



City of Tacoma

City Council Action Memorandum

TO: Hyun Kim, Interim City Manager
FROM: Mayor Victoria Woodards and Chief Policy Analyst Bucoda Warren
COPY: City Council and City Clerk
SUBJECT: A resolution designating Kochi, India as a Friendship City of the City of Tacoma, requiring a review of the relationship for possible Sister City designation or dissolution within five years. – Requested for December 9, 2025
DATE: November 19, 2025

SUMMARY AND PURPOSE:

A resolution designating Kochi, India as a Friendship City of the City of Tacoma, requiring a review of the relationship for possible Sister City designation or dissolution within five years.

COUNCIL SPONSORS:

Mayor Victoria Woodards

BACKGROUND:

In order to be considered for a Friendship or Sister City designation, a committee must be formed with members from both communities and a relationship must first be established. Once a relationship has been established and has started to build momentum, the committee can apply to the Sister Cities Council for formal consideration of a relationship. Once approved by the Sister Cities Council the application is then forwarded to the Mayor's Office who reviews the materials for completeness and submits the recommendation to the City Council for consideration. A friendship City designation is typically meant as a stepping stone to a formal Sister City relationship and a period of engagement and review of the fit of the relationship.

A Sister City designation between Tacoma and Kochi is grounded in shared strengths, complementary priorities, and the potential for meaningful long-term collaboration. Both are diverse coastal cities with robust port operations, growing creative economies, and strong commitments to sustainability and community-driven development. Establishing this relationship would expand Tacoma's global engagement, help the Sister Cities Council deepen its regional and international networks, and create new pathways for cultural, educational, and economic exchange.

For the City of Tacoma and its community partners, this relationship offers opportunities to learn from Kochi's innovations in creative economy, smart-city planning, climate resilience, tourism development, and multicultural arts programming. Likewise, Kochi benefits from Tacoma's leadership in port modernization, environmental stewardship, and community-based innovation. Local organizations, including schools, universities, arts groups, and business associations, can gain access to new partnerships, joint projects, and exchange opportunities that broaden global awareness and strengthen international cooperation.

Mutual areas of strength and interest include maritime industries, climate adaptation, clean energy, cultural festivals, creative arts, entrepreneurship, youth development, and equitable urban planning. The designation would serve as a catalyst for community connection, economic growth, and shared learning, enhancing both cities' ability to foster global citizenship and sustainable progress. Syed K Jamal and Clare Petrich visited Kochi in November of 2024 and signed an MoU with the City of Kochi through its Mayor and built a strong foundation for future partnerships. An agreement following this resolution will be signed by the Mayor endorsing the relationship.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/ CUSTOMER RESEARCH:

The Kochi Sister City Committee has submitted their application and have been approved by the Tacoma Sister Cities Council. Following this approval the application has been submitted to the City Council for consideration and formal adoption of Friendship City Relationship. The outreach by the Sister City committee as a part of their application includes regular communications, delegation visits, and formal formation of a committee of members from both Tacoma and Kochi that will maintain and build the Friendship City relationship. Their application includes further details on interests for exchange and relationship building.

Tacoma-Kochi Committee has also already hosted Tacoma's first Festival of Light to bring the Tacoma community together with cultural events, kids' activities, a community fashion show, and many educational and cultural workshops. This has already created some engagement with the public around cultural exchanges and people to people relationships.

2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Equity and Accessibility:

Sister City relationships are established by Tacoma Sister Cities and supported by residents interested in maintaining the relationship. Often these are residents who may have come from the Sister City and want to establish a connection for those living in Tacoma with their home city and/or Country. These relationships and people to people exchanges create opportunities for cultural exchange and learning about other cultures for all residents of Tacoma through public events and volunteer opportunities.

Civic Engagement: *Equity Index Score: Moderate Opportunity*

Increase the number of residents who participate civically through volunteering and voting.

Explain how your legislation will affect the selected indicator(s).

Expanding people to people relationships through Sister Cities provides additional opportunities for the public to get involved and support cultural exchanges, learning, and engagement with City programs.

ALTERNATIVES:

Alternative(s)	Positive Impact(s)	Negative Impact(s)
1.Do not adopt		Kochi will not receive a formal designation as our Friendship City

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW UP:

The Mayor's Office continues to manage the Sister City program and support the exchanges with all Sister Cities. By designating Split as a Sister City staff will add this relationship to the working portfolio of the program. The Sister Cities Council and/or committee may also be invited to present to a Council committee or City Council in the future to update them on standing relationships.

STAFF/SPONSOR RECOMMENDATION:

We recommend adoption of this resolution to designate Kochi, India as a Friendship City of the City of Tacoma.



FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no direct fiscal impact to adopting this resolution, however there may be future travel and/or operational costs associated with events and/or delegation visits which would be managed under the Mayor and Council budget.

What Funding is being used to support the expense?

EXISTING DEPARTMENT BUDGET FOR MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL, 598910.

Are the expenditures and revenues planned and budgeted in this biennium's current budget?

YES

Program participation and coordination is provided by existing Mayor's Office staff with support from Government Relations.

Are there financial costs or other impacts of not implementing the legislation?

No

Will the legislation have an ongoing/recurring fiscal impact?

No

WHILE THERE IS NO DIRECT FISCAL IMPACT RECURRING FROM THIS RESOLUTION THERE MAY BE FUTURE FINANCIAL IMPACTS TO TRAVEL AND HOSTING DELEGATIONS WHICH ARE A PART OF THE EXISTING BUDGET.

Will the legislation change the City's FTE/personnel counts?

No

Program is managed under current FTEs

Attachments:

- Kochi Friendship City application
- Kochi-Tacoma MOU