

**CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM**  
CITY OF SHORELINE, WASHINGTON

**AGENDA TITLE:** Adopting Resolution No. 207- Establishing a Sister City Relationship with Boryeong, Republic of Korea (South Korea)  
**DEPARTMENT:** City Manager's Office  
**PRESENTED BY:** Eric C. Swansen, Senior Management Analyst

**PROBLEM/ISSUE STATEMENT:**

The Shoreline Sister Cities Association is requesting the City Council act to create the City of Shoreline's first sister city relationship. The City of Boryeong, Republic of Korea (South Korea) has expressed a willingness to create a sister city relationship.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

There is minimal financial impact to the City. The City Council established a policy in October 2002 that outlines the City's and Shoreline Sister Cities Association Roles. The policy limits the City's role as an advocate for the Association, providing in-kind assistance (meeting rooms, publicity, schedule coordination, startup assistance, etc.). The Association has a responsibility for fund raising, planning events and hosting exchanges.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends adoption of Resolution No. 207, establishing a sister cities relationship with the Boryeong, Republic of Korea (South Korea).

Approved By: City Manager  City Attorney 

## INTRODUCTION

The Shoreline Sister Cities Association is requesting the City Council act to create the City of Shoreline's first sister city relationship. The City of Boryeong, Republic of Korea (South Korea) has expressed a willingness to create a sister city relationship.

## BACKGROUND

Throughout the City's history there have been numerous requests by foreign municipalities, local residents and local businesses to create sister city relationships. In 1996, the City Council adopted a resolution that encouraged the creation of a sister cities association and required establishment of such a group prior to creating a formal sister city relationship policy.

In 2001, the City Council agreed to provide staff support to assist in the creation of the Shoreline Sister Cities Association. Staff worked with interested residents, businesses and cultural groups to form a group to create the Association. In late 2002, the Association was formed as a non-profit corporation by the State of Washington. Shortly after establishment of the Association, Council adopted Resolution No. 194, which established a Sister City Relationship Policy and process for recognizing cities.

## ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

At the February Sister Cities Association meeting, the Association recommended creating a sister city relationship with Boryeong, Republic of Korea. In accordance with the recognition policy, the following evaluation seeks a sister city that is largely:

### **Similar to Shoreline in terms of size, population, infrastructure challenges and role on the region**

It is important to note that the Republic of Korea has a governance structure that is somewhat dissimilar to the United States in comparison. The Republic of Korea (South Korea) is 38,320 square miles in area. This is roughly the 57% of the size of the State of Washington or 1% of the size of the United States. Korea has nine provinces and six special cities. Political subdivisions are considerably smaller in size and land mass.

Boryeong is situated 120 miles south and west of the national capital Seoul. Boryeong is located on the coast of the Yellow Sea, and covers an area of 219 sq. miles. Only 12% of this area is urban (approximately 27 sq. miles) with the remainder being farm, forest and fields. In comparison, Shoreline is 11.5 sq. miles, considerably smaller than Boryeong's urban area. Boryeong serves a population of 116,546 people, more than double the size of Shoreline's population.

Boryeong is undertaking an ambitious capital improvements program involving transportation and wastewater management, which in some respects is similar to Shoreline.

## **History of informal relations between the two committees**

Boryeong and Shoreline have had some informal relations between the communities in the past. These relations are based largely on familial ties in the area. Boryeong City officials recently visited Shoreline to visit infrastructure sites, including wastewater and parks facilities.

## **Common ethnic or cultural heritage with Shoreline residents**

Boryeong and Shoreline have an extensive common ethnic heritage that is the most recent wave of Korean-American immigration. The first documented immigration of Korean people occurred on January 13, 1903, when the SS Gaelic arrived in Honolulu, Hawaii with laborers seeking an escape from colonial Korea. Subsequent immigration waves from Korea occurred after World War II and the Korean Conflict.

A core group of immigrants from the Boryeong Area immigrated to the Seattle area starting in 1956. Immigration from the Ch'ungch'ong-namdo province, where Boryeong is located, to Washington State is well documented. In fact, the large majority of Washington State residents of Korean-American ancestry have family ties to the province. This relationship is even greater in Western Washington and the Seattle area. This relationship has forged a common ethnic and cultural basis for many of the informal relations between the two communities for many years.

## **Interest in sharing views on municipal affairs**

A recent visit by Boryeong city officials suggest they are eager to learn about local government in the United States. They expressed great interest in how we resolve neighborhood concerns related to large capital improvements (the "not in my backyard" or NIMBY euphemism), creating recreational facilities that meet the needs of both residents and visitors, and financing planned infrastructure improvements.

## **Interest in developing business, tourism and economic ties between the cities**

There is reason to believe there are numerous economic ties between Boryeong and Shoreline already, as the Korean culture places high regard for business activities within familial circles. These activities are most likely involving borrowing, but may also include purchase and sale of goods and general commerce.

While Boryeong may not be a perfect fit in relation to the criteria above, there appears to be enough similarities and historical ties to suggest that creating a sister city relationship is in the best interests of both cities.

## **Other Factors**

Staff has expressed concern in the past with the amount of work that a sister city relationship will entail. While the Shoreline Sister Cities Association has been formed to serve as the City's point of contact for such relationships, as with any new organization it may periodically suffer from leadership, membership and fundraising challenges.

To the extent that the Shoreline Sister Cities Association serves the community by managing this relationship on our behalf, the City will be able to concentrate on our core responsibilities as a city. However, it should be noted that we are creating a commitment with another city to create future cultural, educational and business ties between the two cities. Should the Shoreline Sister Cities Association be unable to rise to these challenges in the future, the City may need to get involved directly, taking away from our core responsibilities as a city. The City can also, at its sole discretion, terminate a sister city relationship that it can no longer support.

There are a number of cultural differences that exist between the two cities that will be part of the challenge of managing this relationship. In the United States, and Washington State in particular, using public funds for creating sister city relationships may be considered as an inappropriate use of public funds. It is for this reason that our sister city relationship policy outlines the City's role as providing in-kind assistance and membership in the Association. In Asia, using public funds for such relationships is common place. In fact, it is viewed as a vital trade and economic development expense to many cities, garnering great financial and community support. Simply stated, Shoreline could be viewed as a poor cousin if measured by the investment our community will make in such a relationship. While many may think it is important to spend a great deal of money to host a variety of exchanges and events, the true measure of success will be using each exchange opportunity as a forum to create peer relationships that result in lasting friendships regardless of future exchange activities.

## **STAKEHOLDERS**

The Shoreline Sister Cities Association has reviewed the request from Boryeong and has recommended that Council adopt a resolution creating the City's first sister city relationship with Boryeong, Republic of Korea.

The Shoreline Community College is very interested in this relationship. Boryeong has a technical college that specializes in automotive technology, including design, engineering, maintenance and management. It is very similar in many respects to the Automotive Technology program at Shoreline Community College. Both programs have the direct support of major automotive manufacturers. Boryeong has a relationship with Daewoo Korea, a major Korean auto manufacturer. Shoreline has relationships with a local dealers association, Ford, Chrysler, General Motors, Volvo and Honda. The two program are very complementary. Boryeong also has an interest in the schools cosmetology and precision machinery programs.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends adoption of Resolution No. 207, establishing a sister cities relationship with the Boryeong, Republic of Korea (South Korea).

**Attachment A: Resolution No. 207**

**RESOLUTION NO. 207**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF SHORELINE, WASHINGTON  
DESIGNATING BORYEONG, REPUBLIC OF KOREA AS A  
SISTER CITY UNDER THE SHORELINE SISTER CITY POLICY.**

WHEREAS, Council adopted Resolution No. 194, which established a Sister City Relationship Policy and process for recognizing sister cities; and

WHEREAS, Shoreline Sister Cities Association has reviewed the request from Boryeong and has recommended that Council adopt a resolution creating the City's first sister city relationship with Boryeong, Republic of Korea; NOW, THEREFORE,

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF  
SHORELINE, WASHINGTON AS FOLLOWS:**

**Section 1.** Boryeong, Republic of Korea is hereby designated a Shoreline Sister City pursuant to the Sister City Relationship Policy adopted by Resolution No. 194.

**ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL ON JUNE 9, 2003.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor Scott Jepsen

**ATTEST:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sharon Mattioli, CMC  
City Clerk

This page intentionally left blank.