

## **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

Meeting held May 20, 2026

A meeting of the International Relations Committee is held this day commencing at 3:30 o'clock p.m. in Room 522a, 350 City Hall Square West, there being present the following members:

Councillor Angelo Marignani, Chair  
Councillor Renaldo Agostino, (arrives at 3:45 o'clock p.m.)  
Councillor Ed Sleiman  
Lubna Barakat, (via Zoom video conference)  
Saiful Bhuiyan  
Ronnie Haidar  
L.T. Zhao (via Zoom video conference)

### ***Regrets received from:***

Councillor Fred Francis

### ***Guests in attendance:***

Carlie Flack, Foreign Relations Commissioner, Chamber of Commerce, San Juan del Río, Querétaro, México and Rodrigo Báez, Head Consul of Mexico in Leamington, Ontario, regarding ***Item 4.1***  
John Fraser and Amanda Gellman, regarding ***Item 4.2***

Via Zoom regarding ***Item 4.1:***

- Javier Peña Perrusquia, Coordinador General UAQ Campus San Juan del Río
- Christopher Vázquez, UAQ Campus San Juan del Río
- Carlos Redfern, Representante de RCG Advisory
- José Julio Rodríguez Guzmán, Director del CONALEP Plantel San Juan del Río
- Abigail Durán, Coordinación de Desarrollo Económico de San Juan del Río
- Javier Duran Zárate, Coordinación Técnica de Desarrollo Económico del municipio de San Juan del Río, Querétaro.
- Dario Velázquez, Coordinación de Desarrollo Económico de San Juan del Río
- María del Carmen Amezcuita, Instituto Tecnológico de San Juan del Río
- Rubén Espinoza Castro, Director del Instituto Tecnológico de San Juan del Río Karen Trejo Garduño, Empresa INPLARSA
- Abraham Corona Ruíz, Director de Fomento a la Inversión y Desarrollo Empresarial del Municipio de San Juan del Río, Querétaro.
- Miguel Uribe Esquivel, Director de la Universidad IFES
- Claudia Patricia Trejo Díaz, Coordinadora de Asuntos Internacionales de la UTSJR

***Also present are the following resource personnel***

Matthew Johnson, Executive Director Economic Development  
Sandra Gebauer, Council Assistant  
Karen Kadour, Committee Coordinator

**1. Call to Order**

The Chair calls the meeting to order at 3:38 o'clock p.m. and the Committee considers the Agenda being Schedule A attached hereto, matters which are dealt with as follows:

**2. Declaration of Conflict**

None disclosed.

**3. Minutes**

Moved by Councillor Ed Sleiman, seconded by Lubna Barakat,  
That the minutes of the International Relations Committee of its meeting held  
February 24, 2026, **BE ADOPTED** as presented.  
Carried.

**4. Business Items**

**4.1 San Juan del Rio Proposal**

Carlie Janine Flack, Advisor to the Investment Promotion Committee in San Juan del Rio, Queretaro, Mexico, appeared before the International Relations Committee to present a proposal for a Friendship City Relationship between San Juan del Rio, Queretaro, Mexico and Windsor Ontario Canada, and provided a PowerPoint presentation entitled Friendship City Relationship: San Juan del Rio and Windsor – An International Alliance with Purpose, which is attached as Appendix “A”. The presentation provided by Ms. Flack is as follows:

- A video entitled “Friendship City Relationship San Juan del Rio & Windsor: An International Alliance with Purpose” which provides a visual of San Juan attached as Appendix "A"
- Carlie Flack provides the following remarks as it relates to the Presentation:

- This is an initiative born within the Chamber of Commerce and supported by the city government in San Juan del Rio.
- San Juan del Rio is growing very fast and with growth comes great opportunities but also challenges which is forcing them to modernize and to have a vision beyond their own borders.
- There are several similarities between the City of Windsor and San Juan del Rio which creates a natural foundation for collaboration. Both cities are industrial and logistical hubs; their main industry is automotive parts and advanced manufacturing. They also have vineyards with tourism based around that.
- The population consists of 390,000 and the goal is to reach 1 million by the year 2050.
- The average age is 28 with a low unemployment rate of 2.4%.
- In terms of collaboration, she has spoken to the Consulate in Leamington, Invest Windsor Essex, the University of Windsor, St. Clair College. Economic Development Windsor, the Automotive Parts Manufacturers, Association, the Canadian Association of Mold Makers, the Ontario Trade Commission and the Windsor Essex Chamber of Commerce.
- The local government is in full support of the Friendship City project.
- Her proposal is based on three pillars of operation – trade and industry, education, and tourism and culture. The vision is to connect with organizations in those pillars and to create actionable microprojects with them.
- Spoke to Invest Windsor Essex regarding the potential for creating meetings virtually for trade missions so that Canadian companies can promote their products locally to the buyers in San Juan del Rio in the automotive industry and among other industries.
- San Juan will have the opportunity to connect with companies in Windsor that need their products.
- In terms of education, they have gaps in their higher level technical skilled education.
- They would like to bridge that gap so local people can be hired in the higher management areas which comes through education that currently is not offered locally.
- They are interested in partnering with the University of Windsor.
- Suggestion for exchange programs for both faculty and students.
- Could bring nursing students to Windsor to recertify as there is a shortage of nurses in Canada.

In response to a question asked by Lubna Barakat regarding what the second official language in San Juan del Rio is, Carlie Flack responds she suspects it is English and adds they also have indigenous languages as well. She notes that if Canadian students wish to attend university in San Juan del Rio, some classes are offered in English.

Ronnie Haidar asks if San Juan del Rio has other sister cities or friendship cities. Carlie Flack responds that the City of Windsor would be the first.

Councillor Ed Sleiman questions what they are doing above and beyond what is existing at this time in terms of a trade agreement. Carlie Flack responds that the trade agreement will be in negotiations shortly and regardless of what happens with that trade agreement, Mexico will seek an additional trade agreement with Canada directly if a trilateral trade agreement is not reached. She remarks there will still be free trade between the two countries.

Carlie Flack thanks the Committee for receiving this proposal and states it is an honour to represent her city, and all of the supporters backing this proposal.

Moved by Councillor Renaldo Agostino, seconded by Saiful Bhuiyan,  
That the International Relations Committee **RECOMMEND** that the City of Windsor and the City of San Juan del Rio enter into a Friendship City Agreement.  
Carried.

#### **4.2 Children's Art Exhibition – John Fraser, Graphic Designer Presentation**

Amanda Gellman, Media Arts Community Centre and Museum is present and provides the following background information:

- Purchased the former Downtown Mission building and is part of the film and arts community.
- They have a camp for youth ages 8 to 16. They hire folks 19 to 30 in age to teach visual art, photography, film making, animation, and costume design.
- Kids from all over the city and county have been coming to camp since 2012.
- John Fraser presented the idea of taking the Twin Cities Art and to possibly animate it into video.
- Amanda Gellman remarks they can create videos of all of the artwork but can also take still artwork and animated artwork. They are able to create videos and social media pages that each city can plug into which can be shared globally and, to also set up a website.
- They would like to bring this project to life and to live on for a very long time.
- Interested in doing a press conference at the Film Centre to start off in the summer when the kids are there.
- Can also teach art classes to the children from the Twin Cities.
- The 10 Year Anniversary is a great theme and suggests adding Celebration to that theme.

John Frasier, Graphic Designer provides an overview of ideas for the Children's Art Exhibition as follows:

- Was interested when he saw the art exhibit at Art Windsor Essex and the qualities of the different artwork and the different styles that were there.
- Advises they use mapping software at work where there is one large map that can be wrapped on a 3D sphere, so it looks like a globe. It would be a nice project if

they highlighted where exactly all of the twin cities are and eventually could zoom in on the animation to show what the kids love about their cities.

- He suggests during the film camp to go to Walkerville and the children could draw the sculpture of Hiram Walker, the CKLW Sculpture on the waterfront, the Art Gallery; and everything that is great about downtown.
- All of this could be on one map that can be explored and to have one of those animations for each of the twin cities.

Amanda Gellman advises she viewed the artwork at the gallery and is committed to allowing the future artwork to live on. Sandra Gebauer notes that a news release calling for young artists to participate in the 2026 Children's Art Exhibition will be going out in a few days as they want to collect all of the artwork prior to the end of the school year.

In response to a question asked by Amanda Gellman regarding how many pieces of artwork are collected, Sandra Gebauer responds that they ask their Twin Cities to send approximately 20 pieces per city and adds all of the artwork received is included.

Councillor Renaldo Agostino asks if the IRC is able to utilize funding from their budget to assist in this project.

Moved by Councillor Renaldo Agostino, seconded by Councillor Ed Sleiman,  
That **APPROVAL BE GIVEN** to an expenditure in the upset amount of \$1,000 from the International Relation Committee's Capital Fund to support the animation of the 2026 Children's Art Exhibition.

Carried.

### 4.3 Children's Art Exhibit

Sandra Gebauer advises a news release will be issued in the coming days regarding the Children's Art Exhibit. She states that she has reached out to Devonshire Mall already in the event the Committee is interested in hosting a physical display again this year and provided the following weeks: June 22, July 20 and September 7. She remarks that should the Committee wish to proceed with the physical display, September 7 would be the most suitable date, as the art would need to go to the Film Centre first.

Ronnie Haidar advises he is interested in continuing the physical display and asks if laptops or tablets can be available to allow for the public to watch the video.

Moved by Councillor Renaldo Agostino, seconded by Councillor Ed Sleiman,  
That the 2026 Children's Art Exhibition **BE HELD** on a date to be determined at Devonshire Mall; and,

That Administration **EXPLORE** the possibility of making laptops or other technology available, so that the animated video that will be created by the participants of the Summer Film Camp can be viewed during the Exhibit opening.

Carried.

#### 4.4 Shkodra Twin City Proposal Discussion – Next Steps

Sandra Gebauer advises that now that the Committee has received and had a chance to review the actual proposal from Shkodra, the Committee must make a recommendation. The Committee report will then be shared along with the proposal with the Mayor's Office, will go before the Development & Heritage Standing Committee and then to City Council for approval.

Moved by Councillor Ed Sleiman, seconded by Lubna Barakat,  
That the International Relations Committee **RECOMMENDS** that the Proposal for a Sister City Relationship with Shkodra, Albania **BE APPROVED**.  
Carried.

#### 4.5 Gunsan Brews & Blues Festival

Sandra Gebauer advises that further to the request that was received from Gunsan to engage a local Craft Brewery to participate in Gunsan's Brews & Blues Festival and further to the Committee's direction to direct the matter to Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island (TWEPI) to follow-up, both Walkerville Brewery and Sandwich Brewery were approached regarding this opportunity however, neither was able to participate.

#### 4.6 Arlington, Texas

The Chair advises that coordination is currently underway for a reciprocal visit from Arlington, Texas to Windsor. Representatives from Arlington, Texas are proposing the visit be held in late summer or early fall.

Sandra Gebauer notes that based on discussions with the Mayor's Office, July or August may be more suitable, reminding them that the municipal elections are scheduled for October.

Moved by Councillor Renaldo Agostino, seconded by Ronnie Haidar,  
That dates for the reciprocal visit by representatives from Arlington, Texas **BE CORRGINATED** with the Mayor's Office.  
Carried.

Ronnie Haidar remarks that the University of Windsor is interested in being involved when the Arlington, Texas delegations visit the City of Windsor.

#### **4.7 Proposal for Sister City Partnership between Kryvyi Rih and the City of Windsor**

Moved by Saiful Bhuiyan, seconded by Councillor Renaldo Agostino,  
That the Proposal for a Sister City partnership between Kryvyi Rih and the City of Windsor **BE DEFERRED** to the next meeting of the International Relations Committee.  
Carried.

#### **4.8 Polish Heritage Month in Canada**

Sandra Gebauer indicates that a Ribbon Cutting ceremony and remarks by Mayor Drew Dilkens will be held on May 21, 2026, in the lobby of the 350 City Hall Square West building at 11:00 a.m.

#### **4.9 The Polish Canadian Business and Professional Association of Windsor Annual Dinner**

The Chair reports that the 31<sup>st</sup> Polish Canadian Society Business Dinner will be held on Friday, November 20, 2026, at the Dom Polski Club, 1275 Langlois, Windsor.

Moved by Councillor Renaldo Agostino, seconded by L.T. Zhao,  
That **APPROVAL BE GIVEN** to an expenditure in the upset amount of \$1,000 for the purchase of a table for the 31<sup>st</sup> Polish Canadian Society Business Dinner to be held on Friday, November 20, 2026, at the Dom Polski Club, 1275 Langlois, Windsor.  
Carried.

### **5. Communications**

None

### **6. New Business**

#### **Confirm & Ratify E-mail Poll**

That the results of the e-mal poll conducted on May 15, 2026, approving the following recommendation **BE CONFIRMED AND RATIFIED**:

(

Moved by Saiful Bhuyian, seconded by Councillor Ed Sleiman,

That **APPROVAL BE GIVEN** to an expenditure in the upset amount of \$75 for the purchase of refreshments for the May 20, 2026, meeting of the International Relations Committee.

Carried.

**7. Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting to be determined.

**8. Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting is adjourned at 5:15 o'clock p.m.



# FRIENDSHIP CITY RELATIONSHIP

SAN JUAN DEL RÍO & WINDSOR:  
AN INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE WITH PURPOSE



# WHY WINDSOR, ONTARIO?

- ✔ Our similarities create a natural foundation for collaboration.
- ✔ Industrial and logistics hubs
- ✔ Shared challenges (supply chain shifts, tariffs)
- ✔ Similar city scale and economic identity

“Both cities help build North America.”





**SAN JUAN DEL RÍO**  
2024 - 2027



# SAN JUAN DEL RÍO, QUERÉTARO: WHERE HISTORY MEETS PROGRESS.

**1**

Its connectivity makes it an ideal logistics hub for business, trade, and investment.

**2**

San Juan del Río preserves its historical essence, colonial architecture, and a safe, welcoming atmosphere



# CONNECTIVITY



**SAN JUAN DEL RÍO**  
2024 - 2027



## Distances to the U.S. border

El Paso, Texas — 1,630 km / 1,021 mi  
San Diego, Ca. — 2,600 km / 1,615 mi  
Laredo, Texas — 940 km / 584 mi

## Distances to the main seaports.

Altamira — 631 km / 392 mi  
Veracruz — 607 km / 377 mi  
Lázaro Cárdenas — 544 km / 338 mi  
Manzanillo — 650 km / 403 mi



- Highway
- Railway
- Highway NAFTA



**SAN JUAN DEL RÍO**

2024 - 2027



# STRATEGIC LOCATION



**45 MIN**

SJR- Querétaro Intercontinental Airport and the state capital.

**6 H**

From the port of Veracruz.

**7 H**

From the port of Mazatlán



**25 MIN**

SJR – Arco Norte

**1 H**

Celaya

**2 H**

CDMX and Toluca

**5 H**

Guadalajara





**SAN JUAN DEL RÍO**  
2024 - 2027



# RAILROADS

## Ferromex

Kansas City  
Southern México



New station  
México-Querétaro

# INFRASTRUCTURE

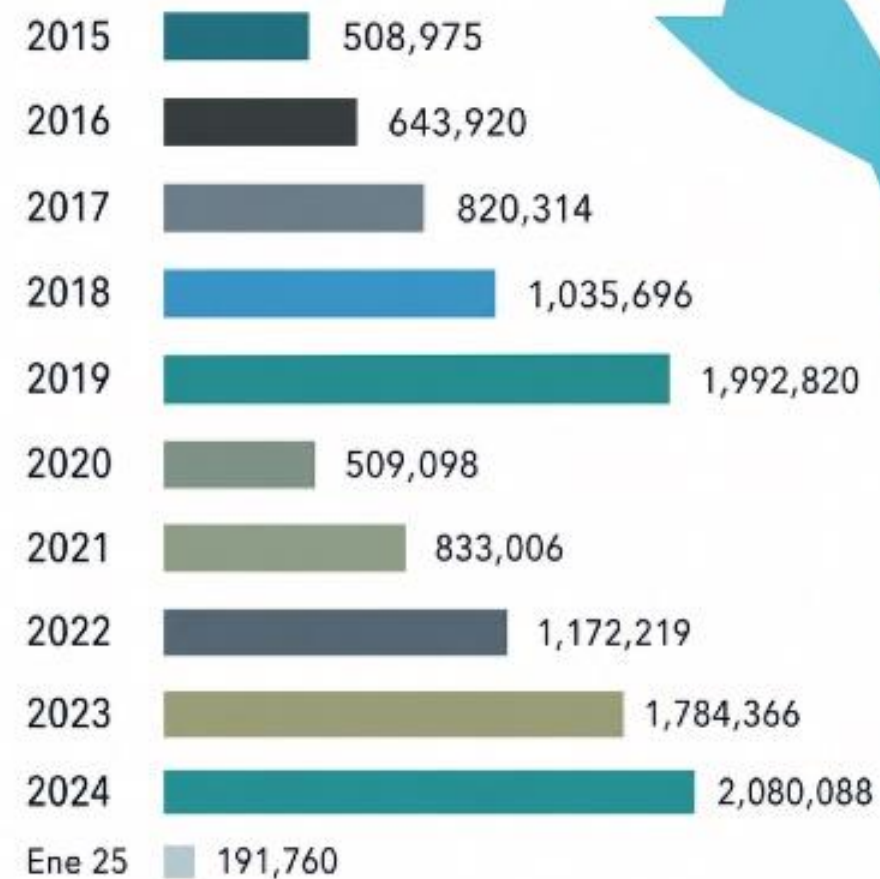


-  **Federal Highway**  
173 km
-  **NAFTA Highway**
-  **Railway**  
520 km
-  **Gas pipelines**  
1.5 M consumers
-  **State highway**  
1,177 km

# First airport in Mexico to comply with ICAO standards



## Passengers

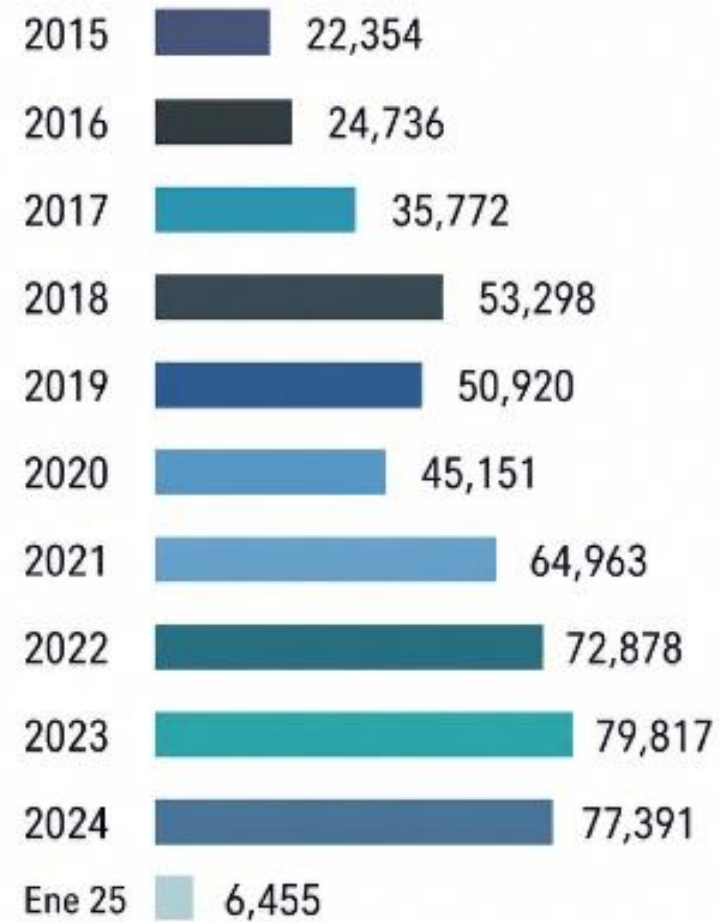


**ADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE**



# 5th place nationwide in international cargo

## Annual cargo tonnage



**ADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE**



**SAN JUAN DEL RÍO**  
2024 - 2027



# 390 THOUSAND INHABITANTS

Due to its diversified economy, with key sectors such as industry, commerce, and agriculture, San Juan del Río represents a significant consumer market in the bajo region.



# INDICATORS



**20%**

contribution to the state GDP

**77%**

of the local economy comes  
from the industrial sector

**Second-largest**

commercial infrastructure in  
the state

**High**

urban competitiveness  
according to IMCO.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Instituto Mexicano para la Competitividad, A.C.

# HUMAN CAPITAL AND SKILLED WORKFORCE

**28 years**  
average age

**68,000**  
workers in the industrial  
sector

**63 out of every 100  
inhabitants**  
are economically active

**2.4%**  
state unemployment  
rate

**De 8 a 12 familias**  
Between 8 and 12 families  
move to live in San Juan del  
Río, Querétaro every day

## Primary sector

Main crops:

Alfalfa	Sorghum	Oats
Fodder	Beans	Broccoli
Tomato	Wheat	Nopal (cactus)
Dried chili pepper	Peach	

**80,000 hectares**

38,215 rainfed

8,900 irrigated

27,570 grazing land

1,331 forest

2,340 urbanized

## National producers of roses

70 hectares of cultivation in the El Organal community

## Secondary sector

320 direct manufacturing industries

Investment of 482 million dollars





# SECURITY

**Intelligence**

**Technology**

**Professionalization**

The state of Querétaro ranks first nationwide in Rule of Law in Mexico – World Justice Project. Effective collaboration among municipal, state, and federal forces.

San Juan del Río is part of the state video surveillance system, with more than 200 cameras installed at strategic points and continuous monitoring from the C4 center.



**SAN JUAN DEL RÍO**

2024 - 2027



**SJR** Legado de  
Bien Común

**San Juan del Río, Querétaro,**

**THE GATEWAY TO  
THE BAJÍO.**

**“At a time when North American trade relationships are being tested, Canada and Mexico are strengthening direct partnerships in unprecedented ways.**

**We are seeing record trade missions, increased diplomatic collaboration, and growing conversations about how our two countries can work more closely together — not only federally, but regionally and locally.”**

Marcelo Ebrard – Minister of Economy, Mexico

# COMMUNITY SUPPORT

- **Mexico**
- Queretaro Automotive Cluster
- Queretaro Wine Industry Cluster
- UAQ
- Universidad Tecnológica SJR
- Instituto Tecnológico SJR
- CONCYTEC
- Conalep
- Exo-s
  
- **Canada**
- Ontario Embassey in Mexico
- Mexican Consulate, Leamington
- Invest Windsor Essex
- RCG Advisory (Windsor)



# WHO WILL MANAGE THE RELATIONSHIP?

## San Juan del Río Chamber of Commerce:

- Coordinate communication, trade missions and projects.
- Represent local industries and organizations.

## San Juan del Río Municipal Government:

- Provide institutional and diplomatic backing.
- Officiate legal proceedings.
- Designate a municipal liason.



# COLLABORATIONS

- University of Windsor
- St. Clair College
- Mexican Consulate in Leamington
- Invest Windsor Essex
- Economic Development Windsor
- Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association (APMA)
- Canadian Association of Mold Makers (CAMM)
- Trade Programs Advanced Manufacturing Roadshow
- Windsor Essex Chamber of Commerce



# Vision for the Future



## Trade & Industry

- B2B networking meetings
- Supply chain diversification
- Mutual soft landing services
- Supplier development
- Bilateral trade missions (virtual or in person)



## Education

- Student/teacher exchanges
- Shared training programs
- Bilingual workforce pipelines
- Educational pathways for technical certifications
- Collaborative research projects



## Tourism & Culture

- Joint promotion
- Featured region in food , wine and cultural festivals
- Participation in Wines of the world event

# FINAL THOUGHTS

Windsor and San Juan del Río are uniquely compatible cities.

We share industries, economic realities, workforce challenges, international ambitions and a belief in growth through collaboration.

This partnership has the potential to become far more than a symbolic agreement.

It can become a living bridge between two cities helping shape the future of North America together.

# THANK YOU!

- Carlie Flack – San Juan del Rio Chamber of Commerce
- E-mail: [inversiones@canacosjr.com](mailto:inversiones@canacosjr.com)
- Cel: (52) 427 121 1520

