



Peace and Justice Commission

CONSENT CALENDAR
June 27, 2023

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
 From: Peace and Justice Commission
 Submitted by: Grace Morizawa, Chair, Peace and Justice Commission
 Subject: Establishment of a Sister City Relationship with Las Vegas, Santa Bárbara, Honduras

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution establishing a sister city relationship with the municipality of Las Vegas in the Santa Bárbara department of Honduras.

SUMMARY

The Peace and Justice Commission is tasked with recommending the establishments of new Sister Cities. Las Vegas, Santa Bárbara, Honduras has approached Berkeley with the request of becoming a Sister City. Certain criteria must be met to become a Sister City, which Las Vegas, Honduras meets.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

None.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

Pursuant to Resolution 56,069-N.S., the City of Berkeley has an established criterion for the establishment of a Sister City relationship. Below is a list of what the proposal must require:

- A) A description of the proposed sister city, township, or community; and
- B) A list of similarities between Berkeley and the proposed sister community;
- C) An explanation of why this particular sister city should be selected by showing how it fits the below listed criteria.

There are seven criteria points that must be met:

- 1) The Sister City relationship should benefit the human rights, health, safety, culture, and education of the citizens of Berkeley; and

- 2) New opportunities for exchange programs, cultural enrichment or curriculum enhancement should result from the relationship; and
- 3) From these new opportunities, there should accrue direct benefits to the students of the Berkeley Unified School District; and
- 4) It should be demonstrated that a sufficient number of Berkeley residents are committed to pursuing this relationship, and that such a group is also capable of representing Berkeley's interest in such a relationship; and
- 5) It should be demonstrated that a sufficient number of residents in the proposed Sister City are committed to, and capable of, sustaining the relationship; and
- 6) There should be no direct nor indirect costs to the City of Berkeley; and
- 7) The Sister City relationship should increase the harmony in Berkeley and be in the best interests of the City.

At its regular meeting May 1, 2023, the Peace and Justice Commission adopted the following recommendation proposing the establishment of a sister city relationship with Las Vegas, Santa Bárbara, Honduras.

M/S/C: Lippman, Jaquin.

Ayes: Bohn, Jacquelin, Lippman, Morizawa.

Noes: None.

Abstain: Maran.

Absent: Lee, Gussmann.

BACKGROUND

Berkeley currently has 15 active Sister City relationships throughout the world, including two with Native American tribes. There are no Sister Cities in Honduras. The first establishment of a Sister City was in 1967 with Sakai, Japan, and latest took place in 2018, with Gonju, Republic of Korea.

The municipality of Las Vegas has sent two delegations to the City of Berkeley over the past several months to talk about setting up a Sister City relationship. The SHARE Foundation has also been in communication with the Mayor's offices in both Berkeley and Las Vegas, Honduras on the creation of such a relationship.

A. List of criteria

1) The Sister City relationship should benefit the human rights, health, safety, culture, and education of the citizens of Berkeley

There currently is no Sister City located in Honduras. Establishing one would provide new opportunities to experience the Honduran culture and share ideas that can mutually benefit our cities on a variety of fronts.

2) New opportunities for exchange programs, cultural enrichment or curriculum enhancement should result from the relationship

The proposal would proposal calls for mutual visits of delegations, with residents of Las Vegas, Honduras in Berkeley for our festivals, cultural events and community gardens with our community learning about the efforts to bring back cultural activities lost to Las Vegas under the previous government, and the campaign “Vamos a la Milpa,” developing family and community gardens to provide food independence. There are also several student exchange programs which are described below.

3) From these new opportunities, there should accrue direct benefits to the students of the Berkeley Unified School District

Discussions have already begun with Berkeley elementary schools and Berkeley High for teacher and student delegations to share the rich music program in the Berkeley schools and a vision of the mayor of Las Vegas, “Guitars and Violins for Las Vegas,” which has become a national campaign with the partnership of SHARE Foundation to bring music to all of the schools in Honduras. Las Vegas will send their students to Berkeley to see BUSD’s rich educational opportunities and music program first hand.

4) It should be demonstrated that a sufficient number of Berkeley residents are committed to pursuing this relationship, and that such a group is also capable of representing Berkeley’s interest in such a relationship

There have been many Berkeley residents, churches, and organizations who have been working with the population of Honduras over the past decade, in the shadows of the oppression and corruption of the previous national government, and will continue traveling to Honduras to work with the current government for the betterment of the Honduran people. The president-elect invited SHARE to her inauguration because she wanted the world to see that the relationship is only stronger now.

5) It should be demonstrated that a sufficient number of residents in the proposed Sister City are committed to, and capable of, sustaining the relationship

There have been twelve SHARE delegations to Honduras in the past four years, including many individuals and organizations representing Berkeley. SHARE Foundation has participated in a radio program on Radio Progreso (Honduran national non-profit radio), speaking to the Honduran people every Monday for three years.

6) There should be no direct nor indirect costs to the City of Berkeley

The SHARE Foundation and partnering organizations take responsibility for fundraising for any expenses related to this agreement. SHARE has raised significant funds over the years to support the work in Honduras.

7) The Sister City relationship should increase the harmony in Berkeley and be in the best interests of the City

Berkeley has a large Central American community that includes Hondurans who have come to love our city, and our Berkeley residents who have made the journey have fallen in love with Honduras and have developed deep friendships with individuals and organizations that will only get stronger with this agreement.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

No environmental effects.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Establishing a new Sister City, the first in five years, would continue Berkeley's legacy of being an international city.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

None.

CITY MANAGER

The City Manager takes no position on the content and recommendations of the Commission's Report.

CONTACT PERSON

Okeya Vance-Dozier, Peace and Justice Commission Secretary, City Manager's Office
510-529-5376

Attachments:

1: Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

ESTABLISHING A SISTER CITY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MUNICIPALITY OF LAS VEGAS IN THE SANTA BÁRBARA DEPARTMENT OF HONDURAS

WHEREAS, the Peace and Justice Commission advises the City Council on all matters relating to the City of Berkeley's role in issues of peace and social justice, and initiates and develops cultural and educational foreign exchange (Berkeley Municipal Code Chapter 3.68.070); and

WHEREAS, the Peace and Justice Commission has been charged by the Berkeley City Council with reviewing proposals for new Sister City relationships; and

WHEREAS, the SHARE Foundation presented a proposal for a Sister City relationship with the municipality of Las Vegas in the Santa Bárbara department of Honduras;¹ and

WHEREAS, the Peace and Justice Commission has concluded that the proposal meets the City's criteria for establishing a Sister City, namely:

1. The Sister City relationship should benefit the human rights, health, safety, culture and education of the citizens of Berkeley; and
2. New opportunities for exchange programs, cultural enrichment, or curriculum enhancement should result from the relationship; and
3. From these new opportunities there should accrue direct benefits to the students of the Berkeley Unified School District; and
4. It should be demonstrated that a sufficient number of Berkeley residents are committed to pursuing this relationship, and that such a group is also capable of representing Berkeley's interest in such a relationship; and
5. It should be demonstrated that a sufficient number of residents in the proposed Sister City are committed to, and capable of, sustaining the relationship; and
6. There should be no direct or indirect costs to the City of Berkeley; and

¹ The city of Berkeley has maintained a long relationship with Central America during the war years, including establishing a formal sister relationship with San Antonio Los Ranchos in El Salvador, and declaring Berkeley as a Sanctuary City for Central American refugees.

The city of Berkeley is the home of the original five sanctuary congregations that helped launch the national sanctuary movement, the East Bay Sanctuary Covenant, which continues to serve thousands of Central American refugees annually, and the SHARE Foundation, which has maintained sister-relationships across the region for more than 40 years

7. The Sister City relationship should increase the harmony in Berkeley and be in the best interest of the City; and

WHEREAS, Mayor Victor Hugo Tejada of the municipality of Las Vegas has expressed to the Berkeley City Council his municipality's desire for a Sister City relationship with Berkeley in a regular Council meeting on April 25, 2023.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Berkeley hereby approves the establishment of a Sister City relationship with the Municipality of Las Vegas in the Santa Bárbara department of Honduras.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Berkeley asks the Peace and Justice Commission to coordinate with the SHARE Foundation to create the sister city committee and to look for ways to strengthen solidarity and friendship activities with the city of Las Vegas, Santa Bárbara, Honduras.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Berkeley directs the city clerk to forward a copy of this resolution to Mayor Victor Hugo Tejado of Las Vegas, Santa Bárbara in Honduras; U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken; and to Berkeley's congressional representatives.