

Metro Tourism and Convention Commission
Tuesday, May 12, 2026
Time: 8:30am
Location: 500 11th Avenue North, Suite 650, Nashville, TN

Leesa LeClaire called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m.

Commissioners Present:

- Leesa LeClaire, Chair
- Mark Hayes, Vice Chair
- Sherry Franklin
- Dr. Sybril Brown
- Nealy Glen
- Tom Petrillo
- Q-Juan Taylor
- Derrick Free
- Rob Higgins

Metro Staff:

Abby Greer, Legal Counsel
Jamari Brown
Metro IT Representatives

Nashville Convention and Visitor Corp (NCVC) Staff:

Deana Ivey
Jeff Mefford
Bruce McGregor
Heather Middleton
Adrienne Siemers
Marie Sueing
Andrea Arnold
Brad Lineberry
Ashley Warrington

Nashville Downtown Partnership:

Tom Turner
Ben Simpson
Jeanette Barker

Following roll call, Leesa LeClaire opened the public comment period. No one signed up to speak.

LeClaire requested approval of the minutes of the March 3, 2026, meeting.

Sherry Franklin moved to approve the March 3, 2026, minutes; Sybril Brown seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

LeClaire asked Jeff Mefford, Chief Financial Officer of the NCVC, to provide the financial report. He provided the following highlights:

- Mefford stated that no surplus or profit was provided to the NCVC through Metro resources. The NCVC is only reimbursed for actual expenses incurred in the promotion of the city.
- Costs are running in line with expectations and producing positive results for the city.
- Metro has reported the hotel tax collections through the month of February, and the total received during the first eight months of the year was just over \$97.8 million. The portion of that dedicated to tourism promotion is \$28.3 million. This amount is ahead of the prior year total by almost 3% and exceeds the NCVC's expense reimbursement requests for the period.
- Tax collections for the month of February were an all-time high for the month, and collections for the eight-month period of July; February set a new all-time record for collections during that time period.
- The year-to-date total reimbursement requested by the NCVC from the Metro contract for the period was \$25,036,830.
- Total revenue received for the period from all sources was \$33,400,617 including the additional revenue that the NCVC obtained from other sources to supplement the Metro contract funding.
- Total expenses incurred for tourism promotion activities during the nine months were \$33,400,617.

Derrick Free moved to approve the Financial Report; Mark Hayes seconded the motion; and the motion passed unanimously.

LeClaire asked Bruce McGregor, Senior Vice President of Research with the NCVC, to provide a research update. He provided the following highlights:

- Davidson County had a 9.2% increase in hotel room demand year-over-year.
- In the first quarter, Davidson County lodging revenues grew 8.7%, despite a 2.4% increase in supply, occupancy rate grew by 6.7% and RevPAR increased by 6.1%.
- Demand year-over year is partially contributed to demand generated by major events, including New Year's Eve and the NCAA FCS Championship Game. Tourism Economics analyzed the FCS game and projected it resulted in 18,826 visitors. This is notable as it was during a typically low-demand period in early January.

- Winter Storm Fern in late January caused high hotel demand but also lower rates. Rates overall for January were down 7.6% compared to last January due to the storm.
- Valentine's Day promotions grew countywide occupancy to 85.8% and downtown hotels to 89.3%. February was a strong month for conventions with multiple events with over 3,500 room nights.
- March's hotel demand growth is partially attributed to Men's SEC Basketball Tournament and other events with up to almost 5,000 room nights.
- Nashville ranked 13th in occupancy rate in Q1 among the top 25 US markets. Nashville had a 7.8% occupancy growth in Q1, placing second behind San Francisco. Nashville was second in supply growth at 2.6% and second in room demand growth.
- There was a 5.2% increase in countywide hotel demand in April. Room revenues increased by 6.7% and RevPAR grew 4.4%. Demand was impacted by multiple conventions and the St. Jude Rock N Roll Marathon, which had 25,000 registered participants.
- Year- to-date data for January – April shows Nashville had a 7.9% increase in demand and room revenues up 8% countywide.
- TravelClick indicates that hotel booking pace for Nashville in May could be down compared to last May. Last May was a record-breaking month for room nights sold in the city.
- June is anticipated to be strong for demand, as transient hotel demand is up 9.7% in Nashville, partially due to four major concerts at Nissan Stadium, one of which is Alan Jackson's sold-out farewell concert. Group hotel bookings are pacing well for July and August, which will help offset any minor losses in leisure travel.
- A recent article in CoStar highlighted that visitors make up 60% of stadium concert attendees in Nashville. The article tied Nashville with Las Vegas and the next closest market was Atlanta at 38%.
- Nissan Stadium ranks among the top three in NFL teams with the most hotels in a one-mile radius of the stadium. There are over 13,000 hotel rooms in the radius that will help recruit major events at Nissan Stadium. Nissan Stadium has a full slate of concerts that help boost hotel occupancy rates. Last year CMA Fest brought in \$86 million in visitor spending in the city with 95,000 attendees. This summer, Nissan Stadium has booked Bruno Mars, Chris Stapleton / Lainey Wilson, CMA Fest, Ed Sheeran, Alan Jackson and friends, Post Malone, and the Foo Fighters. In late summer and fall, the stadium will host TSU's home games as well as the John Merritt Classic, the Ole Miss vs Louisville game in September and the Titan's home games, which will be the last year the team will play at the original Nissan stadium.
- Bridgestone Arena has a major line-up of events also, such as three-night Music City Rodeo featuring headliners Miranda Lambert, Charley Crockett and Jon Pardi, Megan Moroney, Barry Manilow, Brooks and Dunn, the Dove Awards, Red Clay Strays, Lil Wayne, Kacey Musgraves, and Olivia Rodrigo.

LeClaire asked Deana Ivey, President & CEO of the NCVC, to give a report from the organization. She provided the following highlights:

- Nashville performed very well in the first half of the fiscal year.
- Nashville's market is performing strong and bringing in record demand, but local competition is higher than ever; there is an increase in supply in every area of hospitality.
- NCVC is purchasing more advertising and booking or creating more events than ever before, all to drive record demand.
- With approximately 60% of concert attendees being visitors, NCVC continues to encourage Nissan and Bridgestone and other live music venues to book more shows and to support the promotion of these events to visitors.
 - Summer events in Nashville include:
 - July 4th Let Freedom Sing!
 - The event includes a multi-genre music lineup including country, rock, jazz, blues, Latin country, salsa, R&B, bluegrass, Americana, funk, Zydeco, hip-hop, pop and will be expanded to include five stages across the event footprint.
 - The stages that have been announced to date include:
 - Public Square Park:
 - R&B and local pop rock
 - The green at Riverfront Park:
 - Country and pop rock
 - Walk of Fame Park:
 - Local indie bands and all-female country
 - Summer Kick-Off at GEODIS
 - FIFA World Cup live viewings
 - Forrest Frank
 - Thomas Rhett & Niall Horan
 - InterNASHional Night Market hosted by TIRRC
 - Gaylord's SummerFest
 - American's Birthday Party and Fireworks – multiple nights
 - Great American Road Trip Scavenger Hunt
 - Moonlight Music
 - Hot Summer Bites and Movie Nights
 - Festival Food Favorites
 - Sunday Sundaes
 - Summer Craft Zone
 - Sounds of America Light and Fountain Show
 - Hydro Beats Light and Fountain Show
 - Around We Glow Delta Riverboat Cruise

- The 2026 MICHELIN Guide American South Ceremony will be in Nashville October 21, 2026. This is the event to announce restaurants throughout the south who will receive distinctions in the prestigious guide, which will bring even more of a spotlight on Nashville's culinary scene.

Heather Middleton, Chief Marketing Officer for the NCVC, provided the following Marketing highlights:

- The NCVC PR team has hosted 175 journalists in Nashville to pursue feature stories on the city. These include journalists from 15 countries.
- The NCVC PR team is working with Japanese media in town to cover the Japanese Men's National Soccer Team training for the FIFA World Cup games, assisting with story ideas on Nashville.
- The NCVC PR team also assisted journalists' groups from the UK and India, in partnership with Tennessee Department of Tourism Development.
- NCVC has shifted its media plan to respond to changing economic conditions and target drive markets and higher household income families. The NCVC continues to use Meta to promote weekend events and exhibits that are driving short-term bookings primarily from drive market.

Discussion ensued regarding the following:

- Ivey shared that the Japanese Soccer Club is in Nashville for six weeks training for the FIFA World Cup Games.
- Middleton clarified that drive markets include cities closer to Nashville where visitors can drive from, including Knoxville, Memphis and Chattanooga.

Adrienne Siemers, Chief Sales Officer for the NCVC, provided the following sales highlights:

- The NCVC Sales team is on track to hit year end goals despite concerns of economic unrest earlier in the year.
- There has been a large increase in short-term hotel bookings as a result of additional resources being dedicated to the market.
- From January – March, the NCVC generated an additional 111,000 lead room nights and 31,000 additional definite room nights compared to the same time last year.
- In July, the NCVC will host approximately 3,000 meeting professionals for the CVENT Connect conference. This conference will produce a high volume of future convention business for the city.

Discussion ensued regarding the following:

- Siemers clarified that CVENT is a software company that self an event planning software product; a majority of meeting conferences and hotels nationally use the software.

Marie Sueing, Chief Engagement Officer for the NCVC, provided the following report highlights:

- The Tennessee Department of Tourism Development and NCVC hosted a consultant with the U.S. Civil Rights Trail for site inspections of our member institutions. There are 130 sites across 16 states on the trail, and they provide over 20,000 jobs for hospitality workers and attract 6 million visitors annually. During the visit they co-hosted a community meeting with local trail members and leaders from various industries to encourage collaborations to build awareness.
- Three multicultural conferences are coming in July. Zeta Phi Beta is meeting at Gaylord Opryland Resort and Hotel and has already sold out their block and have booked additional hotels. The NCVC team is assisting all in their booking and event planning needs.

LeClaire announced the next meeting will be September 22, 2026.

LeClaire called for any additional business; there was none.

LeClaire shared this concludes our Tourism Commission business. Starting in 2026, Metro Council passed ordinance BL2025-846 (now reflected in Metro Code as 2.177.070). This ordinance requires the district management corporation to report no less than quarterly to the Commission, “on financial sources and uses of all fees and assessments, including funds resulting from management, operation, or other use of Metro public assets, including but not limited to Metro parking garages.” The Commission’s duty is to listen to the report and ask any pertinent questions members might have. There is no requirement for an action by the Commission related to the report, and the Commission has no additional oversight over the corporation.

Tom Turner, President and CEO of Nashville Downtown Partnership, provided the following report:

- There is an approximate 75% increase in foot traffic on the weekends in the downtown neighborhood.
- 12% of property taxes and 18% of sales tax for the county are collected from downtown.
- Revenue collected in the Business Improvement District during the first quarter was \$3.4 million.
- 81% of the revenue is spent on clean and safe initiatives as dictated by property owners in initial legislation.
- The outreach team has added four additional employees.
- CBRE put Nashville at #4 in corporate headquarter gains in 2025.
- 19 new retail and restaurants opened in the first quarter, bringing the total to 405 restaurants downtown with 69% being local.
- There are 88,000 employees downtown with a 15% office vacancy.

- There are 23,000 residents and 9,400 units in planning.

Discussion ensued regarding the following:

- Turner clarified that NDOT did trash pickup services previously but now has increased services to include trashcan pickup services on the street.

Robert Higgins moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 a.m.; Mark Hayes seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.