COUNCIL AGENDA: 04/17/18
ITEM: 2.5

CITY OF SAN JOSE
CAPITAL OF SILICON VALLEY

Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Councilmember Raul Peralez

SUBJECT: CITY COUNCIL TRAVEL REPORT SAN JOSE-OKAYAMA 60th Anniversary

DATE: April 17, 2018

Approved by: Date: 4/17/18

Figure 1: Gakugeikan High School Administration, Brass Band, and Wadaiko Drum Club with Members of San José Okayama Sister Cities Delegation. Okayama, Japan

This year the City of San José and Okayama celebrated 60 years of friendship and understanding through Sister Cities International. This is both Okayama's and San José's oldest partnership and the third oldest within Sister Cities International, yet still one of the strongest.

The United States has engaged in this relationship since after World War II, when in 1956 President Eisenhower proposed a people-to-people, citizen diplomacy initiative. Following the turmoil of World War II these relationships were intended to promote peace and reconciliation by fostering collaboration between different cultures and between former foes, and to stimulate economic development by promoting trade and tourism. Sister Cities International has grown in popularity ever since and became its own nonprofit corporation in 1967, now boasting more than 2,000 cities, states and counties in 136 countries around the world. Many of the first sister cities occurred between the United States and Japan, which made sense considering it had only been just over ten years since the attack on Pearl Harbor and both Hiroshima and Nagasaki were destroyed by the first and only deployment of an Atomic Bomb during wartime.

Throughout the last six decades both Okayama and San José residents and municipal leaders have been proud to foster our relationship. Both cities have had continual and committed community volunteerism and our respective municipal governments have supported the relationship with personnel, time and financial resources. Locally, through the San José Okayama Sister Cities nonprofit, has a full volunteer board and several were able to participate in this trip. I was honored to be part of a San José delegation of 34 individuals, including official delegates of the nonprofit, Team San José, City of San José, the Silicon Valley campus for Okayama University, San José State University, along with several community and family members. Though this was the largest delegation to ever represent San José in Okayama, it pales in comparison to the 115 delegates that Okayama sent to San José last year and the 310 member delegation they sent on a privately chartered 747 for our 50th Anniversary in 2007.

Our trip began with most of the delegation arriving in Okayama on Sunday, April 8th, via the Okayama Train Station. Nearly the entire delegation, though still exhausted from jet lag, met together that evening to help wrap small gift offerings we had each brought from home, including the official city gift, a San José Shark's jersey that Joe Hedges, City of San José Manager of Sister Cites, had especially prepared.

Figure 2: San José Councilmembers (left to right) Arenas, Jimenez, Khamis, Diep, and Peralez presenting the city gift to Mayor Omori of Okayama.

Figure 4: Okayama Fire Department Band Welcome at Okayama City Hall

On Monday, April 9th, we began our visit with a trip to Okayama City Hall for an official meeting and ceremony kicking off the visit. Having been present for a majority of the events we hosted last year, I can say that our reception of the Okayama delegates also pales in comparison to how we were received by them. From the moment we stepped off of the bus on the first day, we were greeted by the Okayama Fire Department Band and a gauntlet of applause from Okayama City employees, we continued to receive the most gracious hospitality and truly heartfelt welcome. That first meeting consisted of welcome remarks from Okayama Mayor Masao Omori, Councilmember Johnny Khamis, Sister Cities International Board Director Tim Quigley, San José Okayama Sister City Board President Kathy Sakamoto

Figure 3: Councilmember Johnny Khamis presenting opening remarks at Okayama City Hall - April 9, 2018

and U.S. Consul General Karen Kelly. Following, we were escorted to the Okayama City Hall Lobby, where a display of pictures of our Sister City relationship was chronicled. We even found a proudly displayed commendation signed by our very own Mayor Sam Liccardo.

Figure 5: San José Councilmembers meeting with Okayama Chamber of Commerce and Industry Chairman Okazaki and Board Members.

Following the welcome at City Hall we continued on to a meeting with the Okayama Chamber of Commerce and Industry. We had welcoming remarks from their President and Chairman Mr. Akita Okazaki and Councilmember Lan Diep, followed up with a formal presentation and discussion with their staff. The entire San José delegation was very engaged in the dialogue and we even had to cut short some of the questions during the discussion period. It was truly educational to learn about how the business environment functions in Okayama and even more interesting to me to learn how invested their Chamber of Commerce is in taking the lead on promoting events and marketing commerce in their city. Two events that stood out are how their Chamber hosts and finances firework celebrations and they have created a "fruit parfait" marketing campaign unique to Okayama, known as the land of fruits.

Next we traveled to the Okayama Convention Center and received a presentation on how important and integral their convention center activities are for generating tax revenue for their city. Their CEO and President Hidesuke Hashimoto and Councilmember Sylvia Arenas provided opening remarks and it was especially ideal to have with us Laura Chmielewski, Team San José's Vice President of Marketing and Communications. Laura was able to engage with meaningful questions and the dialogue helped us all better understand the important role our own Convention Center and Team San José plays for our city. One of the brightest contrasts was to learn that their convention center is about ⅓ the size of ours, in both capacity and capabilities, yet they have nearly double the budget in marketing funded by the City of Okayama.

Figure 6: San José Councilmembers, Kathy Sakamoto President of San José-Okayama Sister Cities, Laura Chmielewski of Team San José and Joe Hedges – San José Office of Economic Development with CEO and President of Okayama Convention Center Hidesuke and Administration Staff.

Figure 8: Mayor Omori and Councilmember Peralez take a photo wearing attire honoring each other's cities and culture.

We capped off the first day with the official 60th Anniversary Welcome Dinner hosted by the City of Okayama. Welcome remarks were provided by Okayama Mayor Masao Omori, U.S. Consul General Karen Kelly, and myself. It was truly an honor on my part to provide the welcome remarks on behalf of our delegation and the City of San José. I felt most proud to be able to deliver a personal thank you to the City of Okayama and their Mayor for the financial contribution of $20,000 they made to us last year to help us restore our Japanese Friendship Garden which had been badly damaged in the 2017 President's Day flood. Traditional cultural dances were performed as is customary in the Japanese culture we were invited to join in and on the dancing. The evening concluded with a very moving speech from Hisako Kunitomi from the Okayama San José Sister City group in Okayama. She happens to be one of the very first participants of the San José State University - Okayama University student exchange program and she has a tremendous love for SJSU and the City of San José. Mrs. Kunitomi could not have delivered a more inspirational speech about the importance of not only our 60-year partnership but for all international relationships.

Figure 9: Councilmembers Khamis and Peralez join in Japanese traditional dancing.

Figure 7: Mrs. Hisako Kunitomi - First participant of SJSU and OU exchange program and Board Member of the Okayama-San José Sister Cities Program.

We began the second day, Tuesday, April 10th, with a visit to Okayama University (OU). We received welcome remarks from Okayama University President Hirofumi Makino and Councilmember Sergio Jimenez. We learned about the long history between OU and SJSU and about their newest initiatives including Okayama's Silicon Valley campus which is successfully moving onto its third year. One of the most rewarding lessons learned was how President Hirofumi Makino has taken the initiative to champion the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and ensure that OU and the City of Okayama are on a path to not only reach the Paris goals but to also achieve sustainability in all areas of the SDG's. As some of my colleagues may remember I led on pushing San José to adopt all 17 SDG's and although all 17 were not approved by the council as a priority, we did manage to receive external support from the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) to fund a

Figure 10: OU President Hirofumi Makino addressing the Sister City Delegation.

Figure 11: Councilmember Peralez and David Cruz - SJSU exchange student studying Political Science at OU.

study through SJSU that measured our city's current progress with all 17 SDG's. The SDSN ended up evaluating major cities all across the United States and last year in August they presented the results with San José being ranked number one. Vice President Daiji Takeuchi, OU's lead for their SDG work, mentioned how proud they were to be compared with the City of San José and how they looked forward to learning more and partnering with us to further each other's progress. Lastly, we were fortunate to have a quick presentation from David Cruz, SJSU's only exchange student at Okayama University this semester. It was apparent that David has been a tremendous representative for SJSU, the City of San José, and all U.S. citizens, and we were all very proud to claim him.

The remainder of the day we were taken on a tour to see three unique highlights in Okayama. We visited the beautiful Okayama Castle and Korakuen Garden where we learned that each of them had to be rebuilt after being destroyed during WWII by American B-52 bombers. We were also provided an opportunity to learn the art of traditional Okayama Bizen Ware pottery and a few of us were even allowed to try on traditional Kimono and Samurai dressings. The local newspaper popped in and even wrote a story the next day featuring members of our delegation in a photo, and although they didn't make the newspaper, the two youngest members of our delegation were by far the stars.

Figure 10: San Jose Delegation at Okayama Castle with volunteer tour guides.

Our third and final day began bright and early with a tour of Okayama's famous Kibitsu Shrine. We learned traditional cleansing, proper prayer offerings and all about the famous Peach Boy story of Okayama. Following, we visited Gakugeikan High School which was hands down the warmest reception we received on the entire trip. Several students from this school were part of the delegation last year and many of them even had an opportunity to perform traditional taiko with our very own San José Taiko group. Students welcomed us with a gauntlet of applause, while waiving the flags of both Japan and the City of San José. We were then treated to a presentation about the school, including its international program that qualifies them as a Super

Figure 11: Welcome of students while walking through the halls of Gakugeikan High School.

Figure 12: San José Councilmembers, Kathy Tsukamoto, Joe Hedges, and Sister Cities International San José Chapter President Tim Quigley.

Global High school by its students participating on the international level of social issues, communication and problem-solving. We were presented a performance from their internationally renowned brass band and Wadaiko Drum Club. The students were genuinely very appreciative to have our delegation visit them and they were by far a highlight of the entire trip for all of us. We concluded with a tour of the school and a presentation and conversation with their Principal.

After a long morning we headed over to Okayama City Hall for an in depth three-hour long conversation directly with city officials. We were provided presentations and offered an opportunity to dialogue about their parliamentary system of government, international affairs, tourism and city promotion, education for sustainable development, and emergency preparedness. Our delegation was so engaged in these conversations that we went over by nearly an hour and were fortunate that Okayama City employees stayed well beyond their expected time commitments. Some of the major takeaways from these conversations were as follows:

- Okayama has 47 Councilmembers, the ratio of their Councilmembers to constituency is at 1:10,000.
- Okayama City invests heavily into promoting inbound tourism and works very closely with their Convention Center and even provides monetary incentives to travel agencies as a cut from their own hotel tax revenues.
- Okayama believed that San José was prioritizing all 17 SDG's due to our recent ranking and they have even taken sustainability so seriously that they have created two official city mascots to represent water (Mizu) and plants (Kojo) for sustainability (seen to the right).

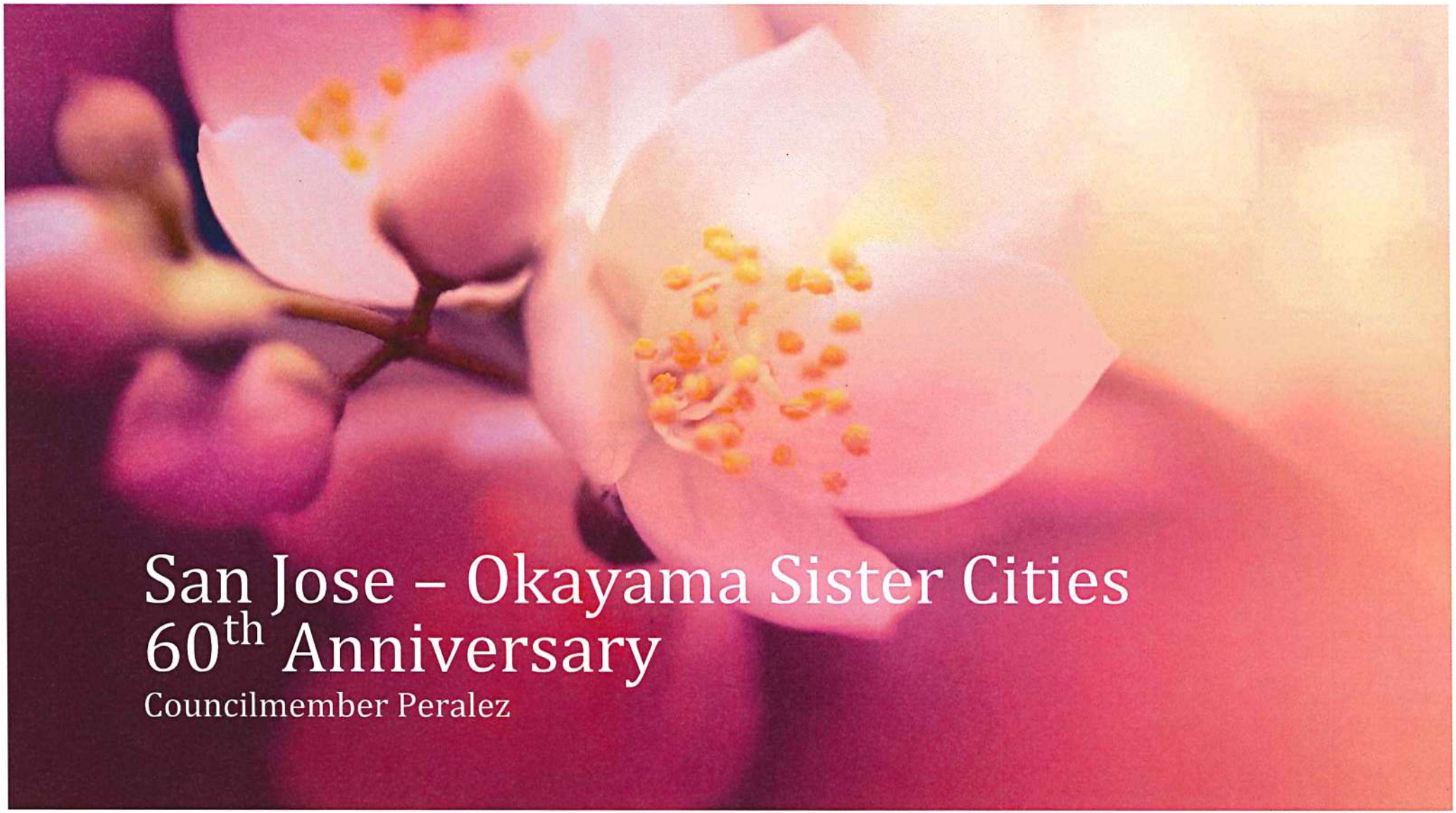
- Okayama is fairly contained from major emergencies but their two highest concerns are similar to ours with earthquakes and floods. They focus heavily on educating their community to be prepared before an energy and how to be self-sufficient during one.

We concluded our last day with a very special dinner hosted by the City of Okayama at the oldest restaurant in Okayama City. Councilmember Sylvia Arenas provided a very touching reflection on the importance of our sisterhood and international diplomacy and on recognizing that although we are from different countries we are ultimately all global citizens and it is important not to be too narrow sighted as we each go about our daily roles in our respective cities. Okayama - San José Sister City Chair Hitashi Matsuda from Okayama provided the closing message stressing the history and their appreciation for our longtime friendship and their sincere gratitude for the visit from our delegation.

I was beyond impressed with not only the hospitality of our hosts and the experiences we shared, but also with the participation and professionalism displayed by everyone from our San José delegation. I felt proud to be part of this delegation and to be together with them representing our City as we continued to build on the important work we set out on 60 years ago.

Figure 13: San José and Okayama Sister Cities delegation together at farewell dinner.

Also: See attached slideshow document in PDF format for presentation on April 17, 2018



San Jose – Okayama Sister Cities 60th Anniversary

Councilmember Peralez

San José – Okayama Sister Cities Background

- Founded by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1956 on Citizen Diplomacy as a "People-to-People" Initiative
  - "If we are going to take advantage of the assumption that all people want peace, then the problem is for people to get together and to leap governments – if necessary to evade governments – to work out not one method but thousands of methods by which people can gradually learn a little bit more of each other."
- Okayama, Japan and San José, CA, USA established a sister city affiliation on May 25, 1957
- Okayama and San José is the 3rd sister city affiliation within the US since the inception of the program and the 1st and longest within the City of San José.
- Last year marked the beginning of the 60 year anniversary and 115 delegates from Okayama visited San José.
  - Okayama delegation donated $20K for restoration of our Japanese Friendship Garden.
  - Okayama Youth Symphony also performed with the Silicon Valley Youth Symphony during this visit.
- The last visit was over 10 years ago during the 50th Anniversary.
- 34 delegation members from San José consisted of 5 Councilmembers and associated staff, Okayama Sister Cities Board members, San José State University – Okayama University exchange Program, San José State University, Team San José, City of San José PRNS and community members.

Day 1 - Welcome at City Hall

Day 1 – Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Day 1 – Okayama Convention Center

Day 1 – City of Okayama Welcome Dinner

Day 2 – Okayama University (OU)

Day 2 – Okayama Castle and Korakuen Gardens

Day 3 – Kibitsu Jinja Shrine

Day 3 – Gakugeikan High School

Day 3 – Okayama Sister Cities Farewell Dinner