

From the Desk of

Michael Ross

916.923.2215 – ssorleahcim@comcast.net

Expanding San Mateo's Sister City Program ***From Israel to Mumbai – Expanding our International Footprint***

PROBLEM:

The problems are:

- a) San Mateo is a firm part of Silicon Valley, and as such, is often called the financing part of the valley;
- b) San Mateo does not have enough international diplomatic relations or ties;
- c) There are no statewide guidelines for establishing diplomatic relations through Sister City programs;
- d) There is a shortage of funding available for these programs;

EXAMPLE:

On the Sister City Project website located at www.sister-cities.org/, you can find a list of cities that California cities have partnered with. The list ranges from A to Z (Albania to Zimbabwe). San Mateo is not represented enough.

SOLUTION:

- 1) Establish a citywide program that promotes international ties for both cultural and business purposes
- 2) Create financing mechanisms that will help attract participants to the program.

SUPPORT: possible

- 1) Sister City Projects
- 2) A variety of not for profit organizations around the state and country
- 3) San Mateo business community

OPPOSITION: possible

- 1) Locals who don't like the program, or the city's choice

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT

- 1) This program will support our international friends
- 2) This program will be paid for mostly by private donations
- 3) By supporting our international friends, we will be expanding California's image, economy and influence

ARGUMENTS IN OPPOSITION

- 1) To implement this program will cost money, money that we don't have
- 2) California cannot establish diplomatic relations with other countries, so our city's should not be able to either

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown – estimated

- a) Initial loss based on fees to become part of the program
- b) Overall benefit as diplomatic and economic relations are established

CODE SECTION AFFECTION: As per Legislative Counsel

LANGUAGE ATTACHED: Yes – Language outlined below as follows

- 1) Intent Language –
 - a. It is understood that establishing communications and friendships creates long relationships;
and

- b. Once “friendships” between political entities are established, economic and social relations often follow; and
 - c. California expresses its support for peace loving and democratically elected governments that respects the rights of their citizens; and
 - d. Strong allies equate to security at home in the US and California
- 2) The City of San Mateo hereby establishes the Sister City International Representation Program. The program shall be under the jurisdiction of the Mayor;
- 3) The Budget will earmark \$1,000,000 per year for the program. Half of the money shall be used for cultivating new friends, while the other half will be earmarked for maintaining current friends
- 4) Once the program reaches two overseas friends, or one on each continent, then in partnership with private business and entities,
- 5) The City shall hire staff as needed. With the signing of this document, the City’s Department of _____ shall hire one staff person to oversee the operations of this program, in association with the Mayor’s office.
- 6) The city shall take applications from the community in an effort to determine what countries we should partner with.
- 7) The City of San Mateo should make friends in the following countries:
 - a. Israel
 - b. Saudi Arabia
 - c. Egypt
 - d. Brazil