

Report to Council



Date: June 1, 2020
To: Council
From: City Manager
Subject: Sister Cities Policy No. 355 Update
Department: Active Living and Culture

Recommendation:

THAT Council receives, for information, the report from the Active Living and Culture Services Department, dated June 1, 2020, regarding the Sister Cities Policy;

AND THAT Council Policy No. 355, being the Sister Cities Policy, be revised as outlined in the Report from the Cultural Services Manager, dated June 1, 2020.

Purpose:

To approve updates to Council Policy No. 355, being the Sister Cities Policy.

Background:

In 2010, the City adopted Council Policy No. 355 knowing that engaging in Sister City relationships fosters a range of cultural, educational, recreational and economic benefits and opportunities for our community. The Policy set a framework for the establishment, maintenance and termination of such relationships.

Over the years, the City has had a Sister City relationship with Veendam, Netherlands and Kasugai, Japan and a few other cities proposed for consideration. While the Veendam relationship ended in 2015, the relationship with Kasugai remains strong. At this time, there are no requests from other municipalities for new Sister City relationships to be formed.

Annually, \$10,000 is allocated to the Sister City program in the Cultural Services administration budget. Sponsor Organizations are eligible to receive annual matching funding to support their activities. Any remaining funds are then transferred to the Sister City Reserve Fund to support sister city relationship activities and visiting delegations.

Discussion:

As part of the review of existing Council policies, staff have completed a review of the Sister Cities Policy No. 355. This Policy, if approved by Council, will change primarily in formatting and the content included in the policy and less so in how we conduct our daily business.

Much of the information in the existing policy is operational in nature and provides a guide for how staff will administer the Sister Cities program. Therefore, the contents of the existing Policy have been separated into two documents: a revised version of Council Policy No. 355 including Council's role and other strategic details and the Sister City Program Guidelines containing administrative details for staff to manage the day-to-day relationship.

Excluding administrative changes to the Policy, there is an adaptation to expand how the annual budget can be used to support the Sister City relationship, outside of the annual matching funding that is distributed to the Sponsor Organization. This policy revision allows for staff to provide additional support to promoting the Sister City relationship, visiting or hosting delegations and supporting related special projects as they arise.

In addition, the policy includes the annual transfer to the reserve fund (Sister City Visits Reserve - R023) any remaining funding not spent in the fiscal year. This has been a practice since 2009, following a motion by Council on July 13, 2009 (R738/09/07/13), however was never formalized in policy.

Information transferred to the program guidelines from the existing policy includes:

- the core principles of a Sister City relationship;
- details about the proposal process;
- details about the establishment process;
- details about the renewal process;
- information about financial support and annual reporting; and
- a sample of a Sponsor Agreement.

The information transferred to the program guidelines remained the same, with the exception of:

- the initial term of the Sponsor Agreement has been updated from 3 years to 5 years, while the renewal term has remained the same at 3 years. Lengthening the initial term allows the Sponsor Organizations more time to establish themselves in their respective communities, before considering the renewal period.
- providing additional details about how organizations access funding support and the annual reporting requirements. This change will make the reporting process easier and clearer for Sponsor Organizations.

Conclusion:

This Policy, if approved by Council, will change primarily in formatting and information included and minimally in how we do business. These revisions are in alignment with the City's recent policy updates and the original intention of the Sister City program.

Internal Circulation:
Communications
Office of the City Clerk

Considerations applicable to this report:

Existing Policy:
Sister Cities Policy No. 355

Considerations not applicable to this report:

Legal/Statutory Authority
Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements
Communications Comments
External Agency/Public Comments
Financial/Budgetary Considerations

Submitted by: C. McWillis, Cultural Services Manager

Approved for inclusion:

JG

cc:
J. Gabriel, Director of Active Living and Culture
L. Bentley, Deputy City Clerk