October 23, 2017

SUBJECT
Sister City and Friendship City Guidelines

RECOMMENDATION
By motion, approve the Sister City and Friendship City Guidelines

BACKGROUND
The Sister City concept started in 1956, some years after the end of the Second World War, during the Eisenhower presidential administration. A worldwide network of Sister City relations was established to help rebuild nation-to-nation relationships and foster global harmony. Efforts were made to create "citizen diplomats" by opening communication between peoples of the world. Out of this effort came the Sister Cities International organization.

A Sister City is an official City 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.

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.

In 1989, local community members established Redwood City International (RCI) a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that works collaboratively with the City to support and promote the City’s Sister City and Friendship City relationships. RCI’s purpose is to encourage the people and neighbors of Redwood City, and the people of similar cities of foreign nations to acquire a consciousness of each other, to understand one another as individuals, as members of their community, as citizens of their country, and as part of the family of nations. Over the past 28 years, RCI has been committed to promoting and supporting 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 cultural, educational, economic and social awareness. The City has been very fortunate to collaborate with RCI to facilitate the City’s Sister City and Friendship City relationships.

The City of Redwood City has been active with Sister Cities and Friendship Cities since the 1990s. In 1992, with the help of RCI, the City affiliated with its first sister city, Zhuhai, China. Since then, the City has affiliated with two other Sister Cities: Colima, Mexico (1998) and Ciudad Guzman, Mexico (2013), and two Friendship Cities: Aguillilla, Mexico (2013) and Quinyuan, China (2015). The City has sent delegations and have hosted Sister City and Friendship City delegations over the years.

**ANALYSIS**
Staff believes that it is appropriate to establish Sister City and Friendship City guidelines to formalize and define best practices and processes. City staff has historically followed an informal process in establishing and managing its Sister City and Friendship City relationships based on best practices from Sister Cities International and Redwood City International processes. Sister City and Friendship City affiliations involve official City evaluation, recognition and participation. To better establish the duties and responsibilities of the City, RCI, and community sponsoring organizations, City staff has developed Sister City and Friendship City Guidelines (Attachment 1). These guidelines address the following topics:

- Proposal and selection process in establishing new Sister City and Friendship City affiliations;
- City recognition of collaboration with RCI;
- City responsibilities and staff support for programs;
- Official visits, travel and gifts;
- Terminating Sister City and Friendship City affiliations; and
- Placing a Sister City affiliation under emeritus status.

Once adopted, staff will refer to these guidelines for future Sister City and Friendship City initiatives going forward. This will strengthen our community partnerships and will enhance the overall program.

**ALTERNATIVES**
The City Council may elect not to approve the Sister City and Friendship City Guidelines or may provide edits to the guidelines.

**FISCAL IMPACT**
No fiscal impact.
ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW
This activity is not a project under CEQA as defined in CEQA Guidelines, section 15378, because it has no potential for resulting in either a direct or foreseeable physical change in the environment.

DEANNA LA CROIX
MANAGEMENT ANALYST

ALEX KHOJIKIAN
DEPUTY CITY MANAGER

MELISSA STEVENSON DIAZ
CITY MANAGER

ATTACHMENTS
1. Draft Sister City and Friendship City Guidelines