



CITY OF GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM

Report: Consideration of Establishing a Sister City Relationship with the City of Martuni in the Republic of Artsakh

1. Resolution Establishing a Glendale Sister City Program with the City of Martuni in the Republic of Artsakh

COUNCIL ACTION

Item Type: Action

Approved for August 23, 2022 **calendar**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report requests City Council's consideration of establishing the tenth Sister City for the City of Glendale with the City of Martuni in the Republic of Artsakh. Establishing Martuni as a Sister City would provide for a critical exchange of ideas to further Glendale's support of economic stability, cultural preservation, and strong social ties in Artsakh.

COUNCIL PRIORITIES

N/A

RECOMMENDATION

Consider the resolution to establish a Sister City relationship between the City of Glendale and the City of Martuni in the Republic of Artsakh.

BACKGROUND

Sister Cities Program Overview

A community of any size can decide to join with a community in another nation to learn more about one another. Therefore, a sister city, county, province, region, state, territory, town, or village relationship is a broad-based, officially approved, long-term partnership between two municipalities in two countries. A sister city, county, or state relationship is officially recognized after the highest elected or appointed official from both communities sign off on an agreement.

Sister city relationships begin for a variety of reasons. These relationships offer the flexibility to allow connections to form between communities that are mutually beneficial and take on issues that are most relevant for the partners. Generally, sister city partnerships share similar demographics and town size. Partnerships may arise from business connections, travel, similar industries, diaspora communities, or shared history.

Glendale's Sister Cities Program

The goals of the City of Glendale's Sister City Program are to exchange cultural, educational, and professional programs in each city and to share common problems and solutions to daily activities. The program also promotes interest and good will, sharing attractions and ideas about natural resources with one another. These relationships are mutually beneficial to the economic well-being of each city.

The selection of a sister city is based upon several guidelines, including similarities in cultural activities, economics, size, businesses, manufacturing, entertainment venues, and accessibility/transportation. Exhibit 1 of this report provides the objectives and guidelines for Sister Cities that past City Councils have been presented with when considering the establishment of a Sister City.

The City of Glendale has the following nine Sister City relationships around the world:

1. Higashiosaka, Japan
2. Tlaquepaque, Mexico
3. Rosario, Mexico
4. Ghapan, Armenia
5. Goseong, South Korea
6. Gimpo, South Korea
7. Gyumri, Armenia

8. Santiago de los Caballeros, Dominican Republic
9. Boeun-gun, South Korea

At a recent Council meeting, Mayor Kassakhian requested consideration of establishing a Sister City relationship between the Cities of Glendale and Martuni in the Republic of Artsakh. Azatoohi Simonian, Adviser to the President of the Artsakh Republic, has extended this invitation to the City of Glendale to consider entering into a formal Sister City agreement.

ANALYSIS

Martuni is a city in the Republic of Artsakh, approximately 25 miles east of the regional capital, Stepanakert; and 42 miles from Yerevan, the capital of Armenia. According to the Government of the Artsakh Republic's website, the territory consists of 367 square miles. As of July 1, 2016, the Martuni region boasts a population of 24,341. Martuni has an ethnic Armenian-majority population.

Martuni has a large agricultural area, including plant cultivation, cattle breeding, and bee-keeping. The main rivers that run through Martuni are Varanda, Khonasen, and Chalun. Notable structures in Martuni include the Martuni Museum, the Martuni House of Culture (Opera House), the Martuni Municipal Building, and the Church of St. Nerses the Great.

The Martuni region is also home to the Amaras Monastery, an Armenian Monastery founded by Saint Gregory the Illuminator at the start of the fourth century. St. Gregory is the patron saint and evangelizer of Armenia. At the beginning of the fifth century, Mesrop Mashtots, the inventor of the Armenian alphabet, established the first-ever school in Amaras that used his script.

Just recently, the TUMO Center for Creative Technologies, a free educational program for teens, opened a TUMO box in Martuni. A TUMO box is a transportable and fully-equipped mini-TUMO, where students can participate in TUMO's programs. This will allow thousands of teens in Artsakh the ability to access self-learning in tech and design without commuting to the TUMO center in Stepanakert. Providing the TUMO education program in the regions of Artsakh allows teens to receive a modern education in their own communities without having to relocate.

Establishing Martuni as a Sister City would provide for a critical exchange of ideas to further Glendale's support of economic stability, cultural preservation, and strong social ties in Artsakh.

STAKEHOLDERS/OUTREACH

N/A

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (CEQA/NEPA)

The establishment of a Sister City relationship with the City of Martuni in the Republic of Artsakh is exempt from environmental review because it can be seen with certainty that the act of entering into this agreement would not have any effect on the environment, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3).

CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE

This item is exempt from campaign disclosure requirements.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1: Pass the resolution in support of the establishment of a Sister City relationship with Martuni, Artsakh.

Alternative 2: Choose to not enter into this agreement.

Alternative 3: City Council may consider any other alternative not proposed by staff.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

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Approved by:

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EXHIBITS/ATTACHMENTS

Exhibit 1: Sister City Objectives and Guidelines