

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR ORDINANCE NO. 260072

Amending Chapter 2, Code of Ordinances, Administration, by adding a new Section 2-12 establishing policies for Sister City and Friendship City relationships; requiring annual reporting to City Council; and aligning future Sister City and Friendship City designations to one city per country.

WHEREAS, Kansas City has maintained official Sister City relationships since 1967, beginning with Seville, Spain, fostering international cooperation, cultural understanding, and economic exchange; and

WHEREAS, the Sister City Association of Kansas City serves as the City's designated organization to administer official relationships on behalf of Kansas City and its residents; and

WHEREAS, Sister City relationships carry significant value for Kansas City's international reputation, economic development, cultural enrichment, and civic identity; and

WHEREAS, Kansas City will host FIFA World Cup 2026 matches, requiring enhanced coordination of international relationships and cultural diplomacy; and

WHEREAS, meaningful Sister City relationships require sustained engagement, dedicated resources, and active participation by Kansas City residents; and

WHEREAS, the City Council requires regular communication regarding the activities, outcomes, and strategic value of these partnerships to ensure accountability and public benefit; and

WHEREAS, focusing resources on strategic relationships will better serve Kansas City's international engagement goals; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KANSAS CITY:

Section 1. That Chapter 2, Code of Ordinances, Administration, is hereby amended by enacting a new Section 2-12 to read as follows:

**Sec. 2-12. Sister City and Friendship City Relationships.**

(a) *Definitions.* For purposes of this section, the following terms shall have the meanings given in this subsection:

(1) *Sister City relationship* means an officially approved partnership describing Kansas City and a city in another country as “Sister Cities” to one another and:

- a. For relationships established after February 1, 2026: formalized by an ordinance adopted by City Council and signed agreement between Mayors.

b. For relationships established before February 1, 2026: recognized by City Council through any official action, including but not limited to ordinance, resolution, proclamation, or mayoral agreement, and listed as active by SCAKC as of February 1, 2026.

- (2) *Friendship City relationship* means a relationship between Kansas City and a city in another country designated by City Council agreement with less formal structure and obligations than Sister City relationships.
- (3) *Sister City Association of Kansas City, Missouri* (SCAKC) means the nonprofit corporation designated by the City to administer Sister City and Friendship City relationships.
- (4) *Sister City Committee* means a volunteer committee organized under SCAKC to maintain and develop activities for a specific Sister City or Friendship City relationship, with a majority of members being residents of Kansas City, Missouri, consistent with the residency requirements established in Section 2-721.1 of the Code of Ordinances.
- (5) *Emeritus City relationship* means a relationship that has previously qualified as a Sister City relationship but which City Council has deemed no longer maintains the degree of active relations required for a Sister City relationship.

(b) *Administration and Representation.*

- (1) Sister City, Friendship City and Emeritus City relationships shall be administered through SCAKC, which serves as the official representative of Kansas City in these international partnerships.
- (2) SCAKC shall prioritize participation by Kansas City, Missouri, residents in Sister City and Friendship City activities, exchanges, and delegations to ensure authentic representation of the City.
- (3) SCAKC shall operate in accordance with this Code and any legislation enacted by City Council that is related to Sister City or Friendship City relationships.

(c) *Proposals for New Relationships.* Prior to any proposed new Sister City or Friendship City designation, SCAKC shall present to City Council a proposal including:

- (1) Rationale aligned with Kansas City's strategic priorities;
- (2) Assessment of potential benefits in cultural exchange, economic development, and civic engagement;

- (3) Demonstrated capacity and commitment from the proposed partner city, including representation by residents of Kansas City, Missouri;
- (4) Plan for sustainable engagement and resource allocation;
- (5) Evidence of community support and committed long-term leadership in Kansas City;
- (6) Absence of other Kansas City Sister Cities or Friendship Cities nearby to new proposed city.

(d) *Limitation on Future Designations.*

- (1) To ensure meaningful and sustainable partnerships, effective after the initial evaluation period described in Section 3 of Ordinance 260072, the City shall limit Sister City relationships to one Sister City per country.
- (2) The limitation in Section 1(d)(1) applies to all new Sister City designations.
- (3) Friendship City relationships are also subject to the one-per-country limitation.

(e) *Strategic Priorities.* The City Council declares the following priorities for Sister City and Friendship City relationships:

- (1) Cultural Exchange and Tourism: Fostering mutual understanding through arts, music, education, and cultural exchange to attract visitors;
- (2) Economic Development: Promoting trade, business partnerships, and investment opportunities;
- (3) Civic Engagement: Providing opportunities for Kansas City residents to develop global perspectives;
- (4) Diplomatic Relations: Consular relationship strengthening, government cooperation, elevating Kansas City's standing with foreign governments;
- (5) Innovation: Learning from international partners about innovative approaches to urban challenges.

(f) *Relationship Review and Accountability.*

- (1) City Council may request special reports from SCAKC at any time regarding specific relationships or activities.

- (2) Sister City or Friendship City relationships that no longer maintain the degree of active relations required for a Sister City relationship shall be reported to City Council with recommendations for revitalization or placement in Emeritus status.
- (3) City Council reserves the right to terminate, transition to Friendship City status, or place in Emeritus status any Sister City or Friendship City relationship.

(g) *Coordination with Major Events.* In preparation for major international events hosted by Kansas City, SCAKC shall:

- (1) Coordinate with the City to leverage Sister City and Friendship City relationships;
- (2) Develop cultural programming that showcases Kansas City's international partnerships;
- (3) Report to City Council on planned Sister City and Friendship City activities related to major events in advance.

(h) *Reporting Requirements.* SCAKC shall submit a comprehensive annual report on Sister City and Friendship City relationships to City Council no later than January 31 of each year. The report shall include:

- (1) Economic development: Trade missions, business partnerships, investment facilitation;
- (2) Cultural programming: Arts and music programs, educational and student exchange programs, and artistic and cultural initiatives with each Sister City and Friendship City;
- (3) City branding: Tourism promotion, international reputation enhancement, and major event coordination;
- (4) Diplomatic relations: Summary of engagement with consular officials that develop and foster official relationships;
- (5) Operations:
  - a. Number of Kansas City, Missouri residents who participated in Sister City or Friendship City activities;
  - b. Financial overview including funding sources and expenditures by relationship;
  - c. Status of each Sister City Committee including membership by residents of Kansas City, Missouri, participation levels for Kansas Citians, and activity;

d. Plans and goals for the upcoming year.

Section 2. All Sister City and Friendship City relationships that are active as of the effective date of this ordinance are hereby formally ratified, approved, and recognized as compliant with their respective definitions in Section 2-12.

Section 3. An annual evaluation process shall be established from the effective date of this ordinance during which:

- (A) SCAKC shall work with each Sister City Committee to develop plans and activities consistent with the goals outlined in subsection (e) of Section 2-12;
- (B) Each existing relationship shall be evaluated based on the criteria and activities reported in first the annual report due January 31, 2027, and annually thereafter, with each report covering the previous calendar year;
- (C) Following submission of each annual report, Sister Cities not meeting the strategic priority and reporting requirements pursuant to Section 2-12 shall shift from Sister City to Emeritus City status, and the affected Sister City Committee shall be notified of the status change by the City;
- (D) SCAKC shall review annually Sister Cities and Friendship Cities and recommend to City Council status adjustments, as appropriate, for relationships not in compliance with Section 2-12.

Approved as to form:



Bret Kassen  
Associate City Attorney



Authenticated as Passed

  
Quinton L. Sanders, Mayor  
Marilyn Sanders, City Clerk

FEB 12 2026  
Date Passed