as on third-party channels to  
22 generate the, the broader reach.

24 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Um, I find this  
25 work fascinating, I really do. I think its, ah,

1 really important and, and not enough people follow it  
2 in, in New York City because, ah, it's, it's, it's  
3 how we, ah, support our city and, and the sectors  
4 that are dependent on, ah, tourism and, and it's, it  
5 involves a lot of strategy, and it involves a lot of,  
6 ah, work behind the scenes, ah, to make sure that  
7 folks overseas um, want to keep coming here.  
8 Obviously people will always want to come to New York  
9 City because it's so, ah, great, but, ah, it doesn't  
10 hurt to remind them how wonderful we are. Um, and  
11 obviously your budget, um, you know, is one that  
12 we've always wanted to be more robust and, um, and  
13 obviously this will be a, a question for another  
14 administration and another, ah, City Council. But,  
15 ah, ah, I, I, I hope that, ah, that you all are, are  
16 going to get the, the resources that you need to  
17 continue the work post stimulus. Um, ah, Chair  
18 Vallone mentioned this a little bit, but I'm, I'm  
19 fascinated by, um, the ramp-up in, in our, our  
20 tourism numbers, right, and I think, um, ah, you  
21 know, Donna talked a little bit about this, but at  
22 our peak we were in the 65 million range, right, of,  
23 of tourists coming to this city after that 10-year,  
24 um, incremental and sometimes not so incremental, ah,

1  
2 increase in, in visitorship and, and of course it, it  
3 fell, um, dramatically. Do you have a, a, a five-  
4 year, 10-year goal, right? Is there, ah, are we, are  
5 we charting, and I know that's almost impossible  
6 because there are so many variables here, um, include  
7 variants, but, ah, but do we have like KPIs that  
8 we're looking at that, um, that will give us some  
9 sense of where we're going and what are our targets  
10 are? Is that [inaudible]?

11 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT KEREN: We were,  
12 thank you for the question. We work very closely  
13 with one of the leading, ah, economics firms in the  
14 industry, Terson Economics. It is an Oxford  
15 economics company and they work with us to understand  
16 the economic forces, the access to New York, and New  
17 York City's own assets, what we have to offer to  
18 these global markets, whether it's the California  
19 vacationer or the school break person from South  
20 America or Europe or Asia. And so when we look at  
21 where we are right now, what our pace of recovery has  
22 been to date, what the concerns are of the travelers,  
23 because we're all so constantly taking the pulse of  
24 our potential travel market. What are their  
25 concerns? What are their financial aspects? We're

1  
2 in an interesting position in terms of for many  
3 people with the capability to do long-haul travel,  
4 international, or transcontinental, their jobs have  
5 not been affected. There is a lot of pent-up demand.  
6 There is a lot of additional savings. There is a lot  
7 of room on people's credit cards to run up some bills  
8 again because they paid down those credit cards  
9 during the pandemic when there was nothing else to  
10 do. So from an economic perspective our potential  
11 markets are economically able to travel. They're  
12 waiting for their visas or their permits or their  
13 comfort levels to pick up. The American travel  
14 market we will be watching very closely coming into  
15 the holidays, but it does look as if our hotels are  
16 beginning to see their short window booking. People  
17 are not sure they want to plan a very far away out  
18 from a trip. But our weekend performance in an  
19 increasing number of hotel rooms every week as more  
20 properties have opened and new properties have come  
21 online is in some weekends running at nearly 85%,  
22 though what's weakening the hotel performance is that  
23 mid-week number, which is still dependent on business  
24 travel, which is still soft, although getting better,  
25 and the international visitor who comes and stays a

1  
2 week and is here on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday,  
3 ah, because they're on vacation. The domestic  
4 travel, we're always been a weekend getaway. New  
5 York is wonderful on the weekends. So the resiliency  
6 of this city as a city and our industry in it is  
7 something we should never take for granted. It takes  
8 work. It takes partnership and cooperation and good  
9 support. But people who know me know I've been in  
10 this job since the post-9/11 period and I've watched  
11 us suffer and come back from 9/11, from recessions,  
12 and now from this global change. Um, I'm a New  
13 Yorker. We will come back and probably faster than  
14 my forecast, but please don't hold me to that.

15 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Ah, I appreciate  
16 that. I also appreciate your defiance love of New  
17 York and, ah, and, ah, I, I too have, ah, been  
18 blessed to, ah, only be a New Yorker for my entire  
19 life, but I would go even a step further along with  
20 Chair Vallone and say that, ah, I've been a Queens  
21 resident for all 52 years of my life and very proud  
22 of that. So, um, speaking of, of question, ah, um,  
23 you know, I know we touched on it, but, but, you  
24 know, talk, ah, a little bit about your support and,  
25 and, and the resources you direct to reminding folks

1 that while we acknowledge how important, ah,  
2 Manhattan, ah, is, ah, and, and, ah, the big  
3 commercial, ah, ah, and, um, central cultural hubs  
4 that we have there, and they're incredibly valuable.  
5 Um, there is nothing like the Met to the Museum of  
6 Natural History and all of those great institutions  
7 that I love. But, ah, we also know there is the  
8 great big borough of Brooklyn, ah, and Queens and,  
9 and the Bronx and Staten Island with lots to offer,  
10 too, and, and how do we, ah, always remind folks, um,  
11 like when the US Open is happening, that when we see  
12 all of those well-dressed folks, ah, on the Seven  
13 Train, which we, um, ah, sometimes like, um, we, we  
14 want to make sure that they, um, they get off, ah, at  
15 Sunnyside, Woodside, Jackson Heights, and Corona and  
16 Flushing and spend some of that, ah, midwestern  
17 dollars here in our beloved Queens.

19 CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER MAMMANA: Thank  
20 you for that question. We, we have a five-borough  
21 strategy, it's core to our mission. And, and quite  
22 frankly it's the only way that we can promote an  
23 authentic experience in New York City for, for  
24 travelers to more and more, ah, every year are  
25 looking for more of an authentic experience. We

1  
2 certainly promote the iconic attractions that are  
3 particularly, ah, relevant for a first-time visitor.  
4 But those visitors that continue to come back  
5 multiple times, the UK visitor is a great example,  
6 ah, and in particular we, we have to ensure that we  
7 are promoting our, our local attractions and our  
8 businesses in order to ensure that we are properly  
9 promoting New York City. It takes a few different  
10 forms. So I would say there's an always on approach  
11 in our content and our press efforts so you will see  
12 in our channels daily, whether it's our website or  
13 our social channels, or in our press channels, ah,  
14 every business that we could possibly promote within  
15 the boroughs, the restaurants, the, the culturals,  
16 that's an endemic part of our coverage. We've also  
17 recently launched several content packages that are  
18 evergreen. Ah, The Black Experience in NYC, The  
19 Latino Experience in NYC, and then we will be  
20 launching The Asian Experience in NYC, which are  
21 evergreen hubs that we will use to showcase the  
22 businesses and the business owners throughout the  
23 boroughs. Again, that make for a very culturally  
24 diverse experience that our locals are looking for  
25 and our travelers are looking for. So that, that is

1 something that is, again, always on, and then within  
2 our initiatives we do take special care within our  
3 membership team and our community affairs team under  
4 Dawn Smith and Shawana Simpson to physically go out  
5 to as many businesses throughout the boroughs to  
6 ensure that if they have a desire to participate in  
7 our programs and hopefully reach the economic benefit  
8 of those programs that they can do so. So those,  
9 that can range from things like neighborhood  
10 getaways, which is again is an always on [inaudible]  
11 platform to showcase local businesses, ah, that  
12 exists today, and we've had since last, ah, summer.  
13 And then our vibrancy campaigns, so for example our  
14 Restaurant Week, Must See Week for the cultural, and  
15 then we have created new programs, such as It's Time  
16 for Culture that is only for that sector, which ran  
17 for the month of October. So we, we, we're always  
18 looking for opportunities to highlight them with  
19 offers that are perhaps more transactional, directing  
20 to what is open right now, and then the content  
21 experiences, and also from a B to B perspective we  
22 have campaigns like Tourism Ready, which helps local  
23 businesses who are interested in selling to the  
24 travel trade. It is a very strange world and you do  
25

1  
2 have to have a particular way of packaging your  
3 offering to sell to the travel trade. So that is a  
4 free program that we are now in our sixth year of  
5 offering, where we will, and I, and as a former  
6 member of NYC & Company I actually took this course  
7 before coming to work here, and it was, ah, a game  
8 changer for our organization. So that really helps  
9 shepherd small businesses through the system to help  
10 them, ah, package up their offering and then we take  
11 them from there and help integrate them into some of  
12 the international sales missions, and there are a lot  
13 of virtual opportunities still available where we can  
14 get them in front of the travel trade and meeting  
15 planners all around the world. So we kind of take  
16 them through our path once they're ready to do so.  
17 So we want to make sure that, and whatever is able to  
18 take advantage of the economic benefit and awareness  
19 of what we do can do that. So, again, on the, on the  
20 front end through our programs and content on the  
21 back end, through programs like Tourism Ready and our  
22 various member events and networking opportunities  
23 where we can help them partner with other  
24 organizations in their, in their area.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Ah, thank you  
3 for that.

4 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT KEREN: I would  
5 like...

6 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Oops, sorry  
7 about that.

8 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT KEREN: I'm  
9 sorry. I, I just wanted to add, um, from the  
10 research perspective two things. One, a lot of the  
11 effort that Nancy and her team and our sales and  
12 development team work with is based on tracking  
13 research that we've been doing here at NYC & Company,  
14 where we know that visitors from out of the city, out  
15 of state, and out of the country are traveling and  
16 spending money in all of the neighborhoods and the  
17 boroughs of New York, and we are working on some very  
18 exciting big data opportunities that are moving more  
19 slowly than as a researcher I would have liked. But,  
20 um, this is something that we are able to actually  
21 show. We've been doing it for years. Um, it started  
22 with, ah, a report that we worked on with the Visa  
23 credit card company, and it's confidential. It's not  
24 identified. But we can see a steady increase in  
25 particularly international travel into neighborhoods,

1  
2 um, beyond the central business district of Manhattan  
3 and across the boroughs. And I challenge any of you  
4 to play a game I play with my colleagues, which is  
5 take a picture on the subway and ask someone, tourist  
6 or local, and if they can't hear them speak my guess  
7 they will get it wrong more often than they'll get it  
8 right, because our visitors no longer stand out and  
9 look different. They look and sound a lot our  
10 marvelously diverse city. And we are sometimes not  
11 aware that that family walking down the street in  
12 front of us, and I just have to add I'm a Bronx girl,  
13 sorry. Um, not sorry I'm a Bronx girl, but for the  
14 Queens members of the committee, um, in the Bronx  
15 there's a very large international travel component  
16 that is, some of it is friends and family, some of it  
17 is driven by the attractions in the borough. Some is  
18 [inaudible] visitors who come to explore from the  
19 Botanic Garden to baseball, to the food and culture  
20 from the South Bronx to the North Bronx. So it's  
21 there and we are tracking it.

22 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Um, well, I  
23 appreciate folks who spend money going to Yankee  
24 Stadium or [inaudible] but, um, ah, and, ah, speaking  
25 of all the love for the boroughs, ah, Majority Leader

1 Cumbo, um, from the great, ah, Borough of Brooklyn,  
2 um, is up next. I just have one last question  
3 before, ah, Majority Leader Cumbo addresses the  
4 panel. Ah, because you mentioned, ah, ah, some  
5 various targeted efforts and, ah, I certainly alluded  
6 to it with the, the answer [inaudible] that we saw a  
7 few years ago, my husband and I, but obviously the  
8 LGBTQ traveler and, um, ah, will not, all of us are  
9 able to, um, ah, travel, um, ah, many, ah, many folks  
10 are and, and enjoy that experience and, and how, how  
11 are you, um, working with and, and, ah, making sure  
12 we get the most, ah, visitorship from the LGBTQ  
13 community?  
14

15 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT KEREN: Nancy,  
16 start, ah, can I just start with...

17 CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER MAMMANA: Go  
18 ahead.

19 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT KEREN: ...ah,  
20 metadata again?

21 CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER MAMMANA: Go  
22 ahead.

23 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT KEREN: That's  
24 what happens when you put the research head on, on  
25 the top. Um, New York City is the number one

1 destination in the US for the LGBTQ class markets.  
2  
3 We are continued to be that right up through the  
4 first quarter of 2020, as almost everyone who could  
5 travel sort of shifted to beach and mountain. The,  
6 ah, community went the same way. But recent surveys  
7 continue to put New York as a top of mind, highly  
8 desirable destination for the LGBTQ communities and  
9 that is domestic as well as international. Um,  
10 certainly New York hosted World Pride in 2019 to  
11 extraordinary success and we're riding into 2020 with  
12 a very positive image of the city. Um, I am tracking  
13 attendance at the Stonewall Monument, which is a  
14 national monument, and people are coming into New  
15 York and visiting the Stonewall Monument, even in the  
16 pandemic. So I think that it is a small measure but  
17 a continuing measuring of the position that New York  
18 holds in the hearts and minds of our community.  
19 Sorry to cut you off, Nancy.

20 CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER MAMMANA: No, not  
21 at all. That's great. Ah, and, and I would just add  
22 that as part of the campaign, our media strategy was,  
23 was designed to, ah, target what we call, there are  
24 two segments, the travel dreamers and the travel  
25 ready. Again, we launched this in June and we were

1 really needing to be a lot more aggressive as people  
2 began to contemplate travel. So that's about 51  
3 million people and within that we did notice early on  
4 that the LGBTQ segment was among the first to travel.  
5 So that's really something we're addressing in our  
6 audience targeting and the partnerships that we have  
7 upcoming, ah, with, from a branded content  
8 perspective with media partnerships and the LGBTQ  
9 space. So we'll, we're, ah, [inaudible] that now and  
10 developing that. It's a little bit more of a deeper  
11 content experience versus just an ad. So that should  
12 begin launching, ah, probably next month in December  
13 into Q1, ah, because we, we obviously recognize the  
14 value of that travel, traveler, and are, are working  
15 very, in a concerted effort to make sure that we, we  
16 remain top of mind.

18 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you, I  
19 appreciate, um, all, all of that and, ah, again, I,  
20 I, ah, really find, ah, your work fascinating, ah,  
21 and, and, ah, ah, deeply, deeply, ah, appreciate all  
22 that, ah, you all do behind the scenes to, to make  
23 all this possible. Ah, I have more questions, but I  
24 know that, ah, Majority Leader Cumbo, um, has her  
25 hand raised and, um, Brooklyn has not been heard from

1  
2 enough today, so I will, um, invite Majority Leader  
3 Cumbo to, ah, join us.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Hello?

6 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: We can hear you.

7 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Oh, wonderful.

8 Thank you so much. I'm, I'm doing a lot of double  
9 duty today. My son is home sick and so you hear the  
10 cartoons in the back and, um, trying to navigate a  
11 lot of things. But I'm so happy that this hearing is  
12 taking place. I wanted to ask a question, um, in  
13 terms of federal funding. Um, many of our not-for-  
14 profit organizations as well as, um, organizations  
15 that are not not-for-profit but are cultural huge  
16 tourism, um, boosters for the city. My question is  
17 do we know what percentage of our cultural  
18 institutions, um, on the for-profit or not-for-profit  
19 side receive federal subsidies or funding, um, during  
20 the COVID pandemic? And I'm just saying, I'm  
21 prefacing that by also asking, my concern is a lot of  
22 the organizations have been propped up through  
23 additional funding, federal funding, even through the  
24 council what we were able to allocate. But my  
25 concern would be where will these organizations, both

1  
2 for-profit and not-for-profit, um, how will they  
3 fare, um, when federal subsidy is not, is not as  
4 robust as it is currently.

5 CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER MAMMANA: I  
6 don't...

7 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: The...

8 CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER MAMMANA: Go  
9 ahead.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FEINBERG: I was  
11 gonna say, I was gonna say, I could, I could take a  
12 stab at that, um, Majority Leader. Um, so, yes, you  
13 are correct. A lot of the cultural organizations  
14 received, um, federal funding. I don't have an exact  
15 breakdown. I can tell you that we worked with, um,  
16 with our network to make sure people were aware of  
17 the opportunities to secure federal funding, whether  
18 it's Save our Stages or the PPP program, um, we  
19 worked with them to ensure that they had competitive  
20 applications. I can look into the exact breakdown  
21 for you later, but I don't have that off the top my  
22 head.

23 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: I think even if  
24 that type of documentation hasn't been done at this  
25 point, I think it would be very helpful to understand

1  
2 and learn, um, how has federal funding impacted  
3 organizations? What's the percentage of them that  
4 received it so that we know or we have a better  
5 understanding of the landscape, so that while things  
6 are opening up and things aren't at full capacity,  
7 um, a lot of that was able to happen because of  
8 federal funding and, and that level of support, but  
9 once that level of federal support leaves and we  
10 still have certain mandates in place, I feel like  
11 that's where the rubber is gonna meet the road in  
12 terms of where the challenges are gonna really begin,  
13 ah, because many organizations have been able to, um,  
14 exist because of the fact that they had the federal  
15 subsidies.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FEINBERG: Yeah, and  
17 I would also just, that's true and I'd also echo that  
18 because of our partnership with the council. You all  
19 have been very generous as well and us being able to  
20 give more money. I mean, last year we had a record  
21 budget of 230 million dollars. So I, I know that  
22 that's not gonna happen every year, but it was a good  
23 year in that regard to help a lot of our cultural  
24 organizations, and particularly the smaller-based  
25 community organizations that actually are not able to

1 access the PPP program as much as some others were.

2 So, agreed concern and, ah, we can certainly look  
3 into that and get back to you with the numbers.

4  
5 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Ah, my other  
6 question is, is more on the health side, and I  
7 apologize if, um, this was touched upon. So I would  
8 imagine in all sectors, but I, I would, just taking,  
9 ah, a stab in, in the dark on this, that in cultural  
10 sector the issues around immunization, um, and  
11 getting the vaccine is going to be more robust and  
12 deeper in the cultural community than maybe perhaps  
13 other sectors. Um, have there been any discussions  
14 or understandings in terms of vaccination rates in  
15 the cultural community, and have there been, because  
16 we're experiencing this, um, in the opening of the  
17 Bedford Union Armory in my district that many of the  
18 not-for-profits are having lots of issues with doing  
19 afterschool programs, their educational programs,  
20 bringing up staff back to work who have now refused  
21 to get the vaccination. Have, and some people  
22 actually have actual medical reasons as to why they  
23 can't get the vaccine. Has there been a thought in  
24 terms of, or any discussion around how we navigate  
25

1 within the cultural sector, um, individuals not  
2 getting the vaccine.

3  
4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FEINBERG: I think  
5 that's a topic, a topic that many, um, cultural  
6 leaders have been looking at, in particular for their  
7 own staff and, um, I think early on when the vaccine  
8 mandates were being, ah, discussed and then  
9 eventually implemented, ah, we worked with the  
10 Department of Health to hold several briefings with  
11 the Culture at 3 group, ah, to get that information  
12 out there. Um, you know, I, I think we, we see this,  
13 ah, yes, this is happening in the cultural sector. I  
14 think it's happening everywhere.

15 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Um-hmm.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FEINBERG: There's  
17 some, some people that just are not, for whatever  
18 reasons are not comfortable getting the vaccine,  
19 whether it's a health reason or a religious reason,  
20 there are just some folks that are not interested in  
21 that and, ah, are not doing it. Um, but we have been  
22 working with our cultural partners to ensure that  
23 they have the information that DOHMH provides and the  
24 state and city, excuse me, state and the federal  
25 government have also provided to help ensure more

1  
2 confidence in the vaccines as they're doing their  
3 [inaudible] education efforts as well.

4 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: OK. I think, um,  
5 in bringing the culture and economic, ah, committees  
6 together I again think that those are really critical  
7 issues as far as, um, what's gonna happen when the  
8 federal funding is no longer, um, at the level that  
9 it was, as well as once the, once organizations have  
10 to begin to operate without that level of deep  
11 subsidy and they're not able to attract the staff,  
12 um, and the individuals and the teaching artists, um,  
13 to run those programs I'm concerned about that  
14 timeframe, or, or, or, or what happens when those,  
15 um, issues I guess collide or, or come together in  
16 some way. So it's just something to, ah, put out  
17 there in terms of getting the numbers of  
18 understanding, how is the cultural community being  
19 impacted by the vaccines, um, and staff, opting to  
20 take the vaccine or not opting to take the vaccine.  
21 Also, which organizations have qualified for the  
22 federal funding, um, and which ones have not or  
23 didn't know about it. So I'll end my, my questions  
24 there. Thank you so much.

1  
2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FEINBERG: You're  
3 welcome.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Madam  
5 Majority Leader. We will now hear from Council  
6 Member Cornegy, who has a question.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Ah, good, good  
8 morning. Um, I want to thank, ah, the chairs, both,  
9 um, Vallone and Van Bramer for, for hosting this  
10 hearing. Um, I, ah, I just think that the  
11 coordinated effort for true recovery and resiliency,  
12 um, should include, ah, SBS or, you know, so the, the  
13 chair Mark Gjonaj and I have had conversations, as  
14 the former chair, have had conversations about this  
15 recovery and resiliency, and while in the past it may  
16 have seemed that the three could operate in, in these  
17 silos I'm, I'm glad that there's a coordinated effort  
18 obviously between cultural affairs and economic  
19 development. I would just love to loop in SBS,  
20 because as we try to build back for a true recovery  
21 and resiliency without a coordinated effort between  
22 three, I think, um, um, you know, it's, it's gonna  
23 make it really difficult. We, we seem to be, if I'm  
24 out and about, whether it's in Nolita or Flatbush or  
25 the Upper West Side, people seem to be adapting to

1  
2 coming back and the city seems to be on an upturn and  
3 an uptick, which leads me to believe that there's an  
4 opportunity for better coordination. Um, I just  
5 wonder what your thoughts were on, on that, the, the  
6 panelists [inaudible].

7 CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER MAMMANA: I, we  
8 have had regular, ah, interaction dialogue with SBS  
9 throughout last 18 months and, and really made a  
10 concerted effort to share information, resources.  
11 Um, we went to SBS when we were looking for agency  
12 partnerships to ensure that we were talking to the  
13 right small businesses right in our community, ah,  
14 from a marketing standpoint. So we, we definitely  
15 agree and would look forward to, to more of that  
16 moving forward. But, but yes, we, we do value the  
17 partnership we have and we have appreciated dialogue  
18 we've had thus far. But, yeah, we agree. We would  
19 continue, we would look to continue that moving  
20 forward as well.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: I, I want to  
22 thank the chairs for setting a precedent for  
23 coordination and hopefully, ah, their successors and  
24 the successor of all the agencies will see the  
25 necessity for continued coordination, especially as

1 we look for true recovery and resiliency. Again,  
2 thank you for the chairs, ah, for, for hosting this  
3 hearing and thank you for the panelists for all the,  
4 ah, welcome information that you've given today.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FEINBERG: Thank you.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Council  
8 Member Cornegy. We'll now turn it back to Chair  
9 Vallone for some additional questions.

10 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: I know Chair Van  
11 Bramer has some questions. I just wanted to thank  
12 both our Majority Leader and Council Member Cornegy.  
13 Ah, I think Jimmy and I have been screaming for  
14 interagency cooperation, that's been my favorite term  
15 um, for about eight years. I think Small Business is  
16 critical to this component. So I thank him for those  
17 components, and I know Jimmy mentioned and I want to  
18 also. If you could express our gratitude to, ah, to  
19 Fred Dixon for his leadership, um, and, you know,  
20 there's been a, a few bills [inaudible] budgetary  
21 ideas and we've had extensive conversations on how to  
22 always bring the proper tools to New York & Company  
23 as a, I guess a subsidiary of, of EDC and, and to  
24 make sure that the realization of its importance, um,  
25 is, is seen on a budgetary priority, on a legislative

1  
2 priority, with over the 50 council members working  
3 hand in hand, and especially with the amounts of  
4 responsibilities that have been placed at your  
5 doorstep during pre-pandemic, during the pandemic,  
6 and as we're coming out of, ah, the pandemic, because  
7 which I, I think we all believe. Ah, ah, my, my last  
8 question would be, I think, is there any I guess  
9 guidelines or determining factors, maybe in some of  
10 our neighboring European countries that it maybe  
11 opened the doors a little earlier than we have to see  
12 how their international tourism programs are going as  
13 some type of I guess guideline or benchmark when  
14 [inaudible] New York and United States, but for our  
15 focus here is that we've seen any, you know how you  
16 mentioned some of the partnerships with British  
17 Airways and England and France, can we, can we guide  
18 some of the progress there in the EU or some of the  
19 other countries since they opened a little earlier  
20 than we have to maybe see the quarterly and annual  
21 progress there? Is there anything that we could use?

22 CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER MAMMANA: We, we  
23 have recently discussed reengaging with what we call  
24 our city-to-city partnerships, ah, that we've had for  
25 several years, where we really are swapping media

1  
2 assets, sharing key learnings and best practices and,  
3 ah, which it may not, may or may not be a surprise,  
4 but they are actually continuing to look to us for  
5 guidance.

6 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: No surprise there.  
7 None whatsoever [laughs].

8 CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER MAMMANA:  
9 [laughs] Yeah, it, and it, quite honestly, the more  
10 we talk to our colleagues, um, as now we've been all  
11 kind of attending global conferences again and  
12 interacting over the, over the last, you know, year  
13 and half, ah, we're all essentially following a  
14 similar playbook with the concentric circle approach.  
15 Everybody was sort of forced to talk to their locals  
16 and citizens, perhaps for the first time in some  
17 countries. At least we had some precedence for doing  
18 that with our vibrancy campaigns, which were largely  
19 locals and tristate. Anyway, but there were many  
20 areas of the world that had never spoken to a local.  
21 So they came to us very early on with, you know, what  
22 are you doing and how do you do it, and how do you  
23 then expand that relevancy now that that's really,  
24 you know, you're fishing where the fish are, so, ah,  
25 a lot of our, our comrades were not really used to

1  
2 doing that. So we've been in a sort unofficial  
3 dialogue with them over the last year and a half, and  
4 now looking to start back up, ah, city-to-city  
5 partnerships, particularly with our European  
6 counterparts to start. Um, but they've been asking  
7 us questions all along the way and we've just been  
8 trying to share what it is we're doing. We've, we've  
9 issued our road map and we'll be following up with a  
10 sort of sequel to that, ah, later on this year with,  
11 you know, how we sort of prepared again, how we fared  
12 against the road map and, um, going into some more  
13 detail on that. So, we, we are happy to share that  
14 information with them, um, and again, I think in  
15 principle we've all been doing a lot of the same  
16 things to different, ah, effects, but, um, we...

17 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: And, I guess,  
18 Nancy, just following that is, but do we have any  
19 data from them on how their international tourism  
20 percentages have started to rise, I guess, in the  
21 last quarter, 'cause it seems they started a littler  
22 earlier than we did.

23 CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER MAMMANA: Yeah.

24 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Something to take a  
25 look at, if we don't have today, but.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT KEREN: We don't  
have it. Um, it is something we can look into.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: And I guess last I  
think just since we're all on that same page, I think  
my last, not so much question or, or maybe concern is  
some of the vaccination guidelines are, are still, as  
we kind of feel our way through this, you know, what  
we're accepting into New York City and maybe on  
Broadway is, is, well, our understanding is a little  
bit different than what the restaurants are  
accepting, and there's some, um, confusion and I  
think concern that if you go to see a show but then  
the restaurant won't accept the same vaccination, I  
guess protocols, I hate that word, um, that we're  
accepting in different areas. I think we have to  
coordinate whether we're just accepting the three,  
um, vaccinations that we've accepted here in, in the  
United States and New York, or we're gonna accept  
the, the global WH vaccination guidelines, which are  
a little bit different, 'cause there is some  
difference in policies and guidelines and what you  
can use to get into a show versus what you can use  
and accepted at a restaurant. And that's hindering  
some of the flow 'cause that's what you want to do is

1 continuation of activities once you're into the  
2 boroughs of New York City. The last thing you want  
3 to do is be able to go see something but not be  
4 accepted someplace else. So, I don't know if we're,  
5 we're working toward coordinating and unifying that,  
6 but there is a difference out there.

8 CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER MAMMANA: We're,  
9 we're, ah, we're doing as much as we can to share the  
10 information as it becomes available, and it, it has  
11 been, ah, as it's been changing and evolving over  
12 time, so that information, ah, is top of mind for us  
13 because it's top of mind for travelers. People, we  
14 don't want people to be confused. In some cases they  
15 are. Particularly, we, we work very closely with the  
16 Hospitality Alliance and particularly, as you  
17 mentioned, in that sector it's a concern on a few  
18 levels with compliance as well. So we're doing the  
19 best we can to make sure people know what those  
20 guidelines are before they arrive, ah, and also when  
21 they, when they get here. So to your point,  
22 consistency is key. Ah, but work very hard to try to  
23 make sure we continue to share that in a very clear  
24 and concise so people can a little bit more easily  
25 navigate, um, on our, on our site and our channels.

1  
2 And, again, we want to do whatever possible with our  
3 counterparts to, to make it as seamless and clearer  
4 as, as possible because you're right, the, theirs is  
5 some amount of confusion, so we're helping to dispel  
6 that so people understand when they arrive what to  
7 expect, 'cause it's key to the visitor experience.

8 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Well, I guess, the,  
9 the sooner we can rectify that the better. We don't  
10 want, especially with the holidays upon us, ah,  
11 somebody being turned away in one place where they're  
12 accepted in others. So if we could maybe temporarily  
13 try to suspend that, or give it universal where as  
14 long as you're vaccinated it will be approved. That  
15 would be a huge help to the small businesses,  
16 restaurants, and hotels. Ah, and now I'd like to  
17 turn it over to my friend and cochair, Jimmy Van  
18 Bramer.

19 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
20 much, ah, Chair Vallone, and I, um, just want to say,  
21 ah, Deputy Commissioner Feinberg, ah, thank you for  
22 mentioning that, ah, we received record funding at  
23 the Department of Cultural Affairs, ah, this past  
24 year. This is something that, ah, I'm very proud of  
25 and Majority Leader Cumbo, um, and the entire

1 council, um, is proud of it. You mentioned that, you  
2 know, you may not be able to expect that level of  
3 funding every year. Ah, I hope you're right, but I  
4 hope that it's more funding, ah, that you get, ah, in  
5 the coming years.  
6

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FEINBERG: From your  
8 lips to God's ears, yes.

9 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Yes, yes. I'm  
10 sure, um, ah, obviously you know I have a great, ah,  
11 respect for Commissioner, ah, Casales, um, ah, but  
12 whomever will be the commissioner of cultural  
13 affairs, um, ah, next year, ah, I'm sure would also  
14 appreciate, ah, an increase in funding, ah, for the  
15 agency. Um, I just wanted to thank, um, ah, all of  
16 you. I know we have other folks so I'm gonna, I'm  
17 gonna keep the briefest time and just say I  
18 appreciate, ah, Majority Leader Cumbo, um, ah,  
19 talking about our, our culturals, ah, and, ah,  
20 obviously the focus in particular on our smaller, um,  
21 neighborhood and community-based culturals, and  
22 Council Member Cornegy talking about, ah, small  
23 businesses. And, of course, so many of our small  
24 culturals are in fact small businesses, ah, which I  
25 know, ah, ah, Majority Leader Cumbo and, and, ah,

1 Council Member, ah, Cornegy also, ah, I have a great  
2 deal of respect, um, ah, and fondness for. So, um,  
3 thank you very much for all the information and, um,  
4 again appreciate, ah, Chair Vallone and I working  
5 together on this. It's always great fun.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chairs.

8 We will now turn to the public portion of this  
9 testimony, of this hearing, rather. Ah, I'd like to  
10 remind everyone that unlike in our typical council  
11 hearings we will be calling on individuals one by one  
12 to testify. Each public panelist will be given five  
13 minutes to speak. So please begin your testimony  
14 once the sergeant has started the timer. Council  
15 members who have questions for a particular panelist  
16 should use the Zoom raise hand function and we will  
17 call on you in order that you raised your hand. For  
18 panelists, once your name is called a member of our  
19 staff will unmute you and then the Sergeant at Arms  
20 will set the timer and give you the go-ahead to  
21 begin. Please wait for the sergeant to announce that  
22 you may begin before delivering your testimony. Ah,  
23 I would like to now call Thomas Ferrugia to testify,  
24 and after Mr. Ferrugia we will hear from Sanne  
25 Wright, and then Sarah Cecilia Bukowski. Ah, Mr.

1  
2 Ferrugia, you may begin as soon as the sergeants  
3 announce the time.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

5 THOMAS FERRUGIA: Good morning. Um, I  
6 did submit a, a longer statement, ah, for the record,  
7 but I do have, ah, a shorter version to read to try  
8 to get it in under five minutes. I think I should be  
9 able to do it. Um, good morning again. I'm Thomas  
10 Ferrugia, with the Broadway League. We thank, ah,  
11 Chairman Bramer and, ah, Vallone, as well as the  
12 members of the committees on Cultural Affairs and  
13 Economic Development for allowing us to participate  
14 in this hearing. I would also like to acknowledge,  
15 ah, Speaker Johnson and Council Member Powers, who  
16 represents this district for their unwavering support  
17 for the live entertainment industry. Prior to the  
18 pandemic Broadway drove an average of 40,500 theater  
19 goers to midtown Manhattan each day. Based on our  
20 2018 to 2019 theater season, which was our last  
21 complete season, ah, Broadway grossed 1.829 billion  
22 dollars on 14.8 million tickets, averaging 35 million  
23 dollars per week on 284,000 admissions. In 2019 46%  
24 of admissions were tourists living outside New York  
25 City and the surrounding suburbs, while 19% were

1  
2 visitors from abroad. Broadway drew this healthy  
3 foreign audience from all over the world, comprising  
4 the highest number of international visitors in all  
5 of Broadway's history. The average foreign, foreign-  
6 born tourist saw, saw 2.3 shows and stayed in city  
7 for 6.7 days. Broadway motivated foreign spending on  
8 ancillary activities, excluding the cost for their  
9 theater tickets, excluding the cost for their theater  
10 tickets, exceeded 2.9 billion dollars. While we do  
11 anticipate losing a large portion of domestic  
12 tourists this coming year, our biggest fear is that  
13 foreign visitors, ah, still represent our most at-  
14 risk theater goers. We would like to highlight  
15 several policies from encouraging visitors to return  
16 to Manhattan and helping sustain Broadway's economic  
17 growth. As Councilman Vallone has already mentioned,  
18 ah, theater safety we feel is a, ah, significant  
19 factor, ah, area safety is a significant factor for  
20 returning visitors, and there has been a  
21 proliferation of aggressive vendors who often attempt  
22 to harass victims into paying for photographs in  
23 Times Square. We therefore thank the council for  
24 passing the aforementioned, ah, Intro 1811, which  
25 addresses many of these concerns. However, as

1 always, as with everything, we believe that active  
2 police enforcement and oversight by this body is  
3 going to be critical to ensuring that this new law  
4 achieves its goals. We also believe access to  
5 midtown remains a vital and continual, ah, remains  
6 vital and the continual addition of sidewalks and  
7 bicycle lanes, clogging streets and making vehicular  
8 access to the theater district needlessly  
9 complicated. It seems like a short-sighted approach  
10 to addressing a larger problem. Visitors should be  
11 welcomed, regardless of their means of transport, not  
12 exacerbated by a lack of pickup and drop-off access.  
13 For example, in addition to the many changes that  
14 have already been made to accommodate bicyclists, the  
15 city recently installed another bike lane along the  
16 East Side curb on 7th Avenue midtown and relocated  
17 street parking into what was formerly a car lane,  
18 thus fully eliminating two vehicular lanes. When  
19 vehicles frequently double park, traffic is then  
20 forced into a single lane. This traffic then clogs  
21 up even further as these vehicles must eventually  
22 turn up 7th Avenue into, into the theater district.  
23 We do acknowledge the need for bicycles. But we  
24 recommend that local businesses are given an  
25

1  
2 opportunity to meaningfully participate in the  
3 decisions that directly impact their customers. We  
4 are already experiencing near gridlock, nonstop horn  
5 honking, and inconvenience for the more than 15% of  
6 theater goers who come, who come to Broadway every  
7 week by car. Finally, we ask the City Council to  
8 revisit Councilman Powers' proposal, proposals to  
9 reform the commercial rent tax, which has been  
10 discussed by this council many times, a regressive  
11 assessment that creates a disincentive to operating  
12 businesses in midtown. Intro 1371 would provide  
13 measured relief to taxpayers with incomes of less  
14 than 10 million or who pay less than \$800,000 a year  
15 in rent. And Intro 1372 would end the tax on  
16 billboard advertisements in the theater district. As  
17 the economy struggles to recover and we work to  
18 rebuild our audiences, we feel that the City Council,  
19 the city, must focus on removing undue financial  
20 obstacles and supporting financial growth. Thank you  
21 again for this opportunity to testify. As always, we  
22 look forward to continued collaboration with the  
23 council to ensure that New York City remains the  
24 cultural and financial capitol of the world. I do  
25 have some data, ah, if anyone would be interested in

1 talking later some numbers about how Broadway is  
2 doing and how things have been over the last couple  
3 weeks compared to, ah, ah, how our numbers are, have  
4 been historically. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Tom, thank you for  
7 the testimony. We do have the written testimony.  
8 Please, make sure you tell all of your partners,  
9 especially Charlotte, that we are so excited that  
10 Broadway's back and we always look forward to working  
11 with you and her and the entire organization.

12 THOMAS FERRUGIA: I do, I will make one  
13 point. The last week we had our one millionth  
14 admission since, ah, we opened, since the [inaudible]  
15 reopened since September. So that was a big, big,  
16 ah, ah, ah, we're very happy that we're, numbers are  
17 moving in the right direction.

18 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Ah, Jimmy and I  
19 come, ah, are responsible for a few of those numbers  
20 [laughs].

21 THOMAS FERRUGIA: Oh, yeah [laughs].

22 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Not a million, but  
23 we're getting there.

24 THOMAS FERRUGIA: OK.

25 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Thank you.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Mr.  
3 Ferrugia. Ah, next we will hear from Sanne Wright  
4 and then Sarah Cecilia Bukowski, followed by Lisa  
5 Alpert. Sanne Wright, you may begin when the  
6 sergeants call time.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

8 SANNE WRIGHT: Hi, everyone. My name is  
9 Sanne Wright and I am the external affairs manager of  
10 the Time Square Alliance. Thank you, Chair Vallone,  
11 Chair Van Bramer, and members of the committees for  
12 their efforts to help New York City recover. We are  
13 very grateful for your continued work to support the  
14 tourism industry over the past several years. It is  
15 no secret that Times Square is the center of the  
16 city's tourism industry. Before the COVID-19  
17 pandemic Times Square was home to 16% of the city's  
18 total hotel rooms, driving 2.5 billion dollars in  
19 annual revenue. Times Square's theater district,  
20 heavily patronized by visitors from across the globe,  
21 brought in 12.6 billion dollars in total annual  
22 economic impact. Similarly, the district's 668  
23 storefronts generated 168 million dollars in annual  
24 sales tax revenue. Today these numbers look  
25 different. Since the pandemic there has been an 89%

1  
2 decline in hotel occupancy, totalling a loss of 417  
3 million in occupancy tax revenue, as well as 89,000  
4 jobs in the tourism sector. In Times Square alone 70  
5 storefronts have closed. At the height of the  
6 pandemic pedestrian counts fell by 91% to 33,000. We  
7 have made strides towards recovery, but over 10  
8 Broadway theaters remain closed and pedestrian  
9 traffic, commercial leasing, and consumer spending  
10 all remain down by 32%, 40%, and 60%, respectively.  
11 If we want over 60 million tourists to return to New  
12 York and Times Square annually, we must ensure that  
13 the city is at its most safe and welcoming. Since  
14 before the pandemic our streets, sidewalks, and plaza  
15 have been inundated with people in need, including  
16 individuals engaging in open drug use, experiencing  
17 mental health crises, and sometimes engaging in  
18 criminal, violent, or otherwise disruptive behavior.  
19 The current policy of allowing antisocial and illegal  
20 activity to occur without intervention is failing.  
21 Instead, the city must commit to enforcing against  
22 illegal activity and sufficiently fund humane,  
23 effective policies to help troubled people find their  
24 way off the streets and into treatment and/or  
25 transitional housing. BIDs and other community-based

1 organizations across the city have the potential to  
2 be some of the strongest partners in making our  
3 public spaces clean, vibrant, and welcoming to our  
4 visitors. Currently, the alliance partners with the  
5 Center for Court Innovation, Breaking Ground, and  
6 Fountain House on Community First, a program that  
7 uses peer community navigators to provide consistent  
8 outreach to persons in need on our streets, building  
9 trust by offering essentials like food and blankets,  
10 and then connecting people to mental health care,  
11 transitional housing, benefits, and employment.  
12 After a six-month pilot period, Community First  
13 received funding from the Department of Social  
14 Services to continue its work for the next year.  
15 Since mid July navigators have engaged with 120  
16 individuals on the street. Through sustained  
17 interactions and trust building, 20 of them have  
18 accepted longer-term support, like housing and drug  
19 treatment. Programs like Community First require  
20 supportive housing and other social services to be  
21 readily available and well functioning, but the city  
22 has yet, yet to invest sufficiently in both. If we  
23 wish to fully recover this must be a priority. Thank  
24 you.  
25

1  
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Ms.  
3 Wright. Ah, next we will hear from Sarah Cecilia  
4 Bukowski, followed by Lisa Alpert, and then Barbara  
5 Blair. Ms. Bukowski, you may begin when the  
6 sergeants call time.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

8 SARAH CECILIA BUKOWSKI: Good morning.  
9 I'm Sarah Cecilia Bukowski. I'm the research  
10 [inaudible] assistant at Dance NYC. We're a service  
11 organization dedicated to the dance workforce here in  
12 New York City. Um, I thank you for holding this  
13 joint hearing and for addressing some of the key  
14 concerns around the arts and cultural sector's role  
15 in the return of tourism to the city. And I'd like  
16 to take this opportunity to expand on some of the  
17 points that directly affect Dance NYC constituency,  
18 which includes small budget organizations and focuses  
19 specifically on the needs of BIPOC, disabled, and  
20 immigrant arts workers. We know that the arts and  
21 culture sector is the number one driver of tourism to  
22 the state. We generate 110 billion dollars in  
23 economic activity with the nonprofit dance sector  
24 contributing 300 million dollars annually. Ah, the  
25 average cultural tourist spends approximately \$31.47

1 beyond the ticket cost on things like meals, retail,  
2 parking, lodging, local transportation, child care,  
3 and souvenirs, to name a few. And these dollars  
4 provide vital income to local merchants in tourism-  
5 related industries. Nonlocal audience spending is  
6 nearly double local audience spending, so that's  
7 evidence of the measurable economic awards, um, in,  
8 in attracting cultural tourists. And as the  
9 foundation for the city's tourism industry, arts and  
10 culture can't operate sustainability without targeted  
11 recovery funding and dedicated ongoing support from  
12 the city. With gratitude, we believe that there are  
13 comprehensive improvements and investments to be made  
14 in order for arts and culture to continue as a  
15 primary engine for tourism. So, first, we request to  
16 include arts and cultural businesses in recovery  
17 funding for the tourism industry, specifically to  
18 comply with public health mandates. Businesses are  
19 confronting increased expenses related to mandate  
20 compliance and an ongoing loss of revenue due to  
21 decreased attendance. And we ask that the city look  
22 to relief funds intended to support the recovery of  
23 the tourism industry to ensure that arts and cultural  
24 businesses can continue to provide programming in  
25

1 compliance with public health regulations. Secondly,  
2 ah, we request to prioritize additional funding to  
3 organizations experiencing the highest levels of  
4 impact from the pandemic. So particularly the  
5 hardest hit small budget organizations and  
6 acknowledging the disproportionate impact on BIPOC,  
7 immigrant, and disabled artist communities. Fewer  
8 and less representative arts workers and arts  
9 organizations in the city directly result in loss to  
10 cultural diversity, tourism opportunities, and  
11 revenue generation across sectors and locales. Um,  
12 and third, we request to further expand city-funded  
13 media campaigns to support the nonprofit arts and  
14 culture sector in addition to Broadway and for-profit  
15 entertainment. I've been seeing the multi-million  
16 dollar welcome back to New York marketing campaign  
17 that puts Broadway front and center. But the city  
18 must also recognize that the vibrancy and value of  
19 the arts reaches far beyond Broadway, and expanding  
20 these media campaigns to include nonprofit arts and  
21 culture organizations throughout the five boroughs  
22 would not only support their programming, but also  
23 bring much-needed economic investment and tourist  
24 dollars to neighborhoods hardest hit by the pandemic.  
25

2 Taken together, we believe these measures could stand  
3 to support arts and culture as a key driver of the  
4 tourism economy in the city. We believe that an  
5 equitable, sustainable, citywide recovery requires a  
6 citywide investment in the people, organizations, and  
7 industries that drive economic activity, and make  
8 every neighborhood in this city unique and vibrant.  
9 Dance NYC thanks you for your consideration and  
10 commends your leadership and ongoing efforts to  
11 support the recovery of the arts and culture sector  
12 as tourists return to the city. Thank you.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Ms.  
14 Bukowski. Next we will hear from Lisa Alpert,  
15 followed by Barbara Blair. And as a reminder to  
16 anybody remaining on who has not, ah, submitted  
17 testimony or raise their hand to testify, please  
18 submit testimony to [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov), ah,  
19 within 72 hours of the conclusion of the hearing.  
20 Ms. Alpert, you may begin when the sergeants call  
21 time.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

23 LISA ALPERT: Hi, everyone, Chair Van  
24 Bramer, Chair Vallone, fellow Brooklynite Majority  
25 Leader Cumbo, everyone else on the call. Um, and

1 everyone from, um, NYC & Company for this really  
2 great conversation. Um, anyone on the call who is  
3 not familiar with Greenwood you should come visit us.  
4 Um, we are, um, a very active cultural institution  
5 throughout the year, um, have about 250 public  
6 programs, um, annually. Um, so I'd just like to add  
7 to this dialogue, um, in a really passionate and  
8 urgent way to make the case that it's especially  
9 important that this committee look at the unexpected  
10 and unconventional, yet no less popular cultural  
11 spaces in New York City, like, um, for example,  
12 Greenwood Cemetery. Um, and support them, um, and  
13 help them continue to accommodate and serve their  
14 audiences. Um, here's just what's gonna really  
15 surprise, I think. Um, Greenwood sees a surprisingly  
16 high number of visitor, um, annually. In 2019,  
17 Greenwood had about 300,000 visitors. In 2020 that  
18 number doubled. We saw 600,000 visitors to Greenwood  
19 in 2020. Um, and with numbers like that Greenwood  
20 became one of the most visited cultural spaces in all  
21 five boroughs. Um, so, um, in, in 2021 it looks like  
22 we're gonna retain about 100,000 of those guys, so we  
23 are at, gonna close out the year about 400,000  
24 visitors, um, to this national historic landmark here  
25

1  
2 in Brooklyn. And in turn our local businesses, like  
3 [inaudible] of Brooklyn, for example, also enjoyed a  
4 substantial uptick in their receipts at the  
5 registers, um, based on people coming to Greenwood  
6 and then being, you know, really exhausted from  
7 climbing up and down the hills and, and pathways here  
8 and needing some carbohydrates and hot coffee. Um,  
9 so currently, um, while we do support, we do receive,  
10 um, some annual, the annual report from the annual  
11 support, um, from the Department of Cultural Affairs.  
12 We have not yet enjoyed the warm embrace, or really  
13 any embrace, from the City Council. But we are  
14 huggers, ah, and we would be most grateful...

15 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Here comes your  
16 virtual hug, Lisa, it's coming, it's coming.

17 LISA ALPERT: I'm so excited. Be  
18 grateful, grateful for a real hug or a financial hug  
19 if [inaudible] help support our, ah, growing  
20 audiences for cultural programs and environmental  
21 programs, and our biggest program of all, so to  
22 speak, the visitor services and orientation that  
23 serve our 400,000, um, annual visitors. Um, we love  
24 welcoming New Yorkers and tourists, ah, to Greenwood  
25 and we hope we can partner with you to continue to

1 support their visits, their adjacent economic  
2 activity, and the cultural adventure that our  
3 visitors have when they visit this national historic  
4 landmark. That's it. Thanks for your, thanks for  
5 your time.  
6

7 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Thanks, Lisa.

8 LISA ALPERT: Yup.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And thank you, Ms.  
10 Alpert. Ah, finally we will hear from Ms. Barbara  
11 Blair. Ah, again, please submit testimony to  
12 testimony@council.nyc.gov to all who have not yet  
13 done so. Ah, Ms. Blair, you may begin when the  
14 sergeants call time.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

16 BARBARA BLAIR: Thank you. My name is  
17 Barbara Blair. I am the president of the Garment  
18 District Alliance. Thank you, Chair Vallone and  
19 Chair Van Bramer, and members of the committees for  
20 your efforts to help New York City recovery after 20  
21 devastating months. The garment district is situated  
22 on Manhattan's west side and links, links the 34th  
23 Street Penn Station area to Times Square. Because of  
24 this central business district location we have some  
25 of the highest pedestrian counts in New York City.

1  
2 Additionally, the garment district has over 50  
3 hotels, hosting 1.9 million visitors to the city a  
4 year, and is the site of Penn Station with 600 riders  
5 a day and Port Authority with an additional 300  
6 riders a day, pre-pandemic. Over the last two years  
7 the district has been negatively impacted by crime.  
8 The west side of Manhattan has had some of the  
9 highest rates of assaults, robbery, and other violent  
10 crime in the city. This is largely a result of  
11 individuals in dire need of help, including  
12 individuals experiencing mental health challenges,  
13 being present in the district and the unfortunate  
14 outcome of over 4300 individuals in hotels in  
15 Manhattan's west side, thus clustering severely ill  
16 individuals. Drug dealing and use is in the open,  
17 including openly injecting, needles strewn about our  
18 streets, individuals passed out on our sidewalks and  
19 in our plazas, and the accompanying disorder.  
20 Ground-floor retailers, including restaurants, are  
21 terrorized by violent behaviors. Tenants that have  
22 returned to our office buildings have rejected  
23 conditions and opted to continue to work from home  
24 indefinitely, and visitors in the hotels are appalled  
25 by what they are witnessing in our great city. For

1  
2 our part, the Garment District Alliance has had 16  
3 assaults on staff members in the last year. If we  
4 want over 60 million visitors to return to New York,  
5 as the Time Square Alliance said, we must ensure that  
6 the city is safe. Since before the pandemic our  
7 streets, sidewalks, and plazas have been inundated  
8 with people in need, including individuals engaged in  
9 open drug use, experiencing mental health crisis, and  
10 sometimes engaging in violent and otherwise  
11 disruptive behavior. The current behavior, the  
12 current, ah, condition of allowing antisocial and  
13 illegal activity to occur without intervention is  
14 failing. Instead, the city must commit to enforcing  
15 against illegal activity and sufficiently fund  
16 humane, effective policies to help troubled people  
17 find their way off the streets and into treatment.  
18 The garment district and indeed the entire west side  
19 of Manhattan, home to our cherished theater industry,  
20 the Empire State Building, the 34th Street shopping  
21 corridor, and Times Square are all under assault. We  
22 implore the committee to put the safety of our  
23 streets, public order, and the insurance that  
24 recidivists and repeat offenders will be removed from  
25 the public realm and placed in appropriate safe

1 settings where the support that they need is  
2 available at the very top of your priorities. The  
3 garment district urges you to put public safety the  
4 top of the list of considerations and to include the  
5 NYPD and any participating agencies, ah, looking at  
6 the recovery in, ah, New York City.

8 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: All right. Thank  
9 you, Barbara. As you can see, we, we look at those  
10 testimonies, and I refer to the ones that I had in  
11 hand, and from what we heard today the number one  
12 topic was quality of life and public safety affecting  
13 those neighboring businesses. So please continue to  
14 be part of these dialogues and committee hearings for  
15 the next council and mayoral administration to be  
16 aware of that, ah, and not just hope things are  
17 magically gonna get better. It's a complete process  
18 to make sure that comfortability level is back where  
19 it was before the pandemic. So we thank you so much  
20 for the testimonies of each of you. Ah, and Lisa,  
21 you got your virtual hug so we have to make sure that  
22 the council does include all the hard work that  
23 you're doing, because as Council Member Van Bramer  
24 did with Cultural Affairs, I can't tell you the  
25 impact that he had with the budget increase with my

1 public schools in my district. Um, they still don't  
2 100% because I have so many schools. But prior to,  
3 to me stepping into office we basically had zero.  
4 And now we almost have a dozen. So, ah, just one  
5 impact of working together as council members, as  
6 agencies, as those who, ah, as Jimmy said, are  
7 passionate about this industry and what it has on  
8 families and children and international and local  
9 business. So I think, Alex, our counsel, do we have  
10 any more panelists today?  
11

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Ah, that is it for  
13 today, Chair.

14 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: So am I safe in  
15 saying that Chair Van Bramer and I can wrap up?

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, yes, you are.

17 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: I think it was  
18 basically just in on my point on thanking our panels  
19 and thanking, ah, Fred Stein and EDC and working with  
20 Jimmy and his team and my staff. Ah, if this is our  
21 last hearing it has been truly an honor to be the  
22 council member for Northeast Queens and serve as  
23 chair of EDC and bring forth these amazing topics on  
24 the inter-cooperation that's necessary, and not just  
25 assume things happen on its own. That's not the

1 case, and, and having this partnership with council  
2 members and delegations and City Hall and city  
3 agencies, and our advocates that come and testify is  
4 how this is the greatest city in the world, um, and I  
5 hopefully have set a precedent that, ah, I know Chair  
6 Van Bramer and I, ah, will look forward to, and if  
7 not we'll be to make sure that they follow up on the  
8 great work, um, that we have done, um, because it has  
9 to continue and, ah, we couldn't have been as great a  
10 council members if we didn't have the amazing staff  
11 that we did, and I, ah, honestly had almost 100% the  
12 same staff I had from day one. So I thank them from  
13 the bottom of my heart for, for being part of this  
14 team. And I'd, I'd like to turn it over to Council  
15 Member Jimmy Van Bramer, who's a part of this amazing  
16 Queens delegation, who has brought Queens onto the  
17 map with all the other [inaudible]. Thank you.  
18 Jimmy, it's all yours now.

20 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
21 much, ah, Chair Vallone, and, ah, and you know it's  
22 very genuine. I, I, I regard you as, ah, an ideal  
23 colleague and, ah, it's always been a pleasure to  
24 work with you, um, ah, unfailingly, ah, generous and,  
25 and kind, and, ah, and you've accomplished a great

1 deal on behalf of, ah, your district, ah, the older  
2 New Yorkers, and of course, ah, your stewardship of,  
3 of this committee and, and all the work that you've  
4 done. So I say thank you on behalf of all of us and,  
5 ah, and it is indeed an incredible, incredible  
6 legacy, ah, that you leave behind for now, should you  
7 ever, ah, potentially choose to, ah, revisit, ah,  
8 this particular space, but, ah, ah, I know that you  
9 have a lot more to do, ah, to Queens and to New York  
10 City, ah, ah, one way or the other. So, ah, so thank  
11 you, ah, Chair Vallone, um, and for the partnership,  
12 and thank you the panelists, thank you to our team  
13 members, who are, ah, here. Ah, ah, I, I know that I  
14 have, ah, ah, one final, ah, committee meeting in,  
15 ah, December that we, ah, will talk about libraries,  
16 and I will end that, ah, Chair Vallone, sort of where  
17 I began, with my love of libraries. Um, so I, ah,  
18 won't, ah, um, go on too long. But, ah, it's, ah,  
19 it's an incredible pleasure, ah, to serve with you  
20 and it's, ah, an awesome obligation and  
21 responsibility and blessing, ah, to have been in this  
22 position for the last 12 years on behalf of culture,  
23 ah, the arts, and libraries. So, ah, thank you and,  
24 ah, I look forward to seeing, ah, all the work that  
25

1  
2 we've done continue, um, and, ah, and the folks who  
3 were supportive continue to be supportive.

4                   CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: With that, we're  
5 gonna adjourn and a closing to today's hearing, as  
6 Jimmy brought me to tears. Thanks, Jimmy [laughs].  
7 Have a good day, everyone. [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 December 14, 2021