

Minutes

Destination El Paso Advisory Board Meeting

Tuesday, May 26, 4:00 p.m.

Destination El Paso

Board Members Present	Board Members Absent	Destination EP Staff	City of El Paso	Public
Daniel J. Veale	Bernie Olivas	Brooke Underwood	Ignacio Troncoso	
Jennifer Gonzalez	Gabriel Ayub	Valerie Garcia		
Rene Hurtado		Chris Puga		
Ken Gorski		Daniel Arizpe		
Veronica Hernandez		Jose Gil		
Pifas Silva		Marisela Huerta		
Genevieve Torrez		Alexandria Acosta		
		Veronica Castro		
		Diana Thornton		

I. Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order at 4:02 PM by Rene Hurtado.

II. Approval of Minutes

- Motion by Rene Hurtado to approve April minutes, seconded by Jennifer Gonzalez. Motion approved unanimously.

III. Department Updates for April 2026

- **Updates: Brooke Underwood, Interim President/CEO, Destination El Paso**
- **Occupancy/Financials: Brooke Underwood, Interim President/CEO, Destination El Paso**
 - Hotel Occupancy and revenue metrics continue to outperform prior year trends despite a week-over-week decline.
 - Weekly average occupancy reported at 69.3%, compared to 74.4% the previous week and approximately 61% during the same period last year.
 - Average Daily Rate (ADR) decreased to \$123 from \$141 the prior week.
 - Weekly revenue decreased from \$3.98 million, consistent with softer occupancy and ADR trends.
 - Destination El Paso will continue prioritizing event-driven overnight demand through concerts, festivals, conventions, and seasonal activations.
 - BTS Concerts held May 2-3 generated occupancy levels in the mid-to-high 90% range across multiple days.
 - El Paso reported 71.7% occupancy, outperforming all other Texas MSAs during the reporting period.
 - Visit El Paso will not participate in FIFA World Cup fan activations due to associated costs and licensing restrictions.
 - Banana Ball visitor and occupancy attribution data remains pending.
 - Visitor Information Center traffic exceeded 24,000 visitors during a three-day period in April, with approximately 80% visitor engagement reported.
 - March financial performance included approximately \$952,000 in total revenue and \$129,000 in adjusted net income.

- Year-to-date revenue reported approximately \$6.2 million over budget, while expenses are approximately \$2.4 million over budget.
- Organization reported positive March variance of approximately \$207,000 over budget.
- **Tourism Development: Veronica Castro, Visit El Paso**
 - Tourism Development reported 17 Amigo Man and Destination Experience Specialist appearances, generating approximately 3,338 engagements.
 - Mobile Visitor Center activations in Chihuahua generated more than 500 engagements and approximately 200 newsletter sign-ups.
 - Military outreach efforts at Fort Hood and Holloman Air Force Base generated approximately 432 military family engagements.
 - Visit El Paso participated in culinary and media activations, including James Beard programming in New York City and influencer hosting efforts.
 - Earned media value reached approximately \$45,000, with annual earned media goals nearing completion.
 - Visit El Paso will host the Travel Alliance Partners (TAP) Tour Operator Conference with approximately 120 attendees.
 - Destination El Paso will participate in the Antojos Food Festival in Chihuahua City and Latino Travel Fest in New York City to support cross-border and Latino tourism initiatives.
- **Advertising: Alexandria Acosta, Destination El Paso**
 - Leisure campaign performance exceeded industry benchmarks, with the strongest engagement tied to bootmaker, culinary, and outdoor content.
 - "BTS in El Paso" campaign content generated approximately 10,000 engagements and 3,000 shares.
 - Convention and Sports campaign creative will pivot focus on convention centers and networking opportunities for meeting planners.
 - Mexico market campaigns exceeded click-through-rate benchmarks and highlighted outdoor recreation, shopping, nightlife, and family tourism.
 - Continued print advertisement placements in Mexico support cross border visitation efforts.
- **Convention & Sports Development: Valerie Garcia, Visit El Paso**
 - Convention and Sports Development participated in multiple trade shows and planner events, including GPS Planner Connect, Destination West, Association Express, Sports ETA Symposium, and the HelmsBriscoe Annual Business Conference.
 - Team secured multiple RFP opportunities through planner meetings and industry networking efforts.
 - Site visits conducted for York Rite and National Association of Social Workers events generated projected economic impact opportunities.
 - Texas Christian Athletic League Volleyball Tournament received verbal confirmation with an estimated economic impact of approximately \$837,000.
 - Red Owl Boxing received verbal confirmation for a national-level event projected to generate approximately \$1.2 million in economic impact.

- Destination El Paso continues pursuing contracts and attendance-building strategies for future LULAC and NALEO events.

- **Special Events/Venue and Event Management: Chris Puga, Destination El Paso**
 - Provecho Amigos event generated approximately 553 attendees and positive community engagement.
 - Vendor participation challenges were identified, and future plans included expanded outreach, educational activations, and stronger small business partnerships.
 - The State of Chihuahua confirmed participation in next year's event.
 - Recent venue events included: *Six: The Musical*, *Interpol*, *Mochakk DJ*, and *Ali Wong Live*, contributing to strong attendance and diverse programming.
 - Destination El Paso hosted nine sold-out shows during Quarter 1.
 - Monthly totals included 26 events, 40 event days, and approximately 60,226 attendees.
 - Qualtrics survey participation increased to 562 convention center event surveys.
 - Guest satisfaction metrics reported 93% likelihood to revisit and 91% overall experience satisfaction.
 - Venue ranked #8 globally among similarly sized venues within Legends Global benchmarking.

- **El Paso Water Parks: Daniel Arizpe, Destination El Paso**
 - Water Parks operations continued seasonal staffing, onboarding, and certification efforts across aquatics and guest services teams.
 - Two lifeguard certification classes and one swim instructor certification class were completed, onboarding 24 new instructors.
 - Seasonal hiring efforts included a lifeguard job fair with same-day hiring opportunities.
 - Community outreach included partnerships with Smile Kingdom Dental, the El Paso Autism Walk, and Nusenda Credit Union.
 - Group bookings for Camp Cohen, Oasis, and Chapoteo Water Parks continued building summer attendance pipelines.
 - Board member Daniel Veale proposed exploring a partnership event near Camp Cohen involving post-event water park access. Feasibility and operational logistics were discussed.
 - Board member Daniel Veale will connect Make-A-Wish representatives with Water Parks leadership to discuss potential park rental opportunities.

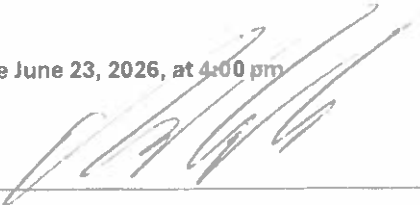
- **Floor open for questions/comments**
 - Brooke Underwood announced continued presentations from Destination El Paso subject matter experts during future board meetings.
 - Marisela Huerta, Director of Event Services, was introduced to the Advisory Board.
 - Advisory Board identification garage cards were distributed.
 - Veronica Castro announced the July 4th Celebration at San Jacinto Plaza commemorating America's 250th anniversary, featuring performances by Randy Rogers Band and Julian Kalel. The event is expected to support overnight visitation and tourism activity.

*Adjourn: 4:59 pm

CITY CLERK DEPT
2026 JUN 25 AM 7:23

*The next meeting will be June 23, 2026, at 4:00 pm

Vice Chairperson: _____

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. A. G.', written over a horizontal line.

Date: _____

6-23-26