



# ANNUAL REPORT FY 16-17



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# LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

## Letter from Greg Harless, Chairman of the Board of Directors

The submission of this board chair letter allows me the opportunity to hit pause and reflect on all that the organization has undergone and accomplished this past year. The 2016-17 fiscal year was designed as a building year. The search for our new President and CEO was much more than an executive replacement of Brad Burlingame, who was deeply committed to and respected by our industry and city.

After a nine-month search, tourism industry veteran Tom Kiely was chosen and joined Visit West Hollywood in October 2016 to begin the transition from an interim and contracted direction to a stable one, poised to meet new challenges in our industry. With the continued support and input from our trusted Board of Directors, Visit West Hollywood implemented tactics to strengthen the organization and strategically position itself in the market.

Some of the highlights of decisions in which the Visit West Hollywood Board directed were:

- A comprehensive marketing campaign resulting from West Hollywood stakeholder surveys, meetings and input. The organization embraced the local nickname of WeHo, in trademark logo and voice.
- Extensive redesign of our website to communicate our variety of lodging opportunities, city ethos, and proximity to events and major attractions.
- The search and placement of a new Chief Marketing Officer to elevate the brand, bringing significant programs to partners and providing leadership for staff.
- Undertaking a major research initiative to understand our visitors and how to effectively market to them, to be implemented in the upcoming fiscal year.
- Restructuring of the organization for better efficiency and collaboration with internal staff and external partners and clients.
- Refocused our public relations approach using veteran industry professionals to provide a global PR plan, align with state and national tourism industry organizations, and train existing staff.
- Assisted the city's two Business Improvement Districts to realign marketing and communication plans, develop enhanced web and branding assets, and eventually hire a BID Manager who has reporting responsibility to Visit West Hollywood.
- Kicked off the renewal process for our TBID funding mechanism, expecting to increase the collection term from five years to ten years.
- Completion of its three-year Strategic Plan for FY 17/18-19/20 guided by the Coraggio Group. This new plan was developed from key learnings from the prior Strategic Plan and a series of meetings with Visit West Hollywood and the BIDs board members and staff, city staff, hotel managers and other stakeholders.

I am proud of the steps our organization has taken to continue to promote and grow the visitor's economy for a city we all hold so dear. We are excited to welcome our city's newest hotel properties next year and their opportunistic influence on the hospitality landscape in West Hollywood.

Further, I am pleased to say that fellow executive committee member Norbert Relecker, General Manager of the Mondrian LA, will assume Chairman of the Board position for the 17/18 fiscal year. His industry knowledge, sincere enthusiasm and leadership will be exceptional resources for the organization. I look forward to continuing to be involved with the Visit West Hollywood Board to see through the organization's economic success through tourism marketing.

Sincerely,

Greg Harless  
Principal, Skye Partners/The Lot  
Chairman of the Board, Visit West Hollywood

# TBID OVERVIEW

All lodging businesses located within the boundaries of the City of West Hollywood are subject to the Tourism Business Improvement District assessment. Under this business improvement district, a transit occupancy tax of fifteen and a half percent (15.5%) of the room rate for each visitor is levied on all hotels/motels. From this money, three percent (3%) of the room rate is dedicated to the support of Visit West Hollywood by the City of West Hollywood while twelve and a half percent (12.5%) is directed to the City's general fund.

The revenues received from the 3% assessment charge are used to:

- Promote the identity of West Hollywood as an urban cultural center;
- Develop and implement a destination marketing strategy targeting potential hotel guests;
- Develop and undertake a comprehensive advertising and public relations program focusing on the business and leisure visitor and the travel trade.

## Frequency of Assessment

Lodging businesses in the City are required to pay the assessment in the month following collection of the assessment. Payment should be made at the same time as Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) is paid to the City of West Hollywood.

## West Hollywood Hotels and Motels

Andaz West Hollywood

Best Western Sunset Plaza

Chamberlain West Hollywood

The Charlie Hotel

The Grafton on Sunset

Le Montrose Suite Hotel

Le Parc Suite Hotel

The London West Hollywood

Mondrian Los Angeles

Palihouse West Hollywood

Petit Ermitage

Ramada Plaza West Hollywood

The Standard, Hollywood

Sunset Marquis

Sunset Tower Hotel

Alta Cienega Motel

Holloway Motel

# STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

Visit West Hollywood has completed the third year of its three-year Strategic Plan that was developed following formation of the Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID). The Strategic Plan development process was guided by Coraggio Group, a consulting firm with extensive experience working with destination marketing organizations. The plan was developed after a series of meetings and working sessions with Visit West Hollywood board members and staff, city staff, hotel managers and other city stakeholders.

3-Year Strategic Direction (FY2014/15 through FY2016/17)

All measures are based on a 2014 baseline.

## 1. GROW DEMAND FOR THE DESTINATION

### Measurable Objectives

- Increase occupancy in our identified need periods year-over-year
- Increase online referrals to our hotels from our booking engine year-over-year
- Achieve greater market balance within these segments: Leisure, LGBT Market, Incentive/Corporate, Film Marketing

### Key Actionable Initiatives

- Develop programs that bolster occupancy during 3-day holiday weekends and November/December
- Enhance SEM
- Increase investment to achieve desired market segmentation balance

### 2016-17 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Grew overall occupancy to 86.1%, a 2.2% increase from the 2014 baseline, ranking first amongst our competitive set (Los Angeles, Hollywood, Beverly Hills, West LA and Santa Monica).
- Launched and iterated a new website, which has increased visitor engagement and encouraged hotel referrals.
- Continued strategic consortia advertising programs with TravelPort/Galileo and Virtuoso targeting identified needs periods.
- Continued efforts to increase search position through keyword and paid search campaigns, resulting in an average organic website hit growth of 25% compared to the previous year.

## 2. INCREASE DOMESTIC/INTERNATIONAL EFFICIENCY AND AWARENESS

### Measurable Objectives

- Increase earned PR value in both international and domestic markets year-over-year
- Increase website traffic year-over-year

- Increase online ad impressions year-over-year
- Increase social media fan base and engagement year-over-year
- Establish brand awareness program in identified emerging markets
- Increase inside California visitation

#### Key Actionable Initiatives

- Emphasize and expand our digital presence
- Develop top-notch organic and paid search capabilities
- Develop an emerging market program targeted at China, Brazil and Scandinavia
- Develop California-only plan

#### 2016-17 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Earned PR value of \$14 million
- PPC campaigns and paid display banner advertising were paused November through March for new brand campaign, resulting in 635,295 website visitors and 1.3 million page views.
- Grew social media followers on all platforms by 12%, to over 190,000.
- Partnered with industry organizations to participate in both travel trade and media familiarization trips from viable emerging markets, including Scandinavia, India and France.
- Executed an 'Adult Spring Break' campaign during an identified shoulder season targeting California, including drive markets in the greater L.A. area, San Diego and San Francisco.

### 3. STRENGTHEN AND GROW OUR PARTNERSHIPS

#### Measurable Objectives

- Measure and ensure all expectations are met based on agreements with all partners, including local organizations
- Increase partnership activity with Visit California, Brand USA and LATCB
- Establish 3 new corporate partnerships that are aligned with West Hollywood's brand
- Increase visitation to partner sites year-over-year

#### Key Actionable Initiatives

- Encourage local BIDs to develop programs and events that support our mission
- Activate a year-round partnership and presence with local DMOs and state organizations
- Leverage corporate partnerships to maximize demand and brand credibility

#### 2016-17 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Enhanced affiliation with Visit California to expand international exposure in Mexico, Australia, UK and Canada by attending trade and media missions, in addition to participating in the "Third Thursday" DMO education series.
- Executive participation in multiple tourism industry boards, including IGLTA, U.S. Travel and CalTravel.
- Hired a BID Manager to better align BID programs and efforts to align with Visit West Hollywood goals and objectives.

- Executed strategic in-market consumer brand partnerships with fashion retailer General Pants in Australia and Taylor Taylor salons with Stylist Magazine in the U.K.
- Partnered on media familiarization trips with Greater Palm Springs, Discover Los Angeles and Visit California.

## **BE A LEADER IN DEVELOPING THE DESTINATION**

### Measurable Objectives

- Engage in destination development through providing research support and participating in tourism-related City processes
- Fully implement the Ambassador Program, aimed at engaging and educating both the business community and our residents, by training 1,000 people

### Key Actionable Initiatives

- Use our research to provide new business information to showcase West Hollywood’s attributes
- Complete a Destination Development Plan in collaboration with key partners
- Design and implement Ambassador Program

### 2016-17 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Conducted a series of stakeholder surveys to better inform a comprehensive marketing plan, with plans to onboard a new vendor for visitor research in the upcoming fiscal year.
- Refined the “I Am West Hollywood” Ambassador Program schedule to occur quarterly, increasing enrollment to 32 new participants. Almost 415 people have been trained and certified since the program’s inception.

## **4. REINFORCE A CULTURE OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND INNOVATION**

### Measurable Objectives

- Identify, implement and measure a minimum of one innovative new program in each department annually
- Fully implement stakeholder reporting process based on CRM data

### Key Actionable Initiatives

- Develop our CRM system and processes to track our database and report accurate information
- Educate business investors on West Hollywood’s assets
- Create appropriate internal rewards and recognition to foster innovation

### 2016-17 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Launched new website in line with new brand, featuring interactive map feature with a focus on content.
- Underwent an extensive rebrand and website development based off of stakeholder and consumer insights.

- Organized successful Instagram Stories with local influencers and tastemakers, resulting in increased cross promotion and influx of new followers.

# BUDGET

## FY 2016-17 Visit West Hollywood Budget Recap

Revenue Source:	Budget:
Hotel Assessment	\$5,432,838
Programming Revenue	\$1,107
Total Income FY 2016-17	\$5,433,945
Carryover from FY 2015-16	\$756,548
Total Funds Available	\$6,190,493
Operating/Programming Projected Budget	\$6,042,500

As of June 30, 2017, West Hollywood Marketing Corp./Visit West Hollywood monies were as follows:

Active Bank Account	\$657,994
Money Market	\$558,645
Certificate of Deposit	\$8,000
Total	\$1,224,639

**FY 2017-18 Visit West Hollywood Projected Budget**

<b>REVENUE SOURCE</b>	<b>BUDGET</b>
Carryover July 1, 2017	\$500,000
Hotel Assessment 2017-2018	\$5,900,000
Total 2017-2018 Income	\$6,400,000
Total 2017-2018 Operating/Programming Expenses	\$6,289,440

<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>BUDGET</b>
<b>PROGRAMMING</b>	\$4,906,040
<p><b>Business Development</b>                      (includes tradeshow, sales missions and familiarizations tours, special events and partnerships)</p> <p><b>Digital Marketing</b>                      (includes website, SEO and SEM, display and email advertising, social media)</p> <p><b>Marketing &amp; Collateral</b>                      (includes creative, research, print advertising, travel guides, visitor maps, and ambassador program)</p> <p><b>Communications</b>                      (includes public relations agencies, media missions and familiarization tours, and media relations tools)</p>	
<b>OPERATIONS</b>	\$1,383,400
<p><b>Operations &amp; Tracking</b>                      (incl. insurance, rent, parking, equipment, maintenance, salaries, retirement plan and tracking systems)</p>	
<b>Total Spend FY2017-18</b>	<b>\$6,289,440</b>

# HOTEL STATISTICS

Revenue Source	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17
Average Daily Rate	\$290.66	\$291.90
Occupancy	88.1%	86.1%

# RESEARCH

## **Visitor Research Updates**

As the organization continues to utilize data to drive strategic decisions, Visit West Hollywood conducted a thorough search for a new research partner in the 16/17 fiscal year that could confidently inform our business plan. The Chief Marketing Officer will work closely with the team from Destination Analysts to conduct intercept surveys throughout the upcoming fiscal year in order to better understand our visitor and ways to effectively market to them. The study will also include an economic impact research study and insight into how our city's new inventory is affecting our visitor economy.

# BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Visit West Hollywood enjoys a unique relationship with its lodging partners, because of our geographic size, minimal corporate branded involvement and congeniality among hoteliers. This business environment allows us to become an extension of hotel sales staffs, leveraging our DMO role with Visit California, by utilizing excellent trade representation in mature markets and including hotel representation in our global sales efforts.

The Business Development department honed efforts in the areas of trade shows, sales missions in key markets, and continuing to host familiarization trips for travel trade professionals. These activities were focused on targeted geographic areas as well as segments including FIT, wholesale, leisure and corporate.

## Sales Missions

The Visit West Hollywood Business Development department participates in a variety of sales missions each fiscal year. The objective of the sales missions is to give specialized and focused trainings in key feeder and emerging markets. Each market affords Visit West Hollywood and our participating partner hotels an opportunity to meet with and educate top buyers for the West Hollywood market—from wholesalers and luxury travel advisors to event and incentive planners.

**Sales missions were conducted in** Australia, United Kingdom and New York. Visit West Hollywood also participated in Visit California's missions in both Canada and Mexico.

**Tradeshows attended:** GBTA in Denver, Virtuoso Travel Week in Las Vegas, IMEX, Incentive Live in Las Vegas, Go West Summit in Reno, America's Cup tournament in Scottsdale, AMEX INTERaction in New Orleans, Destination CA, ABC UpClose San Francisco, MarketHub trade show, IPW, and LE Miami.

**Sales Fams:** Hosting qualified travel agents for trips ensures they have firsthand knowledge of West Hollywood's unique product and can effectively sell the destination. Sales fams (familiarization trips) were arranged for Qantas/American Airlines, Helloworld/Pinpoint Travel with Fiji Airways, Havas Voyages, Scandinavian Airlines, American Airlines and House of Travel (Hoot Holidays and Travel Managers), Travel Counsellors, Flight Centre/Infinity Holidays FAM, AMEX FHR, Qantas Holidays/Viva Holidays, Visit CA Italian Tour Operators, Delta/helloworld for General Pants consumer promotion, American Express UK, Amerigo, Mastercon, Norwegian Air, Carlson Wagonlit/British Airways, Flight Centre Canada, VCA/French TO, and VCA/Air New Zealand.

## Annual Buyer Events

**CA Cup** Visit West Hollywood and Los Angeles Tourism co-hosted the 14<sup>th</sup> annual CA Cup, which included 35 California suppliers and 40 global buyers in attendance, including Korea, Japan, Taiwan, China, Canada, Australia, France, Scandinavia,

Germany, U.K., and Mexico. The itinerary included two overnight stays in West Hollywood, coupled with a ‘Dine Around WeHo’ and closing night event, allowing for further interaction and education of the West Hollywood destination.

**New York**

Visit West Hollywood’s annual New York client event connects key travel buyers, providing West Hollywood hotel representatives with business development and networking opportunities. West Hollywood was well represented this year, with eight of our hotels participating: Chamberlain West Hollywood, Grafton on Sunset, The James West Hollywood, Le Montrose, Le Parc, Mondrian LA, Ramada Plaza, and Sunset Marquis. This year’s event was held in May at Top of the Rock with over 200 clients in attendance.

**Los Angeles**

Our annual Los Angeles client event provides West Hollywood hotel representatives a chance to network with and thank local travel advisors who are responsible for booking clients into West Hollywood hotels. This event also gives our hotel partners an opportunity to mingle with a select group of LA-based media. This year, we had 150 tour operators and travel agents in attendance. The event was held at Norah restaurant in November.

**Sydney**

Visit West Hollywood created our own trade mission for select hotels this year in Australia in March, calling on 20 separate agency calls, hosting luncheons, and creating one major client event attended by approximately 180 guests at the Hacienda at the Pullman Quay Grand hotel. In attendance were representatives from the Ramada Plaza, Mondrian LA, Sunset Marquis and Petite Ermitage.

**London**

Visit West Hollywood also created our own sales mission to the U.K., calling on almost 20 sales appointments. The travel trade event included 120 attendees, with a mix of leisure, entertainment and corporate agents, in addition to airline partners, held at Cucumber at Sea Containers in London. In attendance were representatives from The London West Hollywood at Beverly Hills, Le Parc Suite Hotel and Grafton on Sunset.

**Annual Bookings:**

Hotel Room Bookings	\$160,042.52
F&B Bookings	\$87,918.55
Total	\$247,961.07

# PRINT ADVERTISING

As Visit West Hollywood underwent an extensive rebranding process, print advertising was pulled back and targeted only local and tourism industry publications.

West Hollywood Magazine

Chamber of Commerce

Virtuoso

CalTravel

U.S. Travel's IPW Programs

Visit California Travel Guide

# DIGITAL MARKETING

## Website & Digital Advertising Statistics:

With the roll-out of a new brand voice, the Digital Marketing department completely redesigned and redeveloped the Visit West Hollywood website and executed some key campaigns to support new branding initiatives.

All PPC campaigns and paid display banner advertising were paused November through March in anticipation of new Visit WeHo brand launch and website campaigns.

## Website & Digital Advertising Statistics:

- 635,295 visits to the site.
- 525,352 unique visits to the site.
- 1,313,568 page views.
- 16,253,058 display banner advertising impressions.
- 12,813 hotel referrals generated.

## Fall Soft Period Campaign

To mitigate the Fall/Winter soft period, Visit West Hollywood continued to partner with Travelzoo to reach target consumers to convert and book. This year's Travelzoo promotion found on the Travelzoo site was syndicated on partner sites like The New York Times, Fodor's, Lonely Planet and Chicago Tribune, generating nearly 40 room nights and 11,583,837 impressions.

## Grown-Up Spring Break Campaign

Executed during a shoulder period, the Grown-Up Spring Break campaign was heavily promoted on all social media channels, website and consumer newsletters, generating 85 room nights, 209,840 Facebook reach, 4304 Facebook link clicks, 308,552 Facebook impressions and Instagram reach of 28,106.

## UrbanDaddy

The digital partnership with UrbanDaddy included a dedicated email, weekender email, native content billboard ad and run of network ads, all of which generated 2.1 million impressions. All ad units outperformed UrbanDaddy benchmark averages.

## Social Media Following:

	Followers	Percentage Increase
Facebook	157,383	+9.7%
Twitter	21,065	+8.8%
Instagram	15,594	+61.6%
Total	194,042	+12.5%

Visit West Hollywood continues to expand its social media presence by managing campaigns that increase overall reach and engagement. Visit West Hollywood's ongoing effort to partner with West Hollywood businesses and influencers has also made it possible to increase awareness of Visit West Hollywood on social media.

### **PRIDE Influencer Campaign**

With 160 posts spanning a four-day trip, our PRIDE Influencers shared experiences throughout West Hollywood, with 694,200 video views and 810,700 social media interactions across all platforms.

### **Monthly Giveaways**

Visit West Hollywood holds monthly giveaways on its social media channels to support and generate buzz around new businesses and special events. This year, giveaways for dineL.A. Restaurant Week, New Year's Eve and LA Pride were conducted. Visit West Hollywood partnered with Goldenvoice for an ongoing monthly giveaway giving winners access to an entire month of concerts at The Roxy Theatre. These promotions increased followers, increased the use of our hashtag #visitweho, and increased use of @visitweho on Instagram photos.

### **Partnerships**

West Hollywood was featured on the social media channels of the California Dream Eater (@californiadreameater) reaching 34k followers. Through crowdsourcing and storytelling, the Dream Eater showcases the most compelling foodie locations in California. The content was also shared on the Visit California (@visitcalifornia) social media channels reaching an additional 297k followers. Visit West Hollywood has partnered with Alison Martino of Vintage Los Angeles to source content for our weekly Throwback Thursday posts. Vintage Los Angeles reaches an active community of 300k on Facebook that also help contribute content.

### **Instagram Stories**

Visit West Hollywood continues to leverage the newest Instagram features to show a fresh perspective on West Hollywood. Instagram stories was used to showcase events, new businesses and interviews with local tastemakers. This strategy has increased followers for West Hollywood businesses and Visit West Hollywood while increasing engagement with the existing fan base.

# COMMUNICATIONS

The Communications Department works to raise awareness and drive consumer interest through securing media coverage that encourages a multi-night stay in our city. The PR program is also designed to boost consumer marketing campaigns and trade initiatives while expanding the reach of direct-to-consumer coverage of the destination.

The Communications Department conducts a robust Visiting Journalist Program (VJP) designed to immerse travel journalists in the destination, allowing them to embrace the brand and portray a tangible reality in accessibility, no matter the distance away, and total ability for their audiences to experience all that the destination has to offer. Visit West Hollywood hosted 66 journalists this fiscal year, a threefold increase from years prior, averaging to at least one journalist visit a week.

The Visit West Hollywood Communications team garnered global media coverage through proactive pitching, media hosting, press release distribution and media networking in key cities worldwide. Stories about West Hollywood appeared in international and domestic newspapers, travel trade media, consumer magazines, online and on television and radio.

## **FY2016-17 Media Relations Results**

Circulation	87,145,166
Advertising Value	\$14,127,991

## **The department retained the following external PR agencies:**

Domestic	DKC (through February 2016)
Australia	Gate 7
UK	KBC PR

## **We conducted the following media outreach missions:**

<b>New York</b>	Visit California media reception; TravMedia IMM
<b>London</b>	Individual media calls organized by KBC with Tom Kiely
<b>Sydney</b>	Individual media calls organized by Gate 7 with Tom Kiely and Visit West Hollywood Board Chair Greg Harless
<b>Chicago</b>	Visit California media boot camp and media calls organized by DKC
<b>San Francisco</b>	Visit California media reception
<b>Other</b>	IPW in Washington D.C

The Communications team executed two comprehensive in-market brand campaigns with the goal of furthering destination awareness and driving visitor demand in our key international markets. Visit West Hollywood partnered with fashion retailer General Pants to create a ‘West Hollywood Holiday’ competition that included a ‘pre-competition’ phase with an influencer content trip and video production, trade partnership with Delta and helloworld, and final consumer prize promotion in February that reached key audiences through in-store POS materials, social media, and digital advertising, resulting in a \$1.5 million campaign value.

Visit West Hollywood also engaged in a partnership with Stylist Magazine in March, kicking off a four-week advertorial and digital campaign aimed at communicating key destination messaging and encouraging competition entries across print, digital, and social mediums. The campaign culminated in an in-store reader event and promotional campaign with Taylor Taylor salons with multiple locations in London. The campaign reached 95% of the KPI set by the Stylist Magazine partnership team.

**Media Outlets that covered West Hollywood included:**

Conde Nast Traveller	Irish Daily Mail	Forbes
Travel Weekly	Sunday Times Travel	Qantas AWOL Blog
Vogue	Harper’s Bazaar	National Geographic Traveller
Virgin Voyeur	Sunday Telegraph	Dallas Morning News
Sydney Morning Herald	Coveteur	Daily Mail
The Evening Standard	Bay Area Reporter	Daily Front Row
Escape	The Sun & Scottish Sun	Cosmopolitan Online

**What the media said about West Hollywood:**

- To me, WeHo encapsulates everything great about the City of Angels – the glamour, the fashion, design and endless entertainment venues. It’s where I come to explore my Hollywood fantasies and live like a celebrity, just for a brief moment in time. [...] Letting loose and having a good time is mandatory in WeHo; while recovery is also an art form, typified by spa treatments, exercise classes and a lot of snoozing by hotel pools. - Vacations and Travel
- Colloquially known as WeHo, West Hollywood cranks up Los Angeles’ creativity and entertainment with a well-earned reputation for “it” restaurants and celebrity-friendly night spots. Discerning shoppers know, however, that WeHo is also the city’s capital of impeccable taste, and the Design District, an area orbiting the Pacific Design Center, is its heart. – Virtuoso Life Magazine
- Don’t let LA’s sprawling suburbs, lack of public transport and bewildering network of boulevards put you off. Base yourself in the hip neighborhood of West Hollywood, where historic hotels, quirky bars, gourmet cafes, restaurants and fantastic boutique shopping are all within walking distance (or short Uber drive) of one another. Yes, it’s LA but not as you know it. – Qantas Travel Insider

- West Hollywood has a disproportionate amount of cool relative to its size. Home to the Sunset Strip and located right between L.A. and Beverly Hills, the city is smaller than 2 square miles around and somehow has one of the world's best bar and restaurant scenes (and a serious contingent of famous people that frequent those establishments). WeHo was basically made to be bar crawled. – Cosmopolitan
- Sure, weather-wise it's basically summer all year in southern California. But the splurge of a last-ditch trip to Tinsel Town feels especially luxurious, even when it's actually summer. That's because posh is the name of the game in West Hollywood, where you can slip into the movie-star mindset by simply checking into a lavish hotel like the London or Mondrian, and reclining poolside while aspiring actors serve you cocktails. Just don't let the lingering paparazzi get in your way at celebrity go-to restaurants. – Conde Nast Traveller
- With a traffic area of just 3 square kilometers, WeHo as locals call it in the centre of Los Angeles, is tourist heaven with the legendary Sunset Strip, Melrose Avenue and cinema. It is also home to the most popular gay nightclub in the country, The Abbey. – Sunday Telegraph, Sydney
- Between the sunshine, spotlights and flashbulbs, it's hard to escape the bright lights of West Hollywood (WeHo)... True, WeHo is where regular people live and play, and it's L.A.'s main LGBT stomping grounds. It's also a chic enclave where even the most famous actors, directors, musicians and their entourages escape ritzy zip codes to dress down and sip California-style bevs like Divine Spice Chai Boba (or even an occasional plain tea) in peace. – The Points Guy
- The sprawling city of Los Angeles can be intimidating to a first timer - or even a repeat visitor. With so many neighbourhoods, how do you know where to begin? Those in the know should head to West Hollywood, or WeHo as it's affectionately known. Just 300ha, WeHo borders the City of Beverly Hills and old town Hollywood, (where you can trace the stars on the footpath). It is framed by the best and most legendary parts of Sunset Strip. - New Zealand Herald

# AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

## **I Am West Hollywood**

To ensure that every visitor to West Hollywood has a great experience, Visit West Hollywood launched 'I Am West Hollywood,' an interactive program that encourages and empowers West Hollywood businesses and their employees to become better informed about the city and all it has to offer. This fiscal year, the program was refined and executed on a quarterly basis.

Since its inception in late 2014, a total of 412 certified ambassadors have completed the program.

This 2.5-hour program consists of a guided driving tour around West Hollywood's neighborhoods and attractions, followed by a classroom session facilitated by a trained 'I Am West Hollywood' program leader. The classroom session covers West Hollywood's brand, local insights, tips on providing excellent guest service, LGBT diversity training, and much more. Participants will learn how their role in delivering optimal customer experiences is vital to the city's tourism industry and economic success.

Participants become "Official West Hollywood Ambassadors" and are armed with a database of facts, figures, and "Did You Know" anecdotes about West Hollywood for use in customer interaction.

Business owners and managers in West Hollywood and neighboring areas are invited to enroll their employees in the program. Workshops are offered quarterly and are free of charge to local businesses and residents. Find more information and enroll at [iamwesthollywood.com](http://iamwesthollywood.com).

# MAJOR PARTNERSHIPS AND SPONSORSHIPS

**West Hollywood Design District and Sunset Strip Business Improvement Districts:** Visit West Hollywood administers the West Hollywood Design District and Sunset Strip BIDs through an agreement with the City. Visit West Hollywood provides monetary and in-kind support of the districts, assistance with marketing and public relations efforts, in addition to housing the BID Manager.

**West Hollywood Chamber of Commerce:** Visit West Hollywood's sponsorship with the West Hollywood Chamber of Commerce enables the Chamber to enhance its efforts to promote West Hollywood businesses. One key program the sponsorship supports is Eat/Shop/Play, a digital platform that promotes local businesses to area residents with special offers and discounts. During the fiscal year, Visit West Hollywood was awarded with the Chamber's Creative Communications Award during its 31st Annual Creative City Awards Ceremony. The two organizations meet regularly and work closely together to align their programming and outreach efforts to ensure a healthy business climate in the city, and to promote local businesses to visitors and residents. Visit West Hollywood's sponsorship package includes banner ads on the Chamber website, as well as advertising and editorial in its print and email newsletters.

**LA Tourism:** Visit West Hollywood is a member of LA Tourism and participates in various partnership opportunities, including co-hosting sales and media fairs, and premium positioning on the Discover Los Angeles web site. This fiscal year, LA Tourism and Visit West Hollywood initiated talks to coordinate efforts to enter the China market.

**Visit California:** Visit West Hollywood is a member of Visit California and participates in many of its sales and media missions and events in key markets throughout the year. VWH and VC also frequently co-host media and sales fairs. VWH places advertising in California official visitor's guides.

**LA Pride:** Visit West Hollywood supported the Christopher Street West Association Inc., the 501(c)3 organization that produces the annual LA Pride Festival, through a financial sponsorship. VWH provided in-kind support through its marketing, communication, and digital departments, in addition to participating in this year's Resist March.

**WeHo Sports Festival:** Visit West Hollywood was a principal sponsor of the WeHo Sports Festival, receiving naming rights to the kickoff party in West Hollywood in addition to offline and online marketing promotions. Visit West Hollywood helped facilitate hotel room blocks with member hotels.

**West Hollywood AIDS Monument:** In 2013, Visit West Hollywood committed to a \$250,000 sponsorship over five years for The AIDS Monument, a lasting physical and interactive tribute to the HIV/AIDS epidemic to be built in the heart of the West Hollywood Park.

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

(as of June 30, 2017)

Greg Harless, Skye Partners/The Lot  
CHAIR

Mark Lehman, Esq.  
VICE CHAIR

Norbert Relecker, Mondrian Los Angeles  
SECRETARY

Ira Kleinrock, Le Parc Suites  
TREASURER

Chris Bonbright, Avison Young  
PAST CHAIR

## DIRECTORS

Jamie Adler, Phyllis Morris  
Mylena Christina, Sotheby's International Realty  
Jack Gonzalez, Retired  
Rod Gruendyke, Sunset Marquis  
Phillip Howard, Laurel Hardware  
Jason Illouljian, Faring Capital  
Bill Karpiak, Ramada Plaza West Hollywood  
Ira Kleinrock, Le Parc Suites  
Henning Nopper, Andaz West Hollywood  
Danny Roman, Bikes & Hikes

## HONORARY MEMBERS

Paul Arevalo, City of West Hollywood  
Maribel Louie, City of West Hollywood  
Genevieve Morrill, West Hollywood Chamber of Commerce

# STAFF

(as of June 30, 2017)

Tom Kiely  
PRESIDENT & CEO

Jeff Morris  
CMO

Vicki Heitland  
VICE PRESIDENT OF ADMINISTRATION

Jaimie Du Bois  
DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Erin Pedraja  
DIRECTOR OF DIGITAL MARKETING

Erin Hennessey  
DIGITAL MARKETING MANAGER

Maribel Munoz  
OFFICE MANAGER / FINANCE

Julissa Rodriguez  
SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER

Anne Van Gorp  
COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

Diana Pacheco  
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT