

Pacifica Chamber of Commerce Candidates Forum

Question #9:

How can the city better promote tourism?

Given that hotel tax is one of our most consistent sources of revenue for Pacifica, the City has worked with the Chamber in creating and sustaining the Business Improvement District (BID) with the Hotels. The BID has hosted visits to Pacifica with room nights and itineraries resulting in Pacifica being seen across many media outlets. In the past, the City partnered with the chamber and awarded them an annual grant that started at \$45,000 to assist with the visitor center. A few years ago that amount was reduced and finally eliminated. Would you support reinstating funding for the chamber and visitor center to expand tourism promotion? What other ways would you suggest to promote tourism?

Sue Beckmeyer:

If the excess ERAF fund balance allowed for it, I would support reinstating city funds to promote tourism in Pacifica. I think we need data to help us better understand who visits Pacifica, their motivation for visiting Pacifica, and their opinions about why Pacifica is a good destination for tourism. We need to probe the assumption that "our environment is our economy" to determine if our environment contributes to the amount of tourism dollars spent. I think Pacifica could build on its strong reputation with the Fog Fest by promoting more street fairs, food truck events, concerts, etc. to give visitors and residents options that keep their spending in Pacifica, rather than over the hill.

Mary Bier:

The idea behind tourism promotion is to make the community a destination, not just a pass-through along the way. Attractive signage that highlights amenities can draw folks to turn off of the highway to see the sights. A vibrant downtown area can also serve as a destination. The pier is already a destination for fisherman from all over the county. The addition of the Beach Blvd Hotel Project will bring more people into the area and Palmetto has the potential to have shops and restaurants that visitors would want to frequent. Public art and landscaping can also help to create a beautiful, vibrant feeling to the city. Working closely with Caltrans to clean up their property could help with the landscaping around the highway. Presenting a place of community, culture and spirit attracts people, makes them feel at home and encourages them to return.

I feel that the city should work to make sure that the Chamber is functioning at capacity to ensure the most welcoming and helpful experience for tourist and to encourage and support small business. If there is funding allocated to the Chamber then I would support that.

Bridget Duffy:

The Oceanic Discovery Center would be all we need to become the eco destination city of our dreams. It would all that Area would need to be a real downtown

Vickie Flores:

1. Every city along the coast takes advantage of the tourist dollars to help the city maintain vital resources. Pacifica could do a much better job by working with some of the tour companies that are currently being pushed out of San Francisco. Tour buses are currently not allowed on many popular streets. Pacifica should work with these organizations and businesses in Pacifica to create a city tour. This would generate more foot traffic for the upcoming upgrade of Palmetto, Rockaway Beach, Manor, Linda Mar and Pedro Point, which is all desperately needed.
2. I would support reinstating funds for the Chamber and Visitor Center to expand tourism promotion.
3. Adding new hotels is one thing but having something for the tourists to do once they get here is another. If we don't have enough activities, then the hotels will not stay full year-round. I would like to see a bike rental shop on Palmetto or Beach Blvd. I think we need more people to know about all the wonderful trails here in Pacifica and maybe we could have a tourist-hiking group. I think our art center should be promoted as a tourist destination; along with all the wonderful plays put on by the Spindrift Players. We should increase the number of tours provided by the castle so that tour buses can bring people to that location. Our historical society and antique shops should play a larger roll in our tourism as well. Taking all these wonderful items and placing them in one brochure. Make these available in all hotels and business establishments. In addition, market this on social media and spread the word beyond Pacifica.

John Keener:

In this year's budget, the revenue from the transient occupancy tax (TOT) is \$1.7 million, 5% of the general fund revenues. That will go up in the next year in large part because we are now beginning to tax short-term rentals as if they're hotels. And one hotel is expanding. Over the longer term, we can also expect TOT from the Beach Blvd. project.

I would not support reinstating funding for the chamber. I realize that's unpopular with this crowd, but the city just doesn't have any money to spare.

We have the ocean in front of us. We must make sure the areas around hotels are clean and free of litter, to encourage good reviews on hotel sites. Same for our trails and beaches, for which we thank the Pacifica Beach Coalition.

Mike O'Neill:

The BID seems to be successful in promoting Pacifica. The Transient Occupancy Tax is important to Pacifica's budget.

I think the registry of Pacifica on the Whale Trail, <https://thewhaletrail.org>, is an opportunity that can be exploited to foster visitors to Pacifica. I think Pacifica has a niche that we need to market and grow for the revenue. I am willing to explore funding options for the Chamber from the City however, given current budget restraints it is unlikely for the foreseeable future.

Adonica Shaw-Porter:

Pacifica doesn't have the money available to reinstate funding for the chamber. As someone with a marketing background, I would jump in and work with the talent we already have in the city and at the chamber to promote businesses online and on social media. I would create a citywide calendar of events, and create a downloadable packet for tourists to learn more about our businesses and parks. Additionally, I would work with the community to create a monthly show called "This is Pacifica," which would highlight certain businesses, restaurants and attractions. The show could be played on channel 26, and can also be featured in local hotel rooms. Lastly, I would be in favor of opening up an internship for anyone interested in tackling this problem with the city.