



## TACOMA SISTER CITIES COUNCIL

### FRIENDSHIP/SISTER CITIES PROGRAM - APPLICATION FOR DESIGNATION

To be completed by the requesting organization:

1. **Name and Country of the proposed Sister City and partnering organization:** Kochi in India for Tacoma Sister Cities

2. **Today's date:** 11/10/25

3. ***Name of person requesting relationship:***

Title: Syed K Jamal, Founder and Board Member

Affiliation: Branta LLC (Founder) and the World Affairs Council of Tacoma (Board Member)

Address: 1525 S Sunset Dr Tacoma WA 98465

Email: syed@gobranta.com

Phone: 253 307 5624

4. ***Rationale:***

*Please explain the rationale and focus of the requested Sister Cities Designation. Describe why a Sister City relationship would be beneficial to the Sister Cities Council, the City of Tacoma and your local community, organization and city. Please outline the areas of mutual strength and interest for each of the participants. Limit this section to four pages. Items to include:*

- *Names, title and affiliations of those who will be involved from both cities.*

#### **FROM TACOMA:**

**Committee Members: Syed K Jamal (Chair, 253 307 5624)**

**Ron Smith (Member/Treasurer, 253 678 6750)**

**Rita Chaudhari (Member, 253 273 6738),**

**Travis Pope (Member, 253 970 9250)**

**Drena (Member, 253 320 1456),**

**Maricres Marmar (Member, 253 366 4070)**

**Ria Johnson (Member, 253 376 7828)**

#### **FROM KOCHI, INDIA**

**Mayor, Mr Kumar and his associates including Mr. Chedambath, Ms Rochni, Ms. Chinnu)**

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.

Tacoma-Kochi Committee has 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. With grants from Tacoma Creates and Graduate Tacoma, and support from several sponsors such as Parks Tacoma and Pierce Transit, we have already produced an outcome that has made a huge community impact through cross cultural programming and community development.

- ***Areas of mutual interest upon which the relationship will focus:***

The relationship between Tacoma and Kochi can focus on several areas of mutual interest that benefit both communities. Collaboration in port management and maritime industries can strengthen trade, innovation, and sustainability practices. Cultural and educational exchanges offer opportunities for students and artists to deepen global understanding. Both cities can share strategies on climate resilience, waterfront development, and green infrastructure. Partnerships in technology, tourism, and small-business development can further stimulate economic growth. By building on these shared priorities, Tacoma and Kochi can develop a dynamic, long-term relationship that supports learning, cultural connection, and sustainable progress for both cities.

- **Opportunities for new activities and potential outcomes.**

New activities between Tacoma and Kochi could include joint creative economy projects including films, port-technology pilot projects, climate-resilience workshops, student and teacher exchanges, culinary and cultural festivals, and collaborative tourism campaigns. Entrepreneurship programs, particularly in maritime innovation, clean energy, and digital services, could foster shared economic growth. Potential outcomes include creative coproductions, stronger trade relationships, improved port efficiency, expanded cultural awareness, and increased tourism. Educational partnerships may produce globally

skilled students, while environmental cooperation could lead to shared best practices in coastal protection and sustainable development. Overall, these activities can create a lasting, mutually beneficial partnership that enhances economic vitality, cultural understanding, and community resilience.

- ***Benefits and measurable results that the Sister Cities Council and the partnering organization expect as a result of the establishment of such a relationship.***

The Sister Cities Council and the partnering organizations can expect several benefits and measurable results from establishing a Tacoma–Kochi relationship. Benefits include strengthened international cooperation, expanded cultural understanding, and enhanced economic and educational opportunities. Measurable results may include the number of coproductions and exchange programs launched, participating students or delegations, joint environmental or port-related projects completed, and increases in tourism or business connections. Additional metrics could involve documented best-practice sharing, co-hosted cultural events, grants secured, and community participation levels. Over time, these outcomes demonstrate tangible progress in global awareness, economic development, and long-term community engagement for both cities. Tacoma-Kochi Committee is making plans on those outcomes through community gatherings, public reading and screening sessions.

## **5. Resources:**

*Please address monetary and in-kind resources that may be necessary to conduct the activities of this relationship, how they are to be obtained, and from whom. If none, state "no funding required".*

Monetary and in-kind resources needed to support the Tacoma–Kochi relationship may include funding for travel, cultural events, educational exchanges, port-related collaborations, and administrative coordination. These resources can be obtained through a combination of city allocations, grants from international exchange organizations, corporate sponsorships—especially from maritime, technology, and tourism sectors—and contributions from local nonprofits and community groups. In-kind support may include donated meeting spaces, volunteer time, homestay accommodations for exchange participants, and professional expertise from universities, port authorities, and business associations. Together, these financial and in-kind contributions help ensure the partnership’s activities are sustainable, accessible, and community-supported.

## **6. Profile of the proposed friendship city and/or organization:**

Kochi—often called the “Queen of the Arabian Sea”—is a major port city on India’s southwest coast and a cultural and economic hub of the state of Kerala. Known for its long maritime history, Kochi has been shaped by centuries of global trade with Arab, Chinese, Portuguese, Dutch, and British merchants. This rich heritage makes it a natural partner for Tacoma, another diverse port city with strong international ties.

Kochi's economy centers on shipping, logistics, fisheries, information technology, tourism, and a fast-growing startup ecosystem. The Cochin Port, one of India's largest, supports robust trade and maritime innovation. The city is also home to the Kochi Metro, the Kochi Smart City project, and several universities and research institutions, reflecting its commitment to sustainable urban development and technological progress.

Culturally, Kochi is renowned for its vibrant arts community, including the Kochi-Muziris Biennale—one of Asia's most important contemporary art festivals. Historic neighborhoods such as Fort Kochi showcase unique architecture, multicultural heritage, and diverse culinary traditions. The city also emphasizes environmental stewardship through backwater conservation, mangrove restoration, and climate-resilience initiatives.

As a sister city, Kochi offers Tacoma opportunities for collaboration in port management, clean energy, arts and culture, tourism promotion, entrepreneurship, and education. Both cities share common priorities in sustainability, global engagement, and community-driven innovation, making Kochi a strong and complementary partner for Tacoma's international outreach.

## **7. Additional Information**

*Please add any additional information about this proposed relationship and/or the involved city and organization you wish to share and submit this form electronically to the Mayor's Office and the chair of the Sister Cities Council of Tacoma ([President@TacomaSisterCities.org](mailto:President@TacomaSisterCities.org))*

Additional aspects of the proposed Tacoma–Kochi (Kerala, India) sister-city relationship highlight its strong long-term potential. Both cities are coastal, globally connected, and culturally diverse, offering rich opportunities for collaboration across multiple sectors. The partnership can serve as a platform for expanding Tacoma's presence in South Asia and helping Kochi build ties in the Pacific Northwest, strengthening trade, cultural diplomacy, and people-to-people connections.

This relationship also supports youth engagement through collaborative creative productions, internships, virtual exchanges, and joint classroom projects. Shared interests in climate adaptation, resilient waterfronts, and sustainable urban development provide fertile ground for meaningful cooperation. With strong support from civic organizations, business partners, and educational institutions, this sister-city relationship can create lasting, community-centered impact for both Tacoma and Kochi.

