



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item

15-1043

Agenda Date: 1/29/2016

2016 COUNCIL STUDY ISSUE

NUMBER

OCM 16-01

TITLE Explore Expanding Friendship City Relationship with Iizuka, Japan to a Sister City Relationship

BACKGROUND

Lead Department: Office of the City Manager

Support Department(s): Department of Public Works

Sponsor(s):

Councilmembers: Griffith, Hendricks

History:

1 year ago: N/A

2 years ago: N/A

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

What are the key elements of the study?

This study would explore upgrading the current Friendly Exchange Relations (FER) agreement with Iizuka, Fukuoka Prefecture, Japan to a formal *sister city* relationship, including potential membership in Sister Cities International (SCI), an international membership association headquartered in Washington, D.C., responsible for recognizing and supporting sister city relationships between U.S. communities and their international counterparts, and the organization under which most international exchange programs operate. Research would include required participation in SCI, including annual commitments and potential impacts on City operations, staff resources to fulfill required commitments, etc.

The Sunnyvale Sister City Association (SCCA), a local organization not affiliated with SCI, would also be contacted. Staff would explore the SCCA's proposed vision of what an expanded program would entail, including their recent suggestion to enhance the Japanese theme at Braly Park. The study would query SCCA to determine the commitments they could make in supporting an expanded FER program or a formal SCI membership and sister city relationship with Iizuka, Japan.

Staff would also investigate the sister city activities of other local jurisdictions, such as Santa Clara and Mountain View, to help determine whether there is a general standard of criteria/policy for establishing and maintaining sister city relationships.

What precipitated this study?

In November of 2013, the Council approved establishing a Friendly Exchange Relationship with the

City of Iizuka, Japan with limited use of City resources, as stated in Council policy. Leading up to that approval, a small group of active community members founded the Sunnyvale Sister City Association, and have been spearheading efforts to expand the relationship to one that is more formal. The SSCA also helped to coordinate the planting of cherry trees around the City - a gift from the City of Iizuka - in August 2014. Since that time, the SSCA has expressed strong interest in expanding the City program to be more formal and include additional events/activities. During the November 10, 2015 Council Meeting, Mayor Griffith sponsored, and Councilmember Hendricks co-sponsored, preparation of a study issue paper to explore options for expansion into a formal relationship.

Planned Completion Year: 2016

FISCAL IMPACT

Cost to Conduct Study

Level of staff effort required (opportunity cost): Minor

Amount of funding above current budget required: \$0

Explanation of Cost:

There would be no additional costs incurred to conduct the study.

However, the study would require approximately 80 hours of staff time from the Office of the City Manager and may include additional hours from the Department of Public Works to explore alternatives for Braly Park. Staff assigned to work on this study may not be able to accomplish other tasks.

Cost to Implement Study Results

Unknown. Study would include assessment of potential costs.

Explanation of Cost: Potential costs to implement would depend greatly on the scope and design of the program that Council approves.

EXPECTED PARTICIPATION IN THE PROCESS

Council-approved work plan: No

Council Study Session: No

Reviewed by Boards/Commissions: Parks and Recreation Commission

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Position: None.

Explanation: The resources to manage this program could be significant depending on the scope and design of the program. In 2003 and 2007 Council directed staff to study this same topic. Council action and direction in both cases consistently limited these types of programs to ensure that only minimal City resources are utilized; however, staff recognizes that sister city relationships are common amongst cities and that there may be mutually beneficial exchanges within a formal arrangement. Expansion of the current program may require resources beyond what is currently budgeted and the level of commitment or programmatic options would need to be determined by the City Council.

The City's FER program was established to create opportunities for community members to experience and learn from other cultures. The SSCA has successfully implemented a student exchange program between the two cities. If Council wishes to further support these existing efforts by the SSCA, it could refer them to the City's Outside Group Funding or Community Event Grant processes.

Prepared By: Yvette Blackford, Senior Management Analyst
Reviewed By: Manuel Pineda, Director, Public Works
Reviewed By: Kent Steffens, Assistant City Manager
Approved By: Deanna J. Santana, City Manager