



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oceanside Completes Destination’s First Sustainable Tourism Master Plan

Thoughtful downtown development, accelerating agritourism, and shoreline preservation among top priorities

Oceanside, Calif.- May 2024— Oceanside’s vision for the future is to stand apart on the SoCal coast for its vibrancy, authenticity and creativity as defined in its new Sustainable Tourism Master Plan (STMP), which was officially unveiled at Visit Oceanside’s annual tourism summit on May 30. Developed in collaboration with the City of Oceanside, the STMP provides a 10-year blueprint for smart tourism growth that benefits the economy while aligning with environmental and community priorities.

“Following a decade of planned city improvements and development, including new hotels, restaurants, experiences and infrastructure, the timing was optimal for investing in a vision for the next ten years,” said Visit Oceanside CEO Leslee Gaul. “With so many pressures from the state level, it’s more important than ever for Oceanside to have a road map that outlines projects and priorities that will not only be meaningful for visitors, but also contribute to the long-term health of the destination and a high of quality of life for residents.”

Recommendations in the plan encompass goals ranging from visionary to near-term. A priority among these is the concept of thoughtful development that enhances connectivity between the beach and downtown, fostering plaza-like and green areas that can be activated to contribute to a vibrant landscape rather than favoring dense high-rise structures.

Other ambitious goals include establishing a large conference center, hosting a signature annual event, and potentially pursuing the nation’s first Beach IDEAL sustainable certification. Near term objectives include continued improvement and activation of the pier and amphitheater, accelerating the development of agritourism experiences linking farms, the harbor, and downtown, and advancing shoreline preservation efforts to maintain sand and promote shoreline health. Also noted were realizing projects like Ocean Kamp resort and wave pool and the build out of El Corazon, which will activate a new part of Oceanside for visitors and residents alike.

Infrastructure improvements such as better wayfinding and greenway and bike trail integration are highlighted as essential for easy movement throughout Oceanside and complement the Coast Highway Improvement Project vision. The plan also identifies opportunities for arts and cultural heritage enhancement, including advocating for and supporting plans for a cultural

center celebrating the San Luis Rey Band of Mission Indians, an important part of Oceanside's Native American history.

The plan was informed by detailed research, including a sustainability assessment based on best practices of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), destination assessment, competitive analysis, and stakeholder engagement in the form of a resident survey and townhalls, focus groups and surveys with city leaders and stakeholders, and one-on-one interviews. The data revealed key insights, emphasizing Oceanside's passion for preserving its authenticity and safeguarding its natural environment. Additionally, there is strong desire to cultivate downtown spaces that encourage visitors and residents to linger and experience rather than simply pass through. The key findings also highlighted the importance of growing experiences beyond downtown that add to the diversity of offerings and stimulate tourism throughout the year.

"The tourism industry holds tremendous potential as a force for social, cultural, and economic good," said Gaul. "This plan outlines how to achieve balance by maximizing the positive while addressing concerns comprehensively to minimize negative impacts. We are committed to ensuring that these endeavors are carried out thoughtfully, harnessing their full economic impact while honoring and preserving Oceanside's cultural heritage, natural resources, unique character, and people."

Oceanside is not alone in its forward-looking approach to planning and sustainability. Currently, destination marketing organizations such as San Diego Tourism Authority and Visit California are in the process of similar initiatives.

The Tourism Summit is Visit Oceanside's annual celebration of the industry attended by over 200 business and community members. In 2023, Oceanside's tourism industry saw a modest 3 percent year over year growth generating \$589 million in visitor spending. Tourism also influenced \$43 million in state and local tax revenues and 3,900 industry jobs in Oceanside.

To learn more about the STMP, visit loveoceanside.com.

About Visit Oceanside

Visit Oceanside Conference and Visitors Bureau is the official tourism marketing organization in Oceanside, Calif., promoting travel to the city for both leisure and group visitors. The organization influences about one-third of the \$589 million that is generated by visitor spending in Oceanside each year, which supports nearly 3,900 jobs. Visit Oceanside also operates one of the state's official California Welcome Centers. With just one stop, visitors can find local, regional and state maps, purchase discount tickets to major Southern California attractions, make hotel reservations or shop for the perfect California keepsake. The Visit Oceanside CVB and California Welcome Center- Oceanside are conveniently located just off Interstate 5 at 928 North Coast Highway, Oceanside, Calif. For more information, please call (800) 350-7873 or visit www.visitoceanside.org

###

