

# CARY SISTER CITIES

## STRATEGIC PLAN 2024 - 2028





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# STRATEGIC PLAN AT A GLANCE

## *Cary Sister Cities Mission and Vision Themes*

### **Mission Themes:**

*We believe in fostering cultural diversity and inclusivity.*

- We celebrate and preserve Cary's cultural diversity.
- We foster tolerance and respect for all cultures.

*We believe in creating and sustaining international relations and peace.*

- We build international ties for peace and understanding.
- We enhance global harmony and unity.

*We believe in the impact of cross-cultural understanding and exchange.*

- We connect with diverse cultures locally and globally.
- We encourage mutual learning and sharing across cultures.

*We believe in leaving a legacy in the Cary community.*

- We create lasting connections to our Sister Cities.
- We pave the way for Cary to appreciate culture and diversity.

### **Vision Themes:**

- *We have created and sustained opportunities for youth to learn, appreciate, and experience different cultures*
- *We participated in, co-sponsored, and support a variety of events*
- *We have an engaged membership and are visible in the community*
- *We have strong sustainable relationships with our global Sister Cities*
- *We have created a community that appreciates and values different cultures.*





# STRATEGIC PLAN AT A GLANCE -CONTINUED-

## *Strategic Focus Areas and Goal Statements*

The Cary Sister Cities' strategic plan contains four focus areas with goal statements and top priorities for each area. These focus areas are outcomes of the October 2023 strategic Board retreat and November 2023 retreat debrief meeting. These focus areas are meant to serve as pillars for Cary Sister Cities as they continue to grow their organization over the next four years.



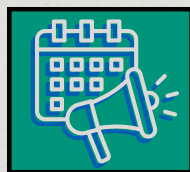
### **Focus Area 1: Strengthen Communications**

Cary Sister Cities will bolster its communication and marketing efforts to share the organization's mission and vision with a wider community audience.



### **Focus Area 2: Expand Membership and Outreach**

Cary Sister Cities will expand its membership and outreach efforts to create new, valuable partnerships and attract more active organization members.



### **Focus Area 3: Enhance Community Events**

Cary Sister Cities will focus on offering high-quality, engaging events and programs for the community that promote cultural diversity and inclusivity.



### **Focus Area 4: Provide Strong Governance**

Cary Sister Cities will continue to clarify its organizational structure and develop sound policies, that enhance the organization's performance.



# ABOUT CARY SISTER CITIES

## *About Sister Cities International*

Established by President Dwight Eisenhower in 1956, Sister Cities International was initially coordinated by the U.S. Department of State and then moved to the National League of Cities. This international program was established to promote friendly relations and mutual understanding between citizens of U.S. cities and those of similar cities in foreign countries. Sister Cities International is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that serves as the national membership organization for individual sister cities, counties, and states across the United States. This network unites tens of thousands of citizen diplomats and volunteers in over 300 member communities with over 2,000 partnerships in more than 140 countries.

## *About Cary Sister Cities*

Cary Sister Cities is proud of their five Cary Sister Cities which include:

- Le Touquet, France (since 1992)
- Hsinchu City, Taiwan (since 1993)
- County Meath, Ireland (since 2001)
- Markham, Canada (since 2002)
- Bandirma, Türkiye (since 2022)







# ENVISIONING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

## *Why Think Strategically?*

The Cary Sister Cities' strategic plan will be a guiding framework for activities and operations moving forward for the next four years. This strategic plan will provide clarity, direction, and focus, with a forward-looking emphasis. The plan will clearly communicate the message of “who we are and what we want our organization to be in the future.” The strategic plan will identify the primary strategic priorities and sample metrics to successfully meet these goals.

The purpose of the strategic plan is to:

1. Set the focus for the organization (establish focus areas and priorities)
2. Define the organization's actions
3. Direct the achievement of short-term and long-term goals

## *Developing Cary Sister Cities' Strategic Plan*

To develop this plan, feedback from Board members was initially gained at a Board meeting and through group virtual meetings. After gaining initial insight into the organization, the Board members convened for the 2023 strategic retreat to assess the current state of the organization and envision the ideal future. Following the Board retreat, the Board members convened again for a debrief session to discuss and refine the strategic plan themes and outcomes.

Based on the input from the strategic Board retreat, the resulting Cary Sister Cities strategic plan outlines four primary focus areas. These focus areas represent the primary strategic areas are crucial for the organization's successful development and growth. Each focus area is further defined to include primary priorities. These priorities are activities to ensure the achievement of the broader focus areas.



# FOCUS AREAS AND PRIORITIES

## *Focus Areas, Priorities, and Performance Measures*

The strategic plan includes four focus areas to guide Cary Sister Cities over the next four years:

- Focus Area 1: Strengthen Communications
- Focus Area 2: Expand Membership and Outreach
- Focus Area 3: Enhance Community Events
- Focus Area 4: Define Governance

The following information describes working goal statements for each strategic focus area, priorities, and sample performance measures.



### **Focus Area 1: Strengthen Communications**

Cary Sister Cities will bolster its communication and marketing efforts to share the organization's mission and vision with a wider community audience.

#### **Priorities:**

- Create a brand and value proposition that reflects Cary Sister Cities' mission and vision (*Years 1-2*).
- Bolster Cary Sister Cities current communication channels including Instagram, Facebook, and website and explore options for new communication channels, such as a newsletter (*Years 1-2*).
- Create and implement a marketing and communication plan to guide Cary Sister Cities for the next four years, which could include a press kit (*Years 1-2*).

#### **Performance Measures:**

- Increased engagement on social media
- Increased followers/audience on social media





# FOCUS AREAS AND PRIORITIES

## -CONTINUED-



### Focus Area 2: Expand Membership and Outreach

Cary Sister Cities will expand its membership and outreach efforts to create new, valuable partnerships and attract more active organization members.

#### Priorities:

- Expand efforts to attract and retain Cary Sister Cities members (*Years 1-5*).
- Cultivate meaningful partnerships with local organizations, leaders, and businesses who align with the mission and vision of Cary Sister Cities (*Years 1-5*).
- Build relationships with Cary Town Council and Staff (*Years 1-5*).
- Build and strengthen partnerships with current Cary Sister Cities and potential new cities (*Years 1-5*).

#### Performance Measures:

- Increased number of partners (business, nonprofit, cities, etc.)
- Increased presence with Cary Town Council and Staff



### Focus Area 3: Enhance Community Events

Cary Sister Cities will focus on offering high-quality, engaging events and programs for the community that promote cultural diversity and inclusivity.

#### Priorities:

- Continue to hold high-quality annual events; examples include 2023 Beer Garden, Octoberfest, etc. (*Years 1-5*).



# FOCUS AREAS AND PRIORITIES

## -CONTINUED-

### Focus Area Three: Enhance Community Events (CONTINUED)

#### Priorities:

- Continue to strengthen and expand exchange programs (*Years 1-3*).
- Plan for and launch new community-based cultural events and programs (*Years 1-3*).

#### Performance Measures:

- Increased participation at annual events
- Increased number of total events held
- Increased exchange program participants



### Focus Area 4: Provide Strong Governance

Cary Sister Cities will continue to clarify its organizational structure and develop sound policies, that enhance the organization's performance.

#### Priorities:

- Strengthen the Board's overall effectiveness (*Years 1-2*).
- Define and track Board roles and responsibilities (*Years 1-2*).
- Refine and improve organizational policies and procedures (*Years 1-2*).

#### Performance Measures:

- Increased understanding in membership and committee responsibilities
- Established and utilized organizational structure







# ACTION PLAN

## *Ownership*

The Cary Sister Cities' Board members will be primarily responsible for managing, implementing, and monitoring the strategic plan.

Under the current Board organizational structure, the following committees/leadership will serve as main support for the associated strategic focus areas:

### **Focus Area One: Strengthen Communications**

- The Communications Committee will support this strategic focus area

### **Focus Area Two: Expand Membership and Outreach**

- The Membership and Outreach Committee and New Sister Cities Partnerships Committee will support this strategic focus area

### **Focus Area Three: Enhance Community Events**

- The Events Committee will support this strategic focus area

### **Focus Area Four: Define Governance**

- The Cary Sister Cities President and Vice President will be the primary support for this strategic focus area

## *Next Steps*

The Cary Sister Cities' Board members will refine the tactics needed to achieve each of the strategic priorities. After defining the tactics, each strategic priority will include the tasks needed to complete each tactic along with the primary stakeholders involved and estimated timelines over the next four years.

All strategic plan movement will be tracked and shared on the Cary Sister Cities' shared drive.



# APPENDIX



## Strategic Planning Process

The process of planning for and envisioning Cary Sister Cities' strategic focus areas began in August 2023. The process, as depicted above, involved three main stages:

1. Where are we?
2. Where do we want to go?
3. How will we get there?

