

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS

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CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS

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February 29, 2024

Start: 1:35 p.m.

Recess: 3:02 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 BROADWAY - COMMITTEE ROOM, 14TH
FLOOR

B E F O R E: Oswald Feliz, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Erik D. Bottcher

Shekar Krishnan

Vickie Paladino

Sandra Ung

A P P E A R A N C E S

Calvin T. Brown, Deputy Commissioner
Neighborhood Development Division at Small
Business Services

Raquel Olivares, Assistant Commissioner at Small
Business Services

Emily Edwards, Executive Director for BID
Program and Organizational Development at Small
Business Services

Rafael Moure-Punnett, Bronx Community Board 6

Nicole Paynter, NYC BID Association

Christopher Leon Johnson, self

Justin Lerner, White Plains Road BID

Alyssa Tucker, Belmont BID

Marshall Strawbridge, Bronx Economic Development
Corporation

Elizabeth Lovejoy, Bay Ridge BID

Pedro Suarez, Third Avenue BID

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Soundcheck for the
3 Committee on Small Businesses. Today's date is
4 February 29, 2024, being recorded by Danny Huang in
5 the 14th Floor Committee Room.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good afternoon and
7 welcome to the New York City Council hearing of the
8 Committee on Small Business.

9 At this time, can everybody please
10 silence your cell phones?

11 If you wish to testify, please go up to
12 the Sergeant-at-Arms' desk to fill out a testimony
13 slip.

14 Written testimony can be emailed to
15 testimony@council.nyc.gov. Again, that is
16 testimony@council.nyc.gov.

17 At this time and going forward, no one is
18 to approach the dais. I repeat, no one is to approach
19 the dais.

20 Chair, we are ready to begin.

21 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: [GAVEL] Thank you so
22 much. Good afternoon, everyone. Great to be here with
23 you today. I am Council Member Oswald Feliz, Chair of
24 the Committee on Small Business. This is my first
25 hearing as Chair of this Committee, and so I want to

2 begin by thanking Speaker Adrienne Adams for trusting
3 me to Chair this important Committee.

4 Small businesses are key contributors to
5 the greatness and diversity of the City of New York,
6 and it's a privilege to support them in my new role.
7 Small businesses are the heart of our local economy.
8 They create so many jobs for local residents. They
9 also work so hard to keep communities vibrant and, of
10 course, they work very hard to support their
11 families.

12 Thank you all for joining today's hearing
13 on how the Department of Small Business Services can
14 encourage successful and diverse Business Improvement
15 Districts throughout the city. I'd also like to thank
16 my City Council Colleagues, representatives from the
17 Administration, and the public for being here.

18 I would also like to acknowledge my
19 Colleague, Council Member Paladino, who has joined us
20 today.

21 Business Improvement Districts, also
22 known as BIDs, are local business associations that
23 work together to provide enhanced services and
24 provide economic growth within neighborhoods to the
25 benefit of all members and to the benefit of all

2 businesses. BIDs have been making positive
3 contributions to their communities in the City of New
4 York since 1982, when the laws enabling BID formation
5 were first adopted. Today, the city is home to about
6 75, 76 BIDs located across all five boroughs. In
7 recognition of the role that BIDs play in funneling
8 resources and improvements to their local
9 communities, the Department of Small Business
10 Services provides logistical support and oversight to
11 help these organizations form and grow.

12 At the same time, it is important to
13 recognize certain challenges and inequities in the
14 opportunities and resources available to different
15 BIDs and commercial corridors in the city. When this
16 Committee last examined the issue in 2018 six years
17 ago, BIDs offered testimony on a number of areas
18 where the City could improve its programming,
19 including strengthening support for microbusinesses
20 and the smaller BIDs, also enhancing citywide
21 management of public space and, of course,
22 facilitating coordination and transparency across the
23 numerous agencies that BIDs work with on a regular
24 basis. These are considerations that remain relevant
25 today. Yet at the same time, small businesses are

2 also facing new challenges as the city continues to
3 recover and adapt in a post-pandemic world.

4 At today's hearing, we look forward to
5 hearing from the Department of Small Business
6 Services about how they have addressed these
7 concerns, both the old and the new concerns since our
8 previous hearing on the topic. I equally look forward
9 to any testimony that BIDs themselves, or any other
10 members of the small business community, would like
11 to offer about their experiences and current needs
12 and, of course, any additional areas where the City
13 can continue to offer support.

14 Finally, before we begin, I want to thank
15 Rebecca Barilla and Jessica Boulet from Central Staff
16 for their work in putting the city together. I also
17 want to acknowledge my Chief-of-Staff, Theona Reets;
18 my Director of Community Engagement, Esperanza Diaz;
19 and my Special Assistant, George Cooke, all who have
20 joined us today.

21 I also want to acknowledge my Colleague,
22 Eric Bottcher, who has also joined us.

23 I want to thank everyone in the who will
24 be testifying today.

25 Thank you so much.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL BOULET: Thank you,
3 Chair Feliz. Good afternoon, everyone. I'm Jessica
4 Boulet, Counsel to the Committee on Small Business.

5 Before we begin testimony, I want to
6 remind everyone who's joining on Zoom, you will be on
7 mute until you are called on to testify.

8 I will call on public witnesses to
9 testify after the conclusion of the Administration's
10 testimony and Council Member questions so please do
11 listen carefully for your name to be called.

12 Council Members, you will be called on
13 for questions after the panel has completed their
14 testimony.

15 I will now call representatives of the
16 Administration to testify. We will be hearing
17 testimony from the Department of Small Business
18 Services.

19 I will administer the affirmation to, I
20 believe we're joined by Deputy Commissioner Calvin
21 Brown of the Neighborhood Development Division,
22 Assistant Commissioner Raquel Olivares, and Executive
23 Director for the BID Program and Organizational
24 Development, Emily Edwards. Panelists, please raise
25 your right hands.

2 Do you affirm to tell the truth, the
3 whole truth, and nothing but the truth before this
4 Committee and to respond honestly to Council Member
5 questions?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: I do.

7 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER OLIVARES: I do.

8 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR EDWARDS: I do.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL BOULET: Okay. Great.
10 Thank you. At this time, I'd like to invite Deputy
11 Commissioner Brown to present testimony.

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: Thank you.
13 Good afternoon, Chair Feliz and Members of the
14 Committee on Small Businesses. My name is Calvin T.
15 Brown, and I'm the Deputy Commissioner for
16 Neighborhood Development. I'm joined here today by
17 Assistant Commissioner Raquel Olivares and Emily
18 Edwards, the Executive Director for BID Program and
19 Organizational Development, and we are pleased to
20 testify on SBS' role overseeing and supporting our
21 New York City Business Improvement Districts,
22 otherwise known as the BIDs.

23 SBS' mission is to unlock the economic
24 potential and create economic security for all New
25 Yorkers, connecting them to good jobs, creating

2 stronger businesses and building thriving and vibrant
3 neighborhoods. There are over 200 small businesses in
4 New York City, each contributing to a unique
5 landscape in their community. SBS Neighborhood
6 Development oversees and guides our network of
7 Business Improvement Districts and invests in
8 commercial corridor revitalization through community-
9 based development organizations. Business Improvement
10 Districts were created in the aftermath of 1970s
11 fiscal crisis as a public/private entity that
12 provides supplemental services to commercial
13 corridors. Over 40 years later, our New York City
14 network has grown to 75, representing the country's
15 largest business improvement network and spanning
16 neighborhoods in all five boroughs. Per SBS' FY22
17 analysis of BID's trends, BIDs served nearly 300
18 miles of commercial corridors and invested more than
19 187 million into local economies in the form of
20 supplemental services such as supplemental street
21 cleaning, neighborhood beautification, placemaking,
22 and business attraction.

23 BIDs are governed by locally controlled
24 non-for-profit boards consistent of local property
25 owners, merchants, and local electeds and residents.

2 Working with city and local communities, BIDs serve
3 as a powerful voice for their district and invest in
4 the long-term success of the businesses in their
5 commercial districts.

6 Among other responsibilities, SBS
7 supports the BID formation process when local
8 stakeholders are interested in exploring creating
9 BIDs in their neighborhood. All formation efforts
10 begin with the creation of a steering committee. SBS
11 provides technical assistance to each BID and
12 participates as an advisory member of each steering
13 committee.

14 Under this Administration, two new BIDs
15 have been created, two BIDs were merged. In
16 partnership with City Council, we anticipate the
17 creation of another BID, Cypress Hill, this year. We
18 will always continue to provide such assistance to
19 local communities and are happy to meet with Members
20 of this Committee to explain the BID formation
21 process in detail.

22 As part of the Mayor Adams'
23 Administration's Blueprint for Economic Recovery, SBS
24 expanded our support of BIDs by developing historic
25 new grants to equitably rebuild New York City's

2 commercial corridors. Delivering on the Mayoral
3 initiative, SBS created the first ever BID
4 Development Grant, totaling over 1.4 million in FY23
5 and FY24. These grants are spurring BID development
6 efforts by 21 different organizations and many of
7 them in low-to-moderate-income communities. Over the
8 past two years, we have also delivered approximately
9 3 million in grants to smaller BIDs that historically
10 lacked the capacity and the resources of larger BIDs
11 in New York City.

12 Knowing that not every commercial
13 corridor has the capacity to take on BID formation,
14 SBS and the Mayor's Office of Equity launched the
15 first ever Merchant Organizing Grant. We awarded over
16 2.4 million to 14 organizations in FY23, 915,000 to
17 11 organizations in FY24. We have helped create or
18 revitalize merchant organizations in more than 20
19 neighborhoods throughout New York City that helps to
20 build the capacity for merchant engagement and
21 organizing and can serve as a catalyst for future
22 BIDs. Since the beginning of his Administration,
23 Mayor Adams has awarded 6.7 million in grants to
24 community-based organizations working in LMI
25 neighborhoods through our Avenue NYC and Neighborhood

2 360 Grant Program. Avenue NYC enables community-based
3 organizations to hire dedicated full-time project
4 managers, complete commercial district needs
5 assessments, otherwise known as CDNAs, and carry out
6 impactful data-driven assessments of their
7 communities. Neighborhood 360 grant provides funding
8 to CBDOs to address key findings and commercial
9 revitalization opportunities identified in the CDNAs.
10 In addition to funding smaller BIDs, merchant
11 organizations, and community-based development
12 organizations, SBS plays an important oversight role
13 for BIDs as well. My staff monitors the fiscal and
14 organizational health of all BIDs, manages each BID's
15 contract with the city, and collects annual reports
16 and audits. We manage the billing process, working
17 with the Department of Finance, to process more than
18 the 150 million received in assessments. SBS staff
19 also serve as representatives on all of the BIDs for
20 the Mayor, including their audit and finance
21 committees. Through this oversight role, we can
22 target our capacity building and technical assistance
23 services to address governance and compliance
24 challenges within the BID network. We provide
25 customized one-on-one support, workshops, and

2 training for BID staff and boards and facilitate best
3 practice sharing and professional development
4 opportunities for BID leaders.

5 Since the beginning of the pandemic, SBS
6 has organized a monthly meeting with all BIDs,
7 inviting city agency partners to provide updates to
8 the New York City BID Network during those meetings.
9 These meetings provide an opportunity for SBS to hear
10 from the BIDs about the on-ground challenges and the
11 real-world implications of City policies.

12 SBS also facilitates partnerships between
13 BIDs, City Hall, including the Chief Public Realm
14 Officer team on strategic initiatives that support
15 small businesses and enhance the public realm. In
16 2022, Mayor Adams also established the first ever
17 Small Business Advisory Commission, which is Chaired
18 by SBS Commissioner Kim, where the New York City BID
19 Association provides feedback on City policies
20 impacting local businesses for joining us.

21 We remain committed as an agency to
22 ensure that small businesses are thriving in every
23 commercial corridor, and BIDs are a key partner to
24 this work. Our historic programming over the past two
25 years has supported thousands of businesses and will

2 continue to work with our BID partners in making New
3 York City the best place to shop local.

4 Thank you, and we look forward to any
5 questions that you may have for us. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Thank you so much for
7 all the information, also for all the work that you
8 and your whole team does in supporting our BIDs, our
9 small businesses, and our commercial corridors. I
10 have pages of questions but first hearing of the year
11 on this issue so I just want to start with the very
12 basics. Start with general information about how BIDs
13 are funded so how are BIDs funded? Assessments,
14 donations, elected officials, what else?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: You named the
16 basics like through assessments that helps to fund
17 BIDs, budgets, some BIDs get donations, they raise
18 money through grants, but, like I mentioned in my
19 testimony this year, we were able to support the
20 smallest of our BID network through our Small BID
21 Grant, which allowed them to amplify the work that
22 they've been doing along their commercial corridors
23 without any impact to their assessments.

24 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Okay, and what's the
25 average budget/revenue of the average BID, but also

2 the average budget of the larger BIDs and the smaller
3 BIDs.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: The average,
5 so we'll call it the medium expense, is approximately
6 529,000. The smallest BID right now is 180th Street,
7 and their BID has an assessment of about 73,000, and
8 our largest expense BID is about 20 million.

9 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Okay, and we have a
10 lot of BIDs in the City of New York. We also have a
11 lot of Merchant Associations. What's the difference
12 between both of them?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: The difference
14 between a BID and a Merchant Associations is that a
15 Merchant Associations is a voluntary organization
16 that supports the merchants within a specific
17 geography whereas a BID is legislated, and as part of
18 that legislation, a geography is mapped, and every
19 property owner within that that geography has to pay
20 into the assessment.

21 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Okay. Questions about
22 organizing a BID. What are some of the processes that
23 need to happen in order to form a BID?

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: As part of the
25 BID formation process, it's a very community driven

2 process, which requires broad based community
3 support. Part of that is coalescing those
4 stakeholders in an identified geography to have
5 steering committee meetings to discuss key issues
6 that would contribute to the formation of a BID, like
7 what would be the boundaries, what would the budget
8 look like, what sort of services are needed within
9 that geography.

10 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: What are resources
11 that you provide to commercial corridors that are in
12 the process of forming a BID?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: My team
14 provides extensive resources, technical assistance to
15 any neighborhood that is interested in forming a BID.
16 We attend all of the steering committees once they
17 are formed. Even before a steering committee is
18 formed, any interested stakeholder, we provide them
19 with what we call the BID One-on-One about the
20 essentials that are needed, what a steering committee
21 should comprise of, so we provide a lot of resources
22 for the formation and throughout the process.

23 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: What are obstacles
24 that you've seen when communities are trying to form

2 a BID? What are obstacles and what are resources that
3 you provide so they could overcome those obstacles?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: Some of the
5 obstacles is getting that broad-based support.
6 Everyone is not a fan of BID, but part of that is
7 providing the education so my team provides a lot of
8 resources to those steering committees to make sure
9 that they're communicating properly what a BID is,
10 what a BID does, what is entailed in the BID process
11 so that it's clear to those stakeholders what that
12 process looks like, timeline, budget, resources, and
13 all those things that are required.

14 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Okay. We have
15 approximately 75, 76 BIDs in the state of New York,
16 26 in Manhattan, but we don't even have half of that
17 in Brooklyn and in the Bronx so what are factors that
18 you would say are playing a role in terms of boroughs
19 of Manhattan and the Bronx not having BIDs compared
20 to the numbers of all the boroughs?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: There are 12
22 BIDs in the Bronx, there are 22 in Brooklyn, 26 in
23 Manhattan, 11 in Queens, and 4 in Staten Island. When
24 it comes to BIDs, it's really about the location that
25 has to consist of commercial corridors so there's a

2 lot of factors that go into the formation. We work
3 with stakeholders throughout the BID process,
4 offering technical assistance at every step so when
5 it comes to the difference in geography, it's really
6 about where there's commercial continuity, and we
7 help them work through the boundaries, what makes
8 sense, what's realistic. There are certain properties
9 that are not assessed, whether they're City-owned, so
10 we help them work through some of those issues to
11 come up with reasonable boundaries for what a BID
12 looks like.

13 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Okay. How many BIDs
14 have been formed, let's say, in the last five years
15 in the City of New York?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: In the last
17 two years, we had two BIDs that were formed, the West
18 Village BID and Castle Hill BID. We have 10 BIDs that
19 are in our BID formation pipeline so we're hoping to
20 see a lot more BIDs in the future, especially with
21 the additional resources that the Mayor's
22 Administration has provided us so we can provide that
23 additional assistance through the BID formation
24 process.

2 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Okay. We obviously
3 have thousands of commercial corridors in the city of
4 New York, thousands of commercial corridors, but we
5 only have about 75 BIDs, which means that an
6 overwhelming percentage of our commercial corridors
7 don't have a BID. Just wondering what resources, if
8 any, are available to commercial corridors that don't
9 have a BID?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: Any commercial
11 corridor that's interested in having a BID, they can
12 definitely reach out to my division, Neighborhood
13 Development. We can walk them through what that
14 process looks like. Even before a neighborhood or
15 organization is interested in a BID, there's a lot of
16 stakeholder engagement that is needed so depending on
17 where they are in that process, we can help guide
18 them about maybe you need to do merchant organizing
19 first. If they're further along, there's other
20 resources like the BID Exploration, which we were
21 able to provide a lot of support to neighborhoods who
22 are in that initial stage to give them that boost,
23 that financial and resource boost so that they can
24 really engage the stakeholders so there's resources.
25 Even outside of the grants, like I stated, any

2 neighborhood organization interested in a BID, they
3 can reach out to my team and we can walk them through
4 what those initial steps are.

5 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Does SBS provide any
6 resources for communities that aren't interested in
7 forming a BID, or let's say they tried but they
8 weren't successful, are there any resources for those
9 commercial.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: We do. We
11 support commercial corridors through our Avenue NYC
12 Grant, our Neighborhood 360 Grants. We have a very
13 useful tool, which is the Commercial District Needs
14 Assessments, which helps organizations who are
15 supporting commercial corridors identify some of
16 those challenges and issues along their corridor, and
17 then my team also works with them to think about
18 strategies for addressing those concerns that are
19 highlighted in the CDNA.

20 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Okay, cool. Thank you
21 for the information. A few more questions, and then
22 I'll pass it on to colleagues and then I'll continue
23 my questioning.

24 Just for general context and background
25 for those that are with us today and don't have the

2 information. with them what's the total SBS budget,
3 and also what's your total budget for grants for
4 BIDs?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: Our grants for
6 BIDs is 5.3 million, which covered a number of the
7 different programs that I mentioned like supporting
8 merchant organizing, supporting BID exploration, and
9 supporting the single districts where we provided
10 funding to the small BIDs of our BID network. We can
11 get back to you with SBS agency's budget.

12 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Okay, and what are
13 some of the most used or most popular grants that
14 BIDs usually apply for?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: They love the
16 Small BID Grant, but our BIDs have also been
17 beneficiaries of the Neighborhood 360 and Avenue NYC
18 grant. Even though a BID has been formed, this
19 analysis helps them assess some of the challenges
20 that they have along their commercial corridor.

21 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Okay. Thank you so
22 much for the information. I have some additional
23 questions, but I'll pass it on to my Colleague,
24 Council Member Paladino, for some questions.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: Thank you. Being
3 a small business owner myself many years ago, but I
4 was in business for over 30 years. My sister is a
5 small business owner. My family had started a
6 business here in New York in 1947 and closed it in
7 2014. It was down in the village, and I'm very
8 familiar with small business.

9 However, when it comes to my District 19,
10 you mentioned there's 11 BIDs in Queens. Can you name
11 the areas? I know there's several, but can you name
12 the 11 for me, please?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: In your
14 District, we have the Bayside Village BID, and we've
15 been funding merchant organizing groups, College
16 Point is one of them that's received the Merchant
17 Organizing Grant for the initial stages to coalesce
18 those stakeholders. In Queens in general, we have
19 165th Street BID, the 180th Street BID, 82nd Street
20 Partnership, Bayside Village as I mentioned, Downtown
21 Flushing, Gateway JFK, Jamaica Center, and Long
22 Island City Partnership, Myrtle Avenue, Queens, and
23 Steinway Street.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: The reason why
25 I'm asking is because my community, which goes from

2 College Point to Little Neck, Douglaston, and we got
3 Flushing, North Flushing in between, and the only BID
4 that really seems to be working out a bit is the
5 Bayside BID, and I just had them in my office this
6 week. I want to get more people involved because we
7 do have the Whitestone Merchants Associations, we do
8 have the College Point Merchants Associations, and
9 listening to you speak and you mentioning the
10 different services that you offer, I think one of the
11 biggest things or challenges for me was trying to
12 talk the people that have the Merchant Associations
13 into becoming BIDs. We need some revitalization in
14 College Point and on the Boulevard. What I'm going to
15 ask you today is if perhaps we could chat after this
16 meeting because I think what you need to do in my
17 District anyway, I do a lot of town halls, I bring
18 you to the people so that this way any questions that
19 they may have, like I could put together a room of
20 let's say a hundred different store owners, maybe
21 more, from every piece of my District, every area,
22 and I invite you to come and I give them the whole
23 thing of what I want to do and this way it sparks
24 their interest because I don't think, because I know
25 they have to participate as stakeholders, which means

2 they have to contribute so the Bayside BID, for
3 example, is Bell Boulevard. Bell Boulevard is very
4 lengthy, and it consists mostly of restaurants these
5 days. It used to be known as Beer Boulevard. Now it's
6 Bell Boulevard, and it's a restaurant hub, but I'd
7 like more than four or five people to participate in
8 the BID. I think what they're lacking is a very
9 strong board of directors, that's for sure, knowing
10 them now going on my third year and knowing how a
11 business needs to be run, they need to understand
12 exactly what it is, I have it right here and
13 listening to you speak, you seem to offer a great
14 deal other than funding. It's more about how they
15 could keep their business going, and I think
16 knowledge is power, and so you and I will have a
17 conversation and I'd like to do a town hall in
18 District 19 so that we could perhaps maybe flip some
19 of the Merchant Associations into a BID and get
20 College Point Boulevard striving. It's really
21 faltering.

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: No,
23 definitely. That would be great, and we can not only
24 talk about the full suite of services that we have in
25 Neighborhood Development, but the full suite of

2 services that SBS has in general that can help
3 merchants and small businesses.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: I was
5 interested, you said something about beautification?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: Yes, so
7 beautification is one of the components that BIDs
8 have been able to do through the extra resources that
9 we've been able to provide them and helping them
10 identify where that beautification can happen.
11 There's a lot of...

12 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: They all need
13 it...

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: Yes.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: Because
16 everything is very run down now, everything is very
17 old, and people need to take better care of their
18 storefronts, and I have said that to them time and
19 again that you need to sweep in front of your store.
20 Would be nice if you put a potted plant outside.
21 There are certain things that you could do on your
22 own, but I am going to talk to you some more. This
23 was very informative for me. Thank you.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: You're
25 welcome.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Thank you so much,
4 Council Member Paladino, and now I'll pass it on to
5 Council Member Eric Bottcher.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Hi. I'd love to
7 get your thoughts on BID coverage for neighborhoods
8 that are more residential in nature than commercial.
9 In Council District 3, we have a lot of BIDs, and we
10 love our BIDs. We have the Hudson Square BID, the
11 West Village BID, the Village Alliance, the
12 Meatpacking BID, we've got the Garment District BID,
13 the Hudson Yards HK BID, we've got the Times Square
14 Alliance, the 34th Partnership. They all do a great
15 job, but we have a lot of residents who aren't
16 included in a BID area and they want BID coverage for
17 their neighborhoods because they see the difference
18 in services. When you cross the street into an area
19 that's covered by a BID, you get better sanitation,
20 you get landscaping with tree pits and flower baskets
21 from the light pools, you have new wastebaskets, you
22 have augmented homeless outreach services, small
23 business support, so much that comes along with a
24 BID. In Chelsea, we don't have a BID for the largely
25 residential area of Chelsea, and we hear year after

2 year residents coming forward and they would like big
3 coverage in Chelsea. The challenge is we don't have
4 like big commercial anchor tenants that could help
5 with the formation of the BID. Google, for example,
6 they're already included in the Meatpacking BID. In
7 prior years, I had heard from the prior
8 Administration that residential neighborhoods
9 shouldn't necessarily have BIDs, that it should be
10 for more commercial neighborhoods. I'd love to get
11 your thoughts on that and maybe some suggestions
12 about how residents could form BIDs if they're not in
13 a primarily commercial neighborhood.

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: As you know,
15 Council Member, the way that the BID legislation is
16 structured, it really does require commercial
17 property owners. That would have to be a fuller
18 discussion to discuss what that mechanics will look
19 like. Right now, the way that BID legislation is
20 structured, it really does require a significant
21 amount of commercial property owners to contribute to
22 the assessment. There's no mechanism at this point
23 right now. There are some BIDs, let me take a step
24 back, that do assess residential properties, but not
25 at the level that they assess commercial properties

2 so we're happy to have followup on the discussion
3 later on.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: One model would
5 be the West Village BID, which is in what you could
6 think of as a primarily residential area, the 7th
7 Avenue South area of the Village, not your average
8 BID. They've been able to cobble together enough
9 commercial buildings to make it work. I would love to
10 discuss with you and maybe we could do some public
11 awareness out in our Districts about if folks want to
12 follow the model of the West Village BID and cobble
13 together something that might pencil out, how they
14 would proceed with that.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: Yeah, we can
16 definitely discuss that, and the West Village BID is
17 fairly new so definitely a case study that we can
18 continue to analyze.

19 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: All right. Thank you
20 so much for the questions. I would also like to
21 recognize Council Member Krishnan who has joined us
22 as well as Council Member Ung who has joined us via
23 Zoom.

24 A few more questions about grants and
25 processes etc. What steps does SBS take to make sure

2 that the local BIDs and the small business owners
3 know about these grants?

4 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Yes. Specifically, to
5 the BIDs, we send out notices about upcoming grants.
6 We have a BID bulletin that goes out to all the BIDs,
7 but we also send out a bi weekly email that's
8 corresponding that goes to the BIDs about
9 information, and then even outside of that we send
10 out correspondence to electeds, community boards, to
11 a full suite of non-for-profit organizations that we
12 have a listserv of about upcoming grant
13 opportunities, and then we even, before the grant's
14 application period closes, we provide opportunities
15 for informationals about what the grant entails, when
16 the deadline ends, and how to apply.

17 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Talk to us about the
18 application process, timelines, documents needed, how
19 lengthy are the applications, how quickly can a BID
20 complete these applications generally, how long are
21 these applications.

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: It depends on
23 the BID. Every organization, the capacity that they
24 have, but my team specifically for the grants that we
25 issue throughout our division, we're there to support

2 them. As people know, there's a procurement process
3 for accessing any City funds so we walk them through
4 what that process looks like, the documents that they
5 need. Luckily for the BIDs, sometimes we have some of
6 those documents so we try to supplement where we can
7 and then work through other information that they may
8 need.

9 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: How fast after
10 completing the application could BIDs generally
11 expect to receive the grant?

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: Our grants are
13 reimbursable grants so part of receiving the funding,
14 you have to execute work that is within the scope of
15 work and then once you provide us with that
16 documentation, then you get reimbursed. Particularly
17 for the single district Small BID Grant, we tried to
18 minimize some of those hurdles where we can at least
19 upfront some funding with the BIDs just identifying
20 some of the work that they would execute so that way
21 we can kickstart some of the work in their commercial
22 districts.

23 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: After submitting an
24 application and completing all the requirements, how
25 long are they generally reimbursed by?

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: Once we have
3 all the invoices, 6 to 10 days before they receive
4 their funding. Barring no issues, like sometimes,
5 there may be like technical issues with ACH pay
6 transfers, so like barring any issues it's 6 to 10.

7 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Now I could see a lot
8 of challenges, especially for the smaller BIDs when
9 it comes to staffing, not being able to have the
10 capacity or the staff to timely complete the
11 different processes so just wondering what type of
12 help is available for these smaller BIDs who don't
13 have a big staff.

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: That's a great
15 question. I can't emphasize enough how we really do
16 care for our small BIDs. We realize the utility and
17 information that they provide to us about what's
18 happening in their commercial corridors so when
19 they're experiencing any contractual invoicing
20 challenges, my division does have a team, our finance
21 and operation team, that provides support one-on-one
22 support to any organization that is finding the
23 process difficult. Many of our small BIDs, we
24 realized that they weren't used to getting funding in
25 this way outside of discretionary so we had to

2 educate them on that process so we do provide a lot
3 of support to make sure that we can minimize any of
4 the tension that they may be experiencing with
5 procuring money from the City.

6 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: What are examples of
7 that in practice? What are examples of ways that
8 you've helped those smaller BIDs in the past?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: I don't want
10 to get into the weeds, but there's a document for
11 getting reimbursed. We'll have someone from our
12 contract management team who would be on the phone
13 with them and walk them through the correct way of
14 filling out those forms, just to make sure that by
15 the time we get it, that we can minimize the time so
16 that we can internally in SBS send it to the other
17 division that will process those payments.

18 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: All right. Thank you
19 for the information.

20 Now, I'll pass it on to Council Member
21 Krishnan who has a few questions, and then we'll hear
22 from Council Member Paladino.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Thanks so much,
24 Chair Feliz. Unfortunately, I can only stay for a few
25 minutes, jumping back to the Education hearing, and I

2 apologize if this was already covered. I did want to
3 just highlight and the Chair's questions just now
4 alluded to it too, the contracting process and the
5 reimbursement and registration is a real issue and
6 not just with BIDs, frankly, all across non-profit
7 organizations and just the process of contracting and
8 registration reimbursement is really hurting both
9 BIDs, as I said, as well as organizations so I just
10 wanted to call attention to it because it seems like
11 something that should be easy to fix, although I know
12 that it's unfortunately just has been a very
13 disappointing reality of City government is that we
14 can't figure this out, but I would urge you all to
15 just really take a close look at how you can
16 streamline reimbursements because it's putting
17 organizations from BIDs to non-profits, they're
18 fronting a lot of money, floating a lot of money, and
19 not able to get it back for a lengthy period of time,
20 and it just seems like there has to be a way to
21 really cut through the bureaucracy of that process to
22 at least solve that piece of it.

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: Thank you. We
24 continue to find ways so that we can minimize that
25 impact, especially to our smallest organizations that

2 support our commercial corridors, but we'll
3 definitely continue to work on ways that we can
4 minimize that time.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER KRISHNAN: Thank you. Thank
6 you, Chair.

7 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Thank you, Council
8 Member, and now Council Member Paladino.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: Okay. Now I did
10 a little math, and I'm very curious, I go line by
11 line, I guess that's just from being in business. I
12 see Fiscal Year was 187 million, Fiscal Year '23 had
13 1.4 million was given in grants, 3 million were
14 given to smaller BIDs. Is this all-inclusive in the
15 187? And then an additional 2.4 million was given to
16 14 organizations in Fiscal Year '23 and another
17 915,000 was given to 11 organizations in Fiscal Year
18 '24. How do we keep our records? How do we know how
19 this money is being spent? When we give BIDs money,
20 and this is an awful lot of money, I'm just real
21 curious how do we keep track of these numbers? What
22 kind of reports, being a BID, having a board and
23 operating this as a business, how do we keep track of
24 these numbers that I just just laid out for you.

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: I believe the
3 187 is the amount that BIDs invest into their
4 neighborhoods in terms of the supplemental cleaning
5 and some of the services that they do, the two top
6 being sanitation and district marketing, but that's a
7 very good question, but we do keep track of how the
8 BIDs are spending the Small BID Support Grant on some
9 of the services that they're doing. They provide us
10 with a scope of work that they would be doing and
11 then they provide us invoices that match that scope
12 of work, and we also have audits that accounts for
13 how BIDs are spending and that's even outside of our
14 grants. That's one of the things that we as an
15 oversight agency look at (INAUDIBLE).

16 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: Because greed
17 always steps in here some way, somehow. People do
18 things and, when I did a job for somebody, there was
19 a receipt, and then there was a running receipt if I
20 charge X amount of dollars to get something done, I
21 line item every contractor and what they did. Do the
22 BIDs do similar? If you allow a smaller BID, like
23 that's in my neighborhood, let's just say
24 hypothetical, 2 million dollars you give the Bayside
25 BID. What do they give you as proof as to how they

2 used, because I know what the President of the Board
3 of Directors makes. It's an awful lot of money. There
4 is a little bit of that in there as well. I just am
5 curious, I just want to make sure that every nickel
6 and dime, especially with the City in this, in the
7 position that we're in right now, BIDs are necessary,
8 I want to see businesses grow, I want to do this town
9 hall, but I also want to keep track of the bottom
10 line. We're talking tens of millions of dollars and
11 greed has a way of stepping in. Do they give you a
12 receipt? We did this, we did that. How is it
13 accounted for?

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: As it relates
15 to our grants, they do provide us with invoices. As
16 it relates to just generally accounting, our BIDs do
17 a wonderful job managing sometimes the limited
18 resources that they have. As I stated, they do
19 audits. We, when I say we, my team, we sit on their
20 audit, their finance committee teams. When they
21 provide new budgets, they have to provide budgets at
22 the end. We get those budgets. They have to submit
23 those budgets to SBS. There's accounting of it.
24 They're doing a tremendous job sometimes with limited
25 resources, and this is why, SBS, we're here, my team,

2 we are constantly trying to find ways to just help
3 them do the work that they're doing.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: Wonderful. I
5 look forward to working with you. Thank you so much.
6 Thank you. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Thank you, Council
8 Member.

9 On that topic of the smaller BIDs, are
10 there any grants to help set the floor in terms of
11 the in-house resources that smaller BIDs have? I
12 could only imagine the grants and the opportunities
13 that the smaller BIDs lose out on due to the fact
14 that they don't have staff to make people aware of
15 the grants available or don't have the staff to be
16 able to fight for resources.

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: Like I said,
18 we have a BID support team that, any BID, small BID,
19 can reach out to and we can assess what those
20 challenges are. Sometimes the challenges are due to
21 the assessments, but each year we survey the BIDs to
22 see which BID would like to increase their
23 assessment. We walk them through that process. We
24 actually have an assessment increase webinar that's
25 coming up to walk BIDs through the steps of how they

2 can increase their assessments, which is a
3 legislative process, but we want to make sure that
4 they get the buy-in from the board, they engage
5 stakeholders so that's one way that they can increase
6 their capacity is by increasing their assessment.

7 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Have we thought about
8 or explored any grants that could potentially set the
9 floor in terms of funding for specific BIDs just to
10 make sure that they are properly funded. For example,
11 a BID that has a total budget of 90,000 dollars per
12 year, bumping it up to 150,000 through grants and
13 making that the potential floor.

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: Something that
15 we haven't explored, but welcome to follow up with
16 you to walk through what that will look like.

17 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Okay, cool. A few
18 questions about two different grants. I'll start with
19 Small BID Support Grant. How much funding is
20 available through the Small BID Support Grant program
21 and what is the maximum that a BID could receive
22 through that grant program?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: It was
24 budgeted at 5.3 million, but as I stated there were
25 other things that the grant funded like merchant

2 organizing, BID exploration, BID formation. Now what
3 we call the Single District Grant, that went
4 specifically to the BIDs, and a BID could receive up
5 to 100,000, but it was based on their proposal and,
6 once we evaluated their proposal, then we made a
7 decision on what was appropriate for the award.

8 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: What's the minimum
9 that they could receive under that program, and how
10 is the amount determined? How do we determine what's
11 appropriate for the award?

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: It was really
13 based on the scope of work and the need. As the
14 division that supports all BIDs, we knew that some
15 BIDs had more needs than others so the way that we
16 looked at it was what they articulated in their scope
17 of work and it didn't make sense in terms of the
18 budget and what we could necessarily award them. It
19 wasn't really like a bottom, like a minimum. We made
20 sure that no BID received less than 50,000.

21 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Okay. What are needs
22 that would be covered under that program? I'm sure
23 sanitation, security, event.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: I would say
25 that the fact that they were given the opportunity to

2 increase and amplify the work that they currently do
3 and without any impact to their assessment. Some BIDs
4 were very creative with some of the programming that
5 they wanted to do to bring more foot traffic to their
6 commercial corridors. Some did add additional funding
7 to their sanitation or the district marketing or they
8 boasted up their beautification so it really depended
9 on the BID and what they felt was a need that they
10 were unable to meet given their current assessment.

11 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: What are stipulations
12 on how this funding could be used, and also can a
13 small BID apply twice a year for that grant if they
14 have two different initiatives, one that they think
15 about after they submitted the initial application?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: The way that
17 our grants work is on the fiscal year, so there's
18 only one opportunity to apply at the beginning, but
19 we make sure that there was ample enough time for all
20 BIDs who were eligible to apply so you would only
21 have one opportunity to apply for the grant. The
22 grants do have to follow what we call the
23 Neighborhood 360 rules so there's certain limitations
24 of what is allowable and disallowable in terms of
25 what they were able to use the funding. Now, if they

2 had any changes to what they originally proposed to
3 us, we did allow an opportunity for a budget
4 modification and, once again, that's where my team
5 will work with them to understand what they needed to
6 change and how they need to reallocate funding that
7 was awarded to them.

8 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: What has been the
9 overall feedback from small BIDs on that funding? Any
10 challenges that they've talked about including, for
11 example, the timelines when they receive the funds?

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: Yes, I mean we
13 will acknowledge that the timeline and getting the
14 money out but, like I said, we've been working to
15 make sure that we can streamline it as possible, but
16 the overall feedback has been great. The BIDs love
17 the grant. As I stated, it takes the pressure off of
18 their assessments so they can really think
19 creatively. We love this grant because it allows our
20 BIDs to get out of the normal rote of what they do
21 and to think and really envision the future of these
22 commercial corridors by amplifying the work that
23 they're currently doing.

24 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Can you talk to us a
25 little bit more about those challenges? Is it

2 challenges related to the timeline regarding the
3 application or when they receive the grants? Could
4 you give us some examples of those challenges?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: This year has
6 been typically late just given OMB's OTP spending
7 freezes but, like I stated, is that there are
8 procurement documents that each BID has to provide us
9 in order for us to release the funding. Sometimes we
10 have to go back, and it can vary across the BID
11 network depending on the turnaround time in terms of
12 providing those documents. Once those documents are
13 provided, we work as fast as we can to expedite any
14 reimbursement that comes with this grant.

15 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Okay. Thank you for
16 the information on that.

17 Now moving on to a different grant, the
18 BID development program. Could you talk to us a
19 little bit about that grant?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: Yes, so
21 currently in FY24, we have 10 organizations that are
22 receiving the BID Development Grant under our BID
23 formation and then we have four that are receiving
24 our BID Exploration Grant, and this has been a
25 wonderful addition to our sort of support providing

2 neighborhoods an opportunity to explore what a BID
3 can do. Part of it is making sure that they have
4 funding to do what we call demonstration projects so
5 they can demonstrate for those stakeholders within
6 this identified geography what it would look like to
7 provide some of those services, and then the BID
8 formation grant, these are organizations that are
9 already in our BID pipeline who are in one of the
10 various phases of the BID formation process, and the
11 BID Formation Grant has allowed a number of those
12 groups to advance, the additional support has allowed
13 them to advance. It's one of our, I mentioned in my
14 testimony, Cypress Hills is going into legislative
15 because they were a recipient of that BID Formation
16 Grant and been able to use those resources so they
17 can do the additional outreach to get them to the
18 last phase of the BID formation process.

19 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: How does the funding
20 work for that program? The BIDs haven't been formed
21 yet, they're probably not a 501(c)3 so who generally
22 receives...

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: You don't have
24 to be a 501(c)3 to be a recipient of any of the
25 grants that we receive.

2 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Right, so how could
3 that potentially help a BID? How could that help form
4 a BID when they're not...

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: Usually
6 there's an organization who is helping to facilitate
7 the steering committee and outreach. Some of those
8 organizations work with consultants that can help
9 them move the process along.

10 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Okay, so I guess local
11 Community Board or Merchants Associations, that type
12 of...

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: Yes.

14 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Got it. Okay. How much
15 funding is available through that grant and also
16 what's the maximum, what's the minimum that could be
17 received?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: For the BID
19 Formation, it was up to 100,000 dollars and then for
20 BID Exploration it's 20,000 dollars per organization.

21 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Sorry, could you
22 repeat that one more time?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: Per
24 organization, 20,000 dollars for BID Exploration, and
25 then for BID Formation, it is up to 100,000 dollars

2 per organization depending on where they are in the
3 BID formation process.

4 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Okay, and what would
5 be covered under the exploration stage? I guess doing
6 merchant organizing, outreach?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: Yeah, it's
8 like merchant organizing, but we do have a
9 deliverable because part of it is making sure that
10 they do the prerequisites to get them into the BID
11 formation pipeline so part of it is doing a needs
12 assessment of their neighborhood, identifying who the
13 stakeholders are so that and a demonstration project
14 are like the main deliverables for BID Exploration,
15 the 20,000 dollars grant. BID formation, like I said,
16 it depends on where the steering committee is in the
17 BID formation process. If they're in the planning
18 phase which is the initial stage of the BID formation
19 process, many of the organizations use it to support
20 hiring a consultant that can help facilitate those
21 steering committee meetings. If you're in the
22 outreach phase, that requires a lot of on the ground
23 work so it supports a lot of the outreach that is
24 done to the stakeholders, and then if you're in the
25 legislative phase, there's some mail-ins, there's

2 some district plan work that they have to do so it
3 really depends on where they are in the phase.

4 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Yeah. What has been
5 the overall feedback from BIDs and members of a
6 community trying to form a BID? What has been the
7 overall feedback on this grant and the funding?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: It has been
9 amazing. It has been amazing. I think we even
10 appreciate it because we got to see organizations
11 that may have stalled because they didn't have the
12 resources to move forward. Now, we're seeing those
13 organizations advancing in the BID formation process.

14 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Okay. Now moving on to
15 general budget questions. Has any BID funding been
16 halted due to the PEGs? Also how has the SBS been
17 affected by PEGs?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: I can say
19 specifically and fortunately Neighborhood Development
20 within SBS has had a minimum impact to the PEGs, but
21 it has not impacted the Small BID Grant funding.

22 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Okay. Some final
23 questions. One of the biggest issues that we hear
24 from small businesses and commercial corridors are
25 quality of life and safety general issues. Are there

2 any grants specifically on those issues? Safety,
3 quality of life, not including of course sanitation,
4 that's a little bit separate, but general safety.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: Even outside
6 of our grants, and I can speak on it, Mayor Adams has
7 convened a Retail Theft Task Force. Many of our BIDs
8 are part of the task force, helping to develop and
9 think about best practices or ideas that can approach
10 these quality-of-life issues. We use our division,
11 Neighborhood Development, we convene a monthly BID
12 call, and we hear from the BIDs directly about some
13 of the concerns they have on their corridors. If it
14 relates to a particular agency, we make those
15 connections. We also direct BIDs to Community Links,
16 which is a process that comes out of the First Deputy
17 Mayor's Office, and Mayor Adams has tasked NYPD to
18 work with other agencies to address any chronic
19 issues that are happening in these districts. A lot
20 of our BIDs submit concerns to the Community Links
21 and, Community Links would then support whatever
22 those concerns are.

23 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Okay. All right, so we
24 talked about the small BID Support Grant, also the

2 BID Development Program. Any other grants that are
3 very popular that we're going to talk about today?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: I would keep
5 going, our Avenue NYC, our Neighborhood 360, these
6 are grants that really support commercial corridors.
7 We had the opportunity to have a new grant this year,
8 which was a Commercial District Lighting Grant, which
9 provide an opportunity for those organizations to
10 bring additional light into their commercial
11 corridors, not just the typical holiday lights, but
12 lights that may speak to the identity of a
13 neighborhood, lights that will bring people to those
14 commercial corridors, and it was one of our most
15 popular grants, meaning that in the application
16 process we had the largest number of people applied
17 for it so it's been one of our popular grants for
18 FY24, but all of our grants in Neighborhood
19 Development are geared towards building a capacity
20 and supporting commercial corridors and the small
21 businesses within them.

22 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Yeah. Could you talk
23 to us a little bit more about the Neighborhood and
24 the Avenue NYC grant? What are services that would
25 help cover?

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: The Avenue NYC
3 and Neighborhood 360, this helps build the capacity
4 of the organization because, as part of those grants,
5 they have to hire a dedicated full-time person to
6 really work on this grant. As part of those grants,
7 organizations learn about how to assess the
8 challenges on their commercial corridors. They also
9 learn how to do outreach to the stakeholders within
10 the corridors that they're serving and then, working
11 with my team, work on a scope of work that can
12 address some of the challenges that they have
13 identified so this is a part of building a capacity,
14 so even once the grant ends, this organization is
15 left with those skills on how to really identify some
16 of these issues and how to think through ways of
17 addressing those concerns. Further, we always connect
18 all of our grantees back to the largest services that
19 we have at SBS, whether it's NYC Best who can help
20 get through the red tape or bringing out our Mobie
21 mobile unit who can come directly to those commercial
22 corridors and hear some of the concerns directly from
23 those small businesses so our grantees basically act
24 like an ambassador to some of the services that we
25 have at SBS and to really promote some of the larger

2 resources that the agency has to support commercial
3 corridors and small businesses.

4 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Okay. Are there any
5 grants available to help reactivate disadvantaged
6 commercial corridors? Let's say corridors that have a
7 high vacancy rate, those corridors, I'm sure that
8 it's going to be very difficult for them to perform a
9 BID, or to even get resources given that they're not
10 organized.

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: Yeah. This is
12 where the Commercial District Needs Assessment comes
13 into play because I think if there's a commercial
14 corridor that is experiencing those sorts of
15 challenges, having that sort of assessment can then
16 help formulate what the intervention should be. Now,
17 it does require a community partner. That's where,
18 we're welcome to if there's any neighborhoods that,
19 you can identify that have those challenges, we have
20 to connect it to a community partner who can help
21 facilitate the grant.

22 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Okay. Cool. Any
23 questions?

24 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: Yes, I do. I
25 have a lot.

2 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: The floor's all yours.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: I'm very excited
4 only because I want to see more people participate. I
5 see the reasons why they may not because of the
6 organization fee and how you set up. It's already
7 like at 100,000. I know my people are strapped. Some
8 areas are really, one of the main reasons why they
9 don't start a BID is because of the startup and then
10 getting the other stores to participate. That's why
11 you coming in and talking to them and making them
12 understand exactly what it is they're going to
13 benefit by their investment, what their investment is
14 going to ultimately give them back, which is a
15 tremendous amount. Now, I do holiday lights for the
16 Whitesell Merchants, I fund that, I do other little
17 things, but they need to get involved in this, and I
18 really think that being just a Merchants
19 Associations, while it's good and it's community-
20 organized and all of that, I think the bottom line is
21 a constant line is what it costs to participate. They
22 always see, and I try to explain to people, you have
23 to first put in order to get out, and that's why I'm
24 really dead set on getting you over to my District
25 and doing what needs to be done. There needs to be

2 more of this. Thank you. My head's spinning. Thank
3 you very much.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: You're
5 welcome, Council Member.

6 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Thank you so much,
7 Council Member.

8 I don't have any more questions, but I
9 just want to thank you all for all the work that you
10 do to support our small businesses and our BIDs. Our
11 BIDs are, again, the heart of our economy. They do so
12 much for our communities. They're the ones that make
13 sure that our communities are vibrant. Our BIDs make
14 sure that our commercial corridors are corridors
15 where people want to come to shop, to eat and visit
16 so I just want to thank you all for all the work that
17 you do, and I'm looking very forward to working
18 together.

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: Yes and,
20 Chair, I just wanted to mention we got that number.
21 The adopted budget was 283.5 million for SBS.

22 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Sorry, repeat that
23 again.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: 283.5 million.

2 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: 283.5 million. That's
3 the total budget for SBS?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: Yes, for FY24.

5 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Perfect. Thank you so
6 much. Alright, thank you so much.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BROWN: Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Now I'll turn back to
9 our Moderator, Jessica Boulet. Thank you so much.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL BOULET: All right.
11 Thank you very much. Thank you, Chair. We will now
12 turn to public testimony.

13 I'd like to remind everyone that each
14 panelist today will have two minutes to present their
15 testimony and recording is not permitted while
16 providing testimony. This is being live-streamed on
17 Council website.

18 We'll start first with those who have
19 joined us here in person. I will call individuals by
20 name and you may step up to the table. We will start
21 with Rafael Moure-Punnett from Bronx Community Board
22 6, Nicole Paynter from the NYC BID Association, and
23 Christopher Leon Johnson.

24 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: I just want to briefly
25 thank you, Rafael, District Manager of Community

2 Board 6. We've been working very hard to organize
3 merchants in the East Tremont section of the Bronx.
4 Hopefully, we could realize the BID in that high-
5 needs area of the Bronx, which has so much potential.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL BOULET: All right. I
7 will call each of you by name and if you could wait
8 until the Sergeant has started the timer.

9 Council Members, if you have questions
10 for a particular panelist, let me know, and you may
11 ask after each panelist has completed their
12 testimony.

13 I would like to welcome first, Rafael
14 Moure-Punnett.

15 RAFAEL MOURE-PUNNETT: Thank you, Council
16 Member. I'd like to thank the Committee for allowing
17 me to speak and thank Council Member Feliz for
18 graduating on his new role. I'm looking forward to
19 working with him on working with merchants in Council
20 District 15 and in Community Board 6.

21 My name is Rafael Moure. I'm the District
22 Manager of Community Board 6 and, as the Council
23 Member mentioned, the Board has been working on
24 organizing merchants along East Tremont Avenue in the
25 neighborhood of East Tremont, and I wanted to speak

2 to some of the challenges in merchant organizing and
3 trying to access SBS funding in neighborhoods that
4 are low income and there isn't already infrastructure
5 in merchant organizing. East Tremont used to be a
6 bustling commercial district that people from all
7 over the city knew about. When FDR was running for
8 re-election, he would drive down East Tremont Avenue
9 to see voters. This was a key area in the Bronx, and
10 when the economy of the Bronx changed in the 70s, it
11 became very depressed and has yet to recover. There
12 is no Merchant Associations. There was one for a
13 couple of years. There was an attempt at forming a
14 BID, which fell apart because of infighting over who
15 would get the Avenue NYC SBS funding, and so I think
16 really what I want to highlight for the Committee is
17 the challenge in accessing Avenue NYC funding in
18 neighborhoods where there isn't an infrastructure of
19 non-profits that can apply for the money, and that's
20 what we're seeing in East Tremont. In Fiscal Year
21 '23, I spoke to several non-profits about applying
22 for the Avenue NYC funding, and no one really felt
23 that it was within their wheelhouse, and no one
24 applied for the funding, and money that SBS has ready
25 and available to support businesses wasn't spent in a

2 low-income neighborhood that could really benefit
3 from assistance from the City in merchant organizing.
4 Part of what I think the feedback that I wish SBS was
5 here to hear is that SBS, I think could look more
6 proactively in how to promote Avenue NYC funding.
7 They mentioned they have a mailing list, but if
8 you're not already doing merchant organizing, you're
9 not going to be on that mailing list and be aware of
10 these funding opportunities when they come around.
11 Another thing that we think that SBS could really
12 expand upon is being more proactive and thinking
13 about what kind of non-profits in a neighborhood
14 could access this funding.

15 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Cool. Sounds good.

16 Thank you so much for the testimony.

17 RAFAEL MOURE-PUNETT: Thank you.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL BOULET: If there are no
19 more questions, then I would like to call Nicole
20 Paynter.

21 NICOLE PAYNTER: Thank you. Chair Feliz
22 and members of the New York City Council Committee on
23 Small Business, my name is Nicole Paynter, and I am
24 testifying today on behalf of the New York City BID
25 Association. I'm also the Executive Director of the

2 Columbus Avenue BID on the Upper West Side of
3 Manhattan. The New York City BID Association
4 represents all of the City's 76 Business Improvement
5 Districts, which are as diverse as the city itself.
6 The Association's mission has always been to support
7 small businesses, to keep our neighborhoods clean and
8 safe, and to bring prosperity to our communities. We
9 are proud to serve nearly 300 miles of commercial
10 corridors, including around 100,000 businesses, and
11 to invest more than a combined 187 million dollars in
12 services back into our communities. Some additional
13 statistics from the Fiscal Year '22 BID Trends
14 Report is included in our written submitted
15 testimony.

16 BIDs work very closely with our partners
17 at the Department of Small Business Services. We
18 interact with several of the divisions within SBS,
19 including Business Services and the Office of
20 Nightlife. We work most closely with the Neighborhood
21 Development Division. This team is led by Deputy
22 Commissioner Calvin Brown and is tasked with BID
23 oversight and support, creating capacity building
24 opportunities for community-based organizations, and
25 the development and management of grant programs that

2 deliver critical resources for BIDs. This includes
3 the Small BID Grant Program, Avenue NYC, Neighborhood
4 360, and others. We are very grateful for the
5 partnership of Mayor Adams, SBS Commissioner Kim, and
6 the City Council in recent years. In particular, we
7 want to thank everyone for their advocacy and support
8 of additional funding for small BIDs through the
9 Small BID Grant Program to deliver critical services.
10 As a part of the Rebuild, Renew, Reinvent Blueprint
11 for Economy Recovery, Mayor Adams laid out an
12 ambitious plan to form new BIDs, expand current BID
13 catchment areas, and to provide additional assistance
14 to small BIDs to serve districts across the city.
15 Small BIDs are hard at work to deliver on the promise
16 of this funding which is being put to use on
17 everything from graffiti removal and street
18 beautification to lights for Ramadan celebrations and
19 business attraction efforts. This program was
20 launched in Fiscal Year '23 and renewed in Fiscal
21 Year '24. We are hopeful this funding will be renewed
22 in Fiscal Year '25. Ultimately, we hope this program
23 is baselined in order to create certainty for small
24 BIDs. Unfortunately, due to the challenges of
25 contracting with the City, BIDs are again awaiting

2 contract registration and rushing to deliver these
3 services as quickly as possible before the fiscal
4 year ends, which is not ideal. Despite these
5 challenges, we do want to commend SBS for the
6 urgency, nimbleness, and creativity that they have
7 shown in standing up this grant program. Baselineing
8 this funding this funding would ensure that BIDs can
9 strategically plan to use this funding for the most
10 important needs of their districts moving forward. We
11 strongly urge Mayor Adams and the City Council to
12 continue to support our small BIDs through this new
13 program. In addition to the critical work our BIDs do
14 on the ground.

15 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: All right, please
16 conclude.

17 NICOLE PAYNTER: We're proud that two BID
18 leaders, Matthew Bauer and Nina Flores, have been
19 serving on the Mayor's Small Business Advisory
20 Commission. We hope that we can continue to work with
21 the SBS, the Mayor, and the Council to advance reform
22 efforts to reduce red tape, encourage
23 entrepreneurship, and stem the tide of storefront
24 vacancies. Thank you.

2 CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Hello. My name
3 is Christopher Leon Johnson. Oh, sorry.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL BOULET: Were there any
5 questions?

6 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: No, no questions.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL BOULET: All right. In
8 that case, I will invite Christopher Leon Johnson.

9 CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: All right.
10 Hello. My name is Christopher Leon Johnson, and I
11 want to say this right now. I know that there's a lot
12 of BIDs that do the right thing. They clean up
13 streets, they work with the small business owners,
14 and they make sure the streets are safe and the
15 business are safe with the NYPD, and they work with
16 community boards and the business management, all
17 agencies like this one, Columbus, but there's one BID
18 that I know it's going to be in the small business
19 for FY25 and FY26, which is going to be based in
20 North Brooklyn. It's going to be called a North
21 Brooklyn BID. Now, I want to say this right now, that
22 the City Council you as the Small Business Chair, the
23 Chair of the Worker Protection need to decline
24 funding for the North Brooklyn BID, and I'll tell you
25 why. Because the North Brooklyn BID will be ran by

2 Katie Denny Horowitz, who is corrupt, who mentioned
3 on camera that there is no need for North Brooklyn
4 BID, but she wouldn't be the head of it, and all this
5 is about with her is trying to collect money from
6 business owners, and I smell a lot of corruption, I
7 smell a lot of extortion going to happen if this get
8 approved. Now, we all know that where was like, I
9 don't know if Lincoln Restler was here today, but
10 this needs to be sent to the Ethics Committee because
11 Lincoln Restler has a big stake with this North
12 Brooklyn BID idea that they have planned out for the
13 City of New York. This need to be rejected. Katie
14 Denny Horowitz is connected to a seven-time stalker
15 that is named Kevin Lechera (phonetic) and a anti-
16 police racist named Ryan Knoen (phonetic), who both
17 are members of Brooklyn Community Board 1, and I'll
18 tell you guys this right now, if this ever happens,
19 and I know very soon it will happen, they're going to
20 extort all the business, owners saying if you don't
21 do this, we're going to screw your business over.
22 They did this with the Open (INAUDIBLE) Streets. All
23 hell is going to break loose, and it's going to set
24 all the Community Boards back and all the BIDs back
25 because the BID gotta do the right thing but this one

2 that they cooking up in North Brooklyn is going to do
3 a lot of damage to all the BIDs in New York City
4 because they, like I said, it's on camera, they was
5 at a movie theater inside the Wythe Hotel and the
6 person that's going to be on the board mostly going
7 to be the chair of the board, Katie Denny Horowitz,
8 mentioned that well, there's no need to BIDs, we just
9 want to collect money from business owners, on
10 camera, I recorded it. It's at a Wythe Hotel with
11 Linky Restler and Emily Gallagher was there.

12 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: All right, please
13 conclude.

14 CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: So I'm going to
15 conclude right now. Linky Restler and Emily Gallagher
16 was there and Kristen Gonzalez was there. Like I
17 said, they said that there's no need for North
18 Brooklyn BID, but we just here to collect money from
19 business owners. I know, like I said, I will never
20 disparage any other BID because I don't really know
21 them, and I know they're doing the right thing for
22 their BIDs in the communities that they serve, but
23 this one that they try to cook up in North Brooklyn,
24 which serves Greenpoint and Williamsburg. Wait, wait.
25 It's under Linky Restler, under Emily Gallagher...

2 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: All right, please
3 conclude.

4 CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: And Kristen
5 Gonzalez and General Gutiérrez because they all
6 scared of her.

7 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: All right, thank you
8 so much.

9 CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Wait, wait. We
10 have to stop this.

11 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Thank you so much for
12 your testimony.

13 CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: I'm going. All
14 right. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: Thank you so much.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL BOULET: All right. Any
17 questions?

18 All right. Thank you very much. Thank you
19 all.

20 I will turn to our Zoom panelists. I
21 believe that we have we'll go in this order. Justin
22 Lerner, Alyssa Tucker, Marshall Strawbridge,
23 Elizabeth Lovejoy, and Pedro Suarez. To begin with,
24 if we have Justin.

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: You may begin.

3 JUSTIN LERNER: Hi. My name is Justin
4 Lerner, Executive Director of the White Plains Road
5 BID. My experience with Small Business Services has
6 been overall very positive. They've helped us
7 throughout COVID. I don't know if it was an official
8 grant or whatever, but they definitely provided a lot
9 of face masks and Purell and had a lot of guidelines
10 to help keep our storefronts open so I don't want
11 that to go oversights because they really did help
12 us through a very dark time.

13 In regards to the grants and the funding
14 that was being discussed. I do agree that they do
15 have a lot of open grants that we can take advantage
16 of, but I also do agree that somehow since our budget
17 couldn't really afford for the reimbursements,
18 finding a different way of working on those grants,
19 and I think that they have been working on that and
20 SBS might be looking to fund a grant for us where
21 they would hire somebody directly where we wouldn't
22 have to come out-of-pocket for that so I'm not sure
23 the last time that's been updated. I think we spoke
24 to them last year on that, but I think that they
25 might be working on that. I hope that they are, and

2 we look forward to working on that grant and finding
3 that study with them. I'm done.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL BOULET: All right.
5 Short and sweet. Thank you very much.

6 Next up, we'll have Alyssa Tucker.

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: You may begin.

8 ALYSSA TUCKER: I'm Melissa Tucker. I'm
9 testifying as Executive Director of the Belmont BID.
10 I congratulate Council Member Feliz on his
11 appointment as Chair of this important Committee and
12 congratulate all the Council Members for their new
13 terms. The Belmont BID works to advance the economic
14 well-being of local businesses in the community at
15 large. We work daily to support and promote our small
16 businesses and help keep our neighborhood clean and
17 safe through our supplemental services. SBS helps
18 build thriving neighborhoods in an abundance of ways,
19 most notably by supporting BIDs and small businesses,
20 and we are appreciative of the work they do daily. We
21 are especially thankful for your advocacy and support
22 surrounding the additional funding for small BIDs of
23 which we are. In Fiscal Year '23 and '24, funding
24 from the small BID grant enabled us to expand on our
25 critical services and broaden our initiatives. If

2 this program were to be baselined, it would create
3 more certainty for small BIDs and allow us to
4 strategically plan to use the funding for the most
5 important needs of our districts. It's challenging to
6 introduce new projects or expand operations, even
7 with additional funding, due to limited staff. If SBS
8 were to introduce a new multi-year grant,
9 specifically for additional staffing, I believe it
10 would significantly help BIDs better serve our
11 districts. While we are grateful and commend SBS for
12 their work, it has been challenging contracting with
13 the City due to timely contract registrations. We
14 believe SBS should offer more grants directly to
15 small businesses as well, things like storefront
16 improvements, equipment, and safety upgrades. The
17 Belmont BID also respectfully requests SBS review the
18 BID Trends Report. Just as our neighborhoods are
19 unique, our BIDs are too, and what is needed in one
20 district doesn't necessarily mean it's needed in
21 another. A similar budget doesn't mean similar needs.
22 We question its value, particularly after it was used
23 to provide data for Comptroller Lander's analysis of
24 the financial and operations practices of...

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Thank you. Time
3 expired.

4 ALYSSA TUCKER: I'm sorry?

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time has expired. Thank
6 you.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL BOULET: All right.
8 Thank you very much, and we will be sure to look at
9 the full written statement as well.

10 Next, I will call Marshall Strawbridge.

11 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: You may begin.

12 MARSHALL STRAWBRIDGE: Good afternoon.
13 Thank you. My name is Marshall Strawbridge. I'm the
14 Director of Small Business and Community Outreach at
15 the Bronx Economic Development Corporation. As the
16 Economic Development Agency for the Bronx Borough
17 President, I represent the Borough President on each
18 of the 12 Business Improvement Districts in the
19 Bronx. To avoid going over time and reiterating
20 things that have been shared before, I just want to
21 second a lot of stuff that has been said about the
22 grant-making operations at SBS and how the
23 reimbursement to invoice system places a financial
24 strain on a lot of our smaller BIDs. The Bronx has a
25 majority of BIDs that operate under 500,000 dollars,

2 so they depend on the grants that SBS provides. I
3 also want to emphasize the role that SBS plays in
4 providing technical support to its executive
5 directors. Many of our executive directors operate as
6 the sole employees of their organizations, and so
7 that places a lot of responsibility on them as the
8 directors there, and so one of the initiatives that
9 SBS and Bronx EDC alongside the Bronx Borough
10 President have launched recently is the Bronx BID
11 Leadership Support Initiative where Bronx EDC is
12 providing technical support along with additional
13 resources to BIDs thanks to a grant from SBS. This is
14 an initiative that's still in its infancy, but it's
15 something that we are excited about and have gotten
16 positive feedback from by both SBS and the BID
17 directors themselves. I think it's something that we
18 should emphasize as being a priority to continue in
19 future years, both in the Bronx and expanded to other
20 boroughs. Thank you.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL BOULET: Great. Thank
22 you very much.

23 Next up, we have Elizabeth Lovejoy.

24 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: You may begin.

2 ELIZABETH LOVEJOY: Good afternoon, Chair
3 Felice and Members of the New York City Council
4 Committee on Small Business. My name is Elizabeth
5 Lovejoy, and I am testifying today as Executive
6 Director of the Bay Ridge Fifth Avenue Business
7 Improvement District in Brooklyn. The Bay Ridge Fifth
8 Avenue Business Improvement District represents 300-
9 plus businesses ranging from diverse restaurants and
10 retail establishments. Our mission is to be a partner
11 to local property owners, merchants, residents,
12 elected officials and community organizations to
13 improve neighborhood conditions that promote economic
14 and cultural vitality of the commercial corridor. We
15 applaud Mayor Adams and the Department of Small
16 Business Services' advocacy to renew additional
17 funding for small BIDs and look forward to continued
18 funding in Fiscal Year '25. As a small BID operating
19 within a fixed budget and bolstered by additional
20 grant funds, the Bay Ridge Fifth Avenue BID is
21 evolving with innovative ideas and initiatives.
22 Nevertheless, the challenge of illegal dumping
23 persists along the commercial corridor, defying any
24 remedy solely through increased funding for
25 supplemental sanitation. We respectfully implore the

2 New York City Council to work with the Department of
3 Sanitation to intense lifetime to intensify litter
4 basket pickups and/or enact regulations specifically
5 designated to deter illegal disposal. Moreover, in
6 our endeavor to cultivate an inclusive and welcoming
7 district, we adorn it with holiday lighting during
8 both the Christmas and Ramadan seasons. Giving the
9 rising costs involved, we pursued discretionary
10 funding to ensure continued installations in the
11 upcoming fiscal year, however the acquisition of such
12 funds entails a cumbersome process, and we earnestly
13 hope for strides to streamline bureaucratic
14 procedures and minimize unnecessary delays. We
15 eagerly anticipate advancing our crucial initiatives
16 with your invaluable support. Thank you.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL BOULET: All right,
18 thank you very much.

19 I believe we have Pedro Suarez.

20 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: You may begin.

21 PEDRO SUAREZ: Yes, I'm here. I'm not able
22 to turn on my camera for some reason. It says the
23 host has stopped it. Alright. There we go. Apologies.

24 Good afternoon, Chair Feliz and Members
25 of the New York City Council Committee on Small

2 Business. My name is Pedro Suarez, and I'm testifying
3 today as Executive Director of the Third Avenue
4 Business Improvement District in the Bronx. The BID
5 covers the commercial area between East 148th Street
6 and East 153rd Street, primarily along Third Avenue
7 in the Bronx. Our mission has always been to support
8 small businesses, keep our neighborhoods clean and
9 safe, and bring prosperity to our communities. We are
10 proud to be the first and oldest of our kind in the
11 Bronx, serving the growing South Bronx community
12 since 1988. The Third Avenue BID covers an eight-
13 block facing area, which includes over 200 commercial
14 tenants. BIDs interact with several of the divisions
15 within SBS, including Business Services and the
16 Office of Nightlife. We work most closely with the
17 Neighborhood Development Division. This team led by
18 Deputy Commissioner Calvin Brown is tasked with BID
19 oversight, creating capacity-building opportunities
20 for community-based organizations, and the
21 development and management of grant programs that
22 deliver critical resources for BIDs. I'm very
23 grateful for the partnership with Mayor Adams, SBS
24 Commissioner Kim, and the City Council in recent
25 years, in particular, thanking everyone for their

2 advocacy and support of additional funding for
3 smaller BIDs like myself through the Small BID Grant
4 to deliver critical services.

5 One thing that I wanted to add and
6 mention is that BIDs in many parts of the city face
7 unique challenges, particularly in the South Bronx.
8 Our BID is located within the center of the opioid
9 epidemic and crisis so that adds an additional layer
10 of complexity to the issues that we're trying to
11 address, and I would also add that the assessments
12 that are delivered to BIDs don't often reflect the
13 volume of visitors that we receive. The Third Avenue
14 BID is the second most heavily trafficked BID in the
15 entire city, second only to Times Square so that's
16 something that I would like folks to keep in mind as
17 they think about the different supports that are
18 needed for the smaller BIDs that we often face a high
19 volume of traffic.

20 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Thank you. Time has
21 expired.

22 PEDRO SUAREZ: Thank you so much for your
23 time today.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL BOULET: All right.
25 Thank you very much.

2 Thank you to all our panelists in person
3 and on Zoom. Is there anyone else that I may have
4 missed in the room or on Zoom?

5 Great. In that case I will turn it back
6 over to Chair Feliz for closing remarks.

7 CHAIRPERSON FELIZ: All right. Thank you
8 so much to everyone who joined us today. Thank you to
9 everyone who testified.

10 Our small businesses are really important
11 parts of our city and, of course, our BIDs do crucial
12 work in terms of helping our small businesses
13 survive, thrive, expand, and do the great work that
14 they do in our city so we look very forward to
15 working with all, including our BIDs, Small Business
16 Services, and all the different agencies to make sure
17 we're continuing to provide for our small businesses
18 in the City of New York.

19 I want to thank everybody who testified,
20 and with that said, today's hearing is hereby
21 adjourned. Thank you so much. [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 March 11, 2024