

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: **COOPERATION AGREEMENT WITH PODUJEVA, KOSOVO**

BACKGROUND:

In 2018, the City received a letter from the Mayor of Podujeva, Kosovo, expressing interest in establishing a partner city relationship. Podujeva is located in northeastern Kosovo, approximately 15 miles north of the capital Pristina. The community contains approximately 71,000 residents, most of whom reside in the rural portion of the municipality. The proposal to form a partnership suggested that Ames' agricultural connections would be complementary to Podujeva's developing agriculture economy.

The state of Iowa has a variety of connections to Kosovo and cities within it. Iowa entered into a partner state agreement with Kosovo in 2013. In 2016, Kosovo opened a consulate in Des Moines. Currently, nine Iowa communities have partner city relationships with counterparts in Kosovo.

Ames' international partnerships are facilitated by the Ames International Partner Cities Association (AIPCA). Currently, Ames' only partnership is with Kosshu City, Japan. This partnership consists of sending and receiving youth (middle school-aged) and adult delegations between the cities, in addition to sharing local crafts and other goods. Partnerships between Ames and other international communities have previously existed, and AIPCA has been in the process of exploring the possibility of a second partner community for several years.

The process of developing a relationship with Podujeva slowed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite this, however, representatives from Podujeva have made several exploratory visits to Ames, and AIPCA representatives have also been able to travel along with other Iowans to Kosovo to meet with Podujeva officials.

A Cooperation Agreement has been prepared to formalize the partnership between Ames and Podujeva. The agreement, which has been produced in English, Albanian, and Serbian, emphasizes several specific areas of cooperation:

- Agriculture
- Education
- Culture Youth and Sport
- Institutional Cooperation
- Local economic development
- Social housing
- Employment and mutual visits of citizens

Each partnering community is responsible for its own costs arising out of the performance of the agreement. The Council should note that funds for AIPCA activities (such as hosting delegations and defraying expenses to send delegation leaders) are budgeted each year from the Local Option Sales Tax Funds. AIPCA submits an Outside Funding Request application with a proposal of activities. **The amount to allocate is up to the City Council each year.**

Correspondence in support of the partnership is attached.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the attached Cooperation Agreement with the Municipality of Podujeva, Kosovo.
2. Refer this item to staff for further information.
3. Do not approve the agreement.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Ames has long been involved in partnerships with a variety of international communities. These partnerships offer the opportunity for Ames residents to benefit from interaction with residents, businesses, and officials from around the world, through cooperative exchanges, educational activities, and other opportunities.

Since 2018, Ames and Podujeva, Kosovo have been exploring the potential for a formal partnership. The attached Cooperation Agreement outlines the areas in which the communities would cooperate. Ames and Podujeva share a variety of interests, and the proposed partnership expands upon an existing relationship between other communities in the state, the state of Iowa itself, and their counterparts in Kosovo. It is therefore the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, as described above.

ATTACHMENT(S):

[AIPCA Letter to Mayor Haila.docx](#)
[Acting Mayor of Kosovo.021020.pdf](#)
[Podujeva - Ames Draft Agreement \(English\).docx](#)
[Ames Sister City Vote.pdf](#)