



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

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Agenda Item Number: 4

Agenda Date: September 26, 2023

In Control: Economic and Workforce Development Committee Meeting

DEPARTMENT: Economic Development Department

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Brenda Hicks-Sorensen

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Briefing and discussion on global engagement activities of the Economic Development Department.

SUMMARY:

This briefing will provide an overview of the activities of the Economic Development Department as they relate to international relationships and global engagement, as well as seek input on target markets for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) attraction.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Economic Development Department (EDD), through the Global Engagement division, initiates and maintains international relations for the City of San Antonio. EDD fosters partnerships that increase global visibility, promotes visitation to San Antonio, and improves the quality of life of city residents through cultural and educational exchanges and economic development. Official relationships include diplomatic engagement and initiatives with our Global

Partner Cities including San Antonio's twelve (12) sister and three (3) friendship cities.

EDD takes an intentional project-based approach to existing relationships and involve diverse and varied community partners. The goal is to have at least one point of engagement with global partner cities every year. These connections can, and have, led to educational and cultural exchanges and foreign direct investment (FDI) attraction.

The EDD Strategic Framework, accepted by City Council in 2022, upholds the Metro Priority Plan (MPP) and emphasizes the importance of FDI. MPP was implemented in 2020 based on research from 2017 through 2019 and developed with the goals of focusing efforts on key global markets; increasing San Antonio's global access through diplomacy, business, culture, and education; and elevating San Antonio's reputation on the global stage.

The Brookings Institution Market Prioritization Exercise defined San Antonio's industry specializations, identified markets that show potential for economic linkage, assessed foreign markets, compiled data to sort priority cities by target industry, and solicited industry and community feedback to validate the data. As a result, five metro areas were identified as being good matches for San Antonio engagement: Toronto, Canada; Frankfurt, Germany; Tokyo, Japan; Seoul, S. Korea; and Mexico City, Mexico. The MPP also highlights the importance of continuing collaboration with long-standing established relationships and nurturing new relationships.

ISSUE:

In FY23, a trade and cultural mission to India further strengthened San Antonio's relationship with its Sister City of Chennai. EDD took advantage of the mission that included subnational diplomatic engagements to meet with companies that have existing operations in San Antonio, like Rackspace, Tata Consulting Services, and INDO-MIM, and promote San Antonio as a leading destination for foreign direct investment. Members of the delegation that represented target industries participated in two investment promotion events in Delhi and Chennai where over 30 potential Indian investors were present.

Sister Cities' engagements continued with EDD support of the Philippines Taskforce and coordination of both the Friendship and Sister Cities signing ceremonies and associated delegations in October 2022 and July 2023. The City of San Antonio established its 12th Sister City in 2023 with Baguio, Philippines.

EDD continued to facilitate the Latin American Taskforce aimed at exploring and fostering relationships in Panama and Colombia, which led to the October 2022 trade and cultural mission to establish business and cultural connections and explore future higher education engagements.

In alignment with the EDD Strategic Framework, the department is focused on evolving the Casa San Antonio program to support FDI attraction. The first contract under this new program has been executed with a consultant in Colombia where we anticipate building a pipeline and leads from Latin America. Additionally, the department is collaborating with greater: SATX, the University of Texas – San Antonio International Trade Center, and other partner organization to identify areas of opportunity based upon current momentum, trends, and data for FDI attraction. Potential target

markets include Korea, Japan, Israel, Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, India, Columbia and Panama in Latin America, in addition to continued activity-based engagements in Mexico. Staff is seeking input from EWDC members on the target markets.

EDD and the Global Engagement division remain committed in support of local engagements like DiwaliSA, El Grito, and the Darmstadt International Youth Orchestra to not only increase San Antonio's access to the outside world through diplomacy, business, culture, and education, but also elevate San Antonio's reputation on the global stage.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This item is for briefing purposes only.

ALTERNATIVES:

This item is for briefing purposes only.

RECOMMENDATION:

This item is for briefing purposes only.