

TO: MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

DATE: 2009 March 18

FROM: MAYOR DEREK R. CORRIGAN

SUBJECT: 2009 TWINNING PROGRAM FOR THE
BRITISH COLUMBIA ASIA PACIFIC INITIATIVE.

PURPOSE: To outline the City of Burnaby's program of initiatives in support of Twinning initiatives with Asia Pacific cities.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** Council endorse the 2009 Twinning Program as outlined in this report.

REPORT

Background

The City of Burnaby was selected in 2008 to receive one time funding of \$50,000 for its local twinning initiatives and to enter into a Memorandum of Agreement with the Province of B.C. in support of twinning or sister city initiatives with Asia-Pacific cities.

Burnaby has a strong tradition and history associated with international sister city or twinning relationships. Burnaby was one of the first communities in Canada to recognize the economic and cultural opportunities of 'twinning' with Asian cities, and has supported a 'sister city' relationship with Kushiro, Japan since 1965. The Province has recognized that Burnaby's existing twinning with Kushiro is rooted in a philosophy of mutual intrinsic benefits that provide an example for pursuing long-term robust Asia-B.C. relationships.

In 2007, at the invitation of the Burnaby Board of Trade, I joined a ten member delegation to visit various cities in China in order to facilitate exchange and establish ongoing relationships. In September, 2007 Burnaby hosted a delegation from the City of Changshu, China and in 2008, we hosted a delegation from Hwaseong, Korea. These activities reflect our desire to build upon the significant economic potential and strengthen our ties with Asia Pacific cities.

The Province of British Columbia has been developing a strategic interest in fostering local government twinning relationships as part of its Asia Pacific Initiative. The Province sponsored a workshop at the 2007 Union of B.C. Municipalities convention to focus attention on the importance of Asia as an emerging market, and British Columbia as the North American gateway. To further demonstrate its commitment to twinning initiatives, the Province of B.C. launched a program to provide information, technical assistance and grant funding to support local government leadership in twinning with Asian cities.

cc: City Manager
Director Finance
Director Planning and Building
Director Engineering
Director Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services

Proposal

Through a planning strategy, accomplished in partnership with the Burnaby Board of Trade, the City has now developed a program of initiatives in 2009 to further develop its twinning relationships. With Council's approval, I will lead a delegation of City Councillors, Board of Education representatives, Board of Trade representatives and City staff to visit cities in Taiwan and China from May 20th – 31st. This working visit will have a busy itinerary to encompass many strategic meetings to finalize both Friendship and Sister-City Agreements as part of this exchange mission.

The proposed itinerary for Burnaby's exchange mission to Taiwan and China is as follows:

- Taipei City, Taiwan (Meet with senior government officials)
- Taichung, Taiwan (Friendship Agreement)
- Hong Kong (Meet Board of Trade delegates)
- Zhuhai, Guangdong Province (Board of Trade Economic Development Agreement)
- Zhongshan, Guangdong Province (Sister City Agreement)
- Jiangmen, Guangdong Province (Meet with government officials)

It is important to point out that the Province of B.C. entered into a "Sister Province" relationship with Guangdong Province in China in 1995 which has proven very successful. Several cities in Metro Vancouver have also chosen to partner with cities in Guangdong Province. Burnaby's proposal to enter into a Sister City relationship with Zhongshan in Guangdong Province dovetails nicely both locally and provincially in terms of promoting cooperation, long-lasting business relationships and mutual benefits to local government.

Future Plan

The City of Burnaby has also initiated a twinning relationship with the City of Hwaseong, Korea. This initiative is still in its planning stages and will be finalized with a sister-city agreement in the autumn of 2009.

Conclusion

The Twinning Program outlined in this report will be supported by the \$50,000 local government grant provided by the Province of B.C. This program will enhance the ability of our City to support the multi-faceted economic and cultural opportunities presented by Asian twinning relationships.

Respectfully submitted,


Derek R. Corrigan
MAYOR