

Compatibility of Wadi Foqun – Alameda Sister City

The Sister Cities initiative was founded by President Eisenhower in 1956, with the goal of championing peace and prosperity through citizen diplomacy.

Compatibility: One or more similarities with Alameda, which may include, but are not limited to: population size, geography, culture, industries, academic institutions, historic or ancestral connections, peace efforts or other shared goals.

Values of Peace, Justice, Equality, Freedom, and Inclusion

- Wadi Foqun and Alameda both embrace these compatible values as aspirational for their respective communities. Both communities live in different contexts, however, and these differences will provide great opportunity for mutual learning and growth

Family Oriented Communities with Strong Support for Children & Youth

- Wadi Foqun and Alameda both value family life and have strong emphasis on the development of children & youth through education, recreation, and special programs
- ***Our hope is for the initial activity to center on exchange of youth soccer teams.***
- Both communities also have pride in multi-generational family heritages which includes extended families and community networks.

Spiritual Traditions & Customs

- Wadi Foqun and Alameda both share rich spiritual traditions and customs. While Wadi Foqun is a primarily Muslim community - this is compatible with the recently renovated Islamic Center of Alameda. Both communities are currently observing the sacred season of Ramadan with fasting, community meals to break the fast (iftar), and gift giving. Alameda is a multi-religious community, and the Buena Vista United Methodist Church has been a long time friend of Wadi Foqun and celebrates this interfaith relationship.
- Theologian Paul Tillich once observed that “religion is the impulse for culture, and the culture is the form of religion.” Sharing of spiritual traditions overlaps and intersects with culture in ways that can educate and inform one another.

Farm History & Culture

- Alameda has a history of farming in what is now known as Bay Farm Island. The desire for fresh produce is provided with “Farmer’s Markets” held twice a week in the West End of Alameda. Urban Farming and access to healthy produce is also

Submitted by Michael Yoshie
Re: S-J 3/18/25

embodied with the Alameda Point Collaborative “Farm2Market” program. Wadi Foquin is a farming village with every family owning their own farm land, some for produce markets in Bethlehem, and many for their own consumption in their own form of “farm to table” cuisine now popular in American culture. Wadi Foquin and Palestine in general are known for their high quality olive oil and harvesting of olive trees.

Historic Relationship to the Land and Environmental Practices

- In its renaming of Jackson Park to Chochenyo Park on Encinal Avenue, the City of Alameda has acknowledged the original indigenous people who populate what is now known as Alameda. Indigenous practices of being in relationship with the land are highlighted at the park and are part of a growing consciousness of environmental awareness in the era of climate change.
- Wadi Foquin residents are indigenous to their land, and similar to Native Americans have a special relationship to the land and ways to protect the natural environment and ecological systems.

Small Communities in Transition Near Larger Municipalities

- Both Alameda and Wadi Foquin are relatively small insulated communities living with unique identities in a larger municipal region.
- Alameda is an island community often proud of its unique identity amidst a Bay Area often identified with internationally known San Francisco.
- Wadi Foquin is a small village located in the Bethlehem District, also near Jerusalem, which are both internationally recognized cities.
- Both communities are in transition with relationships with military as institutions and industries. Alameda is the former home of the Alameda Naval Station which closed in 1996. The military is part of Alameda’s history, but its identity is influenced development of the former Naval Base. Wadi Foquin currently exists under Israeli military occupation but envisions a future free from the restrictions of the military.

Hi my name is Gabriel and I'm an Alameda resident and see myself staying so for the foreseeable future. It's uncontroversial to say America struggles with racism. The duty of the sister city initiative is to create bridges between communities and cultures that help dissolve the in vs out group mentality that underpins the fear at the heart of racist rhetoric.

We are in a moment where in our own communities racism towards Arabs and specifically Palestinians continues to be fostered and encouraged by groups whose interests align with the politics of an apartheid state. As a Lebanese it has been so important and grounding to have people in our community here who I don't personally know express concern for my family and community in Lebanon and have curiosity for what information I can give them access to regarding them. But it should not be the burden of individuals to be a source of information for a community. We need projects like sister cities for this.

We as Alamedans should be interested in the development and growth of our community alongside others. Differences across all aspects of a community are opportunities for understanding and development. Wadi Foquin has a community wanting and waiting to be connected with ours. We are committed to humanity, and we refuse to have the humanity of those in Wadi Foquin questioned or stripped from them. To be dismissed as a community not suited to be connected to ours. I support the Wadi Foquin sister city proposal.

Submitted by Gabriel
Re: S-J 3/18/25