

Minutes

Destination El Paso Advisory Board Meeting

Tuesday, June 23, 4:00 p.m.

Destination El Paso

Board Members Present	Board Members Absent	Destination EP Staff	City of El Paso	Public
Daniel J. Veale*	Gabriel Ayub	Chris Puga	Ignacio Troncoso	Mackenzie Garman
Jennifer Gonzalez*	Veronica Hernandez	Daniel Arizpe		Emilio Rosas
Ken Gorski*	Genevieve Torrez	Jose Gil		Isabella Molina
Pifas Silva*		Marisela Huerta		Vanessa Ramirez
Bernie Olivas*		Alexandria Acosta		Rene Hurtado
		Veronica Castro		
		Diana Thornton		
		Ivan Lopez		

I. Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM by Daniel J Veale.

II. Approval of Minutes

- Motion by Daniel J Veale to approve May minutes, seconded by Bernie Olivas. Motion approved unanimously.

III. Department Updates for May 2026

- **Updates: Veronica Castro, Visit El Paso**
- **Occupancy/Financials: Veronica Castro, Visit El Paso**
 - Week ending June 13 occupancy reported at 75.1%, with ADR remaining flat at \$120.
 - Revenue growth increased from 3.0% to 3.34%, driven by continued lodging demand and major events.
 - Through May, occupancy reached 71.5%, outperforming state averages and increasing 2.6% year-over-year.
 - ADR increased 6% to \$122.52, while RevPAR increased 8.6%. Overall room revenue increased 7%, reflecting continued strength in the hotel market heading into summer.
 - April revenue totaled approximately \$1.6 million. Year-to-date revenue exceeded the budget by approximately \$3.7 million. After City funding adjustments, net income totaled approximately \$238,000.
- **Tourism Development: Veronica Castro, Visit El Paso**
 - Amigo Man continues to increase community engagement and will serve as a marshal in the upcoming Pride Parade.
 - The inaugural Amigo Man 5K and Fun Run attracted 205 participants, including visitors from outside the region. Event proceeds support the Brian Crowe Scholarship Fund, with plans to grow the event annually.
 - BTS activations generated more than 23,000 Visitor Information Center visits over three days. Merchandise sales increased, and the Visitor Information Center served as a merchandise pickup and gifting hub.

- BTS-related content increased destination visibility and generated positive feedback from event partners.
- Connectivity challenges at McKelligon Canyon continue due to limited cellular service. Staff are evaluating long-term solutions, including Starlink and ATM installation.
- Mission Trail Tours, San Elizario activations, and community workshops continued support local engagement efforts,
- Visit El Paso participated in sales missions, media events, and industry conferences including IPW, NATJA, and the Women in Travel Summit.
- The Chihuahua Visitor Center reported increased engagement and visitation during its second year of operation.
- Military outreach efforts continued through Fort Bliss partnerships, tours, and family programming.
- Earned media value reached approximately \$5.5 million and remains on pace to exceed annual goals.
- **Advertising: Alexandria Acosta, Destination El Paso**
 - The “El Paso Made for History” campaign achieved a 1.93% click-through-rate, exceeding industry benchmarks.
 - The “El Paso Made” video campaign generated a 3.48% click-through rate and was the month’s highest performing creative asset.
 - Top-performing organic content included BTS coverage, the Ultimate Guide to El Paso, MVP Women’s Championship content, and recognition of El Paso as the top-ranked city to live in the United States.
 - Convention and Sports Development campaigns continued generating strong engagement through digital and organic content.
 - Mexico market campaigns exceeded benchmarks and highlighted dining, culture, outdoor recreating, and family-friendly attractions.
- **Convention & Sports Development: Diana Thornton, Visit El Paso**
 - Convention and Sports Development participated in multiple trade shows, conferences, and appointment-based events, generating numerous RFP opportunities and future site visits.
 - El Paso secured the 2028 Libertarian National Convention, projected to generate approximately 1,200 attendees, 2,200 room nights, and \$2 million in economic impact.
 - Visit El Paso hosted familiarization tours for health professions and sports industry representatives.
 - Recent sales wins included Republic National Distributing Company, Jam On It Basketball, Texas Society of Architects, and the Jiu-Jitsu Federation.
 - These events are projected to generate approximately 4,450 attendees and \$4.1 million in economic impact.
- **Special Events/Venue and Event Management: Marisela Huerta, Destination El Paso**
 - Recent venue programming included Clue, The Rock Orchestra by Candlelight, Pink Floyd Laser Spectacular, and Brad Williams.

- Monthly totals included 27 events, 39 event days, and approximately 84,768 attendees.
- The El Fresco Summer Music Series launched successfully with more than 2,300 attendees. Nusenda Credit Union has committed as a title sponsor for the next three years.
- Guest satisfaction remained strong, with 91% overall satisfaction and 93% likelihood to return.
- The Convention Center improved its peer benchmarking ranking from #8 to #7.
- **Food & Beverage Highlights: Chris Puga, Destination El Paso**
 - Food and beverage programming continued enhancing guest experiences through themed menus, specialty offerings, and event-specific activations. Examples: Amigo Man's 50th Anniversary with customized menus and elevated displays; concert series specials (\$6 margaritas, \$30 beer buckets); Comic Con "Goku Ramen".
 - Creative hospitality experiences support revenue growth and strengthen the Destination El Paso brand.
- **Operational Highlights/Sustainability Initiatives: Jose Gil, Destination El Paso**
 - Construction began on a 440-kilowatt solar installation at the Convention Center, expected to offset approximately 40% of electrical demand.
 - LED retrofit improvements were completed throughout the Convention Center, improving energy efficiency and event flexibility.
 - The Plaza Theatre roofing project was completed to improve thermal efficiency and extend roof life.
 - Parking garage sewer line replacement and facility infrastructure improvements remain underway.
 - Expanded recycling initiatives included battery recycling stations across multiple facilities and new waste diversion programs.
- **El Paso Water Parks: Daniel Arizpe, Destination El Paso**
 - All four water parks opened prior to Memorial Day weekend. Attendance reached approximately 14,651 guests, representing a 22% increase over the previous year.
 - Water Parks completed lifeguard certification programs resulting in 49 newly certified lifeguards.
 - Community outreach, recruitment efforts, and water safety initiatives continued throughout the season. Aquatic programming generated 178 registrations during May.
 - Five group bookings were confirmed, with additional opportunities in development through 2027.
- **Floor open for questions/comments**
 - Veronica Castro announced the upcoming July 4th Celebration featuring family activities, live entertainment, food competitions, and a drone show. Featured entertainment includes Julian Kalel, and the Randy Rogers Band. The event will take place July 4 from 5:00 PM to 10:00 PM and will utilize a footprint similar to WOW Fest.

*Adjourn: 5:00 pm

*The next meeting will be July 28, 2026, at 4:00 pm

CITY CLERK DEPT
2026 AUG 3 AM 11:10

Vice Chairperson:

Date:

7-28-26