

# City of Portsmouth Forum on Sister Cities and Citizen Diplomacy Program

Monday, April 30, 2018  
Portsmouth Public Library

Hosted by:  
The Mayor's Blue Ribbon Committee on Sister Cities and Citizen Diplomacy

# Forum Goals

1. Explore local interest in Portsmouth's current City Sister City relationships and the degree of interest in maintaining these relationships and/or forging new international ties.
2. Brainstorm ways to engage the community in the program

# Agenda

- A. Introduce Committee (5 mins)
- B. Overview of Sister Cities International organization (5 mins)
- C. History and status of our Sister Cities Program (15 mins)
- D. Committee progress report (5 mins)
- E. Research results (robust programs and Survey Monkey) (10 mins)
- F. Questions (10 mins)
- G. Public input (30 mins)
- H. Present findings and conclusions (35 minutes)

A.

Introduce Committee

# Mayor's Committee

Formed in June 2017:

1. Karina Quintans, Resident, Committee Chair
2. Nancy Carmer, Portsmouth Economic Development Program Manager
3. Mike Nelson, Portsmouth Poet Laureate
4. Valerie Rochon, President, Chamber Collaborative of Greater Portsmouth
5. Stephanie Seacord, Leading Edge Marketing
6. Steve Zadavec, Superintendent of Schools

# Mayor's Committee Objectives

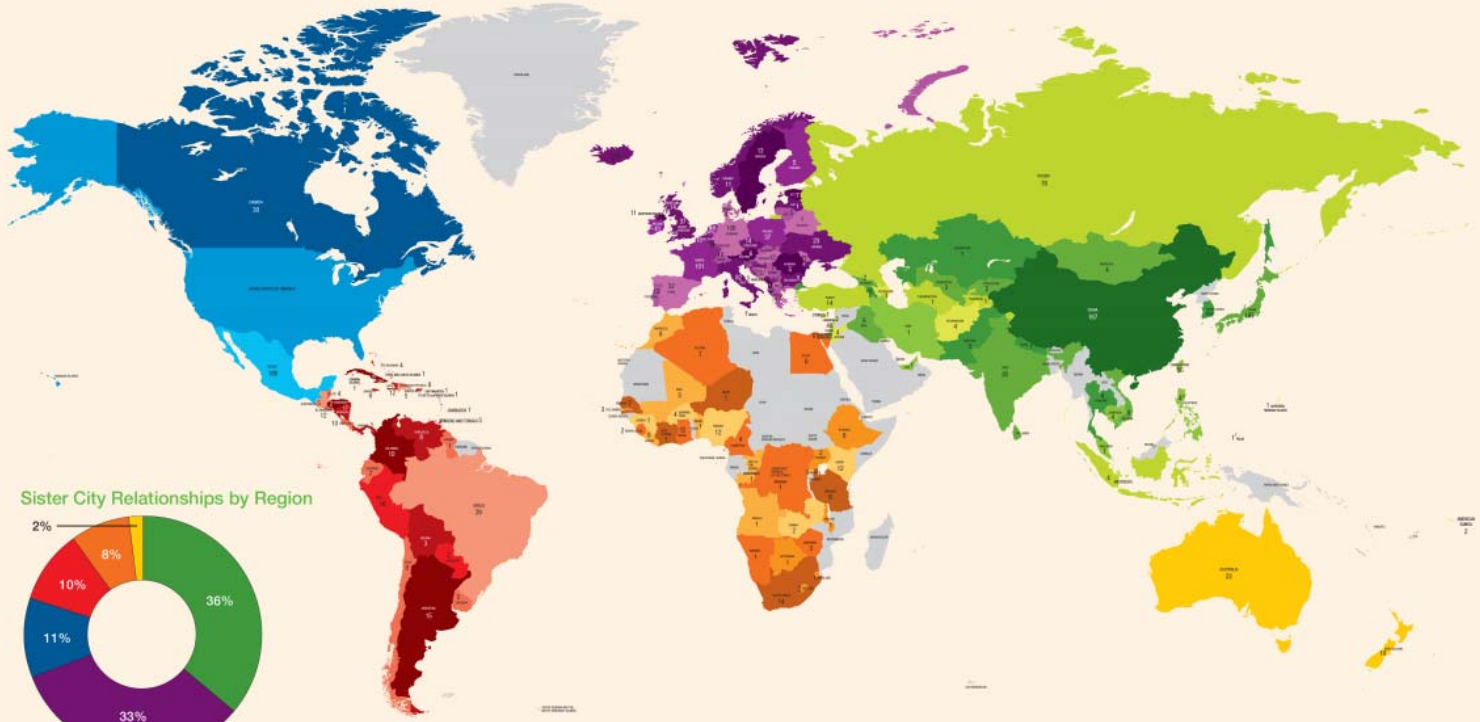
1. Evaluate the level of activity, benefit and local interest in continuing the Sister City or other citizen diplomacy relationships
2. Research successful Sister City/Friendship City relationships to recommend a framework for long term administration, promotion and success of the Portsmouth Sister City Program
3. Explore ways to engage the community in the program (business, educational, cultural and humanitarian groups)

B.

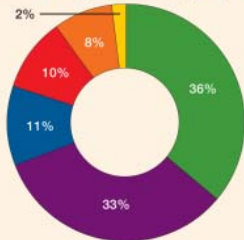
Overview

Sister Cities International

# U.S. Partnerships Worldwide



Sister City Relationships by Region



- Asia 36%
- Europe 33%
- North America 11%
- South/Central America and Caribbean 10%
- Africa 8%
- Oceania 2%



# Sister Cities International

- In 1956, President Eisenhower created Sister Cities International as a US organization formalizing the idea that citizen diplomacy could make a difference
- Mission: to "promote peace through mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation — one individual, one community at a time."
- The US is now friends with more than 136 countries, thanks to official Sister City relationships maintained by 2,000 cities, towns and counties.
- Headquartered in DC: [SisterCities.org](http://SisterCities.org)

C.

History and Status  
Portsmouth Sister Cities

# Overview of Our Sister Cities

- Nichinan, Japan
- Sverodinsk, Russia
- Kitase, Ghana
- Carrickfergus, Ireland
- Portsmouth, England
- Parnu, Estonia
- Szolnok, Hungary
- Agadir, Morocco

# Nichinan, Japan

**Status:** Active **Established:** 1985

## **Local organizations involved:**

- Portsmouth High School
- Japan-America Society of NH
- Portsmouth Peace Treaty Anniversary Committee

## **Program Activities:**

- Cherry trees at City Hall 1985
- Annual student exchanges in Portsmouth and in Nichinan with Sister School Nichinan Gakeun Jr-Sr High School
- City delegation to Treaty 100<sup>th</sup> & 110<sup>th</sup>
- Pen pal program
- 2018 Senior Class Gift display



# Nichinan, Japan



# Severodvinsk, Russia

**Status:** In-Active **Established:** 1995

## **Local organizations involved:**

- Portsmouth/Severodvinsk Connection
- Portsmouth Peace Treaty Anniversary Committee
- Greenpeace

## **Program Activities:**

- 27 exchange visits
- White Nights celebration for Portsmouth Peace Treaty 100<sup>th</sup> in 2005





*Letter Of Consensus  
And  
Citizen Compact  
Of The  
Portsmouth-Severodvinsk Connection*

Sunday, July 16, 1995

Preamble: Under the auspices of the citizen group Portsmouth-Severodvinsk Connection, in June 1994 a delegation from Severodvinsk, Russia, visited Portsmouth, New Hampshire. In July 1995, a delegation from Portsmouth made a return visit to Severodvinsk. Both cities have nuclear submarine shipyards. The purpose of the visits was to discuss the common problems both cities are facing in the belief that active citizen participation in the areas of defense conversion, community development, and environmental clean-up is critical to resolving these problems. The Portsmouth-Severodvinsk Connection is intended to encourage and expand an exchange between communities so that people may learn more about each other's cities and the lives of their citizens.

In the interest of enduring friendship and a pledge of cooperation, we sign this **Letter of Consensus and Citizen Compact**, signifying our commitment to work toward mutual understanding between Russians and Americans.

We recognize the importance of citizen-to-citizen relationships. When citizens meet in personal associations and discuss mutual concerns, no government can prevent them from becoming friends.

As stewards of the earth, it is the responsibility of people to protect, preserve, and conserve the earth for the future.

We share a desire for universal peace.

We will help to organize a constructive dialogue between the institutions of both cities.

We will continue the dialogue begun in June of 1994 in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and continued in July of 1995 in Severodvinsk, Russia, to assure cooperation between our communities.

We confirm our readiness to promote further development and cooperation in the following spheres: citizen-to-citizen diplomacy, health care, environment, culture, education, defense conversion, and economic development and diversification.

With these actions we can enter the 21st Century with excellent prospects for a quality environment, everlasting peace, and economic well-being.

We dare to dream that our future will be bright and good and that our potential as human beings is unlimited.


With love and respect, we will succeed.

Signed by,

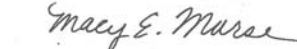
Citizens-Americans:

Citizens-Russians:

Ursula E. Bondi  
Retired Shipyard Worker

  
Roger P. Cole  
Director,  
Seacoast Anti-Pollution League


  
Macy E. Morse  
Activist


  
Jim Splaine  
City Councilor, Portsmouth  
State Legislator, New Hampshire

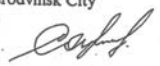
  
Boris Stasiuk  
Retired Businessman

  
Joshua Handler  
Disarmament Coordinator,  
Greenpeace

Aleksei Klimov  
Environmentalist

  
Vyacheslav Puzyrey  
Financial Expert

  
Oleg Savin  
Head, Directorate of Economics and  
Prognosis, Severodvinsk City  
Administration

  
Nikolai Spirin  
Head, Directorate of Self-Governance,  
Severodvinsk City Administration

  
Vladimir Vashchenko  
Radiation-Hygiene Specialist

  
Ludmila Zhukova  
Journalist, the Northern Worker

# Severodvinsk, Russia





# Accra/Kitase, Ghana

Status: Active Established: 2004

## Local organizations involved:

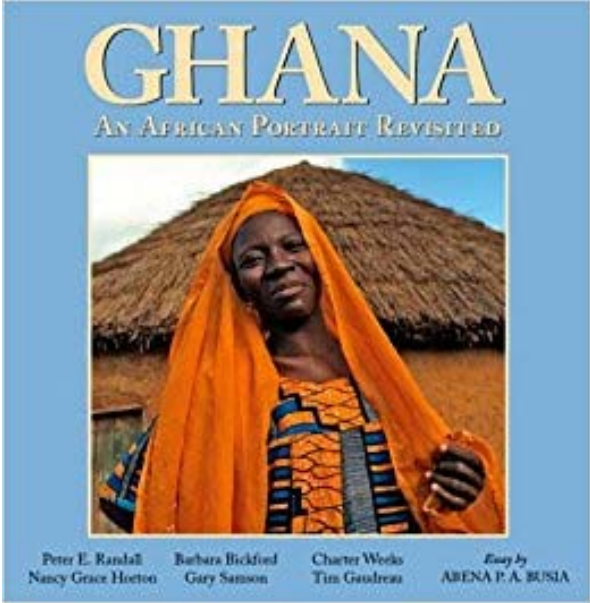
- Valerie Cunningham, president of the Black Heritage Trail
- Elizabeth Doucette, chair of the Sister City Connection

## Program Activities:

- 2013 Discover Portsmouth program
- 2008 visit for grand opening of a new Digital Learning Center created by co-operation of the Portsmouth-Greater Accra Sister City Connection
- 2005 visit by Nana Kwame Takyi, the tribal king of Aburi/Agyementi and Nana Ampoma, king of Kitasi.



# Accra/Kitasi, Ghana



# Portsmouth, England

**Status:** Inactive **Established:** (1993)

Friendship City created when Portsmouth, England began a “Twinning City” project.

## Local organizations involved:

- Unknown

## Program Activities:

- Cemented in 1997 by the visit of the Lord Mayor of Portsmouth, Councillor Mark Hancock
- Correspondence with Mayors Sirrell, Ferrini Mayor Spear from Portsmouth England Lord Mayors
- Performance at Prescott Park by August 2011





# Portsmouth, England





# Szolnok, Hungary

Status: Inactive Established: (1992)

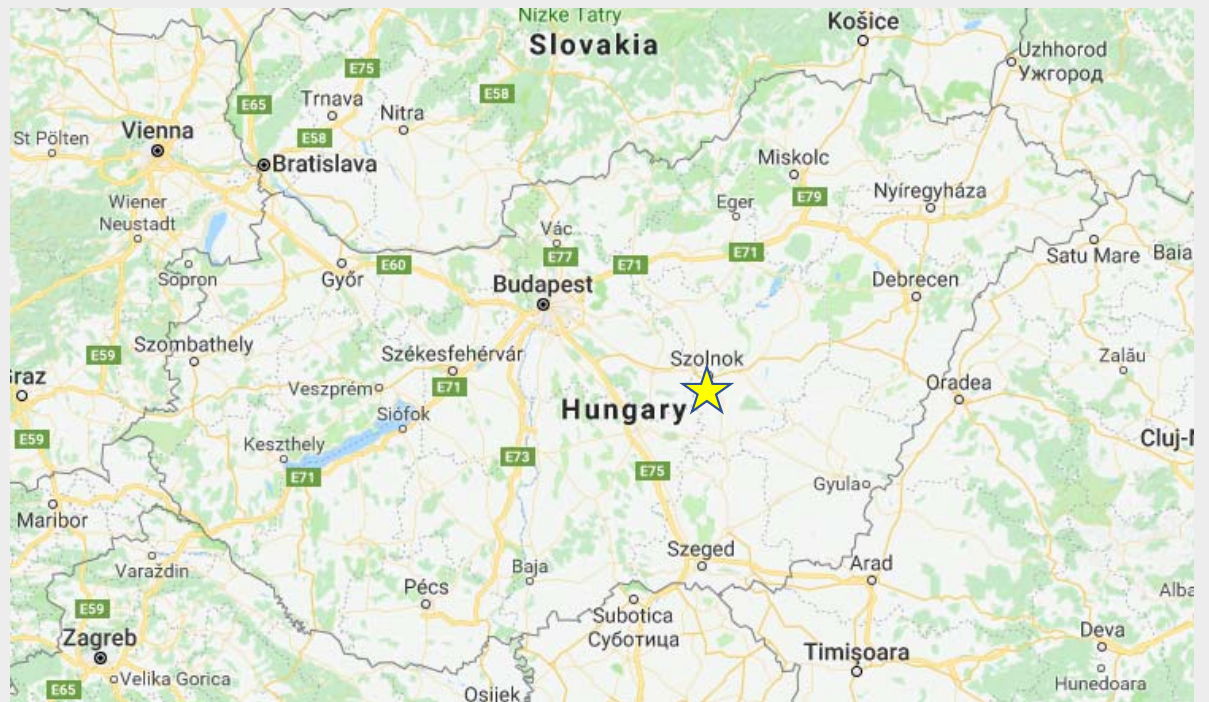
Local champion(s): Unknown

Local organizations involved:

- Unknown

Program Activities:

- Unknown



# Pärnu, Estonia

**Status:** Inactive **Established:** 1990

**Local champion(s):** Unknown

**Local organizations involved:**

- Unknown

**Program Activities:**

- Unknown



# Carrickfergus, Ireland

Status: Active Established: 1992

## Local organizations involved:

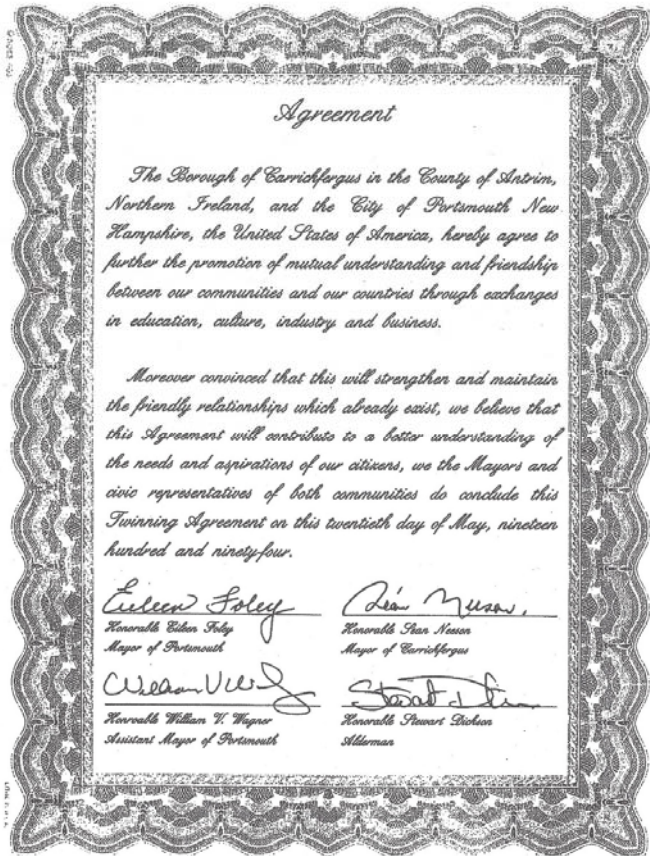
- City of Portsmouth, Mayor's Office

## Program Activities:

- 1999 4 students visit Portsmouth High School, City and home stays
- Today, Friends Forever maintains ties with Carrickfergus as part of its outreach.









# Carrickfergus/Portsmouth Exchanges

- 1993 Initial Portsmouth visit to Carrickfergus
- 1996 Business cultural exchange between City and NH State visitors
- 1997 Portsmouth City Hall hosts traveling photo exhibit from Carrickfergus
- Stone and Floral Monument constructed in Prescott Park honoring Sister City relationship
- Student exchanges from respective cities
- 1998 21 Irish students visit for 9 weeks under Wilder Horizons Program for Tourism focused educational/vocational training
- 1999 Student Exchange
- Delegation of two Carrickfergus Alderman visit Portsmouth, NH
- Winston Churchill travelling fellow visits to conduct innovation/technology service research.

The Council Chambers  
City Hall  
Portsmouth, New Hampshire

## A Proclamation

Whereas:

The relationship between the City of Portsmouth and Carrickfergus, Northern Ireland has been a source of great pride for our community for many years, and we look forward to many more years of close friendship; and

Whereas:

The best way to guarantee the future of this friendship is to make it possible for our children to meet each other and to exchange visits between our two countries; and

Whereas:

The first of these student exchanges has become a successful reality; and

Whereas:

We are fortunate to have our four visiting students with us this evening to experience the American way of local governing at a City Council meeting,

Now, therefore, I, Evelyn Sirrell, Mayor of the City of Portsmouth, join with the members of the City Council and all our citizens, in extending a warm welcome to our very first class of exchange students from Carrickfergus,

**Cheryl Clarke, Julianne Mooney, Sara Moore, and Gary Seaton**

and extend an open invitation to all the young people of Carrickfergus to visit us to meet their peers at the Portsmouth schools, and to carry the memories and friendships made here back to Northern Ireland to share with their families and classmates, in order to extend the bonds of educational, cultural, and economic exchange into the future for the benefit of both communities.



Given with my hand and the Seal of the City of Portsmouth on this, the 4<sup>th</sup> day of October, 1999.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Evelyn Sirrell, Mayor of Portsmouth, N.H.

# Agadir, Morocco

Status: Inactive Established: 1995

Local organizations involved:

- Unknown

Program Activities:

- Unknown



D.

# Committee Progress Report

# Mayor's BRC Progress Report

1. Q&A conference call with the VP of Sister Cities International, Adam Kaplan to gain an understanding of the program and what support the Sister Cities organization could provide
2. Created a Sister City Program page on City of Portsmouth website
3. Facebook Group
4. Researched robust Sister Cities programs
5. Survey Monkey online survey
6. Other: Launched a pen pal program with Nichinan, Japanese Sister City and Sister School; 36 students from the middle and high schools participating, 18 from Portsmouth and 18 from Nichinan

E.

Research Results

Robust Sister Cities Program

# Robust Sister Cities Programs

- Grand Rapids, MI
- Newport, RI
- Anderson, SC
- Portland, ME
- Ft Lauderdale, FL
- Essex, CT

# Comparable Sister Cities Research

**How many?** Up to 18

**How old?** As much as 56 years. But dormancy is common (often due to leadership changes)

**Organizational structure:** Nonprofit; Mayor's office; all volunteer, small budgets (\$3-\$45K as mentioned)

**Committee structure:** Organized by Sister City; Membership fees (\$20-25), Officers with term limits

**Funding:** fundraisers, raffles, small city funds, grants, membership fees

# Comparable Sister Cities Research (continued)

**How is relationship sustained?** Business/student exchanges, cultural celebrations

**Marketing:** websites, newsletters, email list, notices to local groups (eg Rotary, Kiwanis, churches, schools)

**Program activities:** student, artist or business exchanges

**Partnerships:** educational institutions, hotels, Chamber of Commerce, cultural groups, city

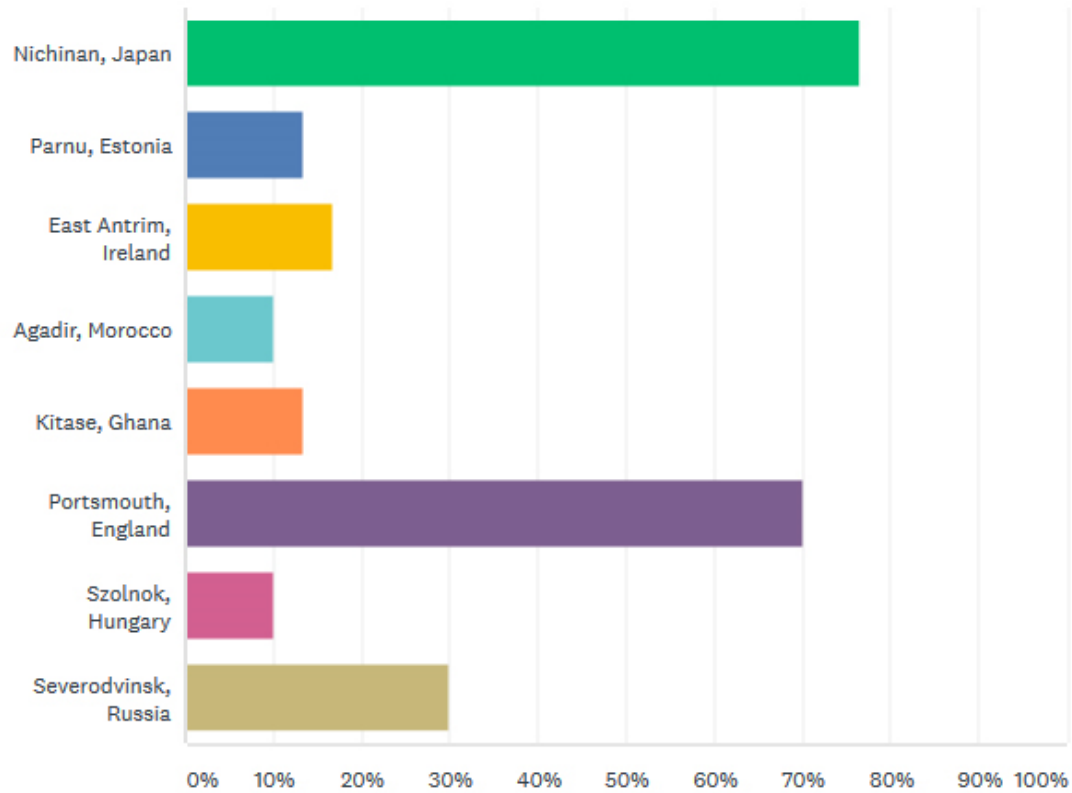
**Biggest struggle:** funding, volunteers, continuity/sustainability, getting the word out, negative perception (“junkets”)



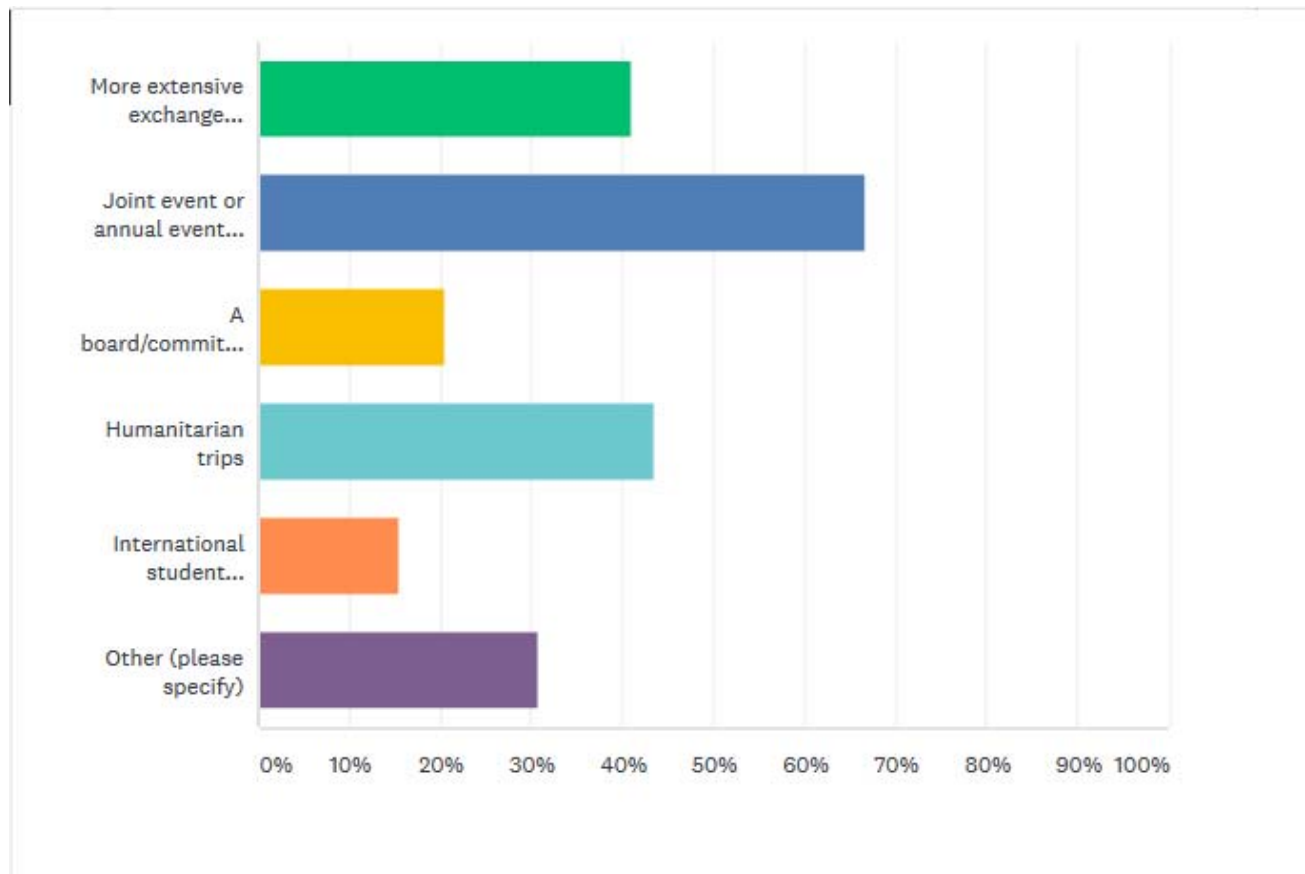
E.

Research Results  
Survey Monkey

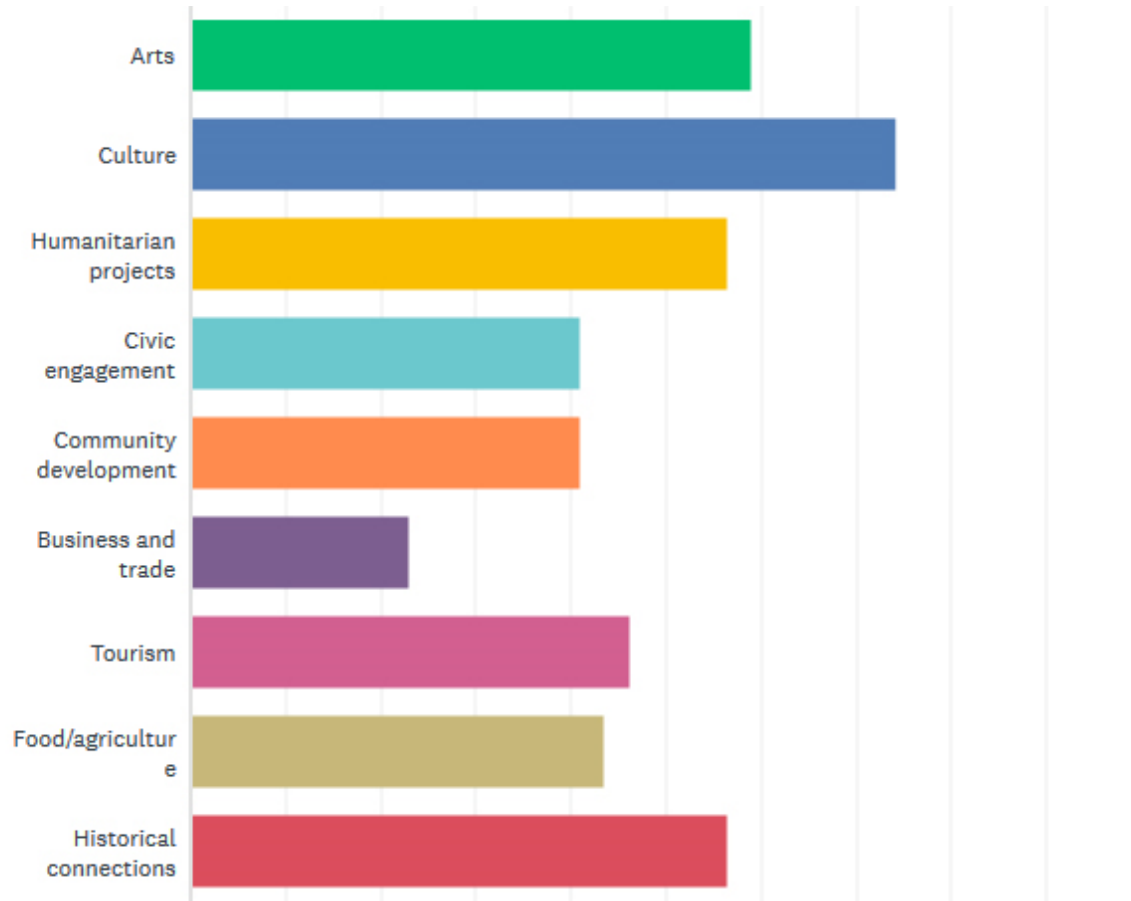
## Which cities were you familiar with?



The focus of Portsmouth's Sister City program has been educational through high school exchange programs. How can we expand on this?



# What types of Sister City program activities would interest you?



Other countries Portsmouth should consider:

Netherlands

Canada

Australia

Vietnam

Zimbabwe

Kenya

Portugal

Greece

Italy

Pakistan

South Africa

Spain

Chile

France

“One on each continent”

F.

Questions?

G.  
Public Input

## F. Public Input

1. How can we engage the community in the Sister Cities program?  
(business, educational, cultural and humanitarian groups)
2. Why do you think the Sister Cities program is important?
3. How can we make the Sister Cities program more relevant to you?
4. Are there cities we should add?
5. Do you have a connection to a city we should add to our program?



H.

Report Back and Conclusion