



Legislation Text

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Staff Report for Discussion of Process By Which City Council Members May Travel to the Sister City of Ponta Delgada, Portugal

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Per a request from the Mayor, staff provides this analysis of the procedural steps that would be necessary for the Mayor or members of the City Council to travel to one of San Leandro's Sister Cities as part of San Leandro's sesquicentennial celebrations in 2022. Staff recommends that the City Council Rules Committee review this information and provide direction to staff.

BACKGROUND

The City of San Leandro has several long-standing Sister City and Friendship City partnerships, including with Ponta Delgada, Portugal. Ponta Delgada is located within the Azores, an island region in the mid-Atlantic. Per the City Council Handbook, Sister City relationships are meant to transcend political or social concerns and lead to ongoing community involvement with the residents of each Sister City. The San Leandro Town Affiliation Committee selected Ponta Delgada as an official Sister City in March 1970. According to available administrative records, cultural exchanges have taken place over the years between the two cities. Examples include:

- In 1989, Mayor Dave Karp and a group of San Leandro residents traveled to Ponta Delgada and the President of the Azores visited San Leandro that same year.
- In May 2000, Mayor Shelia Young, City Councilmember Gordon Galvan and City Attorney Steve Meyers visited Ponta Delgada;
- In August 2001, Mayor Aruda of Ponta Delgada, accompanied by the President of the Ponta Delgada Council, visited San Leandro. A public reception and re-dedication of the Portuguese Immigrant monument at Root Park and other activities were held in their honor; and
- In 2008, Mayor Tony Santos traveled to Ponta Delgada for a 5-day visit during the Great Feast of the Holy Spirit.
- In 2021, Mayor Cutter and Council Member Pete Ballew participated in a live video conference with the Mayor of Ponta Delgada

Analysis

The San Leandro City Council Handbook identifies the steps to be taken when a City Councilmember

initiates a request to visit a Sister City:

- 1) The request should be submitted in writing to the City Council, including the proposed itinerary, how the travel and expenses will be funded, and other assistance that the City will be asked to provide (i.e. gifts to be presented by the Councilmember);
- 2) The Human Relations Committee will make a recommendation to the City council, including a recommended budget for the visit. [Since this committee is no longer in existence, the request is being brought to the Rules Committee as the most analogous successor committee. A corresponding breakdown of anticipated costs is provided later in this report];
- 3) The Mayor will send appropriate correspondence to the Sister City. [This correspondence was sent on September 20, 2021 and staff from the City of Ponta Delgada responded on October 11, 2021 with a letter from Mayor Maria José Lemos Duarte; a copy of the letter is attached to this report]

Fiscal Impacts

Based on research using available online resources as well as information provided on the Ponta Delgada travel website provided by Mayor Duarte's office, staff estimates the costs associated with such a trip could include:

- \$1,500 to \$2,000 for round trip airfare per traveler from San Francisco International Airport (SFO) to Ponta Delgada (João Paulo II Airport) for travel during the summer months of June to August, which is said to be the optimal time to visit the region based on seasonal weather patterns;
- \$75 to \$125 per night for 3-star or 4-star hotel accommodations;
- \$50 per day for meals;
- \$30 per day for local transportation;
- \$50 per day on additional incidentals such as sightseeing and/or event attendance fees.

It is therefore estimated that such a trip could cost in the order of approximately \$2,500 to \$3,000 per traveler for an approximately 4-night, 5-day stay in Ponta Delgada. The adopted current fiscal year budget contains no appropriations directly identified for such a trip. Therefore, any funding for such a trip would need to be appropriated from undesignated general fund reserves. Alternatively, Council Members could potentially draw down funds from their existing \$7,000 annual City Council District transportation and training budgets, though use of such funds in this manner could potentially limit the amount of remaining funds left available for more traditional travel and training activities. Examples of such traditional expenditures include costs associated with attendance at professional development opportunities or conferences hosted by municipal government-related organizations such as the League of California Cities, National League of Cities or the United States Conference of Mayors.

ATTACHMENT(S)

- Letter from Mayor of Ponta Delgada

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