



# SLO TBID ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025



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# BACKGROUND

In June 2008, the City Council adopted Ordinance 1517, establishing the Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID) in the City of San Luis Obispo as requested by the local lodging industry. The assessment of 2% of gross receipts for the district became effective on October 1, 2008, and the use of funds as defined in Section 12.42.030 of the Municipal Code states:

“This ordinance is made and enacted pursuant to the provisions of the Parking and Business Improvement Area Law of 1989 (Sections 36500 et seq. of the California Streets and Highways Code). The purpose of forming the district as a business improvement area under the Parking and Business Improvement Area Law of 1989 is to provide revenue to defray the costs of services, activities and programs promoting tourism which will benefit the operators of hotels in the district through the promotion of scenic, recreational, cultural and other attractions in the district as a tourist destination.”

## ADVISORY BODY

The use of the assessment fund is based on the recommendation of the Tourism Business Improvement District advisory board (TBID Board) which is staffed by City of San Luis Obispo hotel owners, operators and/or managers. The board members are appointed by the City Council and serve for an initial term of four years with the opportunity to serve a second term for a maximum of eight years.

### 2024-2025 TBID Board Members

NAME	PROPERTY	STATUS	TERM CONCLUDES
Clint Pearce**	Madonna Inn	Appointed May 2022	3/31/2026
Lydia Bates*	Hotel San Luis Obispo	Appointed September 2022	Resigned 5/14/2025
Winston Newland	Quality Suites	Appointed April 2022	Resigned 2/28/2025
Lori Keller	Apple Farm Inn	Appointed June 2022	3/31/2026
Prashant Patel	Vagabond	Appointed September 2022	3/31/2029
Nipool Patel	Lamplighter Inn & Suites	Appointed October 2023	3/31/2028
Christine Nelson	TownePlace Suites and Hampton Inn & Suites	Appointed April 2025	3/31/2027
Dante Specchierla	Petit Soleil	Appointed April 2025	3/31/2029

\*Lydia Bates served as Chair for a portion of FY 2024-25.

\*\*Clint Pearce served as Vice Chair and also served as acting Chair for a portion of FY2024-25 following Lydia Bates' resignation.





## ADVISORY BODY BYLAWS

In addition to the governing City ordinance, the TBID Board established its advisory body bylaws and further defined its role and functions as:

The functions and duties of the TBID Board shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- A. Planning a comprehensive program to promote tourism to the City of San Luis Obispo and prepare an annual marketing program consistent with industry goals and objectives.
- B. Develop advertising and promotional programs and projects to benefit the lodging industry in San Luis Obispo.
- C. Present an annual assessment report to the City Council regarding the implemented promotional programs and projects.
- D. Perform any other lawful tasks as directed by the Council.

The TBID Board meets monthly on the second Wednesday at 10 a.m. for its regular board meeting. In fiscal year 2024-25 the board approved the formation of marketing and management subcommittees in lieu of a second monthly special meeting. The marketing subcommittee meets monthly on the fourth Wednesday while the management subcommittee meets monthly on the fourth Thursday of every month. In total, the Board met 15 times for regularly scheduled monthly board meetings and special meetings during the fiscal year and held 7 subcommittee meetings and one member event—representing an average of 45 volunteer hours annually per each of the seven board members.



# 2024-25 YEAR BY THE NUMBERS

In the 2024-25 fiscal year, the City of San Luis Obispo again collected a record-breaking figure of transient occupancy tax (TOT) totaling more than \$11.4 million. This number represents a 4.6% increase over the forecast for the year in the FY 2023-25 Financial Plan adopted in June 2023 and a 7.9% increase over the forecast in the FY 2024-25 Supplemental Budget adopted in June 2024. San Luis Obispo saw five \$1 million revenue-collection months in July, August, April, May and June. This incredible contribution of TOT revenue to the City's General Fund is one of the direct benefits of tourism for the City, as the full collection of TOT revenue is retained by the City. Separately, the TBID retains the revenue collected through its special assessment of 2%, which in FY 2024-25 resulted in nearly \$2.3 million.

The fiscal year 2024-25 occupancy level in the City slightly increased by nearly 3% compared to the 2023-24 fiscal year, with an average annual occupancy rate of 70% for the year. This growth reflects a continued recovery in overnight travel, with the average occupancy rate now approaching the pre-pandemic level of just below 71% seen in the 2018-19 fiscal year.

The growth of the Average Daily Rate (ADR) in the City has stabilized. In fiscal year 2024-25, the annual ADR was approximately \$177. This rate is relatively flat compared to the previous year (a 0.2% increase) but remains \$24 higher than the pre-pandemic year of 2018-19. However, the current ADR is below the peak of \$195 achieved in fiscal year 2021-22.

The last key indicator used by the TBID to gauge impact is RevPAR, defined as Revenue Per Available Room. In the 2024-25 fiscal year, the annual average RevPAR was up nearly 3% from the prior year at the rate of \$125 on average.

While these numbers present a snapshot status of lodging properties, the TBID Board also tracks visitation to the downtown Visitor Center to represent the foot traffic. In fiscal year 2024-25, the Visitor Center served approximately 74,000 guests.

MEASUREMENT	FY 2024-25 RESULT	% CHANGE FROM FY 2023-24
TOT	\$11,417,888.00	+3.2%
TBID Revenue	\$2,283,578.00	+3.2%
Occupancy	70.05%	+2.9%
Average Daily Rate (ADR)	\$177.18	+0.2%
Revenue Per Available Room (RevPAR)	\$125.31	+2.9%

CHECK THE APPENDIX FOR COMPLETE GRAPHS (GRAPHS FOR TOT/ADR/REVPAR/OCC)





## STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

In the fall of 2024, the TBID Board undertook a significant effort to establish a refreshed Strategic Plan that will guide efforts from 2025 through 2030. This foundational work included a dedicated workshop led by Whereabout, a destination consultancy specializing in stewardship, which facilitated a comprehensive session to align the TBID Board around a shared vision and strategic direction.

The resulting 5-year Strategic Plan provides a clear and unified framework for the Board's priorities and decision-making. It outlines the TBID's key roles in stewarding the Visit San Luis Obispo brand, representing its lodging partners and driving overnight visitation through targeted marketing strategies, strategic partnerships and destination advocacy.

Central to the plan are four newly defined Strategic Objectives that will shape the TBID's focus over the 2025-2030 period:

- Ensure Organizational Excellence
- Deliver Smart Growth
- Build Meaningful Partnerships
- Activate the SLO Life

Each Strategic Objective is supported by specific strategies and measurable indicators of success, ensuring accountability and progress over time. Throughout this annual report, examples of accomplishments aligned with these objectives are highlighted, demonstrating the TBID Board's commitment to implementing the Strategic Plan and advancing the long-term vitality of San Luis Obispo's tourism economy.

**CHECK THE APPENDIX TO VIEW THE FULL TBID 2025-2030 STRATEGIC PLAN MATRIX**





## CONSTITUENT RELATIONS

As a commitment to the Strategic Objective to “Ensure Organizational Excellence” the TBID Board continued to support constituent-relations efforts in 2024-25. To keep the lodging constituency abreast of all TBID business, the TBID Board was assigned properties to liaise. Each board member was responsible for communication with their respective group of hotels and then asked to report their findings during the “Hotelier Update” portion of each Board meeting.

The TBID also leveraged the outreach support of the SLO Chamber’s contracted services to perform weekly lodging call-arounds and quarterly hotel visits. This resulted in 2,927 touchpoints with San Luis Obispo hotels through phone calls, emails and property visits to distribute important visitor-serving collateral.

In addition, the TBID hosted a partner reception in February 2025 to encourage networking and share updates on TBID projects and programs, including a sneak peek of the new SLO Life Coach brand campaign. In post-event surveys, constituents rated the presentation and updates from the TBID and partners—as well as the ability to network—as most valuable.

In addition to creating opportunities for networking and education, the TBID also created marketing resources to support the lodging properties’ connection to promotional efforts. Visit San Luis Obispo’s MidWeekend promotion to support off-peak, shoulder-season travel was once again turned into a toolkit that was shared with lodging properties to utilize across their own channels. In addition to the marketing efforts of the TBID, the toolkit allowed individual properties to utilize draft messaging and promotional creative to more easily speak to their audiences, incentivizing travel to their property and San Luis Obispo.





## DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

The TBID is proud to stand with the global movement to advance diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), and it prioritizes these values through thoughtful marketing and business strategies. In partnership with destination organizations such as Visit SLO CAL, the TBID is committed to reinforcing San Luis Obispo's identity as a welcoming and inclusive destination for all.

As an active ally, the TBID listens, learns and evolves to meet the growing call for more intentional and authentic engagement. At the heart of the organization's mission is a deep-rooted belief in the dignity and worth of all individuals—across race and ethnicity, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, national origin, language, age, abilities, veteran status, pregnancy status and spiritual or religious beliefs.

As part of its commitment to DEI, the TBID welcomed a new public relations partner in 2024: Uniquely Driven, a firm recognized for its expertise in multicultural marketing. This partnership has played a vital role in expanding the TBID's reach to more diverse audiences, ensuring inclusive storytelling and broader representation in media and PR efforts.

### **The TBID's commitment to DEI is reflected through tourism marketing initiatives such as:**

- Creating content that resonates with and reflects diverse audiences
- Showcasing the authentic diversity of San Luis Obispo through inclusive imagery, narratives and community partnerships
- Leveraging paid, earned and owned media channels to engage wider, more representative audiences
- Offering destination materials in Spanish to foster accessibility and inclusion
- Amplifying the voices and visibility of diverse-owned businesses
- Building and maintaining strategic relationships, including the partnership with the Gala Pride & Diversity Center

Through these efforts, the TBID continues to foster a tourism environment that reflects the full richness of San Luis Obispo—and ensures all who visit or live here feel welcomed, respected and celebrated.





## SUSTAINABILITY

Visit San Luis Obispo's brand vision is to be known as a tourism organization that balances business and sustainability. In doing so, the TBID supports the City's ambitious 2035 carbon neutrality goal while striving to serve as a model for sustainable tourism leadership. San Luis Obispo is more than just a beautiful place to visit—it's a destination deeply committed to preserving its natural beauty for generations to come.

Sustainability is woven into the very fabric of the community and is a key differentiator in attracting conscientious travelers. Through its initiatives, partnerships and marketing strategies, Visit San Luis Obispo works to embed sustainability into every aspect of the tourism experience—ensuring that the destination remains vibrant, responsible and resilient.

A central pillar of this work is the Sustainable SLO sub-brand, developed to create a consistent visual and messaging identity that resonates with both visitors and locals. From this foundation emerged the Keys for Trees program, a meaningful initiative that brings visibility to the City's climate goals while facilitating real-world impact through tree planting and education.

### **In FY 2024–25, the TBID significantly amplified its sustainability efforts through several key initiatives:**

- Partnering with Kind Traveler, a responsible travel platform, to engage their sustainability-focused audience and expand the reach of San Luis Obispo's eco-conscious offerings.
- Continuing the Keys for Trees program, developed to help offset the carbon impact of travel; 1% of the TBID's projected revenue supported local tree planting in partnership with the City's Office of Sustainability and Natural Resources and EcoSLO.
- Launching a short-form educational video to raise awareness of the Keys for Trees program.
- Integrating sustainability messaging into the new SLO Life Coach campaign.
- Supporting citywide collaborations, including efforts with Solid Waste and Parks & Recreation to co-brand Big Belly trash receptacles and enhance signage at trailheads.
- Promoting off-season and mid-week travel through the Midweekend campaign and messaging tactics, which encourages lower-impact visitation and helps distribute tourism more evenly throughout the year.
- Hosting a sustainability-themed familiarization trip with Kind Traveler featuring four Southern California-based content creators, which generated strong social reach and culminated in a hands-on community tree-planting experience.

These efforts not only elevated the visibility of Sustainable SLO, but also reinforced Visit San Luis Obispo's ongoing commitment to environmental stewardship. While the initiative serves as a cornerstone of this commitment, it is just the beginning. The TBID will continue to support the City's sustainability objectives through intentional programming, passionate partnerships and a long-term vision for a thriving, sustainable destination.



## PARTNERING FOR IMPACT

Executing a year-round marketing strategy requires not only expertise, but close collaboration. The TBID works alongside City Staff and a dedicated team of contracted partners to ensure cohesive, creative and performance-driven marketing across all efforts. Each agency brings specialized capabilities that, together, create a fully integrated marketing ecosystem.

Regular coordination, shared strategic planning and cross-functional execution between the TBID and its partners ensure that all tourism marketing elements—from media buying to public relations to social content—are aligned in tone, message and purpose.

### CONTRACTED AGENCY PARTNERS:



#### Noble Studios

Agency-of-record leading integrated marketing strategy, brand development, creative direction, campaign execution and media planning/buying.



#### Uniquely Driven

National public relations agency focused on multicultural marketing and audience-specific storytelling.



#### SLO Chamber of Commerce

PR and guest services partner, supporting media relations and in-market visitor experience.



#### Badger Branding

Content marketing partner responsible for developing and managing organic social media content across Share SLO channels.



# MARKETING ACTIVITIES

To effectively influence travel decisions, the TBID’s marketing strategy is intentionally mapped to the traveler journey—from the earliest stages of dreaming to the final step of sharing. By leveraging a multi-channel approach, the TBID ensures that Visit San Luis Obispo messaging reaches audiences at the right time, with the right content, through the right platforms.

This integrated strategy spans a wide mix of tactics, including paid media, public relations, social media, content marketing and website engagement—each tailored to key touchpoints in the traveler’s experience.

## MARKETING ACTIVITIES BY STAGE OF TRAVELER’S JOURNEY

DREAMING	→	PLANNING	→	BOOKING	→	EXPERIENCING	→	SHARING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Aim to create brand awareness &amp; connection</li><li>• Create shareable content that inspires travel</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bring prospects to the website to encourage research and discovery about what makes the destination special and unique</li><li>• Help prospective travelers plan with destination-specific content</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encourage travelers to visit key stakeholder pages to book &amp; plan their trip</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Utilize website to plan in-destination moments and activities</li><li>• Find up-to-date travel information</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Keep the conversation going to amplify our message</li></ul>
<b>SERVICES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Organic Social</li><li>• Paid Social</li><li>• Display Ads</li><li>• Email</li><li>• PR</li><li>• Influencers</li></ul>		<b>SERVICES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Website Experience</li><li>• Organic Search</li><li>• Paid Search</li><li>• Organic Social</li><li>• Paid Social</li><li>• Display Ads</li><li>• 3rd Party Ads</li><li>• Email</li><li>• Public Relations</li><li>• Print</li></ul>		<b>SERVICES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Organic Search</li><li>• Paid Search</li><li>• Paid Social</li><li>• 3rd Party Ads</li><li>• Website Experience</li><li>• Email</li></ul>		<b>SERVICES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Website Experience</li><li>• Email</li><li>• Organic Social</li><li>• Visitor Center</li></ul>		<b>SERVICES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Organic Social</li></ul>

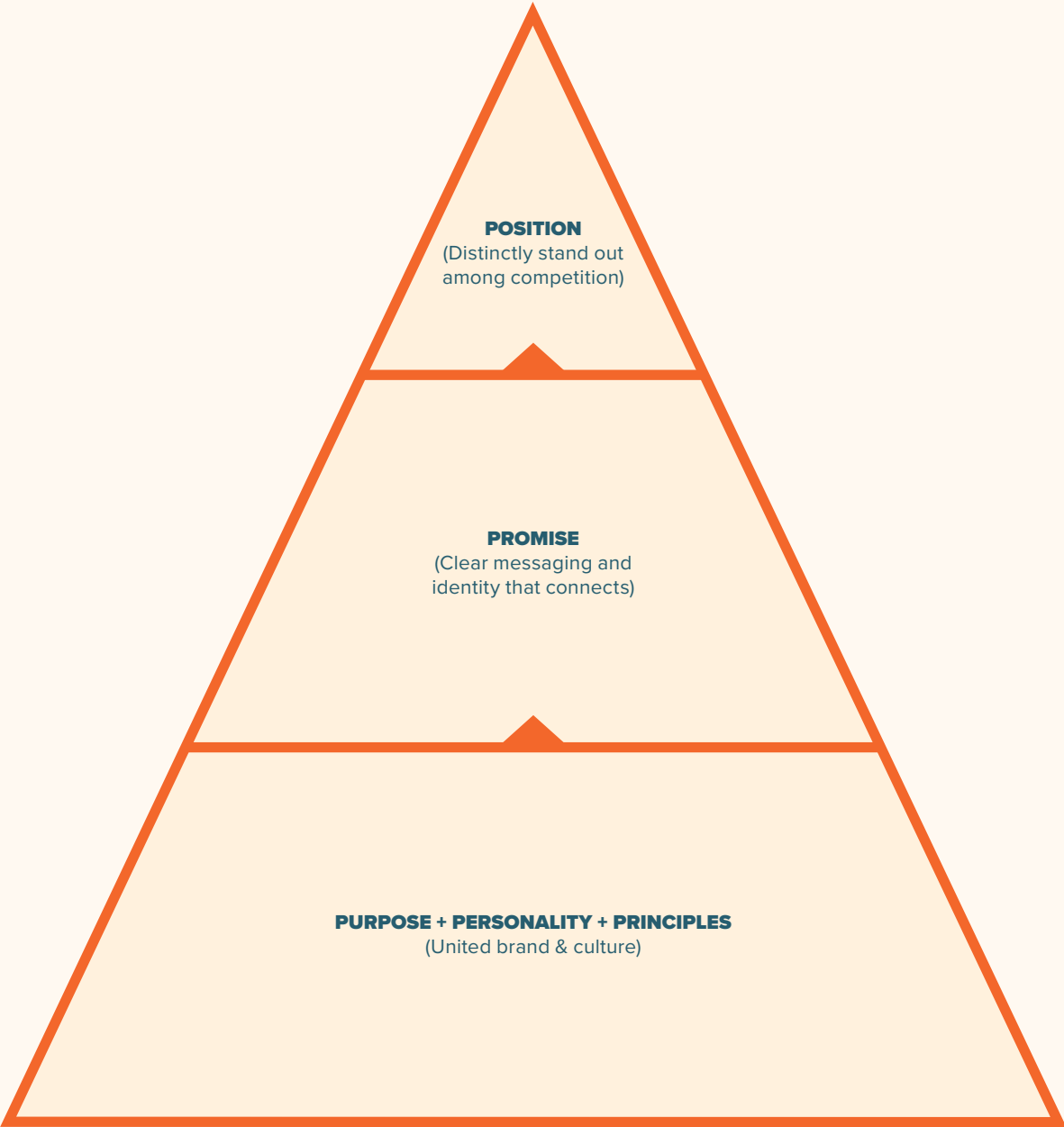


# BRAND STRATEGY

Visit San Luis Obispo is the official tourism brand for the destination. The inclusion of “Visit” is an intentional choice, clearly signaling the brand’s purpose as a tourism entity and inviting travelers to experience and explore San Luis Obispo. The Visit San Luis Obispo brand supports the TBID’s mission to share the abundance of SLO, drive prosperity to the lodging economy and serve as the voice of all stakeholders.

In FY 2024–25, Visit San Luis Obispo branding was consistently applied across all marketing initiatives to ensure a cohesive and unified brand presence. The brand book outlines what the destination marketing organization stands for, how it benefits travelers and locals and why it stands out. It captures the brand’s essence and spirit, and outlines how the brand comes to life visually, verbally and culturally. It includes everything from messaging, logo usage and color palettes to brand philosophies, values and partnership examples.

At its core, the brand book reinforces a powerful distinction: while putting heads in beds is Visit San Luis Obispo’s business purpose, putting hearts in beds is its brand purpose. The organization exists to share everything San Luis Obispo stands for—so that visitors connect emotionally, care for the community as their own and return time and time again.





# BRAND PLATFORM



## POSITION

### HOMEBASE AWAY FROM HOME

You don't just visit SLO on vacation, you become part of our community and culture, an honorary local. The welcoming waves hello, neighborly nods and small-town California charm instantly make you feel comfortable and allow you to start living the "SLO Life." As you immerse yourself in our city, you bond with it and start to feel a sense of belonging that blends with the beauty of life's stresses being released because you're away—it truly feels like a home away from home. And with the beaches, iconic sites and stunning beauty of the world-class Central Coast nearby, it's also an incredible homebase during your vacation. SLO is the ideal homebase away from home.



## PROMISE

### A CHANCE TO LIVE THE SLO LIFE

The "SLO Life" is a deep breath that releases life's pressures. It's a change of pace. It's a fresh take. It's a warm embrace. It's a feeling of comfort and calm in a welcoming place filled with a special energy, connection, creativity and a wholehearted spirit. You can feel the "SLO Life" wrap its arms around you and pull you close. It's tangible. And you'll never want to let that feeling go, so you live the "SLO Life" to its fullest while you're here and take a piece of it with you when you head back home.



## PURPOSE

### HEARTS IN BEDS

If putting "heads in beds" is our business purpose, putting "hearts in beds" is our brand purpose. We live to share all that San Luis Obispo stands for so we can emotionally connect with and welcome people who will fall in love with our community in such a way that they actually become part of it, caring for it like they live here and returning time and time again.

# BRAND CAMPAIGN

In FY 2024–25, Visit San Luis Obispo took a bold step forward in evolving its core brand message with the development and launch of the SLO Life Coach campaign. This creative platform builds on the success of the established brand line, “Live the SLO Life,” which has served as a powerful anchor for the destination’s messaging over the past few years.

The SLO Life Coach campaign marked a significant investment in creative storytelling and brand amplification. It introduced a fresh, personified expression of the Visit San Luis Obispo brand—embodied by a charismatic, laid-back and witty character who shares “SLO Life Tips” with charm and a touch of bold energy. As a personality-driven approach, the SLO Life Coach brings the brand to life in a way that’s relatable, engaging and distinctly San Luis Obispo.

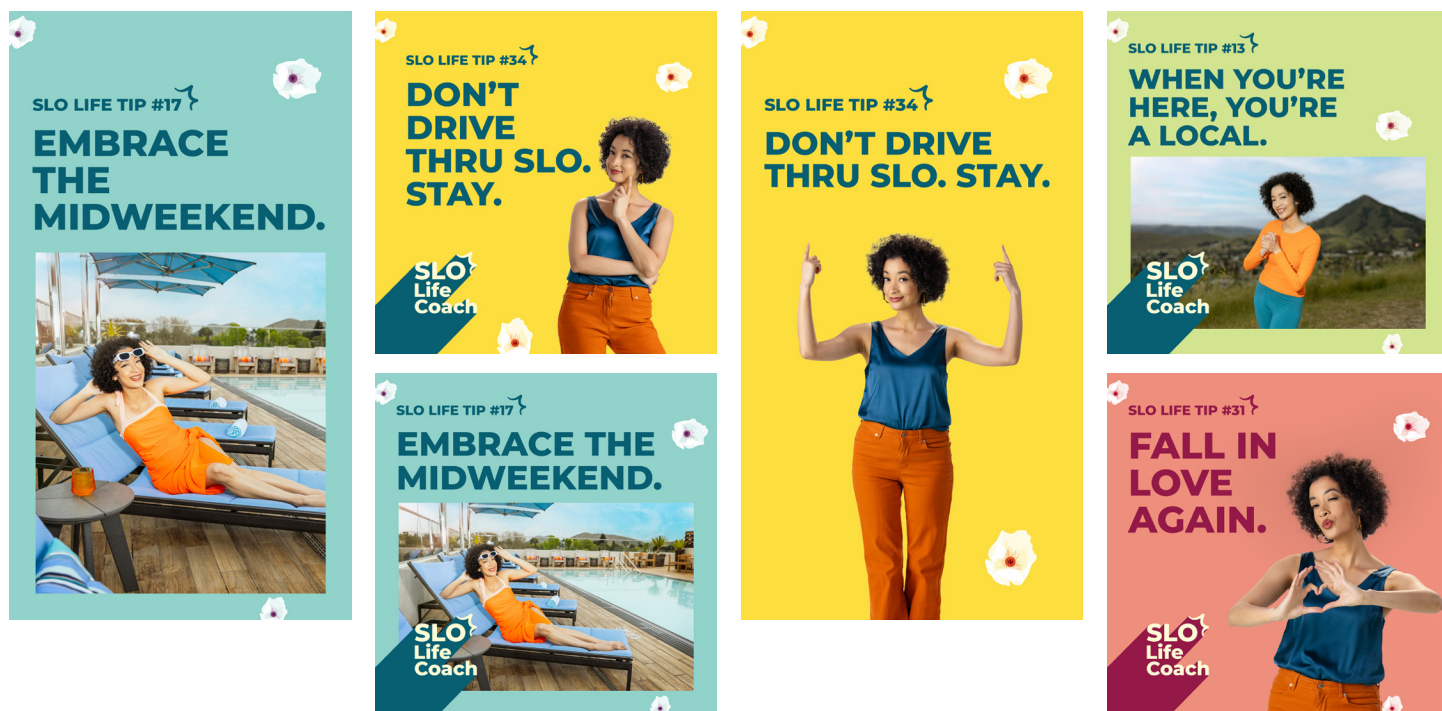
Launched at the tail end of FY 2024–25, the campaign represented a major milestone. It was seamlessly integrated across Visit San Luis Obispo’s owned, earned and paid media channels, supported by refreshed brand visuals and optimized landing pages tailored to target audiences. This cross-channel execution helped ensure brand consistency and impact at every stage of the traveler journey.

The SLO Life Coach is more than a campaign—it’s an invitation to experience San Luis Obispo in a deeper, more personal way. As the campaign continues to roll out in the year ahead, it will remain a key tool in showcasing the destination’s welcoming spirit and reinforcing what it truly means to “Live the SLO Life.”

## DISPLAY ADS



## META ADS







## PROMOTIONS

Encouraging midweek travel continues to be a strategic priority for the TBID to support their Strategic Objective and commitment to Deliver Smart Growth and sustainable tourism practices. By driving visitation outside of peak periods, the MidWeekend initiative helps support lodging businesses while easing pressure during high-demand times.

### 1 | Summer MidWeekend Promotion (July–August 2024)

In the summer of 2024, the MidWeekend promotional campaign returned to help drive midweek stays in San Luis Obispo. From July 1 to August 31, visitors who booked a qualifying two-night midweek stay (Sunday–Thursday) at participating TBID properties received a \$100 cash incentive. The promotional campaign was integrated across owned, earned and paid marketing initiatives.

#### Key results from the promotional campaign included:

- 462 Midweek Room Nights Booked
- \$90,288 Booking Revenue Across SLO's Lodging Properties

### 3 | Mayoral Declaration & Middle Name Giveaway (April 2025)

To support this strategic evolution and help drive shoulder-season visitation, Mayor Erica A. Stewart officially declared San Luis Obispo the MidWeekend Vacation Capital of the World. To mark the occasion and generate awareness, Visit San Luis Obispo launched the Middle Name Giveaway in April 2025, inviting travelers whose middle name (or a variation of "Luis") matched the city's namesake to enter for a chance to win a midweek vacation. The promotion was supported through dedicated paid media placements, PR outreach, social amplification and featured on VisitSLO.com.

#### Key results included:

- 781 Newsletter Sign-Ups (Giveaway Entries)
- 191,136 Page Views
- 78 Lodging Partner Referrals on VisitSLO.com

### 2 | Strategic MidWeekend Evolution

Following the success of the summer promotion and in recognition of the need for a year-round approach to midweek travel, the TBID made a strategic decision in the latter half of FY 2024–25 to evolve MidWeekend into an evergreen campaign. This pivot moved away from short-term cash incentives in favor of sustained, brand-forward messaging integrated into the broader brand campaign. The shift supports an "always-on" strategy designed to build long-term travel habits and align with Visit San Luis Obispo's broader brand values.



# WEBSITE

VisitSLO.com serves as the City’s official tourism website and is the primary digital platform for promoting the destination. While designed primarily for consumers, it also provides valuable resources for travel trade professionals, meeting planners, TBID members and media. As the central hub of Visit San Luis Obispo’s marketing efforts, all campaigns and communications are strategically connected to and supported by the website—making it the cornerstone of the organization’s digital presence.

## WEBSITE PERFORMANCE YOY

<b>25%</b>	<b>13%</b>
Increase in Overall Traffic	Increase in Average Session Duration
<b>26%</b>	<b>33%</b>
Increase in Hotel Partner Referrals (43,923 vs 34,758)	Increase Things To Do Partner Referrals (39,179 vs 29,439)
<b>26%</b>	<b>2%</b>
Increase in New Users	Increase in Newsletter Sign Ups (1,006 vs 804)



# SEO

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) remains essential to driving visibility, authority and engagement for VisitSLO.com. By deepening content and optimizing key pages, SEO efforts support the site’s discoverability and the broader effectiveness of Visit San Luis Obispo’s digital strategy.

In FY 2024–25, SEO performance was challenged by rapid shifts in the search landscape—particularly the rise of AI-generated results and evolving formats on Search Engine Results Pages (SERPs).

Despite these changes, a proactive and comprehensive SEO strategy continued to deliver results. Strengthened technical foundations and content authority ensured Visit San Luis Obispo remained discoverable by the right audiences at the right time.

## SEO PERFORMANCE YOY

<b>2%</b>	<b>11%</b>
Increase in Organic Traffic	Increase in Pages per Session
<b>19%</b>	<b>8%</b>
Increase in Average Session Duration	Increase in Organic Hotel Partner Referrals (10,168 vs 9,427)







## DIGITAL MEDIA

Visit San Luis Obispo significantly expanded its digital media strategy, supported by a 24% increase in paid media budget compared to the previous year. This investment allowed for greater emphasis on upper-funnel awareness-building tactics while continuing to balance performance-driven, lower-funnel strategies aimed at driving bookings and measurable conversions. This approach directly supports the TBID’s Strategic Objective to Deliver Smart Growth, ensuring both long-term brand health and near-term economic impact.

Our digital media efforts employed an integrated, cross-channel strategy designed to connect with travelers at all stages of their journey. Campaigns were informed by performance data and market insights to optimize reach, relevance and return on investment.

### Digital Media Performance YOY

**57%**

Increase in Paid Traffic

**38%**

Increase in Paid Social Click-Through Rate

**56.7 Million**

Total Paid Impressions

**42%**

Increase in Google Ads and Facebook Clicks

**10.2%**

Paid Search Click-Through Rate (Benchmark 8.7%)

**54%**

Increase in Google Ads Partner Referrals

## EMAIL MARKETING

Visit San Luis Obispo continued to deepen subscriber engagement by integrating branded content like SLO Life Tips, exclusive promotions and introducing the SLO Life Coach. Email remained a key channel for delivering personalized travel inspiration to key audience segments, guided by performance insights. Tactics such as gated content, giveaways and prominent sign-up opportunities across VisitSLO.com supported steady list growth while fostering strong connections with both new and existing subscribers.

### Email Marketing Performance YOY

**50%**

Average Newsletter Open Rate (45.2% Industry Benchmark)

**11,645**

Sessions Driven to VisitSLO.com

**48%**

Growth in Newsletter Subscribers

**16**

Total Emails Sent

# PRINT ADVERTISING

Visit San Luis Obispo continued to include limited print placements within its media mix. While digital remains the primary focus, strategic print advertising served as a valuable tool to reach niche and mature market segments, reinforcing travel inspiration and supporting broader brand awareness efforts.

## Print Placements Included:

- Cal Poly Program Ad & Visiting Teams Guide
- Central Coast Tourism Council Map (cover & listing)
- Certified Folder destination-brochure distribution
- Visit California Visitors Guide
- Visit SLO CAL Visitors Guide
- SLO International Film Festival Program Guide



**Certified Folder  
destination-brochure  
distribution**

## SLO International Film Festival Program Guide





# SOCIAL MEDIA

@ShareSLO—Visit San Luis Obispo’s official social media presence—continued to be a powerful platform for engaging locals and inspiring visitors through dynamic, trend-driven and brand-aligned content. In FY 2024–25, efforts expanded reach and engagement across platforms, introduced new content formats and integrated key brand campaigns including SLO Life Coach, MidWeekend and SLO Restaurant Month.

### Social Media Highlights:

- Nearly 7,000 new organic followers across all platforms
- Produced 170 original Reels, executed 26 giveaways and facilitated 88 collaborations
- Maintained a cohesive visual aesthetic across Reels covers, Linktree, banners and Highlights
- Established successful content series including Generational To-Dos and SLO Fine Dining
- Increased community engagement through Ticket Tuesday giveaways and campaign support

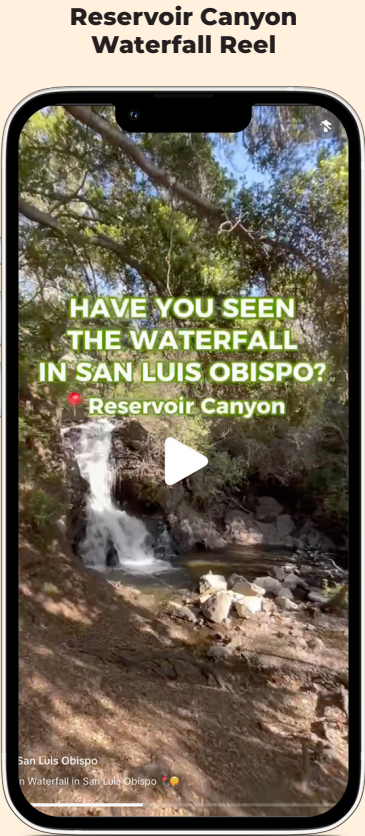
### Top Performing Content:

- **Cozy Cafes in SLO**  
154k IG views | 40.7k TikTok views
- **Reservoir Canyon Waterfall**  
122k IG views | 57.4k TikTok views

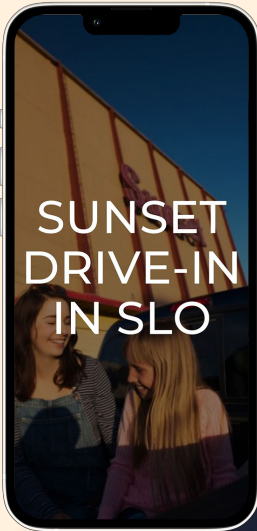
### Visit San Luis Obispo Social Media Channels:



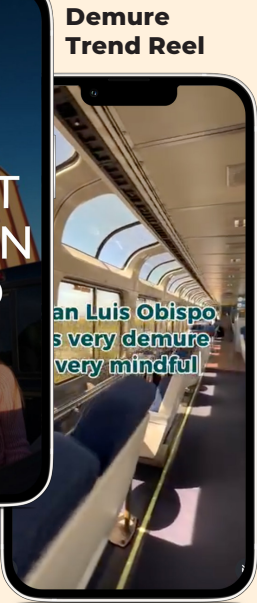
Cozy Cafes in SLO Reel



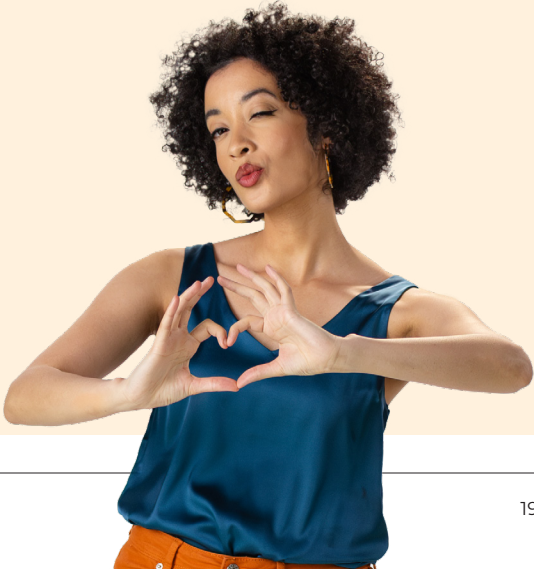
Reservoir Canyon Waterfall Reel



Sunset Drive-In Reel



Demure Trend Reel



# PUBLIC RELATIONS

Visit San Luis Obispo maintained its shared public relations model through a joint contract between the TBID and the Promotional Coordinating Committee (PCC) with the San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce. This collaborative approach was strengthened by the addition of Uniquely Driven, a national PR agency specializing in multicultural marketing. The SLO Chamber focused on regional outreach, while Uniquely Driven led national efforts—working together to implement an integrated PR strategy.

Together, these partners executed a comprehensive program aimed at building awareness, securing high-quality media coverage and amplifying the Visit San Luis Obispo brand by highlighting the community's unique character and vitality.

Our PR strategy this year included 19 individual media visits and the coordination of two group familiarization (FAM) trips. One of these, a sustainability-themed FAM in partnership with Kind Traveler, brought four Southern California-based content creators to San Luis Obispo. The trip delivered strong social media reach and concluded with a community tree-planting event aligned with the Keys for Trees initiative. The second group FAM welcomed five journalists and showcased the "Essence of SLO(w) Travel," spotlighting the destination's unique, mindful pace and immersive local experiences.

Collectively, these PR efforts resulted in 84 media placements, generating over 6.7 billion impressions. Coverage appeared in prominent national and regional outlets such as National Geographic, Forbes, Thrillist, USA Today, NBC Los Angeles, La Opinión, Travel + Leisure, Sacramento Bee and AARP.

With the PR landscape continuing to evolve—marked by newsroom reductions and a growing reliance on freelancers—Visit San Luis Obispo is exploring new media formats such as satellite interviews, advertorials and pay-to-play opportunities to ensure sustained visibility and reach.

## PR Performance

**6,717,238,130**

Circulation

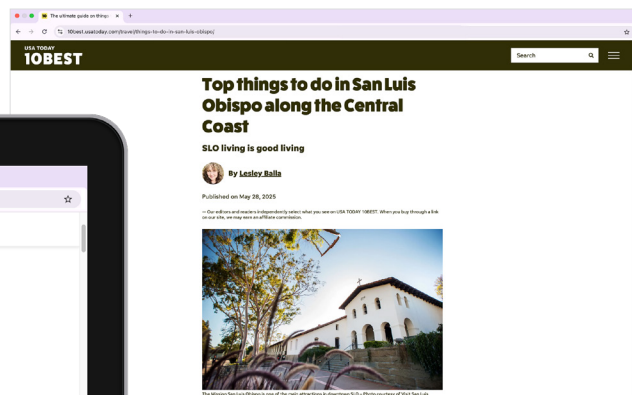
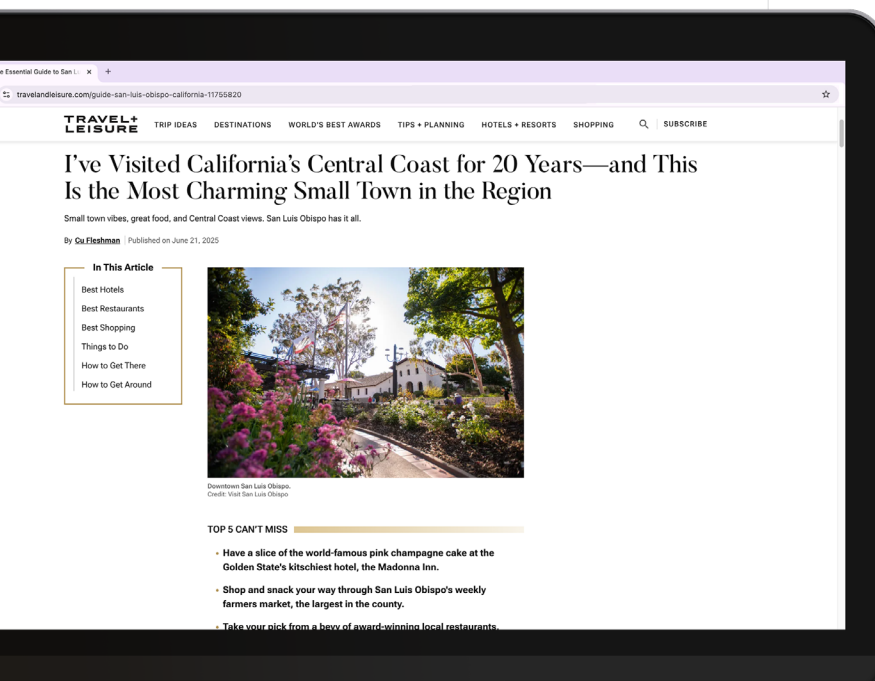
**6.7**

Billion Media Impressions

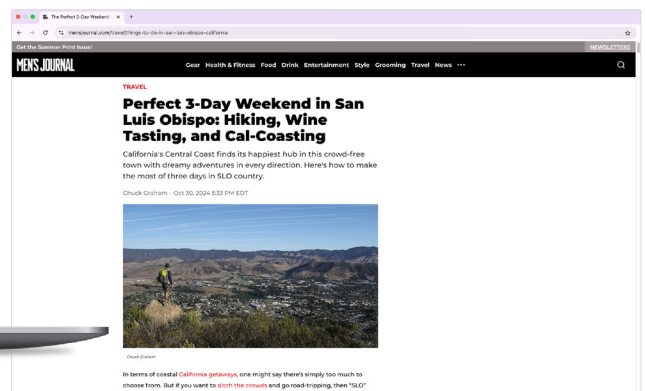
**84**

Total Number of Placements

### Travel & Leisure Feature



### USA Today 10Best Feature



### Men's Journal Feature



# GUEST SERVICES

Through a dedicated contract with the TBID, the San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce continues to provide a comprehensive suite of guest services that support Visit San Luis Obispo's mission to create welcoming experiences for travelers.

In FY 2024–25, the Visitor Center served as a key resource for prospective and in-destination visitors, providing personalized guidance and hospitality across multiple touchpoints. The center welcomed 73,999 walk-in visitors, responded to 16,066 digital inquiries (via email and web chat) and fielded 2,592 phone calls throughout the year.

Included in this service offering is the 1-877-SLO-TOWN line—a dedicated phone number tied directly to Visit San Luis Obispo's marketing efforts. This line, managed by Chamber staff, provides live assistance to travelers planning their trips and is used exclusively to promote San Luis Obispo lodging properties and experiences. In FY 2024–25, the line handled 411 calls, offering friendly, real-time support to visitors looking for tailored trip planning.

These guest services play an essential role in extending the Visit San Luis Obispo brand, ensuring travelers receive personalized attention and up-to-date destination information.







## EVENTS

Destination events continued to play a key role in attracting visitors to San Luis Obispo. The TBID Board reviewed funding requests on a case-by-case basis, using the established application process.

### Events Sponsored:

- **VINEYARD TEAM, SUSTAINABLE AG EXPO — NOVEMBER 11-13, 2024**

The Sustainable Ag Expo was a three-day, mid-week, off-season educational symposium and tradeshow attracting over 500 wine industry professionals to San Luis Obispo. The Expo in 2024 marked the 19th year of the event. Visit San Luis Obispo sponsored lodging for event speakers and presenters and was featured in event promotions.

- **MISSION COLLEGE PREP HIGH SCHOOL, MISSION PREP CHRISTMAS CLASSIC — DECEMBER 19-23, 2024**

The Mission Prep Christmas Classic is a four-day premier California High School Basketball tournament featuring some of the best high school basketball players from the state and beyond. The event draws a majority of out-of-area attendees and livestreams to thousands more. Visit San Luis Obispo was the exclusive lodging partner, providing hotel accommodations for visiting teams in exchange for inclusion in event advertising.

- **SLO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, 31ST FESTIVAL — APRIL 24-29, 2025**

The 31st edition of the San Luis Obispo International Film Festival hosted a six-day event and screened over 100 films throughout the week. The event featured a VIP Festival Lounge, Red Carpet events, live music, educational conversations with filmmakers and industry leaders and capstone events each night that brought the community together to celebrate the arts and expose our audience to important topics around the world. Visit San Luis Obispo supported the festival in various promotional ways including funding and managing the out-of-area paid media campaign, funding to provide lodging for filmmakers, media and industry professionals and promoting a complimentary See + Stay film fest package in exchange for overnight reservations.

- **GALA PRIDE & DIVERSITY CENTER, PRIDE AND CULTURAL PROGRAM — YEAR ROUND**

The TBID maintained its legacy partnership with the Gala Pride & Diversity Center in FY 2024–25, supporting both the annual Central Coast Pride celebration and year-round Pride & Cultural programming. Visit San Luis Obispo remained committed to amplifying authentic, community-rooted storytelling—collaborating with Gala to help develop LGBTQIA+ content for VisitSLO.com. The partnership also included promotion of Central Coast Pride through owned channels and select paid media tactics, reinforcing the destination's inclusive values and welcoming spirit.

In addition, Visit San Luis Obispo continued its participation in the Events & Festivals Working Group (EFWG)—a multi-jurisdictional working group of 18 destination partners, event organizers and community leaders convened by Visit SLO CAL. The group played an ongoing role in the development and implementation of the SLO CAL Events & Festivals Strategy, aimed at increasing countywide overnight visitation, supporting economic growth and enhancing quality of life for residents. Key focus areas included strategic planning for existing and future events, optimizing off-peak periods, fostering event collaboration and guiding the process for regional event support and investment.





## STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

In FY 2024–25, Visit San Luis Obispo continued to strengthen its collaboration with numerous community partners and industry nonprofit organizations to amplify destination marketing efforts. These collaborations increase the efficiency and impact of promotional activities by providing new platforms, audiences and alignment with shared values.

Now in its second year, the TBID's partnership with Kind Traveler—a responsible travel platform—continues to serve as a meaningful channel for engaging sustainability-minded travelers. Through Kind Traveler's Every Stay Gives Back program, Visit San Luis Obispo showcased its Keys for Trees initiative via a dedicated destination landing page and annual community impact report. The collaboration also extended to influencer engagement, supporting a sustainability-themed media FAM that helped bring San Luis Obispo's story to life through content creators aligned with environmental values.

Partnerships with Cal Poly remained a cornerstone of outreach efforts. Through ongoing collaborations with the Office of Student Affairs, Visit San Luis Obispo participated in SLO Days, Mustang Family Weekend and Open House, providing direct access to thousands of students, parents and supporters. The partnership with Cal Poly Athletics also continued, including destination sponsorship, marketing exposure and lodging coordination with TBID properties.

### **Key partnerships in FY 2024–25 included:**

- Cal Poly's Office of Student Affairs (New Student & Transition Programs and Parent Program)
- Cal Poly Athletics (Mustang Sports)
- Kind Traveler
- ECOSLO (in support of Keys for Trees)
- Gala Pride & Diversity Center



## INDUSTRY RELATIONS

### CALIFORNIA HOTEL & LODGING ASSOCIATION (CHLA)

The California Hotel & Lodging Association (CHLA) protects the rights and interests of the California lodging industry. Legislative advocacy, educational training, communication and cost-saving programs are provided for all segments of the industry. Through the TBID, all lodging properties in the City of SLO are members of CHLA and can utilize the services offered.

### VISIT CALIFORNIA

The Visit California partnership has been critical in the growth of Visit San Luis Obispo's brand within the California Tourism product. SLO has received coverage through the marketing activities performed by Visit California including travel trade, press and industry outreach. Monthly submissions are uploaded to Visit California for media leads, trade contacts and newsletter content.

### CENTRAL COAST TOURISM COUNCIL (CCTC)

The Central Coast Tourism Council (CCTC) is an organization of tourism and hospitality professionals whose marketing efforts accomplish collectively what no single tourism entity can do alone: promote the entire California Central Coast as a destination and maximize our members' tourism revenue. The CCTC serves as the Central Coast's voice in Sacramento and partners with California Tourism's global marketing and advertising campaigns. The TBID is actively involved in CCTC with a seat on the board from staff and the SLO Chamber public relations representative on the PR committee.

### VISIT SLO CAL

The TBID maintains participation with Visit SLO CAL by having a representative on the Board of Directors and the Tourism and Community Promotions Manager on the Marketing Committee. The TBID Board leverages the partnership with Visit SLO CAL to promote San Luis Obispo on a national and international level—beyond the local and state reach the TBID's marketing plan focuses to achieve. The TBID's participation in Visit SLO CAL also encompasses group sales, film commission, countywide public relations and countywide strategic planning like the SLO CAL Events & Festivals Strategy.





# 2024-25 AWARDS & ACCOLADES



## AAF RENO ADDY

Silver - Specialty Advertising / Merchandise



## AAF RENO ADDY

Silver - User Experience (VisitSLO.com)



## W3

Silver - General Websites – Tourism (VisitSLO.com)

# 2024-25 FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

INCOME SOURCE		2024-25
FY 2024-25 TOT Revenue Assumption, per FY 2023-25 Financial Plan		\$10,918,080
FY 2024-25 TOT Revenue Assumption, per FY 2024-25 Supplemental Budget		\$10,586,256
FY 2024-25 TOT Revenue Collection		\$11,417,888
FY 2024-25 TBID Revenue Assumption, per FY 2023-25 Financial Plan		\$2,183,616
FY 2024-25 TBID Revenue Assumption, per FY 2024-25 Supplemental Budget		\$2,117,251
FY 2024-25 TBID Revenue Collection		\$2,283,578
FY 2024-25 TBID Projected Expenditures*		\$2,174,457
FY 2024-25 TBID Projected Surplus*		\$109,121

\*Actuals will be reported to City Council at the Year End Budget Report in November 2025. Audited financials will be available in February 2026.

TBID PROGRAM BUDGET		ALLOCATED
<b>Operations/Staffing</b>		
Administration Overhead (2% of TBID Assessment)		\$43,672
Staffing		\$275,084
Staffing Contingency		\$85,000
<b>Contracts &amp; Marketing Services</b>		
Marketing Contract - Noble Studios/DCI		\$1,250,000
Chamber of Commerce - PR		\$50,000
Chamber of Commerce - Guest Services		\$51,975
Chamber of Commerce - Media Monitoring Service Fee		\$3,713
Co-op Marketing Program Funding		\$30,000
Content Marketing Services - Badger Branding		\$87,800
<b>Partnerships</b>		
Cal Poly Athletics		\$65,000
EcoSLO - Sustainability Initiative		\$21,836
Kind Traveler		\$12,495
SLO Coast Wine Collective Membership		\$5,000
<b>Events &amp; Promotions</b>		
General Events Promotion		\$50,000
Event Activation + Collateral		\$5,000
Seasonal Promotion		\$25,000
<b>Tradeshows</b>		
Tradeshows		\$19,500
Tourism Conferences		\$9,500
<b>Tourism Organizations</b>		
CCTC Dues		\$1,000
Smith Travel Report		\$3,500
CalTravel Membership		\$1,000
California Hotel & Lodging Association		\$30,000
<b>Research + Program</b>		
Research + Program Development		\$30,000
<b>Support / Meetings</b>		
Tourism Program Expenses		\$7,500
FAM Trip Hosting		\$12,500
Services/Online Tools/ Fulfillment (Dropbox, Crowdiff, Survey Monkey)		\$15,000
<b>Contingency</b>		
Contingency Fund		\$7,550
<b>Totals Committed</b>		<b>\$2,198,625</b>





## LOOKING AHEAD (FY 2025-26 PRIORITIES)

As Visit San Luis Obispo enters FY 2025–26, the TBID remains committed to advancing the goals outlined in the newly established 2025–2030 Strategic Plan while ensuring the continued execution of the amended 2024–2026 Strategic Marketing & Business Plan. This two-year Strategic Marketing & Business Plan serves as a comprehensive guide for Visit San Luis Obispo’s overarching marketing direction, as well as the tactical efforts that support destination stewardship, overnight stays and represent the voice of stakeholders.

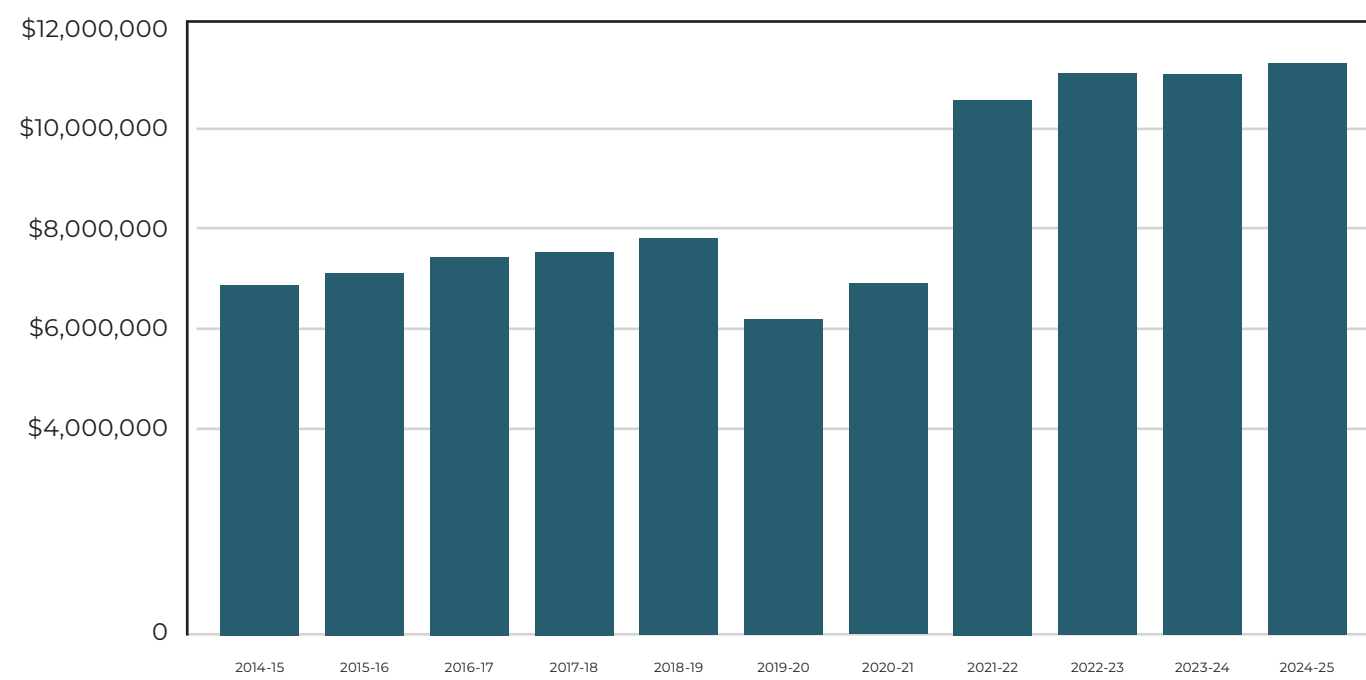
**The following priorities will guide the work ahead:**

- **Deploying a Fall 2025 brand tracker and local sentiment study** to measure progress in brand perception and inform ongoing tourism program development
- **Ongoing amplification and integration of the SLO Life Coach campaign** to strengthen destination storytelling and deepen audience engagement
- **Securing impactful partnerships** to broaden reach and elevate Visit San Luis Obispo’s marketing efforts
- **Continuing to evolve MidWeekend messaging** as part of the SLO Life Coach brand to promote year-round midweek travel through an evergreen, always-on approach
- **Developing a comprehensive influencer strategy**, including hosting a micro-influencer midweek FAM, to authentically showcase San Luis Obispo and connect with niche travel audiences
- **Advancing business meetings and trade travel efforts**, including a test-and-learn sponsorship of the California Main Street Conference to explore a multi-venue conference model
- **Optimizing paid and organic search efforts** to keep VisitSLO.com discoverable amidst the rise of AI-generated search results
- **Embedding sustainability and DEI authentically across all programs**, reinforcing the brand’s core values and long-term vision

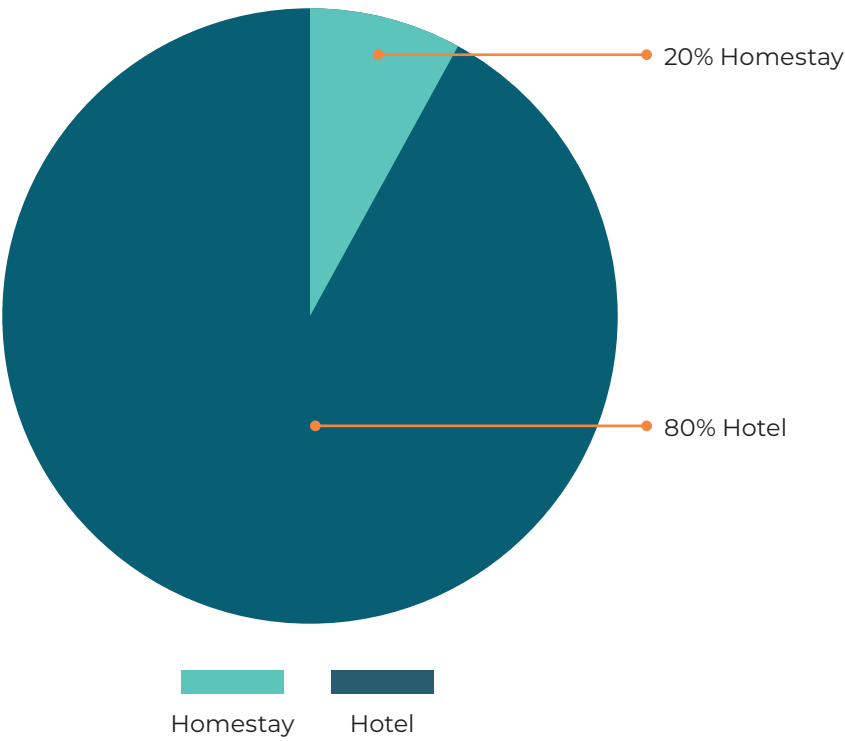
While these are not the only areas of focus for the TBID, they represent key priorities requiring significant attention as Visit San Luis Obispo works toward meaningful, measurable implementation in the year ahead.

# APPENDIX

## TRANSIENT OCCUPANCY TAX FY 2014-15 TO FY 2024-25

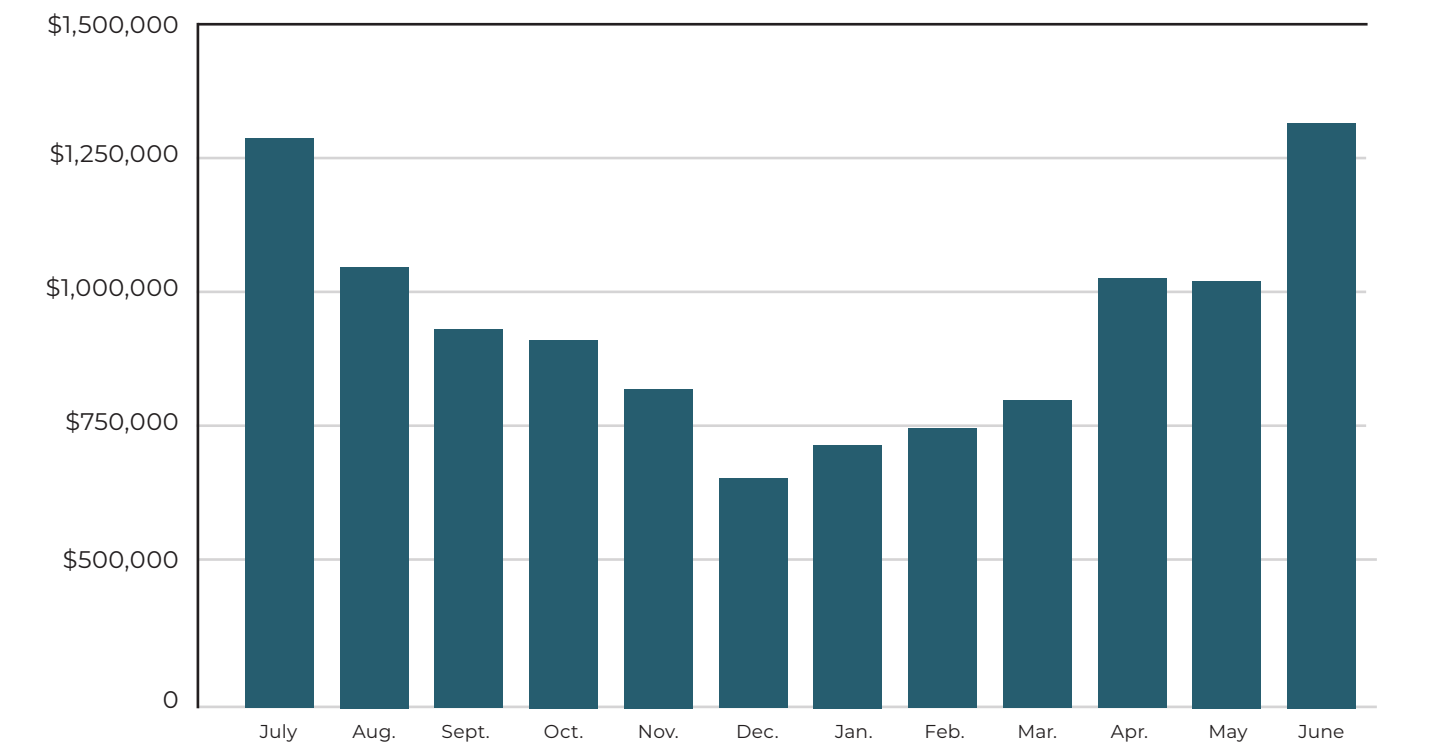


## TRANSIENT OCCUPANCY TAX DISTRIBUTION 2024-25

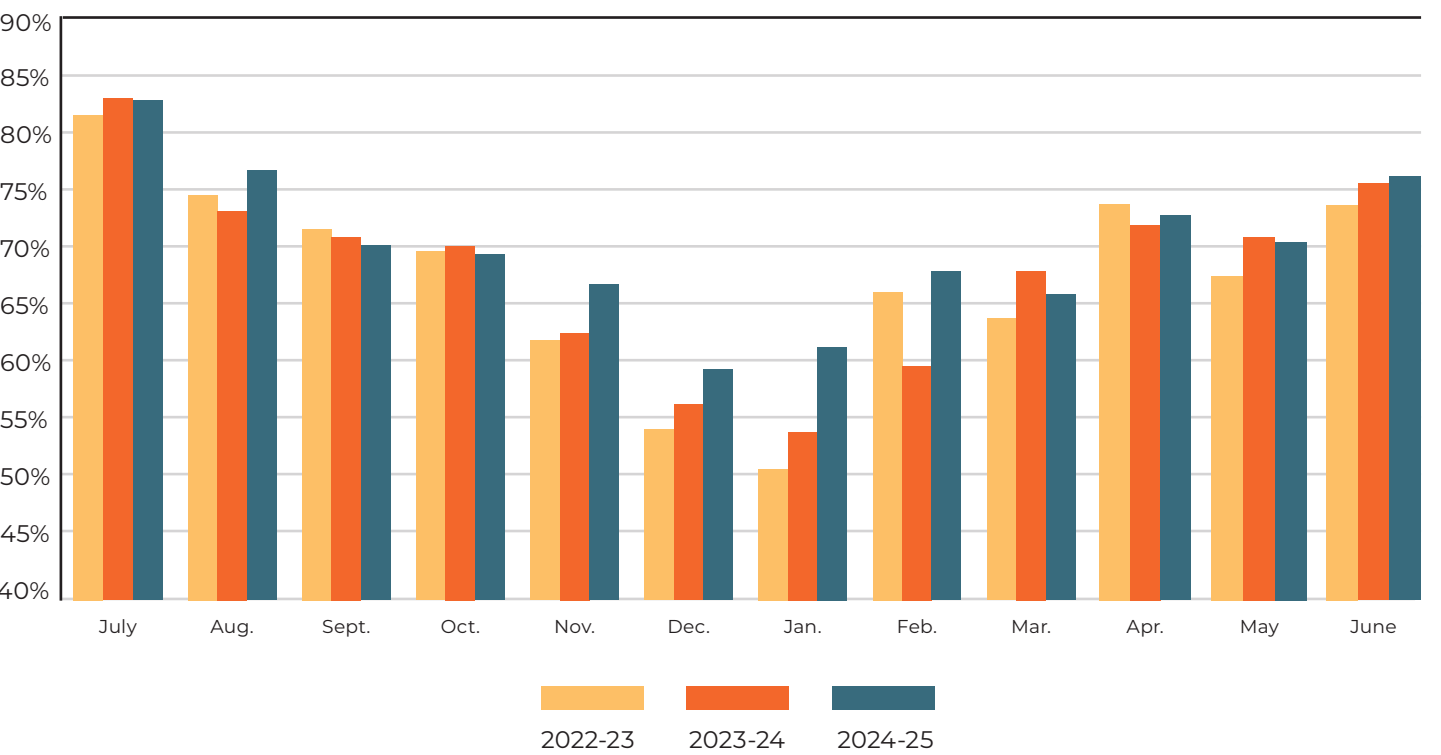




TRANSIENT OCCUPANCY TAX MONTH TO MONTH 2024-25



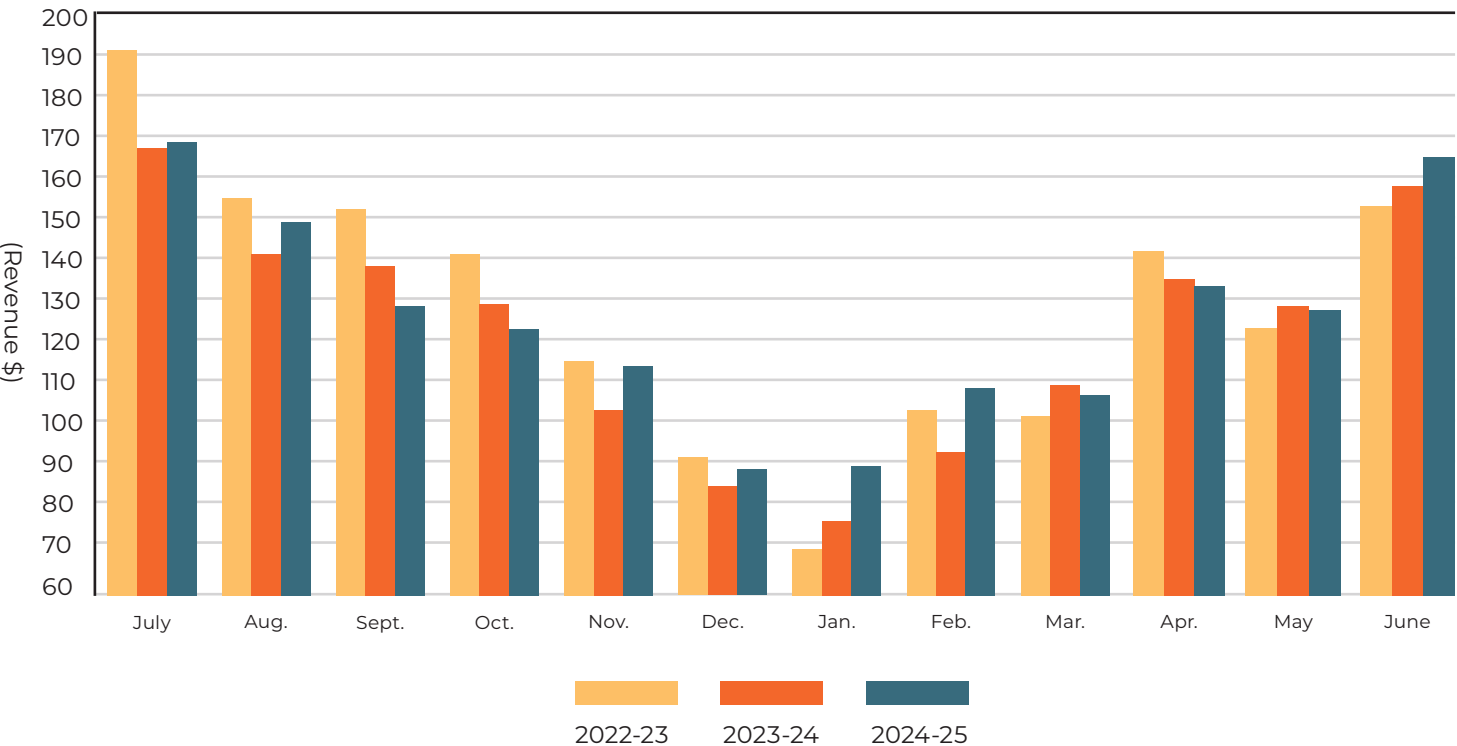
OCCUPANCY MONTH TO MONTH



AVERAGE DAILY RATE MONTH TO MONTH



REVENUE PER AVAILABLE ROOM MONTH TO MONTH





# TBID 2025-2030 STRATEGIC PLAN

## NORTH STAR

### Vision

A welcoming community with a vibrant economy that enriches the lives of visitors and residents alike.

### Mission

We share the abundance of SLO, driving the lodging economy and serving as the voice of our stakeholders

### Values

We believe in:

- Service
- Leadership
- Adaptability
- Collaboration

### Position

The SLO TBID stewards the brand of Visit San Luis Obispo and represents its lodging partners, driving overnight stays by:

- Telling the San Luis Obispo story via targeted marketing content and activities.
- Serving as a convener and subject matter expert for tourism conversations impacting the destination.
- Advancing strategic partnerships that extend the reach and influence of Visit San Luis Obispo.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

### Objectives

### Indicators

#### Ensure Organizational Excellence

- Maintain stakeholder sentiment of Visit San Luis Obispo performance.
- Increased engagement and participation with Visit San Luis Obispo's Brand Book and promotional toolkits.

#### Deliver Smart Growth

- Increase in resident sentiment.
- Increase mid-week occupancy.
- Increase length of stay.

### Objectives

### Indicators

#### Build Meaningful Partnerships

- Create one net new signature brand partnership
- Partnerships balanced across identified key sectors

#### Activate the SLO Life

- Lift in brand sentiment against baseline.
- Increase RevPAR.
- Increase awareness of SLO as a sustainable destination

## STRATEGIC ACTION

- Grow organizational capacity.
- Invest in internal relationship building.
- Develop an innovation process.
- Communicate successes.
- Invest in stakeholder connections.

- Perform an audit of our partnership landscape.
- Develop partnerships to address key gaps.
- Develop an events strategy to complement Visit SLO CAL's approach.

- Foster ongoing positive resident sentiment.
- Develop remote work messages as part of SLO Life.
- Advocate for conference center development.
- Partner with Visit California and Visit SLO CAL to bolster targeted segments of travel.

- Further enhance the use of data to inform marketing programs.
- Maintain focus on social awareness & environmental responsibility.
- Maximize the evolution of the "Live the SLO Life" brand.
- Differentiate Visit San Luis Obispo while building off Visit SLO CAL's success.

Visit  
San Luis  
Obispo  
Live the SLO Life

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