
CITY OF KELOWNA

MEMORANDUM

Date: October 28, 2008
File No.: 0450-30
To: City Manager
From: City Clerk
Subject: Sister City Report

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT *Going Global A Review of Kelowna's International Municipal Partnership Opportunities* as attached to the October 28, 2008 Report of the City Clerk be received for information;

AND THAT further discussion regarding the recommendations in the Sister City review be forwarded to the 2009 Budget deliberations.

BACKGROUND:

Council directed staff to engage a consultant to examine the City's existing sister-city relationships, the potential for expanding or enhancing these existing relationships and any options for other types of relationships. The final report, *Going Global A Review of Kelowna's International Municipal Partnership Opportunities* is attached for Council's consideration.

In addition to speaking with City staff, the consultants contacted representatives of the Kasugai and Veendam Sister City Associations, the Kelowna Zambia Partnership, UBC-O, Okanagan College, the Economic Development Commission and the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce.

The consultants made a series of recommendations for enhancing Kelowna' Sister-City relationships. It is not known if Veendam, Kasugai or Zambia are interested in pursuing a "Neo-Hanseatic Partnership" – should Council direct staff to pursue the recommendations in the report, further dialogue with our existing Sister Cities and their respective Associations would be required.

Council had directed the City Clerk's Office to conduct the review, however due to the corporate re-organization sister cities will probably fall under the responsibility of the newly created Strategic Initiatives and Intergovernmental Partnerships department.

It is recommended any increase in sister-city funding be deliberated as part of the 2009 Budget considerations.

INTERNAL CIRCULATION TO:

Director of Financial Services

FINANCIAL/BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS:



The consultant's report recommends an annual increase in sister city funding to \$15,000. The \$5,000 funding listed for 2008 includes \$2,500 budget amount and an additional \$2,500 from Council contingency.

Considerations that were not applicable to this report

EXISTING POLICY:

LEGAL/STATUTORY AUTHORITY:

LEGAL/STATUTORY PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS:

FINANCIAL/BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS:

PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS:

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS:

EXTERNAL AGENCY/PUBLIC COMMENTS:

COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS:

ALTERNATE RECOMMENDATION:

Submitted by:


Stephen Fleming, City Clerk

Approved for Inclusion:

[John Vos, Interim Director of Corporate Services]

cc: Director of Strategic Initiatives and Intergovernmental Partnerships

Final Report

Going Global

**A Review of Kelowna's International
Municipal Partnership Opportunities**

7 October, 2008

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1 Introduction

Municipal twinning is an ancient practice dating back to 9th Century Europe and the sister city relationship of Paderborn, Germany with LeMans, France. Modern twinning efforts expanded greatly during the reconstruction efforts following the Second World War, and as an ongoing effort at citizen diplomacy during the Cold War. The relationships created over the years have taken a wide variety of forms and aspects, and a growing body of “best practices” is now emerging to guide communities as they assess and consider their options for productive economic, social, cultural and recreational partnerships with sister communities around the world.

The City of Kelowna has a number of existing sister city relationships with communities including Senanga in the Western Province of Zambia, Veendam in the Dutch province of Groningen, and Kasugai in the Aichi District of Japan. In recent years, the community has also been approached to consider a range of new twinning relationships, especially with cities in China. These opportunities occur within a context of potential support from a range of structures, including the Federation of Canadian Municipalities’ International Centre for Municipal Development, the BC-based Local Government Management Association’s Africa Project, and a range of provincial government efforts to increase economic linkages with communities in the Asia-Pacific region.

As it considers a range of options for municipal partnerships, sister city relationships and community twinning, the City of Kelowna retained the consulting firm of Millier Dickinson Blais for expert external advice and assistance to assess, understand and prioritize the best avenues for moving forward. Of particular interest in these efforts was a cost-benefit analysis of partnership options, including consideration of:

- Kelowna’s existing sister city relationships
- Kelowna’s potential for expanding or enhancing these existing relationships
- Kelowna’s options for other types of relationships, both through participation in formal programs and through independent activities

Millier Dickinson Blais is a national economic development and municipal strategic planning firm with extensive international experience, including direct, first-hand experience in the creation and management of innovative international community-to-community partnerships.

2 Kelowna's Existing International Relationships

To better understand Kelowna's existing international relationships, the project team spoke with representatives of a range of local agencies, organizations and institutions. Among those interviewed as part of the project's research process were the following individuals:

- Art Brown, President of the Kelowna-Veendam Sister City Association
- Ewa Ciuk, Program Coordinator, International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives
- Robert Fine, Executive Director, Invest Kelowna
- Allison Flack, Past Clerk, City of Kelowna
- Stephen Fleming, Clerk, City of Kelowna
- Greg Goodwin, Director, BC Asia Twinning Initiative
- Isabelle Hadford, Director-at-Large, Local Government Management Association
- Cathy Jennens, member of the Kelowna-Kasugai Sister City Association
- Weldon LeBlanc, Executive Director of the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce
- Christine Turner, Information Officer, Federation of Canadian Municipalities

Representatives of the Kelowna-Zambia Partnership were contacted by the research team for their input, but did not return phone calls in time for their feedback to be included in this report.

2.1 Veendam, the Netherlands

The British Columbia Dragoons, an armoured reconnaissance reserve regiment based in the Kelowna area, were among the first Allied troops to reach the community of Veendam in the Dutch province of Groningen during the Second World War. The Dragoons eventually liberated the town, and following the war a squadron of the Dragoons were billeted in the community. These military officers helped the community rebuild and worked with them to reconstruct the administrative capacity of the municipality. Although the troops soon returned to Canada, as early as 1950 Veendam asked several of the Dragoon veterans to return to the town for the fifth anniversary celebration of VE Day. From 1950 through to 1980 many veterans returned to Veendam to join commemorative celebrations.



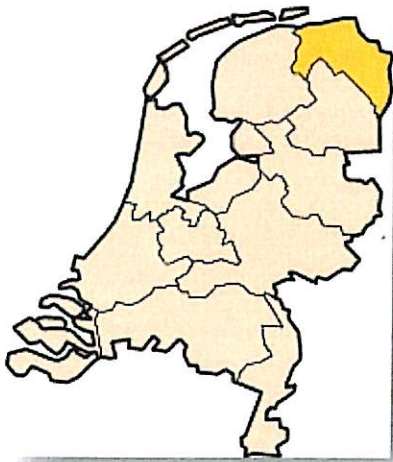
In 1980, the Mayor of Kelowna hosted the Mayor and Town Council of Veendam in a visit to Kelowna, and suggested that a sister city association be formed. Since the formation of this association, two Canadian veterans have been invited back to Veendam each year to celebrate VE Day. This trip is paid at the expense of the Veendam town council.

Veendam today is a town of about 28,000 people. Sometimes referred to as the "Park City", it is a typical Dutch community of canals and gardens with ample green space and a strong commitment to environmental concerns.

In 2005-2006 the sister city association decided that it would be beneficial to beautify the local Canadian cenotaph in Veendam. This process involved rebuilding the cenotaph and the local park that surrounds it. The sister city organization, along with many supporters, raised

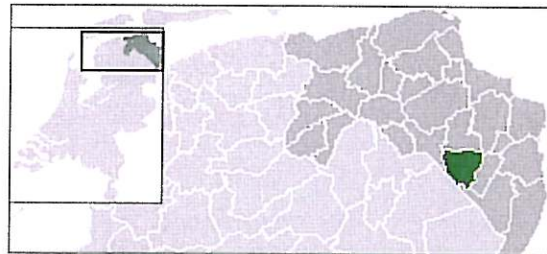
\$575,000 for this improvement initiative. The materials from the original cenotaph were moved to a local museum.

Another ongoing facet of the relationship is a high school student exchange. Each year, the two cities exchange two high school students for a year. The goal of this program is to promote the historical and cultural linkages between the two communities and to provide unique educational opportunities for local youth. Unfortunately, over the past few years the association has been unable to afford to send two students, and has instead sent only one.



The Current Relationship

The current leadership of the sister city association sees the relationship as a primarily cultural and historical opportunity, and has been resistant to economic or business considerations. When Kelowna representatives were asked by Veendam municipal leaders about the possibility of exporting Kelowna wines to Veendam, the head of the Dutch sister city association argued that the group is not a trade organization, only a cultural organization (it should be noted that Art Brown of the Kelowna group came back to Canada and passed the information reading the interest in local wine along to Kelowna's wine museum, which stated that the Veendam market by itself is too small to pursue any further trade possibilities).



The Kelowna association now meets on a quarterly basis to discuss the relationship, and plan activities both in Kelowna and abroad. Representatives of the Veendam Town Council and Mayor returned to Kelowna in July of 2008, where they were taken on a formal tour of the City of Kelowna. Sister City Association representatives noted that the 2007 trip taken by Kelowna officials to Veendam and the 2008 trip by the Veendam officials to Kelowna were undertaken not only for cultural purposes, but also to allow municipal representatives to examine each community's infrastructure.

The Future of the Relationship

Kelowna participants have noted that the relationship must change if it is to have a future; the members of both associations (drawn as they are from veterans' groups) are aging, and garnering funding for the association is becoming more difficult. Discussions were held in early July with both the Kasugai and Zambia sister city associations to discuss the possibility of working together for future fundraising opportunities. Art Brown of the Veendam association has stated that he is attempting to get approval from his board to meet and form a larger

organization with the other sister city groups. He would like to see these groups co-ordinate their efforts to improve sister city opportunities and to increase the economic viability of all of the associations.

Recently, the City of Kelowna has asked the Kelowna-Veendam sister city association to consider the possibility of building a Dutch Windmill in one of the City's parks. Some members have been resistant to the idea of putting a windmill in the same park as the cenotaph (which has been suggested by some Kelowna officials), and are currently exploring other viable locations for the windmill.

Veendam is also twinned with Gniezno, Poland.

2.2 Kasugai, Japan

Kasugai is a City of 300,000 people in the Aichi Prefecture of Japan, near the City of Nagoya. Founded in 1943, the City is twinned with both Kelowna and Auburn, Washington.

The Kelowna-Kasugai Sister City Association is a long-standing group that has sought to foster beneficial relationships between the two communities. This is a very active relationship that is designed to "enhance the relationship between Kelowna and Kasugai in areas of culture, education, sports, government, commerce and the environment."

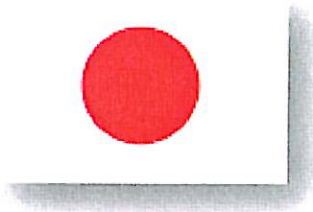
History of the Kasugai-Kelowna Sister City Relationship

The sister city relationship between Kelowna and Kasugai was created in 1981, initially as a cultural exchange between the two communities. On a two-to-three year basis, each community sends a group of representatives to visit the other community. These exchanges provide each delegation with the opportunity to stay in the homes of local residents and learn of the culture of the host members of the sister city association. The invitees are expected to pay their own airfare, but all other expenses (food, transportation, entertainment) are covered by the host community. A trip is currently planned for a Kelowna delegation

to travel to Kasugai in 2009.

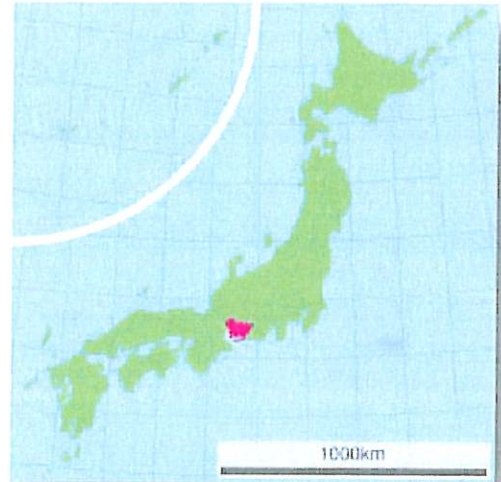
The Current Relationship

Today, the two sister cities enjoy a strong relationship, which has been built over the past 27 years. No longer is the association just a cultural exchange; the relationship has been expanded to create additional opportunities for civic engagement, environmental co-operation, educational exchanges, sports exchanges and commerce/trade exchanges. Cathy Jennens, a current member of the sister city association, noted there are currently about 30 active members of the group in Kelowna, but that this membership rises and falls as new events and exchanges occur. She also noted that the Kelowna-Kasugai sister city association acts a facilitator for the wide-ranging facets of the current relationship. Following is a description of some of the current activities occurring between the two communities.



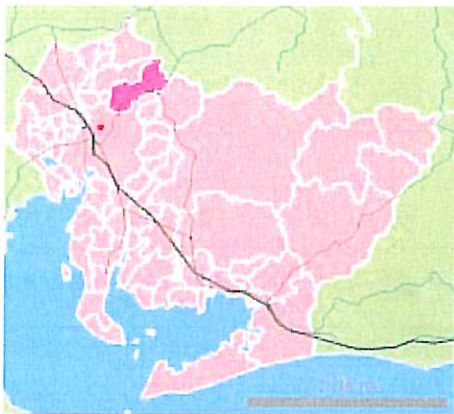
Education

In Kasugai there are 15 middle schools which are involved in an educational exchange with Kelowna. Every second year, students are asked to compete in an essay competition where the winners are sent on a youth delegation to Kelowna. The program provides the opportunity for eight students to travel in one year, and then seven the next, for a five-day period. This program has been in place for the past twenty years. Further, there are four sister high schools in Kasugai that complete exchanges each year (the Kelowna sister association is only a facilitator and not the administrator of this program).



Sports

There is a possibility of creating an exchange for the sport of Kendo. The current mayor of Kasugai is a teacher in Kendo and one of the current members of the Kelowna association is a Kendo leader. Discussions are underway concerning possible partnerships to provide training possibilities and exchanges. Historically, the two communities have participated in soccer exchanges, with Kelowna sending teams to Kasugai to compete in local tournaments.



Cultural

The Taiko Drummers are an offshoot of the sister city association. They were founded in 2003 with the help of one of the educational exchange students. This drumming group now performs regularly at cultural functions in Kelowna. The local Girl Guides and Boy Scouts have also participated in several cultural exchanges between the two communities. Additionally, there is an active quilt exchange group. The Kelowna sister city group regularly hosts a "Taste of Japan" evening as a fundraising opportunity for the organization.

Government/Civic

The City of Kelowna chose to build a Japanese garden behind City Hall. A local farmer and the City endeavoured to complete this project, while Kasugai provided staff assistance. A Kasugai city gardener was brought to Kelowna to teach the local gardeners how to create and maintain the garden. During the cultural exchange tours, government officials have also been investigating strategies to increase local governance efficiency and practice by examining the

infrastructure and administration of the host sister city. To date, this has involved touring and studying infrastructure improvements and waste reduction and recycling efforts.

Environment

The two cities signed an agreement on environmental protection in 2001. Currently, the associations are in the planning stages of how to further develop the relationship with regards to environmental projects and subject matter.

Commerce

Quail's Gate winery, a local Kelowna business, has been actively selling – and attempting to increase their market share of – icewines into Japan. This relationship has been fostered through the sister city association. The owner of Quail's Gate winery is encouraging the sister city association and the City's administration to complete a Kelowna trade mission to Kasugai.

The Future of the Relationship

The Kasugai government has been very supportive of this sister city relationship. They have a dedicated staff member that organizes and administers many of the exchanges. Alternatively, in Kelowna the sister city association is run by a group of volunteers, who must regularly fundraise to ensure that the group will have enough money to continue supporting the range of partnership programs in place.

In considering the future of the relationship, volunteer group members in Kelowna note that the cultural and education exchanges should continue to be strengthened and grown. They have also expressed some interest indicated in working with the other sister city associations (Veendam and Senanga) in the future to co-ordinate fundraising for the groups, and have suggested the possibility of organizing a "sister city cultural evening" in Kelowna.

2.3 Senanga, Zambia

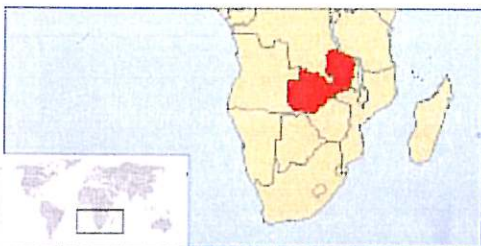
Senanga is a Zambezi River community of approximately 100,000 people located in the Western Province of Zambia. It became Kelowna's newest sister city in February of 2008,



following a concerted campaign led by the Kelowna-Zambia Partnership (KaZ), a local organization established in May of 2007. The partnership is anchored by two non-governmental organizations – the Victoria International Development Education Association (VIDEA) in British Columbia, and Women for Change in Zambia.

Senanga's local economy is largely based on subsistence agriculture and fishing, limited tourism and some light manufacturing focused largely on traditional textiles and handicrafts.

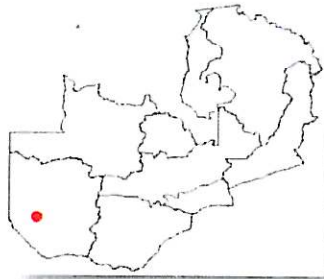
The purpose of the KaZ is to promote international cooperation for the development of safe, sustainable communities that enhance the well-being of individuals, families and groups. Through joint initiatives and partnerships, KaZ



seeks to nurture economic development, environmental sustainability and healthy communities.

The relationship between Kelowna and Senanga is young, and has yet to fully develop. However, participants in the initiative have prioritized three kinds of specific relationships between the communities. The first of these is “bottom-up” activities, which are seen to include community and economic development projects and goals. The second area of activity is “top-down” initiatives, which include efforts to engage in policy development, adoption of best practices in local governance, municipal administration and issue-oriented advocacy. Finally, the relationship promotes “sideways” interactions between the communities, focused on activities such as training and the exchange of ideas.

KaZ is seen as a small initial steps projects by 2010. themselves with Development agreed set of 8 the United Nations activities such as improved



enhanced access to

adopted the motto “Our people working together for the best possible future.” KaZ’s efforts are financed in part through local fundraising efforts and in part through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

long-term partnership, with present leading to full-scale relationships and The project proponents have allied the United Nations Millennium Goals. These are an internationally-goals and 21 targets established by in September of 2000, focused on the eradication of extreme poverty, environmental sustainability and education. On this basis, KaZ has

Independently, members of the Kelowna Vineyard Church have also established connections to Zambia, linked in part through a faith-based development initiative known as Seeds of Hope.

2.4 Other Communities

Although the City of Kelowna has no other formal international linkages, the community has been approached by a number of potential international partners in recent years. In particular, communities from China have repeatedly requested more formal relationships with Kelowna.

In February of 2008, the Beijing neighbourhood of Chongwen, which includes Tiananmen Square, expressed an interest in partnering with Kelowna. Their overture was relayed by participants in the Kelowna-Beijing program of Canada World Youth, a development-oriented non-governmental youth organization. Beijing is currently twinned with 37 other communities worldwide, including Ottawa.

Also in February of 2008 Ida Chong, the provincial Minister of Community Services, contacted the Mayor and Council of Kelowna regarding the interest of numerous Chinese communities in identifying sister cities in British Columbia. These Chinese communities included:

- Shunde, a neighbourhood of the City of Foshan and birthplace of martial arts film legend Bruce Lee
- Kaiping, a Guangdong region city currently twinned with Mesa, Arizona

- Zhongshan, an economically successful city with a strong agricultural sector, and
- Shenzhen, a city neighbouring Hong Kong with 17 existing sister cities, though none in Canada

In March of 2008, officials from Okanagan College relayed a request from Nantong, a city in Jiangsu province. Nantong's Foreign Affairs Office formally contacted the Mayor's office via letter to propose a sister city relationship. The City of Nantong presently has two other sister cities: Gimje, South Korea and Swansea, Wales.

For some time, a Chinese national named Shifeng (Christopher) Yao has been suggesting a partnership between Kelowna and "Shangri", which, lacking other evidence or indications, the project team theorizes is Shangri-La County in Yunnan province. Yao is a former student at OUC, and has been in touch with the Mayor's office and local residents on a number of occasions, most recently in April of 2008.

A past president of the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce has also been promoting possible sister city links to China, with the specific suggestion of Cixi City as a partner. Cixi is a community in Zhejiang, an eastern coastal province south of Shanghai. Functionally, Cixi is a neighbourhood of the port city of Ningbo, which has partnership relationships with some 22 communities worldwide, including Surrey, BC.

The high level of interest expressed by Chinese cities reflects a concerted effort by the Chinese government and many Chinese cities to strengthen and enhance their international connections and linkages. In part, this effort represents an attempt to increase the international profile and prestige of Chinese cities, but in part it also represents a genuine desire to pursue innovative economic and cultural exchange. In general, Chinese municipal structures (which function very differently from their Canadian counterparts, with wider ranging powers and larger relative budgets) have prioritized investments into sister city relationships. This has created an uneven playing field in which Chinese cities have significantly more resources to devote to international municipal cooperation, including large, dedicated staffing structures such as "international" or "foreign affairs" offices. While municipalities throughout much of Asia and Europe devote significant resources to sister city relationships, the Chinese have raised this practice to a fine art.

Other Kelowna discussions, however, have prompted consideration of potential partners outside of China. Surveys carried out by the Invest Kelowna Economic Development Commission have suggested minimal interest from the business community in stronger relationships with China, but growing interest in other Asian partners. In particular, South Korea appears to be of interest, and Invest Kelowna Executive Director Robert Fine has discussed the Korean option with the Mayor as recently as May of 2008. Australia has also been mentioned by members of the business community as a potential location for Asia-Pacific business and municipal partnerships.

3 Review of Potential Support Structures & Programs

3.1 FCM International Centre for Municipal Development

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) is an organization working to improve the quality of life of all Canadian communities by promoting strong, effective and accountable municipal government. FCM and CIDA have been working together to achieve the same objective in developing countries (the so-called "Third World") through a structure known as the International Centre for Municipal Development (ICMD). The ICMD designs and implements municipally-focused programs which harness the knowledge and expertise of Canadian cities and communities for use in developing nations. Through collaborative relationships, participating municipalities find opportunities to discover new ways of approaching problems within their own jurisdictions while strengthening the awareness of development issues and challenges.

FCM's international program spans four continents and includes more than 140 municipal government partners and 40 local, national and regional associations of municipal government. Its members also play an important leadership role, advocating for the rights of municipal government through global institutions such as United Cities and Local Government and the Commonwealth Local Government Forum. ICMD gathers, develops and disseminates knowledge and experience from both domestic and international sources that are available to municipalities through manuals, tool kits, models, websites, best practices and case studies. Since Kelowna is already a member of FCM, the city would benefit from reviewing these resources on a frequent basis to identify potential models and best practices that may enhance their existing twinning relationships.

For many years, FCM has worked in conjunction with the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) to deliver its development programs in Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean. These affiliations present opportunities for gaining further insight and expertise around international relationships in different continents and may represent potential funding sources.

FCM also works directly with a range of international structures providing support to municipalities, many with support services that could be integrated into municipal twinning or sister city programs. Some FCM international partners that Kelowna could leverage in its twinning program include:

- The World Bank Cities Alliance, which is a global alliance of cities and their development partners that is committed to improving the living conditions of the urban poor by working with cities to upgrade slums and create development strategies. Canada and other donor countries contribute funds to and participate in the World Bank Cities Alliance Consultative Group. FCM participates in the Consultative Group as an advisor to the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), which is a member. This combined presence provides a strong Canadian voice in the discussions and enables FCM to seek practical ways to co-operate with Cities Alliance work in the field.

- The Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF), which is an organization whose objectives are aimed at deepening local democracy, promoting and strengthening effective local government, and encouraging the exchange of good practice policies in local government structures and services in all Commonwealth countries. In this context, it should be noted that both Canada and Zambia are Commonwealth countries.

3.1.1 FCM Case Study: NALAG, FCM and VNG

FCM supports three municipal partnerships between Canadian municipalities and their counterparts in Ghana in West Africa, as well as maintaining its longstanding cooperation with Ghana's national association of municipalities, NALAG¹. The main challenges to local government in Ghana revolve around the areas of:

- fiscal management
- revenue mobilization
- public service delivery
- community social needs

FCM's Municipal Partnership Program (MPP) aims to develop a solid program that will enhance administrative and fiscal decentralization, revenue mobilization, and ensure good governance and efficient service delivery in the partner municipalities.

MPP provides the framework for both FCM and FCM members to work directly with NALAG to assist the association in building its capacity to be more proactive when developing policy and advocacy platforms and increasing performance in relation to service delivery in Ghana. At the local level, partnerships between municipalities often focus on local economic development, municipal taxation and revenue generation, as well as public health service delivery. These are focus areas that have been identified by the participating local governments.

FCM also co-operates with its Dutch counterpart VNG and other northern (i.e. "developed world") local government associations to coordinate an exchange of information and technical support to NALAG and its members. FCM's Municipal Partnership Program (MPP) has been active in Africa from the beginning of the Federation's international programming activities in 1988. During the current funding agreement (2007-2010), the program in Africa will operate in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Mozambique and Tanzania.

3.2 Local Government Management Association Africa Project

The Local Government Management Association (LGMA) of British Columbia is a professional organization representing municipal and regional district managers and other local government officials in the Province of British Columbia. The association promotes professional management and leadership excellence in local government and raises awareness about local government officials' roles in the community. Through its Africa Project, the organization provides a networking base for government professionals who have expressed interest in

¹ The National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana, NALAG is the umbrella organization of all Local Government Authorities in Ghana. These Local Authorities include all 110 Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies in Ghana.

information sharing and technology transfer opportunities with their counterparts in Africa. At the same time, the LGMA TeamWorks program works as a point of exchange and information-sharing for specialized services for municipal projects such as land use planning. TeamWorks provides expertise in a wide variety of local government fields such as strategic services, information technology, financial management and land use planning. TeamWorks could potentially be used as a mechanism for sharing information to supplement field visits in twinning or sister city relationships, where the focus of the relationship takes on a dimension related to improving or enhancing municipal service delivery.

Recently, LGMA has also taken up a challenge issued by Canada's former ambassador to the United Nations, Stephen Lewis, to form a collaborative partnership that would see local government professionals from British Columbia travelling to African nations to provide assistance and training in the delivery of municipal services. Planning has been underway since 2006 and volunteers are currently being sought to help structure a program. Underlying the project is the concept that municipal officials and communities in British Columbia are well-placed to support local capacity development in Africa. They have the professional expertise, experience and qualifications to assist officials in African cities and villages with on-the-ground technical assistance, training and ongoing support in relation to a wide range of local authority issues, from water quality to financial management to land use planning. As this initiative opens the door for international volunteer projects that benefit developing communities in Africa, this is an excellent professional development opportunity for Kelowna, particularly with respect to Senanga, its Zambian sister city.

The model being proposed for the project would see LGMA members employed as hands-on instructors and coaches for African officials who are often attempting to provide local government services with very scarce resources. For many of them who are replacing those who have died of AIDS/HIV, they have had no previous formal training or experience in municipal governance. This approach closely models the existing Teamworks Program offered by LGMA in British Columbia, where experts with specialized skills provide volunteer training, coaching and mentoring for colleagues in smaller towns and villages at no charge.

As an Association, LGMA will serve as the intermediary between local authorities in Africa seeking help and BC-based members who are willing to volunteer. The LGMA plans to facilitate the volunteer assignments and cover travel and accommodation costs, which would be funded through a charitable foundation that is currently being established. Through their partnership with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, LGMA will also act to facilitate arrangements (where required) at the national level.

3.3 Province of British Columbia Asia Twinning Initiative

The BC Asia Twinning Initiative signals the Province's recognition of the large and growing economic importance of the Asia-Pacific region, which is home to some of the world's largest and most dynamic national economies. The four priority countries under the Initiative are China, Japan, India and South Korea.

The BC Asia Twinning Tool Kit was developed specifically for local governments as a practical “how-to” guide to establishing new international twinning arrangements with Asian partners, or to enhancing existing relationships. The Tool Kit also profiles the twinning experiences of ten local governments from across the province. Although the Tool Kit focuses on twinning with Asia, the principles and resources contained within it may be applied to other twinning initiatives. The B.C. Asia Twinning Initiative is led by the Ministry of Community Services working in partnership with the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM), the BC Ministries of Economic Development and Education, and the BC Intergovernmental Relations Secretariat. The BC government has allocated financial resources for twinning initiatives within each municipality to the amount of \$50,000. This funding represents significant opportunities to address specific needs of twinning initiatives.

The funds allocated by the provincial government are intended to assist BC's local governments in more effectively planning their international twinning programs, including the establishment of the vision and objectives of the relationship, the identification of potential partners, and the support of travel for senior municipal officials to conduct face-to-face meetings. The funds will also provide assistance to develop materials to promote the community's twinning efforts, including costs related to translating materials and providing cultural awareness training for staff and council members involved with twinning initiatives. Efforts are also underway to provide ongoing professional and technical assistance to local governments through new institutional extensions that will be established in the future.

3.3.1 BC Asia-Pacific twinning Case Study: Kamloops, Uji and Changping

Kamloops has twinning relationships with Uji, Japan (a city that is situated on the outskirts of Kyoto) and Changping (a District of Beijing) in China. The purpose of the agreement with Uji was to enhance mutual understanding between the citizens of both cities through educational, cultural, sports and economic exchange. The Uji connection is principally focused on education and student exchanges.

The Mayor of Kamloops played an active role by signing a Friendly City Protocol Exchange with Changping District with its intent specifically focused on trade and tourism development. The stakeholders involved were the Commerce Bureau of Changping and Changping District, the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, Venture Kamloops, Kamloops Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Bureau of Changping District and Tourism Kamloops.

What is clear about Kamloops' twinning initiatives is the active leadership role that Council members played in establishing the relationships. There is also a sense that Kamloops prioritized these relationships by involving a variety of stakeholders at different levels of government. This level of commitment and leadership is often critical in giving momentum to a twinning relationship.

Venture Kamloops recognizes the importance of China as an important market for Kamloops-based firms, and is actively focused on efforts to open doors for those businesses that are ready to pursue opportunities there. Local companies such as Domtar have forest products to sell, while Thompson Rivers University, along with the local School District, has educational services to market. With 1,200 registered foreign students – many of whom are from China – injecting

close to \$40 million each year into the local economy, Venture Kamloops utilizes this opportunity to introduce new investment opportunities.

The local structure established to maintain twinning relationships not only determines the benefits derived from the relationship, but is central to its continuity. The relationship with Uji is managed by a community committee chaired by the Mayor, who sends a multi-party delegation to Uji every other year. The committee also organizes the placement of teachers in Uji to teach English. Each year, Council budgets \$25,000 to cover the costs of the exchange program, which pays the Kamloops' delegation costs for bi-annual visits. The active role that the Mayor performs sends a strong signal about the commitment that the City has to its twinning relationship.

Stakeholders also play a distinct role in maintaining the twinning relationships – Venture Kamloops, the marketing and economic development arm of the City of Kamloops, is responsible for managing the agreement between the City and Changping. It should be noted that all local efforts are also co-ordinated and aligned under a guiding strategy that sets the direction for activities within the relationship.

Venture Kamloops has invested in a special Kamloops-China Trade and Development service with a partner based in China to help Kamloops-based businesses to obtain market intelligence, identify business opportunities, and better understand key social and cultural practices. The service will also give firms access to affordable, on-the-ground assistance with translation, meeting space, scheduling, transportation, and immigrant investor programs. A Trade and Development group that strategically focuses on identifying and cultivating ground level local connections may be located within Kelowna's Business Development Centre as an adjunct service for local business owners looking to expand their operations overseas.

Communicating the benefits and successes related twinning is also essential for generating awareness, interest and support from the local businesses and organizations. These firms and organizations gain a better sense of how they can "plug into" the twinning initiative and their experiences can offer lessons and assistance to others who have an interest in pursuing internationalization. Recently, Venture Kamloops offered a seminar for firms interested in doing business in China in the near future. It is also planning to host a seminar in cooperation with the B.C. Ministry of Economic Development's 2010 Commerce Centre titled "Think Asia".

3.4 Sister Cities International

Sister Cities International is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting and fostering twinning relationships between cities in the United States and cities in other countries. Sister Cities International is a leader in local community development and volunteer action, enhancing quality of life through educational exchanges, business development opportunities, and information sharing on issues such as technology, health care, and the environment.

Sister Cities International is presently considering the option of allowing partnerships between twinned communities with no US-based partner using its platform. This would eliminate the current restriction to membership on the basis of partnering with US cities and could potentially create opportunities for Kelowna to access information and resources that could enhance its

twinning partnerships. The organization allows sister city programs around the world the opportunity to network, learn about innovations and share knowledge and experiences. Some of the resources and services that Kelowna could potentially utilize through this organization include information and sample documents useful for active and successful twinning relationships. Sister Cities International also has an assessment toolkit to strengthen and evaluate existing sister city programs, a communication toolkit to assist with media relations, a youth and education toolkit to encourage and retain the involvement of youth in the twinning movement and a fundraising toolkit designed to help organizations with their fundraising programs.

One good example of Sisters International's success in supporting twinning programs can be observed in the Newburyport, Massachusetts and Bura, Kenya partnership. Newburyport recently provided books and medical supplies to their sister city in Bura by working with the International Medical Equipment Collaborative, a volunteer-based, non-profit group that collects used, donated medical equipment and repairs, cleans and packages it for shipment to needy facilities in developing countries. By utilizing key information resources available through Sister Cities International, Newburyport met the basic medical needs of their Kenyan partner. Newburyport has also conducted teacher exchanges, farmer exchanges, HIV-AIDS education exchanges and women's leadership seminars.

3.5 International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives

ICLEI is an international association of local governments and national and regional local government organizations that have made a commitment to sustainable development. ICLEI provides information, delivers training, organizes conferences, facilitates networking and city-to-city exchanges, carries out research and pilot projects, and offers technical services. The focus of ICLEI's campaigns and programs is on assisting local governments to achieve their sustainable development goals through a step-by-step process that begins with generating political awareness of key issues, establishing action plans toward defined, concrete and measurable targets, and meeting targets through project implementation and evaluation.

Full Membership in ICLEI is offered to local governments and associations of local governments. Member dues (paid annually) vary according the type of organization, Gross National Income and population. ICLEI membership provides access to a worldwide network of peers allowing its members to benefit from and contribute to the success of others in the global community.

As an ICLEI member, Kelowna would not only have the opportunity to participate in ICLEI's international campaigns and programs and international and regional projects, but could also enjoy the opportunity to play a role in the design and pilot phases of these campaigns and projects. Kelowna would also have exclusive access to all ICLEI publications electronically via the members-only area of ICLEI's website. Kelowna would also be part of a worldwide network of local government representatives that are tackling shared environmental management and sustainability challenges. They meet at workshops, seminars, and conferences around the world, and through electronic conferences on the website.

Funded international travel is provided to ICLEI members as it is available. For example, in November 2003, ICLEI (with the support and partnership of an organization known as the Coalition of 21 Municipalities) held the World Congress of Local Governments and ICLEI Council meeting in Athens, Greece. ICLEI member cities who met certain criteria received full travel funding for this event. ICLEI is often made aware of funding opportunities and seeks to direct funders to members, and members to funders, where there is a match. ICLEI is partnered with FCM to deliver the Partners for Climate Protection Campaign. FCM leads the fund raising activities under this partnership. ICLEI also receives funding from CIDA.

3.6 Other Programs

There are organizations around the world which handle sister city links much in the way that Sister Cities International does, such as the Australian Sister Cities Association and the New Zealand Sister Cities Association. Many twinning offices and staff are also housed within municipal associations, such as the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR).

Although not related to present sister city relationships, other regional organizations that may be of interest to Kelowna in the future include:

- Municipal Alliance for Peace (MAP), which is a joint initiative of the Association of Palestinian Local Authorities (APLA) and the Union of Local Authorities in Israel (ULAI), which aims to catalyze local peace-building activities in participating Palestinian, Israeli and international municipalities
- l'Association internationale des maires francophones (AIMF), which brings together mayors from cities in which French is the primary language
- Korea Local Authorities Foundation for International Relations (KLAFIR)

4 Best Practices & Emerging Approaches to Municipal Partnerships

4.1 The Hanseatic Model

In the late Middle Ages, the fragmented political structure of Europe left many cities and towns feeling isolated, unprotected and economically vulnerable. In 1241, the small north German city

of Lubeck decided to create a series of alliances with other communities in order to enhance security, create stability and – above all – to promote new economic and trade opportunities. It began by forming an alliance with the City of Hamburg, followed soon after by the City of Cologne. In 1266, this alliance of cities (known as the Hansa or Hanseatic League) was granted special trade rights in England, and began a period of rapid expansion.



The Hanseatic League

By about 1350, the Hanseatic League had grown to include 170 member towns and cities, and had become one of the most powerful political and economic forces in Europe. Its influence was eroded during the Thirty Years War, and the Peace of Westphalia which ended that war in 1648 formally signalled the end of

Hanseatic power. European power increasingly gravitated toward a strong group of emerging nations, including Spain, France, England and Sweden.

In recent years, however, the advent of globalization has led some theorists to suggest that the declining power of national governments in a globalized economy allows towns and cities to once again reassert their influence, and to establish productive international partnerships between cities even when they are geographically separated. The Hanseatic League is often held up as a model of how such structures may be established, nurtured and maintained over time. Modern advocates suggest that “neo-Hanseatic” models of municipal cooperation will

begin to emerge as cities identify potential partners with whom they may pursue common economic, political and cultural goals.

Neo-Hanseatic models are often attractive to small and mid-size municipalities, as they allow communities with corresponding interests to pool their limited resources. In theory, such co-operative approaches also lend themselves to more effective lobbying and political pressure tactics. However, the primary motivation for neo-Hanseatic models – as with the ancient Hanseatic League – appears to be for the promotion of economic activity.

4.2 Best Cities Global Alliance

The Best Cities Global Alliance is probably the most successful neo-Hanseatic model involving a Canadian city. The Alliance is a coalition of eight cities working cooperatively to attract “mega-conferences” of 10,000 delegates or more to their communities. The eight member cities are:



- Cape Town, South Africa
- Copenhagen, Denmark
- Dubai, United Arab Emirates
- Edinburgh, Scotland
- Melbourne, Australia
- San Juan, Puerto Rico
- Sydney, Australia
- Vancouver, Canada

While in one sense each of these cities is competing with the others to attract conferences to its community, the reality is that these large-scale conferences do not visit the same city year after year – rather, they move from global venue to global venue. The rationale behind the Best Cities Global Alliance is thus to gather and share intelligence on those organizations and associations holding mega-conferences, thereby allowing member cities to improve their “bids” for conference hosting opportunities, and to improve their chances of winning large value conference contracts. At the same time, member cities can promote their partners when hosting large events within their own communities. In this way, the eight member cities collaborate to improve their individual performances within this particular area of economic activity.

Each of the eight cities makes an annual contribution to the organization, a portion of which is used to hire a General Manager who coordinates the organization’s activities. The organization operates under the auspices of a Board of Directors representing each of the eight communities, with the Chair selected on a rotating basis among all eight communities. The organization is presently based in Denmark.

4.3 The St. Catharines, Ontario – Oulu, Finland Model

In 2001, economic development staff at the City of St. Catharines in the Niagara Region of southern Ontario began to consider possible international linkages in an effort to kickstart a sagging manufacturing economy. Recognizing the need to diversify the economic base, they

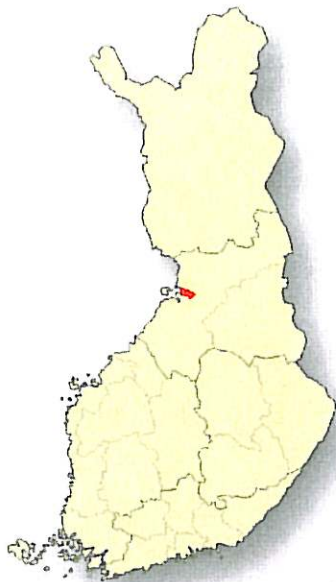
searched for a potential partner that had successfully shifted from the old to the new economy, but also a partner that could conceivably offer creative opportunities for new economic and cultural partnerships on an ongoing basis.

For a number of reasons, the St. Catharines team ultimately settled on the community of Oulu in northern Finland:

- The two communities were roughly the same size at 120,000-130,000 people
- Oulu had been a traditional manufacturing centre that transformed itself in the 1990s into a world-leading centre of wireless communications and information technology development
- Oulu had been ranked by *Wired Magazine* as one of the “10 smartest cities in the world”
- Finland was ranked by Transparency International as the most honest country for business in the world
- Finland was ranked by the World Economic Forum as the “most competitive economy in the world”
- Finland was ranked by the World Economic Forum as the “most technologically-advanced economy in the world”

Beginning in 2001, St. Catharines courted Oulu, proposing an informal partnership focused on creating economic linkages between the two communities. The Canadian community

positioned itself as a “gateway to North America” for Oulu-based firms, where they could enter the huge North American market from a Canadian “safe haven” with multiple, specialized support programs drawing support directly from St. Catharines municipal staff, and then – once more firmly established – take advantage of NAFTA to expand into the US market. At the same time, St. Catharines-based exporters could gain a toehold in European markets through Finnish partnerships, particularly in the fields of wine, tourism and professional training.



Ultimately, 16 Finnish firms have established operations in St. Catharines, while a 17th firm that was already operating in the community closed a Montreal-area facility to consolidate its operations within St. Catharines. Some 50 Canadian jobs have been created through the partnership

to date. Although initiated by the municipality (with financial support from the Industry Canada-administered Community Investment Support Program), the relationship has now largely been taken over by the private sector, with many of the incoming investments handled by a new St. Catharines company called The Scandic Group (TSG; see company logo at right).



TSG is an innovative, results-oriented business development firm that specializes in the internationalization of Scandinavian-based companies. Headquartered in St. Catharines, Ontario, TSG currently represents the North American interests of more than a dozen firms from Finland, Sweden and elsewhere in northern Europe.

The firm offers a range of support services and structures to Scandinavian firms, including Export Partner programs, market entry analysis and market assessment research, access to financing and in-market representation. TSG also works closely with regional governments – and particularly the Finnish Ministry of Employment and Economy – to assist with export development and foreign market entry programs.



TSG's Canadian team consists of 9 staff headed by John Savio (a former software executive and entrepreneur) and Greg McCandless (a long-time economic development professional who has worked for municipalities including Fort Erie, St. Catharines and Richmond Hill). Founded in 2006, TSG has grown rapidly; it is a privately held company revenues are not public, but it is estimated that gross revenues from Finnish government contracts alone will approach

€600,000 per year by the end of 2008.

The success of the St. Catharines-Oulu model prompted a number of other Scandinavian communities (including Lulea, Sweden and Bodo, Norway) to seek similar relationships with St. Catharines, earning the community a reputation as the “Nordic Gateway” to North America.

4.4 The Markham Model

In early 2008 the Town of Markham, a northern suburb of Toronto that is home to some 260,000 people, unveiled a new economic development strategy. Focused on building a 21st Century city, the strategy described a series of “enabling environments” that would be required to achieve success in the new economy. One of the targets of this activity was the “building of the global city” – in other words, the development of a community that was fully linked to and integrated into the increasingly globalized economy. To achieve this end, the strategy suggested, Markham had to look beyond its historical international business ties, and establish new international connections that would carry it further in the future. The strongly multicultural and multilingual nature of the community were seen in this context as a foundation for creating new or enhanced international linkages and relationships, utilizing the community’s own human resources to open doors to international economic opportunities. Within the strategy, this was referred to as the “global hometown” approach.

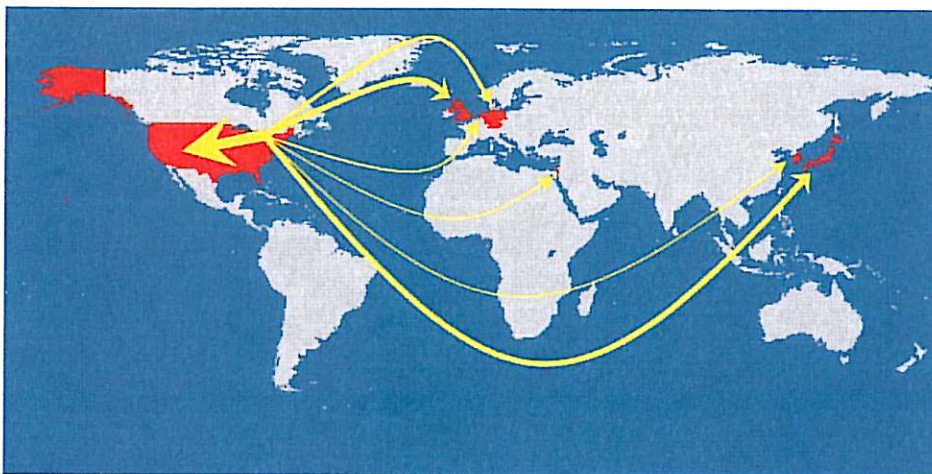
Underlying this global hometown concept is the notion that the community’s existing national, cultural and identity communities routinely maintain links and contacts with other members of those same communities in other countries. Residents of Chinese descent or Polish descent or Moroccan descent (for example) often retain links and close connections to their former homes and communities. In a globalized economic environment, such links are immensely valuable, and there is an opportunity for Markham to leverage those existing relationships in a manner

that promotes and enhances additional investment attraction and trade partnerships for the community's benefit. Such activity is well-positioned for success, as the benefits of the relationship can apply equally to both ends of the newly-created international relationship.

This approach also equally assumes, however, that there is a "disconnect" between the patterns of Markham's *existing* international business linkages, and its *potential* international linkages. In essence, those countries that represent the best targets under this approach are not necessarily those on which Markham's business community is presently focused.

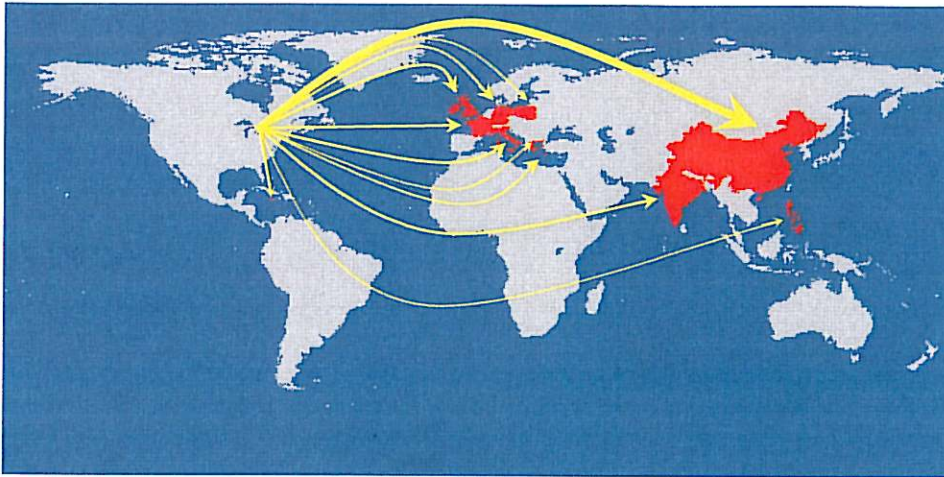
Ownership of Markham's Top 100 firms suggested that the existing international business linkages emphasize relationships with the following countries (in descending order of magnitude):

- United States
- United Kingdom
- Japan
- Bermuda
- Germany
- Israel
- The Netherlands
- South Korea



The "global hometown" strategy, in contrast, emphasized the following countries by virtue of their "people connections" to Markham:

- | | |
|------------|-------------------|
| • China | • Germany |
| • England | • France |
| • India | • Greece |
| • Scotland | • Jamaica |
| • Ireland | • The Philippines |
| • Italy | |



While there was some overlap between the two approaches (notably in the UK and Germany), the analysis suggested that Markham was well-positioned – given local human resources – to pursue new international partnerships with countries that had previously been ignored. Markham economic development staff have recently taken significant steps in this direction, launching campaigns focused on India, and leading a recent trade mission to China. In both instances, they have leveraged significant support from the community’s own Indian and Chinese populations, and leveraged those local connections into contacts, intelligence and business opportunities abroad.

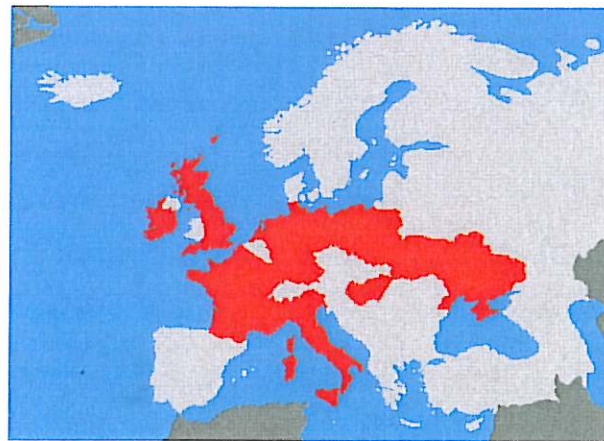
4.4.1 Applying the Markham Model to Kelowna

Although a full “global hometown” strategy is beyond the scope of this present work, it is possible to draw some preliminary conclusions about the focus of such a strategy in Kelowna. A brief analysis of Kelowna’s 30 largest employers suggests that all are either Canadian or US-owned operations, suggesting that most of Kelowna’s international business connections are with the United States. However, Kelowna’s residents are often more connected to other jurisdictions. Looking solely at those Kelownans born abroad, Statistics Canada census data suggests that the strongest international linkages are as follows:

Population of Kelowna’s Top 10 European Ethnic Connections (1st Generation Only)

Origin	# of Kelowna Residents
Germany	3625
England	3215
Scotland	1415
Ireland	1260
Netherlands	985
Italy	730
Poland	715
France	580
Hungary	415
Ukraine	385

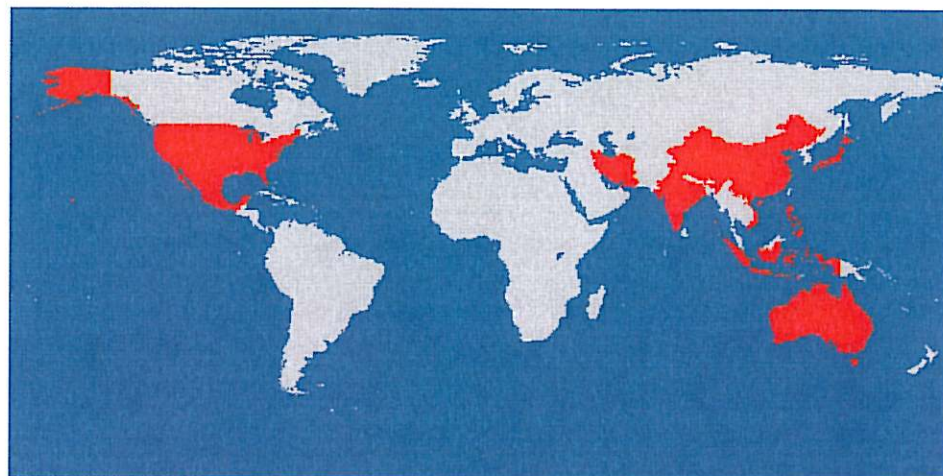
Map of Kelowna's Top 10 European Connections (1st Generation)



Population of Kelowna's Top 10 Non-European Ethnic Connections (1st Generation Only)

Origin	# of Kelowna Residents
India	980
China	755
Philippines	300
United States of America	275
Viet Nam	265
Japan	155
Australia	145
Mexico	130
Iran	100
Indonesia	75

Kelowna's Top 10 Non-European Connections (1st Generation)



The Markham approach has some history of success in a British Columbia context, where it has featured in the growing relationships between Richmond, BC and Wakayama, Japan. Wakayama was the ancestral home of many of the early Japanese fishermen who emigrated to western Canada from Japan. Working with its resident Japanese community, Richmond was able to parlay historical and family connections into an ongoing relationship between the two communities. Within five years, a number of Japanese companies, including a major Japanese automobile firm, had established a presence in Richmond. Over the years, despite these economic roots and ongoing economic benefits, the nature of the relationship evolved to the point where, today, twinning activities are focused not only on business ties, but increasingly on culture, education and athletics.

The twinning arrangement with Wakayama has generated substantial and wide-ranging benefits for Richmond. Significantly, Richmond's benefits have included strong and direct economic benefits — a point that sets Richmond apart from many other communities involved in twinning with Japanese cities. Richmond's ability to provide Japanese firms with industrial land and access to Canadian markets has been key in making the twinning an economic development success. The ongoing cultural and educational exchanges honour Richmond's early Japanese roots and serve to keep the relationship strong.

5 Feasibility Assessment & Strategic Direction

5.1 Recommendation: Focus on Existing Relationships

With so many overtures from China, an increased emphasis on twinning from the province and a history of successful twinning initiatives, it would be easy to embrace additional twinning relationships for Kelowna. However, each of the existing relationships faces significant challenges in the near future. The Kelowna-Veendam relationship is susceptible to the aging of its volunteer base, and to ongoing fundraising challenges. The Kelowna-Kasugai relationship has struggled to add a business or economic function in recent years. The Kelowna-Senanga relationship is so new that it remains poorly understood and poorly resourced.

All three of the existing relationships would benefit from some additional attention, care and resources; in one sense, it is better to ensure that existing relationships function effectively than to rush to create more relationships that may prove unsustainable.

5.2 Recommendation: Create a Neo-Hanseatic Partnership

Kelowna should seek to create a “neo-Hanseatic” partnership among its sister communities; in other words, it should seek to create multipartisan relationships between its sister cities, rather than simply bipartisan relationships. Kelowna should conceive of a league of four cities – Kelowna, Kasugai, Senanga and Veendam – which will seek to co-operate and co-ordinate activities jointly in order to improve and enhance international linkages between its members.

Kelowna will need to promote this concept to the other participating communities, but should be able to articulate the benefits of improved linkages between cities, while highlighting the potential role of Veendam and Kasugai in enhancing opportunities for impoverished Senanga. Each community gains new partners, new cultural connections, new market opportunities and new supporters – while giving up little in the process.

5.3 Recommendation: Pursue a Three-Pronged Twinning Strategy

The purpose of this four-city partnership should be threefold:

1. Economic development, improved business links and new export opportunities
2. Cooperation on issues of municipal administration, improved local service delivery (in areas such as health services, revenue generation and the environment) and the transfer of technology, know-how and best practices
3. Cultural connections and linkages, including those related to the arts, heritage, education and the ability of citizens to promote peaceful co-operation in a global context

To date, the focus of the existing sister city relationships has been on the cultural expression of municipal twinning. This element of the relationships must be maintained and enhanced, but at the same time, an improved understanding of economic and administrative opportunities must be developed. The challenges of municipal administration in the 21st Century require innovative approaches, and tapping into the wide range of existing and potential support structures made available through twinning relationships will require approaches that move beyond basic cultural exchanges. At the same time, the value of these cultural links, opportunities and experiences

for leveraging local support and building the perceived value of sister city relationships (both in Kelowna and abroad) cannot be overstated, and must not be overlooked within any future efforts.

5.4 Recommendation: Prioritize Economic Links to Build External Support

While each of the twinning strategy's three prongs must receive support and consideration, it is the economic development function that will attract the greatest levels of external support. Kelowna and the three sister city associations should work directly with Invest Kelowna and the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce to articulate an economic development rationale that will lie at the heart of the neo-Hanseatic alliance between the four partner cities.

To the project team, there appears to be a logical economic and industrial connection between the four cities – despite their vast differences – arising from the presence of four distinct economies with strengths in food, agriculture and fisheries. Kelowna is both a centre of fishing and farming, with a well-developed food products industry characterized by local wine and juice makers, but also by food products companies such as Sun-Rype. Kasugai is a major manufacturing centre with a strong food processing sector, home to major Japanese companies such as the giant Kasugai Snack Foods company. Veendam, a center of peat farming and peat cutting for more than three centuries, is also home to a major cluster of food and agricultural processing industries, including a major potato starch and derivatives industry headed by multinationals like AVEBE. Senanga relies on local agriculture for much of its livelihood, but is also a major sport- and food-fishing centre on the Zambezi River. This obvious economic link between the four communities should be used as the foundation for an ongoing economic development relationship.

An agricultural and food focus to the economic component of the relationship also lends itself to other areas of common interest, linking effectively to environmental considerations, and from there to opportunities for improved performance and technology transfer. Kelowna hosts numerous assets that could both play a key role in establishing international work on these fronts, while simultaneously bringing direct benefits back to the Kelowna area. For example, Invest Kelowna is the only Economic Development Commission in British Columbia with a full-time agricultural officer. The Okanagan Environmental Industry Alliance and the Okanagan Science and Technology Council could also be players in – and beneficiaries of – this kind of relationship.

For many organizations, this kind of economic opportunity is likely to trigger increased support for sister city activities. While cultural and administrative exchanges are clearly of value, they are sometimes difficult to justify from the perspective of taxpayer expenses, or business investments. By highlighting and focusing on elements of the economic opportunity arising from the enhanced sister city relationships, the door is open to increased private sector funding, increased support from business associations, and the wider availability of funds from government sources. In part, this reflects the realities of cost-benefit analysis: while cultural exchanges (for example) unquestionably create benefits for a community, those benefits are often difficult to quantify. Economic benefits are often easier to quantify and easier to measure, and thus create higher comfort levels among those making funding decisions. The St.

Catharines-Oulu relationship is of interest in this regard: 17 Finnish companies and 50 jobs in St. Catharines made a compelling case for continued investment and support, and elicited ongoing financial contributions from municipal, federal and private backers.

5.5 Recommendation: Use the “Best Cities” Model of Administration

The Best Cities Global Alliance suggests a possible model for administering the new sister city structure: rotating responsibility for project management and administration. Rather than annual visits to each community, the participating communities should rotate through each community over a four year period. The project team proposes the following schedule for the first four-year period:

2009: Kelowna hosts delegations from Veendam, Kasugai and Senanga and sets an agenda that focuses on building and formalizing the joint relationships between them

2010: Veendam hosts the partners, with the goal of leveraging ongoing support from VNG (the Dutch association of municipal governments) and other regional partners

2011: Kasugai hosts the partners, with the goal of leveraging additional support for the initiative from additional Japanese partners

2012: Senanga hosts the partners

Rotation of the gathering spots thus allows maximum contact between the partner communities while minimizing annual expenditures related to travel and meetings. These formal meetings would not, of course, preclude other community or third-party funded initiatives (high school exchanges, cultural exchanges, etc.) from proceeding on their own timelines, but would provide a fixed focus for maintaining a proactive agenda for co-operative action at the municipal level.

Senanga is deserving of special consideration within this structure. As a community facing significant financial, organizational and administrative challenges, the project team recommends that the other communities bear most of the costs of Senanga's participation in this initiative on an ongoing basis. It is likely that each community's respective national development agency (CIDA, the Department of Development Cooperation of the Dutch Foreign Ministry and the Japanese International Cooperation Agency) will be in a good position to support such an approach. This is justified in part by the economic development focus of the relationship – which will create the capacity for new jobs and improved economic opportunities within Senanga as well as the other sister cities – but particularly by the opportunities for technology transfer and the sharing of best practices in municipal administration, which will allow Senanga to significantly improve its municipal administration practices on the basis of knowledge gained from its sister city partners.

2012 has also been chosen as the date for Senanga to first play host in the relationships for two additional reasons. This year has previously been identified by the KaZ partnership between Kelowna and Senanga as a key year for the relationship. Furthermore, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Municipal Partnership Program provides funding and support for a number of African municipal initiatives in target countries – but not in Zambia. However, this

program is slated for renewal in 2010/2011, at which time Kelowna and its partners may effectively lobby for the addition of Zambia to the list of approved partner countries. This will enhance to resources available to Senanga for the relationship, as well as those available to Kelowna in support of the overall initiative.

5.6 Recommendation: Designate Staff to Oversee Twinning Relationships

Effective management of the enhanced sister city relationships will require more formalized structures of responsibility. While each of the individual relationships may still be best led by community leaders and community organizations, the ongoing administration of new elements of the program, and the need to co-ordinate among multiple external players will require that individuals with formal responsibilities for program administration be identified.

The project team proposes that the economic development components of this enhanced strategy become the responsibility of Invest Kelowna's agriculture officer, under the supervision of the agency's Executive Director. At the same time, the municipal exchange/municipal governance components should be coordinated from the Office of the Clerk of the City of Kelowna. Cultural programs would remain the direct responsibility of local community organizations (led by the sister city associations), with those same organizations form a steering committee or umbrella structure (see Recommendation 5.7 below) to provide high level guidance and advice to the economic and governance programs.

Assessments of the staff time necessary for the kind of activity outlined in this strategy are notoriously difficult to assess, and may vary significantly from year to year. However, to better assess the likely costs, the project team suggests that a notional 3 person weeks of time allocation be made each year, with a 4th person week of time allocated in years in which Kelowna hosts visits from the other 3 sister cities. The notional annual allocation of this time is as follows:

Principal Staff Person Responsible for Sister City Relationships

- 1 week in the field visiting sister cities per year (5 consecutive days)
- 1 week providing support services and ongoing management of relationships per year (5 days dispersed across the fiscal year)

Additional Staff Responsibilities

- 1 week providing support services and ongoing management of relationships, potentially divided among multiple staff per year (5 days dispersed across the fiscal year)
- 1 additional week of logistical coordination and hosting duties every 4th year, when the sister cities meet in Kelowna

This suggests an allocation of approximately 4% of total annual working duties from the principal staff person assigned to the sister cities file. It also suggests a person-equivalent of 2% of one person's total annual working duties to support this individual, although this may be dispersed among several individuals. This latter allocation would rise to about 4% (again,

potentially dispersed among multiple staff members) in years during which Kelowna is the host city for the rotating sister city gatherings.

Actual costs for this additional staff commitment will, of course, vary depending upon the compensation of the person identified within the City structure to take the lead role in the sister city process. The project team believes that this individual should be someone relatively senior (perhaps even the Clerk or Deputy Clerk), with more junior staff playing the supporting role. Even in this instance, however, the actual financial costs of the human resources required to manage this process will be minimal. In all cases the true cost of running this program is, in large part, underwritten by the volunteer efforts of the sister city associations.

5.7 Recommendation: Create a Sister Cities Umbrella Group in the Community

To assist in the co-ordination of the enhanced relationship, a sister cities umbrella organization should be created. This group should not “take over” the sister city relationships; rather, the primary responsibility for each relationship should continue to rest with the community organization that created, nurtured and built it. Past successes, past accomplishments and past directions must all be recognized, valued and embraced.

At the same time, the sister city associations themselves have increasingly begun to see the need for greater co-operation and co-ordination of their own activities, and an enhanced set of sister city relationships will only increase the need for some kind of structure to help accomplish this task.

The umbrella structure should be spearheaded by the existing sister city associations, with Invest Kelowna and the City of Kelowna providing staff support and some logistical co-ordination. Other community organizations with an interest in the sister city relationships – the Chamber of Commerce, faith-based groups such as the Vineyard Church, and relevant organizations based on nationality or ethnicity – should all be invited to participate in this new structure.

The primary focus of the umbrella organization should be the maintenance of the existing sister city relationships while co-operatively working to enhance the new collective possibilities.

5.8 Recommendation: Increase the Resources and Support Available

The expanded relationship between the sister cities will necessarily require additional resources to be effective, particularly financial resources. The project team recommends an immediate and annual increase in City funding for the sister city relationships from \$5,000 to \$15,000. This amount still remains below what many other BC communities are committing to their international partnerships (for example, Kamloops at \$25,000), but does represent a step forward in terms of municipal support, while at the same time reflecting an increase that will have little impact on the overall municipal budget. Invest Kelowna should also consider an annual allocation within its operating budget, particularly focused on opportunities for economic development and trade collaboration.

Other potential sources of financial and technical assistance in this project – many of which may be approached for support year after year – include:

- The BC Asia Twinning Initiative, including its \$50,000 pilot funding
- The FCM and its various programs including the International Centre for Municipal Development and the Municipal Partnership Program
- The FCM's Dutch and Japanese counterparts
- The Local Government Management Association's Africa Project
- The International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives
- CIDA and its Dutch and Japanese counterparts, as well as multilateral development structures such as the Commonwealth
- Other federal government programs such as Industry Canada's Community Investment Support Program (CISP)
- Sister Cities International
- Enhanced fundraising and support from the local sister city associations
- Support from other non-governmental organizations

5.9 Recommendation: Consider Future Expansion

Should the enhanced relationship be successful (or alternately, should an existing sister city drop out of the relationship), Kelowna may wish in the future to consider adding additional partners. While there is no question that many Chinese cities would jump at the chance for such a partnership, neither the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce nor Invest Kelowna has been particularly keen on the notion of a Chinese sister city.

Chinese cities have the advantage of deep pockets and high levels of political commitment to the concept of twinning, and might well be intrigued by the notion of a "neo-Hanseatic" model of co-operation. However, it is difficult to assess the degree to which a Chinese partner might be willing or able to work for an economic development contribution to a Kasugai or Kelowna, and to what extent the economic benefits of such a relationship might flow in a single direction. If Chinese partners were determined by the City to be desirable, preference should probably be given to a community with a strong agricultural and food sector, which would allow the community to directly contribute to the focus of the economic development relationships between the larger groups of communities. Of those Chinese cities that have already expressed an interest in partnering with Kelowna, it is perhaps the city of Zhongshan that fits this description most closely.

On the other hand, the existing sister city relationship between Veendam and Gniezno, Poland or between Kasugai and Auburn, Washington might provide some opportunities for expanding the neo-Hanseatic relationship. While an eastern European partner offers some distinct regional opportunities to the relationship, care should be taken when considering a possible American partner. In the St. Catharines-Oulu partnership, it was access to the North American market that made the Canadian community attractive to the Finns – an American partner would eliminate this advantage. Similarly, in the Best Cities Global Alliance, founders were careful to

ensure that only one city from each region of the world participated – making Vancouver the lone North American participant in an effort to minimize direct competition between members.

Certainly the BC Asia Twinning Initiative opens up many non-Chinese opportunities across the Pacific Rim. Invest Kelowna has expressed cautious interest in possible partnerships with India, Australia and South Korea – all of which happen to rank relatively highly within the lists of first generation Canadians residing within Kelowna. Latin America remains the largest region presently outside of the existing sister city structures, which may suggest that it could be a logical focus for future relationships. On the basis of first generation connections already extant in Kelowna, Mexico might be a potential partner, but the economic development focus on food, agriculture, wine and fishing might more logically lead to partnerships with communities in Argentina or Chile.

Regardless of the final choice, additional sister cities should only be considered at a later date. When they are considered, the choice should be made from the perspective of identifying partner communities that have the most to offer the enhanced relationships that have been created – that is, the most to offer to the group as a whole, and the most to offer to Kelowna in particular.