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MEMO

Date: August 15, 2022
To: City Council and Mayor
From: Jody Roberts, Communications Manager
Cc: Thom Sheridan, Interim City Manager

Re: Sister City Guidelines

Per Council's request at a previous Council Workshop, following are draft Sister City Guidelines to begin the discussion with City Council. These guidelines have been discussed with legal and the topic is on the Council Workshop agenda for September 13. Also included is information on two topics that provide additional information for the discussion:

- Information on the **Sister Cities International** organization which might be a benefit the Hudson Sister City Program.
- The **Sister City Transparency Act** being considered by Congress which could impact Sister City partnerships in the future.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Jody

Guidelines to Becoming a Sister City

The City of Hudson Sister City Program is designed to establish relationships with other national and international cities that provide for future exchange of educational, cultural, social, and economic opportunities.

Hudson City Council determines the potential for a successful partnership between Hudson and applicant cities based on the following:

- Municipal compatibility.
- Has established a citizen committee with the ability to develop and maintain the relationship.
- The potential to provide cultural, educational, and economic initiatives that are mutually beneficial.
- Has the financial capability sufficient to fully fund its operations and visits, receptions, delegations, and other functions a Sister City relationship entails, without financial contributions from the City.

Cities interested in establishing a formal Sister City relationship with the City of Hudson should do so by providing a proposal to the City Manager's Office.

The Process of Establishing a Sister City Partnership

A proposal for a Sister City relationship should include documentation that clearly supports why a City should be considered for an official Sister City.

Examples of supportive documentation can include:

- Statistical data.
- Books, maps, illustrations, and city promotional material.
- Videos and PowerPoint presentations.
- Documentation with information regarding business, culture, and educational opportunities.
- Documentation showing a plan of action for establishing and maintaining the Sister City relationship long-term.
- Documentation showing how the committee plans to fund the activities and operations the Sister City relationship.

Hudson City Council would review the proposal and, if acceptable, would authorize a Memorandum of Understanding formally establishing the Sister City relationship.

Additional Information

Sister Cities International (SCI)

SCI helps Cities maintain and grow their Sister City relationships. Hudson might wish to consider a membership with this organization. Membership for Hudson would be \$440 annually. Some benefits of joining SCI are listed here: <https://sistercities.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/new-Benefits-of-Membership.pdf>. The SCI website can be found at: <https://sistercities.org/>.

Sister City Transparency Act

The Sister City Transparency Act is currently being considered by Congress/Senate and could impact Sister City relationships in the future, particularly with countries with low ratings by Transparency International.

The Sister City Transparency Act would require the Government Accountability Office to study the activities of sister city partnerships involving foreign communities in countries that received a score of 45 or less on Transparency International's 2019 Corruption Perceptions Index. A sister city partnership is a formal agreement between a U.S. community and a foreign community that is recognized by Sister Cities International and that is operating within the United States.

Among other elements, the required study must (1) identify oversight practices that U.S. communities implement to mitigate the risks of foreign espionage and economic coercion within sister city partnerships, (2) assess the extent to which U.S. communities ensure transparency regarding sister city partnership contracts and activities, and (3) review the range of activities conducted within sister city partnerships.

As reference, Germany, the location of our current Sister City, has a 2021 score of 80 in the Index. Rwanda, which was being considered for a Sister City, scored 53. Their 2019 scores were Germany (80) and Rwanda (51). Both countries are above the rating which is of concern in this potential legislation.

The results of the federal study (should either bill be enacted) will be monitored for the potential policy changes governing sister city partnerships that could result.

Full text of the Act can be found here: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/710/text>.

Most recent Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index:
<https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2021>.