SAUSALITO SISTER CITIES, INC.

2020 - 2021 PROGRAM UPDATE

SAUSALITO, USA

—

VIÑA DEL MAR, CHILE

2021

SISTER CITIES INTERNATIONAL AWARD:

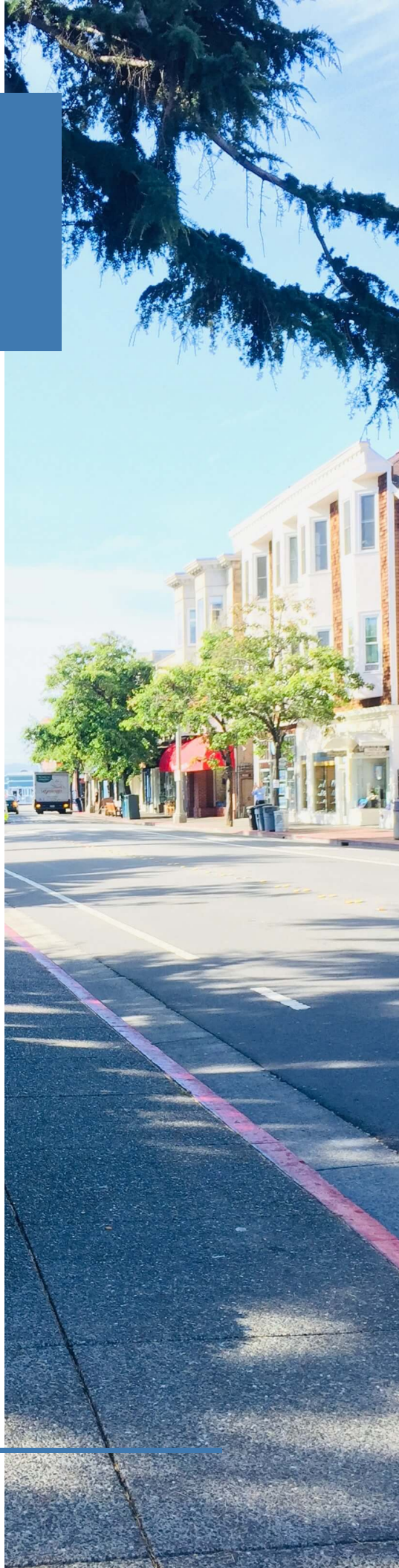
"INNOVATION IN BUSINESS, TRADE, AND PROFESSIONAL EXCHANGE"

ABOUT

The charming seaside cities of Viña Del Mar, Chile and Sausalito, California share many similarities. Both are nestled on the Pacific Coast, and enjoy the same temperate year-round climate. Each is a magnet for international travelers with their coast-side beauty, and colorful artist's communities. They also both have a connection to an even larger tourist city: Sausalito connects with San Francisco via the Golden Gate Bridge; "Viña and Valparaiso are connected by the Avenida España, eight miles of scenic shoreline highway.

While Sausalito has had an official Sister City relationship with Viña Del Mar, Chile, since 1960, it was in 2011 that we were introduced to AGEP-V, the Associación Gremial de Empresarias Y Profesionales. The entrepreneurial women of this group provide support to one another, network with each other personally and professionally, and have strong ties throughout the region. As they say on their website: "Una mujer sola es invisible y juntas, somos invencibles." (A woman alone is invisible and together, we are invincible.)

Our Sister City program has focused on mentoring the women of AGEP-V by sharing ideas, education, and leadership in our American way of doing business. Since 2011, on alternating years a group of about ten Sausalito residents has traveled to Chile, holding workshops there for their organization and visiting some of their brick and mortar locations. The following year, seven women from AGEP come to Sausalito for leadership, mentoring and American business exposure. Here we provide home stay opportunities for these business women, attempting to align them with women business professionals in similar industries. Our workshops here have included topics such as building a strategic business plan, marketing, communication, customer outreach and retention, political mentorship and more.



WHERE WE'RE AT **TODAY**

With the advent of the pandemic in 2020, there was a seismic shift for businesses all across the globe. This shift did not exclude the entrepreneurial women of Viña Del Mar. In fact, they were devastated by the pandemic on top of suffering from the political unrest that wreaked havoc in their country beginning the prior year. Our Sausalito Sister City program rose to the occasion and morphed our program to specifically meet the needs of these women in crisis.

We cancelled our scheduled in-person visit to Viña, and instead designed a series of virtual meetings via ZOOM. We also scheduled regular "check-in' meetings to support the women and demonstrate that we care about them and that they are not suffering in isolation. We have continued the virtual meetings in 2021 on a bimonthly schedule.

"Our relationship with Sausalito Sister City is old and very vibrant…This fruitful relationship, like the whole of our lives, had to be abruptly modified in 2020 and 2021. In 2020 it was the Sausalito delegation's turn to travel to Viña del Mar, a situation that was obviously postponed. So, we planned to continue through meetings by zoom, where it was possible to overcome the overwhelming effects of quarantine and….learn about other marketing strategies…. talk about writers… and learn more about the lives of notable women from Sausalito and Viña del Mar...Thanks to these online activities we have been able to continue our relationship, making it stronger and more fruitful."

- XIMENA SILVA
CURRENT VICE PRESIDENT AND
IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT OF AGEP-V
www.ximenasilva.cl

MEET THE **TEAM**

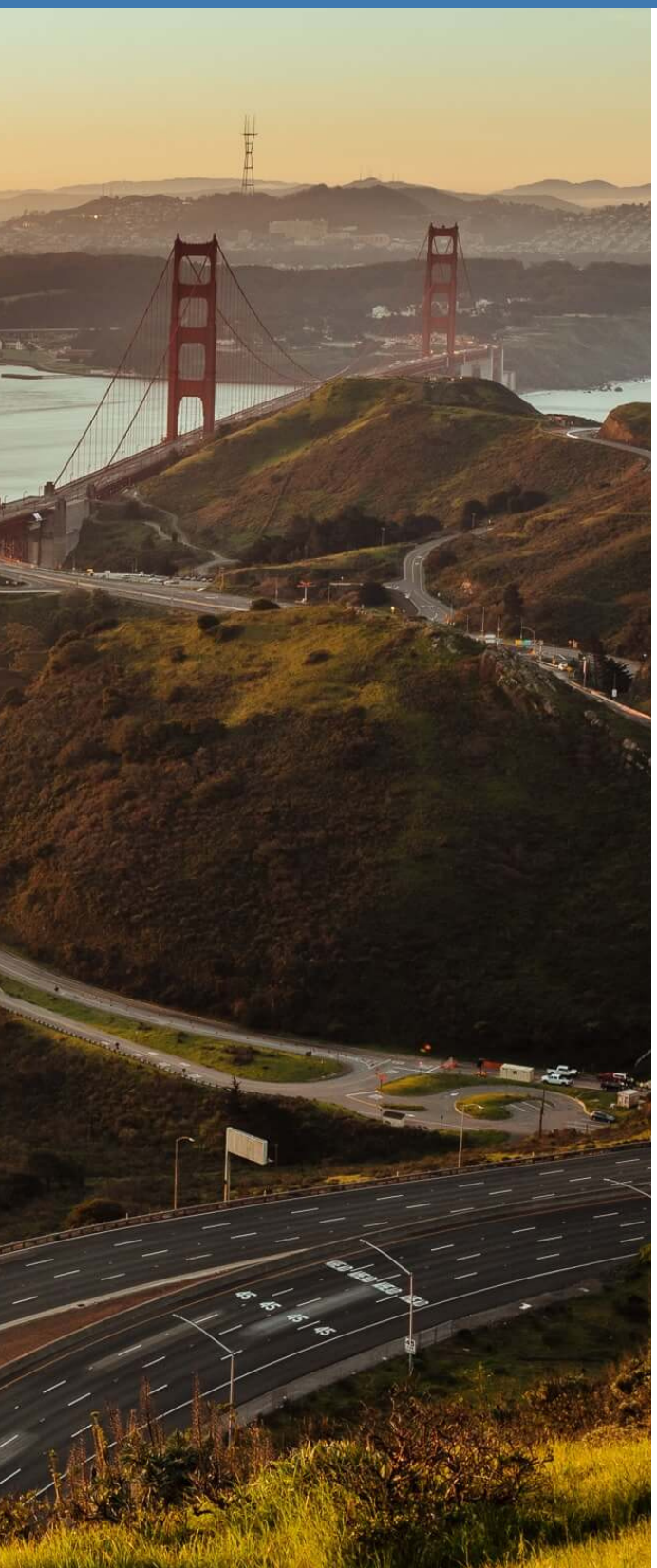
The Associación Gremial de Empresarias Y Profesionales (AGEP-V) is a group of women entrepreneurs based in the Viña Del Mar/Valparaiso region. Women from this group, representing industries from hostel ownership and management, tourism, graphic design, fabric arts, silversmithing, food production, artists, and more participated in the virtual meetings. We communicate regularly by email and Zoom with the current president, Maria Antoinetta Allemand and the immediate past president, Ximena Silva San Martín. Maria, who goes by Anto, has owned and operated a number of hostelries and is currently in the process of creating a care facility for older citizens. Ximena is a graphic designer whose business has exploded during this past year. Both of them have helped us shape the programs that were formerly in-person and now have converted to Zoom.

Sausalito's "operations council" is chaired by Monica Finnegan, a commercial real estate consultant and developer. Executive Coach Deana Kardel co-chairs the program with Monica. Cathy Stierhoff, a retired CPA, is secretary. Our interpreters are Lizzie Brown Jeremi, native of Chile and retired school teacher from the San Francisco School District; Brenda DeBruyn, makeup artist and personal stylist; and Patty Zevallos, event producer. Other key individuals on the council include Jan Swanberg, marketing consultant and Coach for Stanford Business School Distance Learning Programs; Karen Aiken, entrepreneurial, strategic marketing and branding specialist; Lorna Newlin, artist and owner of Sausalito Pottery; Paula Tejeda, owner of Chile Lindo Empanadas in San Francisco; and Susan Roe, Business Development Specialist with the San Francisco Zoo and immediate past president of Sausalito Sister Cities, Inc.

Juli Viera, President and CEO of the Sausalito Chamber of Commerce has been a tireless supporter of our program. In 2019, she recruited our Chilean delegation to work in her food booth during the Sausalito Art Festival, where we originally connected with Patty Zevallos, who became an interpreter for our program. During the in-person visits, Juli presented engaging programs on creating a storefront on online platforms such as Etsy and Instagram. She invited our sisters from Chile to a Zoom Couch Shopping event over the holidays, which inspired the women of AGEP-V to create a similar program there.

Our Sister City program enjoys the support of our City Council. When we travel to Chile, a representative from our Council has always accompanied us, and the Council always receives the whole delegation at a City Council meeting. Mike Langford, Park and Recreation Director, has been our staff support during AGEP-V visits.

RECENT ACTIVITIES



The global pandemic prevented us from travelling to Chile in 2020.

Disappointed, but undaunted, we began a series of virtual meetings, via Zoom of course, that have in fact added a new and deeper level of connection between the women of the two Sister Cities.

In prior years, a select few have been able to travel, and actual face-time was at most only once a year. With our Zooms, we've had as many as 50 participants, and some have come to know one another more intimately, more fully understanding the challenges that the women are facing.

Every speaker presents in her native language, so must be translated in order for everyone to be able to understand. Our translators are members of the Sausalito program, and like all of us, volunteer their service.

We are fortunate to have three stalwarts who have stepped up to the challenge and have made the conversations in two languages most enjoyable.

RECENT ACTIVITIES

ONLINE BUSINESS TRAINING

In response to the women of Chile lamenting the lack of in-person retail business, we reached out to Juli Viera, the CEO of the Sausalito Chamber of Commerce, who led a virtual workshop on how to sell online, including overviews of selling on Etsy, EBay, FaceBook and Instagram.

As a result, a number of the women ramped up their online presence.

One successful example, **Luisa Collao**, a clothing and textile designer, discovered botanical printing and began filming and posting videos of her creative process on YouTube & Instagram.

Below: Zoom Meeting, Sausalito Sister Cities & AGEP-V

REMOTE BOOK GROUP

To minimize their feeling of isolation, we instigated several social programs, including a book group discussion of *A Long Petal of the Sea*, by renowned Chilean author Isabel Allende.

Allende has supported the program in the past by hosting the women at her foundation's office (in Sausalito) on two of their annual visits here. Her book is a fictional re-telling of real life events during the Spanish Civil War when Pablo Neruda, (Chilean diplomat, Nobel Prize winning poet, beloved National Poet of Chile), chartered a cargo ship that brought some 2,000 Spanish refugees from the war to Chile to start a new life. These immigrants played an important role in the development of modern Chilean culture.

Four AGEP-V members have relatives who arrived in Chile as refugees on that ship, and they shared touching first-hand experiences.

RECENT ACTIVITIES

SUPPORT FOR ONLINE PROJECTS

We participated in the online launch of their new marketing platform, Vitrina Circular, created by the women of AGEP-V to showcase their makers and creators,

The platform is also meant to foster the ideas of a circular economy: to reduce, reuse and recycle.

Visit this site at www.vitrinacircular.cl. It is possible to convert the site to English.

INSPIRATION FOR FUTURE ACTIVITES

The Sausalito Chamber of Commerce held a "couch shopping" virtual event and invited members from both Sister Cities to attend. Makers, artists and shop owners presented their wares, usually from their own studio or location, and offered discounts to attending buyers.

Members from AGEP-V were impressed enough by the event that they plan to create a similar event sometime soon in Viña Del Mar.

Above: Vitrina Circular, www.vitrinacircular.cl

RESULTS

As a result of these meetings, our support, and their own gumption, many of the women have pivoted their businesses to meet the needs of the pandemic and post-pandemic marketplace.

ASTRID LAUER
Pastas Astrid Lauer
www.astridlauer.cl

Instead of printing promotional banners, **Astrid Lauer** has created a line of Italian pastas and sauces that she is selling to individuals and retail outlets. She writes: "Just as the pandemic crisis came, I started this new pasta venture, which helped me overcome the economic downturn of my events company."

Instagram:
@astrid_lauer

CAROLINA ARROYO

Carolina Arroyo, former president of AGEP, an artist with a background in many mediums, began creating and selling masks at the start of the pandemic. As she realized there were more and more mask makers flooding the market, she pivoted to creating jewelry set in gold and silver. She writes: Undoubtedly, the pandemic has put our businesses in check and we have had to reinvent ourselves or die, on top of the fear from the coronavirus."

Instagram:
@arroyoaparicioc

BRITANIA SALINAS
britaniasalinas.cl

Britania Salinas, a successful artist (who exhibited at the 2019 Sausalito Art Festival) is baking and painting on cookies and other baked goods, selling them as gifts for special occasions. She writes: "None of this would have been possible without the path opened by the Sausalito Sister City and Viña Del Mar program. Today I am 100% dedicated to this business which has been growing rapidly".

Instagram:
@nativochile_cl
@mitty.cook
@britaniasalinas

RESULTS

RUDITH ESCOBAR
Comercializadora y Distribuidora Textil Eco Cu SpA
www.fieltrochile.cl

Rudith Escobar is no stranger to re-invention, having had to start anew many times over the years. During the pandemic, she created an Academy of Felt, doing training online, creating a tutorial magazine and designing and creating a DIY felting kit. She writes: “Having the tie with the sisters of Sausalito is a constant learning experience, with trainings, live and online seminars, ideas for marketing as well as cultural issues that enhance knowledge and abilities to see my company from an international perspective. Our sisters in Sausalito are always aware of our development and attentive to our concerns as a Trade Association (AGEP-V)”.

CARMEN YÁÑEZ ENCALADA
www.rustikaorfebreria.cl

Carmen Yáñez Encalada, a goldsmith, applied for and received a National award when she was inspired by our work together. Carmen writes: “The Sister City program encourages us to grow, they contribute to us, they accompany us on our path as women, entrepreneurs and as a group. In these Zooms, we not only obtain training from our Sisters, but they also invite people with different expertise…..With our motto “Yes We Can”, I dared to apply for a National Program for women entrepreneurs, because I needed to expand my business and sales. So, in the middle of the Pandemic I prepared my Project, and to my surprise, I received an award, which has allowed me in this difficult time of pandemic, to digitize my business and upgrade my workshop tools."

Instagram:
@rustika-orfebreria

Fanpage:
@rustikaorfebreria

LOOKING FORWARD

Our support of AGEP-V and the virtual meetings are continuing in 2021. In our first ZOOM of 2021, we launched an exciting Pen Pal program. Members of AGEP have been paired with members from our Sausalito group and are now sharing stories, photos, laughs and tears via email, FB, WhatsApp and Instagram, further deepening our connections. Our second ZOOM of 2021 carried the theme: "We Can Do Hard Things", taken from Glennon Doyle's best-selling book "Untamed." Women from both cities shared stories of how they have coped during COVID, what "hard things" they have had to do, and how they have adapted.

Elena Ríos, pastry chef and owner of Delicias de Elena described what "hard things" she has done and how she adapted. She writes: "In these pandemic times, nothing has been easy. I have made an effort every day to push my business forward, and because of my great perseverance I managed to reinvent myself. First, I am thankful for having had the opportunity to travel to Sausalito and visit so many beautiful places."

Adding this type of emotional support has augmented our ongoing approach of providing business support and has deepened the connections between all of the individuals on both sides.

We now have greater understanding of the nuances of the lives of the women in Chile, and they also have a clearer view of our lives.

We are all thrilled with these deeper relationships and feel that it represents the essence of the people-to-people aspect of our Sister City program.

We are delighted that the sentiment is mutual. **Rudith Escobar**, from Viña Del Mar, sums it up as follows:

"I have a great admiration for each of the Sausalito sisters, their challenges and goals, well-defined, the teamwork and the solidarity of sharing everything necessary for our greatest good as people and in our endeavors. We are privileged as an association to be a part of the program in both cities, Viña and Sausalito."

ELENA RÍOS
www.deliciasdeelena.cl

Instagram: @deliciasdeelena

Facebook: @deliciasdeelena

"FOR AGEP-V, IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO BE UNITED IN NORMAL TIMES; NOW IN PANDEMIC TIMES, IT IS EVEN MORE RELEVANT THAT WE MAINTAIN CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN TREMENDOUSLY ENRICHING IN THIS SAD AND COMPLICATED PERIOD.

WITH THE PERIODIC ZOOM MEETINGS, WHICH WE LOOK FORWARD TO WITH GREAT ANTICIPATION, WE SHARE HOW WE EACH ARE LIVING DURING THESE TIMES….

EVERY DAY OUR UNION WILL BE STRONGER, BECAUSE WE ARE COMING TO KNOW EACH OTHER IN THESE TIMES, PEOPLE TO PEOPLE."

- MARIA ANTONIETA ALLAMAND
CURRENT PRESIDENT OF AGEP-V
WWW.LASELENAS.CL

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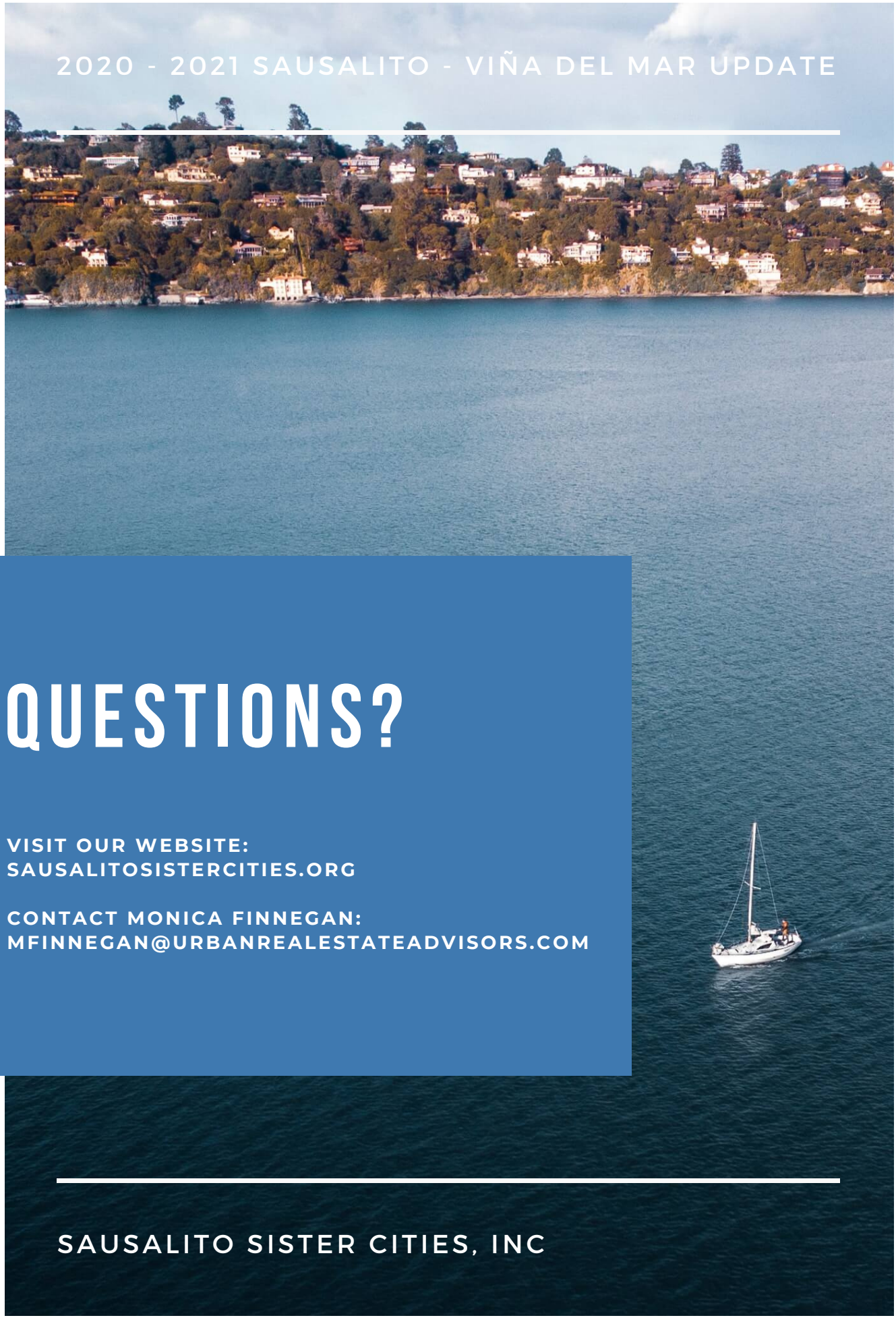

QUESTIONS?

VISIT OUR WEBSITE:
SAUSALITOSISTERCITIES.ORG

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