

**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND FRIENDSHIP CITIES COMMITTEE**

**TO:** MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS

**SUBJECT: CELEBRATING 60<sup>TH</sup> YEAR AS A SISTER CITY WITH KUSHIRO, JAPAN**

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. **THAT** the preferred renaming of Hawthorne Lane to Kushiro Sister City Lane be **REFERRED** to the Executive Committee of Council for consideration.
2. **THAT** the activities outlined in section 3.0 in the report titled “Celebrating 60th Year as a Sister City with Kushiro, Japan”, of the International Relations and Friendship Cities Committee meeting dated March 10, 2025, be approved.

**REPORT**

The International Relations and Friendship Cities Committee, at its meeting held on March 10, 2025, received and adopted the *attached* report outlining the City initiatives to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> year anniversary as a Sister City with Kushiro, Japan.

Arising from discussion, the Committee **AMENDED** the recommendation to suggest renaming Hawthorne Lane to Kushiro Sister City Lane. According to the Interim Guidelines and Procedures for Naming Civic Assets, this recommendation will need to be forwarded to the Executive Committee of Council for consideration.

On behalf of the International Relations  
and Friendship Cities Committee,

Councillor P. Calendino  
Chair

Councillor J. Wang  
Vice Chair

**TO:** INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS & FRIENDSHIP CITIES COMMITTEE (IRFCC)

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

**SUBJECT:** **CELEBRATING 60<sup>TH</sup> YEAR AS A SISTER CITY WITH KUSHIRO, JAPAN**

**PURPOSE:** To outline City initiatives to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> year anniversary as a Sister City with Kushiro Japan.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT** the activities outlined in section 3.0 in the report titled “Celebrating 60<sup>th</sup> Year as a Sister City with Kushiro, Japan”, dated March 10, 2025, be approved.

## **1.0 POLICY SECTION**

The City of Burnaby maintains Sister and Friendship City relationships that meet the goals and objectives of Burnaby’s International Relations and Friendship Cities Program.

A Sister City visit supports the following City policies: Climate Action Framework; Official Community Plan; Community Safety Plan; Transportation Plan; Economic Development Strategy; Environmental Sustainability Strategy; Housing and Homelessness Strategy; and Social Sustainability Strategy.

## **2.0 BACKGROUND**

Burnaby has a strong tradition of international sister and friendship city relationships. Sister and friendship cities have intrinsic long-term benefits for the community, like spreading economic and cultural awareness. The Sister City relationship between Kushiro, Japan and Burnaby began in 1965. This year (2025) marks the sixtieth anniversary of the Sister City relationship between the City of Burnaby and Kushiro, Japan.

## **3.0 GENERAL INFORMATION**

In 2024, the Mayor of Kushiro extended an invitation for a delegation to visit Kushiro, Japan, in celebration of the 60th Anniversary of the Sister City partnership between the City of Burnaby and the City of Kushiro. Due to the current economic landscape and associated challenges, the City of Burnaby has communicated that it will not be sending a delegation to Kushiro. However, Burnaby is looking forward to hosting representatives from the City of Kushiro. Kushiro is currently reassessing their plans and will provide

further details to Council once finalized. At present, the City of Burnaby staff are preparing to receive a delegation from Kushiro, Japan, in July 2025.

**Tentative Itinerary**

The delegation is expected to arrive on July 11 and leave on July 15. The tentative itinerary is as follows:

Friday, July 11 – Delegation arrives

Saturday, July 12 – Tour of Metro Vancouver and Vancouver Symphony Orchestra at Deer Lake Park

Sunday, July 13 – Invitation only event at Nikkei Centre

Monday, July 14 – City activities

Tuesday, July 15 – Delegation departs

City staff have been reviewing suggestions on initiatives to commemorate the Anniversary. The following commemorative activities are proposed:

**Renaming “Hawthorne Lane” and Installation of Garden**

There is a walkway between the Nikkei Centre and the parking lot for Alan Emmott Centre. The walkway is on the private property of the Nikkei Centre however the City has a statutory right of way for the walkway as utilities underlie the path. The walkway has been unofficially named Hawthorne Lane. City staff have discussed with Nikkei Centre staff to officially rename the walkway either Kushiro Lane or Kushiro Emmott Lane (as Alan Emmott was a former mayor of Burnaby who signed the Sister City Agreement with Kushiro and the Alan Emmott Centre is on the other side of the lane) to commemorate the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary as a Sister City of Burnaby.

Also, as part of this initiative, the Nikkei Centre has proposed turning the area into a Japanese garden with the walkway going through the garden. The Nikkei Centre project committee has proposed a design drawing that has been reviewed by both the Engineering and Parks, Recreation and Culture staff for feasibility. Staff believe that the plan can be supported, including the planting of the six new cherry blossom trees. The plan is contingent upon the installation of a tree root barrier in a linear application to protect the walkway and the parking asphalt surfaces. Additionally, the proposed soft landscaping shrubs and flowers will be planted with little to no excavation, as they will be installed in mostly raised garden beds with some large rocks. The plan also includes a rock wall running along the east edge of the pathway.

**Eco-Sculpture**

In Japanese culture, the crane is a powerful symbol representing longevity, good fortune, peace, and loyalty. The City’s eco sculpture program includes a crane eco sculpture which will be planted in April and located on Burnaby Mountain near Mintara.

**Street Banners**

The City's Marketing and Communications Division will collaborate with Japanese artists from the Nikkei Centre to select the art for street banners. The 13 banners will be placed on the street poles along the walkway and South Oaks Avenue.

**Vancouver Symphony Orchestra - Signature Event Dedication**

For over 30 years, Symphony in the Park has been a cherished summer event for Burnaby residents and visitors. This free outdoor concert showcases the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra at Burnaby’s Deer Lake Park. To celebrate the anniversary, this year’s event will feature a VIP reception and be opened by the Mayors of both cities. Additionally, the VSO will perform a traditional Japanese song.

**Kushiro Cup**

The City of Burnaby awards the Kushiro Cup to its Outstanding Citizen of the Year annually. The Cup, a gift from Kushiro, Japan, was presented in 1982. Past winners will be invited to participate in Nikkei Centre and VSO events to honour their achievements.

**Video**

A video of events, from planting the eco sculpture to the delegation's departure, will be shared with the Kushiro Mayor in September 2025, marking the 60th Anniversary of the Sister City Agreement.

**4.0 COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Upon Council approval, City staff will inform Kushiro staff about the commemorative initiatives and confirm delegation dates. Staff will notify the Nikkei Centre to start garden implementation around the path and ensure completion by the end of June 2025. Staff will also work with Nikkei Centre staff on designing the commemorative plaque for the walkway and the street banners. Notifications about the July 13th activities will be shared via Nikkei Centre channels and the City's "City Connect" publication, website, and social media.

**5.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Funding for International Friendship and Sister City initiatives have been budgeted in the Gaming Reserve.

The following budget is being proposed for the respective delegation and commemoration activities:

Activity	Budget
<b>Street Banners (including installation in 2025 and removal in 2027)</b>	\$28,000 for banners 13 light poles
<b>Boulder and Plaque for Lane</b>	\$4,000 (including boulder, plaque, and installation)
<b>Japanese Translator</b>	\$3,000 (over duration of visit)
<b>Hosting Dinner</b>	\$27,000 (estimate at 175 attendees)
<b>Tokens of Appreciation</b>	\$3,000
<b>Other: Invitations, signage, advertising</b>	\$2,200
<b>Estimated Total Cost</b>	<b>\$67,200</b>

The crane will be put together as part of the annual eco sculpture program. Any costs associated with the VSO will be covered by the allocated budget for the VSO. Tourism Burnaby will provide all ground transportation during the delegation visit.

Respectfully submitted,  
 Noreen Kassam, Deputy CAO/CFO

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

Attachment 1 – Lane Visual

**REPORT CONTRIBUTORS**

This report was prepared by Noreen Kassam, Deputy CAO, and reviewed by Mary Morrison-Clark, General Manager Parks, Recreation and Culture, May Phang, General

Manager Engineering, Marie Ishikawa, Director Marketing and Corporate Communications, and Elaine Wong, Office Manager, Mayor's Office.