



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:

Agenda Item Number: 37

Agenda Date: January 30, 2025

In Control: City Council A Session

DEPARTMENT: Economic Development Department

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Brenda Hicks-Sorensen

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

This ordinance approves a Sister City Agreement with Santiago de Querétaro most commonly known as Querétaro, México.

SUMMARY:

This ordinance approves a Sister City Agreement with Santiago de Querétaro most commonly known as Querétaro, México. San Antonio currently has three sister cities in Europe, one in Africa and six in Asia. Should it be approved, Querétaro would be San Antonio's third sister city in México to join Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, and Guadalajara, Jalisco. With this agreement, the people of San Antonio and Querétaro agree to collaborate for the mutual benefit of our communities by exploring educational, economic and cultural opportunities.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Sister City Program, administered by Sister Cities International, was initiated by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1956 to encourage greater friendships and understanding between other nations and U.S. cities, counties, and states.

Over 315 years ago, in 1709, Father Antonio de Olivares, a Franciscan missionary from the College

of Santa Cruz of Queretaro, arrived in San Antonio. He went on to eventually help found the first of our five missions, Mission San Antonio de Valero (The Alamo) in 1718, the Presidio San Antonio de Bexar, and the Acequia Madre de Valero, the initial phase of what became a 45-mile network put in place by the Franciscan priests to provide water for the missions and their agricultural endeavors.

Familial, religious, educational, and cultural relationships continued in the intervening years, but more recently strong ties have been fostered with increasing economic cooperation, the signing of the San Antonio- Querétaro Airport Agreement, the Alamo Colleges-Querétaro Educational Consortium MOU, and the significant “Al Otro Lado del Espejo” exhibition featuring 23 San Antonio artists that opened September 20, 2024, at the Museum of Art of Querétaro.

Future collaboration is being sought by the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Tech Bloc, and the US-Mexico Business Association (AEM San Antonio) which all participated in a 135-strong San Antonio delegation visit to Querétaro for the 2024 Friendship City Signing. Additionally, the story will continue in 2027 when Querétaro artists come to San Antonio on a reciprocal exchange.

ISSUE:

Sister cities are identified for consideration based upon historical, cultural, and economic ties beneficial to residents of both communities. Consideration is also given to a community’s alignment with the Metro Priority Plan and additional data analysis. Sister Cities International requires the signatures of both mayors and ratification of an agreement by the respective city governments, as means of acknowledging the intended commitment. For this reason, City of San Antonio protocol for Sister City designations requires approval via City Council ordinance.

ALTERNATIVES:

City Council could choose not to approve a Sister City Agreement with Querétaro, México. However, not approving this agreement would be inconsistent with the City of San Antonio's emphasis on cultivating cultural, educational, and economic development ties with cities and regions of historic significance to San Antonio.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This ordinance does not have a fiscal impact.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the Sister City Agreement between Querétaro, México, and San Antonio, Texas.

