



CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD

BUSINESS TASK FORCE MEETING

Wednesday, March 11, 2026, at 2:00 P.M.

Location: Virtual Meeting via Zoom

MEETING NOTES

I. Roll Call/Introductions

Business Task Force Members:

Present: Kody Christiansen, Jonathan Cottrell, Joshua Gafni, Leslie Haro, Austin Monroe, Michael Palmieri, Craig Susser, Clementine Todorov

Absent: Jamison DeTrolio

City of West Hollywood Staff:

Laura Biery, Laura D'Ambrosia, Rebecca Ehemann, Paolo Kespradit, Andi Lovano

Visit West Hollywood Staff:

Tom Kiely, President & CEO

Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation Staff:

Seta Zorabian, Regional Manager

II. Prior Meeting Follow-up (January 14, 2026)

January 14, 2026, meeting notes reviewed and filed.

III. Focus Area #3 – Presentations and Current Efforts Supporting Visitor Activation and Destination Positioning

The Task Force received presentations and background information on current City and partner efforts supporting visitation, activations, and destination positioning.

Visit West Hollywood (VWH) Overview

Tom Kiely of Visit West Hollywood provided an overview of funding increases, tourism expectations, and upcoming activations. The Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID) hotel assessment will increase from 3% to 4% effective April 1, 2026, with the annual budget projected to grow from approximately \$7.8 million to \$10.5–\$11 million, supporting expanded sales channels and new market development.

FIFA World Cup 2026 Activations (June 2026)

City staff presented plans for FIFA World Cup 2026 fan zones and related cultural programming, including:

- Plummer Park Fan Zone: Friday, June 12 (U.S. match) through Saturday, June 13, 2026
- West Hollywood Park Fan Zone: Thursday–Sunday, June 25–28, 2026 (Opening Night U.S. match on June 25)
- Fan zone features: big screen viewing, beer garden, food and merchandise, DJs/performers, mini-pitch, and ongoing activations between matches
- *Disco Foot* activation: dance-meets-soccer performances (June 26–28)

Art & Route 66 Centennial activations (June–November 2026), including:

- Large-scale vinyl art installation in windows of City-owned vacant retail space (former Crossroads space) near West Hollywood City Hall
- Temporary sculpture at Plummer Park (Santa Monica Blvd frontage)
- Santa Monica Blvd street light pole wraps forming a public art corridor as part of a Tri-city collaboration (West Hollywood, Beverly Hills, Santa Monica) extending the Route 66 concept to the sea
- New Route 66 signage throughout West Hollywood (Summer/Fall 2026) by City Council selected artist Skut
- Route 66 caravan coming from Santa Monica through West Hollywood
- Route 66 car show aligned with Summer Sounds Concert on July 26 at Plummer Park

IV. Task Force Discussion

Focus Area #3 – Position the City as a destination of choice for visitors with activations and events in conjunction with the special events coming to the greater Los Angeles area.

Task Force members discussed a range of strategies to enhance West Hollywood’s appeal as a visitor destination, with an emphasis on expanding event programming, leveraging regional and seasonal opportunities, and strengthening district identity. The discussion highlighted opportunities to build on existing activations while introducing new experiences that support local businesses and drive visitation.

Key ideas discussed included:

Event & Festival Programming

- Revival of a music festival on the Sunset Strip (Note this item was approved by the City Council to occur on October 17, 2026)

- A citywide Food & Wine Festival featuring local restaurants, chef demonstrations, and wristband/passport-style incentives to support pre- and post-event activity
- Expansion of night market concepts such as “Taste of Sunset”, including food samples, crafts, and local vendors

Visitor Activations & Experiences

- Public viewing events tied to major entertainment and sporting moments (e.g., Oscars, Emmys, Grammys), including creative industry tie-ins and agency/production partnerships
- Development of a *Community Watch Parties* brand to position West Hollywood as a safe, inclusive, and creative destination to watch sports events or awards shows or season finales of popular shows, with potential perks such as line-skip access and special offers, creating a 3rd Space for gathering together
- Annual *4/20 Cannabis Activation* in the Emerald Village to serve as an anchor event attracting regional and national visitors, integrated with compliant businesses

Partnerships & Accessibility

- Shuttle partnerships to bring visitors from neighboring cities during peak activations
- Efforts to amplify walkability and improve connectivity between districts and event locations

Small Business Support Ideas

- Establishment of a *Microloan or Revolving Loan Fund* accessible to both home-based and brick-and-mortar businesses
- Exploration of group insurance purchasing or umbrella policies to help lower business costs
- Targeted 1:1 outreach to the approximately 450 current West Hollywood home-based businesses to better understand and address what specific support needs there are in the home-based business sector at this time

V. Comments from Public

- Victor Omelchenko – asked staff to work with the historic preservation commission to align on the Route 66 Centennial Anniversary

VI. Next Steps & Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned on Wednesday, March 11, 2026, at 3:30 p.m. via Zoom.