

CITY OF BELLEVUE, WASHINGTON

RESOLUTION NO. 6551

A RESOLUTION regarding the Sister City Affiliation Policy for the City of Bellevue; and amending Resolution No. 6384.

WHEREAS, the City of Bellevue has had sister city relationships since 1969; and

WHEREAS, the City of Bellevue initially focused its sister city relationships in the Pacific Rim, establishing sister cities in Yao, Japan, and Hualien, Taiwan; and

WHEREAS, the City of Bellevue established new sister city relationships with cities in Eastern and Central Europe in the 1990's, affiliating with cities in Liepaja, Latvia, and Kladno, Czech Republic, for the purpose of assisting those cities as they transformed to a democratic form of government; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of Bellevue have demonstrated a desire to participate in "people-to-people" relationships with the citizens of selected foreign cities to establish greater friendship, international communication, understanding, and world peace between the people of the United States and the people of other nations; and

WHEREAS, it is desirable to encourage international trade, economic development, and tourism between Bellevue and its sister cities; and

WHEREAS, the success of sister city programs is dependent upon active citizen involvement and support and a relationship between the City of Bellevue and volunteer organizations in order to carry out sister city programs; and

WHEREAS, the City of Bellevue and the Bellevue Sister Cities Association (BSCA) receive on-going requests by cities throughout the world wishing to affiliate with Bellevue as a sister city; and

WHEREAS, the City Council desires to amend the Sister City Affiliation Policy adopted by Resolution No. 6384; now therefore,

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BELLEVUE, WASHINGTON, DOES RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Resolution No. 6384 is amended to read as follows:

1. STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES.

The City of Bellevue in entering into sister city relationships seeks international relationships which will enhance its citizens' understanding of other cultures, and/or which will allow the City to engage in productive and mutually beneficial exchanges of new technology, techniques, and solutions to problems with cities of comparable development. The City will support and encourage the establishment of sister city affiliations which serve the following objectives:

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A. To provide opportunities for citizens that live or work in Bellevue who wish to participate in social, cultural, educational, governmental, environmental, and economic exchanges.

B. To enhance citizens' economic well-being by developing opportunities for trade and tourism.

C. To provide opportunities for citizens that live or work in Bellevue to work on international projects.

D. To share expertise in addressing problems.

E. To develop business and economic ties in Bellevue with other parts of the world.

F. To increase knowledge of and sensitivity to diversity here and abroad.

2. SELECTION GUIDELINES

The following is a composite of different factors for consideration when selecting a sister city. These factors are recognized as subjective in nature and are to be used as general tools to assist in the selection process. The awareness that a desire to learn from and share experiences with another city can, in some cases, balance the lack of similar characteristics with a potential sister city.

A. Strong Bellevue community support.

B. Strong support by the business community and/or other key organizations/institutions in the community.

C. The existence of a nonprofit organization or a proposed nonprofit organization/institution which is able to work closely with the City of Bellevue.

D. Similarity to the City of Bellevue in terms of:

1. size, either absolutely or in relation to the region, e.g., the City of Bellevue is approximately 31 square miles; the Eastside Region, as defined by the 2000 U.S. Census Report, and including unincorporated areas, is approximately 143 square miles.

2. population, either absolutely or in relation to the region, e.g., the City of Bellevue's population is 106,400; the Eastside Region, as defined by the 2000 U.S. Census Report and including unincorporated areas; has a population of 493,000.

3. the proposed city is an urban center, or is within approximately 50 miles of an urban center, with transportation infrastructure in place with the urban center.

4. the proposed city has infrastructure challenges presented by a similar geographic condition, e.g., hilly terrain, surrounded by mountains and lakes; density; infrastructure in place to allow accessibility to and from city.

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5. the proposed city has a similar role in the region, e.g., regional, economic, and political leader and/or a key player in regional, economic and political activities.

E. Geographic and cultural dispersion around the world to maximize the diversity of cultures.

F. Comparable educational levels.

G. An interest in sharing views and information on issues of governance and citizen/governmental relationships.

3. SELECTION PROCESS

In order to ensure that sister city affiliations reflect the community's interests and are managed effectively by the City of Bellevue in partnership with an active volunteer organization(s), requests to the City for sister city affiliations shall be evaluated as follows:

A. Any city or organization may submit a Letter of Interest to the City of Bellevue or to the BSCA on behalf of a proposed sister city.

B. An initial summary review for general fit and applicability with the Objectives and Guidelines shall be done concurrently by the City Manager and the BSCA within 45 days of receipt of the Letter of Interest.

C. Following a review by the City Manager and the BSCA, the parties shall share their evaluation and level of interest regarding the proposed sister city. If both the City Manager and the BSCA agree that there is sufficient interest in the proposed city, more detailed information will be sought. If it is determined that there is not sufficient interest, no further action will be taken and the petitioner will be notified.

D. Following the 45-day initial review period, if further information is required, additional materials should include:

1. A statement, along with a general description of the city, indicating why the petitioning city wants to become a sister city with the City of Bellevue.

2. A description of how the petitioning city meets the Objectives and Selection Guidelines of this Policy.

3. A petition with the names, addresses, and phone numbers, of at least thirty (30) people who:

a. live in the Puget Sound region, of which at least a majority live or work in the City of Bellevue;

b. attest to a long-term, broad-based interest in establishing a sister city relationship with the petitioning city; and

c. are, or who will agree to become, active members of a volunteer citizen organization to support that relationship.

E. Following a review of the additional materials, the City Manager and the BSCA shall in a timely manner make a recommendation to the City Council, including an analysis of the fiscal impact, as to whether a sister city affiliation should be pursued.

F. If approval from the City Council is obtained to explore a sister city relationship, an exploratory site visit may be made to the proposed sister city to determine whether there is sufficient support to move to the next stage, i.e., Friendship City status.

G. Friendship City Status:

1. The City Council shall designate the petitioning city as a Friendship City for the first two years. The designation of Friendship City means that there is no formal structure to the city-to-city relationship and there are no formal obligations between the cities. The two-year trial period will give both cities the opportunity to continue to gauge compatibility and to determine if there is a long-term commitment on the parts of both cities to enter into a formalized sister city relationship.

2. A "Memorandum of Understanding" between the City of Bellevue and the Friendship City will be prepared agreeing to a plan of action for the two-year trial time period. If needed, an extension of up to an additional year may be granted by the City Council.

H. Formal Sister City Relationship:

Following the two-year Friendship City period, the sponsoring volunteer organization will make its final recommendation to the City Manager prior to the City Council's final decision regarding the sister city relationship.

4. IDENTIFICATION OF SISTER CITY CANDIDATES

The City Manager or City Council may initiate activities to identify potential city or cities to be considered as sister cities.

5. GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCT

To assure that the Bellevue Sister Cities Program is conducted in a manner consistent with the public interest and in accordance with the laws of the State of Washington and the laws and policies of the City of Bellevue, the following guidelines are hereby established:

A. Through its sister cities program, the City of Bellevue carries out a fundamental governmental purpose of providing social, cultural and educational services. The City will, therefore, expend such funds as it may deem necessary and appropriate to ensure the proper functioning of the sister cities program.

B. The City of Bellevue shall provide such staff support as is necessary to establish and maintain communication with its sister cities.

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C. The City of Bellevue may involve private citizens and organizations in the implementation of this policy, at the discretion of the City Manager.

D. City funding of sister city activities will be limited to public purposes. Publicly funded activities may include:

1. Travel for City officials, or their delegates, when travel is necessary to establish or maintain an official sister city affiliation;

2. Appropriate activities to receive public officials, or their delegates, when visiting Bellevue on official sister city business;

3. The exchange of information and material which support the objective of providing social, cultural and educational services, or economic benefit to the public; and

4. The exchange of technical resources and staff, when such an exchange serves the objectives outlined in this policy and is necessary to establish or maintain the sister city affiliation.

E. Any funding for private purposes is prohibited.

F. Donation of city assets, when that donation clearly serves a public purpose as outlined in this policy, may be authorized by the City Manager, provided the recipient is a public entity.

G. Official gifts received in the course of sister city activities will be the sole property of the City of Bellevue. The City will maintain an inventory of such gifts and will attempt to display them in appropriate public setting.

Passed by the City Council this 21st day of May, 2001,
and signed in authentication of its passage this 21st day of May, 2001.

(SEAL)

Chuck Mosher
Chuck Mosher, Mayor

Attest:

Myrna L. Basich
Myrna L. Basich, City Clerk