



GARDEN ROUTE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

Office of the Executive Mayor

54 York Street, George, 6530, Western Cape, South Africa

29 January 2026

The Honorable Anders Ibsen

Mayor, City of Tacoma
747 Market Street
Tacoma, Washington 98402, USA

RE: Letter of Intent – Sister City Partnership between the Garden Route District Municipality and the City of Tacoma

Dear Mayor Ibsen,

Congratulations on your election as Mayor of Tacoma. I am Marais Kruger, the newly elected Executive Mayor of the Garden Route District Municipality in South Africa's Western Cape Province. As we both begin our journeys of service, I am writing to you about a friendship between our communities that spans nearly three decades - one we now have the privilege of carrying forward together.

On behalf of the Garden Route District Municipality and our more than 630,000 residents, I am honored to express our formal intent to establish a Sister City partnership with the City of Tacoma.

This partnership builds upon nearly three decades of friendship between our communities, nurtured faithfully by Ms. Melannie Denise Cunningham and her colleagues in Tacoma. We are deeply grateful for her steadfast commitment to this relationship and recognize her as the bridge that has connected our people across the ocean. Her vision and dedication have laid the foundation for what we now seek to formalize and expand.

What began as a relationship with the George Municipality now expands to embrace all seven municipalities of the Garden Route District—George, Mossel Bay, Knysna, Bitou, Oudtshoorn, Hessequa, and Kannaland. This evolution reflects our shared commitment to deeper

engagement across education, youth development, economic opportunity, cultural exchange, and tourism.

In the spirit of Ubuntu - "I am because we are" - we look forward to growing together and demonstrating what becomes possible when communities across oceans choose connection over distance.

We respectfully request that this Letter of Intent be accepted as formal expression of our commitment to this Sister City partnership, and we eagerly anticipate the journey ahead.

With warm regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'MARAIS KRUGER', written over a horizontal line.

Alderman Marais Kruger
Executive Mayor
Garden Route District Municipality

Date: 29 January 2026

cc: Sister Cities Council of Tacoma
Garden Route District Municipality–Sister City Committee