

Alameda City Council
2263 Santa Clara Avenue
Alameda, California 94501

14 March 2017

Honorable Members of the Alameda City Council,

On behalf of Sister Cities International, the national association for sister city partnerships, I am writing to express our support for the initiative to form a sister city relationship between Alameda and Wadi Foquin in the Palestinian Territories. While the decision to formalize a sister city relationship is always at the discretion of the community and the mayor, we see no reason why this partnership should not be pursued.

Given Sister Cities International's commitment to building peace through people-to-people relationships, this is a particularly important region for us, and we have worked both independently as well as with the U.S. Department of State on initiatives in the region. In fact, we've just submitted an application to the Stevens Initiative (a foundation supporting virtual exchanges in the Muslim World) in support of projects by two of our members with Palestinian partnerships. While Palestinian sister cities are limited in number, they are highly motivated and often will communicate and work with one another. I've also been fortunate enough to travel to Israel and the West Bank as part of a delegation from Gainesville, Florida (sister cities with Kfar Saba, Israel and Qalqilya in the West Bank) and during my time in the West Bank I was treated with the utmost hospitality and saw people very eager to expand people-to-people contact with U.S. citizens.

Sister Cities International is a nonprofit citizen diplomacy network that creates and strengthens partnerships between U.S. and International communities. We represent more than 500 communities with over 2,000 cities in 145 countries all over the world, and strive to build global cooperation at the municipal level, promote cultural understanding and stimulate economic development. We are a Traditional Public-Private Partner of the U.S. Department of State and continually work with Embassies in the U.S. and abroad to help establish and support sister city relationships. For more information on sister city programs you can visit our website at www.sistercities.org.

Please know that should you decide to pursue this partnership you will have the full support of Sister Cities International, and we will continue to support you with our expertise and connections to the best of our ability. Feel free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns, and regardless of your decision we would like to thank you for your support of the sister cities movement and your commitment to making Alameda a leader in citizen diplomacy.

Regards,



Adam Kaplan
Vice President
Sister Cities International
202-347-8634
akaplan@sistercities.org