



RALEIGH
SISTER CITIES
2021-24
STRATEGIC
PLAN

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*Updated July 17, 2021

**For more info about RSC, please visit RaleighSisterCities.org or send a message to Info@RaleighSisterCities.org for inquiries.

//EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From October 2020 through June 2021, **Raleigh Sister Cities** (“RSC”) developed a strategic plan to formalize key objectives, strategies, and action plans for the next three years. The plan will allow us to advance our mission by establishing key priorities, providing organizational focus, and achieving long-term sustainability. RSC enlisted the help of advisors from **Executive Service Corps of the Triangle** (“ESC”) in order to facilitate development of the strategic plan. ESC followed their standard strategic planning process incorporating some modifications to meet RSC’s requirements. Oversight for the strategic plan was provided by RSC’s Strategic Planning Committee (“SPC”) along with periodic progress discussions with the full board of directors.

The following pages provide a brief overview the strategic planning process, our five key objectives, and the detailed Strategic Plan follows.

The SPC met bi-weekly throughout the project. The committee reviewed and discussed key internal and external data to be considered as part of the plan, conducted in-depth interviews with stakeholders, conducted a SWOT analysis, agreed upon our most important priorities, developed preliminary objectives and strategies, and then finalized the plan.

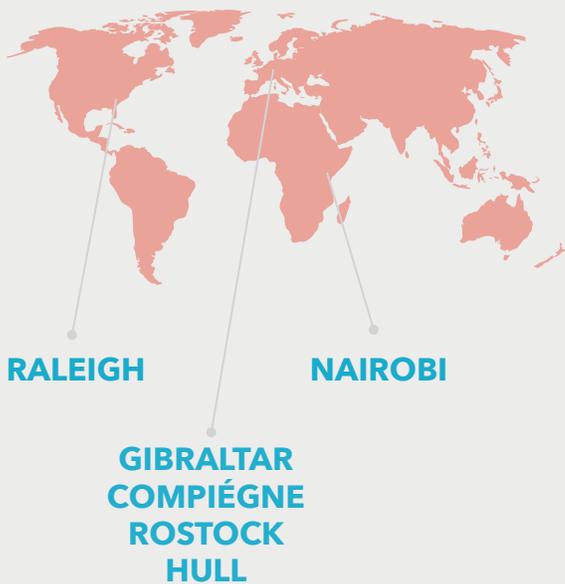
Through this process, we identified the following strategic objectives:

- 1. Cultivate partnerships with other organizations to foster collaboration**
- 2. Increase awareness of our organization in the broader Raleigh community**
- 3. Strengthen the financial sustainability of our organization**
- 4. Provide strong and effective governance**
- 5. Improve the quality and quantity of our programs and services while ensuring operational excellence**

The objectives are appropriately intentional and ambitious. Through the strategic plan’s implementation, we will increase the community’s engagement with our organization, strengthen relationships with our sister cities and our partners, provide enriching experiences for our members, and ensure continued sustainability through sound fiscal and operational management.

//ABOUT SISTER CITIES

Raleigh joined the Sister Cities movement in the early 1980s at the instigation of Ed Walters, Raleigh Mayor Pro Tempore, after he attended a National League of Cities conference. Established by President Dwight Eisenhower in 1956, Sister Cities International was initially coordinated by the U.S. Department of State and then moved to the National League of Cities. This international program was established to promote friendly relations and mutual understanding between citizens of U.S. cities and those of similar cities in foreign countries.



//RSC STARTS WITH HULL, ENGLAND

During a trip to England, Mr. Walters met a representative from Kingston upon Hull and invited the Lord Mayor of Hull to visit Raleigh in October 1984. Two years later, at the opening ceremonies of Raleigh's first International Festival, Mayor Avery Upchurch and Lord Mayor Pearlman signed the Certificates of Affiliation making Hull Raleigh's first sister city.

Sister Cities Association of Raleigh received its charter on December 31, 1985. Funding was initially received from both the Raleigh City Council and the Wake County Board of Commissioners.

In the ensuing years, Raleigh partnered with Shinyanga, Tanzania (1987), Compiègne, France (1989), Kolomna, Russia (1997), Rostock, Germany (2001), Xiangyang, China (2009), Nairobi, Kenya, (2014), and Gibraltar (2020).

To commemorate its 30th anniversary in 2016, RSC presented an array of programs and events to increase the public's awareness of RSC and to encourage their participation kick-off Celebration and City Council Proclamation; International Student Panel; "Taste of Our Cities" Farm-to-Fork Annual Meeting; and "Art from Raleigh Sister Cities" exhibit.

//AT RDU INTERNATIONAL

RSC joined the Cary, Chapel Hill, Durham and Southern Pines Sister Cities groups to create a work of public art at the RDU International Airport which would symbolize the spirit and mission of the International Sister Cities movement. Dedicated in February 2012, the 45 foot mural "Friendly Folks" is located at the International Arrivals baggage claim in Terminal 2.

//VISION

Connect Raleigh to the world through global relationships.

//MISSION

Celebrate global cultures in Raleigh through long-term partnerships and programs through city-to-city and person-to-person diplomacy.

//VALUES

Global Citizenship – The idea that one’s identity transcends geography or political borders and that responsibilities or rights are derived from membership in a broader class: “humanity”.

Integrity - Maintaining the highest standards of professional and ethical behavior, transparency, cultural sensitivity, and respect to our global partners.

Celebration - Honoring the diversity of cultures with programs that enhance citizen diplomacy and appreciation.

Collaboration - Sharing many ideas, backgrounds, and experiences together for greater purposes and achievements.

//STAKEHOLDERS

Raleigh Sister Cities relies upon many stakeholder groups to provide resources and capabilities. They have an interest in, and are directly affected by our Strategic Plan.

- Members
- Donors
- Volunteers
- Board members
- City of Raleigh officials and staff
- The greater City of Raleigh community
 - Citizens
 - Businesses
 - Sponsors
 - Partners
 - Educational institutions
 - Museums
 - Non-profits

// OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

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OBJECTIVE 1: CULTIVATE PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS TO FOSTER COLLABORATION (PARTNERSHIPS: XIMENA URIBE & LINDA WHARTON)

In order to ensure that Raleigh Sister Cities can achieve its mission and continue to grow, we will strengthen our connections with other organizations, business, and individuals.

Strategies:

1. Strengthen city of Raleigh's commitment to RSC including parameters for oversight, partnership, and shared goals (Year 1).
 2. Cultivate meaningful partnerships with local organizations and leaders who can assist us with achieving our mission or have missions similar to ours (Years 1-3).
 3. Cultivate meaningful partnerships with local businesses (Years 1-3).
-

OBJECTIVE 2: INCREASE AWARENESS OF OUR ORGANIZATION IN THE BROADER RALEIGH COMMUNITY (AWARENESS: CODY CHARLAND & KEVIN LORD)

To become a successful communicator through intentional strategies, RSC will build on a set of original values, vision, and mission statement with a new brand identity and marketing plan.

Strategies:

1. Create a brand and value proposition that reflects our vision, mission, and values (Year 1).
 2. Create and implement a marketing and communication plan that targets stakeholders and prospects including volunteers, donors, and members (Years 1-2).
-

OBJECTIVE 3: STRENGTHEN THE FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF OUR ORGANIZATION (SUSTAINABILITY: PAT HALL, KEVIN LORD)

Establish and grow income streams for Raleigh Sister Cities.

Strategies:

1. Develop and implement a comprehensive, robust, and diversified fundraising plan (Years 1-3).
2. Refine and improve existing financial policies and procedures (Year 1).
3. Improve financial reporting as necessary for applying for grants or responding to other requests for financial information (Years 1-2).

//OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES CONT.

OBJECTIVE 4: PROVIDE STRONG AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE (GOVERNANCE: CODY CHARLAND, PAT HALL)

Strengthen RSC's governance by re-defining Board structure, creating and implementing operational policies and procedures, and delivering training to provide for Board effectiveness and Board member transition.

Strategies:

1. Strengthen our board's effectiveness (Years 1-2).
2. Document and organize operational data and tools (Year 1).
3. Refine and improve organizational policies and procedures (Year 1).
4. Conduct a comprehensive risk assessment and create an action plan (Year 2).
5. Create and implement a tool to assess Sister City relationships (Years 1-2).

OBJECTIVE 5: IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF OUR PROGRAMS AND SERVICES WHILE (PROGRAMS: XIMENA URIBE, LINDA WHARTON)

In order for Raleigh Sister Cities to strengthen existing relationships and expand our reach we will leverage our programming and services to the Raleigh community through improved Sister City Committee operations.

Strategies:

1. Strengthen Sister City Committee programs (Years 1-3).
2. Expand and improve our programming, events, and unique cultural experiences (Years 1-3).
3. Energize relationships with our current Sister Cities (Years 1-3).

//MANAGEMENT PLAN

Owners have been assigned to each Strategic Objective. The owners are the stewards for their objective. Stewardship includes:

- Creating and updating supporting strategies and actions plans
- Collaborating with board and staff to complete the action plans
- Gaining necessary approvals from the board
- Obtaining any resources necessary
- Providing progress updates to the board
- Updating supporting strategies and action plans as needed

In addition to the owners, implementation of the Strategic Plan will require active commitment and participation from Board Directors and volunteers.

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- Progress Notes from the prior 6 months
- Goals and Action Plans for the next 6 months

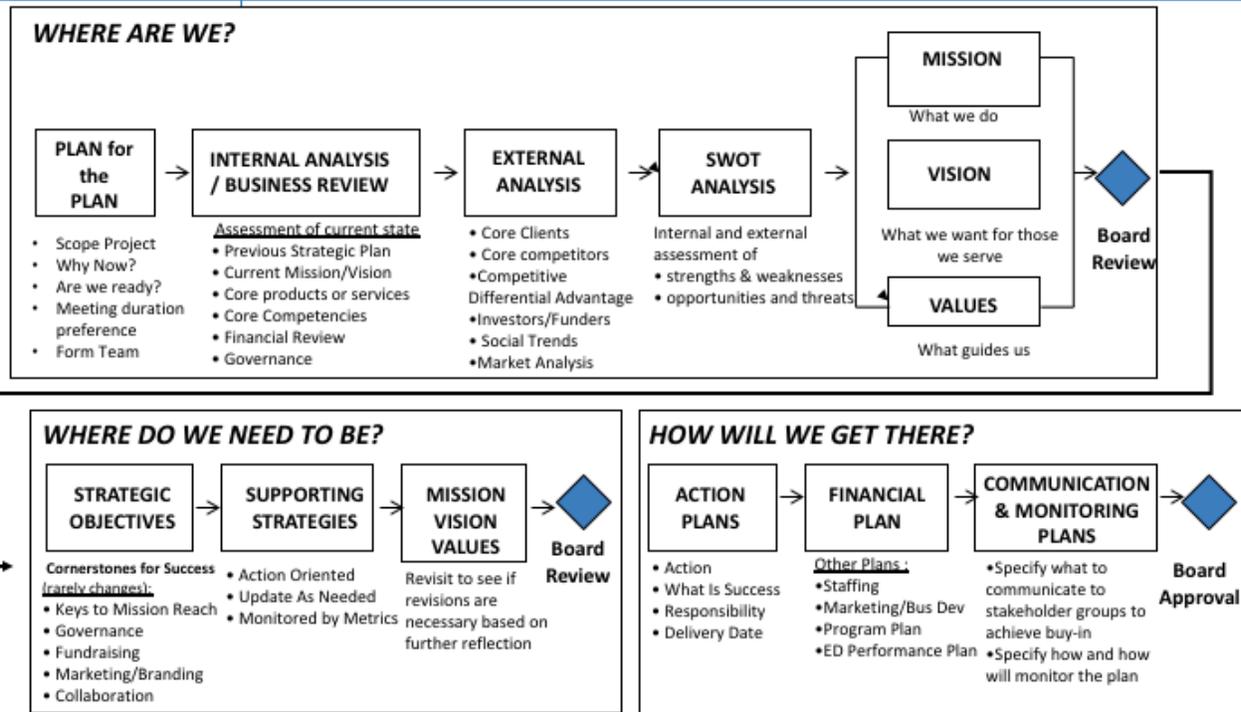
The 6-month review will include the following steps:

- Review progress on each objective while highlighting what's been accomplished and anything that has changed
- Ensure that the strategies and actions plans are properly resourced
- Identify shifts, changes, and/or new challenges within the community that suggest a need to adjust the plan

//APPENDIX A



Base Strategic Planning Process



//APPENDIX B: EXTERNAL & INTERNAL INFO REVIEWED

External

- 2020 SCI Priorities Updated Draft 1-28-2021
- Raleigh 2030 Comprehensive Plan Update Quick Guide
- Raleigh 2030 Comprehensive Plan Update
- Raleigh Mission and Vision
- Raleigh Strategic Plan
- International Sister Cities: Bridging the Divide
- Raleigh 2018 Data Book (published in 2019) – note: this is the most current version
- Raleigh 2018 Community Survey – note: this is the most current version
- International Focus Raleigh
- US Sister City Poll Responses
- Visit to Atlanta Sister Cities
- Phoenix Sister Cities Background
- Madison Kanifing Announces Collaboration on New Library for Kanifing
- International Sister Cities Bridging the Divide article
- 11 Philanthropy Trends for 2020
- NC Blueprint for Global Engagement - 2020

Internal

- Raleigh Sister Cities 2014 Annual Report
- Raleigh Sister Cities 2016 Annual Report
- Raleigh Sister Cities 2017 Annual Report
- Raleigh Sister Cities 2018 Annual Report
- Raleigh Sister Cities 2019 Annual Report
- 2017 Strategic Plan
- MOU between RSC and HRM
- Guide to establishing a sister city relationship
- RSC BYLAWS as amended April 22 2020

//APPENDIX C - STAKEHOLDERS

Current and Former RSC Leadership

- Marjorie Salzman - Former VP of New Affiliations
- Stan Kimer - Former Board Member
- Mary Clare Freeman - Gibraltar Chairperson
- Jo Garrison - Former Secretary Board Member
- David Kilbride - Board Member
- Matt Lail - Current VP of Communications
- Renee Palmer - Former Board Member
- Pat Hall - Board Member
- Katey Ahmann - Hull City Chair
- Gretchen Chapman - Former Compiegne City Chair

Other Sister City Organizations

- Marcelino Garcia - Chair for Bogota sister city in Chicago
- Carol Robinson Lopez - International Sister Cities
- Dr. Alex Akulli - VP Sister Cities of Greater Spartanburg SC
- Brady Surles - Durham Sister Cities

Other Organizations

- Leila Bekri - International Focus
- Jeanne Tedrow - NC Society for nonprofits

Government Officials

- Johnathan Melton - Raleigh City Council member
- Troy Burton - Historical Resources & Museums
- Dickie Thomson - Former Raleigh City Council Liaison
- Emlyn Koster - Former NC Museum of Science President

Donors

- Joan Ellen Deck
- Anne Franklin

//APPENDIX D - SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationships with particular cities • Organizational independence – don't have to ask permission • Unique cultural experiences and event opportunities that larger organizations not able to offer • Ability to meet individually, person-to-person with people from other cities • Dedicated volunteers, long-time supporters • Diversity in Board – come from different cultures, speak different languages • Official city/civic endorsement. Access to city venues. • Small scale events, more approachable, not intimidating • Ability to pivot to virtual events with the sister cities (12 virtual events since October 2020) • Sister Cities International brand reputation • Only international organization that has formal relationships with cities • Longevity – 30 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No strong, continuing fundraising plan • Not well organized – data, documents; haphazard • Volunteer turnover – lose critical skills, volunteers can leave at any time • RSC doesn't always have time/resources to do more • Inability to connect with foreign representatives or officials (e.g., getting in touch with Nairobi, China) • Community not familiar with RSC • Lack of Board development – need more members with strong connections to City of Raleigh, other nonprofits, etc. • Too few volunteers • Inactive sister city relationships – cannot accomplish mission; missed opportunity after investing significant time to establish relationship • Lack of short-term and long-term strategy • Lack of dedicated, paid staff (marketing & communication, event coordination, administrative, build relationships, etc.). Would provide continuity.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology – Zoom, virtual events, communicate with Sister Cities via video; widely accepted • Partnerships w/local organizations w/similar missions • Growth in multi-cultural communities in Raleigh; Raleigh very interested in this trend • Bettering relationships with City of Raleigh officials and staff • Work together – co-host events with other nonprofits • Other regions interested in sister city relationships (India, Mexico) • Market disruption – pandemic, recession, impacts international relations • Build on strong cultural arts community in Raleigh • Raleigh's economy is strong (could help with fundraising) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to connect with foreign representatives or officials (e.g., getting in touch with Nairobi, China) • Community not familiar with RSC • If external environment doesn't change and RSC doesn't change, will be a major issue for RSC (12-18 months) • Unwillingness from City of Raleigh to engage and partner with RSC (haven't found the open door yet) • Leadership changes – City of Raleigh officials, staff • Pandemic impact to travel holding in-person events, have exchanges • Market disruption – pandemic, recession, impacts international relations. • Competition from similar organizations (e.g., International Focus)