City of Redwood City

Sister City and Friendship City Guidelines

Definitions

Sister City: A Sister City is an official relationship established between the City of Redwood City and a city in another country to develop long-term civic and people-to-people linkages and promote the exchange of cultural, educational, economic and social information with international communities that have interests and characteristics similar to Redwood City’s.

Friendship City: A Friendship City is a relationship established between the City of Redwood City and a city in another country that may serve as the first stage in establishing a new Sister City relationship. City officials or staff and interested community members or organizations from the City of Redwood City and its Friendship Cities may periodically keep in contact for the purpose of discussing topics of mutual interest.

Purpose

Sister City and Friendship City relationships are most effective when interested residents in the community work with interested residents in another city to promote communication and understanding among people of different nations and cultures, and when identifiable resident groups or associations can maintain connections over many years despite changes of involved residents.

The City of Redwood City (“Redwood City” or “City”) works collaboratively with Redwood City International (“RCI”), a local charitable nonprofit organization, to support the Sister City and Friendship City Programs. RCI is committed to promoting Sister City relationships between the City and its Sister Cities by hosting Sister City delegations, interns and other visitors; promoting international understanding as a member of Sister City International, the non-profit membership organization which registers and coordinates Sister City linkages between communities in the U.S. and cities worldwide; and advancing educational, cultural, and artistic awareness.

The City of Redwood City has established the following guidelines for the Sister City and Friendship City Programs.

Sister City Selection

Proposal/Approval Procedures

Prior to the City initiating or responding to a formal request for a proposed Sister City affiliation, RCI and/or the community sponsoring organization interested in establishing a Sister City affiliation must meet with Redwood City staff to present an overview of the proposed Sister City and program goals.

In cooperation with an identifiable resident group or association in the proposed Sister City, RCI and/or and the community sponsoring organization must prepare and submit the following to the City:

October 23, 2017
• A detailed demographic profile of the proposed Sister City.
• Documentation of broad-based community support – a list of volunteers, professionals or other organizations in Redwood City and the proposed Sister City that are committed to supporting the program and responding in a timely fashion to each other.
• A preliminary program plan that outlines objectives and funding sources, including planned activities for the first year of the relationship.
• A budget for the first year of activities showing funds, volunteer resources, and/or commitments to contribute materials, services, or time and plans for on-going financial and organizational support.

A Sister City proposal will require recommendation by a member of the City Council. Establishing a Sister City relationship requires approval by the City Council, a signed formal agreement between the Mayor and the top official of the proposed Sister City, and recognition by Sister Cities International.

Selection Guidelines:

Selection of a Sister City shall be based upon, but not limited to, the following guidelines:

• A city chosen for a Sister City affiliation should be located in a country that has established diplomatic relations with the United States. There should be the potential for genuine people-to-people contact; communication and visitation should be able to occur freely in both directions.
• The proposed Sister City should be similar in population size, and/or role in the region, and/or have cultural, educational, socio-economic, governmental, or other tangible features in common with Redwood City, making it an appropriate Sister City.
• There should exist in Redwood City an identifiable resident group or association which favors the proposed affiliation and intends to pursue a meaningful program after the relationship is established. The group should be in a position to organize and finance its own activities over the long term as the City cannot give assurance of financial backing.
• A similar identifiable resident group or association should exist in the proposed Sister City, with a clear indication of intent to carry out active mutual programs.
• The municipal government of the proposed Sister City should demonstrate support for establishing and developing a Sister City affiliation with Redwood City.

Friendship Cities

Proposal/Approval Procedures

Prior to the City initiating or responding to a request for a proposed Friendship City affiliation, RCI and/or the community sponsoring organization interested in establishing a Friendship City affiliation will meet with Redwood City staff to present an overview of the proposed Friendship City.

In cooperation with an identifiable resident group or association in the proposed Friendship City, RCI and/or and the community sponsoring organization must prepare and submit the following to the City:

• A detailed demographic profile of the proposed Friendship City.
• Documentation of community support – a list of volunteers, professionals or other organizations in Redwood City and the proposed Friendship City committed to supporting the program and responding in a timely fashion to each other.

A Friendship City proposal will require recommendation by a member of Redwood City’s City Council. Establishing a Friendship City requires approval by the City Council and signed Letters of Recognition exchanged between the Mayor and the top official of the proposed Friendship City.

Selection Guidelines:

Selection of a Friendship City shall be based upon, but not limited to, the following guidelines:

• A city chosen for a Friendship City affiliation should be located in a country that has established diplomatic relations with the United States.
• Consideration should be given to developing connections with cities in countries that do not already have a Sister City or Friendship City relationship with Redwood City.
• Consideration should be given to cities comparable to Redwood City in areas such as population size, culture, business interests, and community characteristics.
• There should exist in Redwood City an identifiable resident group or association which favors the proposed affiliation and intends to pursue a meaningful program after the relationship is established.
• A similar identifiable resident group or association should exist in the proposed Friendship City, with a clear indication of intent to carry out active mutual programs.
• The proposed Friendship City should have support from individuals, groups, or organizations in the Redwood City community with a demonstrated interest in maintaining the Friendship City relationship.

RCI Recognition and Responsibilities

The City recognizes RCI as a volunteer-led organization that guides the development of established Sister City and Friendship City relationships and supports their missions in the areas of cultural, educational, governmental, and economic relationships.

The City works with RCI to evaluate proposed Sister City and Friendship City affiliations. Because Sister City and Friendship City relationships are agreements between two municipal governments and involve official recognition and participation by the City of Redwood City, the City Council has final approval over all proposed affiliations.

Sister City and Friendship City activities in the community are promoted, planned, managed and implemented by RCI and are not dependent on City funding.

Redwood City International Responsibilities:

• Independently identify, manage, and implement those activities related to the Sister City and Friendship City Programs as RCI may select which support Sister City or Friendship City affiliations.
• Recognizing that Sister Cities and Friendship Cities regularly prefer direct contact with City staff
and recognizing that RCI has no ready communication mechanism or facilities, support City staff
to maintain communication with the affiliate Sister City and Friendship City.
• Prepare an annual work plan detailing RCI activities and corresponding timelines for the
upcoming year.
• Where possible, work with City staff at least two months in advance in arranging official city
promotional gifts and meetings for foreign delegations. For local groups traveling abroad and
bringing City gifts, similar notice is required.
• When agreed upon, reimburse City advances for event, meeting and activity expenses (cost of
food, drinks, and materials) no later than 30 days after the event/activity takes place. City funds
may not be used to pay for alcoholic beverages.
• Manage communications with Sister Cities International and fund annual membership dues.
• Prepare and distribute meeting agendas and minutes to RCI members in accordance with RCI
Bylaws.
• Maintain 501(c)(3) status.

In the event the City receives a request to affiliate with a new Sister City or Friendship City from another
local community sponsoring organization, that community sponsoring organization will follow the Sister
City and Friendship City Guidelines.

City Responsibilities

Establishing and supporting new Sister City and Friendship City affiliations requires a significant
commitment by the City and will be dependent on the availability of City staff and other public resources
that will be necessary to help develop and sustain a successful city-to-city relationship.

Coordinated through the City Manager’s Office, the City will support the Sister City and Friendship City
Programs by:

• Providing for set-up and complimentary access to City facilities for Sister City and Friendship City
events. Sister City or Friendship City delegations, RCI, and community sponsoring organizations
should contact City staff at least 60 days in advance for any formal visits, events, and meetings.
Refreshments may be provided for meetings and activities when deemed appropriate. When
agreed upon, the City may advance payment for event, meeting and activity expenses (cost of
food, drinks, and materials). If RCI or a community sponsoring organization has agreed to pay for
event, meeting or activity expenses, the sponsor will reimburse any City advances no later than
30 days after the event/activity takes place. City funds may not be used to pay for alcoholic
beverages.
• Providing access to postage, fax, copying and printing equipment to RCI and community
sponsoring organizations for support for Sister City and Friendship City events in which the City
is participating.
• Providing the use of meeting room space at no cost to RCI and community sponsoring
organizations for related activities.
• Providing modest official City promotional gift items typically given at community events to
government representatives from visiting countries, such as City t-shirts, pens, reusable bags,
and lapel pins.
City staff resources are limited and will typically involve extending or receiving invitations from Sister Cities and Friendship Cities, annual correspondence from the Mayor/City Council, and limited support for visits by the Mayor, Vice Mayor or Councilmembers to Sister Cities and Friendship Cities (e.g. official City letters, visas, and formal gifts). Additional City staff support may be provided at the discretion of the City Manager.

**City Official Visits to Sister and Friendship Cities and Associated Travel Expenses**

When the Mayor, Vice Mayor or Councilmember initiates a request to visit a Sister City or Friendship City, such request will be made in writing to the City Council, including the proposed itinerary, how the travel and expenses will be funded, and other assistance the City will be asked to provide (i.e. gifts to be presented by the Mayor, Vice Mayor or Councilmember). RCI and community sponsoring organizations may also make recommendations to the City Council, including a recommended budget for the visit. If approved by the City Council, the Mayor will send appropriate correspondence to the top official of the Sister City or Friendship City.

When an invitation is received from a Sister City or Friendship City for Redwood City officials to visit that city, the City Council shall review the invitation or request, including any travel-related expenses offered by the Sister City or Friendship City. The City Council may also consider recommendations from RCI and the community sponsoring organization regarding who will represent the City and how the travel and expenses will be funded. The total number of people travelling on behalf of the City may be limited at the request of the host city in order to manage host city resources required to support the delegation.

Normally, travel for Sister City and Friendship City programs will be paid by the individual participant, but may also be funded by the sponsoring community organization or by the host city, unless use of City funds is authorized in advance by the City Council.

If necessary, City Councilmembers may use their annual individual training and professional development budget to pay for travel expenses related to the Sister City and Friendship City programs. Should the travel expenses exceed a City Councilmember’s annual individual training and professional development budget, City Council approval is required for use of additional City funds. Travel expenses provided as a gift (not funded by the individual or through City funds) may be subject to applicable Fair Political Practices Commission and Government Code reporting requirements.

The City will not fund travel nor reimburse for travel or lodging expenses for Sister City and Friendship City visitors coming to Redwood City. RCI or any sponsoring community organization may choose to sponsor lodging and expenses for visiting delegations, with the understanding that reciprocal accommodations may occur when a Redwood City delegation visits in the future to the Sister City.

**Gifts**

An exchange of promotional and formal gifts is typical of visits to Sister Cities and Friendship Cities, and from delegations that visit Redwood City. Modest official promotional gifts may be funded by the City. Additional gifts presented to members of a Sister City or Friendship City delegation are the responsibility...
of RCI or the community sponsoring organization. RCI or a sponsoring community organization may choose to provide formal gifts according to their internal budget and approval processes.

Gifts or memorabilia presented to a representative of the City of Redwood City which are intended for the City become the property of the City and shall be displayed at a City facility or distributed at the City’s discretion. Gifts or memorabilia intended for and received by individual City Councilmembers or City employees are subject to applicable Fair Political Practices Commission and Government Code reporting requirements.

Terminating a Sister City or Friendship City Affiliation or Placing a Sister City on Emeritus Status

Sister City affiliations are meant to be long-standing official city linkages that involve extensive community participation beyond government. For a variety of reasons, a Sister City relationship may lose community interest and support, and the City of Redwood City or the Sister City may opt to place the relationship into emeritus status or to terminate the Sister City relationship.

If a Sister City affiliation is inactive for a period of three years or longer, or if there is a lack of community support through RCI or the community sponsoring organization for the Sister City relationship to continue, the City may initiate the process to place the relationship into emeritus status or to terminate the Sister City affiliation with the Sister City and inform Sister Cities International.

The Mayor or his or her designee will send a letter to the Mayor or lead representative of the Sister City to express the City’s intent to end the Sister City affiliation or place the Sister City affiliation on hold in emeritus status. The Mayor or their designee will then notify Sister Cities International that the Sister City affiliation with the City in question has ended or is placed in emeritus status. Sister Cities International will decertify the Sister City affiliation or place the Sister City affiliation on emeritus status.

A Friendship City affiliation may be terminated when such action is deemed appropriate by either city. The Mayor or their designee will send a letter to the Mayor or lead representative of the Friendship City to express the City’s intent to end the Friendship City affiliation.