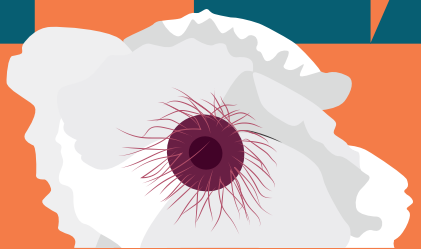
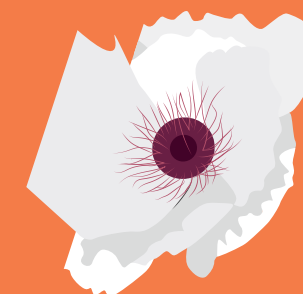
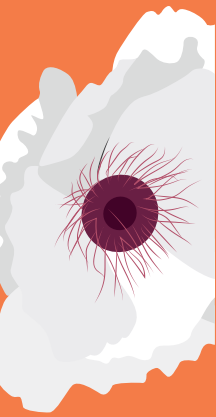
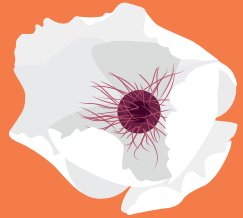
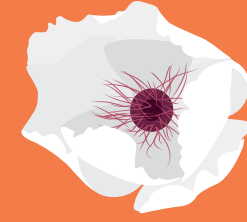




FY26-28 STRATEGIC MARKETING & BUSINESS PLAN





INTRODUCTION

SLO LIFE TIP #8: ALWAYS SAY “HI” FIRST BECAUSE, HERE, THERE ARE NO STRANGERS, JUST FRIENDS YOU HAVEN’T MET (YET).

Hi, and welcome to the San Luis Obispo Tourism Business Improvement District’s (SLO TBID) Strategic Marketing & Business Plan. This plan was developed at the end of FY 2025-26 in order to guide all tourism program efforts over a two-year period (FY 2026-27 and FY 2027-28). As we enter the first year of the two-year plan, the TBID has reflected on the progress made towards the overarching 2025-2030 Strategic Plan, and has identified key focus areas for the year ahead.

This plan outlines the FY 2026-27 TBID program efforts, while serving as a compass for creating unforgettable experiences that showcase what it means to Live the SLO Life. To keep us agile and responsive to changing economic, political and industry trends, we’ll implement this plan within a more detailed and tactical Quarterly Marketing Plan. What is in the following pages also aligns with our broader five-year 2025-2030 Strategic Plan, ensuring every action contributes to our long-term goals.

Central to these long-term goals is ensuring that our core values thoughtfully guide everything we do. Our five-year strategic plan envisions San Luis Obispo as a deeply welcoming community with a vibrant economy that enriches the lives of visitors and residents alike. To make that a reality, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are wholeheartedly woven into our organization’s DNA, that we meet all people where they are, with genuine dignity and respect, just as they are. Alongside this commitment, San Luis Obispo is more than just a beautiful place to visit. It’s a community committed to preserving its natural beauty for generations to come. Our brand vision is to be a tourism organization that seamlessly balances business and sustainability, making San Luis Obispo a must-visit destination while actively contributing to the City's 2035 carbon neutrality goal.

To bring this strategy to life, we have a handful of major initiatives shaping the year ahead. We are keeping the good vibes rolling by amplifying our SLO Life Coach brand campaign and continuing to lean into our title as the MidWeekend Vacation Capital of the World to inspire year-round midweek travel. Behind the scenes, we are taking a thoughtful look at our strategic events partnership landscape and jumping into meetings and group travel research with Visit SLO CAL to help inform our future strategies. We are also keeping our digital strategy as fresh and forward-thinking as our community, evolving our search strategies to meet travelers exactly where and how they find travel inspiration in this new era of AI.

Get ready for fresh ideas, and a whole lot more as we continue to share the SLO Life far and wide!



THE SAN LUIS OBISPO TOURISM LANDSCAPE

Sharing our love for San Luis Obispo means looking at the bigger tourism landscape picture. On the global stage, Visit California supports our efforts by doing the incredible work of creating broad awareness and consideration for the state as a whole, reaching a massive audience through their domestic and international marketing. We also lean into the regional connection of the Central Coast Tourism Council, which beautifully brings together our neighboring destinations to showcase our iconic coastline and classic California road trips. From there, we work hand in hand with our partners at Visit SLO CAL, who take that regional inspiration and channel it into top of funnel excitement for our county. Once travelers' minds are set on the Central Coast, our strategy is to entice them to choose San Luis Obispo as their ultimate homebase away from home. Inviting visitors to stay in the city, unpack just once, and use our walkable streets and vibrant downtown as their natural anchor while they explore everything the region has to offer.

Doing this successfully means keeping a thoughtful eye on how today's economic climate shapes traveler habits. While overall visitation to SLO remains resilient, we are navigating a K-shaped economy where consumer spending is divided. Travelers are increasingly price-sensitive and value-focused, thoughtfully planning their trips to ensure they get a genuine emotional and experiential return on their investment. Given this specific focus on midweek value and shifting traveler sentiment, we are prioritizing our key drive markets. At the same time, we are paying close attention to inbound flights, allowing us to dynamically adjust our targeting to include fly markets as opportunities shift.

Because of these economic realities, when we look at Average Daily Rate growth as a city, it is all about ensuring an authentic SLO experience that aligns beautifully with demand across all of our lodging options. From our cozy, budget-friendly spots, homestays or our luxury hotels, every single property plays a vital role in our ecosystem by delivering true, heartfelt value. Our focus is on attracting the right kind of mindful visitors who connect deeply with our way of life.

While SLO County celebrated record-breaking visitation in 2025, upcoming hotel and motel projects across the region are set to increase significantly overall lodging supply. Because the city of San Luis Obispo currently holds the majority of the county's available room inventory at 24.6%, we must look closely at how we navigate this shifting landscape.

Looking ahead, county-wide supply growth is projected to outpace demand growth throughout 2026 and 2027. This imbalance will inevitably put pressure on occupancy, ADR, and RevPAR across the region, making proactive demand generation (particularly during midweek and shoulder seasons) a top priority.

To help keep our local lodging community humming and vibrant, we will focus on reaching our returning visitors. Our research shows that these familiar friends are the most likely to visit again, because once you experience the SLO Life, it truly stays with you. By combining the loyalty of returning visitors with a strategic, proactive demand engine, we can dream up fresh ways to connect with travelers and give them irresistible reasons to visit, stay just a little bit longer, and choose SLO as their ultimate homebase.

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OUR STRATEGIC FOUNDATION



SLO TBID STRATEGIC DIRECTION & IMPERATIVES

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.

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

- Service
- Leadership
- Adaptability
- Collaboration

OBJECTIVES

- Ensure organizational excellence
- Deliver smart growth
- Build meaningful partnerships
- Activate the SLO Life

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.

VISION

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.
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

STRATEGIES

• Grow organizational capacity. • Invest in internal relationship building. • Develop an innovation process. • Communicate successes. • Invest in stakeholder connections.	• 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.
• Perform an audit of our partnership landscape. • Develop partnerships to address key gaps. • Develop an events strategy to complement Visit SLO CAL’s approach.	• 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.

DESTINATION PARTNERS

In 2008, San Luis Obispo established a Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID), allowing the hotel industry to raise funds solely dedicated to tourism marketing and promotions to attract visitors to San Luis Obispo. The TBID is inclusive of all lodging properties in the city of San Luis Obispo including hotels, motels, bed and breakfasts, hostels, inns and owner occupied homestays. The appointed TBID Board members in collaboration with City Staff and agency partners help to guide the marketing efforts for the public-facing destination brand Visit San Luis Obispo.

The SLO TBID partners with organizations at the state, regional, countywide and local level to leverage the reach and impact of our marketing programs for our tourism businesses in San Luis Obispo. These partnerships allow the SLO TBID to maximize investments and expand awareness in ways the organization would not be able to do alone.

VISIT CALIFORNIA

CENTRAL COAST TOURISM COUNCIL

VISIT SLO CAL

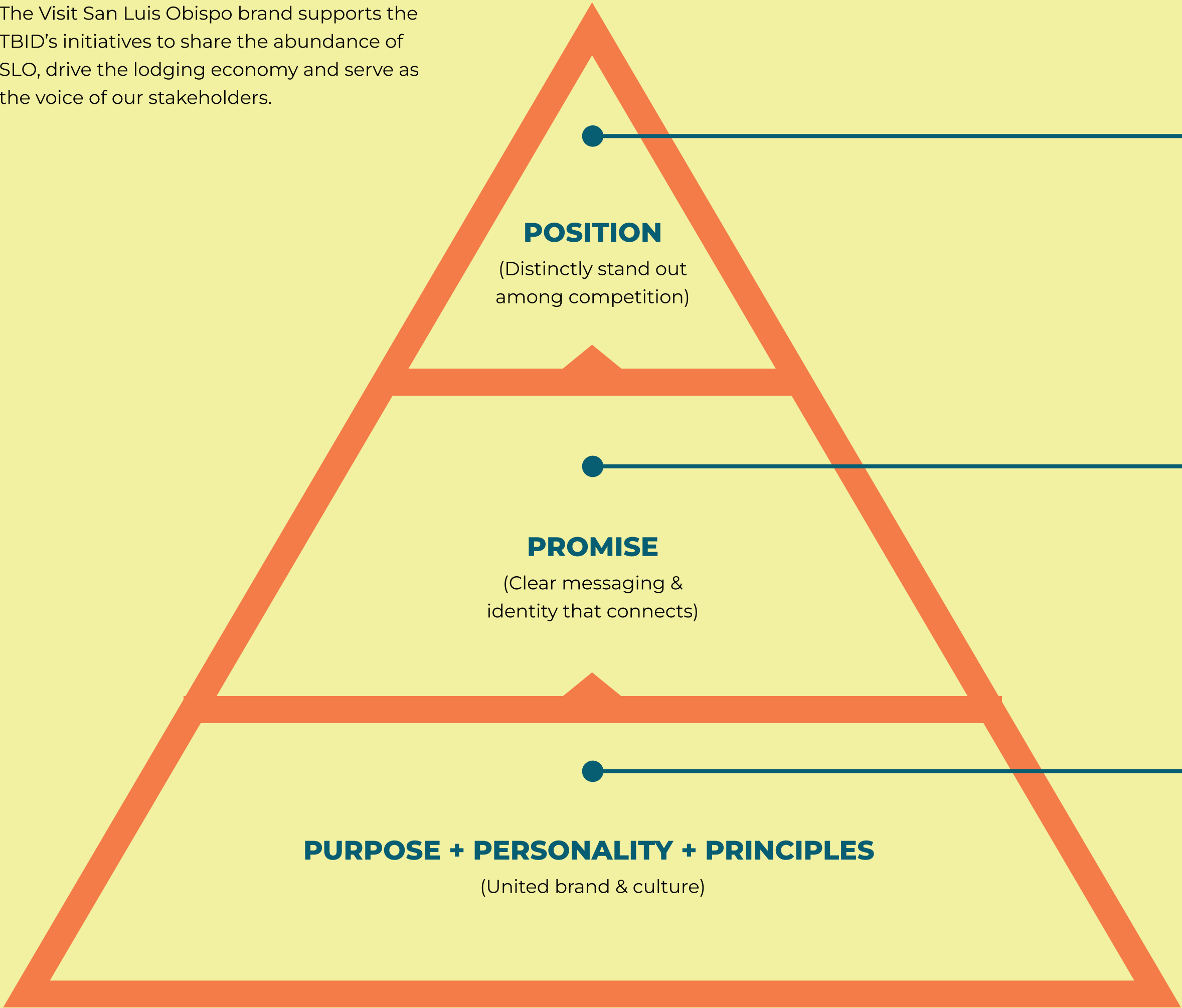
VISIT SAN LUIS OBISPO

SLO LODGING + TOURISM BUSINESSES



BRAND STRATEGY

The Visit San Luis Obispo brand supports the TBID’s initiatives to share the abundance of SLO, drive the lodging economy and serve as the voice of our stakeholders.



HOMEBASE AWAY FROM HOME

You don’t just visit San Luis Obispo on vacation. You become part of our community and culture, an honorary local. The welcoming waves, neighborly nods and small-town California charm instantly make you feel welcome and invite 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 releasing life’s stresses, because 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.

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.

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 RESEARCH INITIATIVES

Over the past few years, the TBID Board has made significant investments in a variety of brand research programs through self-directed and co-op commitments. These studies helped to increase the organization’s knowledge and ability to have specific data and valuable insights to help further guide our efforts to develop program actions. Over the next two years, we'll look to leverage the research and data we've gathered to positively impact progress and performance towards our organizational objectives.

FALL 2021

BRAND HEALTH & EQUITY RESEARCH

- An analysis of the San Luis Obispo destination brand from a qualitative and quantitative perspective.
- These insights and takeaways continue to guide our marketing efforts.

WINTER 2021, SPRING 2022, FALL 2023

BRAND TRACKER & LOCAL SENTIMENT

- This Brand Tracker research has allowed us to set a baseline and trackable measure of sentiment towards San Luis Obispo as a branded destination, among locals and prospective visitors.
- We'll continually use these baselines in order to measure progress in key areas.

LOOKING AHEAD

FY26-28 RESEARCH INITIATIVES

- See page 13 for more details on upcoming research initiatives

SPRING 2024

BRAND & EMERGING MARKET RESEARCH

- This custom research study leveraged audience insights and a partnership with Wiser Insights Group to better understand market influencers, perceptions and sentiments within new emerging markets as they pertain to San Luis Obispo. This study provided robust evidence for the effectiveness of current positioning strategies and identifies clear opportunities for expanding San Luis Obispo's appeal and market share.

FALL 2025

BRAND TRACKER & CO-OP RESEARCH

- Deployed the latest Brand & Local Sentiment Tracker to measure incremental progress towards brand strategy goals.
- Invested in co-op research opportunities in partnership with Visit SLO CAL focused around a 2025 Economic Impact Study as well as a Visitor Profile Study.

RESEARCH FINDINGS & TAKEAWAYS

In the fall of FY2025-26, we initiated the latest Brand & Local Sentiment tracker which measures brand sentiment progress and awareness against established benchmarks. We also partnered with Visit SLO CAL on their 2025 Economic Impact and Visitor Profile studies, which confirm that our strategic direction is on target. A few key takeaways include:

- **Evolving Brand Perception:** Visit San Luis Obispo has successfully continued its shift away from being perceived as just a university town or a quick pitstop on the way to somewhere else.
- **Pillar Momentum:** The core attributes we have been championing—"all the California good, none of the bad," "great for foodies," and "an eco-friendly destination"—all continue to move in a strongly positive direction.
- **Campaign Stickiness:** The SLO Life Coach campaign is proving its effectiveness. In-market travelers show a significantly higher awareness of the campaign, proving the message is breaking through the noise.
- **Demographic Gains:** We are making measurable positive progress with high-yield target segments, specifically women and travelers aged 45+.

SLO LIFE TIP #18 STAY IN SLO.





DATA-DRIVEN BRAND FOUNDATIONS

Sustainability remains our ultimate differentiator and will be woven as an intentional undercurrent through everything we do. To maximize impact, our ongoing messaging will focus on the specific ownable destination features that our research proves are the highest motivators for travelers:

CORE DESTINATION MOTIVATORS

- Food & Beverage
- A Happy, Feel-Good Community
- Convenient Outdoor Hiking & Biking

EMERGING MARKET DRIVERS

- Great Outdoor Hiking & Biking
- Charming & Historic Downtown
- Great Climate Year-Round
- 15 Minutes from Multiple Beaches

LOOKING AHEAD: FY2026-28 RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

To keep our marketing program agile and responsive to evolving trends, we will continue exploring co-op research initiatives destination partners such as Visit SLO CAL and Visit California while seeking out new opportunities around:

- **Advanced Location Data:** Exploring third-party visitation data providers to help inform smarter targeting tactics and paid media investments.
- **Meetings and Trade Research:**
 - A destination-specific meetings research study in partnership with Visit SLO CAL to help inform our broader meetings and events strategy.
 - Continued exploration of the feasibility of a local conference center through the City's efforts.
- **2026 Economic Impact Study:** A study in partnership once again with Visit SLO CAL to gain insight into visitation trends, visitor spending and localized macroeconomic impacts.
- **Brand Sentiment Tracking:** Deploying a Fall 2027 Brand Tracker and Local Sentiment Study to continue monitoring the success of brand campaign efforts.





VISIT SAN LUIS OBISPO MARKETING PLAN

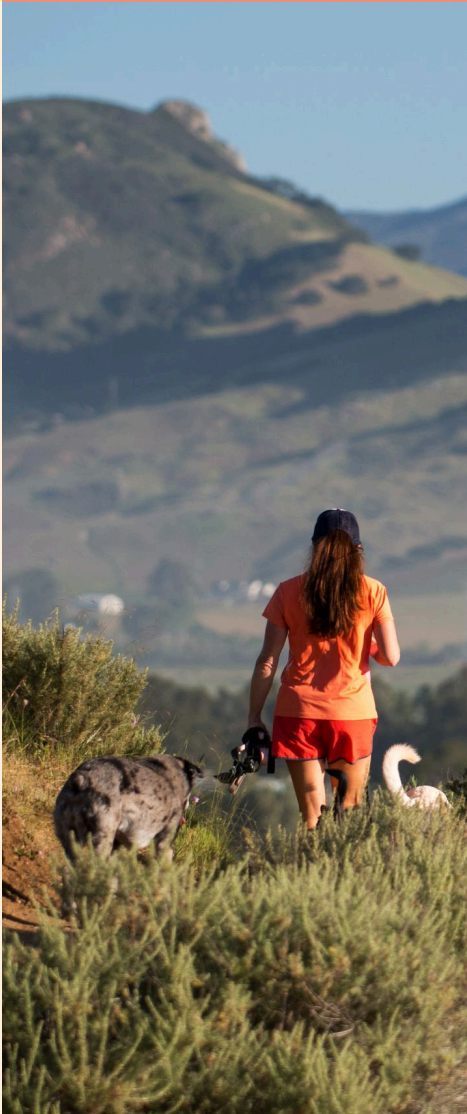
TARGET AUDIENCES

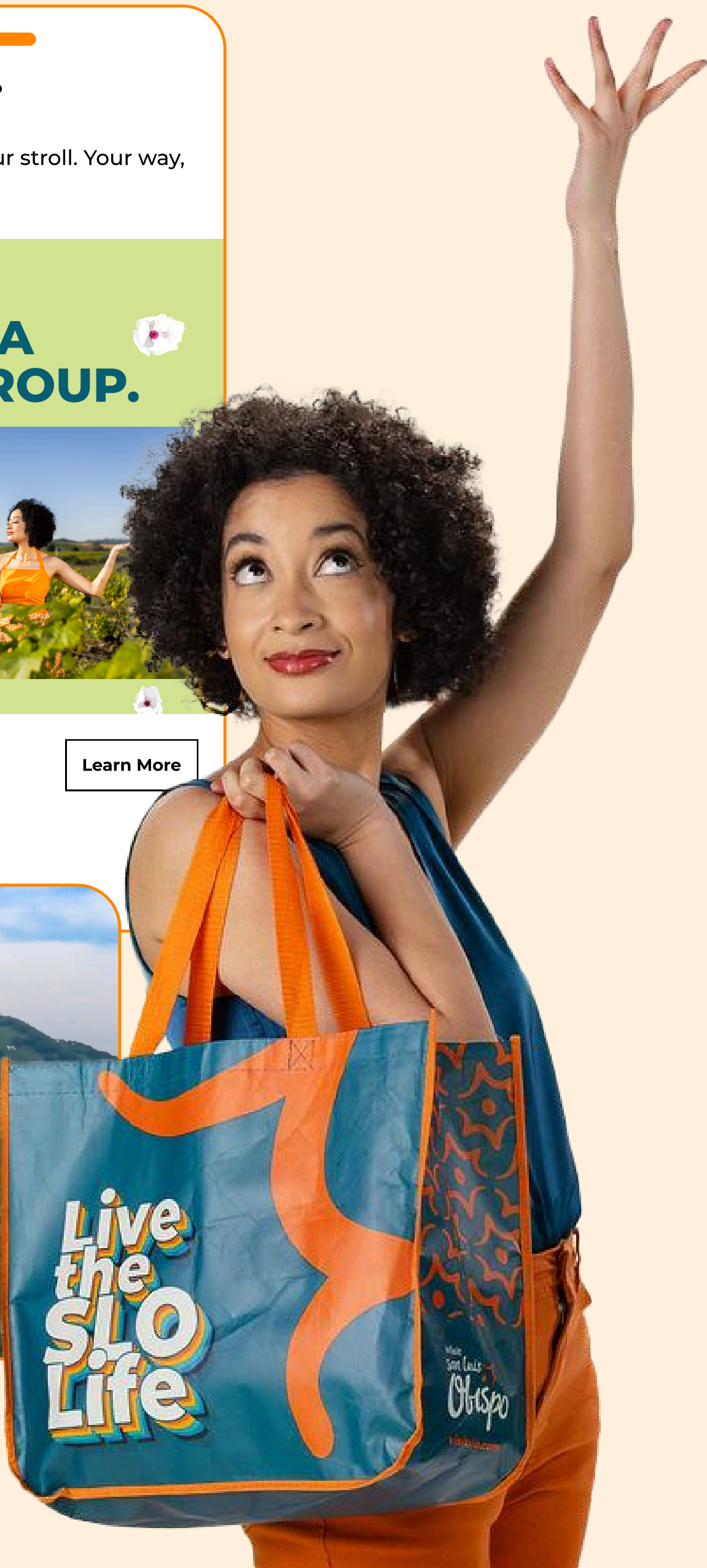
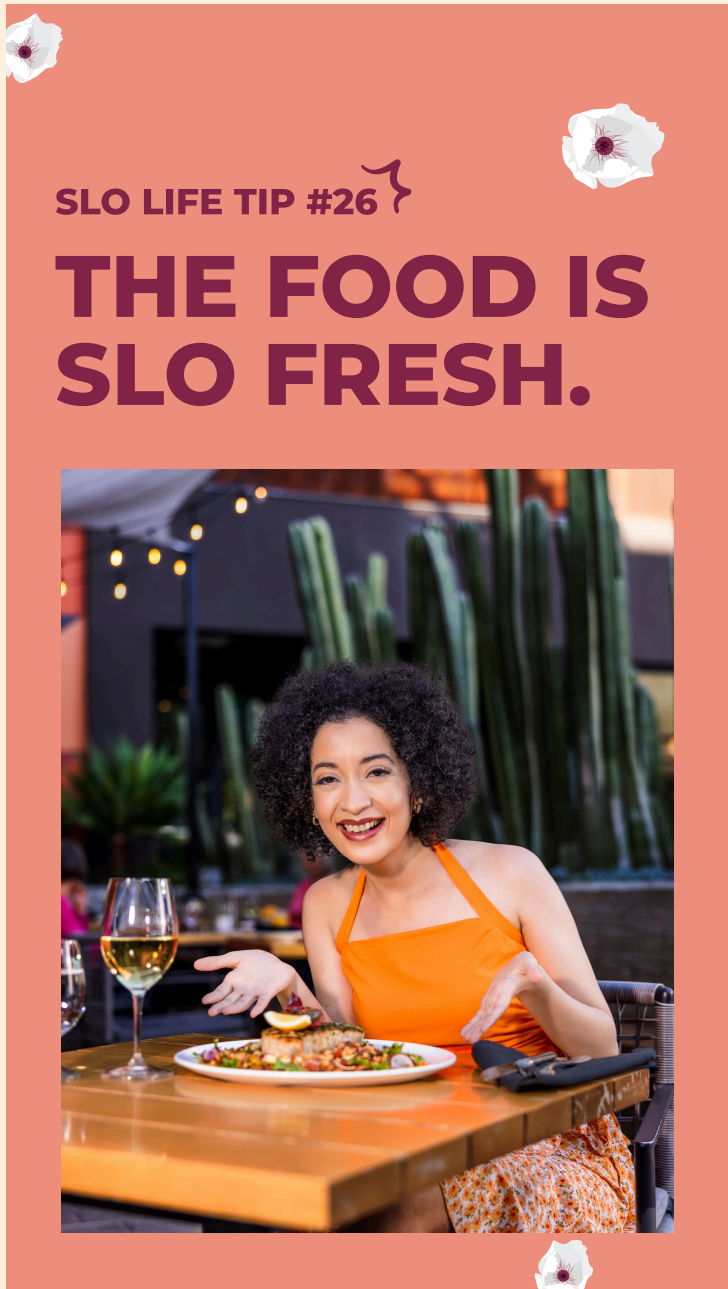
All kinds of people are curious about the "SLO Life" and our job is finding them and inspiring them to come experience it firsthand! We are getting even smarter about how we do just that. By leaning into our latest website data, inbound flight trends and visitor profile research, we're uncovering deeper insights to reach the people most excited to pack their bags for San Luis Obispo.

We're also not doing it alone. We'll continue to team up and align our targeting tactics with Visit California and Visit SLO CAL. This keeps our marketing efficient, collaborative and perfectly positioned to deepen connections in our established markets while welcoming fresh faces from emerging ones.

Here is how we are shaking up our audience strategy for this next chapter:

- **Agile Geographic Investments:** To make sure our budget is always working its hardest, we're maintaining a flexible investment model that lets us shift responsively while continuing to nurture the critical fly markets that build long-term brand awareness.
- **Trading Relaxation for Experience-Motivated Travelers:** Moving away from our relaxation and wellness audience to focus on high-intent travelers who look for a compelling spark to plan their trip. We'll look to target experience-seekers who are motivated by a rich mix of seasonal offerings, local festivals, signature events, unique regional happenings, and one-of-a-kind activities that give them the perfect reason to visit.
- **Winning Midweek with Flexible Professionals:** To continue boosting midweek visitation, we'll additionally tap into hybrid workers, flexible professionals and self-employed individuals in our core drive markets, reminding them that their "remote office" looks a whole lot better from a sunny outdoor patio in SLO.
- **Replacing Audience Assumptions with Actionable Data:** To make our targeting sharper than ever, we'll take the guesswork out by exploring visitation data providers to help inform smarter targeting tactics and paid media investments.

TARGET AUDIENCES (DEMOGRAPHICS & PSYCHOGRAPHICS)						
CORE AUDIENCES				NICHE AUDIENCES		
OUTDOOR	EVENTS & EXPERIENCE	CULINARY	FAMILIES	RETARGETING	65+	SUSTAINABILITY
						
Potential travelers looking to be active and experience nature.	Potential travelers that seek seasonal offerings, local festivals, signature events, unique regional happenings, and one-of-a-kind activities.	Potential travelers looking for unique culinary and beer/wine experiences.	Potential travelers likely to book family or multi-generational group trips.	Potential travelers that have showed intent by engaging with our ads/website. Along with Cal Poly parents.	Potential travelers in the 65+ age range that are likely to book a trip to the Central Coast.	Potential travelers that live more sustainable/ green lives and consider environmental impact.
AGES 25-54 HHI \$110K+	AGES 25-54 HHI \$110K+	AGES 25-54 HHI \$110K+	AGES 25-54 HHI \$110K+	AGES 25-65+ HHI \$110K+	AGES 65+ HHI \$110K+	AGES 25-54 HHI \$110K+



BRAND CAMPAIGN

After a stellar first full year, our beloved **SLO Life Coach** campaign is officially reaching its stride! Launched at the tail end of FY 2024–25, this personality-driven campaign moved beyond standard tourism marketing to personify our brand. It shows travelers exactly how to Live the SLO Life with a refreshing mix of warmth, charm and a touch of humor. While the launch was a major success across our paid and owned channels, we're still just scratching the surface of what it can do. For the FY 2026–28 cycle, we're taking this incredible momentum and shifting our focus from building broad awareness to **converting that awareness into direct action**. We want to take the SLO Life Coach off the screen and connect her directly to real-world experiences that inspire people to book their trip.

OBJECTIVES

- **Convert Awareness into Action:** Transition the SLO Life Coach from a storytelling asset into a driver of real-time visitation by linking her directly to timely bookable offers and interactive, planning-oriented digital web experiences.
- **Maximize Efficiency Through Partnership:** Partner closely with Visit SLO CAL so their assets do the heavy lifting on upper-funnel regional awareness. That frees us to focus our resources on hyper-targeted, conversion-focused efforts.
- **Create Unmissable Earned Media Hooks:** Develop PR-worthy moments, activations and content-first approaches that give media outlets a compelling reason to talk about us.
- **Build a Turnkey Event & Promotion Framework with SLO Life Coach:** Make the campaign agile enough to adapt easily to timely events, seasonal moments and midweek promotions.
- **Deepen In-Destination Presence:** Bridge the gap between digital marketing and the in-person visit by bringing the campaign into the Visitor Center and local activations.

SLO LIFE TIP #34 } DON'T DRIVE THRU SLO. STAY.

THE MIDWEEKEND CAMPAIGN

SLO LIFE TIP #17: EMBRACE THE MIDWEEKEND. THE FUN DOESN’T HAVE TO STOP JUST BECAUSE THE WEEKEND ENDS. AROUND HERE, EVERY DAY FEELS LIKE A SATURDAY!

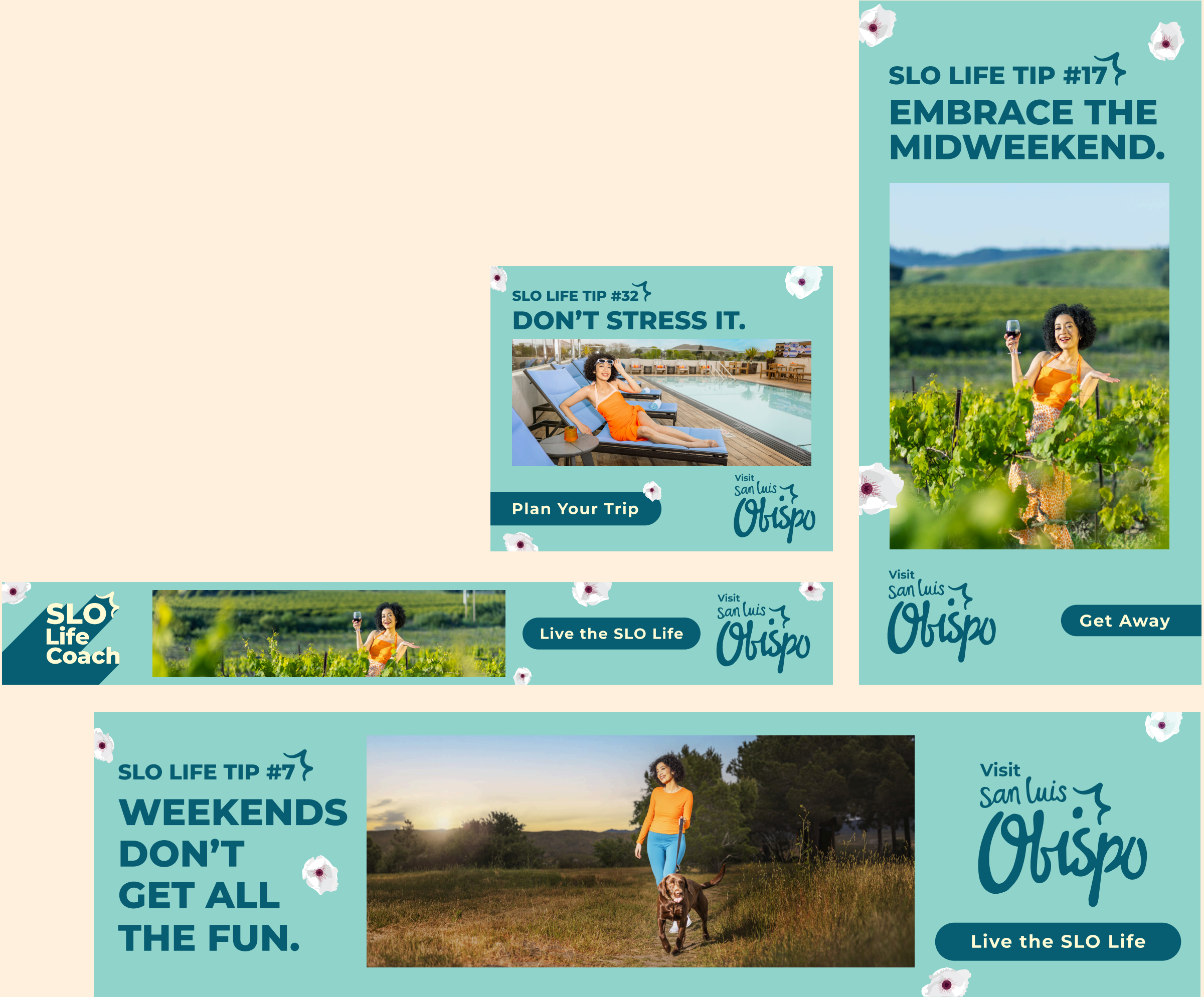
Encouraging midweek travel is an evergreen priority for us. Since officially declaring San Luis Obispo the MidWeekend Vacation Capital of the World, we've transitioned this initiative from a standalone promotional push into a permanent, ongoing extension of our SLO Life Coach brand campaign.

In FY 2026-28, we'll take our MidWeekend strategy to the next level. Instead of just telling people that midweek travel is great, we want to give them undeniable reasons to book.

By focusing heavily on seasonal events, collaborating with our local businesses to create irresistible packages and targeting audiences who have the freedom to travel Sunday through Thursday, we're ready to turn those quieter weekdays into vibrant "MidWeekends."

OBJECTIVES

- **Solidify the MidWeekend Brand:** Continue to firmly establish San Luis Obispo as the undisputed MidWeekend Vacation Capital of the World by exploring strategic regional partnerships, activations, and interactive programming concepts that amplify our messaging and help visitors plan their midweek trips.
- **Drive Midweek Occupancy & Extend Length of Stay:** Ongoing optimizations to midweek marketing efforts to steadily increase year-over-year growth in our weekday-to-weekend occupancy ratio and to increase the average length of stay for midweek travelers.
- **Engage Flexible Travelers:** Refining our audience targeting and messaging strategies to reach and influence audience segments most inclined to travel midweek, such as remote professionals, retirees and Cal Poly families.
- **Co-Create Bookable Packages:** Deepen partner and constituent relations to incentivize, develop and promote more exclusive, high-value lodging and experience packages that make booking a midweek trip effortless.
- **Leveraging Events & Seasonal Happenings:** Seasonal happenings, local festivals, events, and in-town activations will help to provide storytelling hooks that drive more immediate travel interest.





SUSTAINABLE SLO

Around here, protecting our beautiful backyard isn't a trend. It's just how we live the SLO Life. Our vision is to balance a thriving tourism economy with a deep commitment to the planet, doing our part to support the City's ambitious 2035 carbon neutrality goal.

Sustainability is a huge differentiator for today's conscientious travelers. But we also know people rarely book a vacation based on a destination's green efforts alone. That's why we treat sustainability as a meaningful "feel-good layer" of the broader SLO story.

It meets high-intent travelers at the perfect moment in their booking journey, reinforcing that choosing San Luis Obispo isn't just a fun choice, it's the right choice.

OBJECTIVES

- **Champion the Keys for Trees Initiative:** Support the 10Tall initiative to plant 10,000 trees across our community by 2035 through emotional storytelling initiatives.
 - Strategically placing sustainability messaging in front of travelers showing a strong intent to visit, giving them that final, heartwarming reason to choose SLO.
 - Equipping lodging partners with ready-to-use materials, messaging guides, and frameworks that help them share the Keys for Trees program directly with guests.
- **Incorporating Sustainability as an Undercurrent:** Weave sustainability messaging naturally into our marketing efforts across our various owned channels, from organic social posts to our e-newsletters, and throughout the entire traveler experience.
- **Elevate Our Reputation as a National Leader in Sustainable Tourism:** Attract eco-conscious visitors and further solidify our reputation through intentional media pitching and sustainable travel content.
- **Cultivate Strong Partnerships:** Create meaningful partnerships with sustainable businesses to expand the Sustainable SLO initiative.
 - Identifying ways to support and activate around the City's upcoming Climate Action Plan update and its community engagement opportunities.
 - Working in partnership with ECOSLO to create physical signage for trees planted through our programs, turning them into tangible touchpoints for visitors and locals alike.
 - Continuing our partnership with Kind Traveler to tap into their established community of passionate eco-tourists.

INFLUENCER & CONTENT CREATOR PARTNERSHIPS

Influencer and content creator partnerships are a powerful way to showcase San Luis Obispo. By collaborating with trusted voices, we reach targeted audiences and inspire travel to our destination.

OBJECTIVES

To maximize these partnerships, Visit San Luis Obispo will continue to take a strategic and collaborative approach. We will work together with our public relations and content marketing partners on a comprehensive influencer strategy that aligns with our overall marketing goals.

- Identify, vet and collaborate on partnerships with micro-influencers and niche content creators who resonate with specific target audiences, with a focus on those who live in our key drive markets.
- Explore partnerships based on mutual benefits and shared values, emphasizing authentic storytelling.
- Target influencers who align with key market segments: sustainability, LGBTQ+, solo travel, BIPOC travel, outdoor adventure, road trips, culinary and more.
- Empower our community of local hotel stakeholders by providing more education resources around how the City can support, elevate, and collaborate with their individual, property-level PR teams to maximize our collective reach.

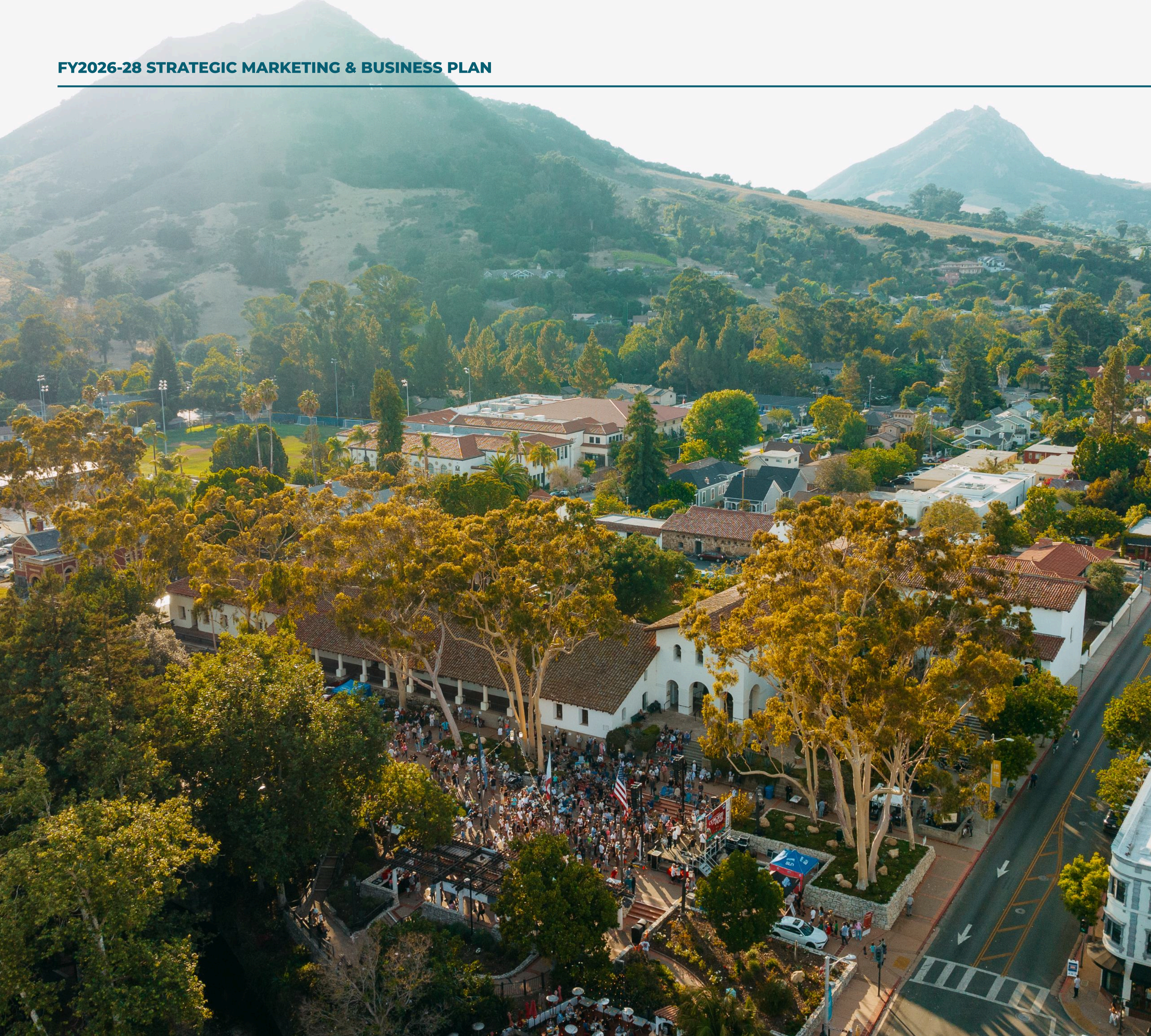
KEY INITIATIVE: INFLUENCER FAM TRIPS

We'll continue hosting micro-influencer FAM (familiarization) trips that bring trusted voices to SLO and put our destination in front of their highly engaged audiences. Each trip can flex around a different pillar to generate a breadth of content for our diverse drive markets, such as:

- Foodies and culinary creators
- Outdoor adventurers
- Sustainable travelers
- LGBTQ+ travel
- Midweek getaways

We'll require influencers to point their followers toward @ShareSLO and explore giveaways to drive added engagement and newsletter sign-ups.





PAID MEDIA

In FY 2025-26, we used a mix of tactics to increase San Luis Obispo's awareness and refine audience targeting. We incorporated Visit SLO CAL's "Unpacking" ads across YouTube and Meta, which performed exceptionally well. We also provided integrated paid media support for key initiatives, leaning hard into our new MidWeekend messaging (after declaring SLO the MidWeekend Vacation Capital of the World in March of 2025) and fine-tuning our SLO Life Coach brand campaign.

Paid media will continue to be a key tactic to keep Visit San Luis Obispo top of mind among both new and existing audiences. Our strategy will increasingly adopt a video-first approach to spotlight our SLO Life Coach, along with our SLO Life Tips video campaign.

OBJECTIVES

- **Deploy an Integrated, Research-Guided Media Strategy:**
 - Execute an integrated paid media strategy to promote the brand, promotional and event campaigns, guided by data-driven research to drive impact toward our strategic objectives.
- **Drive Brand Awareness & Intent-Driven Growth:**
 - Build future visitor demand by intercepting travelers in the early stages of trip planning.
 - Establish a proactive, growth-oriented strategy that uses custom insights to enhance brand equity, maintains an always-on MidWeekend presence, and tests new media channels to connect with our target audiences.
- **Inspire Engagement & Planning Behavior:**
 - Encourage further engagement and consideration of San Luis Obispo among potential travelers by driving them to VisitSLO.com.
 - Strategically target higher-household-income audiences to inspire longer stays and greater spending in the destination.
 - Explore and test new audience segments interested in signature events, festivals and cultural happenings to drive seasonal, intent-driven visitation.
- **Optimize for Conversions & Booking Behavior:**
 - Support local lodging partners by continuously refining and optimizing campaign strategies and digital ad placements by guiding high-intent audiences toward conversion focused content.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Effective public relations is essential to building and maintaining a strong destination brand. By working with local, regional and national media outlets, we generate positive press coverage, drive visitation and solidify San Luis Obispo's reputation as a must-visit destination.

Through a collaborative effort with our partners, we'll execute a comprehensive PR strategy that highlights our destination's one-of-a-kind character.

OBJECTIVES

- **Expand Earned Media Awareness:**
 - Secure impactful media coverage across target drive, fly and national markets to drive visitation and economic impact through promoting longer stays, while layering in interest-based, community, and identity-focused storytelling that establish SLO as a welcoming, inclusive destination.
 - Sustain always-on PR efforts, including responsive media request fulfillment, vetting advertorial opportunities and crafting expert press visits with custom itineraries.
 - Maximize the reach of our earned media successes by proudly featuring our best PR wins and press features throughout our paid and owned channels.
- **Navigate Modern Media Landscapes:**
 - Cut through generic media noise and connect directly with travelers seeking a meaningful emotional reset by shifting our storytelling toward hyper-focused experiential angles, hyper-niche listicles, and emotional outcomes like calm, creativity, and connection.
 - Proactively engage emerging media platforms, publication social networks, and hub-and-spoke editorial models with unique hooks that clearly differentiate SLO from competitors.
 - Distribute LLM-readable press releases and collaborate on AI-optimized content planning to future-proof our earned footprint and maximize discoverability across modern AI search engines.
- **Deepen Our Strategic Co-Op Partnerships:**
 - Collaborate closely with Visit SLO CAL, Central Coast Tourism Council, and Visit California on shared editorial themes, coordinated press hosting initiatives, and reactive media opportunities to maximize earned media exposure.
 - Seek out relevant trade events, conferences and festivals through co-op opportunities to showcase our unique multi-venue and group travel capabilities to event planners and industry professionals.
- **Explore New High-Impact Experiential Tactics and Partnerships:**
 - Bring our brand campaign to life physically and capture a wider editorial audience by developing PR-worthy experiential activations and collaborative event-based tactics that directly support the SLO Life Coach campaign.
 - Execute dedicated Media Missions to show top-tier writers firsthand how to Live the SLO Life and team up with local stakeholders such as chefs and hoteliers, to create an engaging presence that translates experiences into impactful media coverage.





MEETINGS & TRADE TRAVEL

When it comes to Meetings & Travel Trade, our focus over the coming year will be to uncover where our truest opportunities exist. As we look to develop a thoughtful, strategic foundation in close partnership with Visit SLO CAL, we intend to let research lead the way. To make sure we are moving forward as intentionally as possible, the objectives outlined below may be refined based on upcoming outputs of our co-op research initiative and ongoing collaboration with Visit SLO CAL.

OBJECTIVES

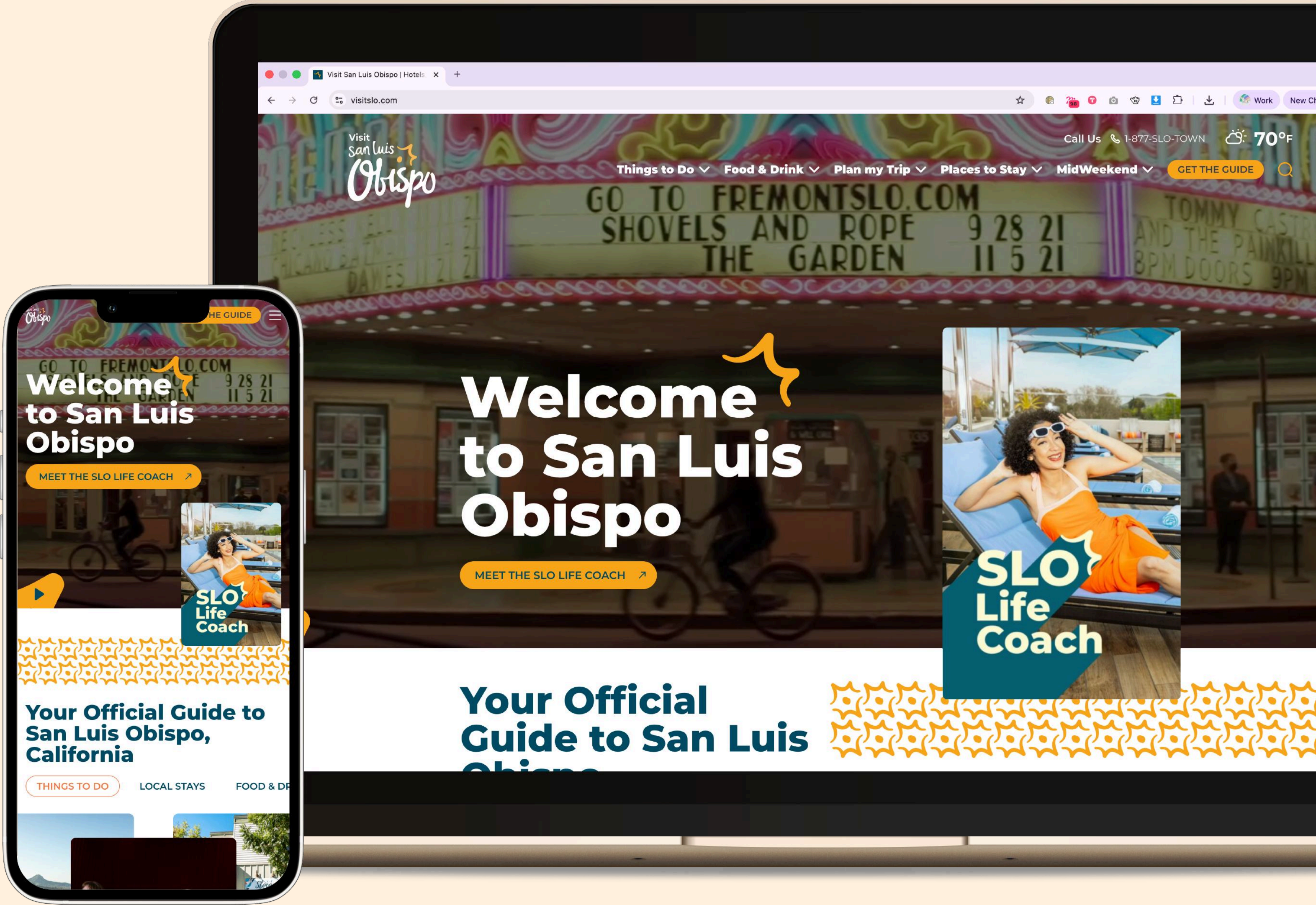
- **Enhance Regional Visibility and Planner Consideration:**
 - Elevate San Luis Obispo County's reputation as a premier business and meetings destination to drive greater consideration among corporate meeting and event planners.
 - Pitch relevant media outlets, attend industry events, and optimize our professional LinkedIn presence to generate positive press coverage, share timely destination updates, and build meaningful connections directly with industry professionals.
 - Compile information on available meeting spaces throughout SLO to update content across VisitSLO.com, ensuring planners have helpful resources during the destination evaluation phase.
- **Shape a Dedicated Strategy:**
 - Build on existing relationships and co-op opportunities with Visit SLO CAL to help research, inform and shape our own strategy for meetings and events.
 - Explore co-ops to attend industry events and showcase the destination.
- **Drive Bleisure Travel:**
 - Position San Luis Obispo as an attractive destination for business travelers seeking leisure experiences.

WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT & MAINTENANCE

VisitSLO.com is the digital heart of our marketing efforts, acting as an online hub for travelers seeking information and inspiration. Our focus over the next year is maximizing its effectiveness and engagement across the site. We'll keep enhancing the user experience while making sure the site is optimized for visibility across traditional and AI search engines, connecting visitors with everything they need to plan their trips and Live the SLO Life.

OBJECTIVES

- **Maintain a Secure, Stable and High-Performing Website Infrastructure:**
 - Ensure the site remains healthy, stable and optimized for performance through continuous technical optimization (for both user experience and search crawlers) and proactive software, security and plugin updates.
- **Keep Digital Storytelling Dynamic, Fresh and Relevant:**
 - Perform ongoing website enhancements and general content updates, including the creation of new web blocks and styles to accommodate fresh content types.
 - Execute quarterly updates to the dedicated Media Page to ensure journalists and press always have access to destination assets and inspiration.
- **Create Personalized and Engaging Digital Experiences:**
 - Explore new digital experiences to support the SLO Life Coach campaign with a focus on enhancing paid landing pages and providing interactive trip-planning capabilities that drive booking behaviors.





SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

Building a strong SEO strategy is critical for maximizing San Luis Obispo's online presence and attracting high-intent travelers. As AI-powered search engines evolve to prioritize user intent and comprehensive content, a holistic SEO approach will strengthen VisitSLO.com's technical foundation and boost its visibility and authority. This ensures our destination remains discoverable by the right audience at the right time.

OBJECTIVES

- **Build Authority Across Traditional & Generative AI Search Platforms:**
 - Future-proof our online presence by building website authority to improve VisitSLO.com's position and findability on search pages and within AI chatbots and agents, as well as Google and Bing hybrid search engines.
 - Conduct a comprehensive SEO and AI Optimization Audit to inform ongoing optimization strategies.
 - Integrate of paid, PR and organic search efforts to maximize real estate within search engine results pages.
- **Scale Technical Optimization:**
 - Maximize organic visibility by addressing technical optimizations, ensuring crawlers can easily index and understand our site.
 - Continually monitor for structured data markup opportunities to help VisitSLO.com surface within AI search results.
- **Drive High-Intent Site Traffic:**
 - Attract qualified, high-intent visitors to VisitSLO.com through a focused owned content strategy and ongoing improvements to the site experience.
 - Optimize toward Google's Experience, Expertise, Authoritativeness and Trustworthiness ranking factors.

CONTENT DEVELOPMENT

The more people discover San Luis Obispo, the more they fall in love with the destination and want to stay longer. Compelling storytelling is essential to showcasing SLO's unique charm and helping people get to know the destination more intimately, ultimately inspiring them to Live the SLO Life.

Through engaging and informative content across multiple platforms, Visit San Luis Obispo aims to deepen audience connections and drive increased visitation. Over the next year, our strategy will focus on producing versatile content that can be adapted for various channels, maximizing our reach and impact, all with the personal touch of our SLO Life Coach.

OBJECTIVE

Create discoverable and educational content that keeps subscribers and SLO fans engaged through search-optimized itineraries and blogs plus regular email marketing.

WHAT TO EXPECT

EMAIL MARKETING

Continued focus on growing our email database, including:

- Creation of more gated content on the website.
- Exploration of new partnerships, giveaways, event partnerships, and paid media tactics to incentivize newsletter sign-ups.

Deepening connections with subscribers:

- Develop a segmentation strategy that draws on past subscriber behavior and performance data to send e-newsletters to the right people at the right time.
- Continuing to engage segmented audiences with content relevant to their unique interests.
- Keeping those familiar with the destination engaged and excited, we'll design a tailored welcome series for high-value sub-audiences like the Cal Poly community (including parents, alumni and visiting families). This series will introduce them to the best of SLO through a lens that matches their lifestyle and calendar milestones (e.g., move-in weekend, graduation, parent weekends).
- Further integration of the SLO Life Coach into the email strategy, delivering SLO Life Tips, travel inspiration and exclusive offers.
- To keep our metrics accurate and our deliverability pristine, we'll run regular list-hygiene checks.

WEBSITE CONTENT

- Inspiring travel through itineraries, theme-based and event-driven content with a focus on discoverability for search and AI.
- Weaving the DEI and sustainability threads into every content piece where they show up authentically.
- Including clear calls to action in blog content to encourage trip-planning behaviors.
- Incorporating the SLO Life Coach's voice into priority landing pages, ensuring they resonate with key audiences.
- Prioritizing content that aligns with our SEO and AIO (AI optimization) strategies, developing supplemental blog content as needed to fill gaps and capture timely opportunities.



Live
the
SLO
Life



ORGANIC SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a powerful tool for fostering engagement, building brand loyalty and reaching new audiences. By delivering compelling, authentic content, we cultivate a strong digital community of locals and visitors who feel connected to San Luis Obispo.

Through strategic platform management and audience insights, we'll optimize our social presence to support visitation and strengthen our destination brand.

OBJECTIVE

Connect, engage and grow our audience by providing timely and relevant information.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Target audiences in our drive and fly markets by building partnerships with business owners, the SLO community and other DMOs and tourism-forward entities.
- Define and execute an influencer strategy in collaboration with the TBID's public relations partners.
- Maintain an active presence on all platforms, engaging with comments and social feedback.
- Focus on video-heavy evergreen and campaign-driven content, mixing new and existing styles.
- Work toward making Sustainable SLO Instagrammable, including itineraries and discoverable trails.
- Drive awareness of Visit SLO as the one-stop shop for all things visitor-facing.
- Work closely with partners to stay consistent across blog posts and messaging.
- Stay in the know on what's trending on social media and deeply familiar with San Luis Obispo and its lodging, businesses, community events and campaigns, establishing our brand as the one-stop shop for all things SLO travel.
- Promote MidWeekend offers and itineraries year-round while driving traffic to the right VisitSLO.com landing pages.
- Integrate the SLO Life Coach through captured content and potential voice-over opportunities.

STRATEGIC INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS

We know success is never achieved alone. To maximize our impact, the TBID Board and staff nurtures strategic partnerships with destinations, agencies, industry and community organizations. Through knowledge sharing and open communication, we'll collaborate with partners to drive impact toward shared goals.

PARTNERSHIPS, SPONSORSHIPS AND MEMBERSHIPS

- Central Coast Tourism Council (CCTC)
- California Hotel & Lodging Association (CHLA)
- Cal Poly Athletics & Office of Student Affairs
- Cal Travel
- Downtown SLO
- Gala Pride & Diversity Center
- Kind Traveler
- SLO Chamber
- SLO Coast Wine Collective
- Visit California
- Visit SLO CAL

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Further collaboration with Visit SLO CAL through co-ops and partnership opportunities aligned with their new campaign creative direction.
- Working with Gala Pride & Diversity Center to create more inclusive content, tools and trainings.
- Exploring ways to capitalize on our presence at SLO Days, Parent Weekend and Cal Poly Open House.
- Supporting Downtown SLO to showcase our charming downtown as the heart of the city through signature events, intentional growth with real economic impact, and improved wayfinding, giving visitors real reasons to fall in love with it and come back.
- Maximizing awareness of SLO through digital cross-promotion.
- Expanding destination awareness through B2B sales and trade shows with industry partners.



STRATEGIC EVENT PARTNERSHIPS

Over the past few years, we have loved supporting the vibrant festivals and events that make our community shine, from collaborating on regional strategies with Visit SLO CAL to spearheading our city's staple annual events. Over the coming year, we are keeping that collaborative momentum going while actively shaping our own dedicated events strategy. This means defining exactly how we show up, support, and amplify the happenings that matter most to our community and drive visitation and economic vitality across the city.

OBJECTIVES

- **Grow Event Tourism & Impact:** Position Visit San Luis Obispo as a premier destination partner for events, sharing the city's unique experiences and offerings to attract increased visitation, inspire longer stays, and build long-term economic growth.
- **Deploy a Partnership Audit:** We are launching a comprehensive audit of our existing events and partners landscape. This thoughtful evaluation will help us clearly understand how we currently support local events, ensure our resources are being used effectively, and maximize our collective impact.
- **Explore a New Signature Event:** We are actively exploring fresh opportunities to bring an entirely new signature event to San Luis Obispo.
- **Align Regionally, Focus Locally:** We will continue to participate in Visit SLO CAL's regional efforts to attract visitors through a county-wide event strategy, all while maintaining strong, wholehearted partnerships that support the city's beloved existing festivities.

CONSTITUENT RELATIONS

OBJECTIVE

Engage TBID constituents in the work of Visit San Luis Obispo, deepening connection and raising awareness of growth opportunities.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Visit San Luis Obispo will keep finding ways to educate and involve constituents in the tourism program through these initiatives:

- Continue biannual Partner Receptions, fostering connection and collaboration.
- Explore training and education opportunities with strategic and industry partners.
- Develop constituent resources to boost and engagement.
- Maintain ongoing outreach to constituents, including newsletters and other relevant communication.

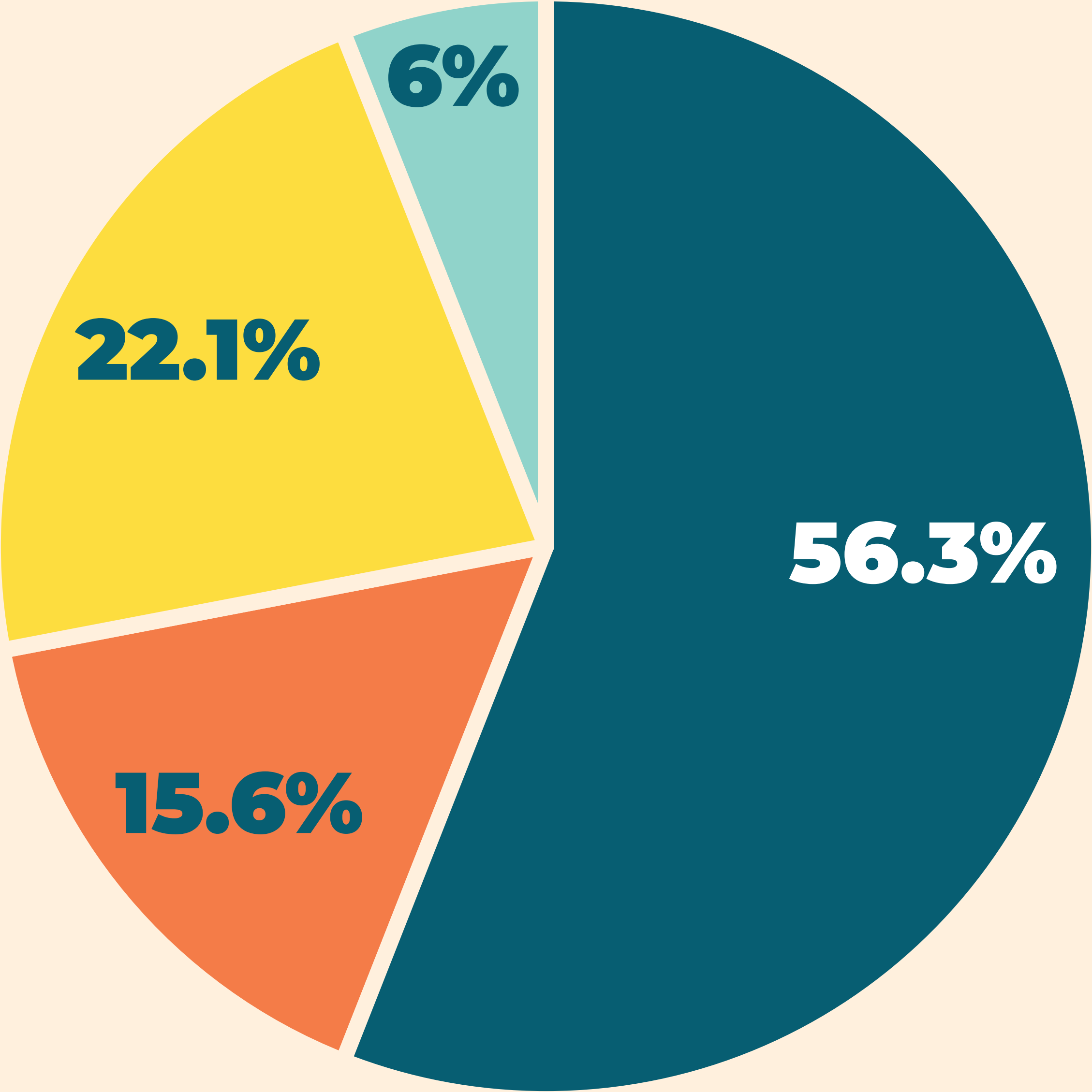


BUDGET

For FY 2026-27, the TBID's revenue is projected to be \$2,299,130. Budget allocations fall across four primary categories, with over half of the annual budget going to marketing and contract services. The TBID also directs essential funds to operations, which include staffing and tourism program expenses, plus strategic partnerships and key tourism organizations.

2025-26 TBID BUDGET EXPENDITURE ALLOCATIONS

- 56.3% MARKETING & CONTRACT SERVICES
- 15.6% OPERATIONS/STAFFING
- 22.1% PARTNERSHIPS, EVENTS & TRADESHOWS
- 6% TOURISM ORGANIZATIONS, RESEARCH & HARD COSTS



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