HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL

KE KANIHELA O KE KALANA O HONOLULU

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

No. **26-185, CD1**

RESOLUTION

AMENDING THE CITY'S POLICY GUIDELINES FOR SISTER CITY RELATIONSHIPS.

WHEREAS, through the adoption of Resolution 21-212 on October 6, 2021, the City Council ("Council") adopted guidelines for the City and County of Honolulu ("City") that govern the establishment of the City's sister city and related relationships with other cities, including friendship city relationships ("Sister City Guidelines"); and

WHEREAS, the Friendship City Implementation Policy provided in the Sister City Guidelines states that "[f]riendship city relationships will be established for two-year terms, after which the City Administration must submit a recommendation to the Council to either transition the friendship city into a sister city relationship or terminate the relationship"; and

WHEREAS, the Friendship City Implementation Policy further stipulates that "[f]ollowing the conclusion of a two-year friendship city relationship, there will be a five-year waiting period before the former friendship city relationship may be considered for renewal"; and

WHEREAS, these stipulations do not allow for flexibility in forming and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships with other international cities; and

WHEREAS, the Council finds that revising the Friendship City Implementation Policy requirements to specifically: (1) provide an option to renew a friendship city relationship (in addition to the options of transitioning to a sister city relationship or terminating the friendship city relationship), (2) provide an option to recommend the preservation, transition, or termination of a friendship city relationship after an initial two-year term, (3) remove the two-year deadline for cities to agree on terms and conditions for transitioning a friendship city relationship to a sister city relationship, and (4) delete the five-year waiting period before a former friendship city relationship may be re-established, will lower barriers to the formation and maintenance of synergetic and collaborative relationships between Honolulu and other international cities; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City and County of Honolulu that it adopts the following "Sister City Guidelines" to govern the City's sister city and related relationships with other cities:

RESOLUTION

"SISTER CITY GUIDELINES

Sister City and Friendship City Criteria Policy

Cities potentially considered for a sister city relationship or friendship city relationship should:

1. Share a direct historical, cultural, or ethnic relationship with the residents of Honolulu;

2. Be similar in population size or character to Honolulu; and

3. Share common public policy goals with Honolulu, including the promotion of business, trade, and tourism, or the mutual exchange of friendship, culture, education, and technology.

Friendship City Implementation Policy

To ensure that friendship city relationships with the City and County of Honolulu are lasting and purposeful, the following implementation policies apply:

1. A friendship city relationship must be established by the signing of Letters of Intent between the Mayor of the City and County of Honolulu and the Mayor or appropriate public official of the proposed friendship city;

2. Friendship city relationships will be established for an initial two-year term, after which the City Administration may, if deemed appropriate, submit a recommendation to the Council to continue the friendship city relationship, transition the friendship city relationship into a sister city relationship, or terminate the friendship city relationship. If the City Administration does not submit a recommendation to the Council, the friendship city relationship will renew for another two-year term;

3. The terms and conditions for the transition from a friendship city relationship to a sister city relationship must be decided and agreed upon between the two cities. The agreement must contain a program that will be instituted by both cities to make these relationships lasting and purposeful;

4. There will be no financial obligation in the establishment of friendship city relationships; and

5. Friendship cities do not count towards the maximum number of allowed sister cities per country.

Sister City Implementation Policy

To ensure that sister city relationships with the City and County of Honolulu are lasting and purposeful, the following implementation policies apply:

1. The City and County of Honolulu may not have more than 10 sister cities from any one country at any time;

2. The sister city relationship must be established by the adoption of a Council resolution and the signing of a formal agreement between the Mayor of the City and County of Honolulu and the Mayor or appropriate public official of the proposed sister city within two years;

3. City funds must be appropriated within two years of the signing of the formal agreement establishing the sister city relationship to provide for the exchange of gifts or goodwill missions, and must be appropriated at least once every five years thereafter;

4. The sister city agreement must be executed and an exchange of gifts or goodwill missions must take place within five years of the signing of the formal agreement between Honolulu and the proposed sister city;

5. A resolution must be submitted to the Council for adoption once every five years, following the signing of the formal agreement, for either the renewal of the sister city relationship with a proposed budget, or to transition the sister city relationship to an emeritus relationship;

6. The failure to implement a formal agreement or to exchange gifts or goodwill missions within this five-year period will result in the automatic transition of the sister city relationship to an emeritus relationship; and

7. Sister city summits may not be held by the City any earlier than five years after the date of the City's previous sister city summit.

RESOLUTION

Emeritus Criteria Policy

It is the policy of the City and County of Honolulu to automatically convert any sister city relationship to an emeritus relationship when the City has failed to execute a sister city agreement or to maintain an active relationship through the exchange of gifts or goodwill missions within the five-year period following the signing of the formal sister city agreement or during any five-year renewal period.

Emeritus Implementation Policy

In the establishment of an emeritus relationship with a city, the following implementation policies apply:

1. There is no term length for emeritus relationships;

2. Emeritus cities wishing to reinstate their sister city relationship with Honolulu may do so after a five-year waiting period and must first apply under the friendship city implementation policy; and

3. Emeritus cities do not count towards the limit of 10 sister cities from any one country at any time."; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Administration must submit an annual report to the Council no later than December 31 of each year that summarizes activities and exchanges conducted with each of the City's friendship and sister cities, identifies the status of each friendship and sister city relationship, and includes recommendations for the renewal or termination of sister city relationships; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that if the annual report includes a recommendation for the renewal or termination of a friendship or sister city relationship, the City Administration must submit a resolution for the renewal or termination of the friendship city or sister city relationship to the Council no later than June 30 of the following year, and must notify cities of the renewal or termination of their friendship or sister city relationships no later than one month following the adoption of any Council resolution renewing or terminating a relationship; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the "Sister City Guidelines" set forth in this resolution shall take effect upon the resolution's adoption and shall supersede, in their entirety, the guidelines established in Resolution 21-212; and

HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL

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BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Mayor, the Managing Director, and the Executive Director of the Mayor's Office of Culture and the Arts.

INTRODUCED BY:

Scott Nishimoto

DATE OF INTRODUCTION:

August 13, 2026
Honolulu, Hawai'i

Councilmembers

CITY COUNCIL
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU
HONOLULU, HAWAII

CERTIFICATE

RESOLUTION 26-185, CD1

Introduced: 08/13/26 By: SCOTT Y. NISHIMOTO Committee: INTERNATIONAL & LEGAL AFFAIRS (ILA)

Title: AMENDING THE CITY'S POLICY GUIDELINES FOR SISTER CITY RELATIONSHIPS.

Voting Legend: * = Aye w/Reservations

08/13/26	INTRO	Introduced.
08/26/26	ILA	Reported out for adoption as amended in CD1 form. CR-240(26) 8 AYES: CORDERO, KIA'ĀINA, NISHIMOTO, OKIMOTO, TULBA, TUPOLA, WATERS, WEYER 1 ABSENT: DOS SANTOS-TAM
09/09/26	CCL	Committee report and Resolution as amended were adopted. 9 AYES: CORDERO, DOS SANTOS-TAM, KIA'ĀINA, NISHIMOTO, OKIMOTO, TULBA, TUPOLA, WATERS, WEYER

I hereby certify that the above is a true record of action by the Council of the City and County of Honolulu on this RESOLUTION.

CHADD KADOTA, ACTING CITY CLERK

TOMMY WATERS, CHAIR AND PRESIDING OFFICER