

**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND FRIENDSHIP CITIES COMMITTEE**

**TO:**            *MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS*

**SUBJECT: DRAFT SISTER AND FRIENDSHIP CITIES POLICY**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**THAT** the proposed Sister and Friendship Cities Policy, attached to the report titled “Draft Sister and Friendship Cities Policy” dated September 26, 2024, of the Open International Relations and Friendship Cities Committee, be approved.

**REPORT**

The International Relations and Friendship Cities Committee, at its meeting held on September 26, 2024, received and adopted the attached report with the proposed draft of the Sister and Friendship Cities Policy.

Arising from discussion, the Committee suggested minor amendments ‘Core Principles’ and ‘Other Considerations’ sections, as well as the need to establish a 30-year term limit for Sister Cities. The final version of the Sister and Friendship Cities Policy is provided as Attachment 1 to the report.

On behalf of the International Relations  
and Friendship Cities Committee,

Councillor P. Calendino  
Chair

Councillor J. Wang  
Vice Chair

**TO:** INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND FRIENDSHIP SISTER CITIES COMMITTEE

**FROM:** DEPUTY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER AND CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

**SUBJECT:** **DRAFT SISTER AND FRIENDSHIP CITIES POLICY**

**PURPOSE:** To establish a Sister and Friendship Cities Policy.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT** the proposed Sister and Friendship Policy, as attached to the report titled “Draft Sister and Friendship Cities Policy” dated September 26, 2024, be approved.

### **1.0 POLICY SECTION**

The City of Burnaby maintains Sister and Friendship City relationships that foster sustainable economic development, trade, education, culture, science and technology, and mutual exchange between cities.

### **2.0 BACKGROUND**

The City of Burnaby has cultivated a variety of partnerships over the years, establishing a rich history of international cooperation and cultural exchange. Partnerships have taken the form of the following:

- Sister City Agreements
- Friendship City Agreements
- Friendship Memorandums of Understanding
- Twinning Agreements
- Community Leaders Partnership Program Partner
- High Tech Friendly Exchange Agreement

Recently, several cities have approached the City of Burnaby to establish either a Sister City or Friendship City relationship.

### **3.0 GENERAL INFORMATION**

Relationships require ongoing commitments, reciprocation, and administration. As a result, staff are proposing to establish a structured framework that guides the City of Burnaby in forming and maintaining relationships with local governments and

communities globally through a policy (Attachment 1). The policy will outline the objectives, principles, and criteria for initiating and accepting sister or friendship city requests and aims to sustain and enhance these relationships for the mutual benefit of all parties involved. The proposed Policy documents current practice and incorporates municipal best practices, taking into consideration core principles and select criteria.

Once the proposed policy is approved, staff will review the City’s current partnerships, as identified in the background section of this report, and bring back to the Committee a report that identifies active and non-active partnerships. As well, recent requests for sister and friendship city relationships will be reviewed considering the policy and recommendations brought back to the Committee for review and possible subsequent approval by Council should the Committee recommend establishing a new Sister City or Friendship City relationship.

The proposed policy aims to streamline and ensure that the sister and friendship cities align with the City’s current social, cultural, and economic landscape. By doing so, it will foster shared learnings and collaborations that benefit all involved.

**4.0 COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Once the policy is approved, local governments and communities reach out to the City of Burnaby to request to be a sister city or friendship city, they be directed to the City of Burnaby’s website to review the approved policy and fill in the form. The completed form will come to the Committee for review.

**5.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Financial resources requirements for 2025 international relations initiatives will be considered during the 2025 – 2029 Financial Planning process.

Respectfully submitted,

Noreen Kassam, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer and Chief Financial Officer

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 – Sister and Friendship Cities Policy Draft

**REPORT CONTRIBUTORS**

This report was prepared by Noreen Kassam, Deputy Chief Administrative Office and Chief Financial Officer.