

CORAL GABLES

THE CITY BEAUTIFUL

International Affairs Coordinating Council (IACC) Meeting Minutes Monday, December 8, 2025

Location: Fink Studio
2506 Ponce de León Blvd., Coral Gables, Florida

Members:	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Commissioners
Olga Ramudo	-	-	-	-	-	X	X	E	P	P	E	E	Mayor Vince Lago
Vicky Rua	-	-	-	-	-	X	X	P	UA	E	P	A	Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson
Alfonso Cueto	-	-	-	-	-	X	X	P	P	P	P	P	Comm. Richard Lara
Raoul Cantero	-	-	-	-	-	X	X	P	UA	P	A	P	Comm. Ariel Fernandez
Richard Montes de Oca	-	-	-	-	-	X	X	P	P	P	UA	P	Comm. Melissa Castro
Ilsa Danielson	-	-	-	-	-	X	X	E	P	P	UA	A	Peter Iglesias
Estrellita Sibila	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	P	P	P	Council-at-Large Appointment

A = Absent P = Present E = Excused UA = Unexcused Absence X = No Meeting F = Former Member

The International Affairs Coordinating Council (IACC) meeting was called to order at 4:15 p.m. Vice Chair, Montes de Oca welcomed everyone to the Committee.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A motion to approve the minutes from October 20, 2025, IACC meeting was made by Board member Cueto and Board member Sibila seconded the motion which was passed unanimously.

COUNTRY REPORT

SAN ISIDRO, ARGENTINA

Vice Chair Montes de Oca, San Isidro representative participated in an International Sister Cities Roundtable on November 7, hosted by Sister Cities International, with attendees from multiple global cities and the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires. The roundtable emphasized the importance of cultural, educational, and business exchanges, including Fulbright scholarships and English-language programs through 13 binational centers managed by the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires. It was stressed that sister city relationships should remain non-political in nature. Coral Gables introduced itself and expressed interest in reactivating engagement with Argentina. Follow-up materials from the roundtable, including official notes and a power point presentation, are still outstanding. Outreach to San Isidro contacts has been initiated, but responses are pending. A potential Zoom meeting was proposed, with future in-person engagement considered once dialogue is established.

Discussion also addressed travel planning to Argentina, noting that a December visit was deferred to ensure the trip would be productive and aligned with confirmed meetings. A visit is now tentatively planned for the first quarter of next fiscal year, depending on engagement progress.

SANTA TECLA, EL SALVADOR

The update on Santa Tecla, El Salvador clarified confusion regarding a request for five buses. City departments confirmed that no buses or similar equipment are available for donation at this time. Communication has been routed through the mayor's offices, and a letter has been sent clarifying that Coral Gables cannot provide buses but remains interested in educational and cultural collaboration. The discussion emphasized the need to reset expectations, assign a clear committee lead, and determine whether a meaningful and sustainable sister city relationship can be developed under current resources and administrative priorities.

LA ANTIGUA, GUATEMALA

Regarding La Antigua, Guatemala, a delegation is expected to visit on January 16th and 20th. Final confirmation of dates and availability is pending from the mayor's office in La Antigua, Guatemala. Once confirmed, the city intends to coordinate a structured agenda, ideally a formal sit-down between mayors, modeled after past successful engagements such as the meeting held at the Biltmore with the Aix-en-Provence delegation. The goal is to reactivate the Sister City relationship through a signing ceremony and to clearly define mutual interests and potential areas of collaboration.

CARTAGENA, COLOMBIA

Future engagement with Colombia was also discussed. A possible trip in 2026 is being considered by Board member Cantero. This timing could support both cultural exchange and business connections, and other opportunities for collaboration.

An update was provided by Leticia Perez on her attendance at the Florida State Sister Cities Conference in Jacksonville (November 13–15). It was noted that most sister city programs operate as independent nonprofit organizations (501c3) and rely heavily on grants. As a city entity, Coral Gables cannot apply for nonprofit status; however, board members could potentially establish a nonprofit to pursue grants. Additional research is underway, including exploring opportunities through the Community Foundation.

Funding and budget considerations were discussed in detail. The International Affairs Coordinating Council/Sister City's program operates with small funding from the Coral Gables Community Foundation. Separate donor-advised funds held at the Community Foundation exist for sister city purposes but require permission for use.

Several Board members discussed the possibility of changing the International Affairs Coordinating Council meetings every other month to potentially improve attendance.

A motion to move the International Affairs Coordinating Council meeting from monthly to bimonthly was made by Board member Alfonso Cueto and seconded by Board member Raoul Cantero and approved unanimously.

The meeting concluded with discussion on best practices for event planning, including the recommendation to develop a calendar of events to track proposed initiatives, funding allocations, and confirmed activities. Using past successful projects as models and maintaining clear coordination among

city departments, consulates, and committee members were emphasized as essential for effective international engagement.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Board member Cantero and seconded by Board member Sibila. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Leticia Perez
International Business Development Representative
Economic Development Department
City of Coral Gables