MINUTES
Visit SLO CAL Advisory Committee Meeting

Visit SLO CAL Advisory Committee Meeting
Thursday, December 4, 2025
3:30 pm – 5:00 pm
VSC Office, 81 Higuera St, Ste 220, San Luis Obispo, CA

1. CALL TO ORDER

PRESENT: Kathy McCorry-Driscoll, Matt Bronson, Matthew Downing, Jamie Maraviglia, Carla Wixom, Jorge Garcia, Stacy Inman, Steve Gregory, Chris Huot, Whitney McDonald, Mark Dariz (arrived after Consent Agenda)

ABSENT: Erica A. Stewart, Andrea Lueker, Jim Lewis, Matt Pontes, Dawn Ortiz-Legg

STAFF PRESENT: Cathy Cartier, Annie Braunschweig, Molly Cano, Lisa Belsanti, Emily Rudge, Whitney Chaney, Matt Halvorson, Kristen Carlson, Aleigh Hogan

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Hemant Patel, Pragna Patel-Mueller, Sean Dasmann, Toni LeGras-Price, Jed Bickel, Amar Sohi, Clint Pearce, Kathy Kelly

MARKETING COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Linda Parker-Sanpei, Michael Wambolt, Stacie Jacob, Cheryl Cuming, Leann Standish, Terrie Banish, Laura Fiedler, Kathleen Naughton, Ashlee Akers,

MEMBERS OF PUBLIC PRESENT: Tracy Dauterman, Jocelyn Brennan

Call to order by Amar Sohi at 3:32pm

2. PUBLIC COMMENT (On Non-Agenda Items)

None.

CONSENT AGENDA

3. Approval of June 12, 2025 Advisory Committee Minutes

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion.

ACTION: Moved by **Huot/Garcia** to approve the Consent Agenda.

Motion carried: 10:0 (Dariz not present for vote)

Business Items

4. Visit SLO CAL Updates

Cartier announced that the new 2026 Visitor Magazine will be released on January 5, 2026, with 50,000 copies printed, and shared the ten-year TMD Anniversary video which was shared at the SLO CAL Summit. Cartier provided a TMD renewal update, noting that the timeline has shifted to beginning in calendar year 2027. Cartier shared several feedback items from the TMD renewal Steering Committee and reviewed the renewal timeline for each quarter of calendar year 2027. Cartier introduced Jocelyn Brennan of HRM Consultants and shared how she will be assisting with the renewal process in a consultant role. Cartier shared a SLO CAL Summit recap which featured attendee breakdown by industry and thanked everyone for their attendance. Braunschweig shared an overview of the Tourism Economics Lodging Forecast and Economic Impact Study, highlighting that the Economic Impact Report includes annual visitation with trends over the past five years, visitor spending by industry for 2025, economic impacts for 2025, and will be delivered in Q1 2026. Braunschweig noted that the Lodging Forecast includes lodging performance indicators through 2027 and includes both hotels and short-term rentals, with delivery set for mid-December. Braunschweig highlighted the initial findings of the lodging forecast which included that supply is expected to outpace demand through 2026, there's an estimated 2.5% and 3.5% increase in total room revenue in 2026 and 2027 and short-term rentals are currently out-performing hotels in YOY growth in all categories (occupancy, ADR, RevPAR, and total room revenue). Cartier provided an update on Highway 1 which included successfully advocating for updated signage and shared several ideas for an activation event upon the upcoming full reopening of Highway 1. Cartier shared an update on Strategic Direction 2029 which will be finalized with the Board and Marketing Committee in January. Cartier highlighted that the main verbiage within the vision, mission and values remained the same, with one slight change to the mission language. Cartier reviewed the feedback from the SD 2029 partner survey which was conducted by Matthew Landkamer of Whereabout. Cartier shared the lodging pipeline data with projections of rooms by year from 2026 to 2031. Cano provided several marketing updates which included the new brand campaign, Turns Well Taken, and shared a Spartan Race recap and the upcoming SLO CAL Open surf competition. Cartier shared the recent event fee increases that the County is implementing for outdoor events in unincorporated areas such as Spartan Race, noting that events at places such as Santa Margarita Ranch could be impacted, and VSC is working with Spartan and the County to find a positive solution. Cano shared updates from the Sales team which included a UK Reverse Sales Mission, various trade shows attended, and a meeting planner FAM.

What feedback do you have on Visit SLO CAL's plan for FY 2026?

Committee Discussion.
McDonald inquired about sports events being done in the state and upcoming partnerships with Visit California. Cano replied that Visit California has a few programs that VSC is interested in, some with individual partners and some with local DMOs, as well as a few paid media and PR opportunities such as influencers coming into the region for experiences. Cartier noted that she recently met with Cal Poly and the Qatar Olympic team, as they are considering using Cal Poly for their Olympic training facility.

McDonald asked if VSC's marketing efforts will be the same for the Olympics as with the World Cup, and Cartier confirmed that both will be focused on equally. Cano noted that each community should encourage local businesses to host watch parties. Garcia commented that community viewing rights for sporting events is difficult through local affiliates and it's expensive; Garcia requested that perhaps Visit California can help with that aspect. Garcia commented that an inflatable screen to show the World Cup on the beach would be extremely helpful, specifically if the region can take a unique experience such as the World Cup and make it their own. Garcia suggested viewing locations such as the Oceano Dunes, the Atascadero Zoo, the Sunset Drive-In, wineries, etc.

McDonald inquired about an update on VSC identifying a signature event. Cartier responded that a landing page on the VSC website was created so that if an event producer would like to bring an event to SLO CAL, they are instructed on the process and correct contacts. Cartier noted that a dedicated staff member and a large amount of seed money is needed if VSC truly were to bring a signature event to this region. Cartier commented

that an external resource would likely need to be hired to bring an outside event such as a marathon. Cartier praised Pismo Beach for the sand art festival, noting that it was a brilliant activation and relatively inexpensive. Inman commented that perhaps a charity that does a long form bike ride, running or walking event would be a viable solution.

Bronson praised VSC's work overall, stating that it is impressive and VSC is knocking it out of the park, and shared that VSC did a great job at the SLO CAL Summit. Bronson also thanked Cartier and the team for pausing the TMD Renewal efforts and their willingness to adapt and modify the plan in order to best position the region for success.

Cartier thanked Bronson and shared that it was a great learning opportunity and feels that there is stability now in order to have hard conversations both internally and at the Advisory Committee table. Cartier encouraged the Committee to continue to speak up and have hard conversations so that VSC is aware when things are getting off track. Cartier commented that when thinking about the ten-year TMD Renewal video and all that VSC has accomplished in the past ten years, it's exciting to think about what can be done in another ten years.

5. Advocacy Conversations

Belsanti provided several legislative updates: AB 1008, SB 346, SB 294, and AB 518.

What overall feedback do you have on these items?

Where and how would you like to partner with Visit SLO CAL in the coming year on this work?

Committee Discussion. None.

6. Experience SLO CAL 2050 Conversations

Belsanti provided updates on several ESC 2050 initiatives: the Tourism Industry Workforce, Last Mile Working Group, Countywide Trails, Sustainable Tourism Toolkit, and SLO CAL Welcome. Cartier shared several airport and air service development updates including a paid media example of the San Diego market which help illustrate a direct correlation between a paid media airport investment which helped bolster tourism in SLO CAL amongst visitors coming from San Diego. Cartier shared an update on the Volaire Air Service conference which takes place in April and shared a recap of Cano's attendance in November at the TakeOff Air Service Conference.

What overall feedback do you have on the direction of this work?

Where and how would you like to partner with Visit SLO CAL in the coming year?

Committee Discussion. Garcia asked if Committee members can provide input on the trails and parking, as there have been several issues with the unofficial trails. Cartier confirmed that that exercise was done a few years ago and will be done again, with efforts to make sure that there aren't more trails in existence that VSC isn't aware of. Cartier noted that VSC aims to work with an app that already exists to have all of the SLO CAL trails in one place, and that this will be accomplished between January and June of 2026, as it is the last piece of Strategic Direction 2026 to be completed.

Cartier shared the next meeting date:

ADJOURN 5:02pm