



# City of Huntington Beach

**File #:** 19-1182

**MEETING DATE:** 12/2/2019

## REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

**SUBMITTED TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

**SUBMITTED BY:** Oliver Chi, City Manager

**PREPARED BY:** Travis K. Hopkins, Acting Assistant City Manager

**Subject:**

Consideration of Resolution No. 2019-92 to extend an invitation to the City of Biarritz, France, for the purpose of establishing a Sister City Relationship .

**Statement of Issue:**

The Sister City Association of Huntington Beach is requesting that the City Council approve Resolution No. 2019-92. If the Resolution is approved, it would allow for the initiation of formal discussions between the City of Huntington Beach and Biarritz, France, for the establishment of a Sister City relationship between the two jurisdictions.

**Financial Impact:**

Not applicable.

**Recommended Action:**

Adopt Resolution No. 2019-92, "A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Huntington Beach Extending an Invitation to the City of Biarritz, France, to Become a Sister City and Inviting the People of Biarritz, France, to Participate in Said Program."

**Alternative Action(s):**

Do not adopt the resolution and direct staff accordingly.

**Analysis:**

The Sister City Association of Huntington Beach (SCA) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that coordinates sister city activities for Huntington Beach, including, but not limited to, high school student exchanges and city official delegation tours. The City does not provide funding to the Sister City Association, however, we do provide a staff liaison to their organization.

Beginning in late-2018, the SCA started researching the possibility of establishing a formal Sister City relationship with the City of Biarritz, France. After nearly a year of review, the SCA voted on October 9, 2019, to formally begin the process of creating a Sister City relationship with Biarritz, France.

Located on the Southern Atlantic coast of France's Basque Country, Biarritz was identified by the SCA as a community that has many similarities with Huntington Beach. Of note, Biarritz is known as the Surf Capital of Europe, and like our community ("Surf City USA"), they attract visitors from all over the world who are looking for a high-quality surfing location. In addition, Biarritz hosts prestigious surf championship events, has world-class beaches, and is considered to be a thriving European resort town.

Given the research and review that was coordinated by the SCA, in September 2019, the City of Biarritz invited representatives from Huntington Beach to visit their community. Alain Robert, Biarritz City Councilmember and head of Biarritz's Sister City program, hosted a delegation from Huntington Beach, which included Mayor Erik Peterson and Chris Cole from the City, along with representatives from Visit Huntington Beach and SCA. Of note, both Mayor Peterson and Chris Cole traveled at their own expense, and no City funds were expended to facilitate traveling to and from Biarritz. Also of note, once in Biarritz, the delegation toured the region, met with officials from Biarritz, and discussed the commonalities that could be found between Huntington Beach and Biarritz.

Subsequent to the scouting trip to France, Biarritz Councilmember Alain Robert was invited to visit Huntington Beach by the SCA. To that end, in October 2019, Biarritz Council Member Robert was hosted by Mayor Peterson and the SCA during a visit to Surf City, and during the visit, additional discussions were engaged about the interest that both Huntington Beach and Biarritz have in serving as the Olympics venue for surfing during the Summer Games.

Should a Sister City affiliation with Biarritz be established, the relationship would serve as a platform in which both cities could exchange ideas, share best practices for practical solutions on similar issues, and discuss priorities from a global perspective. The affiliation will begin with dialogue, but could expand in the future, with the possibility of lifeguard and student exchanges, and / or municipal festivities in each respective city with the purpose of strengthening the potential Sister City relationship.

There are no projected expenses or budgetary impacts associated with adopting Resolution 2019-92. If approved by the City Council, Huntington Beach would formally begin the process of establishing a Sister City relationship with Biarritz, France, by issuing an invitation to establish the designation.

**Environmental Status:**

Non-Applicable - Administrative Item

**Strategic Plan Goal:**

Enhance Economic Development

**Attachment(s):**

1. Sister City Association of Huntington Beach Letter of Request to Establish a Sister City Relationship with Biarritz, France
2. Resolution No. 2019-92: A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Huntington Beach Extending an Invitation to Biarritz, France to Become a Sister City and Inviting the People of Biarritz, France to Participate in said Program

