



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:

Agenda Item Number: 9

Agenda Date: May 11, 2023

In Control: City Council A Session

DEPARTMENT: Economic Development Department

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Brenda Hicks-Sorensen

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Ordinance approving a Sister City Agreement with the Baguio, Philippines.

SUMMARY:

This ordinance authorizes a Sister City agreement between the City of San Antonio and Baguio, Philippines. The goal of this agreement is to encourage collaboration for the mutual benefit of our communities by exploring educational, economic, and cultural opportunities in accordance with the regulations of Sister Cities International.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

There are approximately 140,000 Filipinos who call Texas home and more than 10,000 Tagalog speakers in the San Antonio-New Braunfels Metropolitan Statistical Area – making Tagalog the second most common non-English language spoken in the area, after Spanish. Filipinos also make up a large proportion of healthcare workers in the area. San Antonio's Filipino community has been instrumental in engaging with the Philippines and Baguio, including forming a community-led taskforce and nonprofit to steer programming and engagement.

As part of the objective to build a stronger link to the Philippines, San Antonio hosted a delegation from Baguio in October 2022, which included the city's mayor, city administrator, the president

of Saint Louis University in Baguio, and the hospital administrator of Saint Louis University Hospital of the Sacred Heart. The delegates participated in meetings and exchanges in the areas of cultural heritage, healthcare education and administration, waste management, sustainability, and senior citizen engagement. Culminating the visit, Mayor of Baguio, Benjamin Magalong, and Mayor of San Antonio, Ron Nirenberg, signed a Friendship City Agreement. This agreement seeks to increase trade and tourism between the cities and exchanges in the areas of culture, education, best practices, sustainability, and emergency operations management.

San Antonio currently has two sister cities in Mexico, three in Europe, one in Africa and five in Asia. Should it be approved, Baguio would be San Antonio's sixth sister city in Asia.

ISSUE:

Sister Cities International requires the signatures of both mayors and approval of the agreement by the respective city governments. This agreement seeks to increase trade and tourism between the cities and exchanges in the areas of culture, education, best practices, sustainability, military heritage, and emergency operations management. The following provisions include future efforts in alignment with the agreement:

- Both parties will make joint efforts to promote economic collaboration and bilateral trade to enhance exchange in fields mentioned above;
- Leveraging their designation as UNESCO Creative Cities – San Antonio in Gastronomy, and Baguio in Crafts and Folk Art – both cities will seek to raise their global profile and foster local talent by collaborating between and among the almost 300 Creative Cities around the world;
- Taking into consideration Baguio's founding as a U.S. military installation, the two cities will highlight the role they had in U.S. military history and continue to have as important symbols of cooperation between people and nations.
- Efforts to engage in Best Practices exchange between Emergency Operations Management are underway between both cities;
- With a recent MOU signed between UT Health San Antonio and St. Louis University in Baguio, both institutions will foster higher education exchanges specifically in the area of nursing education.

In following the protocol of Sister Cities International, the governments of Baguio and San Antonio acknowledge the importance of intent to approve the Sister City Agreement.

ALTERNATIVES:

City Council could choose not to approve a Sister City Agreement with Baguio, Philippines. However, this would be inconsistent and contrary to a prior executed Friendship City agreement establishing mutual understanding and cooperation.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Sister City Agreement between Baguio, Philippines, and San Antonio, Texas, contains no specific commitment of funds. However, the Department of Arts and Culture and Economic Development Department budgets support ongoing sister city programs.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the Sister City Agreement between Baguio, Philippines, and San Antonio, Texas.