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CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

Meeting: October 10, 2023

Subject

Updates to the *Policies and Guidelines on Sister Cities, Friendship Cities, and International Delegations*

Recommended Action

Adopt the updated City of Cupertino's *Policies and Guidelines on Sister Cities, Friendship Cities, and International Delegations*, which aim to ensure efficiency within the Sister and Friendship City program and clarity on travel expenses and gifts.

Reasons for Recommendation

The Sister Cities and Friendship Cities policy was adopted in 2005 and last updated in 2018 to enhance the Friendship City renewal process. Although there was an attempt to further update the policy in 2019, no action was taken on the proposed amendment. Thus, the 2018 council-adopted policy has remained in place and is included as Attachment A.

From 2020-2022, Sister and Friendship City activity declined significantly due to worldwide COVID-19 impacts and limitations on in-person events and international travel. With business resuming back to the pre-pandemic mode, Sister and Friendship City activity picked up again in late 2022 and 2023, including a delegation visit from Cupertino to Hsinchu, Taiwan in April 2023. In light of the post-COVID activities that are anticipated to continue, staff is recommending clarifications to the existing policy to further streamline the program.

Staff recently met with all Sister City representatives in order to gather feedback and incorporate their recommendations whenever possible. The recommended changes to the policy are as follows:

Gifts

This section was updated to include a process for tracking and recording gifts provided to the City regardless of the perceived monetary value. The recommended language also allows for transferring ownership of such gifts to the relevant Sister City Committee at the City's discretion.

Travel

This section was updated to limit travel for the Mayor or his/her designee to one trip to a Sister City per year. Limiting the number of trips will ensure equitable travel to Sister Cities on a rotating basis and potentially save City funds.

All other changes are administrative in order to improve efficiency in the facilitation of this program. All proposed revisions to the Sister and Friendship City Policy can be viewed in redline in Attachment B. A clean version of the recommended policy can be viewed in Attachment C.

As part of the research on similar programs in other cities, staff reviewed the Sister and Friendship City policies in cities throughout California: Santa Cruz, South San Francisco, Bakersfield, Irvine, Menlo Park, Millbrae, Mountain View, Pasadena, Redwood City, San Diego, San Jose, Vallejo and Watsonville.

Sustainability Impact

No sustainability impact.

Fiscal Impact

If approved, the revised policy will limit the number of trips and officials travelling to sister cities on an annual basis, which will result in savings.

California Environmental Quality Act

Not applicable.

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Reviewed by: Tina Kapoor, Deputy City Manager

Matt Morley, Assistant City Manager

Chris Jensen, City Attorney

Approved for Submission by: Pamela Wu, City Manager

Attachments:

A – 2018 Policies and Guidelines on Sister Cities, Friendship Cities, and International Delegations

B – Redline: Policies and Guidelines on Sister Cities, Friendship Cities, and International Delegations

C – Clean: Policies and Guidelines on Sister Cities, Friendship Cities, and International Delegations