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# 24-Hour Cities Network governance workshop

INSIGHT REPORT

MAY 2022



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# Introduction

This report is the synthesis of insights drawn from the Governance Workshop of the 24-Hour Cities Network on April 28th, 2022. The 2-hour workshop covered a wide variety of topics and included presentations and discussions on how to build effective city governance at night-time. This report is divided into three main sections: framing of governance at night for the discussion, insights from the main case studies presented, and insights from the group discussion that followed.





# Governance at night

*Presentation by Andreina Seijas, Resident Expert*

Urban governance is the process through which different actors in the public and private sectors collaborate to manage cities. When brought into the context of running cities at night, this urban governance principle remains the same.

There is an increasingly large number of actors, organizations, and institutions in the space of all types, with many groups jostling to have their voices heard on how cities are planned and operated at night. Given the proliferation of actors, there is widespread confusion on who can and should do what, which can create resistance to addressing the topic in some cities. However, much of this can be dispelled by addressing three primary myths of night-time governance:

## MYTH #1

### Shorter nights = better nights

The first myth about governance at night-time is that efficient night-time management requires reducing the hours and restricting the locations of night-time activity. This includes actions like imposing curfews and lockdowns and restricting business operation hours. One way to counteract this myth is to highlight examples of cities that have expanded nightlife activity in a strategic way, such as the cities experimenting with the use of time-based licenses. Amsterdam, for example, uses 24-hour licenses that allow venues and establishments to open 24 hours. The city focused on distributing these licenses to neighborhoods outside its crowded city center to redistribute nightlife outside of its busy core. This spreads the benefits of night-time economic activity more widely while also limiting the negative impacts of such dense concentration.





## MYTH #2

## More police means more safety

The second myth is that night-time governance means greater policing and surveillance. There are an ever-increasing number of institutions, mediators, volunteers, and neighborhood groups involved in managing the city at night. However, many cities still try to solve night-time safety issues by deploying more police and surveillance.

This need not be the case. Cities around the world have pioneering examples of non-police public safety organizations, such as Les Pierrots de La Nuit in Paris, the Soho Angels in London, and the Rembrandtplein Square Hosts in Amsterdam. These programs focus on shifting away from strict policing by decentralizing authority and creating different ways to engage with people at night to de-escalate violence.



## MYTH #3

## Night-time is party time

To many, the night is for leisure- lively concerts, fun restaurants, pulsing nightclubs, and rowdy bars. However, this is a very restrictive view of life at night- and requires us to look beyond leisure and entertainment and think of night-time as a time to work, connect with friends and family, and live every aspect of life. In 2016, Colombian think tank Corpovisarios conducted a study in Cali, Colombia asking people what activity they do outside their homes after 8pm. Contrary to the conventional wisdom that this would be cultural or leisure activities like dancing or drinking, the number one activity cited as exercise- running, biking, and going to the gym. Thinking of the night-time solely in terms of partying takes away from the night's vibrancy- and keeps decision-makers from formulating the best night-time governance strategies.



## Moving forward

Part of how we bust these myths and move toward more effective night-time governance is to treat cities at night as just as deserving of effective planning and management as cities during the day. In recent years as more and more cities have taken the topic more seriously, offices of official night mayors, unofficial night mayors, associations, commissions, and councils have proliferated around the world. As a result, a growing cast of actors is involved, and priorities shift based on location and the ecosystem involved. Unfortunately, there are limited resources to address these issues, which is why providing opportunities to collaborate between the public and private sectors, as well as academia and civil society, is becoming increasingly important.

As night-time governance continues to develop, it is crucial to test the feasibility or the applicability of new solutions and find avenues for them to become a reality. Additionally, other considerations should undergird all night-time governance solutions. Sustainability, for example, continues to be a vital point of discussion. Decision-makers must focus on how we can make night-time ecosystem environments safer, more inclusive, more economically sustainable, and prosperous, with an eye toward adhering to the Sustainable Development Goals. It is important to acknowledge that there are regional differences and that they matter. We also need to ensure that night-time governance isn't just a fleeting topic- but that it becomes a permanent fixture of how we govern cities.



## NEW YORK

# Collaborative governments for creative solutions

*Presentation by Ariel Palitz, Executive Director,  
New York City Office of Nightlife*

New York City's Office of Nightlife is a non-enforcement liaison between the city and the nightlife industry created in 2017 through legislation introduced by Councilmember Rafael Espinal and signed by Mayor Bill de Blasio. The genesis was to provide a safe, trusted space for the industry to interact with the city rather than through law and regulation enforcement channels. The idea behind the founding of the office was to see nightlife as an asset rather than a liability and build a more holistic and respectful relationship between the city and the industry.

One of the first actions the office undertook after it was created was a five-borough listening tour to get broad feedback from across the nightlife industry. This included business owners, workers, performers, patrons, and residents. In addition to the Office of Nightlife, the New York State liquor authority and city police, fire, and health departments were invited to the tour to listen to residents as well. The office also held focus groups to do deep dives into key issues and then conducted a comprehensive economic impact study. They found that the industry had over 25,000 liquor-licensed establishments that accounted for \$35.1 billion in economic activity and supported nearly 300,000 jobs in New York City. The combination of listening to real concerns, grievances and ideas coupled with a comprehensive economic impact study helped to provide the feedback that shaped the office's agenda.

"...How does the city create a framework to manage these issues? This led to the formation of a four-pillared agenda to set priorities for the office. These pillars were 1) Supporting business development and recovery, 2) Improving and addressing quality of life issues between venues and residents, 3) Promoting safety, equity, and harm reduction, and 4) Elevating and preserving nightlife culture."

This effort brought into focus the vastness of the industry and raised the question- How does the city create a framework to manage these issues? This led to the formation of a four-pillared agenda to set priorities for the office. These pillars were 1) Supporting business development and recovery, 2) Improving and addressing quality of life issues between venues and residents, 3) Promoting safety, equity, and harm reduction, and 4) Elevating and preserving nightlife culture.

From this, the office moved into action meant to address the holistic issues that were present pre-pandemic but have only grown in urgency since the worst of the pandemic has subsided. This began by developing MASH (multi-agency support for hospitality)- a dedicated multi-agency nightlife working group that meets every six weeks to discuss how agencies work with each other and with industry to improve self-correction, avoid redundancies, and identify systemic solutions while addressing individual issues. This group also provides a central point of contact with each agency to provide one-on-one case management for individual venues when they experience issues with key city and state agencies. Additionally, in response to accountability and transparency concerns of activists and venue operators, it also provides transparency reporting on M.A.R.C.H (multi-agency response to community hotspots) operations- a police department-led law enforcement program.

The office also created MEND (mediating establishment and neighborhood disputes) to improve the complaint-driven process of night-time quality-of-life law enforcement. With the current system, complaints calls are logged, and the police are dispatched in the early hours of the morning, leading to a situation where few of the underlying issues are resolved. MEND introduces a mediation process that can work with venues and residents to directly communicate and compromise. MEND is run in partnership with the Center of Creative Conflict Resolution in the Office of Arbitration Trials and Hearings, which took the city judges in their mediation division and gave them a more public-facing role, allowing city residents to resolve quality of life issues without involving law enforcement.

The office has also focused on a harm reduction strategy for illicit drugs in partnership with the city Department of Health by providing free Narcan and naloxone kits and test strip training and access. The Narcan Behind Every Bar Campaign trains workers on how to use Narcan brings awareness to the issues involved, and dispels stigma. By bringing together the key groups involved, including the police, all stakeholders can work to address concerns and ensure that a life-saving harm reduction approach is being taken.

"If cities can govern nightlife as the essential part of the fabric of a city that it is, rather than a luxury, we can continue to build healthy, well-governed 24-hour cities."

In addition to these large initiatives, there are plenty of solutions that may seem small but have the potential to hugely improve the governance of cities at night. This includes providing permits for temporary cultural events or repealing outdated laws that prohibit dancing at particular venues in certain parts of the city. Another small but mighty improvement is the standardization of the business application process for Community Boards. Community Boards are neighborhood-based advisory bodies in New York City that consult elected officials and government agencies on issues in a particular district and have a say in approving new liquor licenses. The Office of Nightlife is now working with the city's elected officials to create a standard, business-friendly process to replace the different processes each of the 59 boards currently utilize.

As cities emerge from the pandemic, it is important for city governments to acknowledge how much the nightlife industry has been through in the last few years and how much collaboration and support is needed for this vital sector of the urban economy. If cities can govern nightlife as the essential part of the fabric of a city that it is, rather than a luxury, we can continue to build healthy, well-governed 24-hour cities. Government agencies that are ready and willing to collaborate within, outside of, and between governments to develop and implement creative, innovative solutions will allow their cities to reap the benefits of a robust night-time economy.



## MELBOURNE

# Activating advisors and building knowledge partnerships

*Presentation by Michele Acuto, Director,  
Melbourne Centre for Cities, University of Melbourne*

Melbourne topped indices of the world's most livable city for years, and its nightlife was a key component of these accolades. The shutdown of nightlife during the COVID-19 pandemic hugely affected the city and its identity. Much of the recovery has been supported by the efforts of the Melbourne Night-time Economy Advisory Committee, an advisory council that sits outside of the official city government that advises the city on night-time issues. The committee represents and guides the city, particularly on major investments the city is making. Given that Melbourne does not have a designated "Night Mayor" or nightlife office, the committee chairman, committee and its various partners serve that function for the city. The committee has focused its efforts on reviving the heart of the city and designing programs that match the night-time economy goals with the larger aspirations for Melbourne as a city while supporting its unique character.

One of these programs, Flash Forward, used art installations by local artists to draw people to Melbourne's lesser know laneways- unique pedestrian streets throughout the city that are replete with shops, cafes, bars, and restaurants and that suffered greatly during COVID-related lockdowns that closed 20% of the city's businesses. Planning controls were suspended to encourage the opening of shops. The program is an example of the importance of not simply spending money to solve a problem but of building creative partnerships between stakeholders.

"As we shift the frame of thinking about night-time economies from how to deal with nightlife to how to manage a holistic 24-hour city, knowledge partnerships are an important mechanism for producing innovative ideas."

Another important aspect of Melbourne's approach to governing the night-time economy is its physical and philosophical proximity to major academic institutions. For instance, the University of Melbourne's School of Design studio produced the report that became the primary terms of reference for the Night-time Economy Advisory Committee. The university is also very involved in a program called Project Night Justice, which focuses on improving the safety and well-being of women, trans women, and other members of the LGBTIQ+ community, similar to other programs like London's Good Night Out Campaign. The university is also using federal funding to explore ways to design better environments for night shift workers.

Knowledge partnerships between government entities and universities allow for greater experimentation, research and solution building without being heavily constrained by policymaking and politics. As we shift the frame of thinking about night-time economies from how to deal with nightlife to how to manage a holistic 24-hour city, knowledge partnerships are an important mechanism for producing innovative ideas. Melbourne's effective combination of an advisory group that sits outside of government and knowledge partnerships with a local university is a good example of building night-time governance without an official city agency.



## MONTREAL

# Citizen organizations and civic engagement

*Mathieu Grondin, General Director, Montreal 24/24*

Active civic groups also have a major role in ensuring a successfully managed night-time economy. In Montreal, a group of friends created a non-profit citizen organization called Montreal 24/24 to support the nightlife industry community and develop the night-time economy. The group now has a partnership with Montreal's economic development agency and funding from the city to help Montreal develop a nightlife policy. Montreal 24/24 commissions research studies, runs a night council, provides workshops, plans summits, and undertakes pilot projects.

One of the most important aspects of Montreal 24/24's work is the citizen participatory process, which is primarily work done through the Night Council. Unlike similar councils in other cities, the Night Council does not represent industry but is composed of 12 citizens with a variety of experience in nightlife, from artists to venue owners, public health experts, and academia. The Council was formed during the pandemic and is divided into four committees 1) Permanent spaces (venues, bars, and clubs) 2) Temporary initiatives, festivals, and events 3) Health, safety inclusion, and diversity and 4) Living at night. The original Council members were selected, but going forward, they will be elected with the first election planned for autumn 2022.

“Even citizen-developed and led groups have the power to help shape night-time governance policy, and when they can find governments that want to work collaboratively with them, their power only grows.”

Their mandate is to listen to opinions and provide recommendations on different topics related to nightlife. One of the primary ways the night council interfaces with the community is to hold a yearly event called the Open Mic. All of the citizens of Montreal are invited to take the mic and share their experiences of nightlife, positive or negative, and their vision for the future.

The Council also organizes Montreal Au Sommet De La Nuit, an event that gathers leaders from around the world to talk about night-time governance and to learn about different practices around the globe. At this year's event, Montreal 24/24 will also be using this venue to pilot Montreal's first 24-hour license by throwing a 24-hour party that will feature more than 30 local artists. The idea behind the 24-hour license is not just to extend the fun for patrons but help foster emerging talents and provide more opportunities for those that work at night-time. Instead of limiting the window for night-time cultural flourishing to a few hours a couple of nights a week, a 24-hour license provides the opportunity for more broad-based participation in the night-time economy. The event will also serve as an opportunity to gather data and insights about the effects of a 24-hour license on business revenues, public safety, and effective mobility.

In the future, the ambition is to set zones in the city to have 24-hour sectors. This is an important step in protecting small independent venues and ensuring they're not at risk of being closed by noise complaints. The hope is that this pilot project will be the first step to extending this scheme more permanently and, in the next year or a year and a half, to have a permanent nightlife policy.

Even citizen-developed and led groups have the power to help shape night-time governance policy, and when they can find governments that want to work collaboratively with them, their power only grows. Montreal 24/24 is a great example of how citizen action on night-time governance can lead to long-lasting government-backed results in the absence of a permanent government apparatus.



# Discussion

## Finding funding

Funding is also a major issue in supporting the night-time economy, and in some cases, there is tension between public and private sources. Many cities are happy to leverage public funds to make improvements that directly support private businesses. In Sydney, Australia, for example, the city had "Night-time diversification" and "Live music and performance" grants to support small entertainment businesses with upgrades meant to improve their spaces and pilot new types of entertainment. This support can include upgrading event spaces, support for event production, acoustic improvements, and health and safety projects. This policy incentivizes extra measures that improve the business while also adding benefits that the city would otherwise want, like safety improvements and noise reduction. There is even power in cities working together to lobby higher levels of government for support- Groningen, the Netherlands, has also found success in partnering with other dutch cities to lobby for funds and support from the national government on supporting night-time economies.

However, in some cities, getting the government to invest funds in private businesses is more difficult. It often takes creative action from civil society to show cities the value of such programs. In Vilnius, Lithuania, the city government is readily willing to invest funds in public art and culture, but the city has traditionally been very hesitant to use government money in support of private business. Given that funding from the government can often incentivize establishments to implement things they cannot be otherwise compelled to do, outside groups looked for ways to prove the efficacy of these types of governance tactics.

“Resistance often stems from misunderstandings of the function of night-time businesses and a feeling of disconnection between night-time businesses and their surrounding communities. Solving this requires working with and in communities to help them understand, demystify the night, and help communities realize the benefits of the night economy.”

The Vilnius Night Alliance worked with the city to develop the municipally-led “More than a Bar” program to give bars a door sticker for providing extra staff training that is not required by law, for example, sexual harassment prevention. The sticker will provide the bars with a special status and includes a code that can be scanned to understand how the bar is putting in extra effort. This provides the dual benefit of educating patrons and helping the city government quantify the additional positive actions businesses are willing to take when incentivized, making the argument for city financial support easier.

## Demystifying the night

One of the biggest barriers to implementing proposals that further support the night-time economy is resistance from residents. This resistance often stems from misunderstandings of the function of night-time businesses and a feeling of disconnection between night-time businesses and their surrounding communities. Solving this requires working with and in communities to help them understand, demystify the night, and help communities realize the benefits of the night economy.

In Groningen, proponents of night-time businesses have focused on building a broad spectrum of political support. The city has found success by emphasizing the business and safety benefits with right-leaning groups and the cultural aspects with those on the left. This has been crucial to the successful implementation of 24-hour licenses that have been in place since 1983. The scheme has brought the city a variety of benefits that please all sides. Right-leaning groups can appreciate the increased economic growth that comes from a longer period of daily economic activity, as well as the benefits to safety as the increased amount of people on the streets at all hours disincentivized crime. The flourishing culture pleases those on the left as more artists, and cultural sector workers have flowed into the city to take advantage of the increased opportunity. Emphasizing the many benefits in a way different groups can understand is important for creating broad-based buy-in for implementing beneficial night-time governance policies.

While working with the most active and vocal sectors of a city’s citizenry is important, it is also useful to educate surrounding communities on what goes on in businesses at night. This makes it easier for them to relate to the benefits and helps them understand what supporting the night-time economy means for them. In Zurich, night-time businesses participate in Open Club Day. Bars and venues open one day per year in the afternoon and invite the neighbors to come and see what happens behind the scenes. It often includes children’s discos where families can take their children to play in the club and give them a glimpse of what it is like to produce music and entertainment. Strategies like these help neighbors and politicians understand why night-time businesses can be a positive for them and their families.

## Lessons from COVID

As for nearly all sectors of the economy, the COVID-19 pandemic had a huge effect on the night-time economy, with many businesses that operated primarily at night brushing closer than most to existential crisis. While many of the dire predictions made about the demise of nightlife at the height of the pandemic did not come to pass, night-time business still used the time as a moment of reflection, and many have come back with a different approach than before the pandemic. Discussions around topics like diversity, inclusion, and social justice in nightlife have led to new commitments for how business is conducted. The right to be safe at work or at play during the night and the right to move freely are just a few of the issues that are top of mind for all involved in night-time cities.

COVID-19 also accelerated the development and implementation of a variety of innovative ideas that will remain an integral part of night-time city life around the world. Through Bogota 24h (the city's night-time office) Bogotá, Colombia, undertook 13 pilot projects to help spur the economic recovery of the city, with nightlife at the forefront, but also introduced a "Night at the Museum" concept during the pandemic that will also become a recurring feature of Bogotá nightlife.

Bogotá A Cielo Abierto was another project the city undertook in 50 areas of the city to support restaurants and bars as they recovered from the pandemic that will provide valuable insights into policies that can help the city's economy long-term. The initiative focused on ways to support businesses using open-air city spaces for patrons that will outlast the pandemic and include a new legislatively-approved licensing process.

## Making change permanent

One of the most significant issues facing effective night-time governance is ensuring the staying power of 24-hour policies, strategies, and implementors. In many cities, night mayors and offices of nightlife are not written in legislation and can often be shut down between city administrations. It is important that the work that these offices do is sustainable while they exist so that it can survive from administration to administration. For those whose offices are not guaranteed, it is important to demonstrate the value of the office to the wider government. One approach is emphasizing the value of coordinating inside, outside, and in between the government and the private sector. The ability to bring together businesses, community groups, police, the health department etc. is rare and should be highlighted. As is the role such offices can play as a conduit between industry and government. It is also worth stressing the support these offices give in encouraging industry to take more of a leadership role in policymaking and solutions.

Additionally, the way in which night-time offices are created needs to be reoriented. Too often, they are reactive in nature- a city sees its problems at night and creates an office to help solve them. As the field of research and understanding around night-time economies continues to develop, cities must move from simply addressing night-time problems to actually building proactive, affirmative programs and policies to support and foster robust night-time activity with a particular focus on how to turn short-term pandemic interventions into long-term more permanent change.

Part of this involves providing decision-makers with data and evidence in formats they can understand. The ideas from the community of night-time activists, thinkers, and professionals need to be translated into facts and figures for policymakers to ensure a cohesive conversation. In Philadelphia, a partnership between the Philadelphia Department of Planning and Development and the University of Pennsylvania has enabled research across a variety of topics from mobility and zoning. This partnership enables experts to be able to walk into politicians' offices to give data-backed presentations about how to take advantage of the various opportunities presented by a 24-hour city in their area of responsibility- as well as the losses incurred by not taking a proactive stance toward night-time economic development. These types of partnerships can be an important initial step in setting up night-time governance bodies. In the case of Philadelphia, the findings of this research partnership became the founding set of principles that established the city's night-time economy office.

However, it is also important to recognize the role that organizations outside of government can play in the continuity of night-time governance. These organizations often precede and catalyze the creation of official night-time governance apparatuses. Their role remains important while official agencies operate, particularly if they are eliminated or downsized. Their proactive work can be a source of innovation and accountability for government counterparts, no matter the direction of city government.

## Conclusion

City life doesn't stop when the sun goes down- in fact, it only gets richer. From the \$35.1 billion in economic activity generated in New York City to the laugh shared with a long-lost friend at a restaurant table in a public plaza in Bogota- supporting cities at night has benefits for the city-wide economy and our relationship with our family, friends, and neighbors. Effective governance is key to reaping these benefits. Building effective strategies to develop governance will be crucial for any city looking to be a true 24-Hour city. Whether this be building out government night-time offices, creating government-sponsored outside advisory groups, or leveraging citizen-led initiatives that push the city to act, it's up to the whole community to develop quality night-time cities. Particularly in the wake of the COVID-19, 24-hour economic development is crucial for a global urban economy still scarred by lockdowns, population shifts, and business closures. Creating the right frameworks, policies, and initiatives to support 24-hour cities will ensure they thrive for all residents- day and night.



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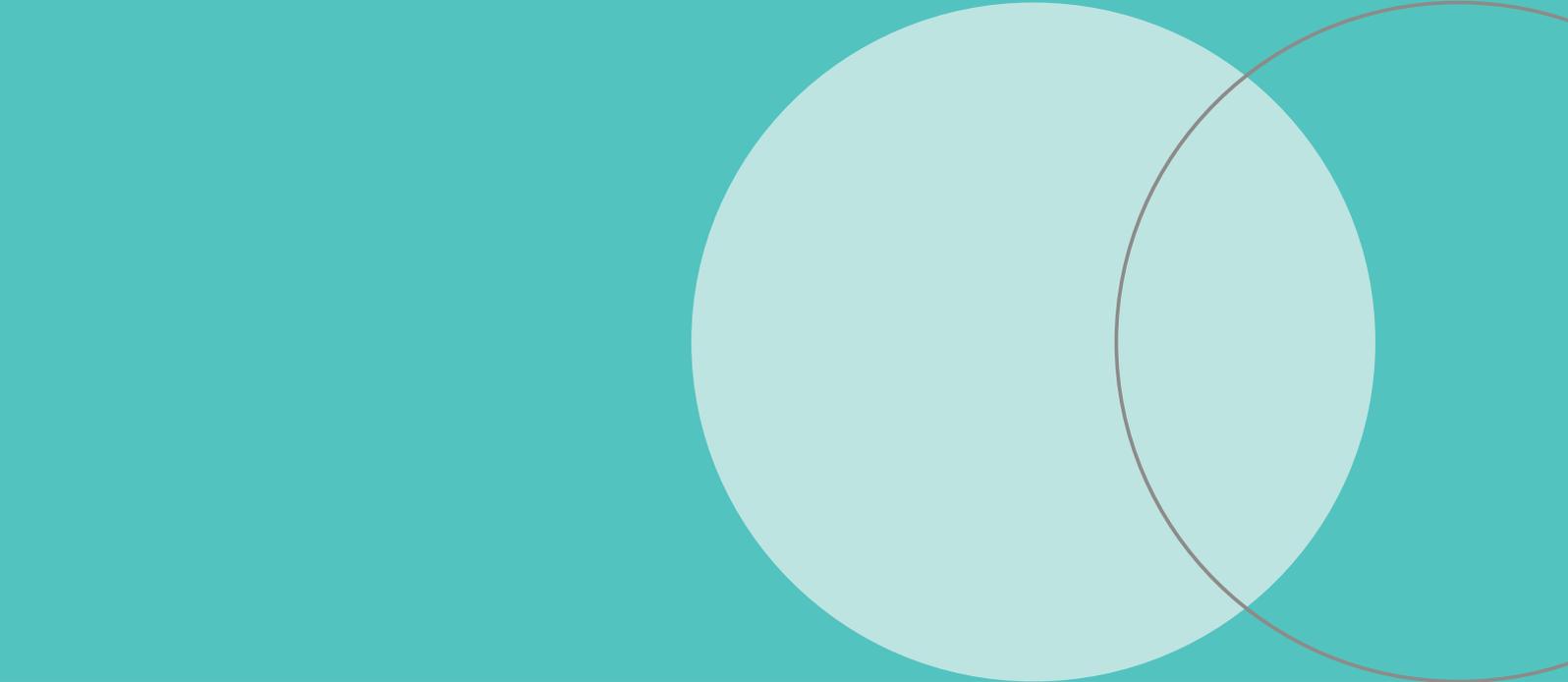
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## About the 24-Hour Cities Network

The 24-Hour Cities Network is a multistakeholder group of urban leaders who, supported by City Possible, gather to share best practices and co-create new solutions to address the challenges cities face at night. Through workshops and thought leadership production, the Network will help cities understand how to create strategies and set policies that ensure their cities are as safe, prosperous, inclusive, and enjoyable at night as they are during the day.

## About City Possible

City Possible™, pioneered by Mastercard, is a new model for urban innovation in which a global network of cities, businesses, academics, and communities work together to make the world's cities more inclusive and sustainable. Find out more at [www.citypossible.com](http://www.citypossible.com).



## Helpful links

[The Urban Night Events and Publications](#)

[Nights Conference 2022](#)

[New York City Office of Nightlife Report 2018-2021](#)

[Montreal 24/24](#)

[The University of Melbourne Centre for Cities](#)

[Melbourne Night-time Economy Advisory Committee](#)

[Project Night Justice](#)

[Philadelphia Nightlife Data Dashboard](#)

[Open Club Day](#)

[Measuring and Analysing the Nighttime City](#)

[New York City's Nightlife Economy Impact, Assets, and Opportunities](#)

[New South Wales 24-Hour Economy Commissioner Year in Review](#)

[Managing Cities at Night  
A Practitioner Guide to the Urban Governance of the  
Night-Time Economy](#)



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