

Item:



Committee of the Whole (Working Session) Report

DATE: Wednesday, May 08, 2019

WARD(S): ALL

TITLE: CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIPS

FROM:

Tim Simmonds, Interim City Manager

ACTION: DECISION

Purpose

The City of Vaughan continues to receive requests for cultural and economic partnerships from communities and organizations across the globe. This Report recommends the adoption of *Policy 02.C.01 Cultural and Economic Partnerships* to govern the City's participation in international partnership agreements.

Report Highlights

- The City of Vaughan has engaged in several Friendship and Twin City Agreements but does not have a Policy to govern them.
- Economic and Cultural Development has prepared a Policy to guide existing and future Cultural and Economic Partnerships between Vaughan and international organizations.
- Current Friendship and Twin City Agreements will be modernized under the new Policy, and future agreements will exist as Cultural Partnerships or Economic Partnerships, with a third option for a non-binding relationship established through a Memorandum of Understanding/Letter of Agreement.

Recommendations

1. That *Corporate Policy 02.C.01 Cultural and Economic Partnerships* be approved.

Background

Cultural and Economic Partnerships with international communities are a vehicle for marketing and showcasing the City of Vaughan on the world stage, and in doing so, can support opportunities for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Vaughan. The City employs several tools to support FDI in the community including working closely with our stakeholders and partners in the FDI ecosystem including: Toronto Global—the FDI Agency for the Toronto Region—business chambers, the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation, and Trade, consular offices, and trade consultants, in addition to participating in trade shows, conferences, and events featuring international business audiences. Cultural and Economic Partnerships form an important complement to this work, particularly in cases where a community of support established through a Cultural or Economic Partnership can encourage an investment to land in Vaughan, or where community advocates have the capacity to act as ambassadors of Vaughan locally and abroad.

The City, however, does not have a formal policy in place to create and manage Cultural and Economic Partnerships.

Economic and Cultural Development’s 2011 staff Report to Council, *Cultural and Social International Partnerships*, presented a framework for treating requests based on cultural and social affiliation. The 2011 framework was based on the ten-year Economic Development Strategy findings prepared in 2010, some of which has since become obsolete and outdated.

Previous Agreements

Since 1992, the City of Vaughan has signed “Friendship and Twin” Agreements with the following communities:

Sora, Italy (1992)	Friendship City
Ramla, Israel (1993)	Friendship City
Sanjo, Japan (1993)	Friendship City
Yangzhou, China (1995)	Friendship City
Baguio, Philippines (1997)	Twin City
Delia, Italy (1998)	Friendship City
Lanciano, Italy (2002)	Friendship City

Previous Reports/Authority

[Cultural and Social International Partnerships, Committee of the Whole \(Working Session\), May 17, 2011](#)

Analysis and Options

The proposed Policy, *Corporate Policy 02.C.01 Cultural and Economic Partnerships*, was prepared in consideration of the City's existing Friendship City and Twin City Agreements, the recommendations contained in the *Cultural and Social International Partnerships 2011 Report*, research and reports related to municipal models of international cooperation, and the best practices of GTA municipalities.

Results-Oriented Approaches to Relationship-Building

As the *Cultural and Social International Partnerships Report* indicated, the work associated with the 10-year Economic Development Strategy in 2010 identified that from a business development perspective, existing Friendship and Twin City relationships did not offer significant economic benefit, but from a cultural and community perspective, they were valuable. Through consultation with other GTA municipalities with similar experiences, staff understand there has been a policy shift to limiting the number of active relationships a municipality is engaged in due to resource constraints, and only committing to those with clearly defined motivations and actions assigned to them rather than the more wide-ranging Friendship, Twin, and Sister City affiliations of the past.

The Brookings Institution is in the process of publishing its research on metro-to-metro cooperation as part of its Global Cities Initiative in its Metropolitan Policy Program. After examining cities across North America engaged in traditional international relationships, they determined that Friendship, Twin, and Sister City Agreements are not as effective at fostering economic benefits as formally structured, "intentional collaborative agreements".

Furthermore, new and innovative purpose-built collaborative models have started to emerge as a major trend bringing communities together in a shrinking global economy. Global examples include the GO Smart Collaborative Platform developed by Taipei City, Taiwan, and the US Ignite model in the United States, of which Vaughan is a member. These new approaches reinforce the continued relevance of global community engagement partnerships and suggest that the models are changing from the old traditional methods.

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
- Agreements are on a one-year trial basis

Types of Partnerships

The Policy defines and outlines the requirements for three possible types of agreements:

1. Cultural Partnership Agreements
2. Economic Partnership Agreements
3. General Letter of Agreement/ Memorandum of Understanding

The definition and scope of each type of agreement was created, in part, through consultation with GTA municipalities with similar mandates to develop international cultural and economic linkages, but also an attempt to modernize Friendship City, Twin City, or Sister City agreements. The new naming scheme foregrounds the expectations of the Partnership.

Cultural Partnerships are formal long-term agreements between the City and Organizations based on non-religious arts, heritage and cultural goals and outcomes. Cultural Partnerships are community-supported and managed, with the assistance of the City.

Economic Partnerships are formal long-term agreements between the City and Organizations based on economic development goals and outcomes. Economic Partnerships may involve community, industry or business associations, and are managed by the City. Economic Partnerships have a clear mandate to capitalize on the economic development potential of joint initiatives and programming.

Letters of Agreement/Memorandums of Understanding are ceremonial, symbolic and non-binding expressions of understanding between the City and an Organization related to common economic and/or cultural vision and goals, or a plan to exchange municipal best practices.

Decision-making and Governance

When the City receives a proposal, staff will make an assessment in relation to the Policy criteria, and prepare a Report for Council consideration. Cultural and Economic Partnership Agreements are approved by Council and executed by the Mayor and City Clerk. General Letters of Agreement/ Memorandums of Understanding can be executed by the Mayor, City Manager, or Chief Corporate Initiatives and Intergovernmental Relations (or Director-level designate), without Council approval during an Outbound

Mission. Such non-binding Agreements may reflect an interest in continuing communications between the City and another Organization with a preliminary plan of entering into a Cultural or Economic Partnership in the future.

Onboarding Process for Previous Agreements

To ensure consistency and transparency, the City's existing Agreements will be subject to the requirements outlined in the Policy. In cases where the City has had contact with a Friendship or Twin City community in the previous four (4) calendar years, that Partnership will continue to be supported by Staff, and will be re-categorized as a Cultural or Economic Partnership, as appropriate. In cases where there has been no contact over the last four (4) years, the Partnership will be concluded by Council Resolution or Bylaw, and the relationship referenced for archival purposes. However, in these situations, the City will contact communities to understand their level of interest in continuing the relationship in the future.

Financial Impact

Cultural and Economic Partnerships are managed and funded by a dedicated budget of the Economic and Cultural Development Department approved during the annual budget cycle.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

Municipalities in the Greater Toronto Area that have existing international agreements and are frequently solicited for additional agreements are also in the process of modernizing their policies to focus on results-driven partnerships. Vaughan has had the opportunity to consult with these municipalities, incorporate their best practices, and create custom solutions for allocating resources efficiently and effectively. Therefore, this Policy is also an opportunity to demonstrate leadership in the GTA community for municipalities that are currently in the process of advancing policies in this area.

Conclusion

As international interest in the City continues to grow, as modern technologies make it much easier to communicate globally in a collaborative way, and as the City becomes more proactive in engaging international counterparts, the City requires a Policy that will promote transparency and efficiency in the process of managing previous partnerships and considering new partnerships, with a renewed emphasis on relationships with defined actions and a mandate to promote economic and/or cultural opportunities in the community. Moreover, a Policy presents an opportunity to modernize "Twin City" and "Friendship City" nomenclature to more current categories of cooperation, defined principally by intention.

Once approved, Economic and Cultural Development staff will examine existing relationships and prepare a Report to Council with recommendations to either conclude or onboard existing Agreements, as appropriate, in addition to a Report to recommend new Cultural or Economic Partnerships.

For more information, please contact: Dennis Cutajar, Director, Economic and Cultural Development.

Attachments

1. *Corporate Policy 02.C.01 Cultural and Economic Partnerships*, Economic and Cultural Development Department, May 8, 2019

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