



MINUTES

Visit SLO CAL Executive Committee

Visit SLO CAL Executive Committee Meeting

Thursday, January 8, 2026

12:00pm – 2:00pm

Visit SLO CAL Office – 81 Higuera Street, Suite 220, San Luis Obispo, CA

1. CALL TO ORDER: 12:04pm

PRESENT: Hemant Patel, Clint Pearce, Aaron Graves, Toni LeGras-Price, Mark Eads, Hamish Marshall

ABSENT: Amar Sohi

STAFF PRESENT: Cathy Cartier, Annie Braunschweig, Emily Rudge, Lisa Belsanti

2. PUBLIC COMMENT (On Non-Agenda Items)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cartier thanked those who attended the December Advisory Committee Meeting, reminded the Committee of the upcoming meetings, Cartier shared the upcoming Annual Bash date for Thursday, May 7, Cartier invited the Committee to the Cal Poly EIM Auction on February 21, Cartier announced the Visitor Magazine is now available for distribution.

CONSENT AGENDA

3. Approval of October 16, 2025 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

4. Approval of October 2025 Visit SLO CAL Financials

5. Approval of November 2025 Visit SLO CAL Financials

Committee Discussion – None.

ACTION: Moved by **Patel/Eads** to approve the Consent Agenda.

Motion: 6:0

CEO REPORT

6. Visit SLO CAL CEO Report

Cartier shared the November STR report which showed a downturn, as expected. Cartier shared the upcoming joint announcement for the reopening of HWY 1 at Regent's Slide that is expected to be shared within the next few days, and VSC is working in partnership with See Monterey to have aligned messaging and plan a joint activation in March. Cartier shared that Caltrans' guidance is to wait for the rainy season to end prior to launching a large announcement and activation later in the spring. Cartier shared an update on the Cal Poly EIM scholarship program, highlighting the large increase in the applicants for the program, and noted that Britt Shuford from the VSC Board of Directors has launched a scholarship program with Common Thread Hotels. Cartier shared an update on the TSA Precheck touchless ID option which has been introduced in 15 major airports. Cartier shared her upcoming travel schedule.

Committee Discussion- None.

Business Items

7. FY 2026 Mid-Year Budget Reforecast

Braunschweig presented the mid-year budget reforecast which featured less drastic changes from last year's mid-year reforecast. Braunschweig reviewed the revenue, operating expenses, expenditures, key initiatives and reserves funding. Braunschweig shared the TMD annual revenue projection, which is just below \$9 million mark, and detailed several additions and reduction in budgeted operating expenses.

Committee Discussion – Eads asked about the data audit being conducted. Braunschweig replied that it is to determine if our data subscriptions and software might be duplicative, unnecessary, or if there are alternate vendors that might provide better or more cost-effective options.

ACTION: Moved by **Marshall/Graves** to recommend Board approval of Visit SLO CAL's FY 2025/26 Mid-Year Budget Reforecast.

Motion: 6:0

8. Tourism Economics Lodging Forecast Results

Braunschweig shared a review of the Tourism Economics Lodging Forecast, which includes a two-year rolling projection of key performance indicators for hotels and short-term vacation rentals in the region (versus last year's forecast which included hotels only). Braunschweig shared some national highlights: recession fears have lessened but consumer sentiment is low, with consumer spending bifurcated by segment. International travel continues to decline due to negative sentiment, hopefully mitigated by large events such as the Olympics and the World Cup. Consumers are prioritizing experiences over material items, which could be a win for the travel industry. Braunschweig shared inflation-adjusted domestic and international spending snapshots and a graphic showing bifurcation in travel demand by segment. Braunschweig noted that locally, supply is expected to outpace demand through 2027 which will keep occupancy, RevPar and ADR relatively flat. The forecast estimates that SLO CAL will see a 2.5% and 3.4% increase in Total Room Revenue in 2026 and 2027, respectively. Short-term rentals are out-performing hotels in year-over-year growth in occupancy, ADR, RevPar and total room revenue.

Committee Discussion- None.

9. Strategic Direction 2029

Cartier shared the updated timeline for the Strategic Direction 2029 finalized draft. Cartier shared the process for how the plan was created and noted that the only item that changed was the mission; the position, values and vision remained the same. Cartier shared objectives 1 – 4 for the three-year plan, along with the respective strategies and key results.

Committee Discussion- None.

ACTION: Moved by **Graves/ LeGras-Price** to recommend Board approval of the Strategic Direction 2029 draft.

Motion: 6:0

10. Marketing, Travel Trade & ESC 2050 Updates

In Cano's absence, Cartier shared the new brand campaign launch milestones for Turns Well Taken and shared a preview of the finalized campaign videos. Cartier shared the co-op program opportunities for the World Cup with Sojern or Expedia in collaboration with Visit California. Cartier shared the Tapped into SLO CAL initiative which will be filmed next week. Cartier shared the filming schedule and locations and shared the creative concept along with the launch schedule. Cartier shared the results of the Spartan Race which included a 12% increase in participants from last year. Cartier shared the new U.K. Sales initiative program with U. K. sales agents in partnership with Hablo, MMGY and Travel Gossip. Cartier shared upcoming events for the sales team. Belsanti shared an update on earned media highlights, including the New York Times article. Belsanti shared a recap of owned media coverage for November and December and shared the top performing social media posts for November and December. Belsanti shared advocacy updates noting that the L.A. minimum wage increase is now to be put on hold indefinitely. Belsanti noted that Diablo Canyon's permit has been approved through 2030. Belsanti shared an update on the Oceano Dunes lawsuit regarding the snowy plover's habitat. Belsanti shared that VSC has established an AllTrails public lands portal account in order to make sure trails are accurately updated and continue progress on the Countywide Trails initiative.

Committee Discussion- None.

Cartier highlighted upcoming meetings and important dates.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 1:30pm