MINUTES
Visit SLO CAL Advisory Committee Meeting

Visit SLO CAL Advisory Committee Meeting
Thursday, June 12, 2025
3:30 pm – 5:00 pm
VSC Office, 81 Higuera St, Ste 220, San Luis Obispo, CA

1. CALL TO ORDER

PRESENT: Jorge Garcia, Chris Huot, Stacy Inman, Mark Dariz, Jim Lewis, Kathy McCorry-Driscoll, Matt Bronson, Matt Pontes, Matt Downing, Whitney McDonald, Carla Wixom (arrived after Consent Agenda at 3:40 pm), Dawn Ortiz-Legg (arrived after Consent Agenda at 4:00pm),

ABSENT: Steve Gregory, Erica A. Stewart, Jamie Maraviglia, Yvonne Kimball

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

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Mark Eads, Kimberly Walker, Jim Hamilton, Clint Pearce, Hemant Patel, Vic Popp, Jed Bickel, Amar Sohi

MARKETING COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Linda Parker- Sanpei, Cheryl Cuming, Michael Wambolt, Gordon Jackson, Jacqui Clark-Charlesworth, Ashlee Akers, Joel Peterson, Leann Standish, Courtney Pene, Terrie Banish

MEMBERS OF PUBLIC PRESENT: Charles Amian, Tracy Dauterman, Kathy Kelly, Kate Secrest

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Call to order by Mark Eads at 3:32pm

2. PUBLIC COMMENT (On Non-Agenda Items)

None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cartier announced that the SLO CAL Summit is taking place on November 13 and shared a reminder to complete the Partner Satisfaction Survey.

CONSENT AGENDA

3. Approval of December 12, 2024 Advisory Committee Minutes

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion.

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

Motion carried: 10:0 (Ortiz-Legg and Wixom not present for vote)

Business Items

4. Visit SLO CAL Update

Cartier, Cano, Belsanti and Braunschweig presented an overview of the FY 2026 Business and Marketing Plan, which was recently approved by the Board of Directors. They shared highlights from each of the four objectives and their respective strategies along with strategies for each department including Integrated Marketing, Sales, PR and social media, Film SLO CAL, Experience SLO CAL 2050, Partnership and Events, Advocacy, and shared a FY 26 budget overview. Cano provided an update on the new brand campaign which has a new tagline ("Turns Well Taken"), based on partner feedback. Cano highlighted Film SLO CAL updates and shared the new Film SLO CAL video. Cartier shared an update on Strategic Direction 2029, noting the timeline for the project kickoff and reminding the Committee of how the three-year plan informs each area of work.

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

Committee Discussion. Lewis complimented Cano and the team for the Business and Marketing Plan and thanked the team for their willingness to listen to feedback and pivot the brand campaign tagline from "Detourists Welcome" to "Turns Well Taken." Lewis commented that it is indicative of true collaboration, and the new tagline provides clearer messaging.

5. Advocacy Conversations

Belsanti provided several advocacy updates highlighting recent meetings with key government leaders such as Congressman Jimmy Panetta, Congressman Salud Carbajal and Senator John Laird. Belsanti highlighted the HWY 1 Task Force scope of work, shared an update on AB 1008, and provided a Last Mile Working Group recap.

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. Ortiz-Legg asked if the bill that supports bars staying open until 4:00 AM is being tracked and supported by Visit SLO CAL as we look ahead to the Olympics. Chaney replied that CalTravel Association is tracking it, and Belsanti commented that it must pass in the state first, followed by communities opting in. Cartier noted that VSC will continue to track it along with CalTravel and this is an important issue for attracting corporate business as well, especially as preparations continue for the Volaire Air Service Conference in April of 2026.

6. Tourism Marketing District Renewal

Cartier shared an overview of the current county wide room share and estimated added room share by 2031 and explained the process for renewing the current TMD. Cartier highlighted the opportunity to renew early and why the need was there, what the project scope would look like, and what Civitas' recommendations were for the timeline and process. Cartier shared the proposed changes for the TMD and explained the reasons for the adjustments. Braunschweig shared the current local rates by community, various other California destinations, and several state-wide district stats. Cartier highlighted the next steps for future input and support as the TMD renewal project begins.

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. Inman asked why the district is 10 years and Braunschweig confirmed it is tied to city and county code, Inman asked for the code numbers which Braunschweig provided. Garcia expressed concern about the increased assessment and suggested adding a fee on rental cars at the airport and shared his concerns about the imbalance of most of the new inventory coming to Paso Robles, and while Pismo Beach is not growing as much. Lewis commented that all communities should be concerned about the new inventory coming, suggested more community engagement earlier in the process, and asked for clarity on where the new funds would go. Huot commented that Paso Robles will add about 1,300 rooms with 500 under construction in 2026. Huot voiced his concern over the aggressive timeline, commenting that Paso Robles City Council has been concerned that Paso Robles may begin to generate more revenue but not see the ROI back. Sohi commented that as a lodging owner, 1,300 rooms is alarming and while the local BIDs do a great job, the main bulk of the marketing work is done through VSC, and everyone needs to continue to think as a region. Cartier reminded the Committee that marketing spend must remain the central budget priority. Cartier reiterated that the goal is not “kingdom building” but to remain committed to collaboration, transparency, and driving demand. Inman voiced concern over the quick timeline and noted that more education is needed for city council members. Cartier replied that no one is married to the timeline but reminded the Committee that the timeline was created by Civitas, who conducts this process all over California and the United States.

Cartier shared the next meeting date: December 4, 2025

ADJOURN 5:13pm