



614 S Broadway · Santa Maria, CA · 93454
Telephone: 805.925.2403
www.santamaria.com

Santa Maria Valley Tourism Marketing District (SMV TMD)

Advisory Committee Minutes

December 1, 2022

12:30 Holiday Inn

DRAFT UNTIL APPROVED

Advisory Committee: Cherag Patel, Ryan Swack, Jerry Patel, Seth Foster, JP Patel

City Staff: Mark van de Kamp

Chamber|Staff: Glenn Morris, Taz Dougherty, Cheryl Cuming

Guests: Brett Vernon & Lucas Budgett, Vernon Group Developers; Matthew Landkamer, Whereabout; Jaime Flores, BBQ Fest

KPS3 | Team: Brittany and Julia

Call to Order by Cherag at 12:07pm

Roll call – Committee majority present.

Public Comment: None.

Presentation: Glenn introduced Brett & Lucas with Vernon Group Developers, who have been working with the City of Santa Maria to create the Town Center redevelopment plan:

- Shared Town Center site plan, including outdoor gathering space for future events, microunits, apartments and a possible hotel.
 - Phase 1 include "lot 3" and Fallas
 - Phase 2 includes 'lot 1'
 - Phase 3 includes Boot Barn and 'lot 4'.
- Brett shared the key highlights:
 - Walkability – Heritage Walk
 - Activated streets and rooftops
 - Living space
 - Memorial Plaza
- Asked about plans for older buildings – downtown specific plan reflects need to renovate existing buildings.
- Goal is to generate new interest, attract more developers and pull in new businesses.
- AC noted focus needs to be on image/curb appeal.

Business Advocacy & Services · Tourism · Economic Development

Promote a Strong Local Economy · Promote the Community · Represent Business Interests · Build Business Relationships

- Capacity for events downtown – open area will be approximately 12,000 square feet with a performing area included. Anticipated to hold about 1,500 people max and noted importance of building out a perimeter for crowd control.

Consent Calendar (minutes, STR, TOT and financials):

Glenn commented TOT YoY is up 17%.

Motion to accept consent items: Minutes: Seth, 2nd JP. Motion carries.

Financials: JP, 2nd Ryan. Motion carries.

Business Items

Discussion & Action Items:

Nomination Committee:

Cherag confirmed that Nomination Committee had met and is recommending Gilda Cordova. Gilda introduced herself sharing her 25 years of hospitality experience, and confirming that the Radisson deal was finalized on November 29, 2022. Motion to accept Gilda’s nomination made by Cherag, 2nd Seth. Motion carries. Advisory Committee welcomed Gilda and is excited to have her involved.

Vice Chair confirmation:

Cherag confirmed that Seth has been suggested as Vice Chair. Motion to accept Seth as Vice Chair made by JP, 2nd by Jerry. Seth abstains. Motion carries.

Events & Festivals Strategy:

Matthew Landkamer, Whereabout, presented the Events & Festivals Strategy. The process included gathering of visitor data via Near (589K visitors over 12 months from 50+ miles), key partner interviews, working group sessions, existing event type research, scoring tool development and viable category recommendations.

- Visitor Profile Stats:
 - Age & Race: well distributed across age ranges 18 – 65+ with 28% Hispanic and 56% white
 - Visitor Education & Income: About 60% had some college with median household income of \$73,565 and media home value of \$417,603
- Consolidated profile:
 - Upper middle class and disposable income- \$73k-111k average annual income
 - Mostly metro mix, not quite suburban, but not fully downtown
 - Mostly with kids and younger families in general
 - All college educated, high likelihood of graduate education as well
 - “Creative class”/white collar jobs in management
 - Elite income-producing assets
 - Enjoy sports in many forms—on TV or in-person, all different levels of professional leagues

- Higher end cars and middle-high end shopping, but values convenient/faster food
- Uses streaming services for music and podcasts
- Event scoring tool was created to score events on ROI on cash and in-kind contributions, plus use of 'multipliers' to ensure the scoring aligns with our strategies.
 - Projected Visibility
 - Alignment to interests/demographics of identified visitor segments
 - Alignment to natural and unique advantages of Santa Maria
 - Alignment to existing venue/accommodations capability and capacity in Santa Maria
 - Alignment to Need Periods
 - Overnight Stays

Three (3) Scoring Tiers were also created to determine which events are most viable.

- Event Type Research was completed to provide event category ideas that would have strong potential in SMV:
 - Bicycle Racing
 - Motorcycles and Classic Rock
 - Music, Beer & Local Food
 - Spring-type outdoor competitions
 - BBQ Festivals
- The most viable categories were identified:
 - Motorcycle Festivals
 - Bike Races
 - Music Festivals

Strategic approaches were explored for each viable category. AC discussion followed noting how we can break down barriers in growing existing events, and the need for better data on overnight stays from the lodging properties. Was mentioned that promoters are key, and sponsorships needed to help provide funding support. Venues are a barrier, and profitability for promoters is primary as they look to multi-day events. Next steps: pursue promoter and event ideas in viable categories.

Information Items:

KPS3 presented marketing report including:

- Website & Marketing performance: Julia noted sustainable increase in hotel referrals and unique hotel pageviews (up by 24%)
- Other updates:
 - SEO and Paid Advertising: long-term wine strategy is really paying off so we will remain focused here. #1 ranking in Central Coast Wine Tasting

- PR: Highlights are coverage through VisitCA and SF Chronicle
- Less is More campaign: launched 11/28 with a focus on affordability. Email creative created to drive more email sign-ups.
- Social: Leveraging content via IG reels and increases in website visitation from our social channels
- What's Next/Upcoming initiatives:
 - Website content strategy to drive SEO – car shows and motorcycling
 - Influencer program selection with Glocally, scheduling and upcoming FAM
 - Digital Visitor Guide

VB | TMD Director Report:

Taz presented VB | TMD update:

- Visitor Guide: December 15 arrival with distribution in January 2023.
- Restaurant Month: 11 restaurants and 7 craft cocktail participants
- Entertainment | Expo Film Panel: Jenn attended in conjunction with CCTC. Researching if there is an opportunity for SM Chamber can step-in as Santa Barbara County Film Commission liaison.
- Key card promo: Want to restart in 2023 and need renewed interest from restaurants and attractions
- Front Desk Training: Noted both Cal Poly and Hancock. Culinary focus at Hancock may be of interest. JP noted need more more/better restaurants.
- Upcoming Trade Shows:
 - IMM (January 2023)
 - LA Travel & Adventure Show (Feb 2023)
 - SF/Bay Area Travel Show (March 2023)
 - IPW – Jenn asked if there was any interest from properties to attend as a partner?

Updates:

Chairperson/Committee Member Reports: Jerry asked Jaime about interest in sporting events, which all agreed comes down to available venue space for out-of-area teams.

JP interested in developing a strategic direction document and creating a greater advocacy focus.

Future Agenda Item

- Strategic Integration – SMV Economic Vitality and where tourism fits.
- Front Desk Training program

Adjourn at 2:13pm

Next meeting: January 19, 2023 at 11am