

Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission

Affiliating with a New Sister City

Purpose

The purpose of a sister city is to promote understanding and foster relationships among individuals, communities, and cities of the world through cultural, economic, educational and humanitarian activities.

The Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission seeks a reasoned and systematic approach to establish sister city partnerships between Charlottesville, Virginia and cities in other parts of the world.

Therefore the Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission adopts these criteria and procedures for selecting and affiliating with a new Sister City.

Criteria

Charlottesville can have a Sister City relationship with another city for various reasons including, but not limited to historical, governmental, educational, or humanitarian. The ideal Sister City relationship is based on two cities having similarities on which activities and exchanges can be built. The goal of the Questions for Consideration, pages 5 to 7, is to help review these similarities and the key criteria for selecting a future sister city.

The key criteria for selection include:

- Citizens in both cities demonstrating an interest in affiliating
- Governments of both cities demonstrating an interest in affiliating
- An advocate group interested in supporting the relationship between the two cities
- The ability of citizens of both cities to communicate with each other
- The ability of citizens of both cities to travel to the other respective city
- Capability that activities between the two cities can be developed in numerous areas such as cultural, educational, medical, governmental, economic, and humanitarian.
- Evidence that the relationship would be sustainable overtime.

Procedure for Affiliating with a Sister City

Overview

Affiliation with a new Sister City may be established by using the following procedure in four phases A) Initiating a Request, B) Commission's Response, C) Council's Response, and d) Official Affiliation.

A. Initiating a Request

- 1) An individual, group, organization or government body, hereinafter referred to as the *Advocate Group*, establishes contacts within the proposed sister city to determine interest in a sister city relationship. A visit, at the sole expense of the *Advocate Group* to the proposed city is optimal, but not required.
- 2) The *Advocate Group* researches the proposed new city and submits a written proposal to the Commission addressing all issues identified in *Questions for Selecting a Sister City*
- 3) The Commission reviews the proposal. If accepted, the *Advocate Group* shall make a presentation to the Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission. The presentation must demonstrate:
 - a. How the proposed city meets the key criteria for selection
 - b. Sufficient volunteers willing to take responsibility for establishing a relationship (i.e. a list of individuals, local organizations and institutions that support the partnership)
 - c. The Advocate Group's willingness to fund-raise for the maintenance of the partnership
 - d. Sufficient proof of the long term commitment of the Advocate group to maintain active exchanges and activity in the partnership (i.e. ?)

B. Charlottesville Sister Cities Commission Response

- 1) The Commission contacts Sister Cities International to inquire if there are any impediments to "Sistering" with the proposed city. The advocate group shall perform an outline internet search to gather more detailed information about the proposed city, including direct contact with the US Department of State and the Embassy or Consulate of the proposed Sister City. This information is then presented to the Commission. If another U.S. has a sister city relationship with the proposed city, the Commission will need to determine if the existing U.S. city is willing to enter into a cooperative agreement with Charlottesville to share the same international partner.
- 2) The Commission shall solicit from the public its testimony about the proposed "Sistering" by offering a public comment opportunity at a meeting before voting. After public comments have been received, if any, the Commission shall deliberate, and vote for, or against, pursuing the city recommend by the *Advocate Group*.
 - a. If the vote is negative, a letter shall be written to the *Advocate Group* explaining why the intended relationship was not approved and what, if anything, might be proved to obtain approval of the relationship.

b. If the vote is affirmative, the commission reports in writing its recommendation to pursue the new city to Charlottesville City Council. The City Manager is asked to send an official information packet to the Mayor of the proposed city, along with a letter asking for the establishment of a “Friendship City” relationship in which the cities develop a relationship to last at least 3 years. During this trial period the cities get to know each other and determine if they want to enter into the long term Sister Cities relationship.

3) If the response from the Mayor of the proposed city is positive, the commission **votes** to approve the “Friendship City” relationship and appoints a Chair and New City Committee charged with developing and managing the new “Friendship City” relationship.

4) The New City Committee recruits grass roots volunteers with broad community representation and gathers letters of support from local organizations, businesses and institutions.

5) There shall be at least one exploratory visit between cities; ideally, the delegations should include at least one elected official.

6) Not less than three years from the date the commission approved a “Friendship Relationship”, the New City Committee can make a formal presentation to the Commission recommending the establishment of a new “Sister City Relationship” and requesting that the Commission seek approval from Charlottesville City Council to “sister”.

a. The presentation must include:

1. an overview of the relationship during the initial period as “Friendship Cities”,
2. demonstration of sufficient volunteers willing to take responsibility for managing the relationship and assisting in fundraising,
3. letters of support from local organizations, businesses and institutions,
4. a proposal for exchanges/programs/activities to be executed over the next two years by the City Committee including a budget for these activities.

b. If the proposal is approved by the Commission, the Commission will go before City Council with a presentation asking permission to enter into a formal “Sister City” relationship.

c. If the Commission does not approve the request to “sister” then they must vote to either continue as “Friendship Cities” or end the relationship.

C. Charlottesville City Council Response

Charlottesville Council votes to approve or reject the recommendation from the Commission to enter into a new Sister City relationship.

- a) If the decision is positive, Charlottesville City Council adopts a Resolution declaring their intent to “sister” with the proposed city and the counterpart governing body of the new sister city also adopts a similar resolution of intent.
- b) If the decision is negative, the Commission must **vote** to either continue or end the “Friendship City” relationship.

D. Official Affiliation / Signing Ceremony

1) During an official visit (in either city), the Mayor or top elected official available from each city, signs a Sister City Agreement. It is strongly encouraged that there be reciprocal visits by official delegations, including at least one elected official from each City within one year of the signing of the Sister City Agreement.

2) All official documents should be written in English and in the language of the counterpart community. Both communities should receive a signed set of the official documents in both languages for their records.

3) One copy of all official letters and resolutions should be sent to Sister Cities International, the U.S. Embassy in the country of the sister city and the partner country’s embassy in the U.S.

Questions for Selecting a Sister City

Any *Advocate Group* requesting the Sister City Commission to consider a new sister city must provide a written proposal that addresses the following questions:

A. General Factors

1. Does Charlottesville already have a sister city in the proposed city's country?
2. Does the proposed city have other sister cities, including a U.S. city partner? (It is preferred that the proposed city not have another sister city relationship in the U.S. However, if the proposed city already has an official sister city affiliation with another U.S. city, this should not be an impediment to pursuing a partnership, as long as all parties agree.)
3. What is the demography and ethnic diversity of the proposed sister city?
4. What is the geography and environment in the proposed sister city? (e.g. water, parks, rivers, bays, harbors, etc).
5. Does the proposed city have an established contact person within its governmental structure or an established liaison group to work with Charlottesville? If so, please give contact information (name, address, phone, and email).
6. If the proposed sister city has sister city relationships with other cities, how successful are these relationships?
7. Are there Charlottesville residents who are nationals from the country being considered?
8. Are there Charlottesville residents who speak the language of the proposed city/country, available for translating and interpreting?
9. Identify various types of exchanges that could be executed with the city/citizens.

B. Cultural, Civic and Educational Factors

1. What are the cultural institutions of the proposed city? (e.g. art galleries, museums, theaters, symphony, musical groups, dance studios, libraries, etc.)?
2. Does the proposed city have local civic organizations (e.g. Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis, Scouts, ethnic clubs, etc.)?
3. Does the proposed city have a formal communication system (e.g. newspapers, TV and radio stations, etc.)?
4. Does the proposed city have amateur and professional sports – youth and adult (e.g. soccer, baseball, hockey, basketball, tennis, water sports, golf, lacrosse, etc.)?
5. Does the proposed city have educational institutions (e.g. pre-school, elementary, secondary, post-secondary, technical, medical schools, law schools, etc.)?
6. Does the proposed city have hospitals, health facilities, and social services?
7. Is the language of the proposed city taught in Charlottesville public schools, local private schools, local language clubs, private language schools, and/or universities?
8. Is English taught in their educational system?
9. What is the history of the proposed sister city? Are there any ties to the U.S. and/or Charlottesville?
10. Who/What are some of the major historical individuals or events that have occurred in the proposed City?

C. Economic and Commercial Factors

1. Identify the key industries (e.g. shipping, banking, military, tourism, medical research, biotechnology, manufacturing, environmental conservation).
2. Describe the past, current and projected economic conditions, initiatives, and development opportunities.
3. What is the trade and investment climate?
4. Does the proposed city have a Chamber of Commerce?
5. Does the proposed city have an airport or airline service?
6. Does the proposed city have practical training opportunities (e.g. work force training, hotel management, information technology, culinary institutes)?
7. Identify the tourism opportunities --numbers of tourists annually, hotels, festivals, attractions.

D. Political and Governmental Factors

1. Is there a diplomatic presence in the U.S. and in the country under consideration?
2. What are the protocol resources (e.g. Embassies, Consulates)?
3. Does the U.S. have Visa regulations on the proposed county? What is the ease of securing visas?
4. Describe the political climate of the proposed Sister City.
5. What is the governmental structure of the proposed City?