



Memorandum

TO: CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Mayor Sam Liccardo

SUBJECT: COUNCIL TRAVEL POLICY

DATE: September 18, 2018

Approved

Date

9-18-2018

RECOMMENDATION

Accept Staff Recommendation along with the amendments articulated in my April 11, 2018 memorandum, with the following amendments:

- 1) Accept recommendation of Councilmember Jimenez's to require prohibitions of public funding of Mayoral staff on international delegations, similar to that of councilmembers' staff.
- 2) Embrace recommendation of Councilmember Rocha's memorandum to encourage publication of past council travel, cost, and source of funding, as I have done on my office website for the last two years.

BACKGROUND

I thank the Administration for their recommended revisions to the Council Travel Policy. Placing all related delegation travel requests on a single agenda, well in advance of the trip, will better enable the Council to address any situations where multiple absences prevent City Council meetings, Committee meetings or other important City business from taking place. I also support the Staff's recommendation to apply this process to both official international delegations (as originally proposed) and unofficial delegations.

That said, I believe that we should establish a higher standard for international delegation trips by also adopting the recommendations in my April 11 memo, along with the suggestions of Councilmembers Jimenez and Rocha. A closer examination of the longstanding mission of Sister Cities International, as well as the significantly higher expense and commitment of time that accompanies international travel, suggests that the Council should embrace a more limited level of participation in these trips moving forward.

The Mission of Sister Cities International

Sister Cities International's website describes its mission as developing "mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation" through "through person-to-person 'citizen diplomacy.'" The emphasis has always been on the role of individual citizens and supportive communities, and not elected officials. The website further states:

Our mission is as strong as it was decades ago when President Eisenhower first established the People-to-People program. As he said in his legendary speech:

*"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.**"*

We have had several sister-city relationships through the years, but the strongest has been that with Dublin. Several dozen citizens on both sides of the Atlantic have taken it upon themselves to engage in powerful cultural and artistic partnerships, support business investment in Dublin, and to fundraise to support educational exchanges. The leadership of individual American citizens like Ray and Marie O'Flaherty, Johnny Hannigan, Tim Quigley, Sean O'Kane, Kimberly Weed Brady, and many others has been vital to this effort. Their work has promoted the fundamental goals articulated by Sister Cities International, to the benefit of many.

In contrast to the work of these individual citizens, we elected officials largely come and go. Part of this is by design. Dublin's Lord Mayor serves exactly one year—and its replaced by someone else on the Council. The Dublin Council consisted of 63 representatives, and generally take turns on such delegations. With the notable exception of (Lord Mayor and eventual Taoiseach) Bertie Ahern and Tom McEnery, there has been little continuity in relationships among elected officials. This is largely the case in other Sister City relationships as well.

Over time, members of the Council have participated—and enjoyed—trips to Dublin. Several years ago, I paid to attend the same trip with my wife and the City's delegation, and found the experience enriching and fun.

However, the Council's participation—and the participation of Council staff—is neither core to our duties, nor to the mission of Sister Cities International. It is beneficial and enriching to anyone who participates, elected or not.

I continue to support the notion that the City should publicly fund one elected official to attend such delegation trips, to demonstrate our collective support for the Sister City mission and our own local community. The marginal benefit of the presence of elected officials declines, however, with each additional councilmember and their staff. Council would surely welcome the input of the local community in selecting which member of the Council they deem a best fit for their delegation. If the local community feels strongly that there should be more representatives, then they might fundraise, or enlist a sympathetic foundation, to fund the trip for additional councilmembers and their staff.

CITY COUNCIL

September 17, 2018

Subject: Council Travel Policy: Official International Delegations

Page 3

If the local Sister City committee believes it's not a fundraising priority to support the attendance of multiple Councilmembers and their staffs, that will tell us what we should already know from the Sister Cities International website: It's not about us. The power of the relationships comes from the people, not from government officials.