

**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND FRIENDSHIP CITIES COMMITTEE**

**TO:**            *MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS*

**SUBJECT: REVIEW OF NEW AND CURRENT SISTER AND FRIENDSHIP CITY RELATIONSHIPS**

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. **THAT** the formal Friendship City relationship with the following cities be concluded:
  - Dongcheng District of Beijing, People’s Republic of China;
  - Dongli District of Tianjin, People’s Republic of China;
  - Changshu, People’s Republic of China;
  - Kunming, Yunnan Province, People’s Republic of China;
  - Dalian City, Liaoning Province, People’s Republic of China;
  - Chongqing City, Yubei District, People’s Republic of China; and
  - Lin-an City of Zhejiang, People’s Republic of China.
  
2. **THAT** the Friendship City relationship with the following cities be re-formalized:
  - Taichung, Taiwan; and
  - Guiyang City, Guizhou Province, People’s Republic of China.
  
3. **THAT** the Sister City relationship with the following cities be concluded:
  - El Zapotal, El Salvador.
  
4. **THAT** the Sister City relationship with the following cities be re-formalized:
  - Hwaseong, South Korea;
  - Mesa, Arizona, USA;
  - Kushiro, Japan;
  - Loughborough, England; and
  - Zhongshan City, People’s Republic of China.
  
5. **THAT** special recognition be given to the Sister City relationship with Kushiro, Japan, and Loughborough, England, by creating a new category that symbolizes historical significance.

6. **THAT** the Terms of Reference for the International Relations and Friendship Cities Committee be updated to reflect the revised Sister and Friendship City relations.

### **REPORT**

The International Relations and Friendship Cities Committee, at its meeting held on March 10, 2025, received and adopted the *attached* report seeking Council direction regarding current Sister and Friendship City relationships.

Arising from discussion, the Committee **AMENDED** the recommendations to remove Zhongshan City, People’s Republic of China, from Recommendation No. 3 and include it in Recommendation No. 4; and to add Recommendation No. 6 to update the Terms of Reference accordingly.

In addition, the Committee recommended that staff contact the City of Loughborough, England, before proceeding with special recognition.

On behalf of the International Relations  
and Friendship Cities Committee,

Councillor P. Calendino  
Chair

Councillor J. Wang  
Vice Chair

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

**FROM:** DIRECTOR INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

**SUBJECT:** **REVIEW OF NEW AND CURRENT SISTER AND FRIENDSHIP CITY RELATIONSHIPS**

**PURPOSE:** To seek Council direction regarding current Sister and Friendship City relationships.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. **THAT** the formal Friendship City relationship with the following cities be concluded:
  - Dongcheng District of Beijing, People's Republic of China;
  - Dongli District of Tianjin, People's Republic of China;
  - Changshu, People's Republic of China;
  - Kunming, Yunnan Province, People's Republic of China;
  - Dalian City, Liaoning Province, People's Republic of China;
  - Chongqing City, Yubei District, People's Republic of China; and
  - Lin-an City of Zhejiang, People's Republic of China.
  
2. **THAT** the Friendship City relationship with the following cities be re-formalized:
  - Taichung, Taiwan; and
  - Guiyang City, Guizhou Province, People's Republic of China.
  
3. **THAT** the Sister City relationship with the following cities be concluded:
  - El Zapotal, El Salvador; and
  - Zhongshan City, People's Republic of China.
  
4. **THAT** the Sister City relationship with the following cities be re-formalized:
  - Hwaseong, South Korea;
  - Mesa, Arizona, USA;
  - Kushiro, Japan; and
  - Loughborough, England.
  
5. **THAT** special recognition be given to the Sister City relationship with Kushiro, Japan, and Loughborough, England, by creating a new category that symbolizes historical significance.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The City of Burnaby adopted a Sister and Friendship Policy in September 2024 (See Attachment 1). This Policy provides a framework for managing current and new sister or friendship city requests, with the goal of maintaining and improving these relationships for the mutual benefit of all parties involved. Following the acceptance of the Policy, staff were instructed to review the City’s current partnerships and present a report to the Committee identifying active and inactive partnerships. In accordance with the Policy (Section 6.01.1), the City will establish a maximum of five (5) Sister City relationships and five (5) Friendship City relationships.

The City established its first sister city relationship with Kushiro, Japan, with a formal agreement signed on September 9, 1965. Since then, there have been a total of sixteen cities that the City has entered a relationship with. It is important to note that many of the friendship city relationships were formed due to the Asia Pacific Gateway initiative. Also, there are a total of three (3) outstanding requests from cities wanting to enter a relationship with the City.

The purpose of this report is to provide an updated status of all active and inactive relationships and new requests from cities, along with a recommendation on how to proceed in accordance with the existing Policy. The recommendations have been based on the assessment of Core Principles outlined in the Policy (See Attachment 2).

**1.0 POLICY SECTION**

This report aligns with the Sister and Friendship Cities Policy (2024).

**2.0 BACKGROUND**

The City of Burnaby has developed various partnerships over time, creating a history of international cooperation and cultural exchange. These partnerships include the following:

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

According to the newly established Policy, successful sister or friendship city applicants are required to enter into a formal agreement through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to formalize relationship. To date the City has a total of sixteen existing relationships and several types of agreements, which include:

Current Friendship City Relationships			
#	City	Established	Comments
1.	Taichung, Taiwan	May 22, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friendship Declaration signed during delegation to Taichung in 2009.</li> <li>• Part of Asia Pacific Gateway initiative</li> <li>• Prior to this agreement, Hi-Tech Friendly Exchange Agreement was signed in June 2007.</li> </ul>
2.	Dongcheng District (formerly Chongwen District) of Beijing, P.R. China	Sept 4, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter of Intent signed in Chongwen during a delegation visit.</li> <li>• Part of the Asia Pacific Gateway initiative.</li> <li>• No formal MOU signed to date.</li> </ul>
3.	Dongli District of Tianjin, P.R. China	Sept 8, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MOU signed in Tianjin during delegation visit.</li> <li>• Part of Asia Pacific Gateway initiative.</li> </ul>
4.	Changshu, Jiangsu Province, P.R. China	June 1, 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter of Intent signed June 1, 2007</li> <li>• Friendship Agreement signed July 20, 2009</li> </ul>
5.	Kunming, Yunnan Province, P.R. China	May 30, 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MOU signed in Burnaby</li> <li>• Representative from Kunming visited in May 2011</li> </ul>
6.	Dalian City, Liaoning Province, P.R.China	April 17, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friendship Agreement signed following the establishment of a 2011 Hi-Tech Friendly Exchange Agreement with this city (see immediately below)</li> <li>• Agreement valid for five-years. Upon expiration, it may remain in force if neither side terminates it.</li> <li>• Received request on February 20, 2024, to design a student exchange program.</li> </ul>
	Dalian, Jinzhou District, P.R.China	May 16, 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City entered into a <b>Hi-Tech Friendly Exchange Agreement</b></li> </ul>
7.	Guiyang City, Guizhou Province, P.R. China	April 17, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friendship Agreement signed.</li> <li>• Agreement valid for five years. Upon expiration, it may remain in force if neither side terminates it.</li> <li>• Received request on Feb 20, 2024, to design a student exchange program.</li> </ul>
8..	Chongqing City, Yubei District, P.R. China	June 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MOU signed</li> <li>• Part of Asia Pacific Gateway initiative</li> <li>• Agreement valid for five-years. Upon expiration, it may remain in force if neither side terminates it.</li> </ul>
9.	Lin-an City of Zhejiang, P.R. China	April 17, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MOU signed in Burnaby during a 6-guest delegation to Burnaby</li> <li>• Part of Asia Pacific Gateway initiative</li> </ul>

Current Sister City Relationships			
#	City	Established	Comments
1.	Kushiro, Japan	Sept 9, 1965	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City's first Sister City relationship</li> <li>Mayor of Kushiro expressed interest in visiting Burnaby in July, August, or October 2025 to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the relationship.</li> </ul>
2.	Loughborough, England, United Kingdom	May 6, 1986	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City entered into this relationship, also called a <b>Twinning Agreement</b>, which is like a sister city agreement</li> <li>City held a reception on August 7, 1985, for a delegation from Loughborough. There was an interest to enter into a sister city agreement.</li> <li>Twinning agreement was signed on May 6, 1986</li> </ul>
3.	El Zapotal, El Salvador	Sept 24, 1990	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreement signed in Burnaby</li> <li>Focus of the agreement was economic and social development instead of fostering</li> <li>Funding for assistance was to be budgeted and determined by council each year.</li> </ul>
4.	Hwaseong, South Korea	September 28, 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sister Agreement signed</li> <li>Prior both Cities signed a Letter of Intent on July 24, 2008, and a MOU agreeing to a Friendship relationship on March 24, 2010</li> <li>City of Burnaby visited Hwaseong in July 2008 and September 2010</li> <li>Delegation of seven from Hwaseong visited Burnaby in Sept 2011</li> </ul>
5.	Mesa, Arizona, USA	March 19, 1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sister Agreement Signed</li> <li>In 2014, 2015 &amp; 2019 both Cities participated in student exchange program</li> <li>Mesa delegation came to Burnaby in 2023</li> <li>Burnaby delegation went to Mesa in 2024</li> </ul>
6.	Zhongshan City, P.R. China	Sept 19, 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Started relationship as Friendship City and signed MOU signed May 26, 2009</li> <li>Part of Asia Pacific Gateway initiative</li> <li>In 2011, City entered into Sister City agreement</li> </ul>
7.	Gatineau, Quebec, Canada	June 1, 1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City entered into a protocol agreement with the City of Gatineau under FCM <b>Community Leaders and Partnership Program</b> to foster friendship between Eastern and Western Canada.</li> <li>City visited Gatineau in 2000</li> </ul>

To date the City has received a total of three requests to enter a sister city relationship, which includes:

Possible New Relationships			
	City	Request Received	Comments
1.	City of Cagayan de Ora, Philippines	Dec 4, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Received request from Cagayan de Oro Mayor to consider a sister city relationship</li> </ul>
2.	City of Baguio, Philippines	Jan 9, 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Received request from Baguio Mayor to explore a sister city relationship</li> </ul>
3.	Chengdu Shuangliu District, P.R. China	Dec 18, 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City received request from Chengdu to enter a friendship city agreement</li> </ul>

**2.1 Sister and Friendship Cities Policy**

The purpose of this policy aims to streamline and ensure that sister and friendship cities align with the City’s current social, cultural, and economic landscape. By doing so, it will foster shared learning and collaborations that benefit all cities involved. *Section 6* of the Policy outlines a set of Core Principles (similarity, reciprocity, community driven, strategic benefit and exclusivity and proximity) that the relationship shall be assessed and other key considerations (See Attachment 1).

**3.0 CURRENT RELATIONSHIPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**3.1 Friendship Cities Relationships**

The friendship city relationship is a partnership that is more limited in scope. Friendship cities are a way for the City to initiate relationships with international local governments on a less formal basis. The primary goal of the relationship is to open lines of communication between the Burnaby community and its organizations (i.e., Burnaby Board of Trade, Burnaby Tourism, School District 41, SFU, BCIT etc.,) and the friendship city.

*Friendship Agreements Under Asia Pacific Initiative*

In early 2007, the Province of British Columbia introduced the Asia Pacific Gateway Initiative, a plan aimed at developing strategies to enhance the integration of British Columbia with the Asia Pacific region. The Province’s goal called for BC to be recognized internationally as North America’s capital for Asia Pacific commerce and culture.

Under the Asia Pacific program, Burnaby received one-time funding to support friendship city initiatives with Asia-Pacific cities. The City matched these funds and over two years, confirmed and/or intendent of entering into Friendship Agreements with the following cities:

- 1) Taichung, Taiwan

- 2) Dongcheng District (formerly Chongwen District) of Beijing, People's Republic of China
- 3) Dongli District of Tianjin, People's Republic of China
- 4) Changshu, People's Republic of China
- 5) Kunming, Yunnan Province, People's Republic of China
- 6) Dalian City, Liaoning Province, People's Republic of China
- 7) Guiyang City, Guizhou Province, People's Republic of China
- 8) Chongqing City, Yubei District, People's Republic of China
- 9) Lin-an City of Zhejiang, People's Republic of China

Recognizing that many of the above friendship agreements were made during the peak of expanding trade relations with Asia from 2007-2011, the current social, economic and political context has shifted. Also, one of the Core Principles within the new policy is Exclusivity & Proximity, which implies that the proposed partner should not have a sister or friendship city relationship within any other local government in the same province or within proximity (i.e., region) of another established sister city location. Of the 9 Friendship City's, 8 are in the People's Republic of China.

1) Taichung, Taiwan

Taichung is Taiwan's second-largest city, with more than 2.85 million residents and considered a special municipality (equivalent to a province). The City first entered a Hi-Tech Cities Declaration on June 8, 2007 to create hi-tech businesses linkages; strengthen scientific, technological and economic cooperation; facilitate and encourage training and exchanges of professionals and refer inquiries, proposals and requests for information. On May 22, 2009, the City officially entered a Friendship Declaration.

The City has maintained the friendship relationship with Taichung and the Committee was seeking approval for the delegation of Council to visit Taichung in 2025. After careful consideration, at the December 2, 2024 meeting, Council did not support the decision to travel overseas.

*Recommendation: The City should maintain its current friendship city relationship with Taichung due to the active relationship and alignment with the core principles of the selection criteria.*

2) Dongcheng District (formerly Chongwen District) of Beijing, People's Republic of China

Dongcheng District, formerly known as Chongwen District, is the cultural and historical hub of Beijing. A delegation from the City conducted a friendly visit to Dongcheng on September 4, 2009, and signed a Letter of Intent to reach a MOU to establish a friendship relationship to enhance trade, scientific, cultural education, tourism and



athletic exchanges. However, a MOU to formalize the relationship has never been signed.

*Recommendation: Given the lack of activity and the absence of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), it is advised that the City formally notify Dongcheng of the conclusion of the Letter of Intent. Any future considerations will be addressed in accordance with the new policy.*

3) Dongli District of Tianjin, People's Republic of China

Dongli is a district in the municipality of Tianjin, housing the Tianjin Binhai International Airport. The city signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Friendly Cooperation on September 8, 2009, to enhance trade, scientific, cultural, educational, and tourism exchanges, particularly in software development, information platform construction, game equipment control software, cartoon design, electric power industry shifts, education and cultural exchange, and tourism resource development. Since signing the MOU, there has been no recorded activity.

*Recommendation: Due to the inactivity and minimal alignment of Core Principles, it is recommended that the City concludes the Friendship City agreement with Dongli.*

4) Changshu, People's Republic of China

Changshu is a country-level city under the jurisdiction of Suzhou, Jiangsu province. The main economy is agriculture, manufacturing and service industries. The City entered into a Friendship City Agreement on July 20, 2009. There is a clause in the agreement that states, "this agreement will be valid for five years. Upon expiration, it may remain in force if neither side terminates it." To date, there has been no activity between the two cities.

*Recommendation: Due to the inactivity and minimal alignment of Core Principles, it is recommended that the City concludes the Friendship City agreement with Changshu.*

5) Kunming, Yunnan Province, People's Republic of China

Kunming, the capital and largest city of Yunnan Province, serves as the political, economic, communications, and cultural hub of the province. On May 30, 2011, the city entered a Friendship City Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to promote exchanges in economic trade, science, culture, education, tourism, and environmental protection. However, since the signing of the MOU, there has been no further activity between the cities.

*Recommendation: Due to the inactivity and minimal alignment with the Core Principles, it is recommended that the City concludes the Friendship City agreement with Kunming.*

6) Dalian, Jinzhou District, People's Republic of China

Dalian, Jinzhou District entered into Hi-Tech Friendly Exchange Agreement with the City on May 16, 2011. Dalian is known for its High-tech Zone which is a national-level high technology industrial zone. It is a highland that gathers new and high technology industries in northeast China and a self-dependent innovation platform.

The formal agreement for this relationship has yet to be located within the City's archives. This initiative was taken to align with the Province's Asia Pacific Gateway Program.

On October 25, 2024, the Government of Canada's Centre for Cyber Security issued a bulletin urging Canadian organizations to increase their defenses against reconnaissance scanning, a low-level but constant cyber threat facing the country. The Cyber Centre has indicated its aware of a sophisticated state-sponsored threat actor from the People's Republic of China who has performed reconnaissance scanning in 2024. While the reconnaissance scanning is not an indication of compromise, it was used to gather information, look for possible vulnerabilities and may be a precursor to further malicious action.<sup>1</sup> Also, Canada's Security Intelligence Service has stated that People's Republic of China remains an enduring threat to Canadian technology, democracy and diaspora communities.

*Recommendation: Given the limited interaction since the inception of the Hi-Tech Friendly Exchange Agreement in 2011, the evolving technological landscape, and cyber security concerns, it is recommended to conclude the agreement with Dalian, Jinzhou District, P.R. of China.*

#### 7) Guiyang City, Guizhou Province, People's Republic of China

Guiyang the capital of Guizhou province in southwestern China and home to 6.22M residents. Guiyang is the economic and commercial hub for Guizhou.

The City entered into a friendship city agreement in April 2015 for a term of five years, with the option to remain in force if neither side terminates it upon expiration. To date, no city has terminated the agreement, and contact has been maintained. Also, during the Covid-19 pandemic, Guiyang supplied and donated PPE.<sup>2</sup> Recently, the Guiyang Foreign Affairs Office requested to establish a student exchange program and invited the City to attend Guizhou's International Sister Cities Exchange Conference on September 8-9, 2024.

*Recommendation: The City should maintain its current friendship city relationship with Taichung due to the active relationship and alignment with the core principles of the selection criteria.*

#### 8) Chongqing City, Yubei District, People's Republic of China

Yubei is a district within Chongqing City. Yubei has placed emphasis on leading automotive and electronics manufacturing. On July 13, 2017, the city signed a Friendship City Agreement. In the agreement it states that the relationship is valid for five years and upon expiration, it may remain in force if neither side terminates it. However, since the agreement was established, there has been no noted activity.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cyber.gc.ca/en/news-events/statement-peoples-republic-china-reconnaissance-canadian-systems>

<sup>2</sup> Rainy Day Connections: Sister Cities During COVID-19

*Recommendation: Due to the inactivity and minimal alignment with the Core Principles, it is recommended that the City concludes the Friendship City agreement with Yubei.*

9) Lin-an City of Zhejiang, People's Republic of China

Lin-an is a suburban district of Hangzhou, Zhejiang. The City hosted a delegation from Lin-an and signed a Friendship MOU on April 17, 2009. The agreement agreed to facilitate and encourage enterprises and business units of both cities for opportunities of investment in the high technology industry and advanced equipment manufacturing to move forward trade and economic exchange. Since Lia-an's delegation visit, there has been no activity between the two cities.

*Recommendation: Due to the inactivity and minimal alignment with the Core Principles, it is recommended that the City concludes the Friendship City agreement with Lin-an.*

### **3.1.1 Sister City Relationships**

A sister city relationship is a long-term, formal agreement that may include cultural, educational, economic and other mutually beneficial opportunities. The sister city movement gained momentum in North America after the Second World War with a goal to encourage cooperation between international communities. Burnaby became a part of that movement in the hopes a sister city relationships would create meaningful, economic, educational and cultural ties between Burnaby citizens and those of other countries.

1) Kushiro, Japan

Burnaby's first sister city was Kushiro, Japan. The formal agreement for the establishment of a sister city relationship between the two communities was signed on September 9, 1965. Following this twinning, the two cities have enjoyed numerous exchanges and visits. The sister city status between Burnaby and Kushiro will celebrate 60 years this year. The Mayor of Kushiro expressed an interest in visiting Burnaby in July, August or October of 2025 to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this relationship.

*Recommendation: The City should maintain its sister-city relationship with Kushiro, acknowledging its historical significance and the alignment of core principles outlined in the new policy. Additionally, the City may explore opportunities to provide special recognition of Kushiro's status to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the partnership.*

2) Loughborough, England

On May 6, 1986, Burnaby entered a twinning agreement with Loughborough, acknowledging Robert Burnaby's ancestral home. A reception on August 7, 1985, for Loughborough visitors expressed interest in this relationship. The sister city agreement was later signed when the Prince and Princess of Wales visited. Since the signing of the agreement there has been no activity.

*Recommendation: The City should maintain its sister-city relationship with Loughborough, acknowledging its historical significance and the hometown of Robert*

*Burnaby. Additionally, the City may explore opportunities to provide special recognition of Loughborough partnership and ties to Robert Burnaby.*

3) El Zapotal, El Salvador

The City entered into a twinning agreement with El Zapotal on September 24, 1990. The twinning between Burnaby and El Zapotal came after Mayor Copeland visited El Salvador in the early 1990s and returned with a desire to see the citizens of Burnaby assist in the rebuilding of that community after a 12-year civil war was ended in 1992. The focus of this relationship was to assist with the economic and social development of the village as opposed to fostering an economic and cultural exchange. As part of the support the assistance included moral support and communication, funding to assist in local community projects and/or coordinating donations from Burnaby citizens wishing to assist citizens of El Zapotal. Since the signing of the agreement, the relationship has been inactive, and no record of support has been provided.

*Recommendation: Due to the inactivity and minimal alignment with the Core Principles, it is recommended that the City concludes the twinning agreement with El Zapotal.*

4) Hwaseong, South Korea

The City entered into a sister city agreement on September 25, 2010, to establish projects, international exchanges, and joint learning opportunities in the areas of economic development, education, sports, and cultural awareness. The City has an active relationship with Hwaseong. In 2008, a delegation of local government officials from Hwaseong visited the City to establish cooperative exchange programs. In 2010, representatives from the City visited Hwaseong to sign the Sister City Agreement, and in September 2011, a delegation from Hwaseong visited Burnaby. Most recently, Hwaseong invited the City to its 24<sup>th</sup> Hwaseong Citizen's Day Commemoration Ceremony on March 21, 2025. However, the Council did not support the decision for a delegation from the City to travel overseas.

Over the last two decades, Hwaseong has transformed into a metropolitan hub and recently achieved special city status surpassed a population of 1 million. With its significant growth, it continues to focus on enabling infrastructure, including transportation. It also continues to attract global corporations, including Samsung and Hyundai for its' strategic advantages and is ranked first in the country in regional gross domestic product, export volume and employment rate.

*Recommendation: The City should maintain its sister city relationship with Hwaseong due to the alignment of core principles and the ongoing active relationship.*

5) Mesa, Arizona, USA

Mesa is Arizona's third-largest city and is known to be a sports training destination, art attractions and outdoor adventures. The City signed a Sister City Agreement on March 19, 1999. Since the signing of the agreement, both cities have had an active relationship. The relationship began with summer exchange programs in 2014, 2015 and 2019. In November 2016, a delegation from Burnaby visited Mesa, and in August

2023 a delegation from Mesa visited Burnaby to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the relationship. In April 2024, a delegation from the City visited Mesa.

*Recommendation: The City should maintain its sister city relationship with Mesa due to the alignment of Core Principles and the ongoing active relationship.*

6) Zhongshan City, People’s Republic of China

Zhongshan City is part of Guangzhou-Shenzhen and is a hub of industrial manufacturing. The City first entered into a friendship city agreement with Zhongshan on May 26, 2009 and on September 19, 2011 entered into a sister city agreement. Since entering into its last agreement, there has been no activity between the two cities.

*Recommendation: Due to the inactivity and minimal alignment with the Core Principles, it is recommended that the City conclude its friendship city agreement with Zhongshan.*

7) Gatineau, Quebec, Canada

According to archives, the City entered into a protocol agreement (unable to locate the agreement) with the City of Gatineau under the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Community Leaders and Partnership Program to foster friendship between Eastern and Western Canada. Representatives from the City of Gatineau attended Burnaby’s millennium celebrations and Burnaby visited Gatineau in September 2000. It is important to note that FCM provided a grant to support the partnership. Since the last visit, there has been no activity.

*Recommendation: Considering that the relationship with the City of Gatineau was not a friendship or sister city relationship, it is recommended that the City conclude its formal relationship with Gatineau.*

**4.0 POSSIBLE NEW RELATIONSHIPS**

The City has received a total of three new relationship requests:

- 1) City of Cagayan de Ora, Philippines to be considered a sister city,
- 2) City of Baguio, Philippines to be considered a sister city, and
- 3) Chengdu Shuangliu, District of P.R. China to be considered as a friendship city.

The City has issued an initial response to the interested cities and has committed to communicating a final decision. With the implementation of the new policy, the subsequent step is to request each interested city to complete the Application Form (attached in the Policy). This form requires information based on specific criteria to evaluate the application. As requested by the Committee, staff will contact the interested cities, obtain the required information as outlined in the policy and provide the Committee with future reports and recommendations on their alignment with the policy..

**5.0 CONCLUSION**

The City has previously entered relationships with cities that encourage mutual social, economic, and cultural benefits and educational benefits. Acknowledging that the

context and circumstances existing at the time the agreements were made have since changed, the following recommendations should be taken into consideration:

- The City has established nine Friendship City Agreements, eight of which were initiated during the Asia Pacific Initiative. This initiative is now well-developed, and its economic benefits have been acknowledged by various levels of government. Additionally, our policy specifies a maximum of five Friendship City relationships, which we currently exceed, and states that we will not establish relationships with cities in close proximity. Due to inactivity and minimal alignment of core principles, it is recommended to conclude the friendship relationship with the following cities:
  - 1) Dongcheng District (formerly Chongwen District) of Beijing, People's Republic of China;
  - 2) Dongli District of Tianjin, People's Republic of China;
  - 3) Changshu, People's Republic of China;
  - 4) Kunming, Yunnan Province, People's Republic of China;
  - 5) Dalian City, Liaoning Province, People's Republic of China;
  - 6) Chongqing City, Yubei District, People's Republic of China, and
  - 7) Lin-an City of Zhejiang, People's Republic of China
- Of the remaining friendship city relationships, its recommended that the City maintain the following relationship and enter into a formal agreement through a MOU to re-formalize the relationship with:
  - 1) Taichung, Taiwan,
  - 2) Guiyang City, Guizhou Province, People's Republic of China.
- The City has established seven Sister City Agreements that were entered for different purposes. Additionally, our policy specifies a maximum of five Sister City relationships, which we currently exceed. Based on the assessment of core principles and minimal alignment, it is recommended to end sister city relationship with the following:
  - 1) El Zapotal, El Salvador
  - 2) Zhongshan City, People's Republic of China
- Of the remaining sister city relationships, its recommended that the City maintain the following relationship and enter into a formal agreement through a MOU to re-formalise the relationship with:
  - 1) Hwaseong, South Korea
  - 2) Mesa, Arizona, USA
  - 3) Kushiro, Japan\*

4) Loughborough, England\*

\* Recognizing the historic and longstanding sister city relationships with Kushiro and Loughborough, there is an opportunity to formally recognize them through a separate category as special sister cities to honor their significance. This would also allow the City to pursue other Sister Cities as the current policy only allows for a maximum of five (5).

**6.0 COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Upon Committee and Council direction, staff will formally communicate with each city thanking them for the past initiative thereby formally concluding any past agreements or re-establishing a relationship through an MOU.

Respectfully submitted,

Rajvir Rao, Director Intergovernmental Relations and Public Affairs

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 – Sister and Friendship Cities Policy

Attachment 2 – Core Principles Analysis

**REPORT CONTRIBUTORS**

This report was prepared by Rajvir Rao, Director of Intergovernmental Relations and Public Affairs, and reviewed by Noreen Kassam, Deputy Chief Financial Officer.