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Testimony for the New York City Council Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations meeting September 24 at 10am

Vineyard Theatre would like to thank the New York City Council for your attention to the important matters covered by the bills under discussion today, and are pleased to offer our strong endorsement of each of them (Int. 2068, Int. 2034, Int. 1773-A)

The Vineyard commenced outdoor performances this Wednesday, with The Busking Project, a series of short one-man vaudeville-style shows by Broadway veteran Bill Irwin. These are taking place on Broadway just south of Madison Square, for limited socially-distanced audiences. We initially encountered difficulty navigating the City's permitting requirements, which spread across several agencies. We were lucky to be introduced to Andrew Ronan at the Department of Transportation, who had a comprehensive knowledge of the situation and was tremendously helpful in making us aware of and meeting all requirements. Also crucial in this effort were SAPO (the Street Activity Permit Office) and the Flatiron Business Improvement District. A clearly-defined infrastructure for arranging outdoor performances would significantly simplify the administrative burden of securing permission to do so. Furthermore, this would create an encouraging atmosphere for a greater number and wider variety of cultural organizations to pursue this option.

We strongly support the creation of an Office of Tourism Recovery, which we see as potentially instrumental in promoting the value of small and midsize nonprofit arts venues outside of Midtown as a secondary tourist market to the city's flagship museums and Broadway theatres for a "complete" New York experience.

As our organization prepares for possible reopening scenarios, we also see the need for an Office of Tourism Recovery in accessing additional government resources. The current lack of capital funding in FY21 for cultural organizations is of significant concern for us, as it is now our understanding that upgrades to HVAC systems may be one of the most important factors in rendering facilities safe for the public. This is of special concern to the many organizations throughout the city with below-ground performance spaces, lobbies, offices, and/or restrooms, The Vineyard among them.

Finally, we fully support the Council's initiative to encourage Congress to pass the Save our Stages Bill (S.4258/H.R.7806). Live performance venues and the workers in our industry have been hit especially hard by the economic effects of the pandemic. The now-concluded Paycheck Protection Program loans were essential to maintaining staffing levels, and an additional grant program for operating costs such as payroll and facilities expenses will prevent further job loss and help our industry and the City retain talent.

**Testimony of the Museum of the City of New York
Joint Hearing of the Committee on Cultural Affairs,
Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations
and the Committee on Economic Development**

September 24, 2020



My name is Lizzy Marmon, my pronouns are they/them/theirs, and I'm the Manager of Institutional Giving at the Museum of the City of New York, one of the 34 members of the Cultural Institutions Group (CIG). Thank you, Chair Van Bramer, Chair Vallone, and Committee members, for providing this opportunity to offer testimony on the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the city's tourism industry, and to share the Museum's experience since reopening.

Through the pandemic's many impacts, the Museum has continued to serve as a steadfast resource on our city's past, present, and future—virtually, and as of August 27 once again onsite.

Prior to COVID-19, the Museum served 300,000 visitors annually, including 50,000 students and educators. 40% of visitors attend from the NYC metro area of which roughly 15% attended from New York State, New Jersey, and Connecticut, with 85% from the five boroughs. 30% were domestic tourists, with highest visitation from Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Florida, California, Washington, and Texas; and 30% international visitors with top visitation from Canada, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, and Spain.

In accordance with city and state guidelines, the Museum has welcomed nearly 3,000 visitors since reopening on August 27, in addition to 25,000 served through live virtual programming during the same period. This would not be possible without the hard work of our entire Museum staff--especially our visitors services, security, facilities, and maintenance teams.

Past audience research shows that visitors see the Museum as a place of comfort, escape, and exploration. 50% of our visitors since reopening had not been to the Museum before, most of those visiting are staying for longer, and all are complying with our new safety guidelines. Our reopening has generated substantial press

coverage, and our reach has broadened due to our increased digital programming in the past six months.

Additionally, our outdoor spaces are being activated for events such as our first socially distanced program last week, a film screening in our *Moonlight and Movies* series, and for an installation called [*New York Responds*](#), which features photographs of 2020 life in New York, curated from over 20,000 submissions via social media.

However, challenges remain. For FY21, the Museum cut its budget by 30% through significant reductions in personnel and programming. Since reopening, we have rehired eight full-time and 19 part-time staff, and seven full-time staff returned from furlough. However, given ongoing budget constraints, 14 full-time staff members remain on reduced hours.

Attendance marks a 75% reduction from the same period last year. We have reduced our open days from seven days per week to five, and invested heavily in new protocols to protect our staff and visitors. While earned income is down overall, we are encouraged by increased purchases per capita in our Shop, and that our café provider Amy's Bread will reopen with the start of indoor dining, with reduced hours and reduced seating capacity.

In the short-term, we expect the majority of visitors will be from our East Harlem neighborhood and Manhattan, but in accordance with city and state guidance, we hope to safely welcome visitors from across the five boroughs, from drive-in markets in the Northeast, and beyond.

My testimony today has focused specifically on the experience that the Museum of the City of New York has had upon being able to reopen to the public. In addition, I would like to submit to the record some examples of innovative programming that my CIG colleagues have undertaken recently to help spur economic activity in their communities.

- **New York Botanical Garden** partnered with Port Morris Distillery, a small business in the Bronx, to procure the massive quantities of hand sanitizer necessary to re-open to the public. They have also partnered with the Bronx

based performing arts group Bombazo Dance Company, amongst others for virtual performance free to the public.

- Through a partnership with **MoMA PS1**, visitors enjoyed the **Queens Botanical Garden** for free on Saturday, September 5th with continuous music streamed live from MoMA PS1's iconic courtyard from 12 to 8pm. 1,001 visitors throughout the day were able to enjoy the Garden and listen and view these performances on the Grounds.
- Although **New York Hall of Science** has not yet re-opened, they have partnered with the **Museum of the Moving Image** and Rooftop Films to present and host the Queens Drive-In, presenting film screenings for drive-in audiences.
- **Snug Harbor** has offered Wellness Wednesdays in conjunction with their farm stand and CSA pick up. Local businesses including bars and restaurants, dance and yoga studios, and MakerPark radio have been using Snug Harbor's space to promote wellness activities and their own products. They are offering deep discounts to Staten Island-based businesses and non-profit organizations to allow them to use our variety of outdoor spaces for safe programming options.
- **The Staten Island Children's Museum** is offering a drop off outdoor kids adventure program. Children ages 4-6 can enjoy facilitated outdoor play, arts, nature and walks on the grounds of Snug Harbor Park, led by a certified pre-school teacher. The program is offered weekdays afterschool from 3-4:30.

New York City's economic prosperity is synonymous with culture—it drives our spending and for many, it's our livelihood, and the city's cultural offerings serve as a beacon for global visitors. Culture will be a critical component of the city's recovery, and the Museum of the City of New York and all members of the CIG remain committed partners to the city in this transformed cultural landscape.

Arts in Education **R**NYC **UNDTABLE**

New York City Arts in Education Roundtable *NYC 2020 Arts Education School Reopening Priorities*

The New York City Arts in Education Roundtable (NYCAIER) is a non-profit service organization working to improve and advance the state of arts education in New York City's schools and beyond. We build our efforts around the values that **arts are essential** and that arts education is a right for all NYC students, especially students who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) as well as students with developmental, physical, and social-emotional disabilities. From powering critical thinking skills and social-emotional learning to activating engagement and improved participation in school, the direct outcomes of quality arts education are critical to building equity and justice in public education, and have been identified as a priority in the CreateNYC Cultural Plan. Arts learning opportunities give students space to process their current reality and build important life skills that will help them move beyond a historically segregated school system.

Going into the 2020 – 2021 school year, we understand that the dynamics of both remote and in-school learning will be tested and adjusted throughout the year, as our education system evolves during the COVID-19 crisis. Arts Education has proven to be an uplifting creative outlet for our students, and provides variety in their daily educational experience, whether it is dance, theatre, visual, music or media. NYC Arts in Education Roundtable would like to ensure that key elements of art education are prioritized and protected for NYC public school students – to ensure their success and social-emotional well being this year. For this reason, we are calling on the NYC Council, Mayor de Blasio, NYC DOE, Governor Cuomo, and the NYS Education Department for the following:

- Prevent schools from eliminating arts education in order to make up for budget shortfalls. This includes:
 - Preserving the \$68,413,612 allocated for FSF Arts Supplemental Funding
 - Protecting the 2,800+ jobs of certified arts teachers
 - Maintaining partnerships with 310+ non-profit cultural arts organizations (which helps to fill the gap of state-mandated arts hours)
 - Ensuring dedicated spaces for arts instruction are provided in and outside of schools.
- Restore funding to relevant agencies and initiatives cut in the FY21 City Budget. This includes the \$3,060,000 cut in City Council CASA funding, and the \$15.5M in eliminated funding for school partnerships with cultural organizations.
- Protect Arts Education Funding and Certified Arts Teachers from further reductions and eliminations due to potential state funding cuts to the NYC DOE (Up to 20% cuts expected).
- Include arts education and arts vendor partnership requirements in clear, system-wide reopening guidelines.
- Work with NYC's cultural organizations to develop a plan to thoughtfully expand the Cultural After-School Adventures (CASA) program to more schools.

About NYC Arts in Education Roundtable:

NYCAIER represents thousands of teaching artists in every discipline and over 500 of NYC's cultural organizations (including Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Brooklyn Academy of Music, NY Philharmonic, ArtsConnection, DreamYard, Apollo Theater, and many more). We are a community of cultural organizations and educators that shares resources, provides professional development, and advocates for the needs of these students, educators and culture organizations to foster inspiring and creative learning environments. Our primary function is to ensure the sustainability of the arts education field and to promote a culture of continuous improvement from lessons learned in classrooms and through research.



PUBLIC ADVOCATE FOR THE CITY OF NEW YORK
Jumaane D. Williams

**TESTIMONY OF PUBLIC ADVOCATE JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS
TO THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT AND COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES, AND
INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP RELATIONS - HEARING
SEPTEMBER 24, 2020**

Good morning,

My name is Jumaane D. Williams, and I am the Public Advocate for the City of New York. I would like to thank the Committee on Economic Development chair Paul Vallone and Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations chair James Van Bramer for holding today's hearing.

About 67 million people visited our City last year with many walking through our streets, dining in our restaurants, and enjoying our museums. This year, our streets are nearly empty, our restaurants are struggling, and our museums are barely full. This is having a serious financial effect on neighborhoods that heavily rely on travelers. Overall, it may take until 2024 for full recovery of the tourism industry. The latest employment figures from the New York State Department of Labor highlight the existing challenges we face today. There were 85,300 jobs in the City's arts, entertainment, and recreation industry back in January. Last month, it was 32,800. In seven months, employment in this sector fell by 61.5 percent.

A central issue in recovery is how the City and the nation will manage COVID-19. If uncertainty persists on controlling the virus, then recovering will take longer. Unfortunately, we have federal officials spending more time on so-called anarchism in New York City than financial relief for our industries dependent on visitors.

That is why I support all of the bills before the committees today to provide immediate solutions for the industry. Councilmember Vallone's Int. No. 1773 would create an office of tourism recovery, and I cannot think of a better time than now to see this bill pass. I also support Councilmember Van Bramer's Int. No. 2068 that would allow outdoor space to be used by arts and cultural institutions. New Yorkers are rightfully cautious on returning to indoor events because of exposure to COVID-19. This makes outdoor activities a safe, alternative option as arts and entertainment organizations financially struggle because of the pandemic. The legislation is similar to our open streets program with an innovative solution for organizations.

Moreover, I support Councilmember Cumbo's Int. No. 2034 that would create a mobile



PUBLIC ADVOCATE FOR THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Jumaane D. Williams

application to provide information about open space use and highlighting low-cost or free public programs for the public. The City should use its resources to allow New Yorkers to better access programs nearby. Finally, Councilmember Van Bramer's resolution before the committee today urges the federal government to take leadership for an industry suffering across the country. By providing grants to live venue operators and talent representatives, we can save our stages.

Without significant financial assistance, New York stands to lose several businesses and cultural institutions people from all over the world come to visit. Months ago, I introduced a bill, Int. No. 1990, that would provide interest-free loans for businesses like those in the tourism industry that are struggling during this pandemic. Even as the City continues to face a financial crisis with a massive loss in tax revenue and no clear leadership from the federal government, it's vital that we do all we can to invest in our local economy. Int. No. 1990 is a means to ensure there is somewhat of a safety net, as businesses worry about their ability to survive.

As I said during a town hall I held earlier this month, we need a positive vision to get through these crises. I do not believe our City is lost. At Lincoln Center, there are plans to have an outdoor performance with 400 people distanced between each other. New productions are set for sometime in 2021. There are several task forces within the arts and entertainment sector to plan for the short term and long term. Artists are already planning for their recovery, and they need our help.

Millions of tourists have visited our City for years, and I expect millions will return after this pandemic ends. We need to have a plan in place and work together to ensure a recovery. I thank the chairs for today's hearing, and I look forward to today's testimony.



**New York City Council Committees on Cultural Affairs and Economic Development
Int. 2068-2020: Open Culture Program
September 24, 2020
Adam Ganser, Executive Director**

Good morning. My name is Adam Ganser. I am the Executive Director at New Yorkers for Parks (NY4P). Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify at this hearing.

This summer parks have been in demand like never before. At New Yorkers for Parks, the only independent advocacy organization in New York City, we are playing close attention to the demands on our city's open spaces. We advocate for the tools and resources that allow stewards of these public spaces to keep them clean, safe, and welcoming for all New Yorkers. We am thrilled to see New Yorkers coming together – for community, recreation, education, and yes, for culture and art – in our parks and open spaces.

At the same time, we need to be mindful that the demand not outstrip the ability of park stewards to care for public spaces with the resources that are available. Volunteers can't band together to pick up litter and care for plants the way they normally do each year. The nonprofits and conservancies that organize volunteers and pay for maintenance and repairs are suffering because their ability to fundraise and pay for extra labor has been cut out from under them. NYC Parks, the agency that oversees 14% of the city's land, got handed a budget cut of 14% in June – just as demand soared towards a summer peak. That's one of the largest cuts to any agency in the city, \$84 million. And we hear about additional layoffs on the table for this fall that might cut down parks labor again, making parks maintenance even more difficult.

Currently, these cuts mean hundreds fewer full-time staff, and over 1,700 fewer seasonal staff to do day-to-day maintenance in parks in all five boroughs. And that's with the combined voices of over 300 groups that joined together as the Play Fair Coalition to fight to keep park funding stable. Imagine what our parks would look like without those advocates. Imagine what our parks would look like if parks become even busier with even less support.

I would like to draw your attention to this imbalance between the many jobs that we are asking parks to perform and the park maintenance jobs that have been removed. If the Council provides a pathway for cultural organizations to use our public parkland and our public realm, we must ensure that the stewards of the public realm are not overlooked. Expanding park usage cannot be an unfunded mandate. We must find a way to lessen the maintenance burden of these additional uses, or identify funding to bolster NYC Parks' labor force.

The critical role our parks and open spaces play in the daily lives of New Yorkers has become more evident than ever during these unprecedented times and yet we continue to treat parks as if they are not essential city infrastructure. NY4P encourages the use of parks by any and all institutions but we ask the council to balance these allowance by ensuring open spaces are well maintained for all.

Thank you for inviting me to speak today. I'm happy to answer any questions the Council might have.

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*For over 100 years, [New Yorkers for Parks](http://www.ny4p.org) (NY4P) has built, protected, and promoted parks and open spaces in New York City. Today, NY4P is the citywide independent organization championing quality parks and open spaces for all New Yorkers in all neighborhoods.
www.ny4p.org*

DCLA Testimony Sept. 24, 2020 – Open Culture & Outdoor Spaces

Aimee Todoroff

Director, League of Independent Theater

Hello. I am Aimee Todoroff, Director of the League of Independent Theater.

Things we know: culture beautifies community space, unifies neighborhoods, and revitalizes economies. We need all three as we face the future of New York City with an uncertain budget and dwindling resources. Allowing artists to activate public spaces creates an unofficial city workforce that will maintain these public spaces and stimulate spending in the neighborhood based, mom & pop shops that make NYC great.

The legendary theater director Peter Sellars (not the Pink Panther guy, [the other one](#)) credits the City of Los Angeles' decision to host an outdoor performance festival in the early 1990s with turning around the fortunes of their downtown corridor and parks. NY artists can do the same for our city in the months and years to come, but only if you can provide a fast tracked and streamlined way to let artists have access to their Public Spaces.

The Open Culture plan proposed by Council Member Van Bramer is a great start. Why is the delightful Paint & Pour on my block allowed to operate through Open Streets, but cultural non-profits are prohibited because they don't serve wine and appetizers?

The League of Independent Theater brought the issue of a fast-tracked outdoor performance permit to the table in April. After months of being told "next week," the city has all but let this season go by. Our artists can't lose another years' worth of opportunity. Outdoor performance and culture needs to be enshrined through at least the end of 2021.

Whether through a fast-tracked permit like the LIT proposal, or a single point of contact like the proposed Director of the Public Realm, New York City needs a simplified system for performance in Outdoor, Public Spaces that prioritizes Local, Independent, Non-profit performance, art and cultural groups that understand the needs of their community, especially those that are BIPOC, Immigrant or LGBTQ lead.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today, and we look forward to working with the city to provide access to Outdoor Arts & Culture for New Yorkers in New Yorker's Public Spaces.



American Hotel & Lodging Association – Testimony on Intro 1773-A

Committee Hearing of the Committee on Economic Development

Council Member Paul Vallone, Chair

Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations

Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer, Chair

September 24, 2020

Dear Committee Chairs Vallone and Van Bramer,

Thank you for having us here to speak on the realities facing the hotel industry today.

My name is Troy Flanagan and I serve as the Senior Vice President of Government Affairs and Industry Relations for the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AHLA), which represents every segment of the hotel industry including major chains, independent hotels, management companies, REIT's, bed and breakfasts, industry partners and more.

The hotel industry is facing the most extreme crisis that it has ever faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and we have grim prospects for a quick recovery. In New York City, hotels continue to face crippling low occupancy and extreme revenue shortfalls due to the pandemic with no relief in sight. While the hotel industry generally employs over 55,000 residents and provides billions in tax revenues, the severe impact on the industry has cut hotel jobs to just 10,000 today in New York City, with no quick recovery in sight. Unlike many other industries, which will be able to bounce back as businesses open up and temporary executive orders are lifted, experts predict that the hotel industry isn't going to get back to even its 2019 status until 2025 or 2026 at the earliest. This stark reality will lead many to file for bankruptcy and cause the loss of good-paying jobs and a large share of the City's tax revenue permanently.

AHLA conducted a survey of hotel industry owners, operators, and employees from September 14-16, 2020, with more than 1,000 respondents. Key findings include the following:

- 68% have less than half of their typical, pre-crisis staff working full time currently.
- Half of hotel owners said that they are in danger of foreclosure by their commercial real estate debt lenders due to COVID-19.
- Without further governmental assistance, 74% of respondents said they would be forced into further layoffs.
- More than 2/3 of hotels (67%) report that they will only be able to last six more months at current projected revenue and occupancy levels absent any further relief.

Hotels want to reopen and are doing everything they can to support their workers and to welcome business back. With almost no revenue and a disproportionately large property tax burden that hotels are struggling (and often failing) to pay with an 18% interest rate, hotels are in dire need of relief if they are to have any prospects for recovery moving forward. Lowering the property tax interest rate would



be a key component of helping hotels survive the coming months and years. The current 18% interest rate will force many hotels to close permanently, because they have no way of paying their property tax bill and have no path towards breaking even in the future given the egregiously high rate of interest.

As you know, hotels have always provided an impressive number of jobs to New Yorkers. Hotels' capacity to maintain their workforce has all but disappeared with the impact of the pandemic, with many hotels shutting down completely. It is our hope that hotels will be able to continue providing these jobs in the future, and we are doing everything we can to get the industry past this crisis so that we can once again provide the well-paying hospitality jobs that we know are so crucial to the City's economy and workforce. We look forward to working with you to facilitate the relief that hotels so badly need in order to support so many working New Yorkers.

As part of the City's efforts to help the tourism industry recover from the pandemic and provide a strong economic base to New York City once again, we support **Intro 1773-A** and the creation of an office of tourism recovery. Our industry will continue to struggle in the coming months and will face immense challenges in the years to come. Any effort to support hotels and the tourism industry in NYC will be crucial to hotels' survival as an industry, as a provider of good-paying, quality job opportunities, and as a key contributor to the tax base of the City's economy.

As leaders of the hotel industry in New York City and around the country, we are working hard to ensure that the hotel industry recovers from this crisis, as we know that hotels provide long-term careers and opportunities for upward mobility for communities in the City and across the United States.

Thank you.

Troy Flanagan
Senior Vice President of Government Affairs and Industry Relations
American Hotel & Lodging Association (AHLA)



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September 24, 2020

Testimony from the Hotel Association of NYC (HANYC)

Council Committee Hearing of the Committee on Economic Development and the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations

Dear Committee Chairs Vallone and Van Bramer,

My name is Vijay Dandapani, and I am President & CEO of the Hotel Association of NYC, a trade association representing over 300 hotels in New York City.

The impact of COVID-19 has created an untenable situation for the hotel industry in NYC, with hotels across the City closing, either permanently or temporarily, unsure if they will be able to reopen and rehire workers. I am including a list below of the 188 hotels that are currently closed, many of which are not sure if they will be able to reopen in the future.

Despite these burdens, hotels have worked closely with the City on Covid relief efforts, providing hotel space at cost wherever the City needs it, for hospital capacity expansion, for homeless individuals in need of additional space, for healthcare personnel in need of a place to stay to safely quarantine, etc. We will continue to work with the City to address needs as they arise, and we hope our efforts will contribute to the City's overall efforts to slow the spread and keep New Yorkers safe.

As you know, tourism is a crucial economic generator for the City, and hotels are a vital part of that. Before the impact of the pandemic, hotels provided over 50,000 jobs to the City, but with hotels closing across the City and no relief from the City, State, or federal government, hotels in NYC are unable to remain in operation, and NYC jobs have fallen to just 10,000, impacting the livelihood of so many New Yorkers. We need to support the hotel industry so that hotels can survive the impact of COVID and continue providing so many good-paying jobs to so many working New Yorkers. If hotels continue to close and are unable to survive the coming months, it would have a detrimental impact on tens of thousands of New Yorkers working in hospitality, and the City would lose these jobs for the long-term.

Creating an office of tourism recovery to help the City's efforts to facilitate the tourism industry's recovery from COVID-19, as proposed in **Intro 1773-A**, would be a welcome addition to the very-much needed recovery efforts at the City level to support the future of tourism in NYC. The health of the hotel industry was under threat well before COVID due to many factors including illegal hotels, disproportionately high taxes, and a lack of the necessary infrastructure to support greater tourism inflows and overnight stays. With the impact of COVID-19, the industry has been all but destroyed, with many hotels closing and others holding on by a thread. We badly need relief if we are going to survive the coming months and years to provide the



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50,000 jobs that we provided prior to COVID, and we welcome any support that the City might be able to give.

One of the key challenges hotels are facing right now is our disproportionately large property tax burden, including the property taxes that were due on July 1st and the next bill that hotels will somehow need to pay come January 1st.

Hotels' real property tax burden is the industry's most pressing expense. Pre-COVID, property tax represented 15% of hotels' revenue, and hotels had a disproportionately large property tax burden compared to other properties in the same property tax class. Now, with the same disproportionately large burden put on hotels more than any other property combined with hotels' revenue dropping over 80% for this year, the burden now exceeds revenue by orders of magnitude. There is no cash flow allowing hotels to pay these taxes. And yet, for any amount that is not paid, hotels accrue interest at the incredibly high rate of 18%, which nearly guarantees that there will be no way to pay what they owe and break even in the future, given the long timeline for any semblance of recovery.

Despite the incredible economic impact that this pandemic has had on the hotel industry's total revenue—a drop of 80% for this year and a likely recovery timeline of five years at least, which is a greater impact and longer recovery than other industries—the industry has received no relief at this time for its most pressing needs.

Lowering the property tax interest rate for hotels would provide us with some desperately needed relief at a time when most hotels have had almost no cash flow for a period of months, and are not seeing any change in that in the near future. Lessening the property tax burden would make it more likely that hotels survive the economic impact of the pandemic and reopen on the other side, therefore providing an important tax base to the City through multiple taxes assessed on hotels, and continuing to boost the City's tourism economy.

Another policy impacting the sector's ability to recover is the State's 14-day quarantine policy, which covers almost every State from which New York would normally receive visitors. This policy discourages all forms of travel, because we know that visitors are not going to be able nor would they choose to come to the City and quarantine for 14 days before enjoying their visit. I encourage the City and the State to explore using an alternative policy, as other States and countries are doing, that uses a negative COVID test as an alternative to the quarantine rule. This would allow travelers who do not have COVID to safely visit and help stimulate our tourism economy once again.

Thank you for your time today. I know that hotels will play an important role in the economic revitalization of the City that is to come, and we look forward to working with the City Council to support these efforts.



THE KEY TO NEW YORK CITY HOSPITALITY

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Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vijay Dandapani'.

Vijay Dandapani
President & CEO
Hotel Association of NYC (HANYC)

NYC Hotels that are currently closed:

1. 11 Howard
2. Ace Hotel New York
3. AKA Tribeca
4. AKA Wall Street
5. Aloft New York Laguardia Airport
6. Ameritania
7. Amsterdam Court
8. Andaz 5th Avenue
9. Andaz Wall Street
10. Arthouse Hotel New York City
11. Avalon Hotel
12. Baccarat Hotel and Residences New York
13. Belleclaire Hotel, a member of Triumph Hotels
14. Belvedere Hotel
15. Bentley Hotel
16. Best Western Bowery Hanbee Hotel
17. Broadway Plaza Hotel
18. Bryant Park Hotel
19. Cachet Boutique NYC
20. Cambria NY Times Square
21. Cassa Hotel New York
22. Cassa Times Square
23. Chambers Hotel
24. Chelsea Savoy



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25. Club Quarters
26. Club Quarters Midtown
27. Club Quarters World Trade
28. Comfort Inn Manhattan Bridge
29. Concorde Hotel New York
30. Conrad New York Midtown
31. Courtyard by Marriott Manhattan / Chelsea
32. Courtyard by Marriott Manhattan / Soho
33. Courtyard by Marriott Manhattan Fifth Avenue
34. Courtyard by Marriott NY Manhattan/Herald Square
35. Crowne Plaza HY36
36. Crowne Plaza Times Square Manhattan
37. Days Inn Long Island City
38. Distrikt Hotel
39. Doubletree by Hilton Metropolitan NYC
40. Dream Downtown
41. Dream Midtown
42. Edison Hotel, a member of Triumph Hotels
43. Equinox Hotel Hudson Yards
44. Element Times Square
45. Evelyn Hotel, a member of Triumph Hotels
46. EVEN Hotel Midtown East
47. EVEN Hotel Times Square South
48. Executive Hotel Le Soleil
49. Fairfield Inn & Suites New York Manhattan/Downtown East
50. Fairfield Inn & Suites World Trade Center Area
51. Fairfield Inn New York JFK Airport
52. Fitzpatrick Manhattan Hotel
53. Four Seasons Hotel New York
54. Four Seasons Hotel New York Downtown
55. Frederick Hotel
56. Gansevoort Meatpacking
57. Garden Inn & Suites
58. Gate Hotel JFK Airport (formerly Sheraton)
59. GEM Hotel



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60. Gild Hall - A Thompson Hotel
61. Gramercy Park Hotel
62. Grand Hyatt New York
63. Hampton Inn Madison Square Garden
64. Hampton Inn Times Square North
65. Heritage Hotel
66. Hilton Garden Inn New York/Times Square Central
67. Hilton Garden Inn Times Square
68. Hilton Garden Inn West 35th Street
69. Hilton New York Fashion District
70. Hilton Times Square
71. Holiday Inn Express Laguardia
72. Holiday Inn L.I. City - Manhattan View
73. Hostelling International
74. Hotel Mela
75. Hotel on Rivington
76. Hotel Plaza Athenee, New York
77. Hotel Stanford
78. Hotel Wolcott
79. Hyatt Centric Times Square New York
80. Hyatt Herald Square
81. Hyatt Union Square New York
82. Iberostar 70 Park Avenue
83. Indigo Williamsburg - Brooklyn
84. Inside by Melia NoMad
85. InterContinental New York Barclay
86. InterContinental New York Times Square
87. Iroquois Hotel, a member of Triumph Hotels
88. Jane Hotel
89. Kimberly Hotel
90. Kimpton Hotel Eventi
91. Kimpton Muse Hotel
92. Laguardia Plaza Hotel
93. Le Meridien New York Central Park
94. Loews Regency New York



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95. LUMA Hotel Times Square
96. Luxe Life Hotel
97. Mandarin Oriental, New York
98. Marriott Vacation Club Pulse, New York City
99. Martinique New York on Broadway, Curio Collection by Hilton
100. Merrion Row
101. Moxy NYC Downtown
102. New York Hilton Midtown
103. New York Marriott East Side
104. Night Hotel Times Square
105. Novotel New York Times Square
106. Omni Berkshire Place
107. Paramount
108. Park Hyatt New York
109. Park South Hotel
110. Park West Hotel
111. Parker New York
112. Pod 39
113. Pod Brooklyn
114. Pod Hotel 51
115. Pod Times Square
116. Public Hotel
117. Radisson Wall Street
118. Riff Hotel Chelsea
119. Roger Smith Hotel
120. Room Mate Grace
121. Row NYC
122. Royalton Hotel
123. Royalton Park Avenue
124. Salisbury Hotel
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126. Selina Chelsea New York City
127. Seton Hall
128. Skyline Hotel
129. Sofitel New York



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131.St. James Hotel
132.Standard - High Line
133.The Algonquin Hotel Times Square, Autograph Collection
134.The Blakely New York
135.The Bowery Hotel
136.The Carlyle, A Rosewood Hotel
137.The Chatwal, New York, A Luxury Collection Hotel
138.The Dominick Hotel
139.The Empire Hotel
140.The Excelsior Hotel
141.The Gregory Hotel New York
142.The Hotel @ Fifth Avenue
143.The Hotel @ New York City
144.The Hotel @ Times Square
145.The James New York - SoHo
146.The Jewel
147.The Lexington New York City, Autograph Collection
148.The Lombardy
149.The Lucerne
150.The Ludlow
151.The Mansfield
152.The Marcel at Gramercy Hotel
153.The Maritime
154.The Marlton
155.The Maxwell New York City
156.The Michelangelo New York
157.The Milburn
158.The Moderne
159.The New York EDITION
160.The Nolitan
161.The Pearl
162.The Peninsula New York
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164.The Quin Central Park by Hilton Club



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169.The Sherry-Netherland
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171.The Surrey
172.The Time New York
173.The Times Square EDITION
174.The Tuscany - a St Giles Signature Hotel
175.The Vue Hotel
176.The Wagner Hotel
177.The Wellington Hotel
178.The Westin New York at Times Square
179.The Westin New York Grand Central
180.U Hotel Fifth Avenue (Formerly Hotel 373)
181.W New York - Downtown
182.W New York - Times Square
183.Warwick New York Hotel
184.Washington Jefferson Hotel, a member of Triumph Hotels
185.Watson
186.Westgate New York Grand Central
187.Whitby Hotel
188.Yotel New York

Testimony of the Randall's Island Park Alliance (RIPA)
to the
New York City Council
Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations
jointly with the
Committee on Economic Development
Thursday, September 24, 2020

I am speaking on behalf of the Randall's Island Park Alliance (RIPA) regarding the creation of an open culture program that would allow art and cultural institutions affected by COVID-19 to use parks, among other sites, as temporary performance and rehearsal space.

As a nonprofit partner working in stewardship of Randall's Island Park, RIPA develops and maintains the Park on behalf of the City, and also provides and facilitates extensive public programming. Our many free RIPA events normally include garden tours, movie nights, and yoga in the Park as well as large weekend events like the Cherry Blossom Festival, the Waterfront Festival, and the Harvest Festival. In addition, we work closely with producers to bring festivals and events to NYC, from concerts like Governors Ball to the Frieze Art Fair and LuminoCity. These cultural events are permitted and coordinated through NYC Parks.

Importantly, these events bring revenue into the Park for daily maintenance – and clearly, during COVID, RIPA's operating budget has taken an enormous hit, like those of other NYC nonprofits. We are therefore extremely sympathetic to the difficulties faced by the city's cultural institutions, without allowable rehearsal and performance spaces.

We do feel very strongly, first of all, that permits and events be submitted as usual through the established NYC Parks process, which provides time-tested guidelines for scheduling, safety, and pricing, among other concerns. NYC Parks works to ensure that event permitting is done in a careful and equitable manner, and preserves spaces for open public use.

In addition, while we support facilitating the return of performances by the city's art and cultural institutions, we feel that any use of parkland for revenue-generating events should be mutually beneficial. Given large budget cuts and reduced resources, NYC Parks already struggles to maintain and clean the City's parkland, especially with greater public use than ever. NYC Parks is in need of additional support, and added use without added resources will only add to that need.

Further, nonprofit Parks partners like RIPA are working to assist the City in caring for its public spaces in this difficult time. Specifically, revenue from RIPA's cultural programming – on-site performances and events – normally helps RIPA to maintain Randall's Island Park to a relatively high standard. We are digging into our reserves, tightening our budgets, and looking for creative ways to continue outdoor programming, toward the goal of our continued viability as an organization in 2021 and beyond.

As a hybrid organization ourselves, RIPA welcomes creative support for our sister nonprofit cultural institutions, and hopes that we can work together toward a mutually beneficial return to much-loved outdoor performances at Randall's Island Park and elsewhere in New York City.

NYC Council Hearing 9.24.2020
Committee on Economic Development
Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations
Testimony of Heather Lubov, Executive Director of City Parks Foundation

I'm Heather Lubov, Executive Director of City Parks Foundation, a non-profit organization that provides programs to encourage New Yorkers to use and care for their neighborhood parks. As both a cultural organization and a park programming organization, we have a unique perspective on outdoor performance. Every year we present SummerStage - New York's largest, free outdoor performing arts festival - in Central Park and 17 neighborhood parks, hosting nearly 80 free performances annually for 160,000 audiences. We also co-manage the Swedish Cottage Marionette Theatre and its traveling PuppetMobile, which presents more than 100 free performances around the city for nearly 25,000 audiences. As a parks advocate, we work with 24,000 volunteers and offer a myriad of sports and educational programs to support 400 city parks.

As an early member of the National Independent Venues Association, we strongly support federal Save Our Stages legislation to help ensure that the music ecosystem survives this crisis and can continue to thrive, develop new talent, and keep our city the premier tourist destination for music. Thank you to Council Members Van Bramer and Kallos for sponsoring Council Resolution No. 1422 in support of this legislation.

We all know how critical parks have been to the physical and mental health and wellbeing of our city in these last few months. The arts are equally vital to our spirits, and, of course, to our tourism industry. It is critical to our city that we bring back the performing arts safely, but quickly. Just as current capacity limits are calculated based on a percentage of a restaurant's or a museum's overall capacity, we urge the City to work with the State to lift the blanket 50-person capacity on outdoor concerts, which applies regardless of how big or small the space is, and instead reasonably identify limits based on overall capacity.

We appreciate that the proposed legislation looks to streamline the permitting process and especially the intention to issue permits upon request. Timeliness of permit approval has always been a planning challenge for us when musicians plan tours 1-2 years in advance, yet we can only obtain permits starting in January of each year. Even with that complication, NYC Parks has a publicly accessible and well-used application process, with staff carefully and diligently reviewing all requests to prevent conflicts and ensure that as much public space as possible is open to all. We recommend against adding another layer of DOT oversight, which will complicate the process, unduly lengthen the review time, and potentially lead to conflicts in park spaces. Despite revenue losses for culturals (and parks) across the board, our city's parks are the most fundamentally democratic of public spaces and are free and open to all, so we strongly recommend that the majority of permitted performances be made available to the public free of charge, as the Parks permitting system currently requires. Legislation must also make clear that the presenting organization is responsible for cleanup of the park space after usage, as our parks system is already overburdened with heavy usage and budget cuts that have resulted in significant maintenance issues.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and thank you for supporting City Parks Foundation and SummerStage.

REBUILD NEW YORK: CREATIVE HOSPITALITY AS A PATH TO INDOOR PERFORMANCES

By Duke Dang, General Manager, Works & Process at the Guggenheim
917 518 8993; ddang@worksandprocess.org

As the General Manager of Works & Process, the resident performing arts organization at the Guggenheim, for 17 years we've have produced over 500 performances at the museum, many in its iconic rotunda, arguably one of the most indoor social distance conducive spaces in the city. The performing arts grow the economy, tourism, and employment, yet with theaters closed the industry is homeless. The Guggenheim rotunda can play a roll, when museums are allowed to produce performances, but we need greater capacity, and more imaginative space use to deploy the performing arts to amplify New York's recovery. Having produced many performances in the Guggenheim rotunda and currently producing NBA-like dance bubble residencies isolated in the Hudson Valley, I propose a simple idea that in one gesture can grow tourism, create jobs, put performers back on stage, and help satisfy audience demand.

INDOOR HOTEL ATRIUM PERFORMANCES

Deemed essential, throughout the pandemic hotels have experienced low occupancy and room rates. Similar to the Guggenheim rotunda, the Marriott Marquis, Conrad Downtown, Roxy and Beekman hotels have indoor atriums. Having produced Guggenheim rotunda performances, this winter, I believe performances in hotel atriums can be a coveted amenity for hotel guests, watching safely from room balconies. No tickets are sold, non-cancellable room reservations are made. Only registered hotel guests are permitted. Check-ins are spaced out. Elevators are keyed to assigned floor. Room service can be made available. Low-floor rooms, become most desired. This elegant solution optimizing the innate social distancing created by indoor atrium spaces and utilize existing hotel operations could allow artists and fans to safely gather, bringing performance, dining, and lodging together to rebuild New York.

PARTNERSHIPS AND GALAS

Temporarily homeless performing arts organizations bring audiences, donors, patrons, and artists together with hotels with indoor atrium spaces to fill hotel vacancies. In addition to performances, as traditional galas continue to be unviable, and in lieu of virtual galas, hotel atriums performances can serve as gala vehicles. Gala supporters sign up for rooms, connecting rooms, suites and connecting suites, or even the entire floor.

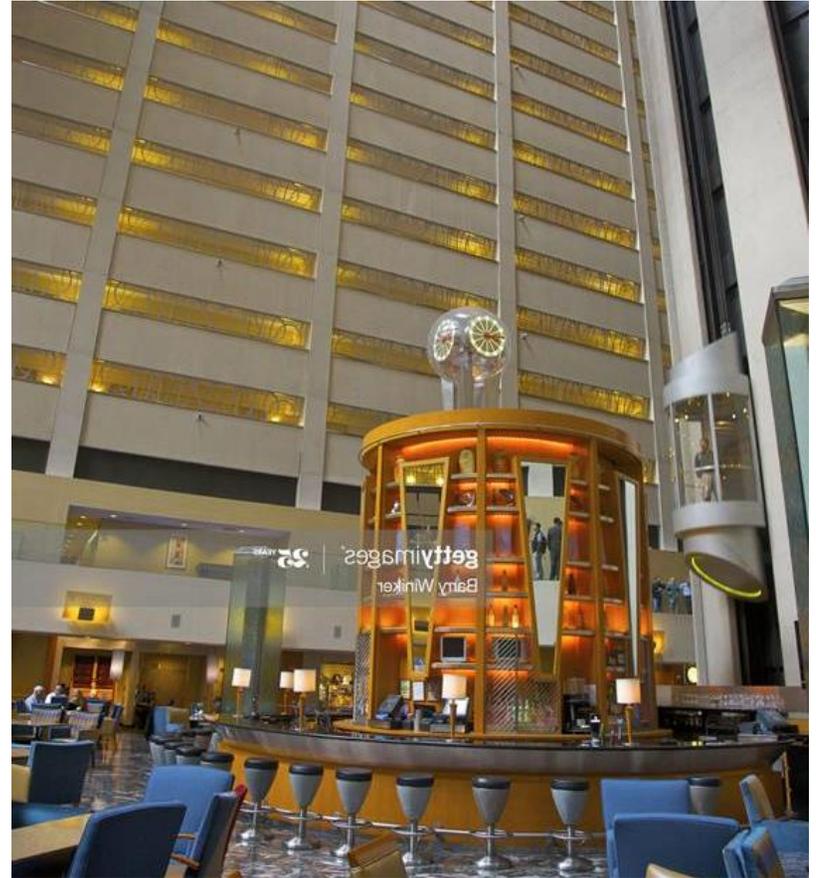
FUTURE VENUES

The promenade of the David Koch Theater and lobby of the Metropolitan Opera House at Lincoln Center. The atrium of Department of Cultural Affairs building at Surrogate's Courthouse (31 Chamber Street). The rotunda of the Guggenheim.

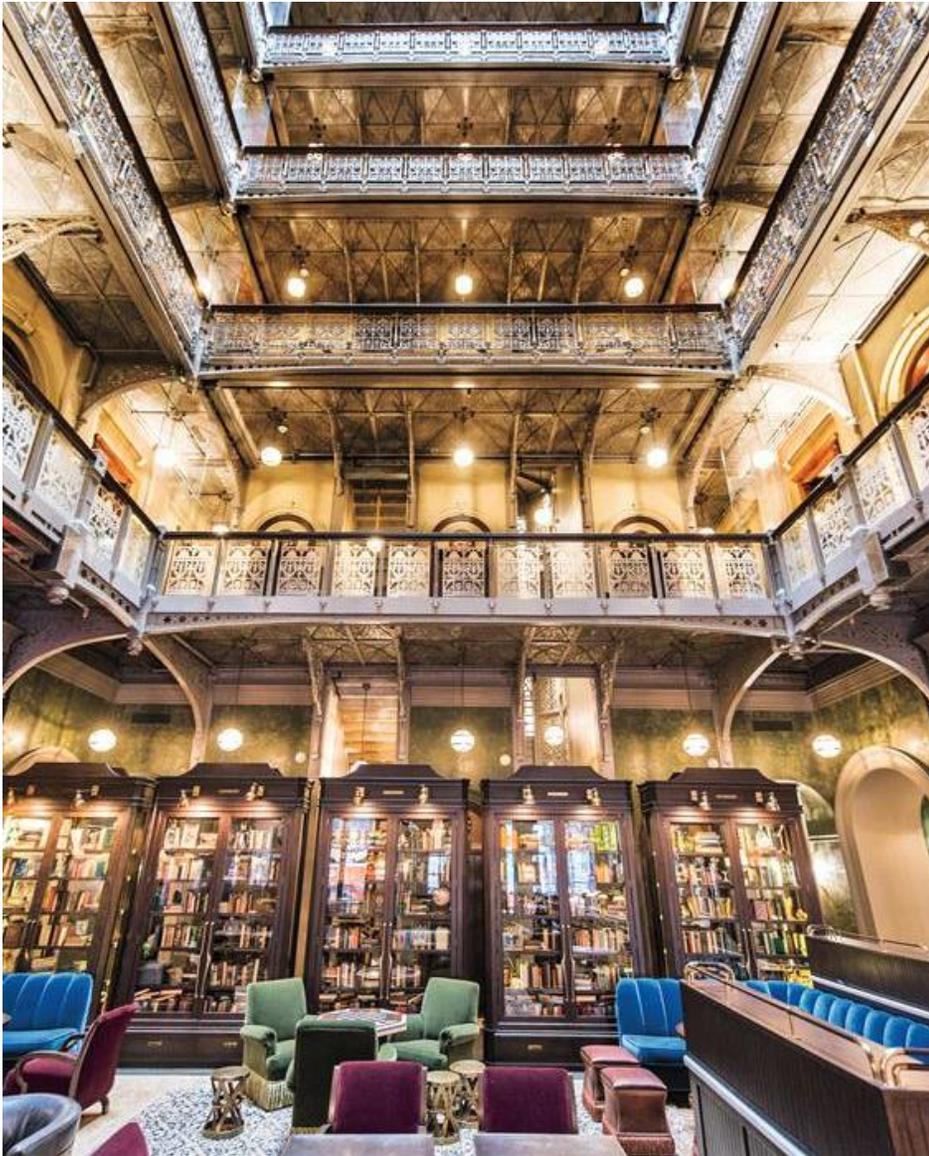
Conrad Hotel New York Downtown – 463 Rooms



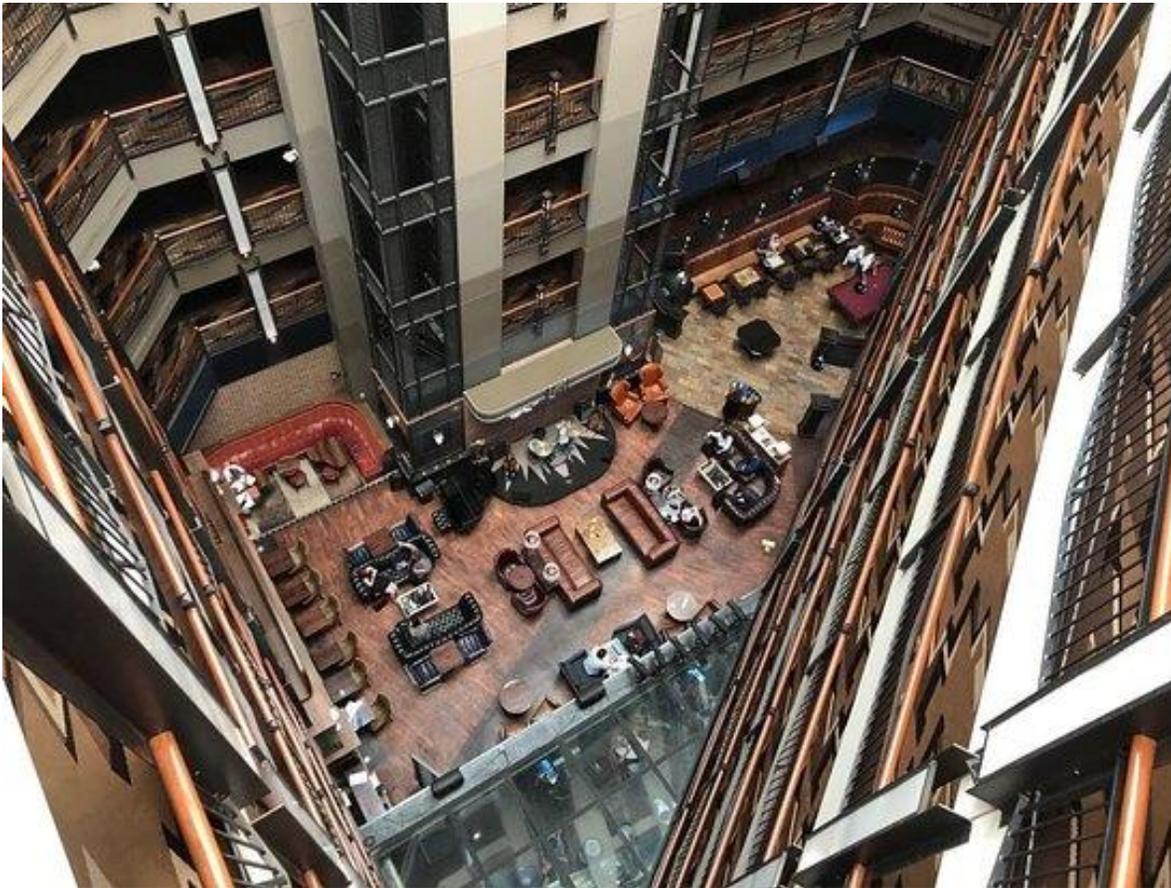
Marriott Marquis Time Square – 1,966 Rooms



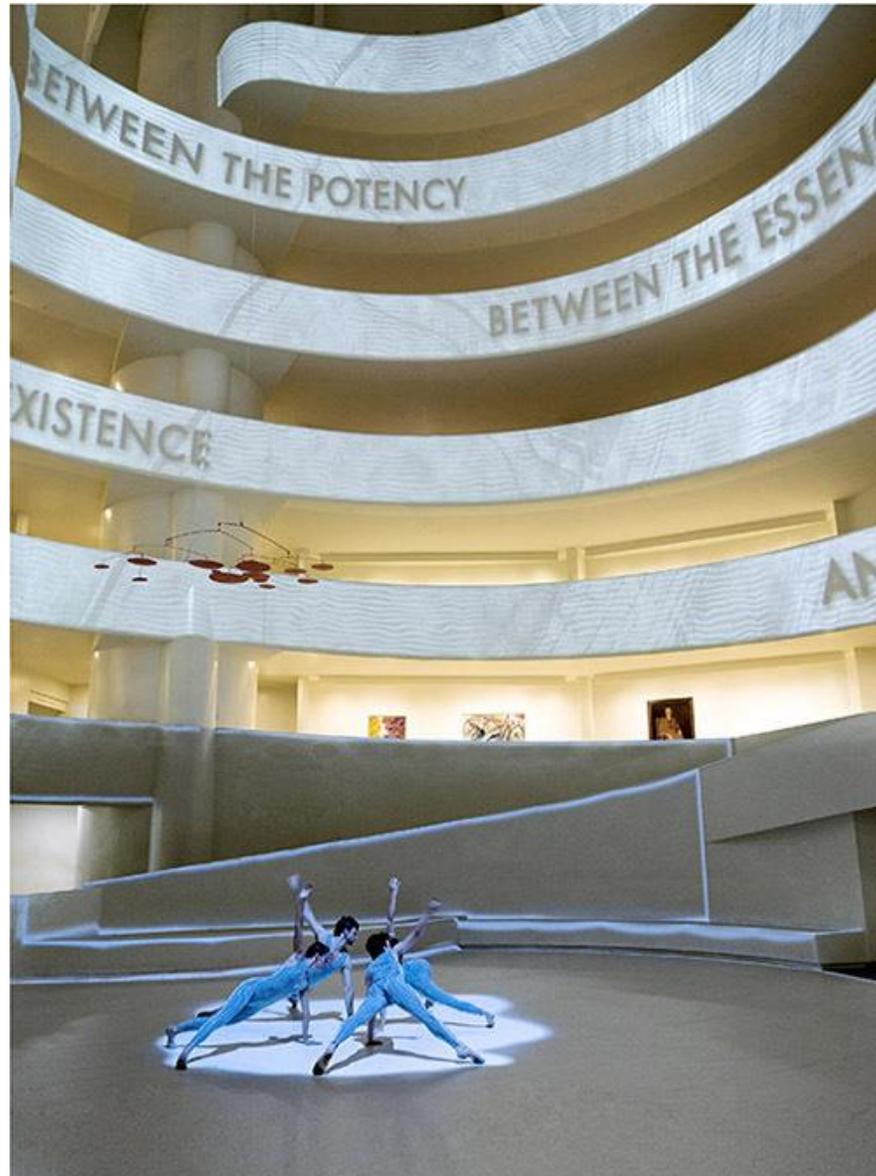
Beekman Hotel – 287 Rooms



Roxy Hotel Tribeca – 201 Rooms



Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum Rotunda





**Department of Cultural Affairs at Surrogate's
Courthouse
(31 Chamber Street)**



The Great Hall at The Metropolitan Museum of Art



**The Promenade at the David Koch Theater
Lincoln Center**



**Lobby of The Metropolitan Opera House
Lincoln Center**

Testimony of the Randall's Island Park Alliance (RIPA)
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**Testimony of Susan M Donoghue
President, Prospect Park Alliance
New York City Council Cultural Affairs Committee Hearing
Int. 2068 Temp Cultural Space
September 24, 2020**

I am Sue Donoghue, President of Prospect Park Alliance, the non-profit organization that operates Prospect Park in partnership with the City.

COVID-19 has made it resoundingly clear that parks and open spaces are essential to the well-being of our communities. Prospect Park Alliance has a long history of collaborating with cultural organizations large and small to provide opportunities for the arts. We value these partnerships, which enliven our parks and provide valuable programming for the public. Making Prospect Park a welcoming and accessible space for the diverse communities of Brooklyn is a key part of our mission, and these partnerships are an important way we're able to expand our reach and bring a multitude of rich and varied voices to the park.

We very much appreciate the intent of the bill introduced by Council Member Van Bramer to provide temporary outdoor space to arts and cultural institutions affected by COVID-19, including parks. We want to also recognize that there is already a process in place through the Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks) for obtaining permits, which provides an avenue for cultural partners interested in Prospect Park to secure space. The Alliance works closely and collaboratively with the city and our cultural partners to support these requests, and to help facilitate the permit application process. This has taken on even more importance during these challenging times.

For example, the NYC Parks permitting process has recently facilitated space for a myriad of youth programs, including many summer camps, to use our parks and open spaces this summer, and provide a venue that would not have otherwise existed during these challenging times. In addition, the same process has been utilized to permit outdoor learning in parks, and Prospect Park Alliance is thrilled to be hosting nearly 13 different schools who are using the park for outdoor classrooms. Lastly, we will be welcoming a public art installation in partnership with BRIC to our Bandshell later this month.

One of the key focuses of the NYC Parks permitting process is to ensure events in our parks are primarily free and open to the public, as befits public open space. We have specially designated areas in the park which provide great venues for events, such as our Bandshell, and these events are largely free, with a set number of benefit shows that support and enable the free programming.

Lastly, the NYC Parks permitting process takes into account the number and location of events in the park, so that NYC Parks and Prospect Park Alliance maintenance and operations teams can ensure the park remains accessible to all visitors, as well as clean and well-maintained. The extraordinary increase in park visitorship due to the pandemic has taken its toll on park maintenance and that is a growing and

significant concern as we look toward hosting events in the park, and balancing events with space for relaxation and recreation.

Hello & Good Evening,

I am a Freelance Professional Dancer based in NYC. I work with several companies including Alison Cook Beatty Dane. and I am writing to share how grateful I have been to continue working with this company during times such as these. It is a huge blessing to continue dancing with my fellow company members (safely, 6+ feet apart, and with masks outside) during the pandemic. We have also been able to safely execute some dance film work, too.

I know these times have not been smooth or particularly easy for most people and all fields have been affected. If it weren't for dance and being able to continue working in this artistic way, I would surely be in a different mental space. It is healing and inspiring to see and feel what the arts can do. I know the work we are doing has tremendous value and it has kept me healthy in my body, mind, and spirit.

Please continue to support Dance companies such as Alison Cook Beatty Dance and other performing arts organizations in NYC.

Thank you for taking the time to read this, and I wish you a fine evening.
May you stay healthy, safe, and well!

Best,

Nika

--

www.nikaantuanette.com

Dear Respected Council Members,

Thank you for taking the time to read this testimony. I write this on behalf of our entire community who is suffering needlessly. This is supported by a letter with nearly a dozen dance studio owners, including world recognized studios like Steps on Broadway and Peridance, which demand equal recognition. This letter can be provided upon request.

Dance is facing an existential crisis. The pandemic, and the response to the pandemic, has left our arts community facing unprecedented hardship and an uncertain future. We were among the first to be asked to sacrifice for the public good. Now, nearly six months later, we are being forced to live our lives with our hands out, hoping that our neighbors, family, and friends can fill them with the assistance our own elected officials have been unable to provide.

That is not to say our dance community is not strong or resilient. After all, creativity, innovation, hard work, perseverance through pain – these are bedrocks of any dancer. We are simply being denied an equal chance to revive our critically ill community. This is despite having the legal right to do so as provided under the Fine Arts Provision in Phase 4 of the NY Forward Plan. Our innate talents and tools, which could make us an asset in this struggle, have been taken from us with no justification. We are watching our own community endure a slow and painful demise, needlessly. Our faith is shaken. Hope is the only commodity we have left. It is this hope that unites us in the pursuit of equality and fair treatment.

The heart and soul of our dance community – the part of the economy that affects millions of New Yorkers – is our dance studios. This is where all cross-sections of life can come together to explore, create, and enjoy activities that bring balance while improving mental and physical health. This is also where our culture is born and molded. If you do not believe it, go to a music venue, a club, the theater, a wedding, watch TV or join Tik Tok. Dance is pervasive. That did not happen by coincidence. Whether you are talking about the theater district in Manhattan, the immigrant communities which gave way to the explosion of ballroom dance on our most popular TV shows, or the Bronx where Hip Hop was born, it started within our own communities right here in NYC. The draw to that culture, those communities, is why the idea of

visiting this city is a life's aspiration for millions worldwide. Dance studios are central to this.

Despite this, we are asked to contribute to the well-being of our society yet remain silent when it comes to our own well-being. We are asked to work altruistically while our right to earn a living is taken away. As society begins to rebuild, we watch the hypocrisy of massage parlors, salons, public pools, indoor media productions, tattoo parlors, and much more all re-open. At the same time, dance studios must endure the false label that we are incapable of creating a safe space for our own community – a right we are equally entitled to under the current regulations.

This is evidenced by jarring actions taken against reputable dance studios since we began to open under the available guidelines. Backed by unvetted and unsubstantiated complaints, studios are being shut down almost unilaterally across the city. In all cases, only one reason was provided - we DANCE. Not because people were not wearing masks. Not because we were not keeping our distance. Not because the business was non-compliant. Not because anything was unsafe. Because we DANCE.

One example is the story of Ballroom Hub. This midtown Manhattan ballroom dance studio opened the first day of phase 4 NYS re-opening. The owners of Ballroom Hub called the NYC 311 ahead of the opening to ensure their studio can open. They were assured that they do, indeed, comply with the re-opening guidelines. The studio implemented strict safety and cleaning measures. Appointments and health questionnaire to access the space, temperature check upon entering, plexiglass barriers between the clients and the studio staff, face mask required, limited capacity, and safe social distancing observed, rigorous cleaning performed frequently.

A mere week later, NYC Sheriff Department officers came, following a complaint against the studio. They ordered the studio to shut down. They could not issue a fine, because all protocols were followed according to the NYS guidelines. They made an arbitrary decision stating that this small boutique ballroom dance studio is a gym. The officers stayed in the studio, supervising the evacuation, and closing of the space. They were acting as if the studio was a criminal activity.

This studio since removed their floors and gave up their lease. This small business lost tens of thousands of dollars and is now sadly closed down...

Another example can be found with PMT House of Dance - a small business that has enjoyed good standing in the community for over 19 years. PMT offers a variety of dance styles and services to the arts community. In less than three weeks' time, they were target twice with inspections. In both inspections, they were never cited for any violation. Despite having the proper affirmation, certification, and print out of the governing regulation, they were told to shut down despite there being only two persons present on both visits. Reasons varied, and when one reason was proven incorrect, inspectors would simply search for another. For example, inspectors in the first visit, the owner's wife and a colleague were training via Zoom. They stated that if they were teaching the Zoom class, that would be OK, but since they are taking it, it is not. COVID-19 does not know the difference. In the second visit, they proceeded to ask for proof of ownership from the owner – only after 10 minutes of inquiries and the inability to find a violation. After each visit, they left with the threat of shutting down, or PMT would be given a violation or a summons. The only reason provided was they DANCE. The second of these visits was caught on video. In the video, inspectors clearly do not have a reason to close to space down and confirm they were going around targeting dance studios to shut down. Asking for your papers, having to prove your wife is your wife, and making threats all while disregarding the actual regulations you are supposed to enforce on multiple occasions feels more like harassment than an inspection.

In actuality, dance studios in NYC are eligible to open under phase 4, according to NAICS Code 611610 (Fine Arts), which includes:

Dance instruction

Dance studios

Performing arts schools

Under the guidelines for phase 4 NYS re-opening, businesses under this code are permitted to operate with restrictions. Regulations that are applicable to this industry are stated as follows:

"(...)dance studios and dance instruction may also operate subject to the Sports and Recreation Guidance."

Despite this, the studios are continually mischaracterized as gyms. This mischaracterization is due, at least in part, to a similar Sport and Recreation Guidance on gyms. While this section on gyms does NOT mention or explicitly state dance schools or studios, the activity of dance is mentioned in this guidance as a higher risk activity – described as "competitive cheer and group dance."

There are other such examples in the regulations. The confusion this can cause is obvious. Conflating dance with competitive cheer is a complete mischaracterization.

We believe that dance studios should have their own set of regulations, much like ice skating and other indoor, low-risk physical activities do.

A dance studio is not a gym. Dancers do not come to the studio with the singular goal to sweat and burn calories. That aside, our spaces are built out differently. Our liabilities are different. Our ventilation requirements are different. We often require large, open spaces with space to move, windows, and natural light. We do not need or share equipment and thus do not have the same concerns of disease transmission. We can easily control the flow of people in and out. The list goes on.

The characterization of dance in these regulations has had the unintended effect of stigmatizing dance as a potentially harmful activity. Dance studios, small businesses, families, and young people who still have the courage to dream are told they must shut it down. This is wrong.

The good thing is that it is not too late. Many small businesses can rebuild or be reborn – but we need your help. Join us in demanding change. We demand the equal right to earn, to exist. To those goals, we ask the following:

The Fine Arts provision in the NY Forward plan, allowing 'dance studios and dance instruction' needs to be clarified, expanded on, and properly enforced. The contradictory language in other parts of the NY Forward regulations should be eliminated.

We demand that Dance Studios, their owners, and proven professionals in the industry be consulted when clarifying and updating these regulations. We are not a monolith. We know our industry best. The decisions for our industry should not be made by those in other industries or random state officials. We know the challenges, and we can help find solutions that can both re-open our dying economy while keeping our community safe. Inspections should not be purely punitive. Inspectors should actually perform a real inspection and provide guidance on how to operate safely (if a business is not doing so). A reasonable timeline should be provided to meet compliance, and an effort to encourage compliance should be made, rather than an effort to punish. Businesses are doing their best to survive. They are not opening with the sole purpose of violating the law. For a small business owner, this is their life.

We do not want special treatment. We want rules to be uniformly applied to allow for better compliance. You want us to believe that you are working for our safety then make the rules the same for everyone. If you do not, people will continue to break them.

As it stands right now, the risks for a dance studio or arts facility to open far outweigh the rewards. To operate, we must re-imagine our business, invest even more money into it, and hope that despite all our months of planning that we will not be shut down by some random complaint backed by regulations that have loopholes within loopholes. These regulations have caused some in the industry to rename themselves only to operate in secret. We are DANCERS, and we should not have to hide it like we are doing something wrong. Dance is a very safe and healthy activity.

The truly sad part in all of this is that dance can be a tremendous asset in our struggle to fight COVID-19. Historically, dance has always been a steadying force in difficult situations. Look at our own city – Hip Hop was born here from the struggles of our black and brown communities. Now Hip Hop is all over social media, keeping us active and bringing joy into our lives.

Perhaps more importantly, dance can help create a culture of safety. As is being done at PMT and Peridance, if people see others dancing with masks, embracing this culture of safety, others will follow this example and realize that life does not have to stop with COVID-19. This was actually happening through a number of real-life examples – like a 'non-masker' now wearing masks and those unable to work finding balance and stress relief through dance.

Safety and dance are not mutually exclusive. Neither is living life and being safe.

HELP SAVE THE FUTURE OF DANCING IN NEW YORK CITY

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please contact me at pmhouseofdance@gmail.com or by calling 212-924-5694.

Written Testimony for: New York City Council Economic Development & Cultural Affairs
Committee Hearing
September 26, 2020

Alexandra Silversmith, Executive Director of the Alliance for Coney Island

Good Afternoon Chairman Vallone, Chairman Van Bramer, and members of the Committees,

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony about Coney Island tourism. My nonprofit, the Alliance for Coney Island, seeks to continue the revitalization of Coney Island and increase visitorship. I am here today to express support for the creation of an *Office of Tourism Recovery (Proposed Int. 1773-A)*. 2020 has been hard for New York City – an understatement in the least, but it was particularly hard for our local economy. Coney Island, as a destination on the waterfront and as the birthplace of Amusements is a cornerstone of New York City’s tourism economy. Unfortunately, many of our attractions were not permitted to open by New York State this year and thus, the ecosystem that sustains the Amusement District businesses, many of which are intergenerational mom and pop businesses, was ruined. The lack of activity this summer, the late opening of New York City Beaches and continued opaque reasons as to why amusements cannot reopen nor are given the guidelines to plan to reopen for 2021 are all causing major financial calamity, a sense of disrepair and true uncertainty for the future of Coney Island.

We commend NYC & Co on the new “All in NYC” campaign which we think is shining much needed attention on our neighborhoods and businesses. Unfortunately, most of our businesses cannot participate to promote visitorship because our seasonal businesses have largely closed for 2020 or are operating on very reduced hours due to the Amusements being closed. Bearing this in mind, it is even more urgent that we create the Office of Tourism Recovery to assist areas like our own which will only be able to begin that long road to recovery in 2021. Additionally, because of the seasonality of our businesses, we are requesting the City Council to work with our local elected Federal officials to create an act similar to the Save Our Stages act to Save our Seasonal businesses. Coney Island is just one example of a seasonal community hard hit by the domino effect of closed sectors, this closure affected regions around the state and along the Eastern Seaboard. Without any financial assistance for our amusements and small businesses that were devastated by COVID-19, we are putting Coney Island’s entire economic engine at risk. To put it in perspective, some of our businesses have been closed since October 2019 and have no certainty as to when they will be permitted to reopen. As they wait, there are over 1,200 jobs that are lost, property taxes that are due, and all the other operating and overhead costs to make sure their establishments do not fall into disrepair. We need your help more than ever to implore the State to release guidelines so that the Amusement industry does not suffer more than it already has. Despite submitting reopening plans and having myriad calls with representatives from the State, we have yet to receive a clear message as to the metrics that are keeping amusements that are closed or guidance to help prepare for 2021. Alongside this dire need is for the State to provide relief for the amusement sector and to the adjoining small businesses that rely on those visitors and foot traffic to make ends meet. We must do all that we can to ensure the future of the People’s Playground and that our businesses can survive.

September 24, 2020

Dear Elected Official,

My name is Bonnie Sue Stein and I am writing to you as a concerned citizen and non profit arts leader in regards to the long term impact of COVID-19 on New York City's arts and cultural community & venues. I am writing to support the bill to require the City to create an open culture program that would allow art and cultural institutions affected by COVID-19 to use parks, pedestrian plazas, roadways, or public parking areas and other approved open space as temporary performance and rehearsal space.

The Department of Transportation (DOT) would be required to create a self-certification process that art and cultural institutions would complete before offering any open space. While this process would not require agency approval, a self-certification could be suspended or terminated by the DOT for non-compliance with requirements of the program or for the protection of health or safety. The program would run until at least January 31, 2021, with the possibility of extension, but it would expire by March 31, 2021.

NYC is not possible without its artists, and when artists are not working, we all lose. At the same time arts allow our neighborhoods to thrive.

As a non profit leader, I run a dance studio and have produced and managed 100s of projects indoors in major and small venues in NYC as well as outdoors at Lincoln Center and in many parks across the city, from uptown to the boroughs. At this time, the dancers I work with are really chomping at the bit to dance in any venue possible, parks and streets are the perfect venues for them at this time, while the theaters are still closed.

Arts and Entertainment were the first industries to be affected and will be the last ones to re-open. Therefore, I am writing to you today to implore you to advocate for our vulnerable sector of the city.

The arts employ thousands of people in NYC, and serve many thousands more. While they may not be "essential" to the time of the pandemic, the closing of our arts centers and organizations will have a considerable negative economic impact on NYC when the pandemic is over.

Thanks for your considered attention to solving this problem. My hope is you do the right thing for the citizens that make the fabric of New York City vibrant like no other place in the world.

With Gratitude,



Bonnie Sue Stein
Executive Director, Seven Loaves DBA GOH Productions



Testimony to City Council on Committee on Economic Development (Jointly with the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations)

Submitted to the Committee on Economic Development (Jointly with the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations) on September 24, 2020

Prepared by Dance/NYC

On behalf of Dance/NYC, a service organization which serves over 5,000 individual dance artists, 1,200 dance-making entities, and 500 nonprofit dance companies based in the New York City area, including BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) dance workers, immigrants, and disabled dance workers. I join colleague advocates working across creative disciplines in thanking the Committee for your leadership during this time and in requesting:

- 1) The City to include the Arts and Culture and the dance community in legislation allowing for immediate and safe reopening of public outdoor spaces for cultural and artistic performances that follow social distancing guidelines;**
- 2) The City passes legislation allowing the dance sector to generate revenue from outdoor socially distanced performances that extends into 2021;**
- 3) The City passes legislation to provide financial support for cultural organizations to produce outdoor socially distanced performances in public spaces and support their wages, salaries, PPE and overall production costs; and**
- 4) The City provides specific reopening guidelines for the dance sector, which are not gyms and serve a key function in the community.**

It has been over six months since arts and culture organizations have had to pivot with 95% percent of organizations cancelling their programs, 88% modifying the delivery of their programs, and 11% not providing products or services to their communities, according to SMU Data Arts and the Department of Cultural Affairs' *COVID-19 Impact on Nonprofit Arts and*



Culture in New York City report. In most cases, arts and culture organizations have had to change their **in-person programming to online for a fraction of the revenue** they would have collected and at the same time fixed costs including: rent and salaries, have not caught up with this change. Small business and family-run dance studios are facing closure due to poor understanding and enforcement of the dance sector in the City's reopening plans in addition to their mounting overhead. These are key pipelines for the dance sector in addition to the department of education, professional programs and Broadway. Furthermore, there is a mass exodus of artists leaving the City due to lost performance opportunities and inability to generate enough income to cover basic needs such as housing, food and healthcare.

The arts are necessary for community building and mental health, both of which are largely at risk due to social distancing measures. According to SMU Data Arts and DCLA, community-based arts organizations (especially those that focus on cultural and ethnic awareness, folk arts, and community celebrations) in the City have reported losses of 12% , unanticipated expenses of 12%, and have lowest level of Working Capital relative to expenses at 1.6 months heading into the crisis. In Dance/NYC's Coronavirus Dance Impact Survey, one organization shared, "We're deeply concerned with the health crisis (physical and mental), loss of jobs and food security for people living in our community who were already vulnerable before COVID-19. Our programs have always served as a place of solace as the arts offer spaces for people to heal and seek solutions. It is important that we exist to help people weather the crisis psychologically and compliment organizations who are offering social services for displacement, health care and food."

The dance sector's economic contribution to the City is ~ \$300 million yearly. This figure only includes organizations with 501c3 status indicating that the contribution is larger with the



inclusion of fiscally sponsored organizations and individual artists. These organizations and artists need to be able to hold performances in a safe manner to be able to generate the necessary income to pay overhead costs, staffing and the increasing cost of rent. Americans for the Arts published that attendees at nonprofit arts events spend \$31.47 per person, per event, beyond the cost of admission, demonstrating that the arts generate income for the surrounding businesses. Live indoor performances may not return for at least a year after a vaccine and these institutions are already experiencing severe cash flow issues and closures. Our findings show that dance organizations, groups and projects project losses of at least \$22M in income including \$16.5M in earned revenue and \$5.5M in contributed revenue directly related to cancelled performances and lack of clarity and guidelines for the dance sector reopening.

The lack of performance opportunities are impacting individual dance workers whose livelihoods depend on it. Dance/NYC's Coronavirus Dance Impact Survey highlighted that individual dance workers reported a cumulative loss of at least \$4.2M in income related canceled performances and teaching engagements. These figures will only deepen as the timeline of the crisis extends. One respondent shared "I have lost all my future dance work due to Covid-19, I have no sources of incomes and I don't think I will be able to pay my rent, health insurance, bills and groceries much longer with no sources of income coming." To add to this an organization expressed "Our dancers, in particular, are experiencing loss of other performance and rehearsal income, as well as a loss of gig-income from their supplemental jobs as bars and restaurants in NYC, are closed. We are most concerned about their livelihoods in this crisis and dipping into creative development funds to support them as much as we are able." Thus, artists and the organizations who employ them, need swift legislation about the immediate and safe reopening of income generating in person performances, if not the City risks losing this necessary workforce for years to come. Already the Department of Education budget cuts in arts education, earlier this year,



have decreased artist staffing. According to SMU Data Arts and the Department of Cultural Affairs' *COVID-19 Impact on Nonprofit Arts and Culture in New York City* report some of the greatest reductions to artist employment have come from Arts Education organizations, which collectively reported decreases of over 2,100 artists, or 78% of artist staffing, during this period.

We acknowledge the work that has already been carried out to safely reopen the City, including the safe reopening of museums and the initial steps to allow for the safe reopening of public spaces for use by the Arts and Culture sector; including the limitation of gathering to below 50 audience members. However, the dance sector has not been provided specific guidelines for reopening due to lack of understanding of the sector and the city's failure to include a dance specific representative in the advisory committee for arts culture and tourism from the mayor's office. In addition, the current permitting fees for revenue generating performances are a financial burden and hindrance to dance organizations who are already strapped for money. Therefore, we are asking that the City waive these permitting fees regardless of if the event is free or revenue generating for small-budget dance makers who need revenue generating performance to survive. Alternatively, City funding to produce these performances is essential. Swift legislation considering the immediate and safe reopening is desperately needed to mitigate the long term effects to the arts sector before winter sets in and we can no longer conduct outdoor classes and perform. Moreover, legislation into spring and summer of 2021 is essential for organizations to begin planning. Artists are by nature creative people and are willing to work in tandem with City officials to allow for safe socially distanced performances.

The arts are a fundamental and integral part of the City's ecosystem that drives tourism. Dance/NYC strongly advocates for a vision rooted in inclusivity, equity, and sustainability for the arts and culture industry. Artists are necessary workers and in order to continue to be a



driving part of the NYC workforce, comprehensive dance-specific reopening legislation is needed so that arts and culture can continue to thrive in a city known for its arts and culture.

For Dance/NYC and its constituents, the most urgent priorities are:

- 1) Legislation allowing for quick reopening of weather permitting revenue generating socially distanced artistic performances that extends into spring and summer of 2021. Artists and dance organizations are eager for opportunities there is ample room for collaboration with different NYC offices including the Department of Parks & Recreation, Transportation, Sidewalks, Streets, and Highways, Health and Education;
- 2) Waiving City permitting fees for arts and culture organizations to produce socially distanced outdoor performances, which are essential to generate revenue for their survival;
- 3) The City allocates grant funding to arts and cultural organizations to produce outdoor socially distanced performances in public spaces and support artists' wages, salaries and production costs.
- 4) The City provides clear and specific reopening guidelines for the dance sector.

We commend New York's city ongoing efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19, while safely reopening the City. The arts have been among the last to reopen and are critical to rebuilding the City. We thank the City Council members for their time and efforts in reopening the arts and cultural sector to bring dance to all New Yorkers.

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**Testimony on behalf of
TopView Sightseeing
NYC Council Committee on Economic Development
Oversight: NYC's Tourism Industry & the COVID-19 Crisis
September 24, 2020**

Thank you, Chair Vallone and members of the committee for holding this important hearing on New York City's Tourism Industry and the COVID-19 Crisis. My name is Asen Kostadinov and I am the President of TopView Sightseeing. TopView was founded in 2016 and operates sightseeing bus tours, boat cruises and bike rentals in New York City.

"Hop On/Hop Off" sightseeing buses provide a convenient way for visitors to navigate the city and take advantage of the multitude of cultural institutions and attractions throughout Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx. As New York City's tourism industry grew, so did our business. Prior to the pandemic, TopView served approximately a million customers annually, employed approximately 200 New Yorkers, and supported approximately 200 ticket sellers. Our diverse staff, which includes many immigrants and bilingual individuals, is not only reflective of New York's distinct communities, but has allowed us to seamlessly serve customers from all over the globe.

When COVID-19 shut down New York City, and most of the world, we were just beginning our peak season. Like many others, we have had to figure out how to maintain our company without the core components of our business. For many months, the only portion of our business that was allowed to operate was our bicycle rental location and we were grateful that, as the weather began to warm and New Yorkers wanted to get outdoors, many locals rented bikes to take to Central Park. New Yorkers exploring their own backyard on "staycations" will be important to maintaining our business until large groups and international travelers are able to safely return to New York.

Our core business has always been sightseeing buses and cruises. While we have been able to begin reopening these services, we are operating at a severely reduced capacity and only utilizing open-air areas of buses and boats. In order to continue to operate efficiently, clear guidance and communication from the government about reopening protocols is essential. For example, service of food and beverage on cruises has not been permitted, as it would be considered "indoor dining," but we have not received clarity if we will be able to reopen these services to customers when indoor dining commences in a few days and if so, what guidelines we will need to adhere to.

There are a number of other steps that the City could take today to support the sightseeing industry. First and foremost, we encourage the City to increase the availability of docking space to allow for more waterborne tours. Increasing numbers of visitors and locals are seeking opportunities to see New York City from the water and the City has an opportunity to increase revenue from docking fees while allowing businesses like ours to grow. Further, the rise in crime and quality of life issues has impacted our business. If tourism is going to rebound after

COVID-19, visitors must feel safe exploring New York City streets, but small businesses also must be protected. Our bicycle rental store had three attempted burglaries over the course of three days -- all by the same perpetrator. At a time when businesses are struggling to make ends meet, these issues are devastating.

I appreciate the Council's attention to the issues facing the tourism industry and look forward to working with this Committee on strategies to support the variety of small businesses that rely on the strength of this sector.

WHITNEY

Whitney Museum of American Art Testimony NYC Council Cultural Affairs and Economic Development Committee Hearing: NYC's Tourism Industry and the COVID-19 Crisis, September 24, 2020

The Whitney Museum of American Art is a contemporary art museum located in lower Manhattan. As the preeminent institution devoted to the art of the United States, the Whitney presents the full range of twentieth-century and contemporary American art, with a special focus on work by living artists. Founded in Greenwich Village ninety years ago, the Museum collects, exhibits, preserves, researches, and interprets art of the United States in the broadest global, historical, and interdisciplinary contexts. As the foremost advocate for American art, the Museum fosters the work of living artists at critical moments in their careers, often before their work has achieved general acceptance, and educates its diverse public through direct interaction with these artists.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on New York City, and the individuals and industries which contribute to its vibrancy, is unprecedented. Over six months ago the Whitney temporarily closed its doors to the public to reduce the spread of the virus for the well-being of its visitors, volunteers, and staff. The Arts sector, like many others, has been grappling with significant financial hardships that these necessary closures and the accompanying loss of associated revenue have presented. Traditionally the Whitney relies on earned revenue from ticket sales, memberships, and retail operations to make up about one-third of its \$60 million operating budget.

The Whitney, at its core, is a New York City institution, whose success is inextricably tied to that of the City's. Approximately 80 percent of the Museum's staff live within the city; many of the artists represented in the Museum's collection live or have lived in the City and before the COVID-19 crisis New Yorkers accounted for more than a third of the Museum's annual average of one million visitors and made up the majority of the Museum's members. New Yorkers represent the majority of participants in the Museum's Education programs which serve people of all ages – from young children to seniors and thousands of K-12 students. The Museum's exhibitions and programs inclusively celebrate the diversity of our nation and thus that of New York City. For instance, the Whitney's current exhibition *Vida Americana: Mexican Muralists Remake American Art, 1925-1945* rewrites art history to celebrate the oversized influence of Mexican artists on the development of American art. New York City and its artist communities figured prominently for the artists featured in this exhibition including Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, and David Alfaró Siqueiros, the last of whom even founded his Experimental Workshop here in the 1930s. Following the lead of these artists, the exhibition investigates social, racial, and economic justice themes that remain deeply relevant today.

As part of the cultural fabric of New York, the Whitney is committed to being a leader in the City's recovery by working collaboratively with government, cultural colleagues, and civic leaders. The Whitney joined with twenty-five cultural institutions from across the five boroughs to establish the New York City Museum Reopening Task Force. The Task Force has met weekly since April to develop a unified set of operating protocols and procedures to safely reopen museums to the public with the belief that standardized protocols and messaging will contribute to increased staff and visitor health, safety, comfort, and confidence in both operating and visiting participating institutions and museums

across New York City. Through coordinated, proactive action, the Task Force has and continues to work to support government's efforts to reopen the city and promote its recovery. This July the Task Force produced a sharable set of guidelines for museums to use for internal operations planning. The Whitney is grateful for the support of the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA), which organized a webinar for the Task Force to share its learnings and protocols with the broader cultural community. DCLA also has posted the Task Force's reopening guidelines and other resources on its website to for all to access.

As the Whitney prepared operationally to reopen safely, it also started planning for the return of its New York audience. While, thanks to the sacrifice of New Yorkers, the infection rate in the City has stayed low in recent months, the nationwide COVID-19 crisis has deepened. Given travel restrictions it is clear that focusing on engaging and expanding our core audience of New Yorkers is vital for reaching the Museum attendance goals needed to meet our financial targets. Serving New Yorkers is also crucial for achieving the Museum's mission of reaching a diverse public to celebrate American art, and now more than ever the Whitney believes that art has a crucial role to help the City's communities heal and rebuild.

The Whitney enthusiastically supports NYC & Co.'s efforts to encourage hyperlocal tourism and rebuild New York's tourism economy. The Whitney is participating in NYC & Co.'s *All in NYC* campaign to inspire New Yorkers to explore their own city. Adam D. Weinberg, the Alice Pratt Brown Director of the Whitney, joined NYC & Co.'s Tourism Coalition Steering Committee. As a member of this group Mr. Weinberg helped NYC & Co. launch a citywide public art promotional effort, *All in NYC: Public Art Edition*, which highlights free outdoor exhibitions and installations across the city.

The Whitney reopened to its members on August 27 and to the public on September 3. As a gesture to the City, admission during the month of September is Pay What You Wish. The Museum is grateful for the strong response it has seen from its neighbors across the City. The Whitney has welcomed in over 18,000 visitors since reopening. The vast majority of these guests were New Yorkers.

Though international and domestic tourism largely remains on pause for New York, the Whitney is planning for the gradual but certain full recovery of tourism to New York. Before the COVID-19 crisis, struck the national and international tourists to the Museum accounted for nearly 60% of the Museum's paid visitation. This income is vital for the City's and the Museum's financial health.

Looking ahead increasing revenue, especially from admissions, will be critical to the Whitney's long-term financial health and stability. Due to the effects of the pandemic, for the first time in fifteen years, the Museum is operating at a budget deficit which it must recover from in future years. Now that public health conditions and the government have allowed for the Museum to be open to guests it is financially critical that New Yorkers continue to patronize the Museum as part of a return to spending across the economy that is critical to the City. The support of the City of New York and NYC & Co. to continue promoting the cultural community to its citizens is vital for institutions like ours. Any further investment in public awareness campaigns and facilitating pathways for New Yorkers to visit their city's museums, would be greatly appreciated.

The Whitney Museum is unwavering in its commitment to serve the City of New York and remains grateful for the ongoing support it receives from Speaker Johnson, Cultural Affairs Chair Council Member Van Bramer, and their colleagues in the City Council, as well as to the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs and Manhattan Borough President Brewer.

For more information contact:

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Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc.
Submission to the NYC Council Committee on Arts and Cultural Affairs:
Written Testimony Regarding
Temporary Outdoor Space for Arts and Cultural Institutions Affected by COVID-19
September 24, 2020

Chair Van Bramer, Chair Vallone, and members of the committees,

My name is Siri Horvitz, and I am the Director of Government and Community Relations at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, a member of the Cultural Institutions Group (CIG). On behalf of Lincoln Center, I extend my sincere gratitude to you, your staffs, and all the essential workers for keeping New York City safe, healthy, and supported during this unprecedented time.

I have prepared this testimony in support of Int. 2068 to create outdoor performance space, as well as support Int. 2034 to create a mobile application to facilitate performance space. Lincoln Center and its CIG and private peer performing arts organizations across the City are grateful to the Chairs and to Majority Leader Cumbo for recognizing the significant challenges faced by our industries, which continue to remain closed due to COVID-19, and for introducing thoughtful legislation that will help us creatively restart performance our programming and resume our sizable contribution to the City's position as the world's cultural capital.

In his 2019 Creative Economy report, Comptroller Stringer noted that New York City's performing arts institutions, including theater opera, dance, and music, draw millions of visitors to the City every year—from preeminent institutions like Broadway, Lincoln Center, and Carnegie Hall, to hundreds of smaller performing arts organizations which provide cultural vibrancy to local communities. There are more than 1,000 theaters, dance companies, musical groups, and performing arts venues in our City, providing employment to over 16,000 individuals earning more than \$1 billion in wages. Our collective offerings are central to not only attracting talent to the City, but contribute to the reason why people want to remain residents of the City.

COVID-19 has closed our doors for the foreseeable future, resulting in cancelled performances and education and community engagement programs, financial hardships, and significant declines in local and non-local tourism. At Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts alone, we lost about \$13 million in anticipated revenue between March and June, and have furloughed or laid off approximately half of our staff. Yesterday, the Metropolitan Opera announced the cancellation of its 2020-2021 season through at least September 2021, a grave preview of likely many more cancellations across the field to come. We have pivoted to offering robust digital content through our website and social media platforms, but these avenues can never replace the live experience of the arts.

In the absence of our indoor concert halls and performance venues, performing arts organizations—of all sizes in all boroughs—are desperate for alternative spaces in which to present programming and bring much needed joy to our communities. Access to outdoor space is therefore critical for the long-term survival of our organizations.

Bringing culture to the City's outdoor spaces, including parks, public plazas, Open Streets, and parking lots affords many benefits: it will restart our organizations' revenue streams (including strengthened support from donors and increased sponsorship opportunities); spur job creation for artists and arts workers; create indirect economic impact for local tourism-related businesses like hotels, shops, and restaurants; and help audiences ease back into the comfort of safely attending performances—a vital first step toward returning to indoor performances when such opportunities become viable. The performing arts contribute to reinforcing the strength of our local communities: we partner with schools, community organizations, social service agencies, hospitals, and other arts organizations of all sizes. We are a significant part of the City's beating heart, and the City's full recovery will be impossible until we can resume in some form.

Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc.

Such opportunities to leverage otherwise empty public spaces for the presentation of performances have been examined since early on in the pandemic, from the minute the CDC advised that engaging in outdoor activities is far less likely to result in potential transfer of COVID-19 than indoor activities.

At Lincoln Center, we have been working to reimagine how to activate the public spaces of our campus in the hopes of creating a year-round civic hub for the City. Our 16-acre campus is resplendent with spacious grounds that are ripe with opportunities for activation: from Damrosch Park, which boasts a beautiful bandshell designed specifically for the presentation of performances, to the high visibility of Josie Robertson Plaza at the eastern entrance to the campus, to the facades and terraces of our world-renowned concert halls, to our green groves and sprawling walkways.

While the pandemic has indefinitely paused our ability to welcome New Yorkers to the campus to enjoy performances and programs, Lincoln Center's commitment to serving our community remains resolute. From Census activations to facilitating the use of our spaces for polling and early voting, from distributing free food to New Yorkers suffering from food insecurity, to commissioning socially responsive artistic work from a diverse group of artists that reflect the City itself, we have enjoyed success in leveraging our public spaces to host small-scale, socially distant programs that have worked to help our local community in its time of need.

Lincoln Center's spaces can also help to fill a major gap that exists for smaller arts and cultural organizations, especially those dedicated to performing arts. Since most do not have the access to public spaces we do, we are uniquely positioned to activate our space not only for use by our constituent organizations, but also for partnerships with arts and cultural organizations across all five boroughs.

Lincoln Center is not alone among the City's performing arts organizations interested in leveraging outdoor public spaces to present performance programming. Brief examples include:

- The Public Theater, which is exploring and actively planning outdoor pop-up style performances in public spaces, with a goal of serving communities that can't easily access virtual programming due to lack of internet access, in fulfillment of their mission to provide moments of joy and connection through live performance;
- The New York City Ballet, which is looking forward to the possibility of using available outdoor space for Company activities which could include rehearsals, ballet classes, informal dance presentations or educational and public programs that cannot yet take place indoors.
- The Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning, which would welcome the opportunity to host and mount performances on City-operated property, having successfully held two well-attended, socially-distanced concerts on its private lawn.

We have no doubt that most performing arts organizations across the City will be interested and eager to bring their work to the City's outdoor spaces if those spaces are made available and accessible. We are not seeking to compete with the Open Streets and Open Restaurants programs; rather to complement them and increase their impact, just as we did prior to the pandemic.

While we appreciate the City's commitment to public health and responsibly reopening businesses, to date, the process of navigating the City's many oversight arms has been cumbersome. We have been in extensive conversation with all relevant agencies and offices for months trying to gain access to the permits we need to broaden our reach and still adhere to the State's reopening guidelines; yet we have been unable to move forward with the required permits. Without them, we cannot further program our own spaces. One of our ideas was to present socially distant performances in Damrosch Park that can then be livestreamed to reach an unlimited number of arts-hungry viewers while putting artists back to work;

Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc.

concerns regarding noise and stage and screen access resulted in the decline of necessary permits, despite the fact that these concerns are not related to the pandemic.

We need special consideration around easing restrictions tied to said permits. We need dialogues that are open to considering creative solutions to the City's understandable concerns regarding the ability to mitigate public health risks. We are a significant part of the reason why tourists visit our City whether from throughout the boroughs or beyond the City's limits. We share the City's safety concerns and stand ready with detailed health protocols to safeguard our artists, employees and audiences. Our greatest hope is to work together on plans and best practices that benefit all.

The Chair and Majority Leader's proposed legislations recognizes this urgent and critical need and responds with action. The ability to self-certify our socially distant programming and apply for free permits to stage outdoor performances via an expedited online process would ease the bandwidth burden faced by our organizations and benefit the City through reduced reliance on precious staff resources during an already-challenging period in our history.

As it is currently drafted, the legislation's proposed program would provide assistance for performing arts organizations through at least January 31, 2021. We implore the City Council to extend this period of support through at least October 31, 2021. Such an extension will provide our institutions with more time to plan thoughtful seasons, work with artists to commission works specifically created to take advantage of presentation outdoors (as opposed to trying to adapt indoor programming for public spaces), and enable our institutions to take advantage of many more months of warmer weather when people will be eager to venture outside. It will also provide the space in which to build and scale the media production capacity of the performing arts, helping to increase the reach of our presentations by utilizing digital platforms and livestream capture capabilities to engage people when outdoor performances will not be sustainable.

On behalf of the City's performing arts organizations and individual artists, Lincoln Center urges the City Council to swiftly pass Int. 2068 to create public outdoor performance space and Int. 2034 to create a mobile application to facilitate performance spaces. These bills will pave the way toward activating the City's public spaces to safely return art and arts education to all New Yorkers.

Just as the Open Streets and Open Restaurants programs have reinvigorated essential activities engaging residents and supporting the City's bottom line, so too would this "Open Culture" program serve to jumpstart the arts. Resuming the performing arts safely outdoors will further breathe life back into the cultural heart of our City. As a field we are passionate about opportunities to serve the City of New York through the arts, and we are confident we can work together to mitigate health risks, provide positive community impact, and achieve wonderful results for the City's residents and visitors alike.

Thank you for your consideration and your decisive action to support the City's unparalleled performing arts.

Respectfully submitted,

Siri Horvitz
Director, Government and Community Relations
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September 24, 2020

In response to today's New York City Council hearing regarding NYC's Tourism Industry and the COVID-19 Crisis, Alessandro Zamperla, President/CEO of Central Amusement International Inc., which operates Luna Park in Coney Island and Victorian Gardens in Central Parks, released the following statement:

Coney Island is a community on the verge of collapse. Given that the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting government mandates have kept Luna Park in Coney Island closed, the progress we achieved in the Coney Island Amusement District in the last decade is currently under threat. Luna Park in Coney Island has been the economic anchor for the larger community and has promoted conditions that encourage local employment opportunities and small business to grow and preserve Coney Island's unique character. The continued lack of clarity and support from New York City and its agencies have been jeopardizing 1,200 jobs and essential conditions for sustainable economic growth in South Brooklyn. Without intervention, the iconic People's Playground will find itself a chapter of New York City's past. New York City and its agencies must extend Amusement District leases in order to provide stability to the area, provide immediate financial support for seasonal businesses that have been gravely impacted by mandated closures, and pressure NY State to approve the operating plans we submitted in June so we can provide some certainty about 2021 to our workers and our community.

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Alison Cook-Beatty, and I received my BFA from the Boston Conservatory of Music at Berklee, receiving the Ruth Sandholm Ambrose Scholarship Award with high honors. I moved to New York City and danced with the Paul Taylor Dance Company and Taylor 2. Alison Cook Beatty Dance is a classically-based modern dance company whose mission is to make dance accessible and emotionally engaging for all. My work has been commissioned by companies such as Ballet Next, Carolina Ballet Theater, Joffrey Ballet School, Infinity Dance Theater, The Boston Conservatory of Music at Berklee, and New York University. I was awarded the 2013 sjDANCEco Award for Best Artistic Merit. Under my direction, the Company has grown to a reputable nonprofit with local impact and international esteem. In September 2020, the Company was awarded a grant from Dance/NYC's Coronavirus Dance Relief Fund.

Artistic Vision For Alison Cook Beatty Dance, the purpose of art is to connect human beings more deeply to themselves and one another. The Company remains proudly oriented by the traditional techniques of American modern dance-techniques, which serve as a shared language between modern dancers worldwide. At the same time, the Company values artistic risk and the exquisitely unexpected. Alison Cook Beatty Dance finds true grace in work, which is emotionally honest and challenges both dancers and audiences through mutual vulnerability.

I wanted to reach out to you today to testify that Alison Cook Beatty Dance has continued to operate, pay are dancers, and create four new unique modern dances and films during COVID-19. We are very proud that we have been able to continue to work creatively during this time in safe ways. Our work has been featured on ABC News Channel 7, NY1, Daily News, The American Reporter, Bloomberg Opinion, and other publications. Our work is a testimony that the Arts are necessary

 [Central Park Field 4 excerpt 01.m4v](#)

for New York City and everywhere, and there are always creative and safe ways to make art and share it with the community.

I have attached some videos and listings for you to see. Please join us this Sat, Oct 3rd, for our Virtual Event and Gala 2020. I would be happy to offer you a comp ticket link to Zoom and Youtube at 8 pm.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter, and I would be happy to have a zoom meeting or phone call at your convenience.

Sincerely,
Alison Cook-Beatty

ABC NEWS

<https://abc7ny.com/community-events/ballet-dancers-perform-on-empty-ballfields-during-covid-19/6249116/?fbclid=IwAR1MED7fPUA56blABxuUxXGdW-zh41Wlj6yePkfEBVDFInxSJsTCLWnZ0X4>

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Alison Cook Beatty Dance

www.alisoncookbeattydance.org

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Dancers make new 'home' on baseball field



With their Upper East Side studio closed during the pandemic, dancers with the Alison Cook Beatty Dance Company rehearse ballet moves in a baseball field in Central Park Friday.

TIMOTHY A. CLARY/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES





729 SEVENTH AVENUE TEL 212-764-1122
5TH FLOOR FAX 212-944-2136
NEW YORK, NY 10019 BROADWAYLEAGUE.COM

Good morning. I am Thomas Ferrugia, Director of Governmental Affairs at The Broadway League. The League was founded in 1930 and continues to serve as the principal trade association for the national commercial theatre industry. Today, we represent over 700 theatre owners, operators, producers, presenters, general managers and suppliers of theatrical goods and services across North America and around the world.

We thank Chairman Van Bramer and the distinguished members of the Committee on Cultural Affairs for giving us the opportunity to tell our story concerning the NYC's Tourism Industry and the COVID-19 Crisis. I would also like to recognize Speaker Johnson and Councilmember Powers for their continued support for the live entertainment industry.

In addition to its cultural significance, Broadway is a massive economic and tourism driver that, until recently, brought an average of 40,500 theatregoers to Midtown Manhattan every day. Each year, we host millions of travelers from across North America and around the globe who spend billions of dollars in our city. Broadway sold 14.8 million tickets in the season ending May 2019, and 65% of those admissions, or 9.6 million tickets, were made by tourists who live outside New York City and its surrounding suburbs.

Most significantly, of those 9.6 million tickets bought by tourists, an astounding 2.8 million were purchased by visitors from abroad. While we are at risk of losing a tremendous number of domestic visitors next year, because of COVID-related disincentives to traveling abroad, foreign visitors represent our most at-risk theatregoer as the likelihood of their visiting NYC in significant numbers for before 2022 is quite low.

Last year, Broadway drew audiences from the United Kingdom, Europe, Asia, Australia, Africa, South America and many other parts of the world, comprising the highest number of foreign visitors in all Broadway's storied history. Approximately 60% of foreign visitors who attended a show last year stated that Broadway was one of their most important reasons for visiting NYC. The average foreign Broadway tourist saw an average of 2.3 shows and stayed in the city for an average of 6.7 days. Broadway motivated foreign spending on ancillary activities, not including the price of their theatre tickets, exceeded \$2.9 billion last year.

As we all know, Broadway, along with everything it brings to the economy, ceased on March 14, 2020 and, as of today, we still have no clear path to reopening, getting our people back to work, and stimulating massive tourism dollars for New York City.



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NYC & Co's marketing efforts, that drive business from the tri-state area into the five boroughs, is of utmost importance for us as 35% of Broadway theatre tickets are purchased by patrons residing in NYC and the surrounding suburbs. We therefore kindly defer to our friend Fred Dixon and his wonderful team for their opinions on Proposed Intro 1773-A, Intro 2034 and Intro 2068.

Finally, we appreciate and endorse Chairman Van Bramer's Resolution calling on Congress to Pass the Save Our Stages Act. As you may know, The Broadway League has been working closely with Congress in support of SOS and, just this past Friday September 18, we joined with Senator Schumer in Times Square for a press conference publicly asking Congress to pass the bill.

Substantial financial support will be required to reopen shuttered shows, launch new productions, and help subsidize losses while this vital industry rebuilds audiences in New York and in the 200 American cities that annually host Touring Broadway. Accordingly, we feel it is vital that Congress recognize the unique cultural, economic, and employment importance of live commercial theatre, and act to address the devastating impact the governmentally mandated theatre closures have had on this industry and on our economy.

Thank you again for this opportunity. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

To the NYC Council Committee on Cultural Affairs,

As a composer, performer and educator in the greater NYC metro area, I urge the Council to move forward with support for outdoor installations and culturally enriching presentations of musical, theatrical, visual, and interdisciplinary artistic works. This time has made artists like me rethink how art can be presented, and how experiences such as outdoor installations can enrich the overall audience engagement in a safe and effective way.

A collaboration I've been working on for several years was originally developed as a series of four live choral plays. Through the pandemic, we have been able to reinvent this choral work as an audio-narrative that can be accessed via QR codes in installments through an installation either in a gallery or outdoor context. If access was granted to outdoor spaces in NYC for the use of arts installations, a project like this could be accessible to park goers in an outdoor context, providing an exciting, immersive audio experience that would be accessible to anyone with an audio player device.

Projects like these are constantly being developed by my peers and by larger presenting institutions, and artists are hungry for a way to safely connect with their communities and greater audiences. Access to outdoor presentations would revitalize the live performance world and provide audiences with welcome entertainment and catharsis.

Thank you so much for your consideration,
Grace

Testimony of Charles Shaviro
Data Researcher, Center for an Urban Future

**Before the NYC Council Committee on Economic Development and Cultural Affairs, Libraries
and International Intergroup Relations**

Supporting the Recovery of New York City's Tourism Economy

September 24, 2020

Good morning.

My name is Charles Shaviro. I am the data researcher at the Center for an Urban Future, an independent think tank focused on expanding economic opportunity in New York City.

I'll be sharing testimony prepared for today's hearing by our policy director, Eli Dvorkin. Thank you for the opportunity.

No part of New York City's economy has been hit harder by the COVID-19 pandemic—or is facing a longer road to recovery—than the tourism sector. The crisis has brought the tourism economy to a near-standstill after years of record growth that had made it one of the city's leading drivers of job creation.

Our research at the Center for an Urban Future has shown just how important tourism has become as a source of middle-income and accessible jobs for New Yorkers across the five boroughs.

Prior to the pandemic, 91 percent of the jobs in tourism were accessible to New Yorkers without a bachelor's degree. The city was home to nearly as many hotel jobs, which pay \$62,000 per year on average, as jobs in manufacturing, which pay an average of \$58,000.

More than 65 percent of New York City residents who work in tourism-related industries are people of color and 54 percent are immigrants—a higher share than in the rest of the city's economy.

Although most of these jobs are concentrated in Manhattan, the tourism workforce is distributed across the entire city. For example, 81 percent of hotel workers live in the four boroughs outside Manhattan, where dollars earned in the tourism sector have a significant local impact.

Now the sector faces a deeply uncertain road to recovery, amid catastrophic declines in visitors, revenue, and employment.

Since March, jobs in tourism-related industries have experienced among the city's steepest declines—down 50 percent in traveler accommodations, 45 percent in ground passenger transportation, 66 percent in clothing stores, and nearly 70 percent in the performing arts.

Given how important tourism has become to the city's economy, the city will need to do more to help lay the groundwork for a long-term recovery. To start, NYC & Company will have to build on and expand the promising "All in NYC" campaign and take the city's local and regional marketing efforts to the next level—and it will require support from the City Council to do so.

For instance, the Council and the Mayor's Office should work together on new discount and incentive programs designed to turn out New Yorkers to become tourists in their own city. The city can draw inspiration from Montreal's Passport Attractions program, which is spurring locals to visit tourist attractions, and the UK's "Eat Out to Help Out" scheme, which provided a government-backed 50 percent discount for dining out at local restaurants on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday nights in August.

The Council can build on the effective Open Streets for Restaurants initiative by expanding this free, online permitting system to work for cultural organizations and performance venues of all sizes—an approach that could help these hard-hit venues generate much-needed revenue while serving as an attractor to boost visitation in commercial hubs like Midtown.

The Council could also direct the creation of a new initiative enlisting New York City's creatives to promote the city. This Works Progress Administration-style program could hire out-of-work artists and creatives to respond to the "All in NYC" brief—but interpret it with their own individual spin.

To ramp up these efforts, NYC & Company will need a new level of support to broadcast New York's public health success story, and change the popular narrative. The Mayor and City Council should increase baseline funding for NYC & Company as part of a recovery strategy and work with the state to pilot a consistent stream of future revenues, such as dedicating a small portion of taxes from hotel and other accommodations stays to fund tourism marketing and promotion.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and for bringing attention to this vital part of the city's overall recovery strategy.

REBUILD NEW YORK INDOOR ATRIUM PERFORMANCES, CREATIVE HOSPITALITY SPURS NEW YORK'S RECOVERY THIS WINTER

By Duke Dang, General Manager, Works & Process at the Guggenheim
917 518 8993; ddang@worksandprocess.org

As the General Manager of Works & Process, the performing arts series at the Guggenheim, for 17 years I have produced over 500 performances at the museum, many in its iconic rotunda, one of the most indoor social distance conducive spaces in the city. The performing arts generate economic activity, drive tourism, and employ workers. It must play a role in New York's recovery, yet with traditional theaters unviable, the industry finds itself temporarily homeless. The Guggenheim rotunda can play a roll once museums are allowed to produce performances, but we need greater capacity, and more imaginative space use to leverage the performing arts to amplify New York's recovery. I propose a simple idea that will drive tourism, create jobs, and help satisfy audience demand as we rebuild New York.

WINTER HOTEL ATRIUM PERFORMANCES

Deemed essential, throughout the pandemic hotels have experienced low occupancy and room rates. Similar to the Guggenheim rotunda, the Marriott Marquis, Conrad Downtown, Roxy and Beekman hotel have indoor atriums. Having produced Guggenheim rotunda performances, this winter, performances in hotel atriums can be a coveted amenity for hotel guests, watching safely from room balconies. No tickets are sold, non-cancellable room reservations are made. Low-floor rooms, become most desired. Only registered hotel guests are permitted. Check-ins are spaced out. Elevators are keyed to assigned floor. Room service is made available. This elegant solution optimizing the innate social distancing created by indoor atrium spaces and hotel operations allows artists and fans to safely gather and performance, dining, and lodging can come together to rebuild New York.

ADDITIONAL SPACES TO CONSIDER

The promenade of the David Koch Theater and lobby of the Metropolitan Opera House at Lincoln Center. The atrium of Department of Cultural Affairs building at Surrogate's Courthouse (31 Chamber Street). The rotunda of the Guggenheim.

Duke Dang
General Manager
Works & Process at the Guggenheim
708 Third Avenue, Suite 1005
New York, NY 10017
Mobile 917 518 8993
ddang@worksandprocess.org

Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations

Mallory Markham, Administrator
Eryc Taylor Dance

Thursday, September 24, 2020

Support for Int. 2068-2020, temporary outdoor space for art and cultural institutions affected by COVID-19

Established in 2006, Eryc Taylor Dance (ETD) is a nonprofit, contemporary dance company whose mission is to create community by connecting through movement. ETD presents original performances, conducts master classes, makes grants for aspiring choreographers, and curates community city programs in supportive housing sites across all 5 boroughs.

Like most organizations, ETD was forced to radically shift course when the pandemic hit. Our company's income was cut in half overnight as the result of canceled workshops, performances, and guest artist engagements.

Our latest choreographic venture, Uncharted Territory, was conceived and developed over Zoom. Going virtual was crucial to keep the company operational, but virtual means are limiting and unsustainable, especially for the performing arts.

Uncharted Territory will make its outdoor premiere in New York City on March 21, 2021, with a week of live events throughout multiple public sites across NYC. This bill's passing with an extension through next summer is crucial to the actualization of our project.

According to data released by the National Endowment for the Arts in 2018, the performing arts sector accounts for \$760 billion of the national gross domestic product. \$114.4 billion of that is from New York State alone.

The performing arts industry has been significantly impacted both economically and culturally due to extended closures and regulations, with little opportunity to resume its business. This bill would usher in a necessary opportunity for our sector to rebuild. Art not only stimulates our economy but also allows us to feel human; that is why it is so essential for this bill to pass.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



09/21/2020

To whom it may concern

My name is Fany Gerson, and I am the Chef/Owner of La Newyorkina, a Mexican ice cream, frozen novelty and sweets shop located in the heart of the West Village at 240 Sullivan Street, New York, NY 10012.

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic and shutdown, we have suffered great losses thought these past 6 months. We shut our doors in March during the mandate, and even though we reopened for pick up and delivery, our business never reached even 35% of our sales last year during the spring-summer.

We are a seasonal business, and rely on our shop sales, but as alternate income we also rely on catering, seasonal locations on the High Line, delivery, as well as concerts and special events thought the city, this has highly impacted our business. Restaurants can't survive on delivery, even more an ice cream shop

Our day to day operations at the shop will not be able to recuperate due to the lack of tourism, foot traffic, destination shoppers that rely on publica transportation, economic despair, as well as the lack students and faculty from NYU. We do not see a clear path of this changing in the next months or years. For this reason, all though we tried to keep our doors open we have come to the decision that we will need to shut our doors. For the moment the only reason why we haven't done so, is because if we do, I am afraid that I will be personally liable for back rent that I obviously could not afford.

We did apply for the PPP loan, but since this is based on a monthly payroll average, we did not have enough to cover rent and payroll, even with the 50%-50% amendment to the law.

We as well as other small businesses you have heard of, are in desperate need to be relieve of any liability that will further impact our future income and welfare., as well as some kind of drastic action for all of us in this industry.

We appreciate your looking into this matter

Sincerely
Fany Gerson

**Testimony from Tim Tompkins, President of the Times Square Alliance
Committee on Economic Development & Cultural Affairs Committee Hearing
September 24, 2020**

My name is Regina Fojas, Senior Vice President at the Times Square Alliance speaking on behalf of Tim Tompkins, President of the Times Square Alliance. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

Thank you, Council Member Vallone, for your continued leadership in focusing on the challenges our City's tourism industry faces, and for highlighting the importance of sustaining the industry in a well-coordinated manner. We would also like to thank NYC & Company for their continued partnership.

It is no secret that tourism is an essential part of New York's, and Times Square's, economy. In 2018, over 65 million tourists visited New York City, totaling \$46.6 billion in visitor spending and generating \$12.8 billion in tax revenue. As the fourth largest employer in the City, the tourism industry is responsible for over 291,000 jobs, which is more than finance, technology, and manufacturing. These jobs support New Yorkers city-wide, with 81% of hotel workers living in outer boroughs. In 2018, state and local tax proceeds related to tourism saved the average city household over \$2,100.

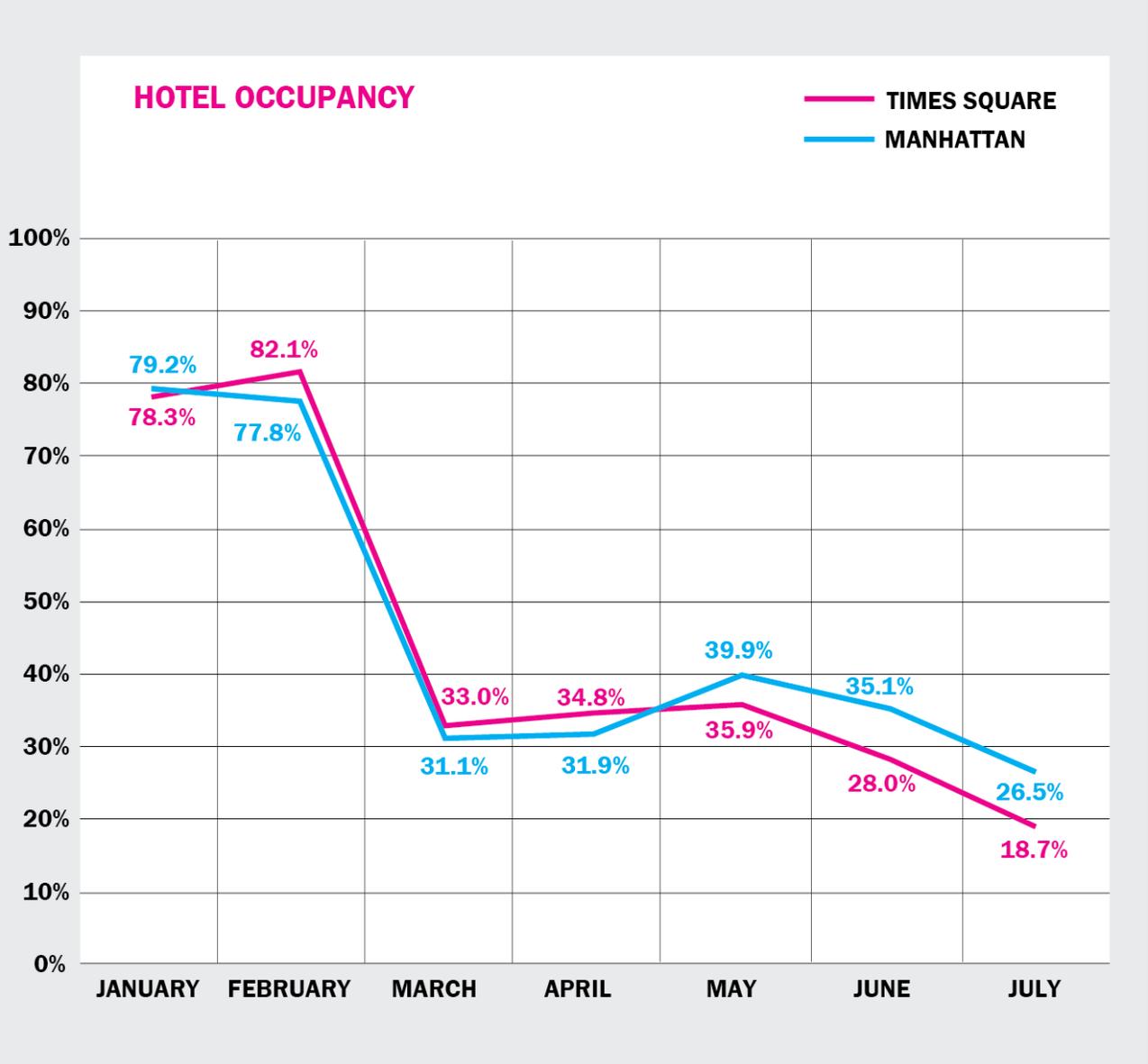
While the COVID-19 pandemic has devastated nearly every industry, tourism has entirely ceased. City-wide visitor and accommodation spending declined by 87% and 98% respectively compared to Q2 of 2019. Times Square, the City's most iconic tourist destination, has borne the brunt of this standstill. While only 0.1% of the City's land area, Times Square is responsible for 7% of the City's employment and 15% of the City's economic output. Our visitor spending declined by 94%, which is 7% more than City-wide, and our average daily pedestrian counts plummeted by 90 percent. Over 50% of our businesses are closed and Broadway will remain dark for the foreseeable future. Between Broadway, closed restaurants and closed hotels, we estimate a loss of 35,000 hospitality and service jobs in Times Square so far. Despite upticks in business across some other commercial corridors, the impact of Times Square's devastation will be felt across all 5 boroughs.

We believe a series of five key initiatives to restore visitor confidence and grow the hospitality industry, including hotels, restaurants, retail, entertainment and arts and culture, must be implemented now.

1. Establish a dedicated funding stream to NYC & Co: Set a timeline of 24/36 months and contribute 50 cents for every dollar of existing hotel occupancy tax revenue to NYC & Co. Also, implement NYC & Co's Tourism District Funding Proposal.
2. Tap creatives by putting out a WPA-style employment grant program to create viral promotional materials under the rubric of All In NYC and give additional tax breaks to TV and film creators who work to create content in line with All In NYC.
3. Address deteriorating public space conditions through an integrated public space management task force or office.
4. Stop the restaurant apocalypse by implementing NYC Hospitality Alliance proposals and creating a temporary sales tax holiday campaign for people who dine out.
5. Convene a multiagency tourism relief task force to support NYC & Co and solicit all mayoral candidates to issue a long-term tourism recovery plan as part of their platform.

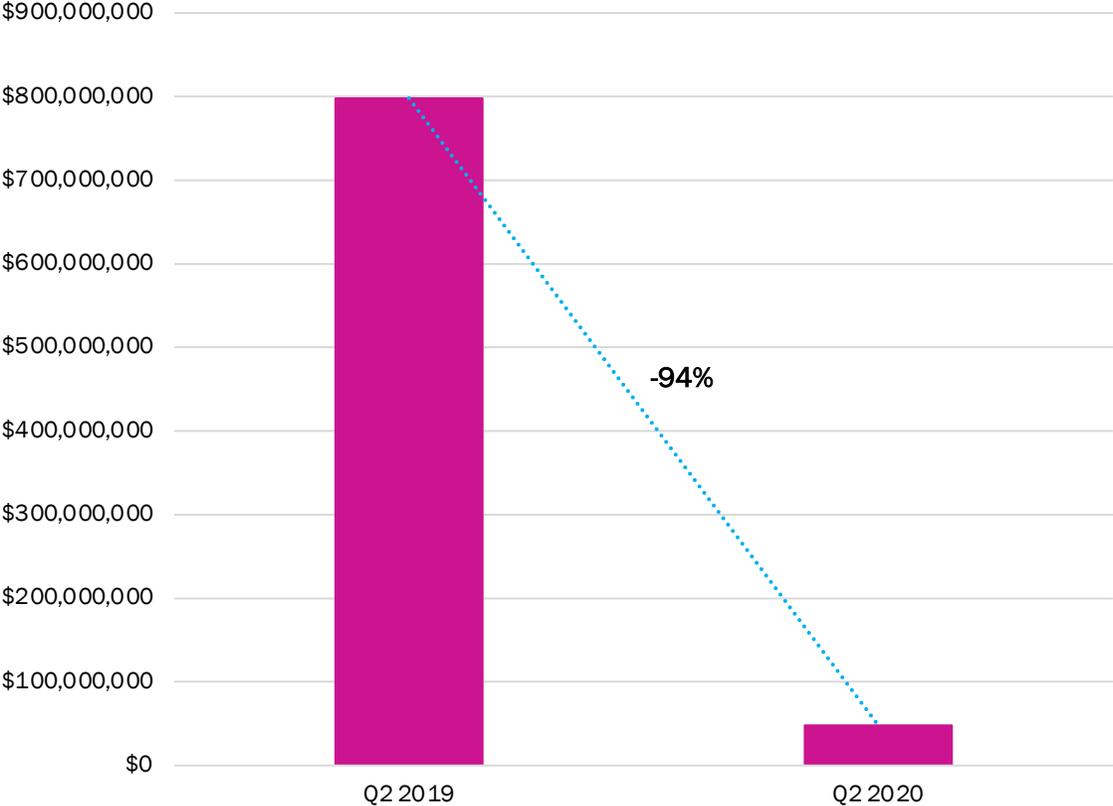
A strong New York City recovery requires strong tourism recovery, and strong tourism recovery starts with Times Square. We want to work with the City to make this happen. Thank you for your time.

The slow of tourism during the pandemic has had devastating economic effects for Times Square and city-wide.

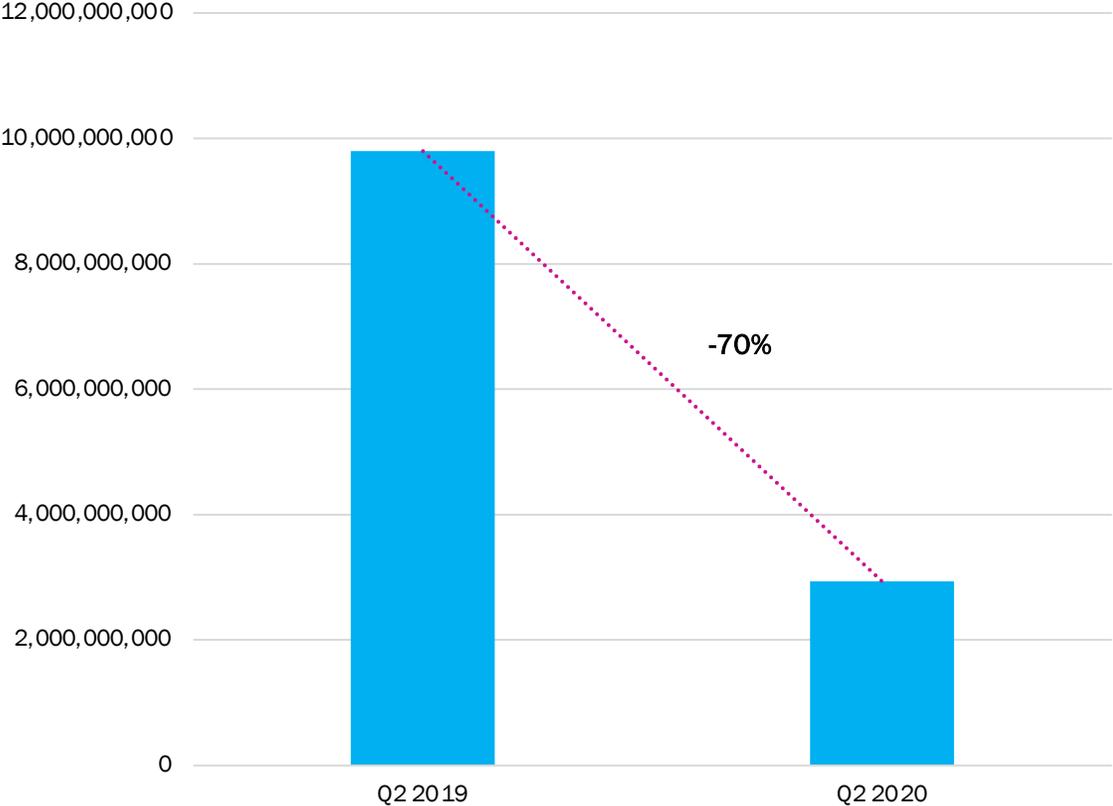


The slow of tourism during the pandemic has had devastating economic effects for Times Square and city-wide.

Times Square Total Visa Spending Q2 2019-2020

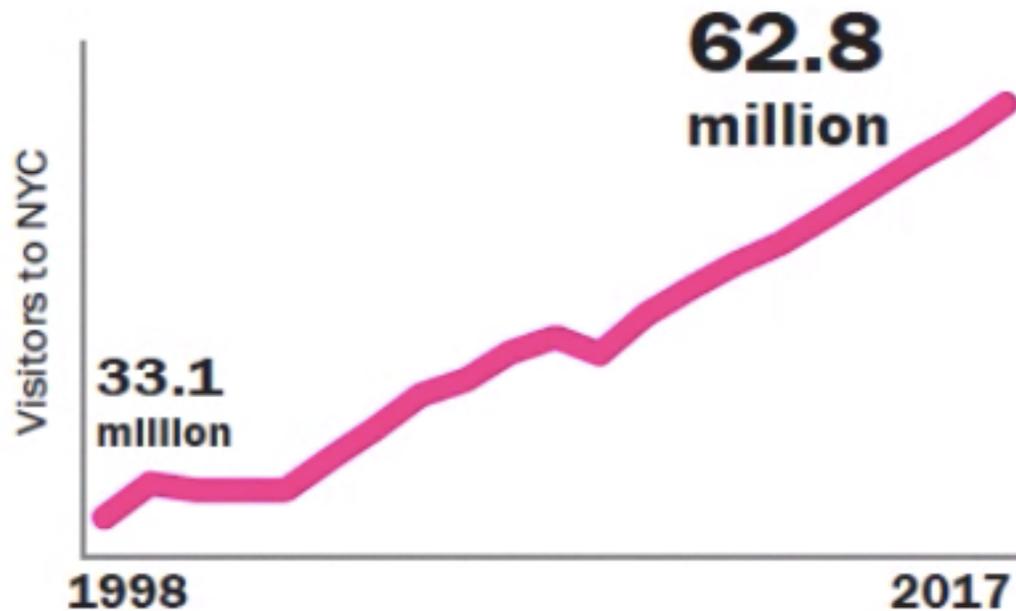


New York City Total Visa Spending Q2 2019-2020

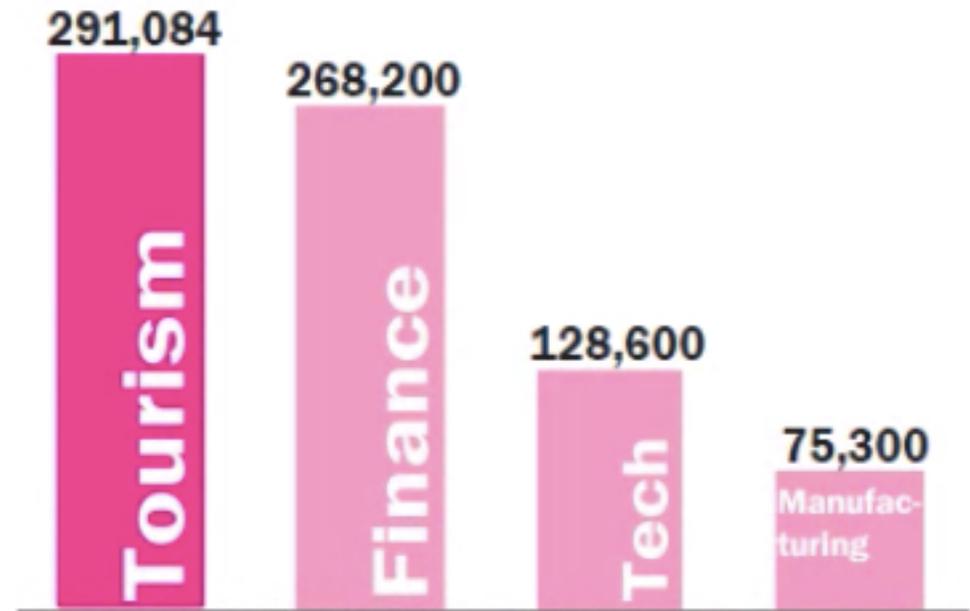


Tourism is integral to New York City's economy.

In the last 20 years, tourism to New York City nearly **doubled**.

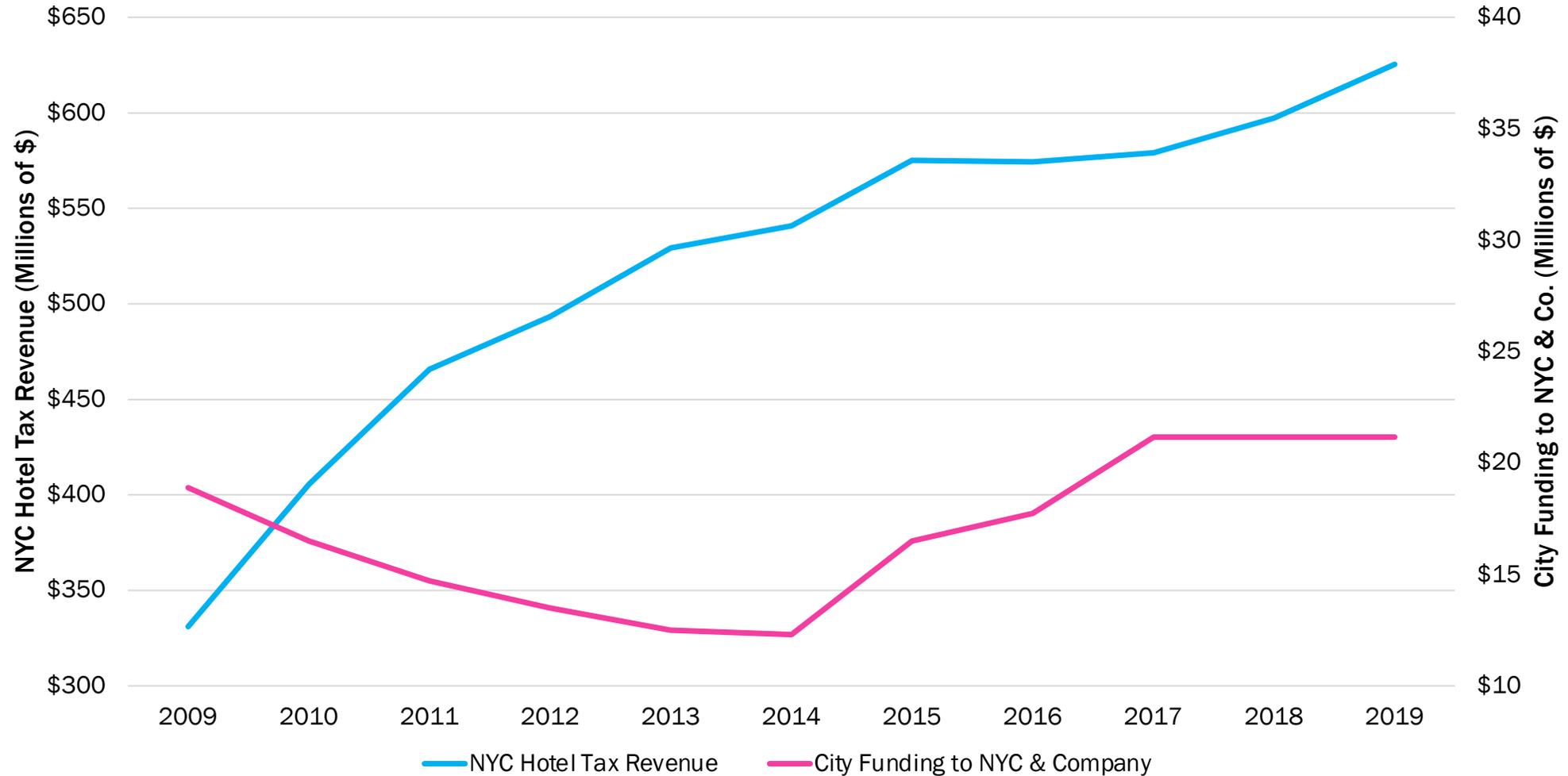


Tourism employs more workers than finance, tech, and manufacturing sectors.



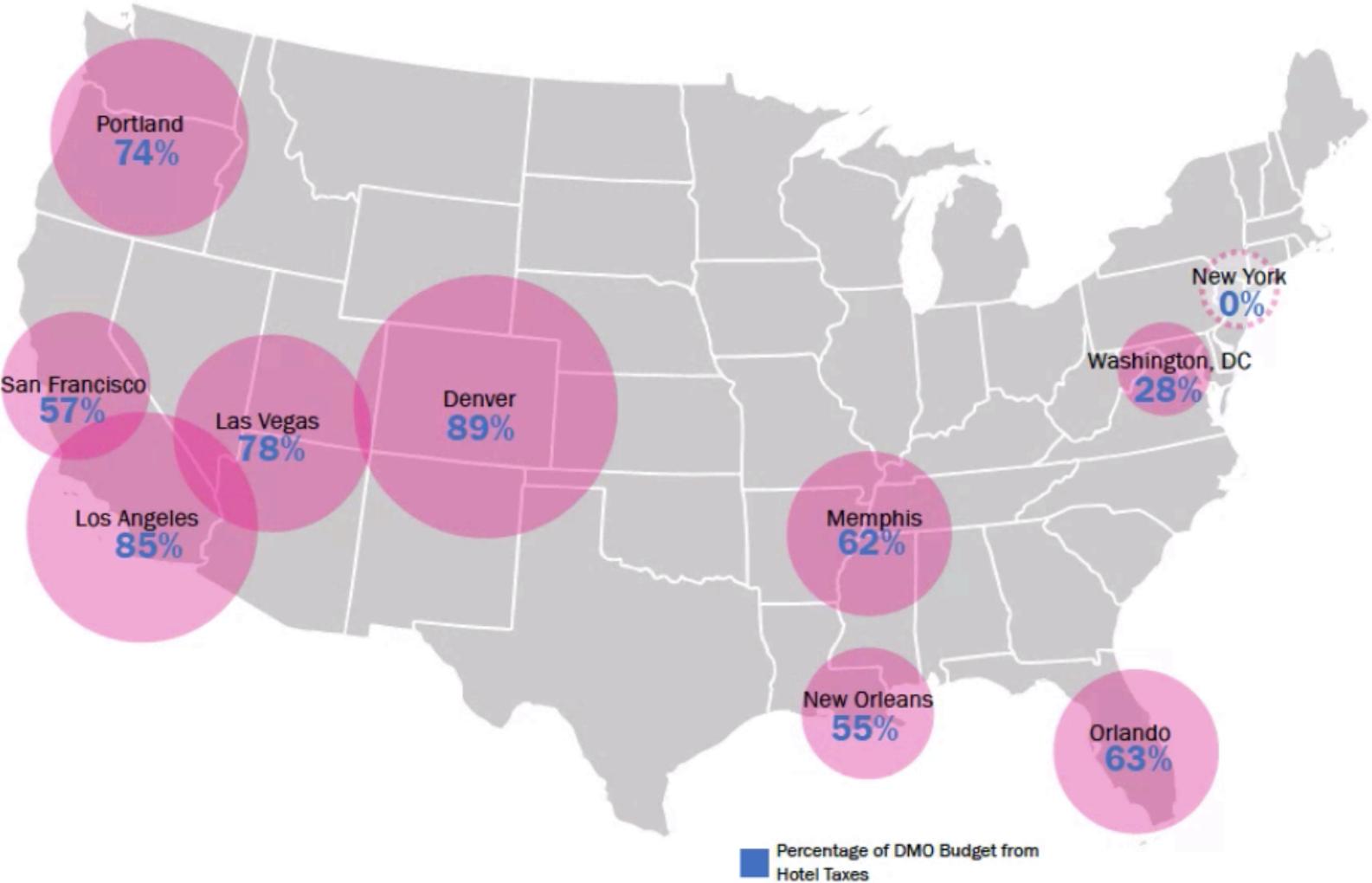
In the past 10 years, revenue generated from hotel occupancy taxes has grown 89% while city funding to NYC & Co has grown just 12%

NYC & Co. City Funding vs. Hotel Tax Revenues 2009-2019



Despite the money tourism generates for NYC, no hotel tax revenue is contributed to NYC & Co

Hotel Taxes Directly Fund Most Top Destination Marketing Organizations Except NYC & Company



The Times Square Alliance proposes a 5-Point Plan for recovery.

1. Establish a dedicated funding stream to NYC & Co: Set a timeline of 24/36 months and contribute 50 cents for every dollar of existing hotel occupancy tax revenue to NYC & Co. Also, implement NYC & Co's Tourism District Funding Proposal.
2. Tap creatives by putting out a WPA-style employment grant program to create viral promotional materials under the rubric of All In NYC and give additional tax breaks to TV and film creators who work to create content in line with All In NYC
3. Address deteriorating public space conditions through an integrated public space management task force or office
4. Stop the restaurant apocalypse by implementing NYC Hospitality Alliance proposals and creating a temporary sales tax holiday campaign for people who dine out
5. Convene a multiagency tourism relief task force to support NYC & Co and solicit all mayoral candidates to issue a long-term tourism recovery plan as part of their platform

Testimony of Cristyne L. Nicholas, CEO of Nicholas & Lence Communications

Joint Hearing, Committee on Economic Development and Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations

September 24, 2020

Good morning Committee Chairs Vallone and Van Bramer and members of the City Council. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today on such an important topic. Tourism is not only one of the most important economic drivers of New York City, but also a critical piece of our recovery.

My name is Cristyne Nicholas and I'm a New York tourism industry veteran, serving as the Chair of the 109-year-old Broadway Association and Chair of Governor Cuomo's Tourism Advisory Council, working closely with the "I Love New York" program. Currently, as CEO of Nicholas & Lence Communications representing a diverse array of tourism and hospitality clients on public relations, I have a front row seat to the devastating effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the tourism industry, its workforce, and our City. As the former CEO of NYC & Company during 9/11, I helped create the roadmap to tourism's recovery and was honored to promote to the world just how resilient New York City is.

As we are all aware, this global pandemic is unlike any crisis in our City's past. We need to be creative, think outside the box, and offer unprecedented solutions during this unprecedented time. I thank the City Council for your creative thinking and offer my support for these bills today.

Regarding Intro 1773-A, which would establish an Office of Tourism recovery within the Office of the Mayor, I see the need for an executive level coordinated approach from City Hall to help coordinate the Herculean effort to support our

tourism economy in this historic time of need. I am aware of the budget crisis that accompanies our economic and health crisis and know that investing in new personnel during a time when the Mayor's Office is planning week-long furloughs is a very difficult decision and probably not necessary. As done with NY State, the State ESD hosts a quarterly Inter-Agency Tourism Task Force, pooling resources and assigning existing state employees to be responsible and accountable for tourism policy. The personnel is there. They just need to be directed. However, I still urge the Administration to invest in NYC & Company's future. According to the Center for Urban Future, NYC & Co's overall tourism budget has not stayed competitive with that of tourism promotion agencies in other global destinations. Tourism is a revenue generator for NYC. And what we need now more than ever is to generate revenue for our City.

I applaud NYC & Company for their outstanding work but know that their core mission is tourism marketing and not coordinating with City agencies. An Office of Tourism Recovery in the Mayor's Office could bring agencies to the table to ensure that the industry is getting all the support they need. When I was at City Hall, we would often call inter-agency task forces to pull together resources for big tourism generating events such as the NBA Allstar game, The World Economic Forum, American Bus Association, The Grammys and many others.

In addition to marquee tourist destinations like the Statue of Liberty, Lincoln Center and Broadway theaters, support needs to be coordinated and prioritized to the meetings and events industry, a \$10 billion industry that is completely closed down. All of these signature attractions, museums and cultural institutions, coupled with the powerful meetings and events industry, have a

massive trickle-down economic effect on our restaurants, retail, and small businesses that are the backbone of our economy. According to NYC & Company's 2019 report, \$46 billion in visitor spending supported almost 400,000 jobs citywide and generated \$70 billion in economic activity. Sadly, however, the tourism industry is the slowest to recovery. If we fail tourism, we fail us all.

In addition to my support of Intro 1773-A, I want to also offer my support of Intros 2068 and 2064 which would create temporary outdoor space for art and cultural institutions and require the City to create a mobile app to coordinate outdoor space for art and cultural programming, respectively. We have seen the success of New York City's outdoor dining program and know that City agencies need to be flexible and nimble when the survival of our economy is at stake. As the art and cultural capital of the world, New York City should be a global leader in offering prime outdoor spaces for arts and culture that are both safe and accessible.

I commend the City Council for your hard work on these bills and thank you for your attention to tourism, the city's fourth largest industry.

Testimony

My name is Gail Thacker, executive and artistic director of the Gene Frankel Theatre; Thomas R. Gordon and I are proprietors. We are located at 24 Bond Street between Lafayette and Bowery.

First, we want to thank you for serving our community and for hearing my testimony. I know it's been difficult time for all of us.

The work that has come from this Gene Frankel Theatre for the last 71 years has had civil rights and progressive thinking at its core. Today this is more relevant and necessary than ever.

We have been closed for seven months now. During that time, we've prepared ourselves. We want a safe space for people to work. Safety and people's lives are important to us. We have purchased an HVAC system with M13 filters; set up cleaning stations with hand sterilizer; acquired touchless thermometers; tracking sheets; filled out safety templates; have followed all directions and guidelines on NY Forward; cleaned, painted, and removed our fixed seats...and we wait...to serve our community...but we are still closed.

As we wait and wait, we ask our government officials to supply us with guidelines and open our smaller theaters. We can help you by explaining how we are not set up like larger Broadway theaters. We are smaller, flexible theaters.

As we watch restaurants and bars thriving outdoors with food and entertainment, we think "what's the difference?" We try to apply for the same permit but we run into brick walls.

Yet we have a positive approach on this. We understand that this virus might be something with us for the long run. And that from here on we follow safety guidelines and move forward. We have to start somewhere. Maybe at 25% or 20% capacity, but start somewhere.

I do understand you are discussing allowing your theaters to set up and enjoy the same guidelines as restaurants and bars. Please, help us thrive immediately. This would be a great start.

I was told that because Bond Street is open, our theatre could not apply for a permit because it would interfere with the restaurants... We need you so much right now. We want to work and pay our bills now.

Thank you so much for hearing my testimony. We love our city.

The Municipal Art Society of New York



September 24, 2020

Testimony from the Municipal Art Society of New York to the City Council Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations in Support of Intro 2068-2020

The Municipal Art Society of New York (MAS) has been providing input on the City's streets and public realm since our founding in 1893. With this unique historical perspective, we have observed the evolving function of our streets to meet the needs of a growing city and to respond to public health crises. We have also seen our streets adapt to balance the needs of moving people and goods efficiently while also playing a foundational role in livable neighborhoods.

We are living in a new world of circumstantially driven experiments. Demand for streets, long-highlighted in planning as reflecting the volume of auto-oriented uses, has dramatically shifted into an appetite for open space. In May, the City began closing entire streets for pedestrians and cyclists, an idea that would get transit and safe street advocates laughed out of a room not long ago. In June, thousands of restaurants began filling once-vacant sidewalks with outdoor dining, with nary a word from the Community Boards who spent decades tightly restricting café permits. The Mayor has already announced that the program will continue in 2021, pandemic or not. Today, as New York City prepares to reopen in-person learning, thousands of schools have requested permits to expand their education into neighborhood streets, parks, and plazas. In the demand for viable space to create community, cultural uses are no exception.

The open culture program being considered under Intro 2068-2020 would further diversify use of our streets for community benefits that serve all New Yorkers. MAS strongly supports the bill and the ability of art and cultural institutions to use parks, pedestrian plazas, roadways, and other elements of the public realm as temporary performance and rehearsal space.

Such efforts are all the more important as we continue to see inequities in open space access. COVID-19 has further exposed the burdens experienced by communities of color as measured by infection rates, deaths, business closures, and policing of social distancing guidance. Many neighborhoods were left out of the early rounds of street closures, leading to an overreliance on existing parks and open spaces.

While there have been plenty of critiques about how these changes have been implemented, we've heard little opposition to the concept of reimagining city streets, sidewalks, parks, and plazas—the collection of spaces we call the public realm—to better serve New Yorkers. The biggest roadblock to progress in this case isn't a debate on the merits, but rather who should lead this effort, and how.

Unlike many other cities of its size, New York lacks a central position within its government responsible for planning and maintaining the public realm. Instead, the City segments oversight of these essential pieces of infrastructure across a vast array of agencies. Rather than functioning together as a seamless public realm network, the spaces are each governed with different rules, competing priorities, and disjointed leadership.

New York has an opportunity to foster proactive planning, integration, and management of its public realm. MAS and our partners recently released a policy brief calling for the creation of a Director of the Public Realm, a new position tasked with coordinating the constellation of public and private entities that oversee our public spaces. Most importantly, this new position must ensure that these entities work in close partnership with neighborhood stakeholders in the communities where these changes enhance livability, safety, and street-level activity.

While DOT has been responsive to the COVID-19 pandemic, the last six months have only underscored the urgency of this position. Our streets can offer so much more than a means of transportation. They have become our living rooms, gyms, classrooms, and dining halls, and now have even more potential to be dedicated to vibrant art and cultural spaces. Access to light, air, and open space makes people healthier, parks greener, and cities stronger. Now more than ever, we need bold leadership and new ideas for the spaces between buildings where so much of urban life takes place.

We need a Director of the Public Realm.

Testimony regarding the Gene Frankel Theatre for its reopening

Hello,

My name is Jorge Clar; I am a performance artist. I am writing to support measures being implemented so the Gene Frankel Theatre on Bond Street in Manhattan can reopen.

I have witnessed firsthand the hardships the theatre has gone through to stay afloat. Gail Thacker and Thomas Gordon have taken every possible measure required to comply with safety regulations during the Covid pandemic.

Nearby restaurants are open and thriving. I am wondering why a small theatre with flexible seating like the Gene Frankel, which has already removed its fixed chairs so the space can be tailored to many configurations, cannot open. The theatre has installed the proper air conditioners with the required filters, and has sanitation stations, safety signage, etc., all set up.

Because Bond Street is an open street, couldn't the theatre even have a small seating area in front? Performances can be staged on the window facing the street.

There must be an option so the theatre can open and be sustainable.

I implore for you to consider the plea of small New York City theatres. The Gene Frankel Theatre is a second home to me and countless fellow artists in the East Village and beyond.

Best regards,

Jorge Clar

Arts in Education **R**^{NYC}**OUNDTABLE**

New York City Arts in Education Roundtable *Live Testimony*

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and Council Member Cumbo and Council Member Van Bramer for your leadership and commitment to arts and arts education. My name is Kimberly Olsen, and I come to you today as Executive Director of the NYC Arts in Education Roundtable and as a proud District 26 resident.

On behalf of the Roundtable's membership, I am here to highlight the importance of continuing existing partnerships between NYC cultural arts organizations and our public schools to support the financial sustainability of our cultural community.

*The New York City Arts in Education Roundtable is a service organization who builds its efforts around the values that **arts are essential** and that arts education is a right for all NYC students. We represent over 120 cultural organizations and 2,000 teaching artists in every discipline. These creative thinkers quickly pivoted in the spring/summer to partnering with educators on curriculum, delivering art supplies to families, and creating engaging videos to promote art-making at home.*

Over 310 arts organizations partner with public schools each year. These organizations hope to continue these arts learning opportunities and support the city's recovery process, despite the financial hardships and burden they now face due to COVID-19. These partnerships employ thousands of artists, give students space to process trauma and think critically about the world around them, and help students build important skills that will help them move beyond the pandemic.

Going into this unprecedented school year, we understand that the dynamics of both remote and in-school learning will be tested and adjusted throughout the year. However, the critical services provided by our cultural community have proven to be an uplifting creative outlet for our students, supports NYC DOE's goals of equity & excellence for all, and provides critical employment opportunities -- specifically for Arts Education organizations, who collectively reported artistic employment decreases of over 2,100 artists, or 78% of artist staffing, as of May 8th.

Given the importance of these partnerships in filling the gap in arts instruction, we request City Council's help in preventing schools from eliminating arts education in order to make up for budget shortfalls.

Please help to ensure that arts are an essential part of a student's curriculum to ensure student success and social-emotional well being this year alongside employment opportunities to out-of-work artists.

The arts are essential for our city, now and forever.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Lucy Sexton
Executive Director
New Yorkers for Culture & Arts
lucy@NY4CA.org
NY4CA.org

September 24, 2020

Thank you Chairs and Councilmembers for this important hearing on arts, culture, tourism, and the city's economy. My name is Lucy Sexton and I am proud to head New Yorkers for Culture and Arts, a citywide coalition of cultural groups of every size from every neighborhood. As you know culture is key to the city's economy, generating \$110B in economic activity pre COVID, and employing some 300,000 New Yorkers*. Arts and culture have also led the city out of every crisis in my lifetime, from reinventing empty spaces in the 70s, to bringing back downtown after 9/11, to getting tourists back after the financial crisis. We stand ready to lead the recovery again, but with many of our spaces still shuttered, and 62% of

artists and culture workers still unemployed, we need your help.**

A story in yesterday's Times talks about the way New York has survived in this time, full of stories of outdoor Zumba classes, impromptu music performances parks and on fire escapes, artists doing chalk murals, people coming together to find joy, beauty, and each other. It is the story of NYC we want to hear. Yet every day I hear from artists who can't get permits, who are being stopped from rehearsing because dance is not yet allowed, who can't play music that needs an amp, who can't afford to the extra cost of permits for events that charge or ask for contributions.

The open restaurants program has been a game changer, enlivening our streets and getting restaurants some amount of sorely needed income. Opening our streets and public spaces to music, dance, theater, visual art, spoken word, comedy will transform the city, delivering joy and healing and laughter and heartbreak and beauty and community. And like the struggling restaurants, we must be also

allowed to charge for our offerings. So we can pay the dancers, musicians, writers, designers, painters, teachers, carpenters, and everyone whose work makes art and culture happen.

One of the great challenges of this time has been uncertainty. We make plans for shows that have to be cancelled and postponed, we create budgets for seasons that may not happen. This open culture program needs to extend through at least next fall. That will allow us to plan for performances and exhibitions and fairs for next spring summer and fall. After a few winter months indoors, our communities will be longing to get outdoors and celebrate, reflect, enjoy, and connect with each other. Let us plan the best art and culture the world has to offer and bring it to the outdoor spaces of our city. As culture comes out, people fill the streets, driving traffic to small businesses of every kind. Images of a city filled with vibrant culture and life is exactly what will draw tourists back. Let culture and art work their magic. And let our cultural organizations and workers begin to recover economically as we help the city recover.

* <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/the-creative-economy/>

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How New Yorkers Found Resolve After 6 Months of Pandemic Hardship

It is not a tale of triumph. Fear persists about what lies ahead. But small transformations have unfolded that reveal the grit and gifts of the city's people.



The 1.3-mile stretch of 34th Avenue in Jackson Heights in Queens has become a neighborhood gathering spot. Credit...Todd Heisler/The New York Times

By Corina Knoll

- Sept. 23, 2020
-
- Even as the coronavirus is ravaging the country and the world, a new reality is emerging in New York City.

Nowhere is that more evident than on a stretch of 34th Avenue in Jackson Heights, Queens, that is now a lively symbol of renewal in a neighborhood where the virus infected one in 22 people and claimed 260 lives.

Residents began trickling to the partially closed-off street soon after the deadliest days had passed. Strollers and wheelchairs appeared. A retired nurse planted purple corn and

sunflowers in the median, and a group took up a daily bingo game. Regular Zumba classes cropped up, then English-language lessons. Families bicycled in packs, and neighbors cheered one day when a boy finally got to remove his training wheels. Artists sketched murals in chalk next to picnics while children zipped through makeshift obstacle courses.

The renewal in New York City comes roughly six months after it became the epicenter of the virus in the United States. Six months of hardship and numbness: Nearly 24,000 people in the city have died during a pandemic that beat down into it, preyed on its vulnerabilities and sent its identity reeling.

The virus soon spread everywhere. On Tuesday, the nation's coronavirus death toll surpassed 200,000.

Still, in the city, where the infection rate has on some days dropped to only 1 percent, there have been small transformations that have revealed the grit and gifts of those who stayed as others scurried to second homes.

During a crisis that has not disappeared, there are signs of resilience and innovation — vibrancy in unusual places and a reimagining of community, resources and opportunity. And a distinct sense of resolve: Our landscape was profoundly altered. But we remain. We will endure.

It is not a tale of triumph. There is no presumption that any sorrow or despair will be erased. Industries, pastimes, institutions, systems, livelihoods and families have been broken. The trauma of the last six months will play out for lifetimes. And fear about what lies ahead persists. (On Tuesday night, city health officials [warned about a troubling uptick in virus cases](#) in Orthodox Jewish neighborhoods.)

Editors' Picks

Yet this is a moment of adaptation and improvisation. When people pool what they have to create something new. When they take unfamiliar steps away from what was to what can work now.



ImageGrass-roots organizations established during the pandemic have helped support businesses in Chinatown.Credit...Chang W. Lee/The New York Times

In Central Park, weddings and birthday parties, once tucked away in rented halls, have spilled out into the open — the celebrations jubilant though everyone is wearing masks. A struggling Greek restaurateur in Queens has added ambience to curbside tables with lanterns and bouquets. Top designers like Christian Siriano and Naeem Khan have included mask-making in their repertoire.

In Brooklyn, a trio of D.J.s throw digital parties to raise money for the owners of dance lounges, while a coffee shop in Bedford-Stuyvesant stocks four community refrigerators with fresh fruits and vegetables for the needy. An opera singer performs every night while standing on a ledge of the Mansion House in Brooklyn Heights.

“There are still these beautiful moments that you don’t have in any other place in the world, like walking in Prospect Park and stumbling upon a jazz concert or a brass band,” said Dominique Nisperos, 37, a comedian and sociologist from Bedford-Stuyvesant who spent two months recovering from Covid-19. “The lows of the pandemic have been really low, but what’s been my saving grace has been the people of New York.”

Even the subtlest shows of coping can be lifelines in a city pummeled and suffering: Roughly half of New York State’s 2.8 million people collecting unemployment benefits are in the city, where long lines overwhelm food pantries and homeless shelters are strained. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority, which runs the city’s subways,

buses and two commuter rails, is facing the largest financial crisis in its history, one that could cripple the system (although it has never been more clean and roomy).

The 1.1 million students who attend New York City's public schools have found their year upended, with poor families thrown into impossible situations. The divide between landlords and housing and retail tenants has become even more vast. Tourism has been wiped out, and Broadway has been shut down until next year. Nightlife establishments have been annihilated, restaurants shattered.

Also, winter is coming. What will we do in winter?



Communities around the city have set up fridges full of food for those in need, such as in this location in Jackson Heights. Credit... Todd Heisler/The New York Times

If faith exists in anything, it is in the clever and enterprising ways that people have managed to pivot from their routines and devise new ones.

When Alicia Ramos lost her job at a clothing factory where she made \$410 a week, her options as an undocumented immigrant from Mexico, with limited English skills and health issues, were few.

So, three months ago, she started rising at 3:30 a.m. every day to prepare five dozen tamales to sell at a train stop in Brooklyn. She had never attempted street vending, and the first outing was tough. But by the third day, her sales went up.

Ms. Ramos, 55, soon added champurrado and arroz con leche to the menu. The venture has been fulfilling financially and emotionally. She's her own boss now. "We're hardworking and persevere," she said of immigrants like her. "The city needs us."

Many others have turned to street vending to sell goods like homemade yogurt, wheels of chicharrón, birria tacos, face masks and hand sanitizer.

Some make their way to the open street in Jackson Heights where joggers and dog walkers move with a sense of freedom and airiness.

"Within increased isolation you're still seeing people navigate by building community, which is crazy," said Justino Rodriguez, 39, a Latin American studies professor who meets a friend every morning for a walk around the concourse.

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Jim Burke, 54, who helps coordinate events on that street, added: "It shows we crave to make the best of any situation. How do we start over, but not the same? You see that after anything New York has gone through."

Image



Families bicycle in packs on 34th Avenue in Jackson Heights. Credit...Todd Heisler/The New York Times

That attitude has been apparent in the volunteers rallying around Chinatown, where initially some xenophobia surrounding the coronavirus cut into the already thin margins at shops and restaurants. The offers of help, particularly from Asian-Americans around the city, have meant a resurgence of energy for the area, a cultural institution.

“These are immigrant-owned businesses. This is how they started,” said Jennifer Tam, the co-founder of Welcome to Chinatown, a grass-roots initiative established during the pandemic to support businesses. “They’re scrappy and hard-working. Despite the challenges, they feel like there’s a chance.”

Entrepreneurs in Manhattan have also been improvising like never before, crushed by the lack of foot traffic and tourists.

Liana Pai’s clothing boutique on the Upper West Side, in her family for nearly four decades, did not have a website at the beginning of the pandemic, so she rushed to snap photos of her inventory, sometimes using her daughter as a model. She FaceTimed with customers, parading out shirts and dresses as her husband held the phone up for hours, his arms shaking. She drove to people’s homes to drop off purchases and mailed out boxes of garments that clients could sift through and then decide what to keep.

The shop has done about one-third of its usual business, and Ms. Pai, 53, may have to close it soon. But she believes she’ll find a way to reopen somewhere in New York City. “I wouldn’t want to be anywhere else,” she said.

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Image



Many restaurants in the city have discovered innovative ways to offer outdoor dining. Credit...Chang W. Lee/The New York Times

Others have been similarly resourceful. David Bogoslaw, 58, was laid off from a Manhattan-based financial publication and has since taken a job as a census worker. “New Yorkers are always strong. They’re not ones to feel sorry for themselves.”

He added, “There’s a lot more pleasant environments you can live in. To live here, you’re going to have to have inner fortitude.”

When Vel Levon’s pole dancing studio in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, could no longer safely host classes or bachelorette parties, she turned to selling watermelons that her boyfriend drove up from out-of-state farms and that were especially sweet. She announced the endeavor on community Facebook groups in July. Business boomed.

“It’s indicative of a New York hustle,” said Ms. Levon, 47. “I’m not ever embarrassed to do something that looks odd.” While other pole dancing studios closed, she was able to keep the lights on.

The deeper change taking place in the city goes beyond individual feats.

Walking his dog Melo along Nostrand Avenue in Crown Heights last week, Ade Chike Torbert reflected on what feels like an emotional shift.

“New York is such a city where it’s eat or be eaten, everybody kind of becomes lone rangers,” said Mr. Torbert, 33, who works in film production.

“This moment allowed us to realize we’ve become a community. And I just see more compassion. I’m more willing to say hi to my fellow stranger because we survived something together. If I see you, we make eye contact, I wave.”

María Figueira, 32, from Brooklyn, said it has been heartening to see people offer their skills and resources to others. “People have been very realistic about what they can provide, like their time as a result of the loss of jobs,” she said.

Ms. Figueira has a steady income from her work in real estate development and has been donating to area organizations. The experience of watching so many battle hardships related to the coronavirus has given her perspective.

“We need to remember as a city we went through a huge traumatic experience — the ambulances that were ongoing constantly,” she said, adding, “I’d say for the most part, New York steps up and has been successful when it embraces that we are in this together.”

As the city reopens, it’s not clear what things will look like and how they will work in the future. The prospect of a second wave is frightening.

Already, attempts at returning to what we know — offices, schools, sports — have been problematic. Signs of real progress have been slow. And yes, many have left.

But even in the face of a devastated economy and an insecure future, there is a persistence, a sustained, indefatigable pluckiness. It says no less of those whose dire circumstances send them elsewhere, but there is a feeling that those who stay put, who dig in, will represent the best of us.

Jonathan Schnapp, co-founder of the Royal Palms Shuffleboard Club in Brooklyn, which has been closed since March, likens it to those gatherings held on dreary nights when the weather is terrible. Those who decide to make the effort to trudge across town seem particularly special.

“Maybe that’s what New York City’s going to be,” he mused, “that snowy-night party with the people who really want to be here.”