

Committee of the Whole (2) Report

DATE: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 **WARD(S):** ALL

TITLE: PHILIPPINES MISSION 2023 - RENEWING THE BAGUIO CITY
ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL PARTNERSHIP

FROM:

Nick Spensieri, City Manager

ACTION: DECISION

Purpose

On Council direction, Economic Development is leading an economic and cultural mission to its partner, Baguio City, Philippines in May 2023. This report seeks approval for Economic Development to use the mission to modernize the partnership and position Baguio City as a gateway to the broader Philippines by: a) granting authority to Council representatives to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with officials from Baguio to initiate negotiations for a renewed partnership; and, b) to consult with Philippine organizations while on the mission that can support a renewed partnership.

Report Highlights

- In December 2022, a Council Members Resolution from Regional Councillor Rosati directed staff to organize a mission commemorating the 25th anniversary of the partnership with Baguio City.
- Vaughan has a strong Filipino community.
- Vaughan's Economic and Cultural Partnerships policy was renewed in 2019. The mission is an opportunity to align the Baguio City partnership with corporate policies.
- Baguio City can serve as the gateway to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) economic region through a modernized Vaughan-Baguio-Philippines partnership.

Recommendations

1. THAT Council delegate authority to Regional Councillor Gino Rosati to sign a General Letter of Agreement/Memorandum of Understanding with officials from Baguio City, pursuant to section 2.3 of the Cultural and Economic Partnerships Policy (02.C.01);
2. THAT the General Letter of Agreement/Memorandum of Understanding direct signing organizations to renew and renegotiate the partnership such that it is either an Economic Partnership, a Cultural Partnership, or an Economic and Cultural Partnership, adhering to the requirements as set out in the Cultural and Economic Partnerships Policy (02.C.01);
3. THAT the General Letter of Agreement/Memorandum of Understanding be in a form satisfactory to the City Manager (or designate) and the City Solicitor (or designate);
4. THAT staff return to a future committee to seek Council approval for the renewed Economic Partnership, a Cultural Partnership, or an Economic and Cultural Partnership, adhering to the requirements as set out in the Cultural and Economic Partnerships Policy (02.C.01); and,
5. THAT staff report back to a future committee the results of the mission.

Background

Vaughan has a thriving and engaged Filipino community with nearly 9,000 residents, many actively involved with the Filipino Canadian Association of Vaughan (FCAV).

As of the 2015 census, Filipino-Canadians were the fourth largest visible minority in Vaughan. To represent this group, FCAV operates in Vaughan. with roots dating to 1990, FCAV hosts ongoing events commemorating the culture and heritage of the Philippines.

Since 2004, the City of Vaughan has recognized Filipino Day annually in June to celebrate Philippine Independence Day.

The City of Vaughan has had a formal partnership with Baguio City, Philippines since 1997. There has been an ongoing exchange of delegations.

Since 1997, four official delegations from Baguio have visited Vaughan. Recently, Mayor Maurizio Bevilacqua and Members of Council welcomed an eight-person delegation from Baguio City to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the signing of the agreement in 2017.

In November 2022, Mayor Steven Del Duca and Council welcomed a delegation from Baguio City, including Vice Mayor Fasutino Olowan and Councillor Fred Bagbagan of Baguio City, to mark the 25th anniversary of the twinning agreement between the two cities. This meeting and economic development technical briefing marked the first international delegation hosted by Mayor Del Duca and the 2022 to 2026 Council. The visiting delegation also extended an invitation to Council to visit the Philippines.

Vaughan Council has undertaken missions to Baguio, including in 2009 for its centennial celebration and the inauguration of the Global Garden, and in 2013, to celebrate the Flower Festival and meet with the Baguio Economic Development Authority.

Global gateway economies are a focal point of future international business development strategies for the City of Vaughan.

Strengthening relationships with gateway destinations presents a significant opportunity to help Vaughan-based companies gain access to leading economies in Europe, Asia, and the U.S. and to raise the profile of Vaughan's economy abroad.

The Philippines is a strong candidate as a gateway to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) economic territory: Baguio City can be a gateway economy partner with Vaughan.

Baguio features strong industry clusters in education with seven postsecondary institutions, a thriving retail and hospitality cluster, and a mining industry in the broader region. Furthermore, the Philippines are a growing economic (trade and investment) partner with Canada with more than \$2.7 billion in trade in 2021, a total value of more than \$2.6 billion of Canadian investment in the Philippines, and a free-trade agreement being negotiated.

Previous Reports/Authority

[Corporate Policy 02.C.02: Inbound and Outbound Delegations](#)

[Corporate Policy 02.C.01: Economic and Cultural Partnerships](#)

[CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MISSION - BAGUIO CITY, PHILIPPINES](#), Committee of the Whole (2), December 12, 2022.

Analysis and Options

The City of Vaughan passed a results-oriented international economic and cultural partnerships policy in 2019. The 1997 Baguio City partnership should be modernized to fit this policy.

In the interest of promoting participation in international partnership agreements that would support a results-driven approach to relationship-building; city-building; and, economic, tourism, arts and cultural development, the Policy includes several requirements for partnerships to be considered, accepted, and continue. Some of these include, that:

- Agreements are focused, results-oriented and purpose-themed
- Agreements are structured to include a 4-year work plan, budget, performance metrics and designated contacts
- Agreements indicate an end date and include cancellation provisions

The 1997 agreement does not achieve any of the criteria.

To modernize the Baguio City partnership, the City of Vaughan will use the 2023 Philippine mission to: enter an MOU with Baguio to initiate negotiations for a renewed partnership; and, to consult with Philippine organizations while on the mission that can support a renewed partnership.

To achieve these two goals, staff are working with the Philippine Consul General in Toronto, FCAV, and the Canadian Embassy in Manila. The draft mission agenda includes:

- Engagements with Canadian trade and economic officials
- Briefings from educational institutions and training organizations that export Philippine talent
- Meetings with Baguio City officials
- Visits to Cultural organizations that can assist in strengthening the Vaughan-Baguio-Philippine relationship

Financial Impact

There is no new financial impact associated with this report.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

Municipalities in York Region are responsible for developing and executing their own International Business Development Programs. Outbound Delegations are within the mandate of Economic Development's Business Plan as a vehicle for promoting

Vaughan's advantages, strategic projects, market opportunities and local businesses in global centers.

Conclusion

This report seeks approval for Economic Development to use the Council-directed mission to the Philippines to modernize its partnership with Baguio City. The goal is to position Baguio City as a gateway to the broader Philippines by: a) granting authority to Council representatives to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with officials from Baguio to initiate negotiations for a renewed partnership; and, b) to consult with Philippine organizations while on the mission that can support a renewed partnership.

For more information, please contact: Raphael Costa, Director, Economic Development, ext. 8891.

Attachments

None.

Prepared by

Raphael Costa, Director, Economic Development, ext. 8891.

Approved by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Spensieri', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Nick Spensieri, City Manager