

INFORMATION CALENDAR

October 29, 2019

To: Members of the City Council

From: Mayor Jesse Arreguin and Councilmember Rigel Robinson

Subject: Report from Sister City Delegation to Gongju, Republic of Korea

INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 2017, a delegation which included officials from Gongju, South Korea, and local Korean American leaders met with the Mayor's Office regarding the establishment of Sister City relations. Gongju is located in the central South Korea and is home to the Kongju National University, and has a population of similar size to Berkeley. The Gongju city government was interested in expanding partnerships with UC Berkeley, increasing exposure for students and residents to American culture and establishing stronger ties to American officials.

In October 2017, the previous Mayor of Gongju visited Berkeley to discuss establishing a formal Sister City partnership. On February 27, 2018, the Berkeley City Council approved the establishment of a Sister City with Gongju, Republic of Korea. To formalize the Sister City relationship, the current Mayor of Gongju, Kim Jeong-seob invited the Mayor to visit the City of Gongju to sign the Sister City Agreement and to meet with officials.

Mayor Arreguin, Councilmember Robinson and staff in the Mayor's office visited Korea from September 25th – 29th, 2019, including visiting Gongju to sign the Sister City Agreement, meet with Gongju officials, and participate in the Baekje Cultural Festival.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

\$4,583.93 from the Discretionary Office Budgets of Mayor Arreguin and Councilmember Robinson. These costs covered airfare, food, and transportation. This reimbursement was authorized by Resolution No. 69,094-N.S., "*Approving the Reimbursement of Expenses Relating to travel to Berkeley's Sister City, Gongju, Republic of Korea*". The Resolution permitted up to \$6,136.80 to be reimbursable for travel costs, however due to budgeting the amount spent was approximately 26% under the authorized budget.

BACKGROUND

From September 25th to September 29th, 2019, Mayor Jesse Arreguin and Councilmember Rigel Robinson, Berkeley's first Korean American council member, traveled to South Korea as a goodwill delegation to formally establish the City of

Berkeley's Sister City relationship with the City of Gongju. This report outlines the details of their trip.



Berkeley currently has [17 Sister City relationships](#) throughout the world. The first establishment of a Sister City was in 1967 with Sakai, Japan. The next most recent visit by a delegation from Berkeley to a Sister City was also to Sakai, Japan, in 2017.

Gongju is a historic city in South Korea with a population similar to Berkeley (116,870 in 2013). Gongju, formerly known as Ungjin, was the capital of the Baekje Dynasty from AD 475 - 538, and is home to many national cultural sites, including the Gongsanseong Fortress and the Tomb of King Muryeong, which were designated as UNESCO World Cultural Heritage¹ sites in 2015.

Gongju, South Korea approached Berkeley in 2017 with the request to become a Sister City. The City of Gongju sent two delegations to the City of Berkeley to discuss establishing a Sister City relationship.

¹ <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1477/>

On February 27, 2018, the City Council approved the recommendation of the Peace and Justice Commission to establish a Sister City relationship with the municipality of Gongju, in the South Chungcheong Province of the Republic of Korea.

The City Council established a Sister City relationship with the City of Gongju in recognition of the many traits shared by the two cities, in acknowledgment of the large Korean-American community in Berkeley, and to provide new opportunities to experience Korean culture and share ideas that can mutually benefit our two cities. Given the current political climate surrounding the Korean Peninsula, it is even more important to form a relationship that will promote peace and good will.

The Sister City proposal presented by the City of Gongju called for mutual visits of delegations during festivals, for Gongju during their Baekje Cultural Festival, and for Berkeley during the Kite Festival. In addition, the City of Gongju proposed establishing student exchanges between our two cities.

Recently, Mayor Kim Jeong-seob sent an invitation to visit Gongju where they hosted an event for their Sister Cities to exchange ideas, in conjunction with the 65th Annual Baekje Cultural Festival². This event took place from September 26 to September 28, 2019. This visit officially commemorated and solidified our Sister City relationship with Gongju.

Resolution No. 69,094-N.S. was adopted on September 10, 2019 approving the reimbursement of travel expenses up to \$6,136.80 from the discretionary Council Office Budgets of Mayor Arreguin and Councilmember Robinson for the purpose of visiting Berkeley's Sister City, Gongju, Republic of Korea to officially commemorate the establishment of Sister City relations and to participate in the 65th Annual Baekje Cultural Festival.

The City of Gongju, South Korea, provided all lodging, meals, transportation for the City of Berkeley delegation during their time in Gongju. The Offices of Mayor Arreguin and Councilmember Rigel Robinson paid for airfare, ground travel from the airport to Seoul, as well as meals and lodging in Seoul before departure to Gongju City.

The delegation consisting of Mayor Arreguin, Councilmember Robinson and a staff member who speaks basic Korean, allowed our two cities to deepen our Sister City partnership, share ideas on issues mutually beneficial to our two cities, and provide for cultural learning and exchange.

SISTER CITY AGREEMENT SIGNING CEREMONY

On the evening of September 26, 2019, the official Sister City Agreement Signing Ceremony took place. Mayor Arreguin and Councilmember Robinson visited Gongju

² <http://baekje.org/kor/>

City Hall, where they were met by local elected officials, city staff, Gongju residents, and various press and photographers.

The Mayor of Gongju led the Berkeley delegation through the welcome crowd into City Hall, where he pointed out the decorative kite from the Berkeley Kite Festival that had been gifted to the City of Gongju two years prior.



After viewing a promotional video for the City of Gongju, Mayor Kim Jeong-seob led the ceremony with opening remarks. Mayor Kim spoke at length of the importance of our partnership, and how special it was to be hosting Berkeley in Gongju and to share their history and culture traditions.

Following Mayor Kim Jeong-seob's remarks, Mayor Jesse Arreguin gave his remarks, elaborating on the context for Berkeley's visit to Gongju, his appreciation for Mayor Kim's hospitality, and his eagerness for a long and productive partnership. After the Mayor gave his remarks, Councilmember Robinson spoke, in both English and Korean, about his relationship to Korea and the many similarities between Berkeley and Gongju that he had observed already in their short time in the city. Councilmember Robinson emphasized that both cities host premier public institutions of higher education, are working to build more housing, and have rich cultural heritage.





The Vice Mayor of Gongju then gave remarks, and the ceremony transitioned to the presentation of gifts.

The Sister City Signing Ceremony was covered by Express News³ and KPN News⁴, both Korean publications.

HIGH LEVEL GOVERNMENT MEETINGS

Mayor Arreguin and Councilmember Robinson met with a number of high ranking Gongju City Republic of Korea government officials including but not limited to: Mayor

Kim Jeong-seob; Vice Mayor Son Kwon-bae; Chairman Park Byeong-su; Councillor Park Ki-young; Director of Safety and Industry Park Seung-gu; Director General of Culture, Tourism and Welfare Sim Kyoo-duk, and Team Leader of H.R. Yang Hui-jin. They toured Gongju City Hall where the Sister City Signing Ceremony was held, the Agricultural Technology Center, and the GOMA Center.

They had dinner and intimate conversation with the Mayor and his cabinet on the first evening of arrival and with the Vice Mayor and a few select government leaders on the second evening. During these meals, the Mayors, the Councilmember, and the Gongju City staff were able to discuss wide ranging topics including: exchanges between their respective universities, sustainability, infrastructure and transportation policy, housing, and the local impact of recent national political events in Korea.

Throughout various site visits and tours, the delegation, accompanied by city staff, regularly discussed elements of local government that were similar to or differed from each other. In particular, the regularity and seamlessness of public transportation was a subject of frequent discussion. Gongju has a new Bus Rapid Transit system that is being launched, as well as a publicly-owned and free-to-operate bikeshare system. Additionally, the delegation discussed at length the approach to housing density in Gongju. Housing development is focused in a few extremely dense clusters, rather than spread across the city. Furthermore, the delegation consistently noticed new and creative ways to make public spaces more accessible. Much like the tactile paving on curb cuts found in the United States, textured tiles make entire pathways clear to the visually impaired across the campus of Kongju National University and through much of the city.

³ <http://www.expressnews.co.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=111810>

⁴ http://www.kpnnews.org/bbs/board.php?bo_table=local&wr_id=507499&city=lc_12&gugun=lc_12_02

CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

Mayor Arreguin and Councilmember Robinson were able to experience the Congratulatory Performance that was designed to celebrate Gongju City's accomplishment being listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, including a 1,500 person choir to mirror the 1,500 years of the Baekje Kingdom; historical stories depicting the Kingdom's successes; a traditional drum performance; and traditional dance performances. Before the Congratulatory Performance, the Berkeley delegation attended a dinner during which Mayor Arreguin gave remarks to Gongju officials as well as delegations attending the Baekje Cultural Festival from the Philippines and Mexico.

The Mayor and Councilmember Robinson toured the Gongju National Museum and Songsalli Ancient Tomb which is also the Tomb of King Muryeong who ruled the Kingdom of Baekje from 501 to 523. The Tomb was untouched when it was discovered in 1971 allowing archeologists a chance to view the burials exactly as they had been placed 1,448 years ago. The artifacts that were uncovered included the royal diadem of the King and Queen, replicas of which make up the formal gift that Gongju City and Mayor Kim Jeong-seob gave to the Mayor during the Sister City Signing Ceremony.

The Mayor and Councilmember Robinson visited the Magoksa Temple, the head temple of the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism⁵. They toured the grounds learning about the daily routine of the monks who live on-site year round, bearing witness to the wooden gods who protect the path from the living world to the spirit world, and enjoyed learning about the creation of roofs on the temples.

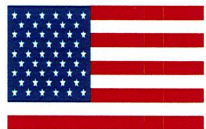
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

There are no identifiable environmental effects.

CONTACT PERSON

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Councilmember Rigel Robinson Council District 7	510-981-7170

⁵ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magoksa>



Agreement on Sister City Relationship
Between Gongju City, Republic of Korea and
City of Berkeley, the United States of America



Gongju City of the Republic of Korea and City of Berkeley of the United States of America have agreed as follows to enter the friendship city relationship in order to respect and understand each other's cultural traditions and to make good friendship with each other based on the principles of mutual benefits and equality.

1. Both cities will establish a close friendly relationship based on mutual respect and benefits to promote cooperation between the two cities.
2. Both cities shall respect each other's cultural traditions and support exchange activities of (including but not limited to) administrative, economic, cultural, artistic, and educational natures.
3. Both cities shall fully commit to creating a supportive environment in order to ease the process of mutual exchanges in various areas and forms, such as knowledge exchange, for the mutual benefit and development of the involved parties.
4. Both cities will encourage the relevant departments or organizations to promote mutual cooperation in the mutually agreed areas.

This agreement shall come into effect upon being signed by the mayors of Gongju City, Republic of Korea and Berkeley City, United States of America, being translated into Korean and English, then being exchanged between the two cities.

September 26, 2019



**City of Berkeley,
United States of America**

Mayor Jesse Arreguin



**Gongju City,
Republic of Korea**

Mayor Kim Jeong-seob



대한민국 공주시와 미합중국 버클리시와의

자매결연 협약서



대한민국 공주시와 미합중국 버클리시는 호혜평등의 원칙에 의해 서로의 문화 전통을 존중하고 이해하며 서로 좋은 자매로서 우호관계를 맺기 위하여 자매결연을 체결하고 다음과 같이 합의 하였다.

1. 양 도시의 협력 증진을 위하여 상호 존중과 이익을 바탕으로 긴밀한 우호관계를 확립한다.
2. 양 도시는 문화 전통을 존중하며 행정, 경제, 문화예술, 교육 등 상호 공동 관심분야의 교류활동을 지원한다.
3. 양 도시는 공동이익과 발전을 위하여 지식정보 교환 등 다방면에서 다양한 형태의 교류와 협력을 전개하여 공동 번영과 발전을 촉진하기 위한 우호적인 환경을 조성한다.
4. 양 도시는 관련 부서나 조직으로 하여금 필요시 구체적인 상호협력 분야에 대한 업무를 추진하도록 한다.

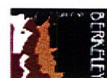
본 협약서는 대한민국 공주시와 미합중국 버클리시의 시장이 서명하며 한글과 영문 각 1부씩 작성 협정서를 교환함으로써 효력을 발생한다.

2019년 9월 26일



대한민국 공주시

시장 김 정 섭



미합중국 버클리시

시장 Jesse Arreguin