

Arts and Culture workgroup report for 2018

By
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Team:

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Our mission and goals:

The mission of the Arts and Culture Workgroup is to work together with folks from various ethnic backgrounds by sharing and celebrating different cultures. Our high-level goals include:

- Promoting cultural sharing activities within the Asian-American community and the larger Austin community
- Increase awareness of opportunities for the City to participate in Asian American cultural activities
- Encouraging Asian Americans in the expression of their culture

Project:

Arts and culture workgroup took on a multiyear project of establishing '**Austin Pune Sister City**' relationship which will provide great opportunity for Indian community to share their culture with mainstream Austin. The cultural exchange opens up doors for exchange opportunities in other fields for both the cities and in turn will help boost the quality of life of Indian/Asian Americans here in Austin.

The initial idea and planning was started in min 2017 and thereafter we made tremendous progress with community involvement. It was a phased approach with defined set of milestones which got to us the point where we have established a friendship city relationship with Austin.

Here are the details on how we approached this project /initiative with detailed timeline and accomplishments.

(1) Dec-2017 (MOU signed between citizen's group of Austin and Pune)

On behalf of citizens of Austin, TX, USA, Indian American Coalition of Texas (IACT) , a citizen's group and a similar citizen's group on behalf of Pune, State of Maharashtra, India entered into agreement to develop a sustainable long term relationship. The agreement opened agates towards establishing a bond through deeper citizen interactions leading to official partnership. Austin Mayor Steve Adler and Pune Mayor Mukta Tilak exchanged the Memorandum of Understanding. A delegation from the Austin Economic Development Division and Greater Austin Asian Chamber of Commerce also visited Pune in January 2018 also paved the way to the Sister City Initiative.



(2) Literary Exchanges between Austin and Pune (April 28 – May 16 , 2018)

Right after signing of the MOU the Art and Culture workgroup and subgroups started working towards meaningful exchanges. Though City of Austin's available grant for literary exchange we were able to arrange travel of Entrepreneur Ms. Manjiri Dhamankar from Pune to Austin for an inaugural cultural/literary exchange. APSCI conducted a series of joint cultural/literary events for the Austin community during Manjiri Dhamankar's stay from April 28, 2018 to May 16, 2018.

(a) Intergenerational Social Intergenerational social integration discussion (April 28, 2018)

This was a discussion with the community which started with thought provoking intergenerational social integration discussion through literature and other materials. The event was co-hosted with SAIVA at Hill Country Church, 3351 Little Elm Trail, Austin. There was a great participation from the community and folks from all age groups.

(b) Donation of documents to Austin History Center (May 1, 2018)

This was an event in partnership with the Indian American Coalition of Texas and other Austin Indian organizations to formally donate documents to Austin History Center to record and preserve Indian American history.



(c) Literary exchange (Panel Discussion):

The final event as part of literary exchange was the Arts and Culture panel discussion with Ms. Damanakar, Hispanic author Antonio Ruiz-Camacho, Chicana poet Ire'ne Lara Silva, African American academic Dr. Helena Woodard, Indian American poet Saryu Parikh, and moderated by Indian-origin newscaster Ms. Hema Mullur of KEYE. This was an amazing event with great participation from the community.



(3) Austin's first ever international Hackathon (Sep 8, 2018)

APSCI, along with the City of Austin Economic Development Department GBE Division, University of Texas Blackstone Launchpad, the Greater Austin Asian Chamber of Commerce, and Pune Fashion Week, partnered together to host a hackathon centered on Smart City solutions and international cooperation. The Austin Pune Hackathon is an effort to promote entrepreneurship and encourage a collaborative effort between tech focused individuals. Pune, Maharashtra and Austin, Texas are both cities striving to overcome unique challenges that can be answered by innovative technology.



(4) Business Delegation from Austin to Pune (Sep 24- 28, 2018)

A business delegation from Austin led by Council member Allison Altor went to Pune from Sep 24 -28, 2018. The delegation met with various businesses, nonprofits, educational institutes, chamber of commerce, museums, health and pharmaceutical companies and cultural centers to exchange ideas on possible collaboration between Austin and Pune.

During this trip an official friendship city agreement was signed by Pune mayor Mukta Tilak and by council member Allison Alter on behalf of the Austin Mayor. Around 70 project ideas came out of these business delegation meetings.



(5) Austin Sister Cities International (ASCI) Fall festival (Nov 4, 2018)

We participated in the Austin Sister Cities International (ASCI) Fall festival where we presented arts and culture of Pune/India. We had hands on session on the Rangoli and items representing history of India/Pune.



Progress synopsis and next steps:

Overall this Austin Pune Sister City project taken over by the 'Arts and Culture ' workgroup is a great story so far where we have been very successful in engaging not only the Indian community of Austin, but also citizens of Pune into the main stream Austin culture.

Going forward we will be focused on meaningful exchanges/projects which will make sense for the benefit of both the cities and work towards officially establishing the Austin Pune Sister City relationship. Here is the overall schedule for this project with planned and actual completion dates.

Item	Planned Completion date	Actual completion date
Idea and planning	Dec 31, 2017	Dec 17, 2017
Establish Friendship City relationship between Austin and Pune	Dec 31, 2018	Sep 26-2018
Establish Sister City relationship between Austin and Pune	Dec 31, 2020	