

MINUTES FOR THE
SISTER CITIES ADVISORY BOARD
January 14, 2026
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111

Roll Call

Present:

- Ross Chambless
- Matilyn Mortensen
- Sheri Sorenson
- Ahimara Suarez
- Rose Kjesbo
- Annie Quan
- Jane Kim
- Stacey Adams
- John Wilson
- Nicole Gallo

Staff Present:

- Olivia Johnson

Approval of the November 5, 2025, Sister Cities Board Minutes

Board Member Quan motioned, Board Member Mortensen seconded, unanimous approval.

Public Comment

No public comments were provided.

Business

Marcus Lee, Community Reinvestment Agency Project Coordinator, presented about the history, current status, and future of the Japantown Visioning Project and downtown entertainment district development plans.

He shared about the streetscape and vegetation plans being developed to help facilitate the outdoor festivals on the street and explained the placemaking and art elements being planned.

Possible opportunities to connect with Matsumoto in the design process include the design of manhole covers, based on those commonly found in Japan, the planting of Cherry Blossom trees, art elements on the sidewalk and planters, and murals.

Possible grant funding or capital campaigns to raise funds for these elements were discussed as options to highlight the Japanese-American experience unique to Japantown

in Salt Lake City and to create a streetscape that honors the past and can be enjoyed by future generations.

Staff Report

Sister Cities International U.S.-Japan Impact Grant

Olivia Johnson noted that the grant application was being finalized.

Matusmoto Video

Olivia Johnson noted that staff in Matsumoto requested a short video introduction of Salt Lake City. She encouraged Board members to contribute and described the plans for filming from different partners around the city.

2025 Annual Report

Olivia Johnson noted that the Annual Report was due by the end of the month to share with the Mayor and City Council.

Quezon City

Olivia Johnson noted that the return of Quezon City to full Sister City status was approved by the Mayor and City Council and that planning for an event to celebrate the milestone would begin later in the spring.

Events

Olivia Johnson noted that Sister Cities was again planning to table at Nihon Matsuri on April 25, 2026. The Board discussed the feasibility of other tabling events around the area, including Living Traditions.

Strategic Planning

Olivia Johnson asked the Board about the frequency of meetings and how members would like to approach strategic planning. Members decided to work on strategic planning at the next meeting.

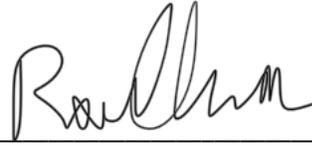
OPMA Training

Olivia Johnson reminded the board to complete their OPMA trainings as soon as possible and send in completed certificates to staff.

Adjournment

Board Member Quan motioned to adjourn, Board Member Mortensen seconded, unanimous approval.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ross Chambless", written in a cursive style.

Ross Chambless, Co-Chair

This document and the recording constitute the official minutes of the Economic Development Sister Cities Advisory Board meeting held on January 14, 2026.
