



COUNCIL REPORT

DATE: June 23, 2026

CATEGORY: Consent

DEPT.: City Manager's Office

TITLE: **Approving Travel and Other Expenses to Attend the 50th Anniversary Commemorative Ceremony of the Sister City Relationship per Council Policy A-14**

RECOMMENDATION

Approve travel for Mayor Ramos and Councilmember Kamei to represent the City at the 50th anniversary commemorative ceremony of the Sister City relationship between Mountain View and Iwata, Japan, and delegate the City Manager or designee to authorize funding of up to \$25,000 for travel, ceremonial gifts, and other expenses per Council Policy A-14.

BACKGROUND

The City of Mountain View is a member of Sister Cities International (SCI), which, since its inception in 1956, has fostered global relationships through cultural, educational, informational, and trade exchanges. The primary vehicle for fostering these relationships is through Sister Cities' exchanges between cities, counties, or states.

In 1974, the Cities of Iwata, Japan, and Mountain View entered a Sister Cities relationship when officials from Iwata contacted the then-Mayor of Mountain View about starting a Sister City relationship. After receiving a delegation from Iwata, the Mayor reciprocated and visited Iwata to determine if the two cities were compatible. The two cities were deemed a match, and a Sister City relationship was formalized.

Following the establishment of the Iwata sister city relationship in 1974, the Sister City Affiliation of Mountain View (Affiliation) was formed in 1976 as an independent nonprofit governed by a board of directors whose primary goal is to promote international understanding and acceptance, and to facilitate a variety of events and programs throughout the year, including a student exchange program. Each year, five to six students from Mountain View can apply to participate in the Mountain View Sister Cities Student Exchange (MVSC) along with five to six students from Iwata. The exchange takes place from July to August, and families of students who travel to Japan to participate in the exchange program are obligated to host Iwata students.

Since the formation of the Sister City Relationship with Iwata, Japan, in 1974, the Mountain View City Council has adopted resolutions commemorating the relationship between the two cities on

its 20th anniversary in 1995, its 25th anniversary in 1999, and its 30th anniversary in 2006. Each resolution highlighted the benefits of the Sister City relationship, cultural exchange, and the annual student exchange facilitated by the Sister City Affiliation of Mountain View.

On May 12, 2026, the Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Councilmembers received a formal invitation from the Mayor of Iwata City to attend the 50th anniversary commemorative ceremony of the Sister City relationship, to be held in Iwata on October 17, 2026 (Attachment 1).

ANALYSIS

In 1991, the City Council adopted Council Policy A-14, Sister City Activities, to govern the City's responsibilities regarding sister city activities. Among other things, the Policy states, "The City supports the sister city concept and its goal of strengthening global understanding between the peoples of the United States and other nations." In addition, the Policy states:

7. City funds shall be expended only for the following sister city-related expenses:
 - c. City gifts, which will be presented to sister city representatives (student, business or government) during their visit to the City of Mountain View, or presented by representatives of Mountain View during their trips to sister cities.
 - d. Any other expenses approved by the City Manager or his/her designee.

Given that Policy A-14 was first adopted over 35 years ago, staff anticipate updating the Policy to better reflect all the elements associated with maintaining this important program.

FISCAL IMPACT

The estimated fiscal impact of the recommended action is up to \$25,000 for travel expenses, ceremonial gifts, and related costs associated with the City's participation in the 50th anniversary commemorative ceremony celebrating the Sister City relationship between Mountain View and Iwata, Japan. Funding will first be provided from available and unused City Council travel budget appropriations. If additional funding is required, staff will identify and return with a recommended funding source through a future budget action, if necessary.

LEVINE ACT

California Government Code Section 84308 (also known as the Levine Act) prohibits city officials from participating in any proceeding involving a "license, permit, or other entitlement for use" if the official has received a campaign contribution exceeding \$500 from a party, participant, or agent of a party or participant within the last 12 months. The Levine Act is intended to prevent

financial influence on decisions that affect specific, identifiable persons or participants. For more information see the Fair Political Practices Commission website: www.fppc.ca.gov/learn/pay-to-play-limits-and-prohibitions.html

Please see below for information about whether the recommended action for this agenda item is subject to or exempt from the Levine Act.

EXEMPT FROM THE LEVINE ACT

General policy and legislative actions

ALTERNATIVES

Do not approve the recommendation.

PUBLIC NOTICING

Agenda posting.

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- Attachments:
1. Iwata Sister City 50th Anniversary Invitation
 2. City Council Policy A14 Sister City Activities