

**North American brands fuel London’s “West End Powerhouse”,
set to contribute \$14bn (£11bn) to UK GDP by 2020**

[New West End Company senior team attending ICSC ReCon event in New York 4-6th Dec 2016]

- London’s West End on track to be the first retail district in the world to generate \$14 billion USD (£11 billion GBP) annual turnover by 2020
- London’s West End has introduced over 15 North American brands in the last 12 months
- Iconic Regent Street in the West End has been described as London’s equivalent of Fifth Avenue NYC
- American tourists are forecast to collectively be the biggest international spenders in London’s West End during the forthcoming busy festive period
- London’s high-speed Elizabeth line (Crossrail) is set to open in 2018 and will provide expedited and easier access to the area, with journeys between London Heathrow Airport and the West End

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New York, 06 December 2016 – New West End Company, the leading business voice for London’s West End retail heartland, confirmed that it is on track to be the first retail district in the world to generate \$14 billion USD (£11 billion GBP) annual turnover by 2020, in New York today. The West End already generates \$11.8bn USD (£8.8bn GBP) in annual sales from its six hectares – totaling more GVA (Gross Value Added) than the City of London and equal to the whole country of Wales. Much of this is attributed to the recent openings of prime North American flagship stores, and waiting for the imminent completion of the new Elizabeth line (Crossrail), which is expected to open at the end of 2018.

New West End Company represents more than 600 businesses behind the world’s largest retail destination across 25 streets, including the iconic Bond, Oxford and Regent Streets.

New West End Company announced that it expects an additional 60 million visits to the world’s leading retail destination when the Elizabeth line opens at the end of 2018 - a 30% increase on the 200 million visitors currently welcomed annually. The high-speed rail line will run beneath the West End, and brings

Bond Street to within just 30 minutes of Heathrow Airport, allowing much easier access for international guests. The opening of the Elizabeth line has also been a catalyst for 2.5 million sq ft of new and refurbished commercial development across the West End.

New store openings in the West End – Predominantly North American brands

North American brands account for more than 15 of the 41 West End store openings in the last 12 months, confirming its position as a global destination for international flagship brands. The West End provides the most prosperous environment for retailers and investors looking to operate in one of the highest-profile and iconic showrooms in global retail – regularly outperforming New York, Dubai and Paris.

Regent Street has seen important North American brands opening this year including Kate Spade, Michael Kors, Polo Ralph Lauren, Coach and the re-opening of the Apple store, with Lululemon and Tory Burch opening their doors in the coming months. Oxford Street also welcomed the arrival of Tesla, New Balance, Timberland and Sketchers, while Bond Street had a significant year with Harry Winston unveiling its recently renovated flagship salon.

Tourism in London's West End

London's West End experienced an unprecedented increase in sales and footfall in the months post-BREXIT. The weakened pound resulted in double digit growth for many retailers in this period. London's West End is already a hot-spot for retail tourism with a substantial \$5.3 billion (£3.3 billion) of the \$11.8 billion (£8.8 billion) annual sales generated in the area coming from international visitors.

Spend by American tourists has increased steeply throughout the year due to a variety factors, including events tailored to North American customers like the NFL Block Party in October, which attracted tens of thousands of American football fans for a traffic-free party on Regent Street, complete with marching bands, a mini football field, interactive sports challenges and competitions. Moreover, in the months immediately following the EU referendum, the depreciation of the British pound caused American sales to grow by 73% YOY. This trend is believed to continue with US tourists forecasted to be one of London's highest spenders during the Christmas trading period.

Speaking in New York at the ICSC ReCon event for global retail, Chief Executive of New West End Company, Jace Tyrrell, commented *“Our focus remains to champion the success of this extraordinary district – the largest retail destination anywhere in the world, and where capital investment meets world class retail. The West End's contribution to the UK's overall economy is significant – a veritable ‘West End*

Powerhouse' even when compared to other major locations and countries. We are currently championing the Mayor of London Sadiq Khan's '#LondonIsOpen' campaign outside the UK here at ICSC New York, to drive inward investment and keep open door policies and access to London's West End. It is an exciting time for the area, and we are looking ahead to the future and what this will bring to the iconic retail destination."

Also speaking in New York at the ICSC ReCon event for global retail, David Shaw - Chair of New West End Company's Property Steering Group - added *"We have seen continued investment into the West End over the last 12 months - underpinned by strong rental growth with retailers such as Polo Ralph Lauren, Coach, Tesla and Michael Kors all taking new space. This is a clear indicator that the West End is a key flagship location for destination retail, with global brands eager for representation in the district."*

As the authoritative voice on global retail and leisure, New West End Company's aim is to drive the change to create a truly unique and inspirational West End experience, unlock barriers for economic growth, and further strengthen the commercial success of the area.

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