



COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

CITY COUNCIL of SALT LAKE CITY

TO: City Council Members

FROM: Austin Kimmel
Public Policy Analyst

DATE: April 8, 2025

RE: INFORMATIONAL: SISTER CITIES ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Item Schedule:

Briefing: April 8, 2025

Public Hearing: N/A

Potential Action: N/A

ISSUE AT-A-GLANCE

The Council will receive an annual report from the Department of Economic Development and the Sister City Board. The report contains an overview of the program's goals and priorities, a look back at its 2024 accomplishments, and updates about each of Salt Lake City's six sister cities.

This annual report highlights last year's visit to Matsumoto, Japan, the first and oldest sister city of Salt Lake City, a relationship that began in 1958. It also highlights a new process for the program to evaluate potential new sister cities and a process to evaluate existing cities.

Goal of the briefing: Review the information the Administration and the Sister City Board provided about Salt Lake City's Sister City program. Formal action is not required for this informational update.

POLICY QUESTIONS

1. The Council may wish to inquire whether the Administration plans to establish relationships with new sister cities and may ask for details about its recent process for evaluating potential Sister City candidates.
2. The Council may wish to ask the department if it requires additional budget or resources to support the program in Fiscal Year 25-26.
3. The Council could ask the department to expand its communications and public engagement efforts to inform the public about the program and opportunities for participation.

ADDITIONAL AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. **Sister Cities Program Background:** Salt Lake City has six active sister city relationships: Matsumoto, Japan; Keelung, Taiwan; Chernivtsi, Ukraine; Torino, Italy; Izhevsk, Russia; and Trujillo, Peru. The primary goal of Salt Lake City's relationships with these cities is to foster peace through mutual respect and



cooperation. The program accomplishes this through activities such as student exchanges, arts and cultural events, partnerships, and, at times, delegation visits.

The Sister Cities Board consists of seven to nine voting members, six non-voting members, and up to two youth members from ages 15 to 18. The board's responsibilities include advising the administration and the Council on the Sister Cities program and its budget, implementing the program's goals, providing annual reports such as this one, and reviewing new requests for Sister City partnerships. In 2023, the Council approved an ordinance to re-establish the Sister Cities Board and oversee the program's operations.

B. **Program Goals:** The annual report provides the following completed goals in 2024, as well as the following goals currently in progress or ongoing. The list below has been copied from page 7 of the Administrative transmittal.

- **Completed goals:**
 - *Filling of board member seats in Districts 2 and 7*
 - *Matsumoto, Japan Delegation visit a success*
 - *Student visit to Salt Lake City from Japan Matsumoto*
 - *Secure more funding- exceeded goal*
 - *Reconnected with Chernivtsi, Ukraine through August Mission (local non-profit)*
 - *City Staff went to San Antonio for Sister Cities International Summit*
 - *Sister Cities application process reviewed and updated*
 - *Involved local Salt Lake artists for gifts exchanged with Sister Cities*
 - *Example: Out of the Blue (The Whale) statue gifted to Matsumoto, Japan.*
- **Goals in progress or ongoing:**
 - *Finding youth representation for advisory board*
 - *Fill board openings in districts 1 and voting member-at-large**
 - *Digitizing of past Sister City documents and images*
 - *Meeting with community members with past knowledge of city relationships*
 - *Annual Planning involving subcommittees*
 - *Organization of previous delegation gifts*

**The original document lists the incorrect board opening but has been corrected to list "voting member-at-large."*

C. **Matsumoto Trip.** A notable achievement in 2024 was City's delegation visit to Matsumoto, Japan. The delegation comprised 22 members from Salt Lake City, including Mayor Mendenhall, Council Member Mano, community leaders, and city staff. The formal visits with Matsumoto spanned about three and a half days. Highlights included gift exchanges, such as a miniature replica of the 9th & 9th whale and tours of local landmarks and businesses.