



# City of Bloomington Common Council

## Legislative Packet - Second Addendum

Issued on Wednesday, 01 December 2021

Wednesday, 01 December 2021

Regular Session

6:30 pm

*\*Please see the notes on the [Agenda](#) addressing public meetings during the public health emergency and possible alternative committee referral actions by the Council. For a schedule of upcoming meetings of the Council and the City's boards and commissions, please consult the City's [Calendar](#).*

# **Bloomington, Indiana || Palo Alto, California**

## **Briefing Document**

**October 2021**

***Prepared by the Palo Alto Sibling City Committee***

This document provides a basis for Palo Alto, California and Bloomington, Indiana to establish a Sibling Cities USA relationship. It is hoped and anticipated that this first of its kind partnership will pave the way for other pairs of geographically distant US cities to establish domestic sibling city relationships to encourage bridge-building, good will and interconnectedness throughout our country.

This overview provides background information on Bloomington and Palo Alto, offers a rationale for why each city should choose the other among cities across the United States, explores the areas of potential engagement between Bloomington and Palo Alto, and introduces the organizational framework for developing the relationship.

The goal of the relationship is to promote cross-regional connection by 1) introducing opportunities to build understanding, respect, and friendship through the collaborative exploration of the culture, arts, community service, and unique attributes of each city; 2) promoting economic and business opportunities, including sustainability practices; and 3) engaging in respectful civil discourse about the issues that face our nation today. This program will involve both youth and adults in its interactions and exchanges.

### **INTRODUCING BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA**

Bloomington is located in Monroe County in southern Indiana. It is Indiana's sixth-largest city, with a population of 80,500. The demographics of the Bloomington population are non-Hispanic White/Caucasian (82%), Asian(10%). African American (4%) and Hispanic (4%).

Home since 1820 of the original and largest campus of Indiana University (IU), Bloomington's population trends young, with a median age of just 28. The population is highly educated: over 90% have high school diplomas, and Monroe County ranks in the top 2.2% of counties nationwide in terms of education.

Along with IU, a Tier One Research University, Bloomington is also home to Ivy Tech Community College and numerous other scientific, technical, and professional establishments. The high level of education also contributes to a thriving workforce. IU attracts students from around the nation and the world with numerous [top-ranked programs](#), including those in music, marketing, environmental policy and management, public affairs, business, entrepreneurship, African history, and social psychology. More foreign languages are taught at IU than at any university in the U.S. -- more than 80.

The largest employers in the Bloomington area are Indiana University and the Crane naval installation. Where once limestone quarrying as well as furniture, television, refrigerator, and elevator manufacturing helmed the city's economy, these industries have largely been replaced by the healthcare and technology sectors. Though limestone still is quarried and sent all around the world. The city's considerable medical manufacturing and pharmaceutical sector is anchored by multinational corporations Cook Group, Incorporated and Catalent, Inc. Half of Bloomington's workforce is engaged in white-collar work; healthcare employment in Bloomington is six times the national average.

Tourism and the arts are also a significant economic sectors in Bloomington, where many residents place a high value on quality of life and the city's vibrant cultural scene. The birthplace of Hoagy Carmichael, who wrote the popular standard "Stardust" in a downtown bar, Bloomington is the seat of IU's Jacobs School of Music, one of the nation's premier music conservatories, and a mecca for thousands attending the Lotus World Music and Arts Festival each fall. Together with the university's offerings, the city abounds in art galleries, museums, theater and dance offerings, music clubs, literary organizations, cinema, and comedy. Bloomington hosts numerous annual regional arts and crafts festivals, a national writers' conference, internationally touring performers and speakers, a limestone symposium, and innumerable concerts, often free of charge. The city's impressive inventory of public art is sustained by a municipal One Percent for the Arts ordinance, and individual artists and arts organizations benefit from grants regularly distributed by the Bloomington Arts Commission. Bloomington has great restaurants and shopping, active nightlife, and is considered a great place to raise kids. And then of course there's Big Ten sports, and the annual Little 500 bicycle race, canonized in the Oscar-winning 1979 film, "Breaking Away." Bloomington's ample opportunities for recreation and cultural enrichment may be the reason *Forbes* named it the best city in the nation for work-life balance.

The city's culture is also informed by its international population and a diversity of faith communities--including several Tibetan Buddhist monasteries, a mosque, a synagogue, churches, and more. Bloomingtonians are known for their commitment to social justice and human rights--the city is home to an NAACP chapter, the Community Justice and Mediation

Center, and the Bloomington United anti-hate advocacy group, and has received a perfect score on the Human Rights Campaign's Municipal Equity Index for six years running. Bloomington is also beloved for its natural beauty and outdoor opportunities. A longtime Tree City and Gold Bicycle Community, Bloomington boasts ample public green space and a continually expanding trail network. The City's national gold medal-winning Parks and Recreation department maintains 32 parks, 11 interconnected trails, two public pools, four sports complexes, a golf course, and an ice arena among other amenities, which it activates through year-round programming. The City's most recent and ambitious park project to date, Switchyard Park transforms a 65-acre former industrial site in the center of the city into a community destination with a multi-use pavilion, spray pad, skate park, playground, community gardens, game courts, and dog parks.

Now in its third century, Bloomington, Indiana continues to grow and thrive, continually reinventing itself to remain relevant while maintaining its Midwestern university town charm.

## **INTRODUCING PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA**

Palo Alto, named for a tree, has 40,000 city-owned trees providing canopy for its city streets. It currently has a population of 68,572 in Santa Clara county in the western part of the Bay Area, a contiguous urban area bounded on the west by foothills to the Coastal Range and on the east by the San Francisco Bay. It is the 135th largest city in California.

The demographics of the Palo Alto population are White/Caucasian (49.9%), Asian(35%). African American (1.8%) and Hispanic (7.4%). Over 50% of the population holds an advanced college degree.

Palo Alto was established in the late 1880s specifically to be the "college town" for the new Leland Stanford Junior University. Early professors became active in the development of the new town; especially notable were a few engineering faculty members who developed and promoted utility services that became the basis of Palo Alto's municipal utility system.

Home to Stanford University and a top-ranked public school system, Palo Alto features beautiful and historic residential neighborhoods, including Professorville and one of the largest collections of Mid-Century Modern homes in the country, boasting 2700+ Eichler homes.

Known as the "Birthplace of Silicon Valley," Palo Alto famously has been a hub of entrepreneurship and innovation. The corporate headquarters for many world-class companies and research facilities such as Hewlett-Packard, VMWare, and many other pillars of technology started in Palo Alto. Starting in the 1970's Palo Altans have been on the leading edge of many

environmental movements, continuing with an aggressive Greenhouse Gas (GHG) reduction goal. Entrepreneurship is in Palo Alto's DNA.

The City of Palo Alto offers robust community amenities including 36 dedicated parks, a 2000-acre Baylands preserve and a 1400-acre Foothills preserve; 39 playgrounds, and 41 miles of walking/biking trails. Home to five community and youth centers, civic involvement by early residents such as Lucie Stern led to a 5-branch public library system including one of the nation's few stand-alone children's libraries; and several community centers providing recreational opportunities such as separate adult and children's theaters. The city also manages a regional airport.

Many community members are engaged in service clubs such as Kiwanis and Rotary or in the Chamber of Commerce, countless non-profit organizations, and many local, politically active neighborhood organizations.

Palo Alto has a highly educated and culturally sophisticated citizenry that is actively engaged in making a difference both locally and globally. Traditional community events include a children's May Fete parade, a July 4th chili cookoff, and a Moonlight Run in the Fall. On the weekend, in two commercial districts, farmers markets become another crosswalk of the community.

### **THREE PILLARS OF CONNECTION**

The implementation of cooperative programs would start after a Sibling City relationship is formalized. Community leaders from Palo Alto would engage with their counterparts in Bloomington to mutually agree on activities. The discussion below recites some starting points and examples of connections that could be made in accordance with the Sibling Cities USA Three Pillars of Connection.

#### **PILLAR ONE: Community Engagement**

Sharing community activity and events is an easy and accessible way for residents to get to know their counterparts in the other city. Initially, commonalities and differences may be discovered via joint virtual meetings. It is hoped that in time some in-person delegations may be able to meet in each of the cities or even at a third location for a service project or a class trip. As outlined below, opportunities include youth programs, arts and culture events, racial justice, LGBTQ, and environmental group exchanges, service/neighborhood organizations such as Rotary and Kiwanis sharing programs and volunteer opportunities, and athletic organizations providing training and/or friendly competition.

#### Youth and Education

Opportunities abound for students and youth to learn about each other's community and collaborate on projects and conduct community services together.

- High school student exchange programs could be developed
- Summer camps for high school students to visit the other community
- Classroom - joint lectures and/or classes on-line
- Arts - joint theatre productions, school newspaper editorials/columns swap, musical programs
- Community services – Palo Alto's Youth Community Services – Make a Difference Day; Bloomington's Banneker Community Center
- Technology - coding/programming and game designing
- Sports - train with and/or compete against teams in other city

### Arts and Culture

Arts communities could explore and collaborate on similar programs; examples of Palo Alto groups and projects that might make connections:

- Neighbors Abroad Sustainability Art Project
- Adult Choirs and orchestras
- Theater Connections
- Cultural Kaleidoscope
- Art Center (classes, production, sales fairs), Pacific Art League, Code Art
- Percentage for Arts program

examples of Bloomington groups and projects that might make connections:

- Bloomington Symphony Orchestra
- The Arts Alliance Center
- Bloomington Arts Commission
- The Writers Guild at Bloomington
- Lotus World Music and Arts Foundation
- Fourth Street Festival of the Arts and Crafts
- Cardinal Stage Company

### Civic and Community Service Organizations

Civic and community service organizations can connect to discover both commonalities and distinctions in their vast array of volunteers and activists, and what projects could be shared or even participated in by the other city.

- Rotary, Kiwanis and other established service organizations in both cities
- Grassroots community organizations; Palo Alto Neighborhoods, Bloomington's CONA

- Racial justice movements and organizations such as Black Lives Matter, Stop Asian Hate, Bloomington United, and Bloomington’s Future of Policing Task Force can connect with their counterparts to compare experiences, trade best practices, and consider ways to work together.
- Religious and interfaith organizations can connect for joint services, discussion, and service projects.
- Athletics organizations that provide fun as well as safety advocacy (Palo Alto Run Club, Silicon Valley Bike Coalition, Bloomington Bicycle Project, Mag 7 Race Series for examples), exchange/compete teams
- As Palo Alto and Bloomington enter their domestic Sibling City relationship, there is an opportunity to introduce their respective new international sister city “cousins.” To the extent practicable, the international Sister Cities introduce a chance to share common programs that might extend to the domestic programs, such as in education and sustainability. Palo Alto, for example, has active international educational and sustainability collaborations that could be extended to Bloomington. Bloomington has two sister cities in Latin America, belongs to a family of other Big Ten university towns, and regularly connects with other cities to share resources and best practices in the realms of business, education, culture, sports, and sustainability.

### Parks/Environment/Open Space

Recognizing that open space is vital to healthy communities and valued by both cities, Palo Alto and Bloomington may mutually explore challenges and successes in managing it.

- Palo Alto has 3 open space preserves totaling 4,000 acres
- Bloomington has numerous nature preserves and natural areas, including those at Griffy Lake, Lower Cascades, and Leonard Springs.
- The two cities may compare and contrast sustaining wildlife habitats while encouraging active use
- Palo Alto’s Canopy, Earth Day, and Sierra Club organizations have counterparts in such Bloomington organizations as the Center for Sustainable Living, the Sycamore Land Trust, and Friends of Lake Monroe.

### Smart Cities and Sustainability

The communities are mutually committed to efforts to promote environmental sustainability including the effects of climate change. Smart city approaches can be shared.

## **PILLAR TWO: Economic and Business Collaboration**

Bloomington and Palo Alto can explore economic and business collaboration that would drive equitable development, innovation, sustainability, and mutual prosperity in both places. Identifying workforce, capital, space, and other economic needs in the two regions could lead to areas of opportunity for cross-regional investment or other types of economic partnership. Strategies for meeting sustainability and climate goals, including the development of well-paying sustainability-related jobs, can be shared and developed.

Exploration of economic partnerships may include the following activities:

- Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development entities trade economic profiles, strengths, strategies and goals.
- Universities, colleges, and community colleges that provide workforce training, research collaboration, intellectual property licenses, and venture investment opportunities invited into discussions with economic actors in the other city.
- Venture, angel, and private equity investors given opportunities to accept pitches from and consider investment in businesses in the other city.

An educational overlay may also catalyze business interactions as programs like FIT and BEAM in Palo Alto and IU Ventures in Bloomington would connect students through business across the communities.

### **PILLAR THREE: Public Policy Town Halls and Discussion**

After residents of Bloomington and Palo Alto have developed friendship, mutual respect, and trust through the cultural exchanges and economic collaboration of Pillars One and Two, they will have an opportunity to discuss the nation's challenging policy issues. Joint town halls and other types of meetings will provide opportunities to hear each other out in a respectful, safe, and open manner. These discussions will uncover shared values and gain insight into the reasons for differing perspectives and disagreement. The goal is to increase understanding that will foster empathy and ideas for better ways forward—together as a more united country.

Several organizations have developed protocols for balanced and respectful policy dialogues on difficult topics that the two cities can use, including:

- [Living Room Conversations](#)
- [Braver Angels](#)
- [National Issues Forums](#)
- Teaching Support Program (Discussing Brave Space)

While we hope some city residents will be able to travel to the other city to participate in person, convening these dialogues online offers opportunities for easy and sustained remote conversation among residents of the two cities.



## YEAR ONE PROGRAM GOALS AND ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIP

The first year will build on the commitments made by Palo Alto and Bloomington. City Coordinators in each city, as well as parallel local committees, would connect community organizations and build programs to spread the word and generate impact within each community. The committees would be authorized by each city, and ideally include representatives from the local government, service organizations and community leaders, as well as representatives of the universities in each city.

Palo Alto will implement this relationship through [Neighbors Abroad](#) of Palo Alto, a local nonprofit that represents the City of Palo Alto in its relations with its eight sister cities around the world to support education, culture, commerce and sustainability. The current Palo Alto committee will transition into an expanded Neighbors Abroad committee to administer the programs envisioned in this document.

Bloomington would form a steering committee to actively administer the program.

Mutual year one goals would include determining initial community kick-offs, an ongoing organizational structure, leadership, community marketing, social media presence, and funding. During the year, in-person visits are anticipated as relationships are richer when people meet face to face. We also expect to celebrate this innovative relationship, starting with a launch event and at appropriate points during the year.

The program would follow the Sibling Cities USA Three Pillars of Connection to form the foundation of the Bloomington-Palo Alto relationship.

- Pillar 1 Programs for Community Engagement
- Pillar 2 Programs for Economic and Business Collaboration
- Pillar 3 Programs for Public Policy Town Halls and Discussion

To ensure impact and improve the program, the committees would use key success indicators to track and report both the extent of the connections we are forming and the nature of them. Key indicators would include the count of participants involved and the count of joint projects, as well as subjective measures. Initially, we expect to use post-event online surveys to gather data. As the program matures and resources allow, we hope to deploy professionally constructed tools to measure both quantitative factors and more qualitative measures of engagement.

The committees will report out at the one-year mark to each City Council identifying the progress and prospects for an ongoing program, as well as Key Indicators. We could also hold a joint council session once a year with our Bloomington counterparts.

Both cities have tapped city and community leaders to identify potential connections and develop programs to further the Sibling City relationship. Once the relationship between the cities is formalized, joint meetings of the program leaders in both Bloomington and Palo Alto may be established to allow for direct communication and collaboration.

###

# SIBLING CITIES USA™

A Program to Build Unity in America

Sibling Cities USA is a new non-profit organization that promotes unity in America by building deep relationships between US cities in different regions of the country. To help bridge regional and political divides, the program will facilitate the cross-regional pairing of cities or metropolitan areas (MSAs). A city or MSA from “the Coasts” might pair with one from “the Heartland,” or a city from a “blue state” with a city from a “red state.”

**Mission:** To promote national unity by increasing cultural understanding and respect, economic collaboration, and constructive political discourse among diverse cities through city-to-city relationships within the United States.

**Vision:** A United States of America with greater inter-regional understanding, respect, and cooperation across geographic, economic, racial, and political divides that leads to a more united, economically thriving, just, and equitable country.

**How:** Sibling Cities USA will facilitate the pairing of regionally diverse cities or MSAs and support their interaction. Sibling Cities will:

- Showcase each city’s unique heritage, culture, and attributes
- Explore common values and aspirations
- Build relationship, trust, and mutual respect
- Discover opportunities for economic collaboration
- Share and collaborate on best practices for city management and addressing civic issues
- Engage in public dialogue to build bridges across political, racial, and regional divides

## Background

Calls for national unity are increasing in response to today’s ominous national divides. These divides have become a growing chasm between “red states” and “blue states” that threatens and tests the strength of our democracy. In his inaugural address, President Biden declared that we “must end this uncivil war.”

Knitting this country back together is essential, but will be neither easy nor quick. Coming together will require a focused, sustained, and multi-faceted effort. President Biden proclaimed that we “can do this if we open our souls instead of hardening our hearts.” Sibling Cities USA is designed to be a leader in this effort so that “disagreement does not lead to disunion.”

**Prior Presidential Action:** In 1956, in the perilous post-WW II environment, President Dwight D. Eisenhower held a White House conference on citizen diplomacy. With a goal of enlisting citizens to create a free and peaceful world, federally-backed People-to-People committees flourished, out of which grew Sister Cities International. Today, SCI is a nonpartisan nonprofit, uniting tens of thousands of citizen diplomats, volunteers, and civic leaders from nearly 500 member communities in more than 140 countries.

President Eisenhower sought to lessen the chance of international conflict by helping people from different cultures celebrate their differences while building partnerships that would increase prosperity and understanding. Sibling Cities USA seeks a similar result right here at home.

## Three Pillars of Connection

The purpose of pairing cities or MSAs from different regions having a range of political, economic and racial diversity, is to promote national unity by assisting America's communities in recognizing:

- the assets that each community brings to the table,
- the synergies that come from building partnerships, and
- our commonalities as fellow Americans committed to the prosperity of our country and the success of our democracy.

To accomplish this, each Sibling Cities USA pair will engage in three types of interaction in accordance with the Sibling Cities USA Pillars of Connection:

**Pillar One:** Community Engagement: Education, Arts, and Culture

**Pillar Two:** Commerce: Economic/Business Collaboration

**Pillar Three:** Civil Discourse: Public Policy Town Halls and Citizen Discussions

Pillar Three may be undertaken six to twelve months after activity under Pillars One and Two have begun and relationships are established between the two cities. Sibling Cities USA will assist each pair of cities/MSAs with setting up these interactions.

### Pillar I. Community Engagement: Education, Arts & Culture

Initial outreach and exchange among the cities will be primarily cultural, social, and civic. Every city or region has its unique and distinguishing culture, history, and assets of which it is proud. Cultural interactions showcase these unique attributes and provide opportunities for the partner city to experience them, too, as residents enjoy getting to know each other. Examples include a signature food, an awe-inspiring vista, a renowned product (e.g., Napa Valley wine or Indiana limestone), a treasured park, local festivals/events (e.g., a Mariachi competition, a chili cook-off, a Black poetry reading, or a Chinese Lunar New Year celebration), or a famous entertainer, author, artist, historical figure or athlete who hails from the town.

The pandemic has caused us to become comfortable with meeting virtually which opens up many possibilities for sharing our community and civic life remotely. City residents could come together for online regional cooking classes, art and history lectures, or book clubs. Students could visit each other's classes, teachers in the two cities could team teach, and clubs could hold joint meetings. Religious leaders could do pulpit swaps or hold inter-regional interfaith services. Civic organizations such as Rotary Club, PTA, League of Women Voters, and others would be invited to partner with Sibling Cities USA at the national level and connect their members in the two cities for joint events. Domestic student exchange programs could organize exchanges with partnering cities. The possibilities are many.

In parallel with cultural exchanges, city councils and city executives will have opportunities to discuss and compare issues they face. Common needs and interests will be discovered, as well as novel approaches and solutions. Councilmembers and city staff can share best practices, ideas, and resources for serving their communities and addressing local issues.

## Pillar II. Economic/Business Collaboration

One of the best ways to get to know each other and create a more united and equitable society is to expand economic opportunity across regional and racial lines. Each pair of cities will explore economic and business collaboration that would drive equitable development, innovation, sustainability, and mutual prosperity. Collaboration can fulfill workforce, space, and other unmet needs for areas with robust economies and attract business and investment to areas seeking growth, enhancing and even jump-starting local economies. City pairs can partner to develop strategies to meet climate goals, including the development of well-paying sustainability-related jobs.

Exploration of economic partnerships may include the following activities:

- Chambers of Commerce and economic development entities trade economic profiles, strengths, and partnership opportunities
- Universities, colleges, and community colleges provide workforce training, research collaboration, intellectual property licenses, and venture investment opportunities
- Venture, angel, and private equity investors consider investment opportunities and accept pitches from the partner city/MSA.

More populous MSAs may offer relatively greater densities of a highly educated and professionally skilled workforce, investment capital, and business management experience. Less populous MSAs can offer relatively more space for manufacturing or other large facilities, lower commercial rent, greater affordability, and increased access to a higher standard of living. Accordingly, a large company might consider locating a new office, manufacturing facility, or remote work hub in the partner city. A technology company could consider a research collaboration with a university in the partner city. An investor might fund a start-up in the partner city.

An increasing number of organizations nationally are exploring cross-regional economic partnerships. This growing interest in investment opportunities in non-traditional geographic regions is evidenced by Revolution LLC, founded by AOL founder Steve Case and famous for its Rise of the Rest cross-country bus tours seeking investments in heartland cities. According to its website, Revolution

*“now has two \$150M Rise of the Rest Seed Funds to invest in seed stage companies outside of Silicon Valley, NY, and Boston (the first launched in 2017 and the second in fall of 2019), both backed by [a group of iconic entrepreneurs, executives and investors](#) including Jeff Bezos, Eric Schmidt, Ray Dalio, Meg Whitman, and Sara Blakely.”*

An available blueprint for economic collaboration among diverse participants is [Strategic Doing](#), that teaches how to form collaborations quickly and enables leaders to design and guide new networks that generate innovative solutions. This approach has led to sustained economic growth in Oklahoma City, Flint, Michigan, Charleston, South Carolina, and more.

The pandemic has made remote work more comfortable and more common. Expectations regarding worker proximity are unlikely to revert to pre-pandemic levels. This, too, opens up possibilities for inter-regional cooperation such as hiring talent from the partner city/MSA without requiring employees to move, and enabling talented people to return to their home regions to help those regions thrive.

New economic ventures provide opportunities for increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion, including in enterprises that are funded and staffed pursuant to collaborations instigated by Sibling Cities USA. Eliminating systemic bias in economic opportunity is a key part of the Sibling Cities USA vision. Partnering cities/MSAs will be expected to incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion practices in their economic and business partnerships.

### Pillar III. Public Policy Town Halls & Discussions

After Sibling Cities residents have begun to develop friendship, mutual respect, familiarity, and trust through the community interactions and commerce activities of Pillars One and Two, they will have an opportunity to discuss our nation’s challenging policy issues. Joint town halls and smaller group discussions will provide opportunities to hear each other out in a respectful, safe, and open manner. These discussions aim to uncover both shared values and differing perspectives. The goal is to increase understanding that will foster empathy and ideas for better ways forward—together as a more united country.

Several organizations have developed protocols for balanced and respectful policy dialogues on difficult topics that the Sibling Cities can use, including:

- [Living Room Conversations](#)
- [National Issues Forums](#)
- [Braver Angels](#)

While we hope some city residents will be able to travel to the partnering city to have conversation in person, convening these dialogues online offers opportunities for easy and sustained conversation among remote residents of Sibling Cities.

## Implementation

**Pilot Program:** A pilot program to establish proof of principle and inspire other cities to participate in Sibling Cities USA is under development. At present, Mayor Tom DuBois in Palo Alto, California (who independently conceived of a domestic sister city program) and Mayor John Hamilton in Bloomington, Indiana (who has been instrumental in developing this proposal), along with citizen leaders in each community, are planning for a Sibling Cities USA relationship. Learnings from their experience will help inform subsequent Sibling Cities relationships.

**Advisory Board:** Sibling Cities USA has assembled an Advisory Board of highly accomplished national leaders, many of whom bring deep experience in bridge-building, including

**Joan Blades**, Co-Founder, Living Room Conversations

**Cornell William Brooks**, Professor, Harvard Kennedy School and former President, NAACP

**Rob Fersh**, Founder, Convergence Center for Policy Resolutions

**David Mathews**, President, Kettering Foundation and former Secretary of HEW under President Ford

**Joan Williams**, Professor, UC Hastings College of the Law and author, *White Working Class*

**Pairing Cities:** Guidelines for the pairing of cities and for fostering their interaction in accordance with the Three Pillars of Connection, include 1) the cities are regionally distant and not in the same state, 2) the cities are of roughly the same size, and 3) city leaders are enthusiastic about the pairing and the program. These guidelines will be refined over time, based on the experiences of prior city pairs. Learnings will be curated at the national level on an ongoing basis and used to enhance Sibling Cities USA practices. Sibling Cities USA is eager to partner with other organizations to identify potential city pairings and is exploring collaborations with the [National League of Cities](#) and the [United States Conference of Mayors](#). City Councils will typically be asked to approve and endorse the Sibling City USA relationship at the outset.

**Funding:** Sibling Cities USA is seeking grant support from private and public sources. Sibling Cities USA has a modest start-up grant and is seeking further support from foundations and other grant makers. Sibling Cities USA will also explore grant support from the federal government, for example, from the Commerce Department, similar to SCI's grant support from the U.S. Department of State.

**Budget:** Budgetary requirements would be modest, as most of the expenses would be for personnel and travel. Sibling Cities USA is designed to be a convenor that fosters relationships among local governments, civic organizations, economic development entities, schools, public interest groups, and more. Those organizations would organize and run their own events and projects. Ideally, Sibling Cities USA would provide modest grant support to participating organizations to enable greater

participation. Based on preliminary research, a national Sibling Cities USA program could be established with an initial annual budget of less than \$1 million.

## Conclusion

The need for unity is now -- our country longs to become more connected and to take renewed pride in America. Sibling Cities USA can help bridge our geographic, cultural, and economic divides, two communities at a time, healing our nation and restoring a common vision of our motto, *E Pluribus Unum*.

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## Note from the Author

*I grew up in Indiana, went to law school in Washington, DC, and practiced law in New York City before settling in Palo Alto, California in 1992. This gave me a deep appreciation and respect for the differing assets of these regions and the good, decent, and talented Americans who live in each place. I am passionate about helping others see their fellow Americans as I do and have carefully crafted the Sibling Cities USA program to do just that. I am eager to lead this program forward and foster its growth, including by facilitating, tracking and supporting Sibling Cities USA pairs, partnering with like-minded national organizations, liaising with both municipalities and the federal government, and expanding the program.*

~ Vicki Veenker

**Vicki Veenker** is an expert convenor whose unique experience with each of the Three Pillars led her to construct and champion this national Sibling Cities USA program. Both the International Trade Commission and the federal courts have appointed Vicki to their mediation panels. She served as the Managing Director, West Coast for Convergence Center for Policy Resolution, a national non-partisan non-profit that convenes policy leaders to find solutions to intractable issues. Her career as an accomplished Silicon Valley intellectual property attorney gives her unique insight into the innovation economy and economic development. As a founder and former General Counsel to Women's Professional Soccer, Vicki has managed multiple entities working in cities across the country for a common purpose. Her first job was with the Kettering Foundation where she worked to increase the national network of grassroots convenors participating in the National Issues Forum.