

**THE CORPORATION OF THE  
CITY OF WHITE ROCK**  
15322 BUENA VISTA AVENUE, WHITE ROCK, B.C. V4B 1Y6



**POLICY TITLE: SELECTION AND MAINTENANCE OF SISTER CITY  
/FRIENDSHIP CITY RELATIONSHIPS**

**POLICY NUMBER: ADMIN - 215**

<i>Date of Council Adoption: September 14, 2015</i>	<i>Date of Last Amendment: February 6, 2017</i>
<i>Council Resolution Number: 2015-308, 2017-063; 2020-156</i>	
<i>Originating Department: Leisure Services</i>	<i>Date last reviewed by the Governance and Legislation Committee: March 9, 2020</i>

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**Policy: Selection and Maintenance of Sister City Relationships**

**Policy Statement**

The City of White Rock will consider establishing Sister City relationships with other municipalities that offer potential benefits to the City of White Rock and the broader community through economic development, cultural, educational and friendship exchanges.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines within which Sister City relationships with other municipalities may be established, maintained or terminated. A Sister City relationship is intentionally created by two (2) or more city governments through a formal agreement. In order to foster a meaningful exchange the City will only commit to one (1) Sister City and one (1) Friendship City Agreement at one (1) time.

**Objective**

The primary objective of White Rock's Sister City Program is to foster mutual understanding and meaningful cultural and commercial connections with designated Sister Cities in the interests of our citizens. Staff will be cognizant to realizing direct beneficial opportunities and / or relationship(s) that from time to time may present themselves, these initiatives will be forwarded to Explore White Rock for consideration.

**Background**

Sister City relationships between communities can foster a wide range of cultural, educational, recreational and economic benefits and opportunities. Council may, through application of the criteria and procedures in this policy, receive, review and decline or approve proposals for the establishment of new Sister City relationships. The policy also provides for management of the relationships once established, through liaison, reporting and sponsorship agreements with local organizations primarily responsible for Sister City activities.

### **Levels of Sister City Agreements**

The City of White Rock will support two (2) levels of international exchange relationships:

1. Sister Cities
2. Friendship Cities

### **Definition of Terms**

The terms used in international partnerships describe the cooperative agreements between cities in the global community to promote cultural and commercial exchange. For the purposes of clarification, the following definition of terms is provided:

**Sister City:** A city that has entered into a formal relationship with the City of White Rock through a Sister City Agreement.

**Sister City Agreement:** A formal, long-term agreement that involves the commitment of municipal resources (i.e. staffing and financial) to achieve specific goals and objectives. Sister City Agreements usually involve participation in projects and/or exchanges that promote cultural awareness, joint educational opportunities, or trade and economic development.

**Friendship City:** Generally a demonstration of goodwill between two (2) cities that does not carry the same level of commitment or obligation as a formal Sister City arrangement.

**Friendship City Agreements:** An informal agreement which typically involves the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) by the Mayors of two (2) communities to promote friendship and cooperation between their communities.

**Sponsor Organization:** A local organization that will manage the Sister City relationship. The organization must be based in White Rock and be either a select committee of Council, a sub-committee or a registered non-profit society.

**Sponsor Agreement:** A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City of White Rock and the sponsor organization outlining the requirements for managing the Sister City relationships.

### **Procedures**

The Corporate Administration Department will be responsible for overseeing the City's Sister City program. The City's Economic Development Advisory Committee of Council will act as the Sponsor Organization to administer the Sister City Program on behalf of the City.

Each Sister City relationship will be reviewed at a minimum of every five (5) years to determine if the City's Sister City Program objectives are being met. Should it be determined that a Sister City relationship is not meeting the City's objectives, the Director of Corporate Administration along with City's Economic Development Advisory Committee of Council, will re-evaluate the situation and make recommendations to Council to either terminate the relationship, re-establish the relationship, or retain the status quo.

## **Role and Responsibilities of the Sponsor Organization**

### **The Sponsor Organization is responsible for:**

1. Reviewing Sister City and Friendship City proposals and making recommendations to Mayor, Council and City Administration.
2. Recommending to Council an annual budget for the Sister City/Friendship City Program.
3. Recommending to Council an Annual Plan for engagement with the Sister City / Friendship City in correlation with the suggested annual budget.
4. Ensuring that the number of Sister City/Friendship City relationships the City of White Rock enters into do not exceed available resources.
5. That goals and objectives be established with each Sister City and Friendship City in order to evaluate whether the relationship is meeting the needs of the City of White Rock.
6. Determining the number and duration of official visits, subject to budget limits established annually by Council.
7. Determining which individuals, groups and organizations could best participate and benefit from fostering ongoing relationships with their Sister City counterparts.

## **Staff Responsibilities**

### **City of White Rock staff are responsible for:**

1. Coordinating all official visits to and from White Rock.
2. Arranging delegations in consultation with counterparts in Sister Cities.
3. Providing resources and advice to the Sponsor Organization about responsibilities and protocol.
4. Providing advice to local organizations and businesses which are extending invitations and seeking exchanges with reciprocal organizations in existing or potential sister cities.
5. Providing advice about responsibilities and protocol to individuals and groups that are participating in official and unofficial visits.
6. Coordinating the collection of all Sister City and Friendship City proposals, and forward them to the Sponsor Organization for their review.

## **Selection Criteria for Consideration of Sister City and Friendship City Requests**

The Sister City model is based on community to community relationships. Proposals for Sister City relationships with the City of White Rock will be assessed based upon the following criteria:

**Similarity** – there are identifiable similarities or mutual interest between the City of White Rock and the proposed Sister City (examples size of population, similar geography, similar commercial bases etc.).

**Exchange** – there is potential for cultural, educational, recreational and/or economic exchange.

**Reciprocity** – as a Sister City there are reciprocal benefits and opportunities for both parties to develop relationships through cultural, educational, recreational and economic activities.

**Community Driven** – there is endorsement, active leadership, involvement and support by the community, through an existing organization or business, to both establish and maintain the relationship.

**Strategic Benefit** – the short-term and long-term benefits of the relationship outweigh the public costs of entering into or maintaining the relationship.

**Exclusivity & Proximity** – the City of White Rock does not have a Sister City relationship with any other municipality in the same country or within close proximity of a proposed Sister City location.

**Political Stability** – the country in which the Sister City is situated has a stable political climate as determined by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT).

**Financial Implications** – the reciprocal relationship must be realistic and financially achievable within allocated annual budget resources.

**History - is there any common history or linkages with the community or region?**

### **The Proposal Review Process**

Prior to consideration of Sister City proposals by Council, the Sponsor Organization must submit to Corporate Administration a detailed written proposal including the following information:

- Name of municipality and country of the proposed Sister City
- Demographic profile of the proposed Sister City
- Outline the short and long termed benefits to both cities
- Describe identifiable similarities and areas of mutual interest
- Prepare a three (3) year work plan including the process and timeline for formalizing the relationship
- Develop a budget for the work plan (including a fundraising plan if required)
- Describe the proposed Sister City's expectations for the relationship
- A letter of invitation from the Mayor of the proposed Sister City and the Sponsor Organization

Upon receipt of a proposal, City staff will review the proposal against the criteria in this policy and provide recommendations to City Council.

## **The Proposal Implementation Process**

If the Sister City relationship has been recommended by Corporate Administration staff and given approval to proceed by City Council, the following implementation process will be followed:

- The Sponsor Organization and the proponent will be notified in writing.
- A formal letter of interest will be sent from the Mayor of White Rock to the Mayor of the proposed Sister City;
- A Sister City Agreement is developed with the Sister City for an initial term of three (3) years with provision for renewal;
- The final agreement will be presented to Council with a recommendation to formally establish a Sister City relationship, and a formal signing ceremony will be arranged by City staff;
- The hosting of official delegations will cover 100% of the cost of gifts, ceremonial dinners, transportation within the City, translation fees and similar acts of hospitality, but does not cover other delegate costs such as transportation to White Rock, meals, accommodation or translation services.
- All Sister City relationships may benefit from ongoing base budget allocated specifically for expenses associated with:
  - The City of White Rock hosting visiting delegations from Sister Cities;
  - Purchase of gifts to be given by City of White Rock Council members when visiting Sister City hosts; and
  - 100% of the costs of the official delegation for transportation, accommodation, translation fees and meals.

## **Annual Council Representation**

**For circumstances where there are to be expected closed meetings between Council and the Sister City representatives, in order to ensure there is not a quorum of Council where the possibility of an illegal meeting is held, annually there will be Council Appointments made as follows:**

- **Mayor**
- **Two (2) Members of Council**
- **One (1) Alternate Member of Council**

**The Mayor and the appointed two (2) members of Council will represent the City in this circumstance.**

## **Rationale:**

This policy has been developed to set guidelines within which Sister City relationships with other municipalities may be established, maintained, declined or terminated. The policy also provides for management of the relationships once established, through liaison, reporting and sponsorship agreements with a local Sponsor Organization primarily responsible for Sister City Program activities.