



## CITY OF HOUSTON - CITY COUNCIL

Meeting Date: 12/8/2020

ALL

Item Creation Date: 12/1/2020

MYR - Ulsan Sister City

Agenda Item#: 9.

### **Summary:**

#### **NOT A REAL CAPTION**

RECOMMENDATION from Mayor's Office of Trade and International Affairs to establish a sister city relationship with the City of **ULSAN, REPUBLIC OF KOREA** (South Korea)

### **Background:**

Houston's Sister City program is managed by the Mayor's Office of Trade and International Affairs (MOTIA) to promote people-to-people diplomacy and encourage citizens to develop mutual trust and understanding through commercial, cultural, educational, and humanitarian exchanges. In 1993, the City of Houston established Sister Cities of Houston Inc. as an umbrella organization to assist with the coordination and promotion of the city's various sister cities associations. Houston currently has 18 sister city relationships; City Council approved Basrah, Iraq as the most recent Sister City in 2015.

Since March of 2018, when the City of Houston signed a partner agreement with Ulsan, South Korea, the relationship between our two cities has continued to grow and flourish. The potential for a long-term mutually beneficial relationship between Houston and Ulsan, especially in regards to business and cultural exchanges, remains even greater still. Establishing a Sister City relationship is strongly supported by the business communities in Ulsan and Houston, the Korean American Association and Community Center of Houston, and the government of the City of Ulsan.

The history of interactions between Ulsan and Houston has demonstrated that, in addition to the naturally existing parallels between both regions, there is a strong network of support on both sides to make this a meaningful relationship.

### **Highlights of the relationship:**

**March 2018** – A initial Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the partnership was signed in 2018 by Mr. Andy Icken, Chief of Development Officer of the City of Houston, and Mr. Park Soon Chul, Director General of Employment and Economy Bureau of the City of Ulsan. This was a first step towards the goal of Houston and Ulsan achieving a Sister City relationship.

**November of 2018** – Council Member David Robinson met with Deputy Mayor of Economic Affairs of Ulsan and his delegation at City Hall during their business development visit to Houston to further discuss the potential Sister City relationship between two cities.

**April of 2019** – An MOU was signed between Mayor Turner and Mayor Song of Ulsan to further the development of goodwill and understanding between the two cities, with collaborative initiatives across various fields, including: energy, education, medicine, biotechnology, disaster management and safety, information technology, cultural exchanges and tourism. Mayor Song traveled to Houston to attend the signing ceremony.

**October of 2019** – A delegation of the Ulsan Culture & Arts Center led by Director Mr. Dong-yeop Geum visited Houston to attend and perform at the Annual Korean Festival at Discovery Green Park. Additionally, the Korean community in Houston gathered to sign a petition to support the Houston – Ulsan Sister City relationship at the Festival.

**June through October of 2020** – During COVID-19, the Korean community has been a tremendous friend and partner in aiding Houston through the pandemic. Their donations of PPE have included: The Consulate General of Korea in Houston donated 1,500 protective face masks, the Korean community in Houston donated 600 medical grade face masks and handmade masks, and the city of Ulsan donated 48,300 FDA registered face masks. The city of Ulsan also shared with Houston their city's strategy in response to COVID-19.

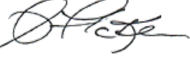
### **Houston – Ulsan Profile:**

- Ulsan is located on the south-east of the Korean peninsula and is the nation's industrial powerhouse that has the world's largest automobile assembly plant and shipyard, as well as the third largest oil refinery. Ulsan's main industries are automobile, shipbuilding, and petrochemical. The city has played a leading role as an industrial city in helping Korea become the 6th largest exporter in the world.
- There are currently 35,000 Koreans (including Korean-Americans and Korean nationals) living in Houston.
- Similar to Houston, Ulsan is a port city and is becoming a next generation energy hub by constructing Floating Offshore Wind Farms, investing in hydrogen technology, and operating the Northeast Asia oil & gas hub project to produce renewable energy and create new jobs for the economy.
- The city of Ulsan joined the World Energy Cities Partnership (WECP) in 2020 after working with Houston, Aberdeen Scotland, and Esbjerg Denmark for several years. Houston serves as the permanent secretariat of WECP, managed by MOTIA.
- The Korean American Association and Community Center of Houston (KAACCH) has been a key supporter of this relationship in Houston.

The approval of a sister city relationship will cement a formal relationship between the City of Houston and Ulsan. A Sister City agreement will allow Houstonians to further celebrate collaboration between the two city's vast economic development potential and enhance Houstonian's appreciation and understanding of Ulsan's unique history and culture. Sister City agreements have led to numerous trade missions, student exchanges, and cultural programs between Houston and its other sister cities, and similar opportunities have been identified with Ulsan.

Upon approval, a signing ceremony will be held.

DocuSigned by:



Andy Icken, Chief Development Officer

**Contact Information:**

Christopher Olson, Director MOTIA  
832.393.0985

**ATTACHMENTS:**

**Description**

Sister Cities Policies and Procedures  
Memo to City Council on Ulsan Sister City Proposal  
New Sister City Procedures

**Type**

Backup Material  
Backup Material  
Backup Material