



## CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

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### CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

Meeting: July 16, 2019

#### Subject

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

#### Recommended Action

Approve updates to the City of Cupertino's *Policies and Guidelines on Sister Cities, Friendship Cities, and International Delegations*, which includes proposed changes to the Sister City travel expenses language and a cap on total Friendship City relationships.

#### Discussion

The City of Cupertino has four established Sister City relationships:

- Cupertino, Italy, formalized in 1963
- Toyokawa, Japan, formalized in 1978
- Hsinchu, Taiwan, formalized in 2007
- Bhubaneswar, India, formalized in 2012

Over the years, City Councilmembers—primarily Mayors—have joined official delegations to these cities. Cupertino's current *Policies and Guidelines on Sister Cities, Friendship Cities, and International Delegations* outlines reimbursable expenses for Councilmembers related to Sister City-related travel. The current language states: "The City will pay for 50% of one trip per year, per Councilmember, provided the trip is in conjunction with an official delegation."

Staff was directed in recent months to review how other cities reimburse their Councilmembers for Sister City-related travel. In accordance with this request, staff reviewed policies and discussed the issue with staff members from the following cities:

- Palo Alto
- Mountain View
- Los Altos
- Los Gatos
- Sunnyvale
- Saratoga
- Campbell

Mountain View, Los Gatos, Saratoga, and Sunnyvale have Sister City policies or resolutions recognizing official Sister City Programs. None of these policies and

resolutions discuss how Sister City-related travel expenses will be reimbursed to Councilmembers. All cities that Cupertino staff contacted stated that Councilmember reimbursements followed their city’s travel policies. These policies are equivalent to the City of Cupertino’s “Travel Policy – City Official” (Attachment A). The policy establishes guidelines for Councilmember travel reimbursement, including airfare, ground transportation, hotel, meals and incidentals, among other items.

To continue Council’s fiscal stewardship and transparency, demonstrate parity among the four Cupertino Sister Cities, and follow best practices of our neighboring cities, staff is recommending the following changes:

*Delete:*

- The City will pay for 50% of one trip per year, per Councilmember, provided the trip is in conjunction with an official delegation.

*Add:*

- The City will pay travel expenses, in accordance with the "Travel Policy - City Official," for up to four (4) trips per year related to official Sister City delegations.
- The four (4) trips include one (1) visit to each of the four (4) Cupertino Sister Cities.
- The Mayor will have first claim to the four (4) trips.
- The Mayor holds the right to allocate some or all of the trips to other Councilmembers.

*Keep:*

- All other Council or City staff travel for Sister City programs must be funded by Sister City Committee fundraising activities, or by the individual traveling Councilmember or staff member, unless authorized in advance by the City Council.

**Friendship City Cap**

At its peak, the City had 27 Friendship City relationships. Through attrition, that number has dropped to less than 10. It was requested that staff look into capping how many international cities could be approved for Friendship City status at one time.

Friendship Cities are not as common as Sister City relationships. Out of the approximately 75 California cities that have Sister Cities, 20% have Friendship City relationships. These cities, excluding Cupertino, are:

City	Number of Friendship Cities
Alameda	1
Beverly Hills	2
Carson	1

Fresno	1
Irvine	1
Long Beach	2
Millbrae	6
Newport Beach	2
Oakland	18
Pasadena	2
Redondo Beach	1
San Francisco	4
Santa Clara	1
Santa Cruz	2

*\*Sister Cities International 2018 Membership Directory*

Sister Cities International, a national nonprofit membership organization, does not give guidance on the number of Friendship Cities any single municipality should have. However, its 2018 Membership Directory shows that most cities in California have less than five (5).

Staff recommends the Council cap the number of Friendship Cities at ten (10) for the following reasons:

- The City currently has seven (7) Friendship Cities, allowing the Council to approve an additional three (3) relationships
- Capping the amount of Friendship Cities will free up Council and staff time to focus on establishing strong relationships with approved cities
- A cap on Friendship Cities ensures that adequate City time and resources are spent on the more formal Sister City relationships

Sustainability Impact

No sustainability impact.

Fiscal Impact

There could be a nominal increase travel expense reimbursements.

Prepared by: Brian Babcock, Communications Officer

Approved for Submission by: Deborah Feng, City Manager

Attachments:

A – *Travel Policy – City Official*

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*