

Friendship and Sister City Adoption Policy

Sharing experiences and knowledge between the City of Santa Cruz and its Friendship and Sister Cities is a source of mutual enrichment. Successful Friendship and Sister City relationships promote peace and understanding by fostering mutual respect and cooperation between individuals and communities. They enhance the quality of life for citizens of both cities.

The intent of this document is to define the circumstances, criteria, and processes to nominate and adopt Friendship Cities and recommend to the Santa Cruz City Council the adoption of Sister Cities. Additionally, a process to reconsider existing relationships is outlined.

Mission and Purpose

The City of Santa Cruz desires to establish relationships with towns and localities abroad to provide opportunities to build friendships, learn about other cultures, and foster international understanding. To this end, the City of Santa Cruz has established the Santa Cruz Sister Cities Committee ("Committee"), a volunteer group of ordinary citizens who, with the support of local elected officials and local organizations, form long-term relationships with people and organizations in cities abroad. Through people-to-people relationships, the Committee pursues activities and exchanges in thematic areas that are important to both communities, including municipal, business, trade, educational, and cultural exchanges.

I. Defining Friendship and Sister Cities

- A. **A Friendship City** is a designated relationship, where both cities have the opportunity to explore the potential for becoming Sister Cities. Both cities enter into an agreement to develop and strengthen relationships through a variety of activities, including but not limited to:
- Youth programs/exchanges
 - Visitor exchanges
 - Cultural and business exchanges
 - School affiliations/pen pals (adult & children)
 - Humanitarian projects
- B. **A Sister City** relationship is a broad-based, long-term partnership between two communities in two countries. This relationship is officially recognized after the mayor or highest elected official or (or if elections do not take place, the highest appointed official) from both communities sign an agreement. A city can have multiple Sister Cities, with community involvement by volunteers, civic organizations, nonprofits, municipal governments, the private sector, and others. Exchange possibilities are as described above for Friendship Cities.

II. Friendship and Sister City Selection Criteria & Process

A. Selection Criteria:

Friendship and Sister Cities should ideally meet three sets of criteria:

- Criteria related to structural similarities associated with compatibility;
- Pre-existing or easily developed constituencies; and
- Geographic balance.

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These criteria are described below.

1. Structural Similarities:

Potential Friendship and Sister Cities should ideally share certain structural commonalities with the City of Santa Cruz to better ensure compatibility and hence the circumstances needed for a long-lived and thriving relationship.

These structural criteria include:

- Population size
- Key industries
- Geographic characteristics
- Institutions of higher learning
- Similar values, such as tolerance and respect for the environment
- Similar goals for their Sister Cities program

For the City of Santa Cruz, a comparable city would be a university town of about 60,000 people located near the ocean or other large body of water with a municipal wharf or working harbor and served principally by tourism, technology, and agricultural industries.

While successful relationships are based, in part, on shared experiences that derive from structural similarities, the City of Santa Cruz should not insist on an exact match. In evaluating structural criteria, the Committee should look for cities that share most, or all, of the above criteria.

2. Existing or easily developed constituencies:

The City of Santa Cruz should enter into Friendship and Sister City relationships only with cities for which community support exists or can readily be developed. Support can take many forms. For example:

- Expatriate and ethnic ties
- Art and cultural relationships and exchanges
- Educational linkages, including alumni ties
- Service organization activities
- Economic and business relationships
- Youth organization activities

In choosing a Friendship or Sister City, the Committee should take cognizance of the number, variety, and depth of relationships between the City of Santa Cruz and that city that already exist and the level of community support in both cities for the relationship. The more existing ties, the stronger the relationship will likely prove to be and the greater the likelihood that relationship will successfully transition to, or be, a Sister City. In the absence of a preexisting base, the potential to develop a broad base of community support can and should be considered. However, given that the Santa Cruz Sister Cities Committee is a volunteer organization, the Committee should give preference to cities which already have local constituencies and community support in both cities. The Committee should avoid entering into Friendship or Sister City relationships with cities where it will be difficult to develop support among the community and the burden of such support will fall primarily on the Committee members.

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3. Geographic Balance:

The Committee should seek geographic balance for its Friendship Cities. Ideally, selected cities should be spread out across the globe rather than clustered in one geographic region. Currently, the City of Santa Cruz has Sister and Friendship Cities dispersed as follows:

- I. North/Central America:
 - Jinotepe, Nicaragua
- II. South America:
 - Puerto la Cruz, Venezuela
- III. Europe:
 - Sestri Levante, Italy
 - Alushta, Crimean Peninsula
 - Biarritz, France
- IV. Africa:
 - None currently
- V. Oceania
 - None currently
- VI. Asia:
 - Shingu, Japan

Future Friendship and Sister Cities would ideally be located in South America, Africa, and/or Oceania for geographic balance and a truly global network.

B. Process for Adding a Friendship City:

The Santa Cruz Sister Cities Committee will frequently be faced with requests to establish Sister City relationships with cities abroad. As a rule, the Committee should seek to preserve quality over quantity. Committee members' time and energy are limited, and should be focused on preserving, deepening, and expanding already existing Sister City and Friendship City relationships. However, excellent matches will come along, and the Committee should be prepared to identify them. The following process will help the Committee do so.

1. Upon receiving a request to establish a Friendship or Sister City relationship, the Committee shall seek a volunteer champion from the Committee membership to actively shepherd the request through the Committee's process. The champion will be a volunteer position only—neither the Chair nor the Committee can name a champion who has not volunteered. If such a volunteer is not identified from the Committee membership, the Friendship or Sister City request will not proceed. The Parks and Recreation staff liaison cannot fulfill this responsibility.
2. Requests for establishing Friendship or Sister City relationships may originate from other cities, members of the public, or Committee members.
3. When possible, Santa Cruz and the candidate Friendship/Sister City should exchange delegations or have other social or community exchanges prior to a formal designation in order to explore and determine all initial exchange possibilities.

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4. Prior to adoption as a Friendship City, the champion will prepare a written report for the Committee to include:
 - a. A profile of the city under consideration that details the structural characteristics of the city (population size, geographic location, presence of universities, key industries). Moreover, the profile should also detail the languages spoken in the area, give a brief introduction to the structure of the local government, provide a short history of the area, and describe any logistical challenges to travelling to and from the city under consideration.
 - b. A profile of the existing or likely constituencies for the Friendship City candidate in Santa Cruz.
 - c. A profile of the existing or likely constituencies in the city under consideration.
 - d. A description of potential focus areas for activities and exchanges with the Friendship City candidate, including a delineation of those potential activities and exchanges. This section of the report should describe how entering into a Friendship City relationship will benefit both cities.
 - e. Once the report is complete, the champion will request the staff liaison and/or Committee Chair to put the report's delivery on the next Committee agenda and formally notify the City Council of this proposal.
 - f. At a subsequent Committee meeting, the Committee will vote on whether or not to adopt the candidate city as a Friendship City; provided, that, if the City Council objects to such designation within 45 days of notification, the city will not become a Friendship City.

C. Capacity

1. Ceiling:

There can be a maximum of two (2) Friendship Cities at a time.

2. Length of Friendship City Status:

The default is that Friendship City status runs for a two-year term.

3. Possibility of Extending or Shortening Term:

The Committee at its option may extend the Friendship City status for an additional year or may decide to consider a transition to Sister City status before the completion of a Friendship City term.

4. Informal Relationship:

It is intended that Friendship City status be informal and need not be reported to Sister Cities International.

III. Sister City Selection Criteria & Process Selection Criteria

Before the conclusion of the Friendship City term, the city may be advanced to candidacy for Sister City status based on the totality of community and Committee support for such advancement and the interest expressed by the Friendship City in becoming a Sister City. It is expected but not required that a city will be a Friendship City prior to adoption as a Sister City and that, in addition to the criteria detailed in Section II, to become a Sister City a city will meet the following additional criterion:

1. At least one bilateral exchange of delegations has occurred after Friendship City status had been granted. That is, a delegation from the friendship city will have visited Santa Cruz, and a delegation from Santa Cruz will have visited the Friendship City, or at least two virtual “visits” or exchanges will have occurred.
2. One or more participating Committee members will have done the following:
 - a. Presented to the full Committee before a delegation departs or a virtual meeting occurs an outline of what they hope to learn and accomplish from the delegation or exchange.
 - b. Solicited questions from Committee members to be investigated during the delegation or exchange.
 - c. Reported their findings to the Committee and made recommendations.

A. Process:

Based on the above criterion the Committee may consider recommending a city to the City Council for Sister City status. While the city is being considered for Sister City status, its Friendship City status will be automatically renewed until the process is completed. The process for granting Sister City status is as follows:

1. Prior to the end of any Friendship City term, the chair of the subcommittee for the Friendship City seeking Sister City status will prepare a report, and deliver the report to the staff liaison and/or Committee Chair for provision to the Committee, that informs the members of the Santa Cruz Sister Cities Committee of the current scope of the relationship and its potential for growth. The report will contain at a minimum the following information:
 - a. A profile of the city under consideration that details the structural characteristics of the city (population size, geographic location, presence of universities, key industries). Moreover, the profile should also detail the languages spoken in the area, give a brief introduction to the structure of the local government, provide a short history of the area, and describe any logistical challenges to travelling to and from the city under consideration.
 - b. A detailed profile of the existing constituencies for the sister city candidate in Santa Cruz. A profile of likely future constituencies should also be provided if the subcommittee intends to involve more segments of the community in the relationship.

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- c. A detailed profile of the existing constituencies for making Santa Cruz a sistercity in the city under consideration. A profile of likely future constituencies should also be provided if the subcommittee knows of it counterpart's plans to expand the relationship to other communities in the candidate city or if the subcommittee has plans to reach out to other community groups in the candidate city.
 - d. A description of the activities and exchanges that have occurred already involving the sister city candidate. This section should not only include a description of the inbound and outbound delegations, but also descriptions of other activities and exchanges in which the two cities have engaged.
 - e. A description of the activities and exchanges that are anticipated for the next five years. With regard to exchanges, the five-year plan should provide a realistic description of their type, frequency, and method.
 - f. A description of how a permanent relationship will be of mutual benefit.
 - g. A recommendation for or against Sister City status.
1. At the same time the report is delivered, the chair of the subcommittee will request the staff liaison and/or Committee Chair to put the status of the city on the next Committee agenda.
 2. The Committee will hear and discuss the report at the next Committee meeting if possible and may either vote on whether to recommend to the City Council to advance the city to Sister City status, may request further information or may determine to hold such vote at a subsequent Committee meeting.
 3. If not previously voted on, at a subsequent committee meeting, the Committee will vote on whether to recommend to the City Council to advance that city to Sister City status.
 4. In the event the Committee votes to recommend to the City Council to advance a city to Sister City status, the Committee Chair or subcommittee chair (or other designated Committee member) will notify the City Council of such vote and will be responsible for working with the City Council to advance the candidacy of the city. If the City Council votes in favor of making the City a Sister City, the subcommittee chair (or other designated Committee member) will be responsible for (i) putting in place a formal agreement between the City of Santa Cruz and the Sister City which must be signed by the mayor or other highest elected official (or if no election, the highest appointed official) of both cities and (ii) forwarding such agreement to Sister Cities International.
 5. In the event the Committee or the City Council votes not to advance a city to Sister City status, then any Friendship City status will expire at the end of the original term (or earlier if so voted by the Committee) and the city no longer will be a Friendship City. If such Friendship City status has been reported to Sister Cities International, the Chair or subcommittee chair shall notify Sister Cities

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International of the termination of the Friendship City status.

IV. Active, Inactive, and Emeritus Sister Cities

A. The activity level of our relationships will vary:

While active relationships with all Sister Cities would be ideal, the reality is that some relationships will become dormant. To deal with this situation, the Santa Cruz Sister Cities Committee needs a mechanism for distinguishing between active and inactive relationships. Sister Cities International has such a mechanism: inactive sister cities can be formally transitioned to an emeritus status or Sister City status can be terminated.

B. “Inactive” Status.

For our Committee’s purposes, an intermediate step between active and emeritus is added: “Inactive” status. This step would be an informal inactive status which Sister Cities International would not be informed about. It would be for our Committee’s use only. In practice, the Committee should deem those Sister Cities for which there have been no or very limited interactions for 3 years to be Inactive. The Committee may also deem a city to be Inactive if there are other extenuating circumstances that make Inactive status advisable or necessary. All cities that are deemed Inactive can be managed by one Committee member who will report on the status of the relationship at least once per year or more frequently if significant interactions are restarted or the extenuating circumstances no longer apply. Once made Inactive, a city can return to active status, but until then, they will be less of an administrative burden on the Committee.

C. Website.

In distinguishing between active and Inactive Sister Cities, the Committee’s online presence (City website, Facebook page) can list the active relationships as our Sister Cities and include a section mentioning our Inactive Sister Cities. By doing so, the Committee can identify its active relationships while also ensuring that Inactive cities remain visible to the community for those who might be inspired to help us restore these dormant relationships. The website also may, but is not required to, list cities that are in Friendship City or Emeritus status.

D. Emeritus Status.

Sister Cities for which there have not been any significant interaction for a total of five years, or which have been in Inactive status for at least two years, or if there are other extenuating circumstances that make Emeritus status advisable, can be considered for formal emeritus status. The Committee periodically should evaluate whether to recommend to the City Council to place any Sister City which meets such criteria into Emeritus status.

1. In the event the Committee votes to recommend to the City Council to place a Sister City into Emeritus status, the Committee Chair or subcommittee chair (or other designated Committee member) will notify the City Council of such vote and will be responsible for working with the City Council to place such Sister City into Emeritus status, including obtaining a letter from the mayor or highest elected official of Santa Cruz to the Sister City indicating that Santa Cruz considers the relationship dormant and wishes to change its status to Emeritus. In such case, a copy of such letter will be sent to Sister Cities International to inform of this change in status.

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2. In the event the Committee or City Council votes not to place such Sister City into Emeritus status, the Sister City will continue to be a Sister City.

E. Re-Evaluation of Emeritus Status.

While a Sister City is in Emeritus status, the Committee periodically may evaluate whether that Sister City should remain in Emeritus status or alternatively should be removed from Emeritus status because either (1) the Committee votes to revive the Sister City relationship or (2) the Committee votes to terminate the Sister Cities status entirely.

1. In the event the Committee votes either to revive or terminate the relationship, the Committee will designate a Committee member to work with the City Council either to revive such relationship or to terminate it respectively, including obtaining a letter from the mayor or highest elected official of Santa Cruz to the Sister City indicating that Santa Cruz wishes to end the emeritus relationship and either revive the Sister City relationship or terminate it respectively. In either event, the Chair or subcommittee chair shall notify Sister Cities International of the revival or termination (if required to so notify) of the Emeritus Sister City status.

2. In the event the Committee or City Council votes not to change a city's Emeritus status, the city will continue to be an Emeritus Sister City.

Last revised by City Council:

April 26, 2022
March 22, 2016

ATTEST:

X 

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Secretary to the Committee