Built on Trust: Unlocking Economic Opportunities of Sister City Partnerships

Co-hosted by

In partnership with

City of Long Beach Economic Development & Opportunity
Invest Long Beach

Key Takeaways for Attendees

Governments | Discover ideas for strategic economic assets and innovative administrative collaborations.

Economic Organizations | Rethink sister cities as a credible platform for trade, investment, and business matchmaking.

Business & Academic Organizations | Take an advantage of trusted networks for your business or academic collaborations.

Sister City Associations | Translate the trust established through your sister city activities into cross-sector partnerships that drive sustainable growth.

November 13 on board Queen Mary

9:30-10:00	**Early Coffee Networking**
10:00-10:10	**Remarks from Consul General of Japan, Kosei Murota** **Remarks from Mayor of Long Beach, Rex Richardson**
10:10-10:20	**CJSCN Presentation** 姉妹都市の人的交流がもたらす経済効果 Economic Impact of Sister City People-to-People Exchanges
10:20-10:55	**San Diego - Yokohama (1957.10〜)** 姉妹都市の信頼関係で築かれる経済交流の機会 Built on Trust: Sister Cities as a Foundation for Economic Opportunity
10:55-11:15	Short Presentations (3 minutes) by **UC Irvine, Glendora City, Riverside City, Phoenix City and Los Angeles Port** 姉妹都市の様々な活用方法 Sister Cities with Diverse Possibilities and Counterparts
11:15-11:50	**Long Beach - Yokkaichi (1963.10〜)** 行政・経済団体・姉妹都市協会の連携 Investment based on Friendship: How the City, Invest Long Beach, and Sister City Associations Turn Partnerships into Economic Results
11:50-11:55	**Remarks from CEO of Invest Long Beach, Courtney Russell**
11:55-13:00	**Networking Reception (with light refreshments)**

Session 1: Built on Trust: Sister Cities as a Foundation for Economic Opportunity

MASAHIRO NISHIKAWA — Representative to Americas, City of Yokohama New York Office



Masahiro Nishikawa is Chief Representative of the Office of the City of Yokohama Representative to the Americas, based in New York. He oversees Yokohama's engagement across North America, particularly sister-city cooperation and international economic partnerships. Since joining the City of Yokohama in 2012, he has worked in public administration and international relations. He has supported wide-ranging sister-city partnerships between Yokohama and the cities of San Diego and Vancouver, helping facilitate exchanges in youth development, education, culture, business, and sports. His work brings together municipal governments, community groups, schools, businesses, and other stakeholders to deepen long-standing relationships and develop new opportunities for collaboration. Alongside his sister-city work, he promotes cross-border business connections, including cooperation in climate technology, innovation, and startup ecosystems. He also engages with international organizations, universities, and investors on sustainable urban development and global city partnerships. He is committed to strengthening practical and lasting connections between Yokohama and its North American partners.

BEN MOORE — Chief Global Affairs Officer, Office of the Mayor, City of San Diego



Ben Moore serves as Chief Global Affairs Officer for the City of San Diego, advancing the Mayor's international engagement priorities, strengthening San Diego's global standing, and connecting international partnerships to local economic development and community benefits. Prior to joining the City, Ben served 18 years with the U.S. Department of State, culminating in his selection to launch and lead a pioneering subnational diplomacy program in San Diego. He previously served as Division Chief overseeing U.S. foreign assistance across the Middle East, Political Unit Chief in the Office of Israel and Palestinian Affairs, and Stabilization Operations Officer supporting the Syrian opposition through assignments in Turkey, Jordan, and Washington, D.C. Ben's international experience also includes assignments with the State Department in Los Angeles and New York, the United Nations in Jordan and Haiti, and nongovernmental organizations in the West Bank and Gaza, Zambia, and Burma, focusing on humanitarian relief, peacebuilding, and conflict analysis. A Boren Fellow for Arabic study, Ben holds a master's degree in international affairs from Columbia University and a bachelor's degree in political science from UCLA.

moderated by LUCAS COLEMAN — Director, World Trade Center San Diego

WORLD TRADE CENTER® SAN DIEGO



Lucas Coleman is director at World Trade Center San Diego, an affiliate of San Diego Regional EDC. In his role, Coleman oversees the team's three pillars of work: cultivating a pipeline of export-ready firms, maximizing foreign direct investment, and enhancing San Diego's global identity and connectivity. Activities under Coleman's supervision include the execution the MetroConnect export assistance program, stewardship of foreign investment projects, outbound international trade missions, and collaboration with regional stakeholders, such as the city, port, airport, and more, to further integrate San Diego into the global economy. Coleman hails from the San Francisco Bay Area and has a Bachelor of Arts from San Diego State University, with an emphasis in Japan/East Asia. He has spent time living in Kyoto, Japan, and is conversational in Japanese.

special thanks to STEVEN SIGAFUS — President, San Diego–Yokohama Sister City Society; Vice President, California-Japan Sister Cities Network



More information

There will be the Yokohama Festival held from November 13 to 15 in San Diego to celebrate the upcoming 70th anniversary of the Yokohama-San Diego Sister-City Relationship!



Session 2: Sister Cities with Diverse Possibilities and Counterparts

DAVID FREDENDALL Mayor, City of Glendora (Councilmember 2020-Present; Mayor 2025, 2026)



Council Member David Fredendall has been a resident of Glendora since 1986 and is a sixth generation Glendoran, dating back to the 1870's as a descendant of a pioneering Glendora family. He and his wife Maria raised a son in the community and local schools and now the son and his family reside in a neighboring community. As an active member of the community, he was very active as a leader and volunteer in youth programs including Scouting where he served in Local, District and Council level positions for more than 27 years. In addition to the local community services, he serves as President and Trustee of the Fairmount Pioneer Cemetery/Foundation overseeing the preservation of our City's Historical Landmark. In his professional career he served as a Logistics Manager developing service programs and operations for product movement and transportation services in the consumer goods industry, procurement and sales services for several industries both local and nationwide. Goals and visions for Glendora include Community/ Economic Development; Housing Growth with vision that fits; making Glendora a destination point of interest and ensuring quality of life values looking to our future for coming generations. Elected to City Council 2020.

KYOKO YOKOMORI, PH.D. Faculty member , Dept. Biol. Chem., UCI, SOM



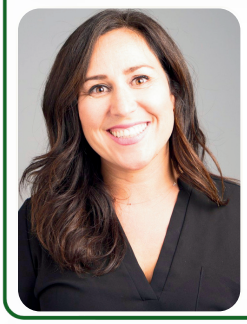
Kyoko Yokomori was the mediator of the first UT-UCI agreement between Tsukuba Human Biology Program and UCI Schools of Bio Sci and Medicine (SOM) (2015). She has also been involved in Campus in Campus (CiC) program. Her background is in veterinary pathology, molecular virology, eukaryotic RNA transcription. Her current research focus is to understand how chromatin structure influences gene transcription and DNA repair, and how their dysregulation contributes to human diseases with a special focus on FSHD muscular dystrophy, using molecular biology, biochemistry, cell imaging and genomics/transcriptomics techniques.

special thanks to SHIMAKO KAWAUCHI, PH.D. Managing Director, TMF of UCI



Shimako Kawauchi received her Ph.D. from the University of Tsukuba and is now Managing Director of the Transgenic Mouse Facility (TMF) at the University of California, Irvine. She leads a team that performs genome engineering. Her team collaborates with the University of Tsukuba to improve cutting-edge genome-editing technologies. Since 2014, she has been serving as a liaison between the two universities. In this role, she supports student, staff, and faculty exchanges between the University of Tsukuba and UCI, and helps strengthen the Tsukuba alumni network in North America.

ANA LEE Advisor to the Mayor, Office of Mayor Patricia Lock Dawson, City of Riverside



Ana Lee is a civic leader, former public defender, entrepreneur, and advocate for international relations and community partnerships. Ana currently serves as an Advisor to the Mayor, Patricia Lock Dawson, in the City of Riverside. Her connection to U.S.-Japan relations began in high school as a student participant in the exchange program between Riverside, California, and Sendai, Japan, a formative experience that sparked her appreciation for cultural diplomacy and international friendship. Today, Ana brings that connection full circle through her work in international relations with the City of Riverside. As Riverside and Sendai approach the 70th anniversary of their sister-city relationship in 2027, she remains passionate about building on this legacy of trust and transforming longstanding friendships into opportunities for collaboration in education, workforce development, and economic growth. Drawing on her experience in public service, law, and as owner of a women's workspace, Ana believes sister-city partnerships are powerful platforms for connecting people and creating lasting opportunities across borders.

JOSEPH MACEWAN President & CEO of Phoenix Sister Cities



Joseph MacEwan serves as President and CEO of Phoenix Sister Cities and International Relations Administrator for the City of Phoenix. In this dual role, he oversees Phoenix's sister city programs and supports the City's broader international engagement, including economic diplomacy, business and institutional partnerships, diplomatic and delegation engagement, and educational and cultural exchange. Joseph has served the City of Phoenix since 2015, with experience spanning economic and community development, housing, and public-private partnerships. Having spent 18 years living overseas, he brings both professional and personal international experience to his work connecting Phoenix with global partners and opportunities. He holds a Master of Science in Applied Economics from Johns Hopkins University.

MARISELA CARABALLO DIRUGGIERO Director of Trade Development, Port of Los Angeles



Marisela Caraballo DiRuggiero is the Director of Trade Development for the Port of Los Angeles, the busiest container port in North America. She connects U.S. businesses with overseas trade opportunities, particularly exports, through the Trade Connect program. Appointed by U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo to the District Export Council of Southern California, she now serves as its Vice President. With more than two decades of experience in public policy development, issues management and legislative advocacy, she promotes specialized business opportunities in key commodity areas, with an emphasis on export cargoes, and highlights the Port's technology and sustainability work, including the Port Optimizer cargo-tracking platform, green shipping practices and enhanced cyber security. She also oversees intergovernmental relations with foreign governments and has negotiated many sister-port agreements promoting trade, supply-chain digitization, environmental stewardship, infrastructure development and security.

Session 3: Investment based on Friendship
How the City, Invest Long Beach, and Sister City Associations Turn Partnerships into Economic Results

COURTNEY RUSSELL — CEO, Invest Long Beach



Courtney Russell is an Economic Development Executive who brings 25 years of professional experience spanning corporate retail, education, hotel and hospitality management, tourism, and economic development. He currently serves as CEO of Invest Long Beach, the official private-sector economic development partner to the City of Long Beach. Courtney guided the organization through its transition from the Long Beach Economic Partnership to Invest Long Beach, a transition now complete. Invest Long Beach is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit focused on business attraction, foreign direct investment, economic research, and international engagement on behalf of the City of Long Beach, Port of Long Beach, and Long Beach Airport. Invest Long Beach works in close alignment with Mayor Rex Richardson's Grow Long Beach initiative, supporting a shared vision for inclusive economic growth. Together, these efforts are focused on strengthening the local economy by attracting new corporations and businesses to Long Beach, helping existing businesses expand, and retaining the companies that already call Long Beach home. Under Courtney's leadership, Invest Long Beach has deepened partnerships across the city while elevating the organization globally, regionally, and nationally, positioning Long Beach as a competitive destination for investment and business growth.

BERIL UNVER — Protocol Officer, City of Long Beach



Beril Unver is Long Beach's inaugural Protocol Officer working to raise the City's profile as a metropolitan worthy of international renown in the lead up to and the long-term aftermath of the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games. She operates as a strategic advisor to the Mayor and wider-City team in fostering deeper global diplomacy, trade and investment ties. Beril serves as liaison between the City of Long Beach and the Consular Corps in charge of supporting all subnational international engagement, dignitary visits, sister city initiatives, and foreign relations. Beril has over two decades worth of experience in policy advocacy; international trade development; hosting top foreign dignitaries; as well as leading 15 congressional delegations to Europe and the Middle East. Prior to this role, she worked as the Consulate General of Canada's Senior Economic-Political Officer responsible for deepening international trade, investment and cultural engagement between the Southwestern U.S. and Canada. While serving as an "honorary Canadian" for almost a decade, Beril managed the organization and execution of several high-profile visits to this region by then Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Minister of Foreign Affairs Melanie Joly, Minister of International Trade Mary Ng, and Ambassador to the U.S. Kirsten Hillman. Preceding her tenure at the Consulate, Beril served as the Senior Programs Officer responsible for substantive planning of international delegations and signature foreign policy events at the Pacific Council on International Policy. A University of California, Irvine and Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey alumna, Beril moved back to So Cal after 8 years working in Washington D.C. at institutions including the Department of Energy and U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom. Beril has been a proud resident of Downtown Long Beach for over 12 years and counting. She feels very fortunate to be able to live in and work on behalf of her favorite city.

SUSAN REDFIELD — President, Sister Cities of Long Beach California



Susan Redfield is President of Sister Cities of Long Beach, where she has served for four years advancing international collaborations through people-to-people diplomacy established after World War II. She brings together communities from Long Beach and cities around the world via programs in infrastructure, education, culture, and youth development, supported by approximately 200 volunteers and 60 active initiatives. Redfield holds a master's degree in social work from Loyola University in Chicago and a JD from Chicago Kent College of Law. Earlier in her career, she spent five years as vice president at a major hospital in Chicago, five years at Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago, and additional time at a university, the Japanese American National Museum, USC, and Caltech, gaining expertise in organizational development, fundraising, board cultivation, and partnership creation. She remains active on the board of the Long Beach Library Foundation, with the Assistance League of Long Beach Mentoring Program, and the Parks, Recreation, and Marine Department. Redfield attributes her success to curiosity and tenacity, emphasizing the importance of rising after challenges, and she values honesty, transparency, morality, kindness, and optimism in both her professional and personal life.

We'd love your feedback!

Please take a moment to complete our survey using the enclosed form or simplyscan the QR code to respond online. Your feedback matters!

