Outlook

Messages & Communications Doc. No. 38GL-26-3103 through 3107.

From 38th Committee On Rules <committeeonrules@guamlegislature.gov>
Date Wed 10/28/2026 10:57 AM
To Guam Legislature Clerks <clerks@guamlegislature.gov>
Cc Frank Blas Jr. <speakerblas@guamlegislature.gov>

4 attachments (10 MB)
102826COMM Doc. No. 38GL-25-3104.pdf; 102826COMM Doc. No. 38GL-25-3105.pdf; 102826COMM Doc. No. 38GL-25-3106.pdf; 102826COMM Doc. No. 38GL-25-3107.pdf;

Håfa Adai Clerks Office,
Please see attached, **Messages & Communications Doc. No. 38GL-26-3103 through 3107** for processing:

√	**38GL-26-3103**	Office of Speaker Frank F. Blas, Jr.	Summary Report on The Guam Experience Commission's Informational Hearing on Tourism Revitalization dated October 16, 2026.
√	**38GL-26-3104**	Department of Administration	General Fund Budget and Actual Expenditures Report for the Fiscal Year ended September 30, 2026*
√	**38GL-26-3105**	Department of Public Health and Social Services	Prior Year Obligation to pay Auto Worx, LLC in the total amount of $283.38*
√	**38GL-26-3106**	Department of Public Health and Social Services	Prior Year Obligation to pay Auto Worx, LLC in the total amount of $296.88*
√	**38GL-26-3107**	Department of Public Health and Social Services	Prior Year Obligation to pay Auto Worx, LLC in the total amount of $296.88*

Please retrieve Doc. No. 38GL-26-3103 from link below:

Messages & Communications Physical Scanned Copy - Google Drive

Kindly reply to this email.

Si Yu'os ma'åse',

Marie Crisostomo

Committee on Rules Assistant

COMMITTEE ON RULES

Vice Speaker V. Anthony Ada, Chairperson

I Mina'trentai Ocho Na Liheslaturan Guåhan

38th Guam Legislature

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Messages and Communications 38GL-26-3103.

2 messages

Speaker Frank Blas Jr. <speakerblas@guamlegislature.gov> Mon, Oct 26, 2026 at 4:21 PM
To: 38th Committee On Rules <committeeonrules@guamlegislature.gov>, Sabrina Salas Matanane <office.senatorbri@guamlegislature.gov>

Håfa adai,

Please see attached M&C Doc. No. 38GL-26-3103

38GL-26-3103	Office of the Speaker Frank F. Blas, Jr.	Summary Report on The Guam Experience Commission's Informational Hearing on Tourism Revitalization dated October 16, 2026.

Si Yu'os Ma'åse'

Bernice Rivera

Administrative Assistant

Office of Speaker Frank F. Blas, Jr.

I Mina'trentai Ocho na Liheslaturan Guåhan 38th Guam Legislature

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38GL-26-3103.pdf

38th Committee On Rules <committeeonrules@guamlegislature.gov> Tue, Oct 27, 2026 at 2:32 PM
To: "Speaker Frank Blas Jr." <speakerblas@guamlegislature.gov>

Håfa Adai,

Received, and thank you.

Si Yu'os ma'åse',

Marie Crisostomo

Committee on Rules Assistant

COMMITTEE ON RULES

Vice Speaker V. Anthony Ada, Chairperson

I Mina'trentai Ocho Na Liheslaturan Guåhan

38th Guam Legislature

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[Quoted text hidden]

OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER
FRANK F. BLAS, JR.
38TH GUAM LEGISLATURE – *I Mina'trentai Ocho Na Liheslaturan Guåhan*
163 Chalan Santo Papa, Hagåtña, Guam 96910 • Tel: (671) 969-6456, (671) 969-0628, (671) 969-6023 • email: speakerblas@guamlegislature.gov

October 26, 2026 38GL-26-3103

OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER
FRANK F. BLAS JR.
OCT 26 2026
Time: 4:00pm
Received:

MEMORANDUM

To: All Senators
Committee on Rules
I Mina-Trentai Ocho Na Liheslaturan Guåhan

Subject: **Summary Report on The Guam Experience Commission's Informational Hearing on Tourism Revitalization held on October 16, 2026.**

Attached is a summary report of the Guam Experience informational hearing held on October 16, 2026, regarding the future of Guam's tourism industry and the work of the Guam Experience Commission.

The hearing brought together a diverse group of stakeholders including representatives from the tourism industry, small business community, cultural organizations, educational institutions, village and community advocates, economic development professionals, and government partners. Their participation reflected a shared recognition that tourism is not simply an economic sector, but a vital component of Guam's overall quality of life, cultural preservation, and long-term prosperity.

Throughout the discussion, participants emphasized the need to move beyond traditional tourism models and toward a more community-centered approach that places our people, villages, culture, and heritage at the heart of the visitor experience. While there were differing perspectives on governance structures and implementation strategies, there was broad consensus on several key principles:

- Tourism remains critical to Guam's economic future.
- Community well-being must be the foundation of tourism development.
- Cultural preservation and authentic experiences are among Guam's greatest assets.
- Infrastructure, beautification, transportation, and public spaces require renewed attention.
- Greater collaboration among government agencies, the private sector, nonprofit organizations, and village communities is essential.
- Action and implementation must now follow years of studies, reports, and recommendations.

The hearing was not intended to assign blame or revisit past decisions. Rather, it was convened to identify opportunities, build consensus, and chart a path forward. As many participants noted, this conversation is ultimately about creating a Guam that residents are proud to call home and visitors are eager to experience.

The attached report summarizes the major themes, recommendations, concerns, and opportunities discussed during the hearing. It is my hope that this document will serve as a useful resource for current and incoming policymakers as we continue working together to strengthen Guam's economy, revitalize our tourism industry, and enhance the quality of life for our people.

As we move forward, I encourage all members of the Legislature to review the report carefully and consider how each of us can contribute to building a stronger, more resilient, and more inclusive tourism model for Guam.

Thank you for your continued service to our island and for your commitment to the people of Guam.

Respectfully,

FRANK F. BLAS, JR.
Speaker

Attachments: Summary Report
Hearing Transcript
Slide Presentation shared at the Hearing

38GL-26-3103
Messages and Communications
RECEIVED
COMMITTEE ON RULES
October 26, 2026
4:21 p.m.
Marie Crisostomo

Summary Report

Guam Experience Informational Hearing on Tourism Revitalization

Date: October 16, 2026
Convened By: Speaker Frank F. Blas, Jr.
Location: Guam Legislature
Subject: Guam Experience Commission findings and community discussion on revitalizing Guam's tourism industry

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Executive Summary

The Guam Experience informational hearing brought together tourism industry leaders, cultural practitioners, business owners, government representatives, educators, and community stakeholders to discuss a new vision for Guam's tourism future. The central message throughout the hearing was that Guam must transition from a traditional destination marketing model to a community-centered, culturally anchored tourism model that places residents, villages, and cultural heritage at the center of economic development.

Participants stressed that tourism recovery is not solely the responsibility of the Guam Visitors Bureau (GVB) or government agencies. Instead, it requires an "all-of-Guam" approach that unites businesses, cultural organizations, village communities, government agencies, and residents behind a common vision.

The hearing emphasized that tourism should not simply attract more visitors, but should improve the quality of life for Guam residents while creating meaningful experiences for visitors.

Key Themes

1. Tourism is Critical to Guam's Economic Future

Several speakers stressed the urgency of revitalizing tourism due to its importance to Guam's economy.

Prior to the pandemic:

- Tourism contributed approximately **$1.79 billion** to Guam's economy.
- Represented approximately **22% of GDP**.
- Supported over **23,000 jobs**.
- Generated approximately **$253 million in taxes**.

Current tourism arrival numbers remain significantly below historical levels, with stakeholders noting that projected 2026 arrivals are among the lowest recorded since the late 1980s, excluding pandemic shutdown years.

Former Senator Joanne Brown warned that tourism recovery is no longer optional but essential to Guam's economic survival as federal spending declines and government expenditures continue to increase.

2. Shift from "Destination Marketing" to "Community-Centered Tourism"

The foundational premise of the Guam Experience Commission is that Guam should no longer be marketed simply as a tourism product.

Speaker Blas summarized the vision:

"We must stop thinking of Guam as a product and start thinking of Guam as a living experience."

The proposed tourism model would:

- Strengthen communities first.
- Improve quality of life for residents.
- Preserve culture and heritage.
- Support local businesses.
- Create authentic visitor experiences.
- Ensure tourism benefits are distributed throughout the island.

A recurring statement throughout the hearing was:

"If it's good for our people, it's good for our guests."

The Four Pillars of the Guam Experience

Rita Pangelinan Nauta presented the conceptual framework developed by the Guam Experience Commission.

Pillar 1: Guåhan

Focuses on recognizing Guam as:

- An ancestral homeland.
- A living culture.
- A place with over 3,500 years of history.

The pillar calls for protecting:

- Natural resources.
- Cultural heritage.
- Historic sites.
- Village identities.

The goal is to prioritize stewardship over commodification.

Pillar 2: Håfa Adai Culture of Care

This pillar promotes hospitality rooted in genuine care and mutual respect.

The Commission emphasized:

- Reviving the true spirit behind Håfa Adai.
- Moving beyond slogans.
- Encouraging stewardship and cultural responsibility.

Hospitality should be a reflection of Guam's values rather than merely a service industry practice.

Pillar 3: Inafa'maolek

The traditional Chamorro value of cooperation serves as the foundation for collaboration among:

- Communities
- Businesses
- Government
- Cultural practitioners
- Residents

The vision rejects isolated efforts and promotes collective action.

Pillar 4: I Hinanaota Mo'na

This pillar represents the continuing journey of the Chamorro people and Guam's future.

Key priorities include:

- Cultural transmission.
- Village-level empowerment.
- Entrepreneurship.
- Policies that connect tourism directly to community well-being.

Community Priorities Identified

Using findings from Guam 2050 and related planning documents, presenters highlighted resident preferences.

Residents generally support:

Infrastructure Before Development

Residents want:

- Roads improved.
- Public spaces maintained.
- Transportation enhanced.

Before major new development occurs.

Preservation Over Expansion

Many residents favor:

- Renovating existing hotels.
- Protecting historic sites.
- Conserving natural resources.
- Limiting overdevelopment.

Particularly in environmentally sensitive areas.

Village-Based Tourism

Residents support:

- Tourism tailored to village character.
- Unique experiences in different communities.
- Decentralization of attractions outside Tumon.

Visitor Expectations Have Changed

The commission highlighted research from the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) showing that today's visitors increasingly seek:

- Authentic cultural experiences.
- Personal transformation.
- Local engagement.
- Educational and meaningful travel.
- Nature-based experiences.

Luxury is no longer defined primarily by resorts and shopping but by meaningful human connections and authentic experiences.

Speakers argued Guam is ideally positioned to meet these evolving traveler preferences if the island invests in communities and culture.

Major Challenges Identified

Infrastructure Deficiencies

Participants consistently identified:

- Poor roads.
- Limited transportation options.
- Wayfinding challenges.
- Public facilities needing repair.
- Airport-related concerns.

As obstacles to visitor satisfaction.

Visitor Access and Mobility

Several speakers noted:

- Transportation remains difficult for visitors.
- Public transit options are limited.
- Accessibility to villages and attractions is insufficient.

Business Closures

Examples cited included:

- Retail losses.
- DFS departure.
- Restaurant closures.
- Struggling small businesses.
- Hotel closures and underutilized properties.

Stakeholders expressed concern about losing tourism infrastructure faster than it can be replaced.

Workforce Challenges

Issues raised included:

- Brain drain.
- Labor shortages.
- Young people leaving Guam.
- Difficulty attracting workers into tourism industries.

Proposed Solutions

One Guam Portfolio

Several speakers advocated viewing Guam as a single tourism portfolio rather than isolated attractions.

This would connect:

- Villages
- Cultural events
- Festivals
- Nature experiences
- Historical sites

- Small businesses

Into a cohesive visitor journey.

One Village, One Attraction

Former GVB strategist Nico Fujikawa highlighted a tourism concept that would:

- Identify a signature attraction in each village.
- Build tourism benefits into communities directly.
- Create local jobs.
- Support local entrepreneurs.
- Generate village revenue streams.

The concept would ensure tourism benefits are felt directly at the community level.

Expanded Festival and Cultural Programming

Suggestions included:

- Extended holiday celebrations.
- Seasonal cultural events.
- Integration of village festivals.
- More community-based attraction development.

Tourism leaders argued Guam already possesses many tourism assets but has not effectively packaged and promoted them.

Small Business Investment

Recommendations included:

- Interest-free loans.
- Financial support programs.
- Entrepreneur development.
- Reduced regulatory barriers.
- Improved permitting systems.

Governance and Organizational Discussion

While there was broad agreement on goals, disagreement emerged regarding structure.

Guam Experience Commission Perspective

Advocates proposed:

- A dedicated Guam Experience Authority.
- Community-centered leadership.
- Coordination across agencies.
- Village-first development strategies.

Alternative Viewpoint

Mark Baldyga and others suggested:

Reorganizing GVB

As a professional destination marketing organization focused exclusively on:

- Marketing.
- Air service development.
- Demand generation.
- Visitor growth.

Stronger Executive Coordination

Suggested appointing a senior tourism official within the Governor's Office who would oversee:

- GVB.
- Airport operations.
- Tourism infrastructure agencies.
- Destination management efforts.

Guam Experience Council

A separate advisory body providing community input while preserving GVB's marketing focus.

Immediate Actions ("Low-Hanging Fruit")

Throughout the hearing participants sought actions that could begin immediately.

Ideas included:

Island Cleanup

Following the anticipated typhoon:

- Community cleanups.
- Removal of debris.
- Beautification efforts.
- Addressing abandoned vehicles.

Holiday Beautification

Speakers repeatedly suggested:

- Early Christmas decorations.
- Village lighting programs.
- Community beautification projects.
- Post-storm revitalization efforts

Improved Visitor Arrival Experience

Suggestions included:

- Reducing airport processing times.
- Exploring family immigration lines.
- Strengthening first impressions.
- Enhancing airport facilities.

Resident Pride Campaign

A recurring message emerged:

"I Am Guam"

Participants emphasized that every resident contributes to the visitor experience.

The campaign concept focused on:

- Personal responsibility.
- Island pride.
- Community stewardship.
- Hospitality.

Consensus Reached

Despite differences regarding structure and implementation, a strong consensus emerged around several points:

Broad Agreement

Participants agreed that:

✓ Tourism remains vital to Guam's future.

✓ Recovery requires urgent action.

✓ Culture and community should be central to tourism.

✓ Infrastructure improvements are necessary.

✓ Villages must play a larger role.

✓ Government agencies must work together.

✓ Small businesses deserve greater support.

✓ Existing studies should be implemented rather than replaced with new studies.

✓ Accountability and execution are now more important than planning alone.

Closing Direction

Speaker Blas concluded the hearing by emphasizing action over blame and encouraging community-wide participation.

The immediate priorities identified were:

1. Prepare for Typhoon Champi.
2. Launch cleanup and beautification efforts afterward.

3. Build a comprehensive tourism action plan.
4. Identify community and industry champions to lead initiatives.
5. Continue stakeholder discussions.
6. Foster resident ownership of Guam's tourism future.

The hearing adjourned with a commitment to reconvene after the storm and continue developing a collaborative strategy for tourism revitalization.

Overall Conclusion

The October 16, 2026 Guam Experience hearing represented a significant shift in the conversation about tourism development. Rather than focusing exclusively on visitor arrivals and marketing, stakeholders largely embraced a philosophy that tourism should be built around community well-being, cultural preservation, village empowerment, and resident quality of life.

The prevailing belief throughout the hearing was that if Guam becomes a better place for its people to live, it will naturally become a better place for visitors to experience. The challenge moving forward will be translating years of studies, plans, and ideas into coordinated action, measurable outcomes, and sustainable long-term implementation.

OCTOBER 16, 2026 HEARING TRANSCRIPT

SPEAKER FRANK F. BLAS, JR.: Hafa Adai and good morning everybody. I know that everybody's kind of nervous because of what we anticipate over the weekend, but I think this is a discussion is really important for us to be able to have today. Okay? we'll go ahead and get started. I'll make brief remarks and then I then I also like to welcome to the table as well and other senators who will be joining, but the the chairman on the committee that handles tourism, Senator Jesse Lujan. Sir, thank you for being here. Thank you all for being here today. Your presence speaks to something very important that the future of Guam's tourism industry is not just a matter for agencies or institution, but a shared responsibility and a shared opportunity for our entire community.

Over the past several months, the Guam Experience Commission has been hard at work examining how we can reshape the way Guam welcomes the world. Their mandate is simple, but powerful. To look beyond traditional tourism models and ask how we can build an experience that is rooted in our culture, shaped by our people, and reflective of the island that we are proud to call home.

The commission has listened to practitioners, visited villages, met with small businesses, and studied the recommendations laid out in many of the reports that uh have studied uh this this this the industry that that we're going to be talking about today. The reports made one thing clear, if Guam wants to rebuild a stronger, more resilient visitor industry, we must shift from the destination marketing to a community-centric, culturally anchored tourism model. In other words, we must stop thinking of Guam as a product and start thinking of Guam as a living experience. An experience carried by our people, our heritage, and our stories.

Today's discussion is part of that work, and I want to emphasize this from the outset. This conversation is for you. This conversation is not to lay blame, not to cast blame, but how to be able to move forward. It is for the small business owners who greet visitors every day. It is for the cultural practitioners who keep our traditions alive. It is for our tour operators, the artisans, the farmers, the village leaders, and the community organizations who bring Guam's identity to life.

This is not a hearing that would basically be centered around government. This is going to be a space for the people who know the industry from the inside out. Those

who understand its challenges, those who see its opportunities, and those who have ideas about how to make it better. We are here to listen. We are here to learn. And we are here to build together. Because revitalizing tourism is not just about attracting more visitors. It is about creating experiences and spaces that our own residents can enjoy and be proud and be proud of it. It is about strengthening our villages, uplifting our culture, and ensuring that the benefits of tourism reach our families and communities. When we invest in cultural experience, our children learn. When we support local businesses, our economy grows. When we work together to beautify our parks and roadways, our communities become prouder. And when we celebrate our heritage, our island stands taller.

The Guam Experience Commission has laid the work has laid the groundwork, and now we need your voices to shape the path forward. So, I ask you to speak openly today. Share your challenges. Share your ideas. Share your hopes for what Guam's tourism tourist for future can be. Your insight is not just welcome, it is essential. Together, we can build a tourism model that honors our past, strengthens our present, and creates a future that our people and our visitors would cherish.

Thank you again for being here. Let's begin the conversation. Okay? So, if we can start, I'd like to at least the people that are here, and then please I invite others who want to be a part of the conversation to be able to join us up here. But, if we can start with down here with Dr. Enriquez and then introduce yourselves around, okay? And then I'm going to actually ask Mr. Tydingco to to go and and we begin, okay?

DR. ANITA BORJA ENRIQUEZ: There you Mananas Si Yu'os, uh thank you so much for the opportunity to be here, Mr. Speaker, Senator Lujan, other members of the legislature tuning in, and also uh, wonderful colleagues, uh, within the industry, Guahu Si Anita Borja Enriquez. I am from the University of Guam president currently, until they let me go. No, but happy to be a part of this conversation. Si Yu'us Ma'ase.

THELMA HECHANOVA: Buenas yan Hafa Adai. My name is Thelma Hechanova. I'm, um, I'm a at large member, but also very, uh, actively involved with the diaspora. So, very happy to be here with everybody, and I'm part of the commission as well. Thank you so much.

JOHN RIVERA: Buenas Sin Hafa Adai, everyone. My name is John Rivera. I represent, uh, CPO Pacific Citadel, and also part of the committee. Thank you.

JOE QUINATA: Buenas. My name is Joe Quinata. I represent the community, and former CPO for the Guam Preservation Trust.

MONTE MESA: Hafa Adai, and good morning, everyone. My name is Monte Mesa. I represent the Guam Travel and Tourism Association, and I also represent GPO and Tumon Sands. Hafa Adai.

GERI LEON GUERRERO: My name is Geri Leon Guerrero, and I'm a business owner, small business owner here in Guam. I own Aztec, and we're here to represent small business owners, as well as one of our participants over here at the Tumon Night Market.

RITA PANGELINAN NAUTA: Buenas yan Hafa Adai. Guahu Si Rita Pangelinan Nauta. I serve as the managing director of Guampedia Foundation, and also as a member of the Guam Experience Commission.

DAVE TYDINGCO: Uh, Hafa Adai. Buenas, everybody. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Senator Lujan, uh, for allowing this forum to occur today. My name is Dave Tydingco. I am president of Valley of the Latte and also I serve on the speaker's commission on the Guam experience.

REGINE BISCOE LEE: Buenas and Hafa Adai Mr. Speaker, Senator Lujan, and I guess industry partners. My name is Regine Biscoe Lee and I'm the president and CEO of the Guam Visitors Bureau.

MARY RHODES: Hafa Adai buenas everyone, Speaker Therese M. Terlaje, and all of our industry stakeholders. My name is Mary Rhodes. I'm the president of the Guam Hotel Restaurant Association and I'm a member of the Guam Experience Committee. Good morning everyone.

MARK BALDYGA: Mark Baldyga. I'm the founder of Baldyga Group. I guess I'm also here as a former GVB chairman, decade on the PATA International Board and having co-authored Tourism 2020 Vision 2000 and more recently the recovery plan. Thank you. Hafa Adai and good morning.

Ben Ferguson representing PHR Ken Micronesia.

BRIAN ARTERO: Hafa Adai good morning. Brian Artero representing the restaurant industry, Lone Star Steakhouse, Crust Pizzeria, Provisions Wine and Cheese. It's good to be here. Thank you.

NICO FUJIKAWA: Hafa Adai good morning Mr. Speaker, Senators. Nico Fujikawa, I was the former director of research and strategic planning at GVB. I currently serve as the executive director for the Guam Ethics Commission, but I'm here today as a citizen.

SPEAKER BLAS: Okay, with that I'd like to be able to open first to the floor. I know that

the commission put together a little presentation. So why don't we go ahead and start with that and then we can continue on with the conversation. Okay?

DAVID TYDINGCO: Can you bring up the slides.

Again, Hafa Adai everybody and thank you so much again for having us today. Today's meeting obviously is a result of invitation by the speaker, which is the next slide, asking the community to come together and see how we can participate in helping improve the quality of our life of our people through tourism, which has been one of the major economic drivers.

We have a number of slides to present and Okay, that's good. Thank you. And we want to kind of share with you we're here number one to provide hopefully some solutions. We know where we came from and we don't have to rehash that, but we truly believe as a community that when we get together and pull together, we will overcome whatever challenges face upon us. The initial thought was the speaker at one of our meetings thought about when we are preparing for a natural disaster like we're preparing for right now, we have an established infrastructure of agencies and private community that collaborate, get together, and essentially prepare. Prepare before the storm, keep our people safe during the storm, and respond rapidly to recovery. And we're thinking that's exactly what we need as well. Something that's institutionalized relative particularly for our tourism industry. And our solutions that we're looking for are community should be community driven and community centric because at the end of the day what we hope to accomplish is making tourism an ends to improving the quality of life for our people. Next slide, please.

I just want to real quickly shadow again what's at stake. You know, pre-pandemic, the tourism industry represented 1.79 billion dollars of contribution to the economy. It represented 22% of the GDP. There were over 23,000 people employed and contributed about 253 million dollars in direct taxes. And all of that then goes back to helping our people. And what we want to be able to do is figure out not necessarily how do just do we get back there, but how do we chart a course that will be a direction that our community would like us to see relative to the development of our industry. Next slide, please.

Again, this is just August numbers. You know, we're minus 15.5% compared to 2025. And and you know, that number was down pre-pandemic. But, you know, I we there our largest drop is Korea, right? And this, the numbers say little to what people are actually experiencing here. The exit surveys taken by GVB show a high level of satisfaction of those that are coming here. They would return if they 9.2 I believe out of 10 said they would return. And then, you know, relative to the experience here is 8.2 out of 10. And they also had an issue concern with the airport 7.9. The point is this, they really enjoyed themselves here, but the challenge is it's our infrastructure, our transportation, our roads, everything that are just essential to the quality of life of our people. And that was their concern. Next slide, please.

RITA PANGELINAN NAUTA: As Dave just shared with you the urgent purpose of the Guam Experience Commission, I want to walk you through the structural framework of our vision. One that centers community and cultural heritage as the absolute foundation of our economic recovery.

When we look for a model of true stability, we don't have to look outward. We look to the Acho Latte. The architectural foundation developed by our ancestors over 2500 years of research and development in sustainability right here in the Marianas. A millennium ago, our ancestors started building these permanent stone pillars to support structures like the canoe house, a vital public gathering space where the community came together to discuss matters of the clan and ensure collective well-being. Today, we propose anchoring our visitor industry and economic recovery on that solid foundation, the four pillars of the Guam experience.

Each pillar represents a critical component of what has sustained and continues to sustain i man tao tanu, the people of the land and all those who choose to call Guam home. The first pillar, Guahan, we have to recognize what we have. Guam isn't a resort destination or a stopover. It is our ancestral home shaped by over 3500 years of history and a distinct indigenous identity.

Tourism models treat our island like a commodity to be consumed rather than a community to be nurtured. Before we ask what we can offer visitors, we must protect and value what is already ours. Our amazing but fragile natural environment from the highest peak of Humullung Manglo to the deepest point of the largest ocean in the world.

Throughout our 19 village districts, our complex history, and of course, our enduring cultural heritage. When we make Guam a place our people are proud to live in and protect, we naturally create a place the world respects.

The second pillar is rooted in a culture of care. You know, over the past 20 years, it's been a joy to hear people greeting each other with a warm Hafa Adai. But it means more than just hello, as its true meaning is rooted in a deep culture of care. It's a contraction of Hafa Adai Adahiho, or how are you caring for yourself? It's an ancient sentiment of deep care and mutual respect. Through revived legacy of the Hafa Adai commitment, we are moving from symbolic gestures to intentional action. Asking individuals, businesses, and leaders Para'e ta Go'f Adahi to practice daily stewardship of our neighbors and cultural integrity, making hospitality a natural reflection of who we are.

The third pillar in Innafamoalek is our sacred spirit of cooperation. Best understood through our voyaging tradi- tradition. Here in Micronesia, the canoe is considered the mother, the navigator the father, and the crew are brothers and sisters sailing the ocean as one family. In this context, the canoe is our island and our mother. The navigators are amani'aina, those that came before us. And we, the crew, are set loose, brothers and sisters. To cross the open ocean towards recovery, we cannot work in silos. We must

humble ourselves and go flee e to see beyond to gain understanding, hold deep respect for one another, or to fat tao'tao. To be guided by the wisdom of our elders and realize every crew member has an essential role. When we work side by side, honoring and being guided by our ancestors, we ensure the collective well-being of I tano, I tasi, I aire, yan I tao'tao guahan.

This final pillar, e hin en auta, the journey of our people that our first ancestors began more than 3,500 years ago. And here we are today at the helm, continuing the journey forward. As a seafaring people, our ancestors navigated with precise intention and deep situational and spiritual awareness.

As we chart our economic future, we must navigate with that same ancestral wisdom. E hin en auta reminds us that our path must be guided by our cultural values, not outdated transactional models. We need policies that break down silos, invest in village level cultural transmission, empower local entrepreneurs, and ensure our people remain the primary stewards and beneficiaries of our visitor industry.

Following these four pillars requires a shared commitment. These pillars cannot be managed by government alone, nor can they be left entirely to the visitor industry. What we are calling for today is a shared commitment. We need every resident to step up as both a steward of our visitor industry and a direct beneficiary of its success. When we take care of our home, our culture, and each other, a thriving economy naturally follows.

DAVID TYDINGCO: Next slide, please.

RITA PANGELINAN NAUTA: As we look at the data showing our residents this this is No, I think this is the 2050 plan.

And so um this is based from the 2050 plan in terms of and this is from the and the sentiments of our residents in terms of improving our Guam experience. And so if you can look at that the majority of our residents really prefer improving existing hotels over building new ones. And that the majority of them also support more tourist attractions and optional tours and opposing building new hotels and metal build and retail buildings. And then majority also preferred development again tailored to each village character, each village is unique sense of place.

DAVID TYDINGCO: Next slide. please.

DAVID TYDINGCO: Relative to the 2050 Guam sustainability plan, what the priorities our residents looked for is infrastructure before construction, making sure that our island is able to support any new development in the area. They were very passionate about

historic and cultural protection, conservation over new structures, and limits over the development and the aquifer up north. So, again, people again generally are looking for how can we make sure we maintain the quality of life of our people while still sustaining our industry. Next slide, please.

What they have basically said is what we in terms of wanting what our tourists want, you know, we want clean parks. We want to be able to have improved lighting. We want to be able to just have an investment in our community not for the benefit of guests, but for the benefit of our local people. And again, it's just makes sense. If it's going to be great for our people, it will be even greater for those that come and visit and see the pride we have in our island. Next slide, please.

Yes, here in our island today, we've lost several variety of attractions, retail, and also entrepreneurs that are trying to start out their businesses. We see that in the retail industry, we saw a real big example of a major player in our tourism industry and that's DFS. It was a very telling story of how we are proceeding with our visitor markets. And today we have the opportunity also to see other things evolving and you will see that hopefully soon in the new year where we'll be introducing other concepts that will adapt to our current situation but also looking to the future with what is to come with not just the military build-up but also with the revival of the pride of our people to really rise above the situation we are faced with.

We also look at restaurants and I'm sure my neighbor Mr. Artero down on my left side here will elaborate a little bit more on how we had also challenges with our restaurant industry. I seen it first hand in both the two properties that I'm that I manage and see that many of our local people have been affected. We lost a lot of labor force. We are sad to see people leaving and we want to keep the people here but also attract the people to come back. Also with our hotels, I know our major partner in the hotel industry here PHR, Ben Fergusen, who's here as well as Ben that will be elaborating a little bit more but we see that you know, we've lost several major hotels.

You know, I'm glad to see that there's going to be a development soon. Hopefully with Pacific Star coming back on. But we love the we lost also a very viable name in the hotel industry. It used to be Sherwood, then recently Verona. But this is what we need to continue to look at re-attracting other investment into Guam. And as the survey show, you know, we need to improve our destination, our island, and continue to help the businesses to prosper. Next slide. Next slide, please.

We also took some survey with the legislature approve a funding to help with identifying some of the things and with the PFK study and revealed again that we need to all work together. It's showing us that this survey called out a lot of things that need to be defined as a group, as an island, to bring back what needs what the needs are in continuing our tourism industry. It also revealed that in you know, we have to make a lot of improvements

with our destination. It also brings out, you know, that the result will again the collaboration between our government agency, our private sector, and the community coming together and building this respect for our culture, respect for our villages, and respect for our heritage with the Chamorro culture. Next slide.

We have the opportunity to win and get back what we've were accustomed to with our tourism industry, but also to bring back and attract our local people who have moved away. We want to make sure that our travelers as well will be able to want to come back because we have Guam our natural resources improving it will certainly bring the attraction back to our island. Next slide.

As we look at the data showing our residents' deep concerns over public cleanliness and village level upkeep, this isn't a new fight for us. One of the true values of learning our history is to look back and learn from the past to understand where we are in the present. Nearly 19 years ago, we faced this exact same challenge. We realized then what we must recognize today. We cannot market paradise while neglecting our own backyard.

In 2007, as part of the Lieutenant Governor's beautification program, inspired by classic public awareness campaigns that appeal to personal conscience, we created the Keep Guam Clean Campaign to remind our people that littering is a direct disrespect to our island home. We'd like to share that 30-second spot with you now.

Thirty-second commercial on "Keep Guam Clean."

Watching that commercial today, the message remains unchanged. The condition of our island is a direct mirror of our collective state of mind. And that brings us directly to how global travelers are shifting and why our community-first model is the only way forward. That brings us to the next slide, which looks at what modern travelers are actually looking for today.

Guampedia has been part of the Pacific Asia Travel Association Micronesia Chapter since 2018 in an effort to unify the region centered in our rich history and cultural heritage. Can we go to the next slide, please?

This next slide. Next slide.

According to Big PATA, there's been a big shift in the definition of luxury. Traditional markers like lavish material amenities and mass market resort packages are taking a backseat. Today's travelers are prioritizing personal transformation, emotional connection, and trust. There is a massive global shift toward low-density tailored engagement where visitors want authentic interactions with local communities, nature, and living heritage. They're actively seeking out educational, purpose-driven journeys.

This plays directly into our strengths because if we protect our culture and villages, we are offering precisely what the modern global traveler is desperate to find. Next slide.

Now, looking at the broader Asia Pacific visitor outlook from this year through 2028, the region is projected to hit over 714 million arrivals just this year. Between 68% of outbound travel within our region stays right here in the Asia Pacific. While we see high-spending travelers from North America and rising interest from emerging markets like India and the Gulf, our core markets remain right next door. But to capture these travelers, we can't rely on business-as-usual marketing. We have to compete on value, authenticity, and meaningful community-level engagement. Next slide.

And this brings us to a turning a good stay into a complete island experience. Our exit survey analysis and baseline data highlight clear structural gaps in mobility, infrastructure, and perceived value. Visitors tell us that while they love our people and our beaches, airport satisfaction often trails their overall trip satisfaction, and getting around the island is difficult. If we want visitors to experience everything Guam has to offer, we have to fix these baseline infrastructure and transport gaps, ensuring that our villages are accessible, our public spaces are clean, well-lit, and our island is experienced as a unified, welcoming home.

Next slide, please.

JOE QUINATA: You know, it's come to this part that we have to look at our destination. You know, I clearly remembered as an economist back then way back then when tourism just started uh during the '80s. You know, I've learned as an economist that an industry, which is a tourism industry, is driven and by this engine. And this engine at that time we're looking at the big hotels, the big retailers. Those were the engines that that fueled this industry. What we have those already. And I think that we need to shift this we need to turn another engine on. And that engine should be our community. And if we look at this one experience and we get all of our our our mayors, our village our our village communities together, we can be able to to provide that.

You know, we've been doing it for a long time. We look at Gef-Pago. We look at the Humatak heritage walk. We look at uh everything from the public market to we continue doing that, but somehow sometimes, somewhere that support never happened. The villagers were still trying to write grants. Grants start and end in 1 year. So, these programs end. But, they're great programs. They were programs that tourists would want to see. Programs that our community want. And if we can continue supporting that and support it like it's another hotel. Support it like it's an engine that we need to build and an engine that needs to fuel our to our tourism industry. If we do that, that one Guam portfolio that one Guam experience I think that we can kill two birds with one stone. We can take care of our people and at the same time take care of our industry.

Next.

JOHN RIVERA: So, we are at the portion of of our presentation where we start to talk about community-centric solutions. And so, this is not a be-all end-all, but what we start to bring to the table is really what the the data showed. From luxury to experience. You know, Maya Maya Angelou said and I'm going to quote her for a little bit. She said that I've learned in my life that people don't remember what you say. People do not remember what you did. But, people remember how you made them feel. And and this is why the experience is so important. And part of this shift reminds us that we as a people are a gift. And we have so much to offer. And so, from luxury to experience, this is why the experience matters. And if it's good for our people then it is good for our guests. Right?

We grow up in a household where we were taught back in the days that if you're going to invite guests over, you clean your house first. And that is no different from what we're saying today. And it's not a competition. It's a collaboration. And that collaboration calls us to remember that if it's good for our people, then it's good for our guests.

And so Joe started to talk about this one Guam portfolio. And it's not a competition, but it's a collaboration. And it says that each one of these destinations, each one of these villages, each one of these locations have something to offer. From north to south to Tumon to Hagatna, they have some gift to offer. Because that is going to be our path forward. And in that journey in the path forward, when we were even putting some of this together, we actually created a chat group with a smaller group. And we even said things like we even changed the the name to Gift of Guahan. Because when when we started to talk about all the things that we had, we realized we had all these things already. We do all these things already. What we don't do is we don't package it. And we don't sell it. And we don't ignite it as a comprehensive package.

And so when when you look at that as an example, right? We can celebrate. We We learn My children are CHamoru and Filipino. And in the Philippines, they start celebrating Christmas by the Ber-months. September, October, November, December. They have 4 months of celebration. What do we have? Oh, and when you ask people why don't we celebrate, we say, "Because we have other celebrations like Thanksgiving. But my question is, why does that get in the way? Why can we we were always good at saying to everybody where where America's day begins, we are the foothold of telling the world what we are about and what we can do. So, why why do we why can't we celebrate? Why can't we take Thanksgiving, why can't we take Christmas, why can't we take all these other celebrations and call it Gupot Talo Guahan and start celebrating maybe in November to December, and then also extend out to January, February, and then culminate with Mes Chamoru in March. Is there anything preventing us from celebrating? I think the answer is no. And what would that mean for us if we can celebrate? And then Rita tells me that actually that's in keeping because even in January, February, the Chamoru start to celebrate the lunar cycles.

And so we have it all. We have the ability to celebrate from November, December, January, February, culminating in Mes Chamoru, which is who we are as a people. So, why don't we do it? And on a retail perspective, that's great. On a people perspective, that's great. And again, it highlights the fact that if it's good for our people, it's good for

our guests. And cuz at the end of the day, the reality is that when everybody goes away, when the world decides to close up for whatever reason that is not our fault, we are left. Our people are left. Our region is left. And this is our ability to reclaim the fact that if it's good for our people, it's good for our guests.

And so, this part talks to us about viable seats, depending dependable ground access. We're not saying that we don't want tourists. We're not saying that we with that again this is not a competition. We're not saying that airline is not important. It is important. But in order for the airlines to come back, it is if it's good for our people, it's good for our guests. We need ground mobility. We need access points for people to transport and to travel because if our people can transport and travel, our guests can transport and travel. Next slide, please. And then we need to remember that our business is small businesses at the table, big businesses at the table. They're important. And how do they fit in? We need to pay attention to them. We need to resource them. We need to fund them. And we need this ability to create these tour packages that Rita was talking about and Joe was talking about that give half-day and full-day types of packages that focus on the Guam experience. And that experience is not just for our guests, it's for our people, too. Because there's a lot of our people that are off island that we want to come back. What do they come back to? We want people to come, but what do they come to? We invite people to come, but what will they experience? What will they feel when they leave? What do you feel when you come home? From the moment that you get off the plane at early in the morning to the time that you get off the airport, what do you feel when you come home? And if you don't even feel it as a people, then what are we going to expect our guests to feel? So you get the businesses involved. You remember the cultural practitioners. You remember the things that make Guam special because we are the gift. Next slide, please.

And then you match that with resident priorities. Again, it doesn't have to be a competition. You maintain the roads. You repair the roads. You connect and you activate. You select the projects that are culturally anchored and you get the villages involved because they will be the points of contact for these guests to travel from north to south because the Guam experience is one portfolio, not just one simple destination. Because when people leave, they won't remember the village name. They will not remember probably even the location's name. But they'll remember how that location made them feel, and they will remember what the people did for them to make them want to come back. And then after all of that, you build the infrastructure, and you allow our people to benefit from all the good things that come. If our people benefit, then our businesses will benefit. If our businesses will benefit, then we now have a true system and a true equal system that we can sustain regardless of what happens. We started this presentation, and we're not even over yet, with this idea that we do such a good job preparing for storms.

I was just telling people in my previous life, when I used to work at the Catholic cemeteries, I used to tell people all the time, you know, we're so good at preparing for the unexpected. Why not prepare for the inevitable?

This is a cliff that we are we are facing, and the reality is it's going to come whether we're

prepared or not. So, why don't we do what we do best? Why don't we prepare? And why don't we remember the things that make us we are? Next slide, please.

MONTE MESA: And if it's good for our people, it's it's good for for me, and I'm going to pass this to to Dave to talk about the funding. You know, again, this is just a a checklist of different opportunities for funding. I You know, for me, it's the issue is not money. The issue is priority. What do we place priorities on and we and the on the private side of the community want to figure out how do we work with our partners in the government as well as the rest of the community to really drive solutions not based on what money is there or what money is not there, but what's what's a priority for our people? Because if it's a priority, money will be there. Next slide, please.

DAVE TYDINGCO: This is a wish list. You know what we were talking about within the Guam experience commission was let's start. We we've studied this these issues to death, but why don't we start and I guess Typhoon Champi I guess is that's coming is going to force us to start anyways to clean up. Part of the funding that we were looking for is and not new funding because I we believe that a lot of it has already been appropriated into the agencies that have certain responsibilities, but we as the private sector will step out as well and help. But you just appropriated an emergency $10 million for cleanup. Well, let's make sure that because that kind of adds that up adds up to $10 million a little bit for the cleanup investing in that. Let's not just say this is for cleanup. Let's have a plan on how we're going to clean up. And not just the roads, but the junk cars and so forth. How can we again as a community collaborate to make that happen?

We want to as John said earlier, let's start Christmas early, right? I mean they started in September and you know, why don't we do it here because I think that that will help uplift the spirits of our people. I mean, when I go into Home Depot and it's August and I see already Christmas decorations, you know, it kind of gets you in the mood, right? I mean, why don't we do that as a group? I think some a lot of the private sector guys are willing to start doing that for their villages or wherever they're located at.

I think there are business closures as Monte pointed out earlier and the businesses are still struggling and whether or not there's an opportunity to work with the legislature and GEDA to to provide some again a lifeline to many of these guys to be able to continue because as we continue to lose the infrastructure, we continue to negatively impact the experience. At the end of the day I again, we're just talking dollars right now relative to what our priority but we have to as a community set what those priorities are and execute. The longer term projects are probably about 150 million but that all of this money that we're talking about stays here. It's going to be invested back into our island and into the villages and for our people. Next slide, please.

I think that's Joe. I'll pass that on to Joe.

JOE QUINATA: And that's where we bring in our leaders. We have five actions for legislative consideration.

First one is our we need to establish accountability. Of course, we can define that in the it's defined at the commission's mandates. Fund a first phase program. Interest free loans to stabilize our small businesses. Mobility and public place improvement packages. Enable local enterprise.

Looking at our permitting and what we need to do to take those barriers down from preventing our local enterprise from thriving. Advance the Guam experience. Align our village plans with cultural transmission. I know the Guam Preservation Trust had helped with two villages, the Inarajan revitalization plan and the Humåtak revitalization plan. Let's look at that. Let's look at what the people want because that was actually developed by the community. Let's look at what they want and what their needs are. And let's align it align what we're doing with what the community wants. And then lastly is require public reporting. And that is that's that's really can be done through our technology and through our village meetings. I think that we need to constantly engage with our community at that level to report to them, to let them feel that they are part of this, that they also own this one experience. They own community development at their areas. So that would be what we need to do moving forward.

Next slide.

DAVE TYDINGCO: I'm just going to end it with this last slide. We want to move forward. Obviously this upcoming typhoon is going to put a little crimp in scheduling, but we need to set timelines to go forward and execute. While we are looking at the ability for our long-term success to happen, it's got to start now. And the first 30 days after this typhoon, we got to go start cleaning up, and bring the all the players that are here on the table together to decide who's going to champion what particular opportunity to help drive this thing and make it happen. We have the next 6 to 24 months to do the planning and execution. Possibly with again a new bond float to improve the hard infrastructure. Again, not necessarily for our tours, but for our visitors and our people. For our people because that's ultimately where the money's going to be invested in. Okay, so I'd like to end it here because I know there's a lot of others in the round table that we'd like to give an opportunity to see. But thank you. Again, from our perspective, we're here to roll up our sleeves. We're here to work as a community because ultimately the beneficiary of this are going to be not only the people in this room, but our kids and the next generation to follow.

SPEAKER BLAS: Si Yu'os Må'ase. Thank you very much. And thank you very much to the to the panel group for for the presentation. I also I want to make sure that I I invite I mean I thank the the vice speaker Tony Ada for being here. And then I also recognize

former Senator Joanne Brown. Thank you as well. Senator Joanne Brown is part of the Guam Experience Commission as well.

So with that presentation, it's a it's a lot that was covered. It was This was as a result of many months of work of a discussion amongst the many of you that are in the room. Um and you know, like as Dave said and as everybody said, it's time to move. You know, not to take what has happened. We're not going to cast This is not a forum to do that. Please, It's not a forum to cast blame. This is not a forum to say that what we did before was wrong. This is to find out what we can do to move forward. How can we move forward? So with that, let's open up the discussion. That's is what that's what this is for. Vice, do you have anything to say? All right. Senator Jess, do you have anything to say?

SENATOR JESSE A. LUJAN: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Speaker, yeah, actually you know even back to the the 37th Commonwealth Legislature, we had spoken with the industry folks regards to the challenges that we've been facing. So, this is a result of those many months of collaboration and the challenges that we face and even greater challenges because we see other destinations as well that have recovered. Um but you know, and we're smack in the center of um areas that around us that are recovering except you know, in the Marianas, we have in there our brothers and sisters in the CNMI as well, right? And we are Asia's America. And that being said, we should be recovering as well. But again, this has been months of collaboration and moving forward, what do we put our best foot forward to be able to get to that that place where looks like we're turning the corner. I mean, you know, we have some companies right now.

Avolda is getting ready to sign with the airport as well. We're looking at I know that Lotte, I think their last day is December 20th, I think it is. Avolda at this point won't be ready until around March. Uh so, we're trying to work that gap out so there won't be any empty space there. That's being worked out at this point. Um and so, we're we're turning that corner a little bit. So, that being said, hopefully that's the genesis of great things to come as well.

Okay. So, with that, I'd like to open up the floor. Dr. Enriquez?

DR. ANITA BORJA-ENRIQUEZ: [laughter] Thank you. I'm grateful to Joe and Rita and of course the all of your friends around the table and in the audience. But I've always been an economic developer want to be. [laughter] And my marketing hat typically comes on as well. But everything that's been presented very much appreciated. No, you know, no mystery with regard to just the basic fundamentals. When we think about Guam or Guahan as the the destination, the product. Uh back in the days, you know, for those of you who know anything about business or marketing, the four P's, right? Product, place, price, promotion. So for the advanced marketing students, we talk about these three additional P's. People, processes, and fiscal evidence. So the fiscal evidence of our destination really is everything you see. From the time you arrive through the airport, right? Everything that you see that's visual. And you know, for those who frequently travel coming back home, you drive, you know, coming from a destination where perhaps the you know, the streets were manicured, clean, you know, landscaping amazing. And you

come home and you drive through certain parts of the island and you say, "I had a day. Why can't we have something like that?" I had the opportunity to go to a through a wellness retreat in Phuket, Thailand. And it was an amazing, very affordable retreat. There were so many repeat customers to that destination.

From Australia, from Europe, from Dubai, you know, Hong Kong, Singapore. And I asked the one young lady, "How did you find out about this?" She says, "Well, I went online and I was looking for something that had a health component. Fitness, diet, etc. And so within this particular experience that that I had in Phuket, you had an opportunity to go to the beach, to a cave, watch a sunset. And um I thought about our island and said we have better sunsets, we have better beaches, we have better views. And we're a cleaner destination. Uh but the fact that I met customers who never been to Guam because they were not aware. And I thought we could replicate something like that because what is true to their destination is what is in the land. What is in the sea. The experience itself. But taking care of the core product. The core product. Why do people come to us? You know, it's either to experience a benefit or to solve a problem. I go to Guam because it's healthy for my family, my young family. Or I go to Guam because I need to take a break from work as an example. And so the experiences the combination of all the experiences, we all contribute to it.

The infrastructure component, the transportation component, every single village every single village mayor is a core part of that experience. And so we think about the need for resources to address those respective gaps. Right? To address those respective gaps. I mean, a lot of these are low-hanging fruit. They're no mystery to us. If we have students who stay in our residence halls, transportation is an issue. If these University of Guam students can't even get to their destination, what more our visitors? And we hear them say, "Well, you take, you know, take uh strolls, take others." But when you have students that come from greater Micronesia, you know, paying more than two or five dollars for transportation is very steep. Right?

And so all of these uh many, many years ago, we had the one village, one product initiative. Where we try to find a specific uh and I we say indigenous because it's there. It's there within their village footprint. That that could be that value-added experience or product experience that is unique to that respective village. You know, we have the Donut Festival, we have the Mango Festival, we have the Banana Festival in Talofofo. You know, what else is unique, whether it be service-oriented or product? And so there's so much wealth in in the cultural element as well as the historic, right?

The place-based experience that we already have. And those that we can leverage to be part of that ecosystem, our village mayors, all of the different agencies, all of our colleagues around this table and in this room, our students. I mean, Guam, the region is a laboratory of so much so much of a capstone project that Dr. Rivera, you know, used to oversee. And so these young minds also have a lot to contribute. These men holding their traveling to they're traveling to Japan, they're traveling to Taiwan, they're traveling to the Philippines with their friends. So we have this revenue leakage because they want the experience. Right? They want the experience. And what happens after the Japanese

yen strengthens, what then? Where is that experience? And so taking care of what we have for our people, making sure that experience is enriched, making visible what that experience is like and what we have, you know, within these you know, the treasure of our cultural and heritage gems, elevating it in the right positioning.

I mean, I was in Korea and I was getting a facial and the fellow who was the aesthetician says, "Oh, you come from Guam." He goes, "I would like to go to Guam, but I must first find a girlfriend to bring her to Guam." And I told him about the flight the fares. He goes, "I did not know that." And he's in the beauty capital of the world, you know, beauty capital of the world in Seoul, Korea. And so it speaks to that the awareness component as well. So, I'm going to stop here. The University of Guam has so much some so many wonderful resources to leverage. So, you know, we're happy to be a partner to this effort. Thank you.

SPEAKER BLAS: Thank you. Anybody? Senator Brown?

FORMER SENATOR JOANNE S. BROWN: Yeah, sorry. It's been a while. [laughter] Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, I I I recognize the challenges certainly we sit with GVB uh of where we are at this point and obviously we're still struggling with regards to building up our numbers and we've talked about it over the last almost year and a half with regards to how do we rebuild something different and something better and how are we going to adapt to the changes and the type of travelers that are traveling and willing to come to Guam and willing to spend money.

I mean, back in the early '70s when tourism started, it was just build the hotels and you know, take them on the bus and take them on a tour and that was the extent of their visitor experience. We are in a very critical situation. It's not just the fact that um we need to rebrand, but it's critical that we do.

I think we recognize that while we have tremendous amount of financial spending by the federal government and we've benefited from that over the last eight and maybe if just a few more years in the build-up, we are heading to a very critical point and we recognize that we're at the cliff that if we don't address the build-up of our visitor industry, financially this government, this community is going to be in a very, very, very tough situation. One worse than what we've ever experienced in our lifetime. And I think that's why it's even more important because tourism, at least my observation, I'm not inside the industry of those that you are that are, but observing from where I'm at, we're not giving it the attention it needs. And it is absolutely critical to Guam's economic survival to rebuild our tourism industry because I have never seen in my 36 getting closer to 40 years in government the incredible growth of government. We're on average $400 million more a year than we were a few years ago. That's absolutely incredible while we have our private sector suffering, while we see weekly announcements of places that we've gone to and enjoyed eating and experiencing closing down. Um so it's even more critical. It's nice to feel good about our destination, but it's absolutely critical that we rebuild.

This idea that oh, we're going to do other industries overnight and you know, tourism's been nice, but it's old already, you know, it's in the past. And I just can't see all the investment, the buildings that we have down there, the opportunities that we have to rebrand and come out with an even better, more refined product that can improve our overall community and where we're at cuz Guam is not the Guam we grew up in. It's not the safe Guam we grew up in and it's not where our kids can go out on the bicycle down the street.

When we look at the issue about the fact that we need to clean up the island again, the fact that we even have to go back to the basics because we've not been doing it. But even more so, we need to in terms of policy, in terms of direction, assist what we can do to get these struggling businesses bridging over because if we don't, the government and the comfort that we've all been feeling in the government the drop's going to be sharp. If we're worried about our young people leaving Guam, if we're worried about the brain drain, it's going to be even worse if we cannot address what is a 1.4 plus a billion dollar budget that we will not have the revenue to sustain. I mean, thank you, Uncle Sam, but even Uncle Sam's getting a little tight.

We're not That build-up is not continuing and we're already seeing the geopolitics that the priority of even building up to the degree they've discussed in the past may not happen. So, you know, it's worked. We need to invest. We need to refine. We need to come out with a better product, and I think it's a wonderful opportunity and timing uh that we get to do this, because to me, I don't think this is a casual nice little thing we need to do. I think there's a point literally of desperation of rebuilding this industry.

If we don't, the government of Guam that has grown by hundreds of millions of dollars, unprecedented, and Joe, I was one of those young people with you back in the days of Tiempon Ada-Blas, when we did have that last resurgence and build-up, um we're going to be in it for a world of hurt. So, I think the priority, and Mr. Speaker, I thank you for your leadership and helping us here in setting the direction, but uh time is critical in terms of moving forward in what we absolutely need to do to sustain this community uh and obviously sustain this growing government that uh has grown quite big over the last few years. So, with that, thank you very much for the opportunity to comment.

SPEAKER BLAS: Anybody else? Mark?

MARK BALDYGA: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I 100% echo what our former senator said. Do you know that this year at the end of this year, the expected arrivals 637,000, other than the three years we were closed, this is the lowest arrival year since 1988, 40 years. So, it's critical that we get this right and that we move quickly. And so, I really appreciate you putting the focus in holding this round table. It's very important. So, thank you for that. I agree with the vast majority of the principles and the objectives that are laid out in this experience authority. It is exactly the right direction, putting residents first, uplifting our cultural heritage, seeking community engagement, developing low-impact experiences for the visitors, beautifying the island, upgrading infrastructure. These are all essential. If

we could just bottle the spirit of Inafa'maolek, the hotels would be full. So, it's the right direction, and I also agree that GVB should be reorganized um and refocus. The world has changed over the last 50 years. But, I differ quite a bit on the structure needed to accomplish these goals.

My view in this moment, this is where we need to absolutely, substantially strengthen marketing, and to the educator's point, the P of promotion is one that's not put forward at the top of this uh authority. In fact, it's one of five centers led by a deputy experience manager, and the overall organization is led by someone with no tourism qualifications and no board. I I think it's the wrong direction. That's my opinion.

My other concern is that the proposed authority would have broad responsibilities, but no actual authority over any of the agencies responsible for delivering results. This is a moment when we need execution and accountability, not just collaboration. I recommend a very simple three-part approach. It's very very straightforward. And I say this having been a GVB member for 40 years. And as I say, having been the chairman.

First, reorganize GVB as a lean, professional destination marketing organization, or DMO. It's very typical in this industry. Its core responsibility should be marketing Guam, developing air service, driving visitor arrivals, and creating demand, not cutting grass, painting curbs, or cleaning beaches. We likely need 20 or 25 team members, a streamlined independent board with staggered terms, and a CEO recruited by executive search and compensated at a level commensurate with driving the recovery of a $2 billion industry.

Maintenance should be funded by the general fund as originally intended, not by the TAF, and responsibility for maintenance should move to the appropriate line agencies so that GVB's leadership and resources can concentrate on generating demand.

Our visitor markets have changed substantially since COVID, particularly with the shift towards independent travelers. Pre-COVID, we were 80% wholesalers and 20% FITs. The rest of the world was already 80% FITs. This is our fundamental problem. We need to learn how to target market to the FITs. This is the same challenge I face as a private business owner. And we spent 30 years dealing with JTB and HIS and Mode and Hana. Well, that doesn't work anymore. So, we really need to focus ourselves on learning how to drive the visitation.

The beautification, promoting our culture, these are critical, but these are the most basic minimum of what is needed. Just cleaning up the trash in front of the store doesn't mean that customers are suddenly going to flood inside. We need product, and we need to promote it.

Secondly, place responsibility for coordinating and overseeing, not just collaborating, destination management through the governor's office, where it belongs. I propose that the governor designate a senior tourism official, acting with the governor's authority, to coordinate and oversee GVB, the airport, DPR, DPW, and GEDA, and other relevant

agencies. Not only coordinate with them, but to hold them accountable with weekly one-on-ones with agency heads and a once monthly meeting with performance KPIs reported publicly. Much of this work already falls within the existing agencies responsibilities. We need a structure that ensures those responsibilities are carried out and that holds leadership accountable for results.

Third and final, establish a Guam experience council. I think it's a great idea. Cultural practitioners, village leaders, and community representatives all deserve a meaningful institutional and structured voice in shaping the visitor experience. The council could meet monthly with the head of the visitors authority and the governor's senior tourism official to recommend priorities, identify cultural and nature projects and review progress. Lastly, I fully agree that we should move immediately to fund beautification and cleanup without delay.

If funding is made available for a LEAP Three, however, I would respectfully recommend and that it be focused on improving the product rather than on just providing operating funds.

Speaker Blas, I sincerely appreciate the vision behind this initiative and the work that's gone into it. I agree fully with the principles, but I believe that the proposed structure risks diluting demand generation and without the authority to actually drive accountability. Guam needs a better visitor experience, new attractions and reasons to visit and the marketing capability to bring visitors here. Our organizational structure should strengthen all three. Thank you.

SPEAKER BLAS: Thank you. And just to the point, while it is a proposal over the structure, it is a idea for discussion. Okay? Understood. I appreciate that. Thank you so much. And it's an important idea. spur that discussion. Perfect. I appreciate it, sir. Thank you so much. Thank you very much. Monica?

MONICA GUZMAN: Good morning, everybody. I just want to um, express my appreciation to you Speaker for bringing together, this group and having been involved with the Guam experience since the beginning, it's been a very good experience, and I just wanted to say that with Guam Unique Merchandise and Art, with GUMA, we started 14 years ago and it was initially a core program that we wanted to help our artists and our cultural practitioners. But over the 13 years we've had we've grown exponentially. It's now a whole movement within our cultural practitioners and our artisans. We have, we've had 13 program cohorts and it's grown from the year one where we had like 28 people 28 businesses that participated in our training program and it's a 16-week training program. We now have, we now have to cap it because we have over 100 people that are wanting to join our program. Since then, we've had 460 entrepreneurs that have participated in our program. We have incubated 57 Guam small businesses and over the next couple weeks we're going to interview another 15 businesses for incubation. Right now at the Guam at GPO, we have the GUMA Makers Market, and I'd like to acknowledge our sponsors, GPO and of course Calvo's Value Retail for operating the GUMA Makers

Market. There are 35 vendors right now in the GUMA Makers Market and there's a long list of people that want to come and have their products featured in the Guma Makers Market. We also had another program called the EBC Noon Mommy, where we had 374 attendees. And this is home-based cottage industries. There were 151 that qualified. There were 85 EBC Noon Mommy businesses that received grants. And then we also have a small business financial literacy program. 17 businesses have attended the the program. What started as just an avenue to help our artisan and cultural practitioners has now grown into a movement. And when you go into the Makers Market, when you talk to our cultural practitioners, not only are they earning money for themselves, but they are also contributing to the Guam experience. We're doing a survey right now with the Guma Makers Market to see how many are diaspora that visit the and purchase at the store, how many are visitors, and how many are locals cuz we feel that that's going to be an important statistic to know. But this is just a small part that we as small businesses can contribute to the Guam experience, can contribute to the visitor industry, to be able to provide Guam-centric products and a Guam-centric experience to our visitors and to our residents. But I wanted to say that what started out as just to help our artists and our cultural practitioners has grown into something that will help our visitor industry. And thank you speaker and the Guam legislator for continuing to support Guma. Thank you.

SPEAKER BLAS: Thank you very much. Mary, no, you. Well, cuz I was going to turn the Bart because, you know, I don't know if he has to get back to on a flight back to the CNMI. [laughter] But Bart, would you give us a little perspective from Saipan?

BART JACKSON: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you. Thank you, everybody. It's like déjà vu all over again. I am a resident of the CNMI. I'm currently the chairman of the Commonwealth Ports Authority Board of Directors. We're responsible for the three airports in the CNMI and the three seaports in the CNMI. But as some of you know, I have an awful lot of experience working with the Guam Visitors Bureau. Seven terms, six elected, one appointed by Speaker BJ Cruz. 11-time chairman of Guam Hotel and Restaurant Association. So, this is where my heart is. This is where my heart is. This is tourism is what I do, and it's who I am. And I think it's important that the group have a a big-picture perspective as well as focusing on the details of what happens on island. And in my role as the CPA chairman, I I've had that opportunity to look around the region and see what's going on there.

Of course, it's easy to say that 30 years ago we didn't worry about Vietnam. We didn't worry about the Philippines. We didn't worry about Okinawa. These were not real destinations for our source markets the way they are today. And so the landscape has changed so dramatically. There's so much more competition than there ever was 30 years ago when we had our when we had great years, certainly out of the market that established us, which was Japan.

So, from a from a CPA perspective, you know, we talked about Thailand. I think we can all agree that Thailand is one of the most beautiful, successful tourist destinations in the world, not in Asia, in the world. And yet their visitors bureau does pay airlines to fly there.

Not everyone, not all the time, but you know, I've heard discussed in the legislature the concept of well, why aren't we paying airlines to do this? 30 years ago you didn't have to do that. Wasn't the concept. But today you do. And you can't be competitive unless you're doing what other competitive destiny what your competitors are doing. You know, you can't go to GVB and complain whether or not it's GVB or another entity, that's a whole 'nother topic, but at the end of the day, you have to provide incentives for airlines if you want to be competitive.

Airport landing fees. I saw that the airport my sisters and brothers at the at GIAA came up and said that there's going to be a deficit. They're asking for more money. Well, again, we have competitors in Asia that charge zero landing fees. Zero. Very difficult to compete with that. So the seats to a destination are such an important factor, obviously. But you need to know that out there are competitive destinations that are charging nothing for airlines to land per passenger and that are actually providing incentives to get people there. It really gives a different perspective.

From a board standpoint, I can tell you that on the CPA board we have staggered terms and having a new board in and out from a continuity standpoint is just impossible to create any continuity. This is really to me one of the one of the greatest challenges of any visitors bureau and I've also had the honor of serving on the Marianas Visitors Bureau and the Marianas Visitors Authority Board of Directors. Changing everyone out every time is makes continuity impossible.

I remember years ago in an effort led by Clifford Guzman on the rebranding where we created uh opportunities for tourists to go to fiestas, promoting fiestas, transportation for fiestas. I don't see that anymore. It wasn't unsuccessful but it lost focus and lost momentum. And part of that has to do with the politization of the Visitors Bureau where you're not hiring people based upon their real tourism expertise. You're not hiring experts. You're hiring what's in favor. Administrations come, administrations go. Politicians come, politicians go. In order to sustain a business focus, you have to have continuity. And when you lose that, you lose these programs that were working that unfortunately are just, you know, somebody forgot about them or they don't have the same push as before.

It really has to be island-wide and of course, I think every destination fights with the challenges of coordinating the effort and too frequently, and I see this in the CNMI as well as here too frequently, we look to the Visitors Bureau to fix every problem. Oh, there's a problem with the parks. Well, GVB can clean the toilets, don't worry. There's a problem with this. Well, GVB can take the lead in making sure that the lights are on in Tumon. Whatever it is, whatever it is. We're always looking to the Visitors' Bureau as the catch-all when Yeah, it's such an important part of it, but it's only part of it. And maybe they can be the lead in coordinating it, but still, it has to be coordinating and not actually doing. There isn't money to do that. As Mr. Baldyga will tell you as he's been the chairman. You know what kinds of resources are being taken away from the focus of the authority, which is to get people here and lose focus on that effort as you have to do so many other things. It's just It just creates an impossible challenge.

Having professional tourism personnel, leadership would also help to avoid enormous mistakes. You know, for me I love going to Taiwan. Love Taiwan. But, it hasn't been a successful tourism market in 35 years. I've been here 36 years. I've never seen a good year out of Taiwan. I've been to 50 tourism events in Taiwan, and I love and respect the island. But, realistically it's a waste of money. Really. It's unfortunate. And I think that that's the reality. That's the tourism reality of destinations. These are the kinds of challenges that we need to avoid moving forward. And so, I'm very impressed by the amount of work that went into this proposal. And I laud the speaker for bringing this to the forefront. I think it's a great presentation. It's a great idea. But, you know, where the rubber meets the road is not doing it tomorrow. It's doing it 2 years from now and 5 years from now and 10 years from now. Otherwise, you've wasted the effort. Tourism, it's like a It's like an oil tanker. When it's moving, you can keep it moving. But, God forbid it stops. Getting it going again takes so much effort and so much money that that makes it virtually impossible. So, you know, I think this is a great effort and you know, speaking on behalf of the people of the CNMI, we have many of the same challenges. Some not, but we're all in this together. And I do advocate and have advocated more of a Marianas a one Marianas approach than the islands competing with one another. And we haven't done that well over the years. We have tried. Hasn't ever gone well. But, I think that with as both islands are now going to be led by different entities, different administrations, this may be a great opportunity for us to finally become a one Marianas effort and compete as a region instead of just island to island. So, appreciate your time. Thank you very much.

SPEAKER BLAS: Thank you very much. Mary?

MARY RHODES: Hafa Adai and thank you again for bringing these important issues to the table. I think when I first started attending the meetings for Experience Guam, I was really excited because GHRA, having been around 54 years, there are many aspects of it where we've engaged in the community both the public and private sector to try to get a lot of programs in and we've been part of many things. And as previously stated by Bart and actually even Monica who I've worked with in previous administrations when they did the branding for GVB that Bart was referencing and also with what Mark has stated, there are a lot of elements of it in the past where we've been very successful and I think we have to remember that.

Tourism having 60 years into it and GHRA being in it 54, I think it's really important to reflect on what we've done well and what has served us well, but also especially recently what hasn't. And I think that's where we're at today and I think this is why whatever the reasons are that brought us to this table, I'm extremely grateful that we're here.

When again, when I was first joined the committee, I was so excited because a lot of us, some of us older than others, I've been in 20 years, you know, and I've heard a lot of these projects and I've seen all the projects in the last 20 years. They didn't last because the funding ends, the grants end and there's no con- continuity as Bart mentioned,

whether it's administration changes or the grants go away and nobody reapplies for it or they change priorities. And this is an opportunity not just for the legislative body for our new administration to take a look at it collectively to say what do we want for Guam? Not just for the people as our residents, who by the way, when we say this is not a competition, we have to remember tourism is the larger employer outside of the government of Guam and the construction industry. So, when you say it needs to be there for our residents and our people, we're also talking our employees of our industry. So, when you say big business, small business, sure the 80/20 rule 80% of the big businesses you know, 20% of the big businesses, we employ majority of the employees of the industry. So, it can't be about big business or small business. It's about one community. And when you look at the mandates GVB has given they're where they're responsible for marketing as well as research and destination management, a lot of these speak to it, but I don't know if Dave, you can put up that slide where the budget is. I think a lot of these things we have all complained that we need to address like the destination management, getting things back in place to have Guam be a safer place and a cleaner place in order for us to promote Guam.

There are other things that we have to address like transportation that Anita mentioned. We've been working on that for years, but also public safety and we have to get research back. We have to be better at getting data because I can tell you for the industry stakeholders, they're always looking to GVB to provide timely accurate data especially in forecasting and we don't have a lot of data on Guam in general, but that is really a mandate of GVB and that is something that is at the heart of what we should be producing for our destination to improve and to have better vision and focus on where we need to re-prioritize. And I think that's really the message we need to walk away with today is how do we re-prioritize so we could really rebuild tourism once and for all.

We've been talking about recovery since COVID the last 5 years, and we are doing really well on that recovery. And don't forget, even though we're short of our 750,000 goal, we've had that for the last 2 years. And yes, we're down to 650, but there are people still traveling, and we have to focus on the people who are still traveling, and how do we improve that experience? And part of that is because those who are still around, the businesses still around, especially the airlines, the hotels, the restaurants, the optional tours, the transportation companies, they've invested and continue to invest a lot into Guam. Not just GVB. Collectively, the industry, we spend more in marketing than GVB is giving to market Guam. But here's the lost opportunity. I think everybody should walk away with opportunities today, but the lost opportunity I've been coming to the legislature the last 3 years when we they have budget hearings or asking for incentive programs.

What we've seen in the surplus of 60 million for the last several years, we're missing a hundred million just by not focusing on tourism. You're missing a whole hundred million dollars on what we used to get. That 150 million mark is what we used to bring in hotel occupancy tax. Total investment into Guam just every year. If Guam and our elected leaders can really focus, and our agencies, and it's not just GVB, it is airport, it is GEDA, it is GVB. And organizations like GHRA to refocus this industry going forward. And I really appreciate the sentiment of former Senator Brown because we are at that position today.

We can't wait for what has happened with our partners in Marianas with Saipan. We cannot lose any more carriers. And what a lot of people don't know, in the last 5 years, some of our numbers went up is because our tourism stakeholders have subsidized some of those airlines. It's not just programs and incentives. There are charters that came in where packages were created between airlines and hotels to bring them to Guam. So, it's a collective effort. And when we talk about in a formal experience, it is truly all work partners working together in this industry. But, I think what we have to recognize today is when we say experience Guam, you're really talking a whole other thing, not what GVB is mandated for.

GVB is mandated for marketing and promoting Guam. And providing the research and the statistics, but also looking at the product, right? And managing this destination. And funding programs for events and festivals. And they've done all that. If I could just say, the things that have not been sustainable, we've already talked about the gift, the Guam Island Fiesta Tour. Those are the festivals that were created. The one village, one product, the Guam brand, and the Guam brand train- training. The cultural heritage and outreach committee, CHamoru. We've had cultural dances. There's a new international dance festival. We need to continue to look at that, GMIF. Unfortunately, because of the weather, it's been delayed. There's a local food local and manufacturing projects that have been funded through GVB and other sources to try to get more people into that, Guma and Guam Product Seal. We have all the programs already there. Why can't we just make them better, invest more into that? You're also missing a huge component here.

You have industry stakeholders that make up, yes, the marketing of Guam and the product itself and some of destination management. But when you're talking experience Guam with cultural arts, with the people, and the villages and the landmarks, our flora, fauna, our terrain, there's so many people not here at this table and I think this experience Guam should not be really about whether or not the stakeholders who are in charge of marketing should really just that should be the focus.

I think this should evolve into other partners who need to be at this table because Rita said something really important and it said commodity to be consumed. The com- community needs to be nurtured. We need to have Department of Chamorro Affairs. We need to have Parks and Rec, Guam Council Heart of the Arts and Humanities, GVB Cultural Heritage Committee back, Hagatna restoration and redevelopment, Humanities Guahan, Historic Preservation Trust, Land Management. Those, even Department of Ag and EPA, they all impact our product and destination management. And also the governor, lieutenant governor's beautification task force. All those things you're wanting to fund and lead initiatives through this council should be in a task force, but with those agencies. And GVB, over the years, I'd say at least 15 years, has taken more than they're supposed to over these years and been underfunded because they've been funding DPR. They And this is all hotel occupancy tax, right? So, I'm not saying anything new, but I think it has to be stated here at this table because if you're looking at $40 that's GVB's entire budget which their primary responsibility is marketing our Island.

Destination management is also important. It's a three-tier. It's marketing, it's research, and it's destination management. That is what GVB is responsible for. But they are not the ones only holding that flag. There are so many agencies responsible for that and we need to bring those agencies to the table and really talk about experience Guam and how each of their funding needs to be reprioritized all to support tourism and this whole effort.

It shouldn't just be GVB's fund or future hot bond tax. I think that we need this is a great starter conversation, but we need all of those agencies to come together. During the Calvo administration, I believe they even consolidated all the cultural heritage programs because when you have everybody working in little silos, they do very little. They don't make great impact. And so when the Calvo [clears throat] administration consolidated it, it was supposed to make a greater impact and all I've seen is they're still in silos. They're not even at the table. Where is Guam Museum in this as well, right? There's so many parts of that is experience Guam. Where are our mayors? I've always said GVB doesn't get enough funding for what they're mandated for or even had to accept outside of their mandate, but also the mayor should have increased funding to deal with the abandoned vehicle. They had to release it back to DPW and DPW is not here. GEDA is not here. UOG who oversaw one village one product, SBA, SBDC. When you're talking getting more entrepreneur programs like Guma, this is not even the table for it.

You're really talking GEDA, UOG, SBA, SBDC. That is who should be there together with GVB to support more programs and initiatives like Guma or One Village One Product. But, me as GHRA and everybody else here, I think we're all supportive to attend that and make sure whoever leads this new administration will move forward with all of these things in mind, but I don't want to get it confused that tourism is only big business and it's only GVB. I think it's everybody's responsibility, but we need to compartmentalize that a little bit because it is so big. It is really big. And if we represent Guam, we have to think of what everything Guam represents. And I I'll tell you that commission is going to probably have multiple parts to it. And I think it's a great opportunity.

Our industry has had challenges. It's actually really bleak and dismal right now. I'd say on just the numbers that we've seen in going backwards, especially the last four or five months, this is again where we harness it and take our opportunities to move forward. And what can we improve on? But it's going to take every concerted effort. Every agency has to at least have, and I said this in my uh pinpoint uh interview with Ryan Mummert, if every agency, if you can implore every agency, not just the legislature, not just the front office, but every agency, DPW, every agency needs to have two to three initiatives where they can make tourism better and recover much faster. If that's the permitting process, waiving certain fees, getting a huge amount of workforce development, and waiving sponsoring health certificates. And I have a golf tournament tournament coming up that pays all of the first aid CPR lifeguard training for 3 years for employees. Like we have to do things to get people to want to work in the industry, to grow the industry, sustain the industry, and to promote our island. But it's going to take every agency and whoever is going to lead that from what you were saying, if that person's going to take GVB, airport, GEDA, but also work with the other agencies, I think they need to find two to three things

that they need to identify where the employees are just focused on that to help regrow tourism.

That is what it's going to take, and a lot of those people aren't in this room today, and I think you're going to have another two sessions just even compartmentalize all of that. So thank you very much for being here. I think that collectively we can work together. I think that the appetite to address this, the timing is very interesting knowing we have an election We have a new administration coming in next year next year and even talking about giving four times, I saw the number was $40 million, but 100 and 50 million if we go after another hot bond. I would love to see the details of that a little bit more because even me being part of the committee, my first time to see it was on Wednesday and I've shared it with my board both the presentation and the bill, but I would love to see the details of the budget so that we can have better conversations I think as industry partners to talk about how do we work together to really rebuild our tourism industry.

SPEAKER BLAS: Thanks, Mary. And just to show you while they're not here, every agency and every entity that you had asked that should be here have been in the meetings we have had the This is a combination and then reason why it's here at this point in time is because we've done a lot of the research that I want to thank the commission members, you as well, be you know, coming in and providing the input and stuff and then going back to meeting with all of these entities that you have talked about that are necessary. You're absolutely right. And I think that one of the things that we have recognized is that yes, GVB is a main component - major player in this, but GVB is not the only player in this. Okay? And we want and have to be fair with them. Because you're right, in the last 50 years that they've been in existence, if you look at their original mandate, the mandate they have and the and what they're doing today, it's far beyond what was required. And we need to be able to if we want to be serious about this, we got to we got to take a step. Why is it now that we're doing this? Why not? Okay? Why not? I think that the time is ripe. The time is right. It shouldn't matter who the next administration and what's going to happen. It takes the collective effort of the community. Okay? Whether this happens in January or it happens today in October, it's got to happen. So, that's what I appreciate it. That's why I as I was sitting here with a with a swell in my face and saying, "Yeah, you're absolutely right. You're absolutely right. Okay?" And I want to continue that. So, thank you very much. Anybody? Monica?

MONICA GUZMAN: I just want to say that um in looking back, we started meeting in February of 2025.

BEN FERGUSON: Well, first off, thank you very much for hosting us today. It's great to hear all of the opinions about how to get our industry back on its feet. I think we agree on much more than we disagree on. That's the good news. The bad news though is the list of things that we need to get better at is lengthy. And we've all got to come together to get this to get this to number one to create a plan. And then we have to coalesce around that plan and it seems to me that that's really been our greatest efficiency over the last four or five years is not being able to coalesce around a plan. When I say coalesce around

a plan, I mean all of our agencies, both branches of government, the industry, everybody needs to first agree on what we need to do and what we need to be better at and then we need to execute that. And I just feel as though we all what we've talked about today, we all agree these are the things that need to be done. Now, how we prioritize those, that needs to be discussed and that needs to be agreed upon. How we fund those things, that needs to be discussed and agreed upon. But we've got to start with that basic premise that we let's create the plan and then let's assign individuals and organizations to execute the plan like we would do in any business and hold those individuals accountable with certain benchmarks and let's move forward. I think that we've got the ability to do that. We don't lack the brainpower here in this room to make that happen. All of us have great ideas. We may not agree on everything, but in general we agree on everything. So, I'd like to first to again thank you very much for the opportunity to be here today. PHR Ken Micronesia has been here for 20 years. We're celebrating our 20th anniversary here on Guam. We've got a very large footprint here. We've got a lot at stake here, and we want to be a part of the solution. So, please let us know how we can assist in that regard and, we are optimistic that we're going to get this thing right. So, thank you again.

SPEAKER BLAS: Brian, you sat there in the corner very quiet over the last hour. Let me give you an opportunity to say something.

BRIAN ARTERO: A lot of great ideas. High intellect at this table. I'm very very fortunate and appreciate, grateful to be here today. Someone just said today about taking care of the tourists that are coming through. Sighting maybe that we have some low visitor count, the lowest visitor count with Mark just mentioned. But, also taking care of the visitors that are coming through today. Simple things that we can we can fix exactly today as in like tomorrow. Because the plans that we're putting together definitely great plans are going to take some time to put together, correct? 30-day, 60-day, 90-day milestones to hold ourselves accountable to. What can we do, for example, today?

Example, maybe cutting down the immigration line wait time from 90 minutes to maybe 20 minutes for families. Getting the family experience through quicker. I mean, is there an express line at the at the airport for immigration for families to come through? I think that we used to focus on the family market before. I think it's something we should definitely be looking at, right? I think Mary pointed out that the hotel industry has been, and the airline industry has been kind of co-funding tourism with the packages. Maybe look at what we can do now to help hotels maintain their properties with some offsets on their taxes. Even with restaurants. We're seeing restaurants vanishing. Maybe a two two-year to three-year tax reduction so that they can, you know, the hotel and restaurant industry, highly capital intensive business. Air cons break, chillers break, ovens break. You're talking about thousands and thousands of dollars. In terms of marketing, I think Mary talked about how hotels and airlines are doing marketing. I spent a quarter of a million dollars in marketing just my own restaurants. I have a tourism manager in Korea and Japan. So, we're all putting our money on the table. So, it's great that our voices are being heard today. Great ideas, great plans coming forth, but what can we do like tomorrow? Can we make that impact tomorrow with the with the immigration line? Is that

something we can do so that families can get through and to their hotel and check in so they can start their Guam experience? I think we can.

NICO FUJIKAWA: Test mic test. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and everybody here at the table. You know, there there's a lot of things that that we can discuss today, but I wanted to bring it back to the plan, right? I think the framework we kind of agree on, the approach we agree on. Maybe there's there are some structural issues in terms of authority and how to execute. But I think the biggest thing that we have to bring to the table is that we have a plan. We can we can wrap up this meeting now and say, "Hey, we have the plan." And what it is we started to look, this is back when I was at the Visitors Bureau, and touch on an amazing plan that the University of Guam built with the one village one product, right? But we said, "How do we take that to the next level?" Because any policy, any real good policy can sustain itself. So, it always comes back to funding. It shouldn't be funded by a federal grants because there is a sunset. There's a timeline. But when you put in a policy that creates and generates new revenue, then we have something that can move us to the next level.

Now, I bring this up because I wrote this plan. I wrote this plan when I was the director of research and strategic planning. It's called the one village one attraction. Taking that same concept from one village one product and moving it to the next level. Understanding the different characteristics of every village, finding out what makes the people proud of that village, and then putting our minds together with experts to generate an attraction that can drive visitors outside of Tumon, but also bring back pride to the community. I think we really have to start there, right? Cuz the local experience is the visitor experience.

Now, we as locals, we look around, we're not happy with what's going on in the island. We can't, you know, wake up other than going to the beach once in a while and barbecuing. Yeah, that's a fun time. But what happens after that? When we see the trash on the road, when we see our roads cracking, we lose so much of the experience. And so, we kind of have to bring it back and start building these attractions, these investments as a local first investment. When it's good for the locals, it organically attracts visitors, right?

When we travel, we don't look for the touristy areas. Where do the locals go for gyoza? Where do we go for udon? We look for the places that the locals love and experience because we want that experience. And I think if we really resurrect the one village one attraction, you can see that there is a plan there, and then we can discuss what is the structure for this? Because I agree, I don't think it belongs at GVB. I believe that this plan is bigger than one agency, but it works and it can work.

In our research, I found what I like to do instead of all looking through all the data on the visitor exit survey was pull up the open-ended comments. And there was one that stuck with me when I was there. It was from a Korean visitor. And he said, "The people on the island and the island itself is so beautiful. It's unfortunate that they don't take care of it. It doesn't match the energy that we get from the people." When I ran a sentiment study on

how the locals felt about tourism, I pulled a focus group of customer service employees from all the different hotels. And what I found was amazing.

There was an individual at the Nikko Hotel who said that they have a Japanese couple come back and stay five times a year at the Nikko Hotel. I said, "Wow, they must be, you know, brand loyalty." It wasn't. They come back and they stay at that same hotel because they made a lifelong friend at that customer service desk. Again, going back to the impact of the people. Right?

So, when we build these attractions, we actually went into the villages, sat with the village mayors, sat with their planning councils, and sat with the community to understand what is it that you guys want, how big do you want it, or how small, how impactful, and then let us work with experts to design that.

Now, again, it shouldn't be a government complete government effort. It has to be a private public partnership. It's the only way it's going to work. We can't have village mayors running an attraction like a business within the village, right? They're not businessmen. But then I realized, well, then that creates 19 opportunities for the private sector to engage with the government. There's 19 opportunities for us to develop unique offerings in every village.

I sat with Monica and discussed this a while back. And I asked her, "How many entrepreneurs in the different villages do you have already?" And pulling from that, we designed the anchor and developed the infrastructure using all those entrepreneurs to come and set up shop. They no longer have to bid or fight for festivals or little fairs at different times. They can stay within their village. It would encourage new entrepreneurs in that village to go to their attraction. And of course, there are caveats.

We would ask the operators, "Hire first the people of that village. Retirees, people who have retired who have general manager experience, those are the perfect candidates. Or new high school graduates who are looking for a job but don't have a car, they can walk to their attraction." But the idea was to build pride. If I live in Aiea Heights and there's an Agana Heights attraction and my son just graduated and he needs a job, my son will be an ambassador for Agana Heights for his attraction. He's not going to graffiti. He's not going to trash the place because he grew up there and he lives there.

The idea of one village, one attraction was to bring it back to the people and to show the tangible benefits of how the tourism machine could actually work for them. Now, this is a huge plan because then it starts paying for itself. In our research, I was a member of the International Association of Attractions and Parks, and I found that of all the different parks and attractions around the world, they had a 10% profit margin. 10%. Okay? Now, if we just do simple math, let's say an attraction makes $6 million, that's $600,000 profit. Of that, what if 5% or half of that goes back to the village itself? Now, a village has $300,000 that the mayor and the planning council can invest back into the people. So, it goes back into the tangible benefits that we need to start getting the community on board with whatever it is we're planning.

The people have to start seeing that tourism does work for them. They don't right now. Sure, we have nice hotels. Yes, we have nice buffets that we can go eat at on Sundays. But, what about in my village? What about new CCTVs to protect my house from being robbed because my attraction did well? What if the 20,000 Koreans that came through my village now helped donate new computers to my school? To my son's school. Then we start getting the mayors, their operations, and all these different villages away from the general fund. We don't have to ask the general fund to start funding new things. We've created an ecosystem that feeds into itself. Then we take a percentage of that of that revenue, and we pay into a transportation system. 19 villages, 19 different business models that have different offerings, complete different offerings, paying into an island-wide transportation system. A northern, a central, a southern. All creating different hubs.

To me, this is what the future of Guam looks like. This is the offerings. And I'll give you an example so that we don't have to talk in theory. When we went down to Humåtak, we always celebrate the Magellan's landing. I said, "Why can't we build the Trinidad, the Spanish galleon that Magellan rode and landed on the island?" Why couldn't we build that in the bay for them, and that becomes an educational opportunity? It becomes uh school field trips, dinner on the deck. It now becomes an anchor down at our southernmost village that would drive people to go down there. And on their way, they could stop by an attraction in Piti or in Inalåhan. And all of those attractions were going to be built with the communities' buy-in before we even announced anything.

And I can share with you guys, we have about six attractions that I was able to get through with the different mayors, but I've never shared them out of respect for the village because I wanted the villagers to understand first, is this what we want? This is what the mayor and the planning council liked. We want to share with you at a town hall and then move to the next step because once we have the community buy-in, then we become that oil tanker that we can't stop. And I think we really need to go back to this because it is a plan that I believe in. I have since obviously left that role, but the passion for the island is here, right? I teach my kids, it's easy to leave and go find a better opportunity, but I'd rather stay and help raise the island that raised me.

SPEAKER BLAS: Thank you very much. I think that helps to encapsulate everything that we've been talking about and getting it back to again, what's good for our people and good for our visitors, okay? And that's the focus that we want to be able to do to be able to provide. Ma'am, you've been silent and is there anything else you want to contribute? Okay.

REGINE BISCOE LEE: Hafa Adai and thank you very much, Speaker Blas and members of the legislature that are here and obviously the Guam Experience Commission. I participated in the research and authoring the PKF report that was mentioned earlier in the previous slides and I also had the opportunity it's to attend the Guam Experience Commission meetings prior to my time at GVB. And you know, as was mentioned by Ben and Mark, we all understand tourism is a major economic driver for Guam.

Our 2025 economic impact report shows that the industry is still generating about 1.6 billion in economic impact. It supports more than 15,000 jobs as Mary had mentioned and it generates 163 million in local government tax revenues. 163 million every single year. So these numbers are important, but they represent local businesses. They represent working families. They represent livelihoods across our island. And I think again, we agree, we recognize that our tourism industry continues to face challenges. It's really not lost on us that those challenges affect our businesses, our working families, our community. We agree there's much more work to do.

Bringing back visitors and encouraging them to choose Guam is much more than just marketing. We need to make sure we have the air service to bring them here, attractions that they want to experience as David mentioned, and opportunities for them to really connect with our culture, connect with our villages, connect with our people and our food. All of these things go hand in hand and they require us all working together, which is why I'm so grateful for the speaker to call us together and have this conversation.

As Director Brown mentioned earlier, GVB's FY2027 budget is approximately $29 million. For perspective, that's less than 2% of the 1.6 billion in economic impact generated by tourism in 2025. We agree that the legislature has an important role in setting the budget and providing policy direction for the government. Those decisions affect the programs, the services, the infrastructure that support our visitor experience and all the things that we're discussing today. And while GVB plays an important role in marketing Guam and developing destinations, the health of our industry also depends on these things kind of outside of our control, air service, transportation, infrastructure. And then the destination upkeep, cultural programming, and support for local businesses can rest with us.

As Mr. Tydingco had mentioned, these are shared responsibilities that require coordination across the government, across our public sector, our entire island coming together, even our brothers and sisters in the Marianas. Our in one Marianas community. So, again, we do agree discussions about the future of tourism should include the people who are directly affected by it, our cultural practitioners, small businesses, airlines, tour operators, villages, hoteliers, residents, restaurant workers, tourism workers. We all have a stake in what happens next. And so, we really need to listen to those voices and build on the work that is already underway.

For us at GVB, this comes back to i Nafa Maolek. As Rita had mentioned, working together. Tourism, again, is an all of Guam issue that requires an all of Guam solution. And we can't work in silos. The government, the private sector, our cultural practitioners, all of us have a role to play. We need to listen to one another. And again, as as everyone here has mentioned, we want tourism to continue to create opportunities for our people to make Guam the very best place to live, work, and visit. And so, I think we're all in agreement that that's what we should do moving forward. And Si Yu'us Ma'ase for that for the opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER BLAS: Thank you Senator, and you are absolutely right. Okay. This issue that we have before us in as far as how we're going to create a better economy, how we're going to create a better lifestyle for Guam, it's much larger than just GVB. This is a whole island approach. And that's what we propose to provide. GVB is but a component of this, but it shouldn't be the entirety of it. And for too long, you've you you've taken on that responsibility. And well, I'll take it at times taking too much of the blame for this. That's why we said this is not about what happened before. This is how we can move forward.

Okay? And I think one of the things we recognize and realize around this room is that this is all our responsibility. Okay? It's not the business is how large or how small it is. It's the community that exists. It's our villagers. It's our entrepreneurs. It's our people that want to be able to do this. And Mary as you said as you stated earlier, we for far too long we've managed to put everything in silos and we're working in silos. You know, you're going around this room listening to all the different ideas and all the concerns and all the suggestions. Never once I don't think never once have we ever had the opportunity to put everything on the table and see what we got. So, it goes to what Bryan was saying, what can we do tomorrow? What can we do when we leave this meeting today? I'll tell you one of the things we can do. We can start to help to clean up.

Okay? Let's prepare ourselves for what is an impending disaster so we can deal with this disaster. I'm much more better, and not rely on that's that agency's responsibility or that's that business's responsibility. It's our responsibility. Even us as legislators, I think one of the things that we're going to be doing here and I will tell you, I didn't work with this in a silo either. I had constant communication with the vice speaker and with the chairman on tourism. On many of the things so that it really doesn't come as a surprise to many of the colleagues. And then taking these ideas and well, okay, what do we need to do policy-wise to be able to move forward and I you know here hearing a lot, there isn't really much policy that we that that we need to be able to continue to produce here as it is the product and we working on working together. And as a community. And that's what we want to be able to provide. And that's what this provides. So I think that you know I mean I want to I don't want to speed this up any more than it is but I think that you're right. Let's I like to be able to leave here saying what is it that we can do today? Tomorrow. Okay. You know can I ask you know Regine is it a simple ask or hard ask? If we can start to have communication with ICE and how we can basically look at putting together a family entry.

REGINE BISCOE LEE: Yes, absolutely. Thank you Mr. Speaker. I wanted to just note that we actually had a meeting with some folks while we were out in Washington D.C. We've met with them twice already. Danny Givens with the USCIS and we've brought this to his attention, both about the lines and then also reconsidering maybe some of the visas visa requirements that we have for potential entertainments, entertainers to have events here on Guam and entertainers from our source markets. So those are part of the conversations but we'll follow up with him and we'll see what we can do to have that conversation because it really is a federal government ask that we need to make at this time. And some of those are labor challenges and it takes them about 18 months to put an additional officer or some somebody to staff that here on Guam and so there's a little bit of a lead time but we've been making those requests at least for the last 2 years.

SPEAKER BLAS: Okay. And the thing another thing is inevitably we're going to have to clean up in the next couple of days. Okay? Okay, we're going to have to pick up the trash, but I think that well we pick up the trash and make things back. We use that as an opportune time to start to put up Christmas lights. I mean our island and our community is going to need to experience something to lift them. And, maybe it's a great time to be able to start to do this. Maybe it's a great time to start to use this opportunity while we're all hunkered down to talk about it a hafa adai and inafamaolek family and have those kind of conversations within the home. You know, this

I hate to say this, but for lack of this storm is probably a godsend. Because it gives us time to reset, rebrand, reconstruct. Okay?

Okay. Yeah, I got I kind of it just came out a little bit wrong, but you know, hey. Yeah, okay. Um you know, but that that's said this is you know, let it's before us. Okay? It's before us. There's nothing that we or anybody here can do to change any of that. But using that as an opportunity there to be able to start to do some of the things. Is there anybody else that are sitting, Cathy, thank you very much from the chamber. Is there anything that anybody else would like to contribute to the conversation, Mary?

MARY RHODES: I I just have a question. So what is the call to action after this if because it you seem to have or David mentioned specific timelines for things, right? So, obviously there's you know, we can do things like the coastal clean up and there's a lot of things that do take place and honestly, I think GVB, I work with them at Homeland Security for the emergency management all the time and there's a lot of things we do focus on especially after for post recovery from a storm or a typhoon and we obviously will be working this weekend on those things. But, what exactly are you wanting after this initial round table? Like I said, I think there should be several based on the different initiatives, but what is the low-hanging fruit in the experience commission group? I guess the commission's not approved, but at least the experience committee, which you did get approved last year through the legislature to have at least the advisory group. What is the low-hanging fruit that we can do today that doesn't require funding, just cooperation? For things, you know, I think we have to look at not just the nation manage, but like what Brian said, logistically, how can we improve our processes that Anita talked about, right? It's how do we get the product to move more efficiently so that people have a greater experience because the touch points on Guam are lacking. Um from the time they leave the airport, there's so many complaints about people seeing them, you know, take their luggage up to the airport and walking around Tumon and those are the things just so you know, during an emergency, between GVB and GHRA, we coordinate all of that when we have stranded tourists, when we see them on the street, when they go to the airport and the airport's closed. There's so many things that we handled that a lot of people don't know about, but we don't want to wait for an emergency. We rather coordinate all these efforts now and let's streamline our process. So, I think if this if we could really think about the short term, like Brian mentioned, what are the immediate needs to improve that? And then, maybe that's something um I would like to look to Regine. Maybe we could work

with you because I know you meet regularly with the airport. Once a week. And maybe there's things we should be bringing to the table so that they could start already addressing this. That doesn't cost us money.

SPEAKER BLAS: You know, the value of me being here is secondary. Look around, and then we've got a lot of subject matter experts and people who have great ideas. So, anybody have like to be able to help to answer that question? I mean

DAVID TYDINGCO: Yeah, you know, again, we've got a long laundry list and there's no magic wand that we're going to wave to solve all these problems. I think one of go back to what Ben said earlier. Let's get behind the plan. Let's put that plan together that we can all march behind with short, medium, and long-term goals and aspects. And the plans exist already. It's about refining them and then we're not all going to agree, but at the end of the day, once we agree on the once we all the majority of us we all get behind it. And a lot of work has already been done, but then it's to identify champions who are going to be responsible to carry out these plans and to execute. Uh and again, what's important to start with the plan and let's start with what they've already put together in terms of the recovery plan that GVB has. And let's see where we're at and then move from there and refine it. But I think if we can if we can go to something that we can already say, "This is where we're headed." then we get behind it and appoint the champions and let's run.

SPEAKER BLAS: Anybody else?

MARY RHODES: Sure. This will be the last one. So, when you talk about the recovery plan, right? There were plans to fund that and those things did go away. So, that's why a lot of things didn't come to fruition. But, we keep referencing this PKF plan that cost us $2 million. But, but I can tell you nothing has been implemented. There's been no call to action on that plan with very little Yes, it told us everything we already knew. But, some things that have not taken place in the last 3 years since Typhoon Mawar were the replacements of the signs, the lights down in not just Tumon, but all over the island. But, the signs, the lights, um and um there there's quite a number of things uh even our heritage walking trails, like our hiking locations, the sign to the airport is gone. I mean, there's so many things. It's street lights, it's traffic lights, and it's signs. Those are the basics in that PKF study that has not been fixed. And we spent $2 million on that. We should have spent the $2 million on getting signs at least. So, I'm just saying there's the plans are all there, and I hear that. That's probably the biggest walk away take away from me on this Experience Guam report and budget is that these plans all exist, but we've done very little to address. And that's why I'm asking, what is the call to action from this group? Because GHRA is willing to get behind those things, especially as nonprofit, that doesn't require a lot of money, but a lot of coordinated effort. But, let's find it, and let's work with whoever's responsible, if it's GVB, DPR, airport, let's figure out what the low-hanging fruit is, because time is extremely important. And you talk about Christmas lights, I did ask Leanne on what the plan is with the GVB, you know, the budget for the lights. And I know that the plan is right around Thanksgiving um for the Christmas lights. But, I can tell you there's always a toss-up between whether Tumon gets the lights or Hagåtña.

It's like, why can't it be both? It is both. It's both this year, right? So, great because it it's also in a lot of other villages and I know that's what you want to do with this is get it throughout the island, but um you know, that's a contract that takes I think every 3 years uh at GVB, but the Christmas lights is just one of many things, right? It's the fireworks, it's all of that that's part of the holidays and we need to really um roll that out much better, I think in communicating that and getting people around it. GVB used to get the hotels and the restaurants along the major corridors to also participate and participate so that they could help light up Guam. And so, I think that's what you're asking is really can get everybody clean up, spruce up, and lighten up Guam in the next couple of months. And so, I'm really more about getting things done. And so, I would like to know what that call to action is for the next couple of months.

SPEAKER BLAS: I think you're right in as far as the low-hanging fruit. You know, none of this is really going to make any sense unless we start to get the community participate and people. And how can we best do that? Again, without funding. We I mean really you want to wait for the legislature? We're not going to be able to address that until December. Okay? It won't be addressed until December realistically. But in the meantime, your low-hanging fruit is let's clean up and let's spruce up. Okay, and let's start to decorate. Let's start to be festive. The same time it doesn't take any money to I mean I remember one of the most successful programs we had for to attract tourism or to for tourism is welcome all visitors enthusiastically. Remember that? Wave. What did that all require? Just this. Okay? Just this. It didn't require any money. But it what it does is it helped to brand it, it helped to bring that our people were – are hospitable. You know, if I was to ask everybody around here, what's the one experience that you have when you go to Rota, when you go down the street? Everybody get the one-finger wave? They're known for that. Did it cost them anything? Shouldn't cost us anything more.

The low-hanging fruit here is let's start to build our pride. And give us a reason to be able to be wanted to be a part of it. So, I think in as far as immediate action that we I think we can all agree upon is look, we're going to have to clean up. But, let's clean up and then build from there. Build the pride from there. That's the low-hanging fruit that we want to start from there, but it's also in the meantime we can start to look at the different program. You know, you know and Dr. Enriques talked about one village, one park. Let's bring that out, and let's see what the what kind of ideas we can have there. And give the community the opportunity to say how we can best do this. Not us. Let the mayor of Inarajan and his and his municipality and his villagers talk about it. Let the mayor of Yona and Talofofo and his people talk about it how to be able to do this. Let the mayor of Dededo talk about you know, and their people up there talk about how to do this. And let them start to help the own ownership. And then build the and then start to build the relationships there. Okay? I know I know you know Mike doesn't like the word collaboration, but I think I use it in a in a sense of let's get everybody involved in this. Let's not order it. Let's get everybody involved in it because I think we can find that more people are receptive to it if we do it in that fashion.

SENATOR LUJAN: Yes. Yeah, again, I want to thank everybody for being here. I think it's very informative. I think the low-hanging fruit of this whole thing, right? Is we have the

promotion, of course, I love Guam. I think the low-hanging fruit with this as we leave today is that I am Guam. I am Guam. Each one of us is Guam, and we represent that island. So, as we leave here, that's the lowest hanging thing that we can do, and we go out to our again our places of business and all that and tell that to our employees because we are Guam, and whatever it is that I do I mean, imagine if just each and every one of us just picked up after ourselves. Just did that. We wouldn't have to be picking up after anybody else. So, if you just took yourself, you know, we love Guam, we do this. I love Guam what I am Guam. So, I think that's the lowest hanging fruit that we can take out of this whole thing, and you know, my agencies I know I think the other committee chairs as well we're going to be doing out a closeout hearing before the end of the term to be able to give those these findings from our agencies to the transition team cuz we're going to have a new administration. Okay? We're going to have that to the new administration our findings and for the for our agencies, and we'll have a new legislature as well. And so, that being said, but as the speaker said, that won't be done until December. No. Yeah. So, but to leave here today is I think very productive, but thank you very much as we go and prepare our homes and our businesses for this storm cuz the governor's calling us in to special session to more money cuz looks like we're going to get a direct hit. So, anyway, take care of yourselves and we'll come back again.

SPEAKER BLAS: Yeah. So, why don't we go ahead and we start the schedule that we're working with? Cathy, thank you very much. Ma'am, come on up. Here you go.

CATHERINE CASTRO: Hi. just very quickly. I'm Katherine with the chamber and I just wanted to say that um a lot of the things that I already I that I came to say have already been said. But one of the things that I wanted to um just emphasize is something that the chamber has been talking about for years and years and years and that really it and it's one of the the five pillars that we've been talking about uh um in our project prosperity and that is a government that works, right? And so we're really really um hopeful that you know, with the new administration that we take a look at all of our agencies and really what Mary has said, we are all together. Everybody contributes, right? To our tourism industry. It's not somebody's job over another job. It's all of our jobs, right? And really I mean the first touchpoint like what Brian said, the first touchpoint is our airport. My goodness gracious, that's the first thing that needs to be fixed. The everything from the Hafa Adai spirit to the facility to my goodness, having sidewalks so that you know, you know you see people walking down the roadway with their pulling their suitcases. Why are we letting this continue to happen? Why isn't our government giving the mayor money to or DPW parks or DPW money to put a sidewalk on the darn road? I mean it seems so simple, so much low-hanging fruit that we could be doing, right? Why do we have sand in in all over the roadway in Guam from typhoons that have happened months ago and every other country and every other world place in the world, it would have been taken care of in 2 weeks. Right? Certain things like that, a government that works. If this was a private sector and they you saw you see what they do, they take care of each other, their um their areas, their facilities because it's they have to do it. They want people to come their facility and be happy and be comfortable. Taking care of our island is the perfect is the most important thing. So, I don't want to you know, we all got things to do. We've got

to take care of our homes and our businesses for this typhoon. God bless us all and thank you very much for this opportunity.

SPEAKER BLAS: Yeah, thank you very much. You made a very good very good point, but I However, I also think we're pointing here, okay? Let's not wait for government to move. Let's not wait for government to move. Let's do it ourselves. Okay? Let's do it ourselves. Let's do this Okay? Let's do this collaboratively, okay? But Okay? So, that you know, I'm and then we can start to see Again, that I did we did we didn't want it was this was not a blame game discussion. This is a how can we do it better? And I think one of the things that we recognize and how we can do this is we got to do this together. We got to do this together. I will ask that as a result of what we continue to share I'm sure that some of you going to walk out of here at 2:00 in the morning you're going to have a great idea, but you forgot about it. I want to give you that opportunity to be able to think about this and everything and then we'll reconvene in a couple of weeks after the you know, the storm. I just you know, I want us folks focus on getting past you know, this storm with our with our homes and our businesses and then we can come back, but I think the low-hanging fruit like you said here is once we clean up, let's spruce up. And then also start to develop the pride within ourselves. Like he said, I think I love Jess' idea. You know, I love Guam. I am Guam. What better way to show that pride? So, anybody else I want to give an opportunity? Hami Guahan. Okay. Hami Guahan. All right.

So, it is 11:20 in this morning. I want to thank you all for being here. This is not the last piece that we're going to have this discussion. I think you know what the gist of how this is going to work out. I think one of the things that we need to do is how can we help to improve and how we how we can help each other out in doing this, okay? So, thank you very, very much. Okay? Have a safe weekend, please. Buckle down, and I'll see you at the other side of this storm. Thank you very much.

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GUAM

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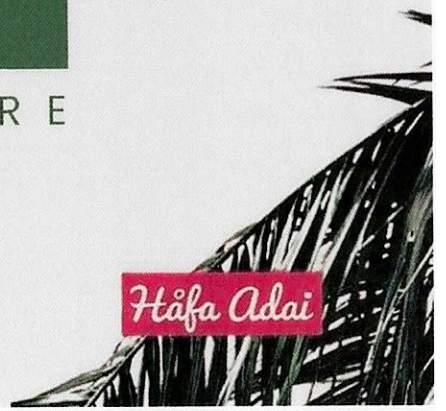

OCTOBER 16, 2026
GUAM EXPERIENCE ROUND TABLE

OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER
FRANK F. BLAS, JR.
38TH GUAM LEGISLATURE – *I Mina'trentai Ocho Na Liheslaturan Guåhan*
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September 22, 2026

Håfa Adai!

I have scheduled a **Legislative Informational Brief** on the current state of Guam's tourism industry, including the challenges before us, the changing needs of the industry, and the opportunities that lie ahead. The briefing will be held on **Friday, October 16, 2026, beginning at 9:00 a.m. in the Guam Congress Public Hearing Room**.

The briefing will be facilitated by the Legislature's **Guam Experience Commission**, formalized through **Resolution 22-38 (COR)** and tasked with examining Guam's visitor industry through the perspectives of those who are directly engaged in tourism operations, cultural experiences, small business, workforce development, and community life. The Commission provides an important opportunity to bring these voices to the legislative table and ensure that our discussions are informed by the realities experienced by the people who contribute to Guam's visitor economy every day.

Tourism remains one of Guam's most important economic pillars, but its significance extends well beyond visitor arrivals and economic activity. It touches our small businesses, our workforce, our villages, our cultural institutions, and the way we present Guam to the world. As we look toward the future, we must understand not only where the industry stands today, but also what is needed to ensure that tourism remains resilient, competitive, and beneficial to the people and communities of Guam.

This briefing will allow us to hear directly from industry stakeholders, cultural practitioners, workforce representatives, small business owners, and community members regarding the challenges they face, the evolving expectations of visitors, the impacts of tourism on our communities, and the opportunities available to strengthen and diversify Guam's visitor experience.

As legislators, our responsibility is to listen carefully, understand the circumstances on the ground, and consider policies that serve the long-term interests of our island. The perspectives shared during this briefing will help provide that foundation as we evaluate Guam's tourism trajectory and consider future legislative action.

I encourage your attendance and participation in this important discussion. The future of Guam's tourism industry is ultimately connected to the future of our communities, our economy, and our ability to share the unique culture and character of our island with those who come to our shores.

Thank you for your continued commitment to the people of Guam and for your service in helping shape a stronger and more prosperous future for our island.

Si Yu'os Ma'åse',

FRANK F. BLAS, JR.
Speaker

WE FACE A TOURISM ECONOMIC DISASTER

What we know...

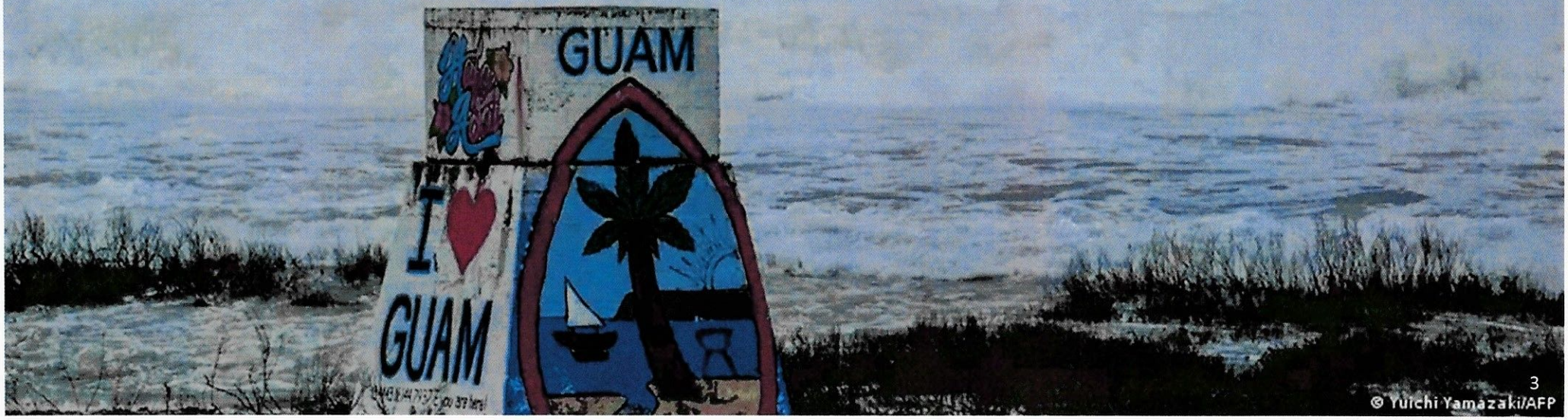
We know how to pull together in the aftermath of natural disasters

What we need...

We need the same level of coordination and resources to overcome this tourism economic disaster.

How we deliver...

Our solutions that we deliver must be community driven and community centric.



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THE ECONOMIC STAKES EXTEND ACROSS GUAM

Pre-pandemic tourism supported livelihoods, public revenue and local suppliers.

$1.79B

Direct visitor spending in 2019

22%

Share of Guam GDP
$1.4B value added

23,100

Jobs supported
38% of Guam jobs

$253M

Tax revenue associated with tourism

Recovery affects workers, farmers, transport providers, cultural practitioners and public service.

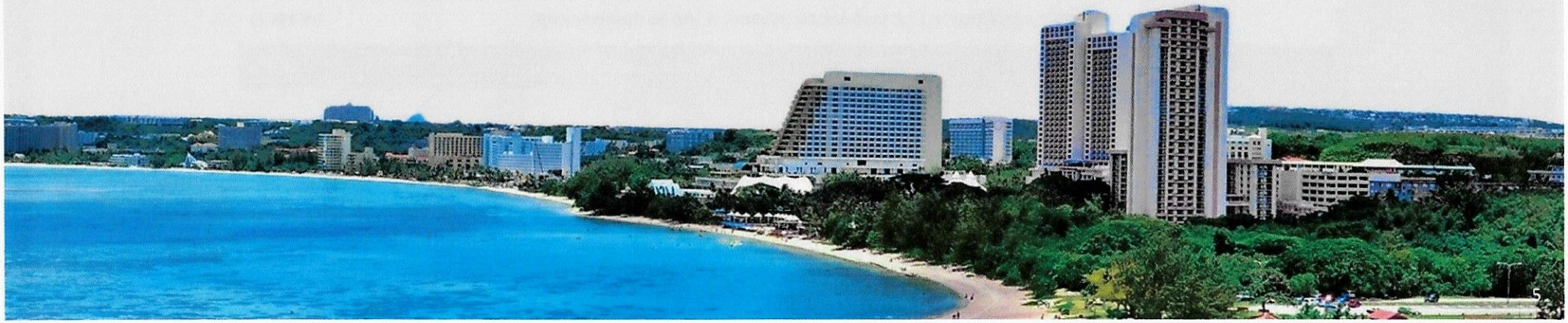


RECOVERY REMAINS FRAGILE

The submitted GVB preliminary table shows declining calendar-year arrivals through August 2026.

January–August	2025	2026	Change
Total visitors	495,625	418,829	−15.5%
Korea air arrivals	232,020	154,323	−33.5%
Japan air arrivals	163,222	159,661	-2.2%

Both source markets are in decline; recovery requires market-specific action.

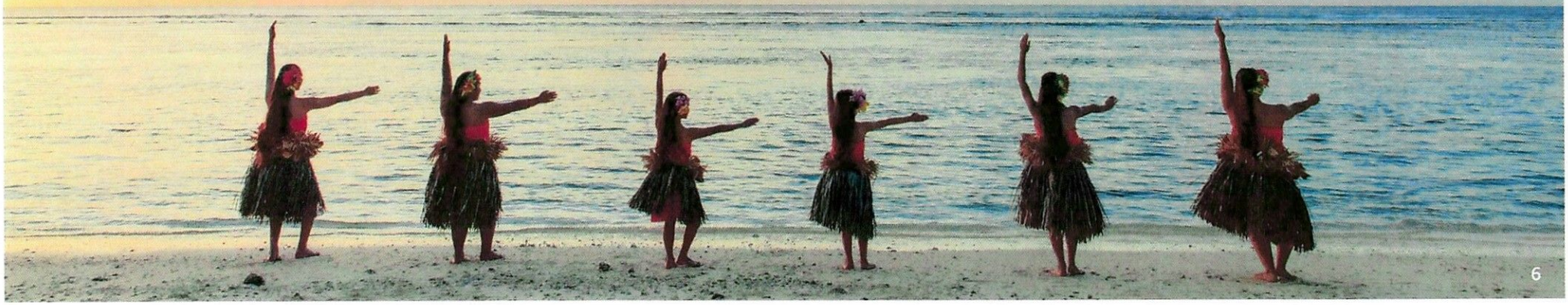


FOUR PILLARS OF THE GUAM EXPERIENCE

The proposed Commission centers community and culture in a Guma'Latte framework.

Pillar	Meaning for Recovery
Guåhan	Stewardship of our ancestral home and all 19 village districts
The Håfa Adai Legacy	Daily care for families, neighborhoods and cultural integrity
Inafa'maolek	One island crew, guided by ancestral wisdom and mutual respect
I Hinanaota Mo'na	Policy that supports cultural transmission and local enterprise

This is a shared commitment where residents are the stewards of tourism and receive its benefits.



RESIDENTS IMPROVING THE EXPERIENCE

Survey preferences point toward reinvestment and attractions that respect Guam's character

92%

Prefer improving existing hotels over building new ones

77%

Support more tourist attractions and optional tours

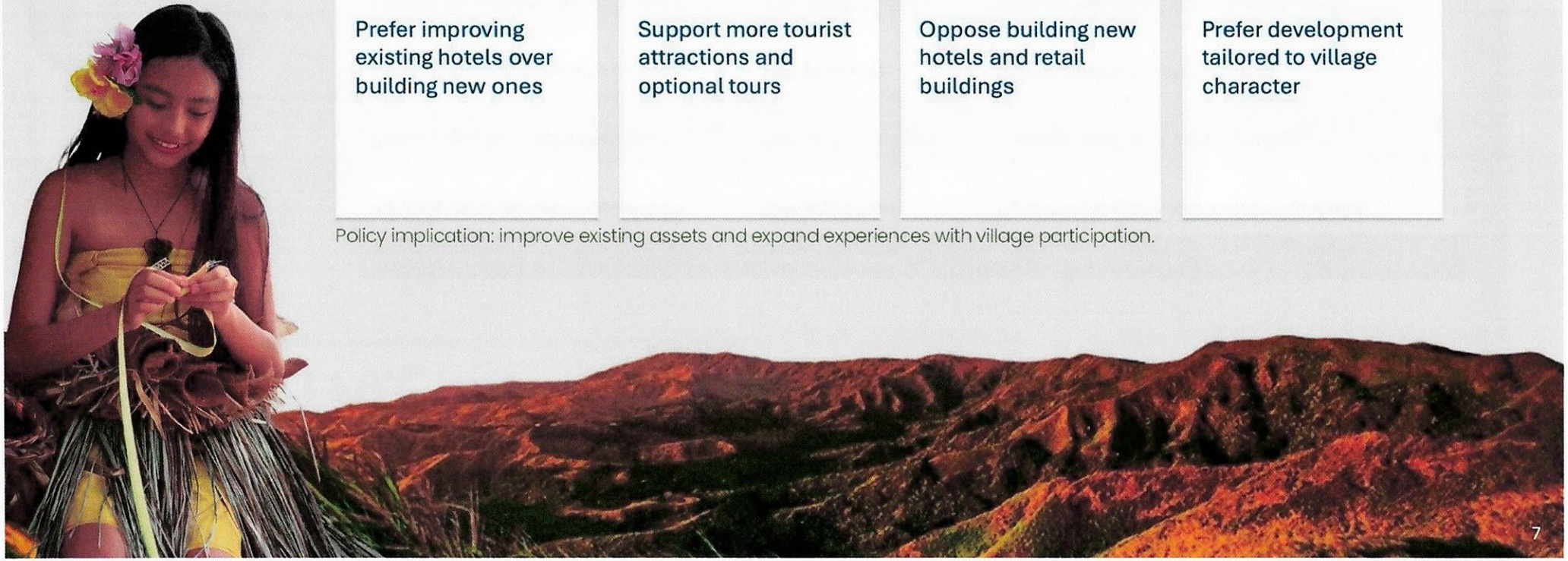
75%

Oppose building new hotels and retail buildings

79%

Prefer development tailored to village character

Policy implication: improve existing assets and expand experiences with village participation.



PROTECT ASSETS THAT MAKE GUAM DISTINCTIVE

Residents place clear value on culture, conservation and infrastructure readiness.



Resident priority	Reported response	Recovery design rule
Infrastructure before construction	92% important	Fund enabling services before expansion
Historic and cultural protection	78% very important	Preserve sites; pay local interpreters
Conservation over new structures	73% prioritize	Screen environmental impacts
Limits over aquifer / coastal areas	72% / 68% support	Respect water and coastal constraints



FIX PUBLIC PLACES THAT RESIDENTS USE EVERY DAY

Tourism investment can earn community support through visible improvements.



55%

Dissatisfied with cleanliness of recreational areas

Fund upkeep, restrooms and waste removal.

44%

Dissatisfied with recreational safety

Improve lighting, crossings and safe access.

44%

Say disability access is inadequate

Audit accessible paths, transport and facilities.

Walking paths, communal spaces and better maintenance serve both residents and visitors.

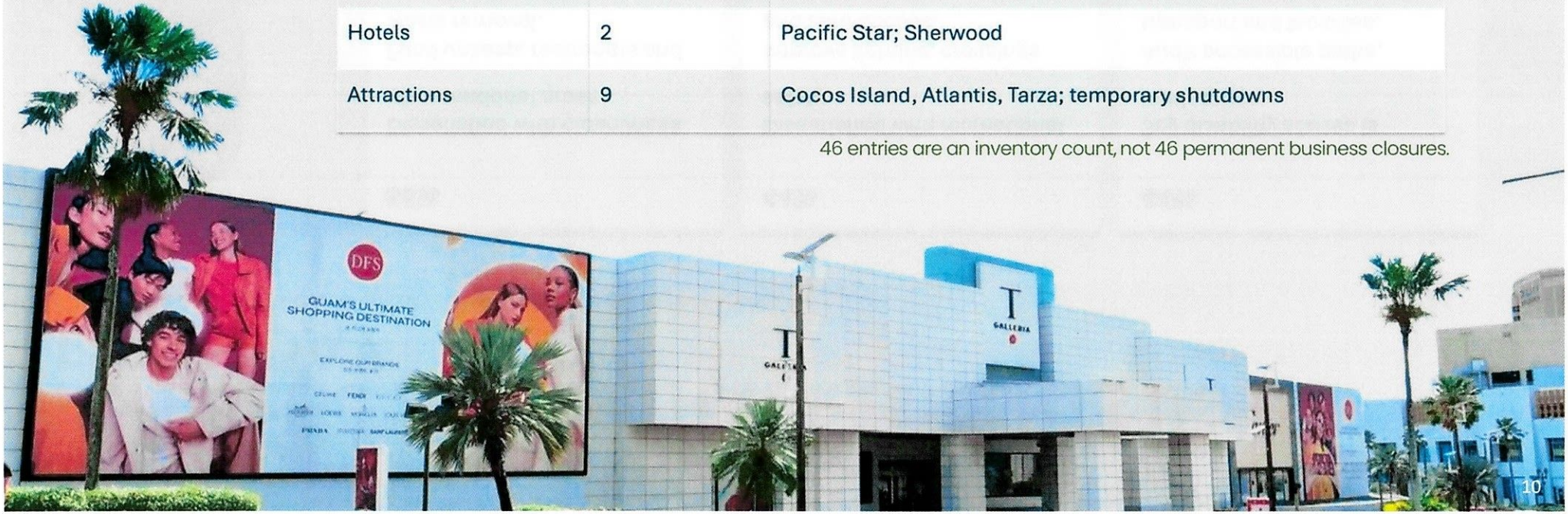


TOURISM ECOSYSTEM IS LOSING VARIETY

The inventory documents a broad contraction in visitor-serving locations and experiences.

Inventory category	Numbered rows	Examples listed
Retail	10	DFS, DKSH boutiques, Tumon Sands tenants
Restaurants	25	Hard Rock, Red Lobster, Proa, local dining locations
Hotels	2	Pacific Star; Sherwood
Attractions	9	Cocos Island, Atlantis, Tarza; temporary shutdowns

46 entries are an inventory count, not 46 permanent business closures.



PFK CALLS FOR COORDINATED ACTION AND REINVESTMENT

The December 2024 report identifies structural weaknesses that predate the pandemic.

Lead together

Define roles and accountability.

Coordinate agencies, industry and community.

Simplify small-business processes.

Renew the product

Improve infrastructure and existing facilities.

Develop authentic CHamoru experiences.

Make sustainability operational.

Rebuild access

Increase viable airline capacity.

Target demand with measurable digital marketing.

Mobilize public and private capital.

PFK Tourism Recovery Plan, Dec. 2024 pp. 163-176, 185-188



THE OPPORTUNITY TO WIN BACK TRAVELRS

Demand, access and destination value must be addressed together.

Japan

Address airfare, price certainty, passport barriers and convenient gateway schedules.

Korea

Submitted July comparison: Guam share fell from 2.57% (2019) to 0.65% (2026).

Compete on value and bookable experiences.

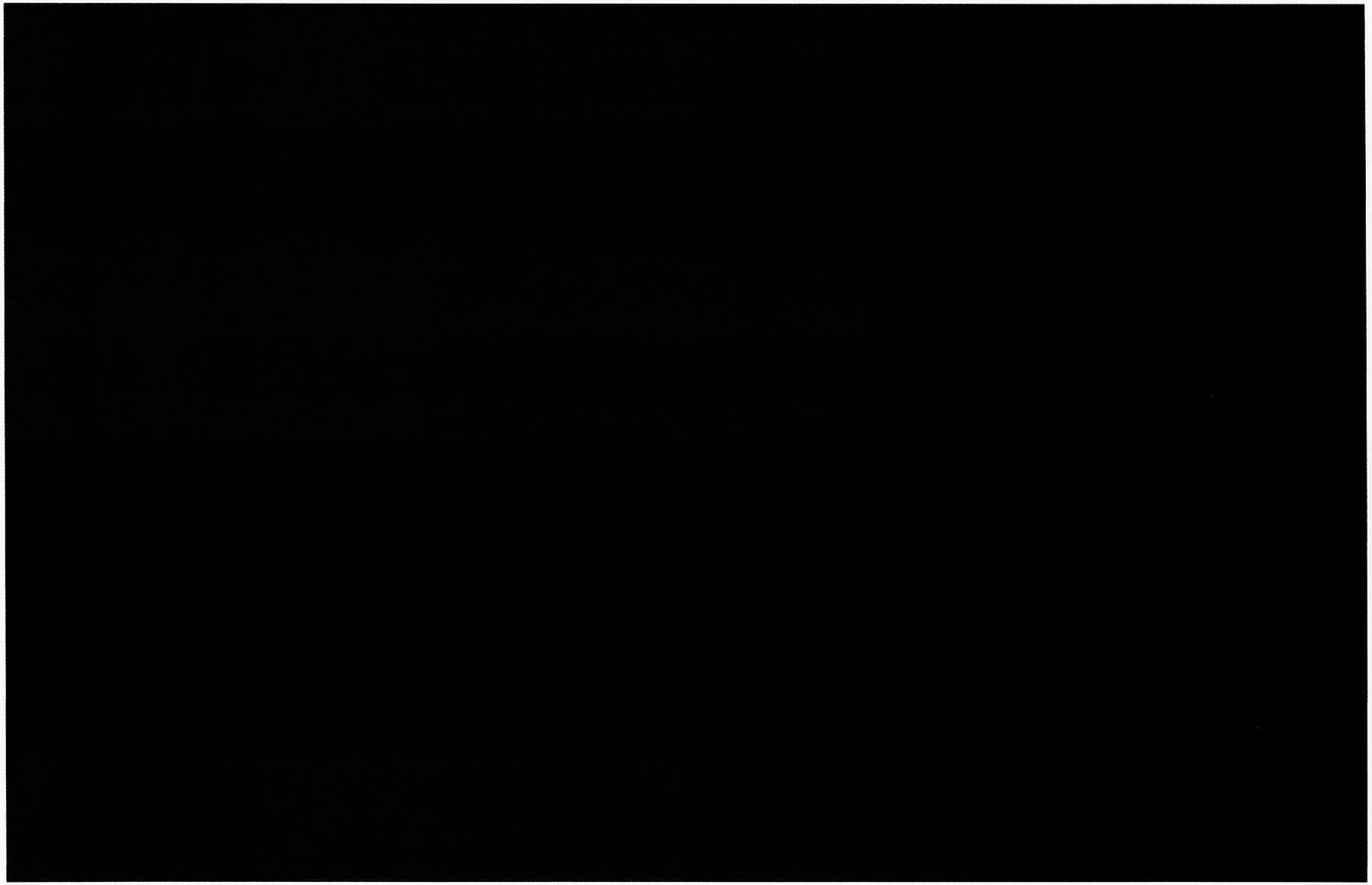
Regional markets

Build Taiwan and regional niches: education, sports, meetings and family visits.

Pair demand campaigns with seats.

Currency improvements can help affordability; use refreshed exchange rates in live campaigns.



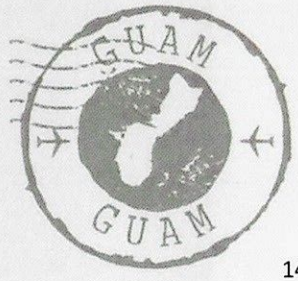


MODERN TRAVELERS LOOK FOR

Visitor Preference Shift



- **Experience as the New Luxury:** Traditional markers of luxury (such as lavish material amenities) are taking a backseat. Travelers increasingly prioritize personal transformation, emotional connection, and trust.
- **Bespoke and Low-Density Engagement:** There is a pronounced shift toward low-density experiences that offer authentic, meaningful engagement with local communities, heritage, and environments rather than mass-market tourism.
- **Cultural and Heritage Preservation:** Travelers are placing higher value on destinations that protect and authentically feature indigenous traditions, artisan crafts, and living histories, seeking out educational and purpose-driven journeys.



Source: Pacific Asia Travel Association Asia Pacific Forecasts (2026-2028)

ASIA PACIFIC VISITOR OUTLOOK (2026–28)

Visitor Preference Shift



Market Growth

714.9 million

Arrivals projected for 2026
2028 baseline: 761.2 million

20 of 39 destinations

Expected to exceed pre-pandemic arrivals in 2026, rising to 27 by 2028

68–70% of regional outbound travel stays within Asia Pacific

Source Markets

North America

High spending, historically above US$2,400 per trip

India and Gulf markets

Rising incomes and growing interest in outbound travel

Younger travelers

Social media and shared experiences influence bookings

Visitor Preferences

Meaningful experiences

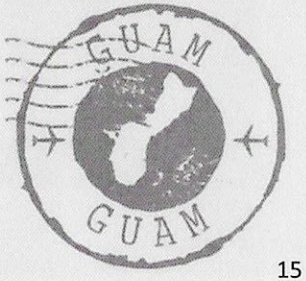
Personal transformation, emotional connection and trust

Local engagement

Small-scale experiences with communities and nature

Culture and heritage

Living traditions, artisan crafts and educational journeys



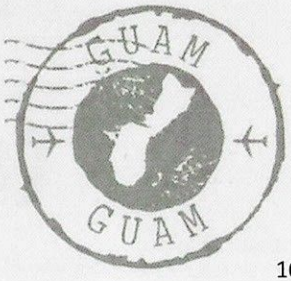
Source: Pacific Asia Travel Association Asia Pacific Forecasts (2026-2028)

TURN A GOOD STAY INTO A COMPLETE ISLAND EXPERIENCE

The Submitted exit-survey analysis highlights mobility, infrastructure and value gaps.



Signal in submitted strategy	Recommended response
Japan: transport, infrastructure, shopping	Reliable connections; fresh local products; clear information
Korea: costs, infrastructure, transport	Transparent packages; competitive value; easy booking
Airport satisfaction trails overall trip	Improve arrival information and onward transport
Experiences as a competitive advantage	Culture, nature, food and guided village encounters



MAKE A ONE GUAM EXPERIENCE PORTFOLIO

Connect existing sites, village plans, and proposed projects through a bookable half-day and full-day journey.



NORTH:
Nature, conservation and guided learning

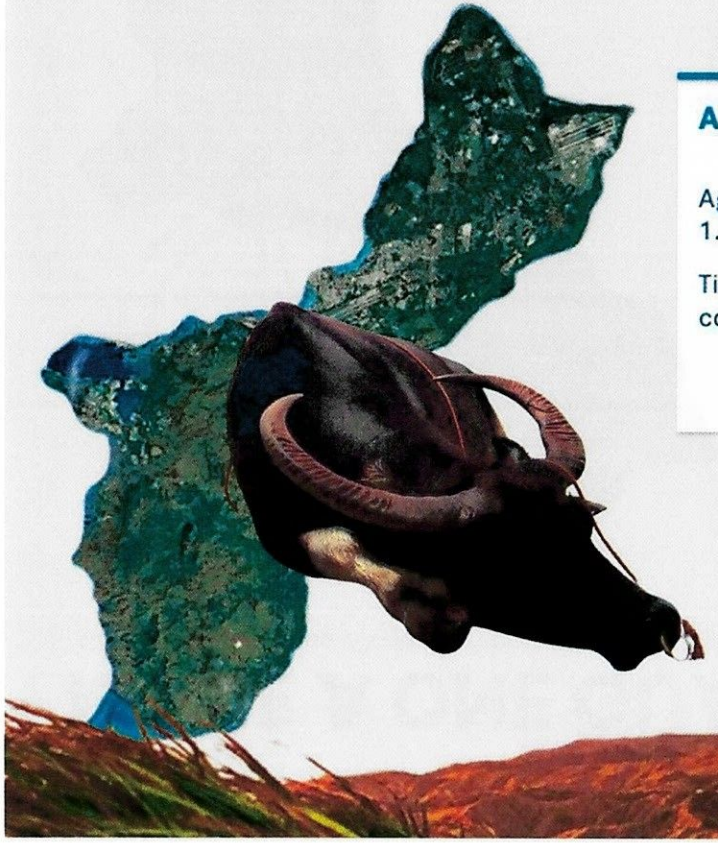
TUMON:
Hotels, restaurants, beaches and entertainment

HAGÅTÑA:
Museum, Spanish/Catholic history and civic culture

SOUTH:
Living heritage, farms, river valley and ocean experiences

RESTORE VIABLE SEATS AND DEPENDABLE GROUND ACCESS

Air capacity and island mobility should be a planned, unified, complementary system



Airline partnerships

Agree gateway and seasonal seat needs using a 1.3M proposed 2030 planning target.

Tie incentives to sustained routes, booking conversion and net-new seats.

Ground mobility

Pilot airport–Tumon links and connections to Hagåtña and the south.

Publish fares, timetables, accessible capacity and digital booking.

HELP LOCAL ENTERPRISES SURVIVE

I Hinanåo-ta Mo'na links economic policy to village cultural transmission and local enterprise.



Tour operators + dining

One-stop permitting and advisory support.

Costed, targeted working-capital options.

Local food, tours and shared booking channels.

Hoteliers + workforce

Prioritize renovation and service quality.

Train guides, hospitality teams and transport staff.

Package stays with paid local experiences.

Cultural practitioners

Pay creators, guides and performers.

Pass cultural knowledge to future generations.

Protect community control of heritage and interpretation.

SELECT PROJECTS THAT MATCH RESIDENT PRIORITIES

Reconcile PKF's investment ideas with the sustainability survey.



Priority	Recommended approach
First: repair and maintain	Public places, existing hotels, safety, accessibility and signs
Next: connect and activate	Transport links, heritage interpretation, tours and local markets
Then: select a flagship	Evaluate a cultural/heritage anchor with feasibility and village input
For any major expansion	Test demand, infrastructure capacity, environmental limits and benefits

PKF's luxury-resort "lighthouse" idea needs reconsideration in light of resident opposition to new hotels.

MATCH FUNDING TO THE JOB AND UPKEEP THE FUNDING

Approve a costed portfolio with clear eligibility, delivery gates and operating budgets.

Funding option	Best proposed use	Condition
Annual public / TAF resources	Visitor services, marketing, maintenance	Confirm eligibility; annual outcomes
Federal grants	Transit, roads, parks, resilience, skills	Match, deadlines and agency readiness
HOT-backed / other bond options	Durable enabling infrastructure	Affordability and debt-service review
PPPs + nonprofit / philanthropy	Attractions, culture and enterprise	Fair risk allocation; funded operation



Guam Experience

BUDGET SUMMARY

#	Budget Item	Amount	Start Date	Duration	Comments
1	90 Day Island-Wide Clean up	$2,500,000.00	1-Nov	90 Days	• Identify Contractor to Continue Maintenance • In partnership with Village Mayors
2	Island-Wide Signage	$1,500,000.00	1-Nov	180 Days	• Major Corridors Identifying Routes, Historic Sites, Points of Interest • Maintenance of "I ❤ Village" Signs
3	Junk Vehicle Removal	$2,500,000.00	1-Nov	180 Days	• GSWA Car Crusher - Initiate Collection
4	Christmas Lighting	$500,000.00	1-Nov	90 Days	• GVB Inventory/ Island Target Nov 15 Launch
5	LEAP III	$30,000,000.00	15-Nov	90 Days	• Administered by GEDA
6	Major Island Wide Event	$3,000,000.00	5-Feb	5 Days	• Major Concert - BTS or Equivalent
	Total	$40,000,000.00			

5 ACTIONS FOR LEGISLATIVE CONSIDERATION

Legislative partnership can put the four cultural pillars into practice.

Action	Concrete Next Step
1. Establish accountability	Define the Commission's mandate with agency and community roles
2. Fund a first-phase program	Interest Free Loans to Stabilize Tourism Ecosystem , mobility and public-place improvement package
3. Enable local enterprises	Review permitting barriers and targeted recovery financing
4. Advance the Guam Experience	Align village plans with cultural transmission and resident stewardship
5. Require public reporting	Quarterly delivery and spending reports; regular resident feedback

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START AND SCALE

Proposed timetable begins after agreement on recovery mandate.

FIRST 30 DAYS

Name the lead and workstream owners.

Refresh arrivals, seats, active businesses and fleet capacity.

Collect stakeholder asks and costs.

DAYS 31–90

Submit the costed program.

Launch targeted cleanliness, signage and mobility pilots.

Select projects using resident-benefit criteria.

6–24 MONTHS

Deliver route partnerships and bookable journeys.

Renovate and activate priority assets.

Scale only after service and funding gates are met.

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INAFA'MAOLEK GUIDES SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

The proposed Commission unites agencies and communities as one island crew.

Mandate

Unite agencies in one program.

Care for land, water, air, sea and people.

Set budgets and deadlines.

Representation

GVB, GIAA, DPW/GRTA, DPR, GEDA and BSP.

Mayors, industry, residents and cultural/environmental partners.

Accountability

Monthly delivery reviews.

Quarterly reports to the Legislature and public.

Escalate barriers and assign corrective action.

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MEASURE RECOVERY BY WHAT GUAM GAINS

The Håfa Adai Legacy makes daily care and local well-being measures of recovery.

Public scorecard	Measures
Access + value	Arrivals, seats, route retention, visitor spend, hotel occupancy
Experience + delivery	Airport/mobility satisfaction, reliability, milestones and maintenance
Community + stewardship	Resident sentiment, local jobs and purchases, cultural/environmental outcomes

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COMMUNITY CENTRIC SOLUTIONS

GUAM

PEOPLE • EXPERIENCE • CULTURE



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