

Sabha, Tamer

From: PADRES PUSD <
Sent: Monday, January 12, 2026 4:51 PM
To: Jomsky, Mark; PublicComment-AutoResponse
Cc: Phillis Griffin; JESSE MAREZ
Subject: Public comment 01-12-2026 Agenda item -11

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Please add my attachments to my public comment on Agenda item 11, regarding Anti discrimination policies and actions by the city.

Greetings Mayor Gordo, Vice Mayor Rivas and members of the council,

As we sadly begin this year, with more ICE agent harassments and facing an unprecedented global crisis caused by a government that is moving towards a dictatorship, violating international laws, disregarding constitutional, civil and human rights, creating a war department, canceling public broadcast television, hiring thousands of federal agents to enforce discrimination laws and doctrines that were enacted when slave owners were elected to the presidency.

our communities are being terrorized and law abiding residents are being removed based only on the color of their skin,

In the so called Venezuelan regime, political protesters were incarcerated, here in the US protesters are being killed.

The US is being depicted world wide as a bad nation by the actions of the few that believe they can rule others and make impositions of their own will,

Here in Pasadena our immigrant community is still underrepresented in many ways, and while many of us are ready to stand firm against injustice and abuse of power, even if it means being arrested, our elected officials must take action to defend and properly represent the people that voted for them.

Pasadena must take action to separate ourselves as a community from the dark message being sent to the world by the federal administration.

The Pasadena International Sister Cities Association and the Guanajuato proposed Affiliation committee have still gotten no response from the Mayor's office on our meeting request., our group has worked very hard for over Two years , we ask our Mayor and city council to take action, and respond to support our work and recommendations to form the first official Mexico sister cities affiliation of Pasadena with Guanajuato to end decades of local exclusion of our communities, and send a much needed message of peace from Pasadena to the international audience.

1/12/2026
Item 11

Our Mexican community makes a great part of our beautiful Pasadena fabric, we look forward to a respectful response from the Mayor.

Thank you.

 12_08_2025_Report on the 2025 Cultural Exchange Visit.pdf

**REPORT FROM THE GUANAJUATO PROPOSED
AFFILIATION COMMITTEE
ON THE 2025 CULTURAL-EXCHANGE VISIT
GUANAJUATO, MEXICO
OCTOBER 31 - NOVEMBER 7, 2025**



**GUANAJUATO-PASADENA PROPOSED
SISTER CITIES AFFILIATION
PRESENTED
DECEMBER 8TH, 2025**

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CURRENT PASADENA SISTER CITIES AFFILIATIONS:

LUDWIGSHAFEN GERMANY 1948 	MISHIMA JAPAN 1957 	JÄRVENPÄÄ FINLAND 1983 	VANADZOR ARMENIA 1991 	XICHENG CHINA 1999 	DAKAR-PLATEAU SENEGAL 2018 
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Introduction

On behalf of the Pasadena International Sister Cities Association (PISCA), the Guanajuato Proposed Affiliation (PA) Committee, responding to a formal invitation from Guanajuato Mayor Honorable Samantha Smith, organized a Pasadena Delegation consisting of the PISCA President, Vice President, Board-Members, Pasadena City College International student Center administration and General Members of the Guanajuato PA Committee to conduct the second Cultural Exchange Visit to the city of Guanajuato in the central State of Guanajuato, Mexico, during the Day of the Dead Festival Celebrations from October 31st - November 7th, 2025.

This Proposal of Affiliation report meets all the criteria listed and defined in the [PISCA's Sister City Affiliation Policy \(SCAP\)](#). Each time one or these criteria is met, not necessarily in numerical order, it will be identified as follows: **(SCAP X.X.)**

The 2025 Cultural Exchange was completed in accordance with the Guanajuato PA committee 2025 workplan and also as a direct response to a formal invitation from Guanajuato Mayor Honorable Samantha Smith who stated: "Dear friends from Pasadena, Warm greetings from Guanajuato, where we are ready and very excited to welcome you and share wonderful moments together. It is my pleasure to inform you that the Municipal Government of Guanajuato has prepared a special program of activities for the Pasadena Delegation. This visit would allow you to experience firsthand the cultural richness of Guanajuato during the International Cervantino Festival and the Day of the Dead celebrations, two of the most significant expressions of our identity". This second Cultural Exchange visit marks the repeated success by the Guanajuato PA committee and demonstrates the continuous feasibility, suitability, and desirability of establishing a Sister Cities relationship between the communities of Pasadena and Guanajuato. **(SCAP 2.1, 2.2)**

List of All Cities Reviewed by the Guanajuato PA, New Affiliations Co-Chairs, and Previous Sister Cities Teams

As stated in our previous 2024 Guanajuato PA report, before the final selection of Guanajuato Capital as our Proposed Affiliation, several cities in Mexico were considered, researched, evaluated and reviewed by the Guanajuato PA Committee, PISCA and New Affiliations Co-Chairs. (SCAP 2.8.4)

1. **Almoloya de Juárez**, State of Mexico
2. **Mérida**, State of Yucatan
3. **Cancún**, State of Quintana Roo
4. **San Miguel de Allende**, State of Guanajuato
5. **Zacatecas**, State of Zacatecas
6. **Ciudad Juárez**, State of Chihuahua
7. **Valle de Guadalupe**, State of Baja California
8. **Santiago de Querétaro**, State of Querétaro
9. **Guanajuato**, State of Guanajuato

Recommendation

The Guanajuato PA Committee began evaluating and reviewing potential Mexico affiliation cities in the fall of 2023. After completing an extensive research on all potential cities in Mexico, the Guanajuato PA Committee, New Affiliations Co-Chairs, and members of the Pasadena Delegation that conducted the 2024 and 2025 Cultural Exchanges including PISCA President, Vice President, Board members and general membership are fully approving and recommending on this report that the City of Pasadena establish a formal Sister Cities relationship with Guanajuato, Mexico; and that the **Pasadena Mayor, Vice Mayor and City Council lead an Official Delegation** to Guanajuato in early 2026; and that our City of Pasadena Mayor and Elected officials respond to this community call by following Sister Cities International (SCI) protocols and **a formal invitation is sent to the Mayor of Guanajuato to lead an Official Delegation to Pasadena** in order to continue the Guanajuato-Pasadena sister cities affiliation process as outlined by Sister Cities International affiliation guidelines and the Guanajuato Proposed affiliation process transitions from un-official or community based to official and Elected official led, responding to the community call by making this affiliation proposal official. **(SCAP 2.9, 2.10)**

2025 Cultural Exchange Pasadena Delegation Members



The Pasadena Delegation consisted of the following participants:

1. René H. González, President, Pasadena International Sister Cities Association
2. Connie De La Torre, Vice President, Pasadena International Sister Cities Association
3. Raul Ibáñez, PISCA-PCC Liaison and Immediate Guanajuato PA Committee Vice Chair
4. Guadalupe Ramirez, Guanajuato PA Member.
5. Phillis Griffin, Board Member, Chair, Governance and Ethics Committee.
6. Elvia Montenegro Aragon, Board Member, Social Media and Content Director
7. Justin Chapman, Guanajuato PA Member
8. Armando Duran, Interim Assistant Superintendent/Vice President, Student Services, PCC
9. Jessica Farfan Oseguera, Administrative Assistant, Child Development Center, PCC
10. Olivia Loo, Director, International Students, PCC
11. Metztli Alcantar, Guanajuato PA Member, PCC Student
12. Vicente González, Guanajuato PA Member.
13. Jose Antonia Portillo, Guanajuato PA Member, Grupo Amigos Pasadena
14. Alejandra hernandez, Guanajuato PA Member, Grupo Amigos Pasadena

Guanajuato-Mexico Proposed Affiliation (PA) Committee Members **(SCAP 2.5-2,3)**

(In alphabetical order)

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Bahena, Carlos | 25. Isiordia, German |
| 2. Bahena, Jason | 26. Isiordia Jr., German |
| 3. Benitez, Marlene | 27. Mares Jesse |
| 4. Cabrera, Ana | 28. Marquez, Amalia |
| 5. Carvajal, Conrado | 29. Molina, Reyna |
| 6. Carvajal, Delia | 30. Montenegro Aragon |
| 7. Chavez, Humberto | Elvia |
| 8. Climaco, Alexis | 31. Montoya, Nelly |
| 9. Climaco, Carmen | 32. Morales, Ed |
| 10. Climaco, Marcos | 33. Porras, Susana |
| 11. Cortez, Jorge | 34. Portillo Hernandez, |
| 12. De La Torre, Connie | Alejsndra |
| 13. Ezquivel, Andrea | 35. Portillo, Jose Antonio |
| 14. Farfan, Jessica | 36. Ramirez, Guadalupe |
| 15. Flores, Abel | 37. Ramirez, Isabel |
| 16. Flores, Javier | 38. Rivas, May |
| 17. Hernandez Elizabeth | 39. Rogers, Matt |
| 18. Gomez, Jose | 40. Santoyo, Fabricio |
| 19. Gonsant, Mario | Saul |
| 20. Gonzalez, Rene | 41. Villalobos, Esmirna |
| 21. Gonzalez, Vicente | 42. Villalva, Tony |
| 22. Griffin, Philis | 43. Villanueva, Maricela |
| 23. Guzman, Patricia | 44. Vigil, Evelyn |
| 24. Ibanez, Raul | 45. Zambrano, Laura |

About the Itinerary of the Pasadena Delegation



At the formal invitation of Guanajuato Mayor Honorable Samantha Smith, the Pasadena Delegation immersed into Guanajuato's rich and vast culture, from October 31st to November 7th, this time having the incredible opportunity to experience first hand the mystical and world renowned [Día de los Muertos festival](#), based on Meso-american tradition from the Aztec Mythology that centers on the idea that on this day, the souls of the dead return to the living world to visit their families. During this special spiritual day, Mexican families welcome the spirits of their loved ones with altars (ofrendas) adorned with lots of Cempazuchitl flowers, candles, and photos, and celebrate them with feasts of their favorite foods and cemetery visits, believing death is a continuation of life and something to celebrate.



We got a chance to witness a complete transformation of the city tunnel-ways from regular vehicular use into an incredible underground Carnival with hand made arts and crafts from the entire region, delicious food and traditional local drinks and spirits like fruit-flavored-Mescal samplers and Mexican Cantaritos that along with the live Mariachi music created a magical atmosphere as the whole town celebrated and cheered for the lives of those who had departed to the *Mictlan*, the Aztec underworld.



We met with leaders from the organizations like *Manos Unidas*, the civic group that plans the *Tapete de la Muerte*, a city-wide art exhibit that is composed of "Tapetes" or artistic floor mats that are drawn and created individually with the participation from local, national and international artists. These *Tapetes* are created with all natural materials (much similar like the decorations for the Rose Parade floats, **SCAP 2.5.1**) the same materials used in the Traditional Day of the Dead Altares or Ofrendas, including thousands of colorful Cempazuchitl flowers, petals, seeds and natural-colorant paints. This art exhibit is made possible each year with the help of over One Thousand volunteers including elementary, secondary and University students, parents, teachers, administrators, first responders, local Boys and Girl scout troopers, Business owners and family groups just to name a few.



Much of the agenda and itinerary for the Pasadena Delegation visit was graciously prepared under the Direction of Presidenta Samantha Smith, the Guanajuato Municipal Government, and with the assistance of the Director of International Relations, **Luis Carlos Salinas**.

The Pasadena Delegation was received as Guests of Honor at many activities including preferred seating for the Day of the Dead Parades including Retirno al Mictlan and Calabras y Catrinas as well as a very special guided tour to the Mummy Museum and the Historic *Pantheon Municipal de Santa Paula*, where the Guanajuato mummies were exhumed and where some of Guanajuato's (and Mexico) most venerated heroes rest.



In addition to the official activities prepared by the Municipal Government, Rene González, PISCA President and Guanajuato PA Chair, prepared additional Cultural rich-activities for the Pasadena Delegation including visits to the University of Guanajuato (UGTO), Cultural-Extension Department, home of the official folkloric Ballet (BAFUG), the Beautiful UGTO Main Building, and many other points of interest and historical sites like the Mina de la Valenciana, Historic Churches, Mercado Hidalgo, Diego Rivera Museum, El “Cura” Miguel Hidalgo Museum, Iconic Callejon del Beso, the Alhóndiga de Granaditas and “El Pipila” Monument, a large statue overlooking the entire City in memory of one of Guanajuato’s most celebrated heroes.



Pictures Above: A Plate on the Pipila's statue footing with a Mexican-Patriotic message in brass letters that reads: "There are still other Alhondigas to burn"

About Guanajuato



(Pictured above: a full moon and clear night-sky lighting the Pasadena Delegation's Magical Callejoneada experience)

Guanajuato, a **UNESCO World Heritage for Humanity Site**, and with no doubt, one of the most beautiful cities in the world, has a powerful historical significance related to the independence of Mexico that cannot be overstated. At one point it was the official headquarters of the government of the President of the Benito Juárez Republic, during the nation's reform stage.



The city is more than 470 years old, having been officially founded on December 8, 1559, by Spain during the colonial period. However, the region was inhabited long before that by many indigenous peoples like the Otomi, Purépecha and various Chichimeca groups such as the Guamares and Guachichiles.



Above: Guamares-Chichimeca Nation Dancers at the Return to the Mictlan Parade.

These groups were warlike, semi-nomadic and did not practice significant agriculture, nor did they construct cities but these highly skilled warrior groups would later become instrumental in helping Hernan Cortez by joining his Army to defeat the Aztec Empire and give way to 300 years of Imperialist Spanish rule.

After the Spanish *Conquista*, the city's major transformation and development boomed after many silver and gold sediments were discovered in the area. This led to a significant mining growth in the area as one of the wealthiest cities in the western hemisphere during the 16th century. Guanajuato, then named [*Real de minas de Guanajuato*](#), became a major role player in the economy and history of the Spanish

Empire with substantial bonanzas that created many World-Elite Mining Families in Guanajuato and in the old continent, some that would even receive Royal Titles like Antonio de Obregón y Alcocer, former owner of the Mina de La Valenciana who was named Viscount de la Mina and Count of La Valenciana by King Charles III of Spain.



Real de Minas de Guanajuato:

On the high plateau of central México at nearly 7000 feet is the city of Guanajuato, originally named Real de Minas de Guanajuato (Royal Mines of Guanajuato). It was founded in 1548 by colonial Spain for one reason only: to make Spain rich. Silver and gold extraction were foundational to Spain's political economy, and in those times the mines of Guanajuato were among the most productive in the world..

Guanajuato's unique cobblestone narrow streets, networks of underground tunnels, alleyways that become live-stages for Callejoneadas typified by the famous *Callejón del Beso* (Alley of the Kiss), and countless of hidden Plaza-Gardens create a natural romantic scenery all around that attracts millions of visitors every year.



The word "Guanajuato" originates from the Purépecha language, combining the words "guanax" or "quanax" (frog) and "huato" or "juato" (hill or mountainous place). The name literally means "frog hill" or "place of the frogs" and refers to the appearance of the surrounding hills that, from a distance, resemble a giant frog. The name was later adapted to Spanish as Guanajuato, and the royal name of *Real de Minas de Guanajuato*.

A former Spanish rule-era granary and public grain exchange, the Alhóndiga de Granaditas, (now an art and local history museum with pre-Columbian exhibits) was center stage to a fierce battle that raged between Hidalgo's rebels and the Spanish, who fortified themselves inside the Alhóndiga until "El Pipila" (whose real name was Juan José de los Reyes Martínez Amaro) shielded himself with a large flat stone and approached the entrance with tar and torch in hand to burn the door, thus allowing Hidalgo's insurgent army to gain access, seize the site, and win the first battle for the Independence of Mexico.

Each year, Guanajuato hosts the [Festival Internacional Cervantino](#) (FIC), a major arts and culture festival featuring artists and performers from all over the world. Each edition of the FIC features Mexican states and other countries as guests of honor. In 2025, Veracruz and the United Kingdom were the guests of honor and thus were in charge of presenting the best of their culture and art at the festival. The FIC annual event is planned during the third and fourth weeks of October each year. This festival is the equivalent of the Rose Parade in Pasadena. It is, in fact, Latin America's most important cultural event. It is known as "the festival of the spirit" and its origins date back more than half a century when students from the University Theater conducted plays and performances in the streets and public squares of Guanajuato.



Presentation of the 53rd FIC were state authorities and representatives from the invited regions, including Samantha Smith, Mayor of Guanajuato, Libia Dennise García Muñoz Ledo, Governor of the state of Guanajuato, Claudia Curiel de Icaza, Secretary of Culture of the Government of Mexico, María Xóchitl Molina González, Secretary of Culture of Veracruz, and Susannah Goshko, Ambassador of the United Kingdom to Mexico.

In this edition, the honored guests were the United Kingdom and Veracruz, who shared the most representative aspects of their folklore, music, and artistic expressions.

During our 2025 Cultural Exchange visit, our knowledge of the number of similarities between Pasadena and Guanajuato grew bigger. Experiencing the Day of the Dead festival and art exhibits was an incredible experience and witnessing over a thousand volunteers of all ages decorating the Tapete De la Muerte with all natural materials immediately resembled volunteers working at the Tournament of Roses and the Rose Parade floats, and watching the city-wide transformation for the Day of the Dead Festival with stages and activities literally all over town, reminded us about Pasadena's Art Night but in a much bigger scale. Both cities have international Festivals and world renowned attractions and are similar in size: Pasadena has 140,000 residents and Guanajuato has 194,000, according to the 2020 Census. Guanajuato is an international tourist destination with vast historical and cultural significance, as is Pasadena. Both cities are important and noteworthy hubs of arts, music, culture, science, technology, education, architecture, historic preservation, sports, and more. (SCAP 2.7.1)



Cultural Exchange Proven Results

It was very rewarding to see the Guanajuato-Pasadena cultural Exchanges already making a positive impact in our communities. The installation of portable bleachers on available spaces along the route of the Day of the Dead parade and festival was an idea that the Guanajuato municipal government got by accepting a formal invitation by the Guanajuato PA to visit Pasadena during the winter of 2024 and enjoying the courtesy seats graciously provided by Councilmember Madison. The Guanajuato Delegation watched the 136th Rose Parade from the reserve-seating bleachers, and that is where they got their idea to install (for the first time in history) their own portable bleachers on available spaces for the 2025 *Day of the Dead* Festival. The bleachers were a huge success as spectators began reserving seats on the sidewalk and the bleachers even 12 hours before the parade, just like our community does for the Rose Parade.(SCAP2.7.1)



It has now become very clear that an official Sister Cities relationship between the two cities would be mutually beneficial and appropriate. There is significant interest on both sides already, and both communities demonstrate huge enthusiasm about future cultural and academic exchanges. Many have enlisted in Grupo Amigos Pasadena, repeated official letters of interest have been exchanged and successful unofficial Cultural Exchange visits from both sides have been completed. (SCAP 2.2-4)

Notable Meetings & Events of the Pasadena Delegation

Starting Monday, October 31st, through the very last day of the visit to Guanajuato on Friday November 7th, 2025, the Pasadena Delegation visited numerous entities and established strong relationships of potential collaboration with many officials, professors, historians, school principal and administrators, civic organizations, and community leaders. Overall, it can be stated unequivocally that the Cultural Exchange Visit was once again, a total diplomatic success.



The Cultural Exchange Visit began in the evening of October 31st, literally as we were arriving from the airport our amazing experience began. As the *Zona Centro* closes all its main streets that lead to Guanajuato Capital, airport shuttles drop all passengers leading to Zona Centro at one of the nearest stops, which are about ten to fifteen minutes of walking distance to the Zona Centro hotel area.

As we started walking and making our way to the hotel, we joined huge lines of foreign visitors from all over the world pulling their luggage (just like us). Walking on the main streets we noticed the sidewalks were full of seating people as if they were watching our arrival, soon enough we realized that we were actually in the middle of a city-wide *Day of the Dead* marathon event called *Me Muero por Correr*, (I am dying to run) and the people in the sidewalks were actually cheering at the One Thousand Eight Hundred Marathon participants, nevertheless many locals would also cheer to the passing by visitors, sensing a welcoming feeling all around us. The Guanajuato community is familiar with the permanent tourist presence and has a warm and welcoming mentality as they all appreciate and truly care for the hundreds of thousands of tourists that visit them every year, and they surely wear their ambassador suits with much pride and joy. The Guanajuato people's message and sentiment in the air was very clear: "Welcome to Guanajuato, the Cultural Heart of Mexico."



As we finally arrived at the hotel and settled in, the outside atmosphere could be felt even inside our hotel rooms, as there were a total of fifteen major attractions in that evening alone on the Day of the Dead program including the marathon that we “participated in,” a Mojigangas Parade on main streets, live music by Dj Satanas (Satan) in the underground tunnels, nocturnal walks through the Cemeteries, Castle of the Terror, videomapping protection at the important Basilica de Nuestra senora colegiata de Guanajuato, live theater performances by UGTO University students at Meson de San Antonio, a Chinese circus act by Xempa Circo Dragon at Plaza de Las Ranas and two other musical venues at different points of the city. With all of the unbelievable entertainment all over town it was easy to make the night seem to last forever.

It was day one, and the Cultural Exchange visit had already been paid off.



On our second day, the Pasadena Delegation, after a much needed rest was taken to some local hidden eatery gems that were discovered on our 2024 visit, Delegation participants were treated to some of the most delicious local home-made foods they had a chance to taste, including some popular traditional dishes like Chilaquiles Divorciados (red and green chile symmetrically arranged), cafe de Olla, Pan de Pueblo, tamales and hand made quesadillas of over ten different dishes to choose from. The delegation participants became immediate daily customers, and they quickly learned why the local people chose the “Baratillo” Plaza as their favorite breakfast destination.

The Day of the Dead festival program was once again packed with evening activities including the Mojigangas Parade, Desfile de Calaveritas y Catrinas (Little-skulls represented by small children and traditional Catrinas parade), Callejoneadas Macabras, (Callejoneada-musicians with scary makeup), another Theater presentation “Don Juan Ternorio” by UGTO art students, large Videomapping at the Basilica and Live music in the underground tunnels and also at different stages combined with the many Mariachi and norteno bands entertaining at Plaza de La Union. It was another Day in Paradise or better stated in the Mictlan, the Aztec Underworld. As a helpful information note, comfortable shoes or running tennis-shoes are a must in Guanajuato during major festivals, as the entire Zona Centro and underground tunnels are all closed to vehicular traffic to allow for the visitors to navigate the streets in safety.



As the night approached and much expected *Calaberas y Catrinas* parade was set to take center stage, the Pasadena Delegation along with the Salinas California Delegation were invited into the Municipal Presidency Building to watch the Parade directly from the Presidential Balcony that was adorned with a giant skeleton that seem to be climbing into the balcony. Guanajuato Director of International Relations Luis Carlos Salinas introduced the Pasadena delegation to City of Salinas California Major H. Dennis Donohue and Assistant city manager Lisa Grossman-Murphy, both applauded our two years of Proposed Affiliation work and offered full support for our Guanajuato PA committee and PISCA in future collaborations and joint visits to Guanajuato. We enjoyed watching the Parade, sharing the Presidential balcony and evening. The Pasadena delegation and the Salinas Delegation exchanged mutual contact information.



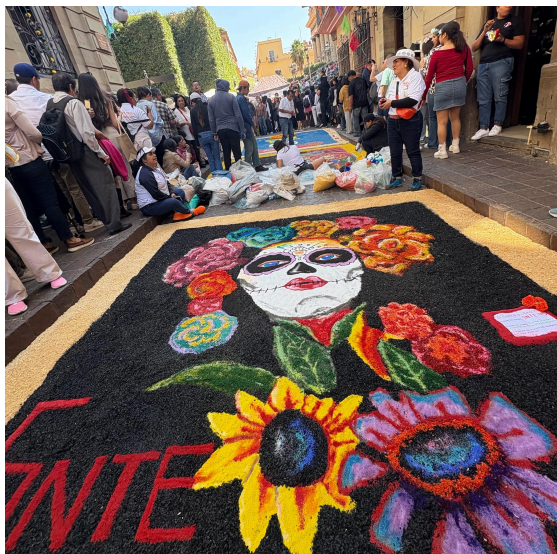
In the early hours of our third day, the Delegation Participants, now seasoned visitors, made their way into the “Baratillo” Plaza to recharge for what would be another day filled with cultural-rich activities, people to meet and places to discover.

Different from the previous day programs, this day had a very early start as thousands of volunteers including students, teachers and civic organizations from all over the state and even the world all had to arrive that morning at Zona Centro before the sun was

even out to begin to work on one of the most amazing city-wide art displays of the festival, the Tapete de la Muerte.

Over a thousand volunteers of all ages rapidly mobilize to their positions and begin creating amazing works of art on Guanajuato's main streets, from 7 in the morning until 7 or 8 at night they work on their knees and even seating on the floor to meticulously decorate their unique *Tapetes* with all the same natural materials used in traditional ofrendas. According to Alica Jazzo, General Director of the [Manos Unidas](#) civic organization, this was the 18th edition of this event which included over 145 participants from local, state, national and even international artists that have made this a wonderful tradition of the Day of the Dead festival.



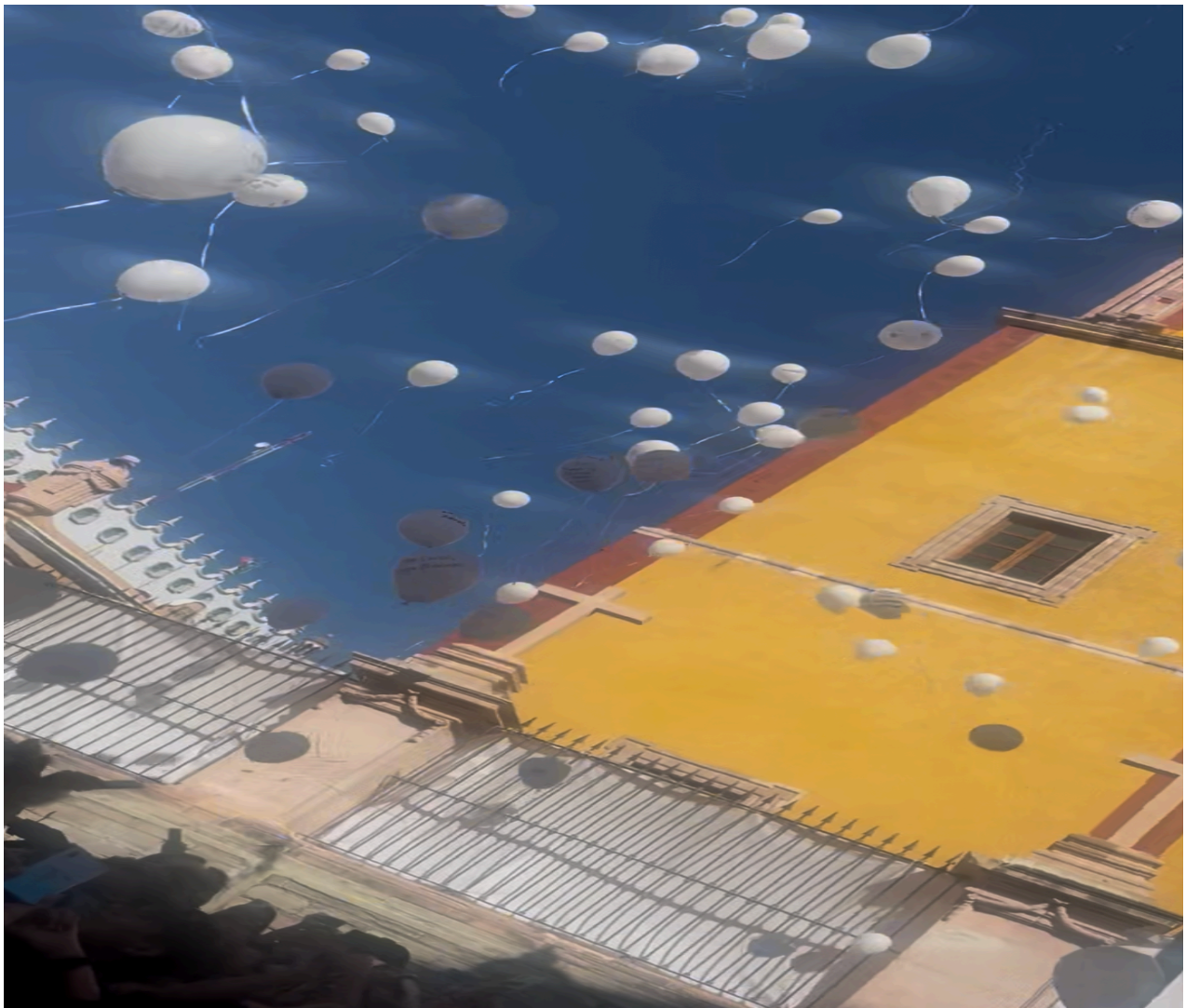


Pictured Above: some samples of *Tapetes de la Muerte* Artistic participant entries.

The very detailed Tapete decorations are completed in real time before the eyes of hundreds of thousands of visitors and can take all day to complete.

While all the 145 plus Tapetes de la Muerte were being completed the Day of the Dead program was packed with activities throughout the City and the day, including the installation of the death event, Alfeniques's contest, "Vida Y Muerte" (Life and Death) theater presentation by the San Luis Potosi, Folkloric ballet, matinee walking tours of

the “Terror castle” at the Centro de convivencia infantil, and the memorable Ascenso de las Almas event in front of the Main Basilica de Nuestra Senora colegiala de Guanajuato, an emotional gathering of thousands of participants in front of the town’s main Church that after writing the names of their departed loved ones on white balloons, and participated in a large crowd prayer, released the balloons into the sky in a coordinated beautiful and emotional act that for a very special moment filled the Guanajuato skies with thousands of white balloons flying through the air. It was hard not to get sentimental next to hundreds of people crying in joy while watching the balloons make their way to “Heaven.”



As the night approached large crowds were ready for the main event of the Dia de Los Muertos Festival, *Retorno al Mictlan*, an important note about this event is that all of the monumental logistics to mobilize over one thousand volunteers from all over the state in a single morning before sunrise, the thousands of on-their-knees volunteer hours and the amazing artistic designs are all executed only to be destroyed exactly at

10:00PM by the passing of the *Return to the Mictlan* Parade, a representation of the Aztec Goddess **Mictēcacihuātl** (Nahuatl pronunciation: [\[mɪk.teː.kaˈsi.wa.t͡ɬi\]](#), meaning "Lady of the Dead") ruler of the underworld alongside her husband, **Mictlantecuhltli**, who is the god of death, and as she crosses the Tapete de la muerte she is guiding and guarding all the souls of the death back to the Mictlan, the Aztec Underworld.



Pictured Above: A representation of the Aztec Goddess **Mictēcacihuātl** crossing the *Tapete de la Muerte* at the *Día De los Muertos* festival, as she guides and guards all souls on their returns to the Mictlan, the Aztec Underworld. (10PM, Nov. 2) The Mictlan gates close exactly at Midnight, Mictēcacihuātl is in charge of guarding and ensuring all souls return safely to their resting world.

Day Four was a free day for the Delegation's much needed rest, as the Day of the Dead Festival had ended we had a clear opportunity to go sight-seeing to the countless Historical, Cultural and Iconic points of interest in the City. We planned sightseeings at iconic Mercado Hidalgo, Callejon del Beso, Museum of Natural history at the University of Guanajuato Main Building and its famous Escalinatas (Large Main staircase), we also visited the Director of the Internationalization Department, at the University of Guanajuato, we were greeted by Maestro Erick Manuel Sanchez-Robles MIM, Head of Academic Mobility and Exchange from the UGTO's Office of International Relations and Academic Collaboration. Maestro Sanchez-Robles greeted PISCA's President and vice president with joy and since UGTO was doing their annual audit he offered to prepare a future virtual presentation for Pasadena City College that describes in detail the different foreign student exchange programs and relations that UGTO has with many countries all over the world. In previous presentations staff at the Internationalization department had described the many programs in which UGTO collaborates with various universities around the world on research, science, arts, culture, and summer programs offered to international students. Maestro Sanchez-Robles applauded our Sisterhood efforts and reaffirmed that the UGTO international student programs department is ready to collaborate with any colleague or university regardless of the existence of a Sister City relationship with their home states or cities, the same message that was echoed by the UGTO Director of Cultural Extensión Dr. José Osvaldo Chávez Rodríguez, who on our first UGTO visit provided a complete description of their art programs, including the Ballet folklórico de la Universidad de Guanajuato (BAFUG), the Symphonic Orchestra, one of the most renowned symphonics in Mexico, their Estudiantina all-female group, Mariachi, and acting programs at the UGTO.

In conclusion, the UGTO leadership from the General Director to the different departments offered their complete support for future collaborations that could promote the beautiful arts of Mexican culture and help support the arts and culture programs including the creation of a professional Mariachi program at PUSD and collaborative fundraising events **(SCAP 2.5.4)** for that could benefit both the UGTO, Guanajuato and Pasadena's public schools and Colleges and the Guanajuato PA. **(SCAP 2.7.2,3)** On the same day, we also met with painter and artist Ms Loreta Laura Rangel Villaseñor, a local artist that has collaborated with the Guanajuato and Ashland Municipal Governments and the Sister-Cities Civic group [*Grupo Amigos de Ashland*](#), and was awarded with an artistic project [*"Las calles de Guanajuato"*](#) a large mural that was installed in Ashland on the Guanajuato-Ashland 55th Sister Cities affiliation anniversary.

About the art project in Ashland, Ms Loreta stated that her art piece was selected among many other artists and that she was thrilled to be part of the Ashland-Guanajuato community bonding through the art. Ms Loreta was very happy to learn about our Guanajuato PA work and agreed to enlist herself to the newly formed Grupo Amigos Pasadena, a group of Guanajuato citizens, educators and community leaders that will serve as permanent local support of the Guanajuato-Pasadena affiliation. We discussed future ideas for a Guanajuato art piece in Pasadena like a Pasadena-[Pueblos Magicos](#) letter head sign installation and Ms. Loreta offered her full support for helping on this and any future art projects. (SCAP 2.7.1)



Pictured Above: Mural (The streets of Guanajuato) on Calle Guanajuato in Ashland.

On Day Five the Pasadena Delegation took a guided tour traveled to many important points of interest throughout the day, the first stop was the Pipila Monument where they had a chance to see the entire Guanajuato City from up in the hills on majestic 270 degree panoramic views that incite anyone to pull out their cameras. We learned about different history versions of Guanajuato's hero El Pipila and took a chance to climb the statue for even more dramatic panoramic views of Guanajuato.



Above: Panoramic View of Guanajuato and San Ramon Mine entry.

We proceeded with the guided tour to the San Ramon Mine, in the Valenciana mining district where the delegation had a chance to go into the mine for about 600 feet underground to get a glimpse of the mines interior, the mine chronist described the slavery daily routines and the 'Raya' payment agreements from the Spanish rule era, we also learned that many modern words are actually derived from the old mining times in Mexico.

Our next stop on the tour was the **Alhoniaga de Granaditas**, one of the most important historic sites in Guanajuato and in Mexico altogether. The three-story pink Cantera fortress is dominant at first glance, and looking at the actual entry door burned by *El Pipila* takes your mind back to the actual battle between Hidalgo's insurgent army and the fortified Spanish Elite and soldiers inside. You could see the bullet marks on the walls and imagine the powerful battle that took place. It is easy to see that after conquering such an impressive fortress, Hidalgo's army felt more motivated to continue on their *Independence Crusade*. The road to freedom from Hidalgo's army is now depicted and marked at every stop by the "Estelas de la Libertad" (eagle head shape rocks that point the way) installed in 1960 by then Mexican president [Adolfo](#)

[López Mateos](#), and consisting in the installation of a total of 260 “Estelas” distributed alongside the route that Hidalgo’s insurgency army traveled on their fight for independence, the Estelas proudly mark the principal points traveled between the towns of Dolores Hidalgo and Chihuahua by Hidalgo’s Insurgency Army.



Above: The Facade of the Alhondiga de Granaditas and its marking Eagle-Head “Estela” pointing the way Hidalgo’s Army traveled to freedom (LIBERTAD).

On day five, we had a special honor to receive a guided tour of the Santa Paula Cemetery and the World Famous Mummy Museum, the tour was guided by historians from the Guanajuato Government Secretary of Culture led by staff Ms Sandra Palma, the tour began at the cemetery entry. From beginning to end Ms Palma explained every detail of the cemetery location vs Sunrise and Sunset, the beautiful facade and how the Cemetery received its very first burial until it was at capacity and no more burials were accepted, it remains a Cemetery but because of the high profile people and dignitaries that are buried there, it is now more of a Museum closed to the Public and only open for families of the people that are buried there. Ms Palma described the amount of labor and money that was required to complete some of the most important

graves, finished with Italian marble that was only carved in other states far from Guanajuato. Some of the tombstones and graves had very refined details, the amount of knowledge that the delegation received could easily fill a well written book. We felt very fortunate to have her as guide of our private tour and appreciated her vast knowledge of the historic cemetery and the tombstones, some which had very moving and romantic stories to tell, like the one pictured below.



We proceed to enter the famous Mummy Museum through a very special and not open to the public staircase, the same staircase used on the iconic Mexican movie series “El Santo vs Guanajuato mummies.” This 400-year-old solid rock staircase was a whole experience to climb down, it felt as if we were on an adventure, climbing down into ancient ruins.



The Pasadena Delegation also visited the Diego Rivera Museum, in a building where the famous artist once lived; the UGTO Natural History Museum at the Central Building, and many more significant sites. We finished the afternoon visiting the enormous Hidalgo Market where the Delegation got a chance to navigate the first and second floor of the Mercado and view and purchase traditional pottery, souvenirs and many other hand made artesanias from local artists.





As the night approached the delegation returned to our hotel rooms to prepare for the special reception that was prepared by the Guanajuato Government to officially welcome the Pasadena Delegation now that the Day of the Dead festival had ended. City officials had more time to welcome the Pasadena delegation in a more intimate setting. We were invited to a special dinner reception by the following list of Guanajuato Municipal Government officials :

- **Samanatha Smith**, Presidenta, Municipal Mayor
- **Ángel Ernesto Araujo Betanzos**, Síndico
- **Daniel Chowell Arenas**, Guanajuato Municipal Government Secretary
- **José Carlos Domínguez López Velarde**, Regidor
- **Daniel Barrera Vázquez**, Regidor
- **María Fernanda Arrellano Caudillo**, Regidora, Head of Sister Cities affairs and International Relations
- **Victor Hugo Larios Ulloa**, Regidor
- **Olga Fabiola Durán Torres**, Regidora
- **Liliana Alejandra Preciado Zárate**, Regidora
- **Paulo Edgar Ramírez Noguez**, Regidor
- **Jorge Anguiano**, Tourism and Hospitality Director
- **Antonio Lopez**, Culture and Education Director
- **Luis Carlos Salinas**, International Relations Director

Members of the Pasadena Delegation got a chance to socialize up close and personal with Mayor Smith and we had a wonderful time over dinner remembering good moments together at our 2024 Cultural Exchange visit as well as memories shared during their visit to Pasadena. We recalled Mayor Smith's comment, "A trabajar de inmediato" ("We will begin to work immediately") and how much the relationship has grown with the official formation of the Grupo Amigos Pasadena following the footsteps of the Ashland affiliation community group "Grupo Amigos de Ashland."

Following the advice from **Juan Carlos Romero Hicks** who during our 2024 Guanajuato visit, suggested several supporting ideas that could make a Pasadena-Guanajuato Sister City relationship work and be sustained for many years. He mentioned the formation of a popular Guanajuato-based support group called "Grupo Amigos" that serves as the main support group for the Ashland Sister Cities affiliation, and suggested that a similar group be formed to support the Pasadena-Guanajuato affiliation. "Grupo Amigos Pasadena" has been formed and many strong community advocates, hotel and restaurant owners, government officials acting as citizens, and educational leaders have all joined Grupo Amigos Pasadena. The future collaboration opportunities are already limitless. (SCAP 2.5.4, 2.7.3, 2.8.3)

Mayor Smith and Councilmembers expressed their gratitude and approval for the commitment demonstrated by the Guanajuato PA committee and the efforts to bond the Guanajuato-Pasadena communities with the formation of Grupo Amigos Pasadena.

The special reception dinner was filled with positive vibes between two communities whose relationship continues to grow each day. PISCA President and Vice President took the time to provide reassurance to Mayor Smith and the Guanajuato community that the Guanajuato PA committee remains united and unchanged and our commitment to strengthen our communities relationship is stronger than ever .

The Pasadena International Sister Cities Association leadership presented Mayor Smith with the draft of a [Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#) for future considerations, in which PISCA and the Guanajuato PA committee demonstrates our commitment to promote the peace and future mutual benefit exchanges in the academic, arts and economic development including green energy projects with help from U.S. and international collaborators and prioritize these green energy installations at social service entities including the food bank, senior centers and special education schools.

The special reception dinner ended with much joy and appreciation from both sides on the true human relationship experience between our communities and a mutual affirmation of the strong interest to continue to work together to promote peace and the bonding of our communities while finding ways of cultural collaborations that can be of mutual benefit, prioritizing the most vulnerable citizens in Guanajuato and in Pasadena. Our Pasadena Delegation did an exemplary job at representing our community with dignity and reassuring the Guanajuato community of our continued interest in growing the Pasadena-Guanajuato relationship. The mutual positive sentiment was clear and the message of unity had been transferred with honesty, kindness and respect. We ended the night with a loud group cheer for both communities with a “Arriva Pasadena y Arriva Guanajuato!” (Hurray... Pasadena! Hurray... Guanajuato!)



On the last two days of the trip, the Pasadena Delegation was provided with a Mezcal workshop where we had a chance to make our own Mezcal bottle (scorpion included!) from local Mezcal distilleries masters who explained the different spirits that are produced in the region, the Delegation was provided with a mezcal tasting of many variations of local fruits and flowers.

Later in the evening, the Pasadena Delegation experienced a traditional *Callejoneada* through the hidden alleys of Guanajuato, there is literally no better way to experience Guanajuato than through these nocturnal walks animated by cheers, laughs and of course live music by the *Estudiantina*, we were honored to have the official Tuna Real de Valencia, (the official *Estudiantina*) commissioned to entertain the Pasadena Delegation for the evening with their nostalgic and romantic chants accompanied by their mandolines Contrabass and accordions. It is a memorable experience for all who experience a *Callejoneada* for the first time as it was the case of many of our Pasadena Delegates; A full moon Guanajuato the *Callejoneada* experience was extra magical.



On the remaining day, now with the completion of the official itinerary, the Pasadena Delegation had a chance to plan a guided tour to nearby historic towns including Dolores Hidalgo, Atotonilco, and San Miguel Allende. We stopped at the museum of Hidalgo and the memorial of Jose Alfredo Jimenez, a Guanajuato native and one of the biggest Mariachi songwriters and singers of all time. We visited the Hidalgo Basilica where the ["Grito de Independencia"](#) was originally given by Cura Hidalgo on September 16, 1810. The Pasadena Delegation learned many historical facts about the insurgency movement between Hidalgo, Ignacio Allende, Juan Aldama, Josefa Ortiz de Domínguez, and Miguel Domínguez and later Vicente Guerrero and another Catholic priest, Jose Maria Morelos would join the successful Mexican Independence movement. The guided tour visiting these historical sights provided a more in-depth understanding of history and we were all very satisfied.

It can be stated that our 2025 Cultural Exchange was a total success for the Pasadena Delegation and the learned experiences will surely serve as a platform for future Pasadena Delegations.

Potential Funding Sources for the Guanajuato PA

With help from local organizations in Guanajuato like the UGTO, FIC, Manos Unidas, Public Schools, Colleges, BAFUG and BAG, the Guanajuato PA Committee can plan cultural events that can generate funding that can cover the travel expenses of BAFUG Folkloric Dancer Students to participate in annual Mariachi Music festivals in Pasadena to generate major funding that can make the establishment of a formal Mariachi Program at our public schools and community college(PCC) a reality, while supporting the music and dance programs of Guanajuato public schools and UGTO. These new major annual revenues can also help to modernize our aging stadium to compete and even be ahead of the area's state of the art stadiums. The Guanajuato Food Bank has been doing similar successful events for many years and with the help of many other members of the new *Grupo Amigos de Pasadena*, we can plan major successful cultural events in Pasadena to support the ever growing Pasadena-Guanajuato relationship. **(SCAP 2.4)**

The above are just a few of the many potential funding opportunities that have been explored and as stated by our 34th President of the United States and Sister Cities program Founder President Dwight David Eisenhower, there can be “not one method but thousands of methods by which people can gradually learn a little bit more of each other.” With the current Global political climate, the people of Guanajuato and the people of Pasadena can explore many more ways to promote peace and understanding and also explore potential funding sources to help both of our communities, especially the underprivileged, address social issues that impact both communities, and find ways to help each other in many other ways. We see the continuance of a beautiful and mutually beneficial people to people relationship.

Conclusion

We are truly honored for the opportunity to submit this Proposal of Affiliation before the city council, **(SCAP 2.10)** we thank everyone that has worked tirelessly for over two years on the Guanajuato PA Committee process including Pasadena International Sister Cities Association President Rene Gonzalez, Vice President Connie De La Torre, PISCA Executive Committee, and the Pasadena City Council for the opportunity to present this report. Special gratitude as well to the Guanajuato community and elected Officials who have supported the Guanajuato-Mexico Proposed Affiliation process and the 2025 Cultural Exchange Visit and going forward. This report has been prepared in alignment with the Pasadena International Sister City Association's Sister Cities Affiliation Policy ([SCAP, which is attached to this report](#)), and we believe all conditions have been met in order for Pasadena to take the next steps in the process. This report shall be considered as both the “action plan” and “final written report” as specified in the Sister City Affiliation Policy.**(SCAP 2.7, 2.8)**

Pasadena and Guanajuato have so much in common—including international world renowned festivals; similarly sized populations; a strong sense of history and preservation; shared passions for art, culture, and science; and the presence of renowned educational institutions. There are ample opportunities for art, culture, academic and many other exchanges between Guanajuato and Pasadena. It is clear that an official Sister Cities relationship between the two cities would be mutually beneficial and appropriate. There is proven continuous and significantly growing interest on both sides already and with the formation of “Grupo Amigos Pasadena,” already in existence, the community relations will only keep getting stronger.

Therefore, this report and recommendations are respectfully and duly submitted to the Pasadena City Council (SCAP 2.10) on behalf of the Pasadena International Sister Cities Association by the President and Vice President of PISCA, and with full endorsements from the Board Members, both New Affiliations Co-Chairs, the Guanajuato PA committee and the Pasadena Community at large that supports the Guanajuato-Mexico Proposed Affiliation Committee who are all strongly recommending today that the Pasadena City Council accept this recommendation as submitted which follows Sister Cities International affiliation policies, to transition the Guanajuato-Pasadena Sister Cities process from unofficial or community based to official or elected officials-led and continue their role on the Sister Cities affiliation process by properly representing our community and formalizing a Sister Cities relationship with Guanajuato, Mexico, with no further delay.

Contact Information

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Attachments to this Report

- [Dia De Los Muertos Festival Detail Program Schedule](#)
- [Photo Album of the Cultural Exchange Visit to Guanajuato2025](#)
- [Photo Album of the Exploratory Visit to Guanajuato in October 2024](#)
- [Pasadena International Sister Cities Association's Sister City Affiliation Policy \(SCAP\)](#)
- [Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\), PISCA-Guanajuato](#)
- [The Birth of the People-to-People Program](#)
- [Sister Cities International's Guide to Establishing Sister City Relationships](#)
- [Sister Cities International's Quick Guide to Establishing a Sister City Toolkit](#)
- [Guanajuato Municipal Government Website](#)
- [Guanajuato Municipal Government Facebook Page](#)
- [Regulations of Sister Cities of the Municipality of Guanajuato \(PDF form\)](#)
- [UNESCO -Guanajuato - World Heritage For Humanity Site](#)
- [Festival Internacional Cervantino](#)
- [University of Guanajuato](#)
- [Guanajuato Food Bank](#)
- [Guanajuato Food Bank's Fundraiser Dinner Event](#)
- [Manos Unidas Facebook Page](#)
- [Information About the Ashland Amigos Club](#)