



For Immediate Release

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PETER GAMEZ JOINS VISIT OAKLAND AS PRESIDENT & CEO

Travel industry leader and Bay Area native brings vision of recovery and optimism in reshaping Oakland's tourism economy



Aug. 23, 2021 - Peter Gamez has joined Visit Oakland, the city's official destination marketing organization (DMO), as President and CEO.

"I'm excited and honored to join Visit Oakland, especially at this time when we have both an opportunity and a responsibility to reshape the city's tourism economy," Gamez said.

"This city has so much to offer visitors – vibrant arts, culture, museums, sports, recreation, beautiful hotels, dynamic meeting facilities and a mind-blowing culinary scene – but it's about more than just things on a map. Through our diverse cultures, people and thinking, Oakland can inspire, challenge, and change the way people see things," Gamez said.



Gamez says his initial goals are inward facing. He will spend his first 100 days diving into the organization's financial, legal and governance standings to help determine how best to recover and rebuild after the traumatic impact of the pandemic.

"I want to be more than a DMO president, I want to make Visit Oakland the best organization of its kind to work for in the country. I believe that all of us have a higher purpose or calling to impact others positively. I want to lead our staff to help them find that higher purpose, which will in turn create a greater positive impact for the community," he said. "One of the first places I worked had a mission statement that simply said 'Create joy.' Sometimes the simplest goals have the greatest impact," Gamez added.

"Using the census as a guideline, I will make sure that our board of directors and staff reflect our community, including Black, indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) and female leadership," he said.

Gamez plans to amplify the tourism voice of Oakland via strategic partnerships with Visit California and neighboring DMOs like San Francisco Travel. Visit Oakland will also create bespoke relationships that will encourage lodging stays in Oakland.

"We will invest in cutting-edge marketing and sales strategies to achieve our mission, 'increasing tourism's economic impact in Oakland through destination development and brand management,'" Gamez said. "We will aggressively market the destination, always keeping our travelers' safety in mind."

"Oakland welcomes all visitors to our beautiful and inclusive city with open arms," said Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf. "We know that tourism fosters incredible economic opportunity citywide, and particularly for our small, locally-owned businesses. I want to congratulate Peter Gamez as the new CEO of Visit Oakland, whose commitment to Oakland and business acumen will elevate Visit Oakland and help boost our local tourism economy."

"We are excited to welcome Peter to our Oakland family and look forward to his leadership in amplifying Visit Oakland's initiative, 'Think Oakland First,'" said Barbara Leslie, President and CEO of the Oakland Chamber of Commerce. "A strong tourism industry is essential to Oakland's economic sustainability – one that embraces all of our small, local, women owned and BIPOC businesses who are responsible for creating the beautiful tapestry we call home."

Gamez brings 32 years of travel industry experience, including executive and senior sales positions with Two Roads Hospitality, Commune Hotels + Resorts, Joie de Vivre Hospitality, Pan Pacific Hotels and Resorts, and Kimpton Hotels and Restaurants. In 2019, he launched Hunter Hospitality Consultants, working with developers, owners, and hotel management companies.



He has served on the Board of Directors of the San Francisco Travel Association (SF Travel) and was Board Chairman in 2018-2019.

Born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area in a Cuban-American family, Gamez holds a Bachelor of Arts in Broadcast Communications from San Francisco State University and is a member of Sigma Phi Epsilon. He lives with his partner, Ricardo Ramirez, and Bernese Mountain dog, Hunter.

Visit Oakland is a private, not-for-profit, 501(c)(6) organization, with a 21-member board of directors and five full-time staff. Visit Oakland is funded by:

- Measure C, receiving 1.5% of the current 14% hotel occupancy tax
- Oakland Tourism Business Improvement District (OTBID), receiving \$1.50 per hotel room per night

In 2018, Oakland had 3.9 million visitors and \$700 million in visitor spending. Tourism is the second largest private employer in Oakland, supporting more than 7,500 jobs.

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