



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

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Agenda Item Number: 4

Agenda Date: October 12, 2021

In Control: Economic and Workforce Development Committee Meeting

DEPARTMENT: Economic Development Department

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Brenda Hicks-Sorensen

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Briefing and recommendation on developing Latin American Relationships and Sister Cities.

SUMMARY:

This item provides a briefing on developing relationships and Sister Cities with recommended Central and South American cities.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

On January 28, 2021, a Council Consideration Request (CCR) was submitted by Councilmember Manny Pelaez, District 8, directing City staff to begin efforts to develop economic, government, and cultural relationships with Latin American cities in Central and South America, including developing more Sister City relationships with cities in the Latin American region. On April 21, 2021 the City Council Governance Committee reviewed the request and referred the item to the Economic and Workforce Council Committee for further consideration.

San Antonio institutions and businesses have developed partnerships with areas in Latin America that provide a foundation for more formal economic, government, and cultural relationships with Latin American cities. However, the City of San Antonio has no significant relationship with cities in Central or South America.

San Antonio is a Spanish speaking city and is home to people from Central and South America. According to Census data, over 38% of San Antonians speak Spanish and there are strong Portuguese language programs at some San Antonio universities. Furthermore, the census data points to an increase in the number of San Antonio residents who self-identify with Central or South American.

San Antonio is home to both Army North and Army South located at Fort Sam Houston. Army South is part of a U.S. and multinational team working to advance security and stability throughout Central and South America and the Caribbean. Additionally, cadets from all over the region train in San Antonio as part the U.S. Armed Forces efforts to expand Latin American military partnerships.

As it relates to institutes of higher education, the University of Texas at San Antonio, University of Incarnate Word, Trinity University, Our Lady of the Lake University, St Mary's University and Alamo Colleges have established partnerships with Central and Latin American Universities and/or actively recruit students from this region.

There are strong business trade and investment flows between Latin American and Texas especially in the energy and transportation industries. Examples of San Antonio corporations involved in trade or operations include HEB, Valero and Rackspace. UTSA is leading the expansion of the U.S. Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) throughout the Americas and has assisted 24 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean adopt the SBDC methodology. Furthermore, UTSA has directly partnered with the Organization of American States, the Inter-American Development Bank, and 24 national governments on this effort.

Finally, the San Antonio International Airport has worked to promote direct routes from San Antonio with South American carriers into Central and South America.

ISSUE:

This briefing will include the research and outreach completed to further develop economic, government, and cultural relationships with cities in Central and South America. Options for communities to consider developing relationships with will be presented to the Economic and Workforce Development Committee for consideration and discussion.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this briefing.

ALTERNATIVES:

This item is only for briefing purposes.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends a regional and strategic approach to furthering relationships with two cities in Central and South America for consideration.