MEETING MINUTES
SANTA MONICA TRAVEL & TOURISM (SMTT)
REGULAR TOURISM MARKETING DISTRICT COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2026
HILTON SANTA MONICA HOTEL & SUITES – 1707 4TH STREET SANTA MONICA, CA 90401

Call to Order: Chair Carreon called the meeting to order at 5:12 PM.

Roll Call & Self Introductions: Chair Carreon called for self-introductions. Those present provided brief self-introductions. The following persons were recorded in attendance:

Present: Chair Aileen Carreon**,** Vice Chair Juan Viramontes, Member Inessa Udovchenko, Member Daniel Gregory and Member Sonia Metz.

Also Present: SMTT President/CEO Misti Kerns, SMTT Chief Operating Officer Evan Edwards, SMTT Vice President of Marketing Ashley Dowgwillo, SMTT Director of Sales Ozzie Otero, SMTT Executive Assistant Haylee Jost, The Eden General Manager Danielle Delcambre, Hilton Santa Monica Hotel & Suites General Manager Althea Abdallah, The Cottage Manager Juana Rosales, Santa Monica Hotel Manager Andrea Melchor and Ocean View Hotel General Manager Bryan Lara.

Absent: Secretary/Treasurer Armando Campos, Member Shahid Kayani, Member Karina Sedigh, and Member Simon Fricker were absent.

Public Comment: Chair Carreon called for public comment. There were no comments.

Approval of the June 24, 2026 Joint Board & TMD Meeting Minutes: Chair Carreon presented the June 24, 2026, meeting minutes for review. Member Gregory moved to approve the minutes, and Member Udovchenko seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously through a roll call vote with Secretary/Treasurer Campos, Member Kayani, Member Sedigh, and Member Fricker absent.

Review of the Year-to-Date Tourism Marketing District (TMD) Collections Memo: Chair Carreon presented the Year-to-Date Tourism Marketing District (TMD) collections memo for review. Vice Chair Viramontes moved to approve the minutes, and Chair Carreon seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously through a roll call vote with Secretary/Treasurer Campos, Member Kayani, Member Sedigh, and Member Fricker absent.

Approval of the Draft TMD Management District Plan: SMTT President/CEO Kerns presented the Draft Tourism Marketing District (TMD) Marketing District Plan for review. Member Udovchenko moved to approve the minutes, and Chair Carreon seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously through a roll call vote with Secretary/Treasurer Campos, Member Kayani, Member Sedigh, and Member Fricker absent.

SMTT Staff Updates: SMTT Vice President of Marketing Ashley Dowgwillo provided updates on several marketing initiatives and partner programs. She announced that the new business specials system is now live on the website, allowing partners to manage business specials and coupons directly through the partner portal, including setting booking and expiration dates. Partners were encouraged to submit September dining specials, which are being promoted through a dedicated landing page, an email campaign to approximately 75,000 Los Angeles County residents and SMTT's consumer newsletters. Dowgwillo also reminded partners about the "I Wish I Had an Extra Bedroom" campaign, which will run through February and offers Los Angeles County residents opportunities for local hotel stays.

Dowgwillo thanked partners who participated in the latest Visitor Guide and announced that the publication will also be mailed to approximately 27,000 Condé Nast Traveler readers. She also provided an update on the Meet in Santa Monica guide, which is being developed in collaboration with the City of Santa Monica and will feature both private and public event spaces through a dual-cover design. Looking ahead, SMTT continues to focus on event-based marketing around major events including the Rose Bowl

Parade, Super Bowl, Valentine's Day and the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Dowgwillo also led a discussion regarding the potential for a cooperative advertising campaign targeting China and noted that SMTT will conduct additional market research before bringing the opportunity back to the group.

In the absence of Vice President of Communications Lauren Salisbury, Dowgwillo provided updates on recent communications and public relations activity. Salisbury recently participated in the Visit California Public Relations Committee meeting and was selected to speak at U.S. Travel's ESTO 2026 conference on crisis communications. The communications team continues to provide partner and consumer resources through its newsletters, including Sea the Good, the community newsletter, the consumer newsletter and Hotel Buzz. Recent media coverage included features in LA Magazine, Forbes, Travel + Leisure and Sunset Magazine, with Route 66 continuing to generate significant interest.

The communications team also continues to host familiarization trips for journalists and influencers from international markets including the United Kingdom, France, South Korea, Germany, India and Canada. The Route 66 Centennial remains a key media focus as the anniversary approaches its conclusion in November, with SMTT continuing to pursue coverage and related content opportunities. The team also recently concluded its Route 66 song contest, receiving more than 100 entries, with a November event planned to recognize the winner. Social media efforts continue to emphasize authentic, video-driven content, with partners encouraged to use analytics, prioritize consistency, and focus on content that generates saves and shares.

SMTT Chief Operating Officer Evan Edwards provided an update on Film Santa Monica following the program's first-year anniversary on September 1. During its first year, Film Santa Monica generated more than $1.6 million in revenue for the City of Santa Monica, exceeding the initial projection of approximately $300,000, and processed more than 230 film permits. Major productions included a $100 million Warner Bros. production at the Fairmont Miramar Santa Monica, Baywatch, H&M, Netflix's The Lincoln Lawyer, Nike and The Morning Show. Edwards credited the City, SMTT staff and local partners for helping strengthen Santa Monica's reputation as a filming destination and improve the permitting experience.

Looking ahead, Film Santa Monica will focus on "vacation on location" or "set-jetting" opportunities, using film and television productions to encourage visitation to Santa Monica. The team will continue building relationships with location managers through organizations such as the Location Managers Guild International and will participate in upcoming industry events, including the American Film Market and California on Location Awards. Film Santa Monica is also pursuing larger studio and international productions, location familiarization tours and opportunities related to California's film and post-production incentives. Hotels and businesses were encouraged to maintain updated listings on FilmSantaMonica.com and provide information about productions filmed at their properties.

SMTT Director of Sales Ozzie Otero provided updates on behalf of Director of Global Business Development Aleksandr Sigalus, highlighting recent international and domestic sales activity. Recent initiatives included sales missions in Australia and New Zealand, participation in ILTM Asia Pacific, a Mexico familiarization trip with Visit California, and engagement with luxury travel advisors through Virtuoso. Upcoming international efforts include Brand USA Travel Week in Amsterdam, additional activity in Mexico and continued engagement with key markets including Canada, France, Germany and the United Kingdom. SMTT also recently completed a cooperative campaign with eDreams in Germany that generated more than 650,000 impressions, approximately 400 click-throughs and approximately 1,900 room nights at the time of the meeting.

On the domestic side, Otero highlighted a recent group sales mission to Phoenix and Scottsdale that included ten hotel partners and meetings with corporate and meeting-planner clients. SMTT anticipates another domestic group sales mission in early 2027 and is planning a Texas roadshow with hotel partners. The team will also participate in IMEX in Las Vegas with several Santa Monica hotels, attractions and experience partners. Otero also announced a potential Visit California reverse sales mission in December that would bring approximately 20–26 international buyers from Australia, the United Kingdom, Mexico and Canada to Santa Monica and the region.

CEO Update: SMTT President/CEO Kerns shared a recent Tourism Economics presentation that provided an important overview of the current economic and travel environment. While inflation, higher gas prices, pressure on household savings, and softer consumer sentiment continue to present challenges, consumer spending and the desire to travel remain resilient. Travel continues to be a priority for consumers, while meetings and group travel are also showing renewed momentum as businesses recognize the value of face-to-face experiences. California and Santa Monica continue to perform well across key hotel indicators, with strong room demand, rate, and revenue. Looking ahead, continued economic growth, productivity gains, and sustained demand for experiences provide encouraging signs for the travel industry, even as we remain mindful of ongoing pricing and labor pressures.

A significant focus remains preparing Santa Monica for the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games and maximizing the opportunities surrounding them. Several hospitality houses have already been confirmed, with additional properties and activations in development. We are also seeing growing interest from corporate brands looking to create unique hospitality experiences, including room blocks, events, restaurant takeovers, and longer-term activations. As we move closer to the Games, it will be important for properties to communicate available inventory, need periods, potential buyout opportunities, and rate expectations so that we can respond quickly and strategically to incoming business. The lessons from Paris also reinforce the importance of being proactive with inventory and pricing rather than waiting until the last minute.

Beyond the Olympic travel period, the team continues to strengthen Santa Monica's visibility and sales opportunities through site inspections, corporate and international outreach, and partnerships with the City and regional organizations. We are also exploring opportunities around the Fourth of July, hospitality activations, and travel extending beyond the Olympic and Paralympic period. The City's Rose Parade float provides another opportunity for local businesses to participate and gain visibility, while upcoming community and industry events, including New Heroes and the Volley-ween tournament, continue to support engagement throughout the year. Continued collaboration, timely communication, and coordination among our hospitality partners will be critical as we move toward 2027 and 2028 and work to capture both immediate and long-term opportunities for Santa Monica.

For the Good of the Order: Chair Carreon called for Good of the Order comments. There were none.

Adjournment: Chair Carreon adjourned the meeting at 6:52 PM.