



# Memorandum

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR  
AND CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Councilmember Johnny Khamis  
District 10

**SUBJECT:** COUNCIL TRAVEL POLICY: **DATE:** September 7, 2018  
OFFICIAL INTERNATIONAL  
DELEGATIONS

Approved by:

Date:

9/7/18

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve Staff Recommendation with the following modification: Allow travel by Council staff, paid for from the Council Office Budget, with the approval of the Councilmember, when the staff member travel is justified by the fact that the staff member has special skills (e.g. he or she speaks the language of the country to be visited), existing relationships, or possess other specific attributes that are pertinent to the destination or the purpose of the visit. This travel justification should be submitted to the City Clerk and be included in the Clerk's memo regarding the Official or Unofficial Delegation Travel item on the City Council Agenda.

**ANALYSIS:**

I am grateful to the Staff for gathering input from the City Council and putting together sensible modifications to the City Travel Policy for international travel by the Mayor, City Council, City Staff, and Council Staff. I appreciate your efforts in crafting a policy that prevents the City's business from being interrupted as a result of international travel while, at the same time, recognizing that, as one of the ten largest cities in the United States, elected and appointed officials will be invited to visit other leading cities throughout the world to support Sister City relationships, establish new air routes, build economic ties, and learn innovative concepts and methods that will benefit the people of the City of San José. I also recognize the need for us to be as transparent as possible with our travel plans and expenses and to be prudent with the taxpayer dollars with which we are entrusted.

In order to maximize transparency and ensure fiscal responsibility, I recommend that the Staff Recommendation be modified slightly to provide a travel justification requirement for Council staff that would be submitted by the respective Councilmember(s) to the City Clerk for inclusion in the Official or Unofficial Delegation Travel item included on the City Council Agenda before the travel occurs.

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I am sensitive to the concerns my Council colleagues may have with limiting their autonomy over the affairs of their Council offices. For this reason, I note that this process does not override the discretion of individual Councilmembers to allow for staff to accompany them or represent them as part of an international delegation, it simply provides a process for the disclosure of the justification for such travel, when it is to occur. By establishing, as part of the public record, the purpose for including Council staff in City delegations abroad, we shine additional light on the process to maximize transparency and public accountability.