

NO: R133

COUNCIL DATE: July 8, 2024

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council** DATE: **July 3, 2024**

FROM: **General Manager, Social Infrastructure & Community Investments** FILE: **0290-01**
General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Culture

SUBJECT: **Union of BC Municipalities 2024 Community Excellence Awards**

RECOMMENDATION

The Social Infrastructure & Community Investments Department and the Parks, Recreation & Culture Department recommend that Council:

1. Receive this report for information;
2. Endorse the two applications submitted to the Union of BC Municipalities (“UBCM”) Community Excellence Awards, as described in this report; and
3. Instruct the City Clerk to forward a copy of this resolution to the 2024 UBCM Community Excellence Awards in support of the City’s applications.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to obtain a Council resolution supporting the submissions of two initiatives for the 2024 UBCM Community Excellence Awards, which is a requirement for the application process.

BACKGROUND

Since 2004, the Community Excellence Awards have recognized and celebrated UBCM members who have implemented outstanding initiatives which can serve as “best practices” for others in providing good governance, delivering services for community benefit, ensuring responsible stewardship of public assets, and maintaining a sustainable framework. Reflecting these goals, the 2024 award categories are:

- **Excellence in Governance** – governance processes or policies that are outcomes-based and consensus oriented; support and encourage citizen participation in civic decision-making; are efficient, equitable and inclusive, open and transparent; and exemplify best practices in accountability, effectiveness, and long-term thinking.
- **Excellence in Service Delivery** – projects/programs that provide effective services in a proactive manner and demonstrate benefit to the community.

- **Excellence in Asset Management** – projects/programs that demonstrate a comprehensive system of asset management policies and practices, meeting and/or exceeding accepted best practices.
- **Excellence in Sustainability** – projects/programs that incorporate a long-term sustainability lens by considering cultural, social, economic and environmental issues in planning, policy and practice.

The City has had past success in the annual UBCM awards program, earning several Community Excellence awards. Since 2011, the City has been successful in receiving the following awards:

- 2023: Excellence in Service Delivery award for Surrey Anti-Gang Family Empowerment (“SAFE”) program.
- 2020: Excellence in Service Delivery award for Surrey Makes Personal Protective Equipment (“PPE”).
- 2016: Excellence in Leadership and Innovation award for the BioPod Initiative.
- 2015: Excellence in Action” award for the Street Light Copper Replacement program.
- 2015: Best Practice, Community Connections award for the MySurrey App.
- 2014: Best Practice, Operations award for the Erosion and Sediment Control Permit Online Reporting tool.
- 2013: Best Practice, Social Media award.
- 2012: Excellence in Partnerships award for the Kensington Prairie Community Centre.
- 2012: Best Practice, General award for the Safe and Active Schools Program.
- 2011: Overall Excellence award for local governments across BC.
- 2011: Best Practice, Website award for the surrey.ca website re-design.

DISCUSSION

For the 2024 Community Excellence Awards, the City has prepared the following applications:

Excellence in Governance – Economic Development Strategy

Recent projections for Surrey’s growth show that the city will become home to a million people within the next two decades. Rapid growth brings many benefits, but it also brings significant challenges in housing, labour, and infrastructure. To adapt and accelerate our development as a city and accommodate this growth, the City of Surrey created *Investing in Our Future: A Roadmap to Realizing the Opportunities of Tomorrow* as the 2024 Economic Strategy. The Strategy will guide Surrey’s economic development planning and investments over the next five years. Over the course of developing the Strategy, staff engaged with more than 1,300 individuals and 90 organizations. A Strategic Action Plan was developed as a result of these engagements and as part of the Strategy, with priorities and actions designed to adapt to changes in the world and leverage our assets to capitalize on emerging trends and create the jobs we need as the city grows.

The Strategy outlines four strategic priorities designed to:

1. Enhance investment attraction;
2. Optimize the use of our employment lands;
3. Develop a talented workforce; and
4. Support vibrant and distinct local business landscape.

Together, and with a strong action plan that ensures an array of tactics and activities, these priorities will allow Surrey to meet our present challenges and capitalize on our economic strengths.

Excellence in Service Delivery - Nature Interpretive Exhibit Space Renovation

The Surrey Nature Centre at Green Timbers Park provides children and adults a place to explore nature in Surrey. While most of our programs are held outdoors, the recently renovated fully accessible indoor nature interpretive space is an area where visitors can get up close and hands on with nature.

The renovation of this area was designed to encourage a deeper understanding of the local flora and fauna, strengthen visitors' relationship with Surrey's natural environment, and foster a sense of wonder. There is no entry fee, and our seasonally rotated exhibits have a variety of interactive components that are meant to answer the questions "What will I find in the park?", "Why should I care?", and "What can I do to help?".

Our interpretive space contains a family corner, which includes natural materials for hands-on play, an extensive library of nature-themed children's books, animal puppets and a theatre for imaginative play and nature artefacts to explore. In addition to the family corner we have a reading nook, an extensive library of local field guides and other nature-themed books, hands-on tabletop displays, and 20 shadow drawers containing more fragile items (such as bird nests). There is also an interactive whiteboard where staff update nature sightings from around the park.

Within our lobby are life-size cutouts of our site's most common birds-of-prey, a historic timeline of the Surrey Nature Centre and more hands-on artefacts for visitors to engage with. It is important to us that we offer a safe space for all ages to come and explore. Our goal is to create a sense of wonder and curiosity and to have people feel confident when out in nature.

Next Steps

Award applications are required to be accompanied by a Council resolution indicating support for submitting each project. If Council endorses the two submitted applications, staff will forward the Council resolution to UBCM.

Awards will be announced and presented at the 2024 UBCM convention in September 2024.

CONCLUSION

The City has prepared applications for two initiatives for 2024 UBCM Community Excellence Awards that meet the criteria of the awards program and are exemplary projects worthy of an award in their relevant category.

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