

NO: R054

COUNCIL DATE: March 14, 2011

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council** DATE: **March 3, 2011**

FROM: **Deputy City Manager** FILE: **0350-01**
General Manager, Parks, Recreation and
Culture
General Manager, Planning & Development

SUBJECT: **Civic Awards Program**

RECOMMENDATION

The Parks, Recreation and Culture Department recommend that Council:

1. Receive this report as information; and
2. approve the development of a City Awards Program that includes the following specific awards all as generally described in this report:
 - a. a “Social Planning Award”;
 - b. a “Civic Beautification Award”;
 - c. an “Environmental Sustainability Award”;
 - d. a “Clean Energy Award”;
 - e. an “Urban Design Award”; and
 - f. a process for the “Recognition of Community Achievement”.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to provide information about a proposed City of Surrey Awards Program (the “Program”) and to obtain Council approval to proceed with the development of the Program.

BACKGROUND

The City has been involved with a number of civic award and civic recognition programs to acknowledge community and citizen achievements. Currently, the City coordinates three formal awards as follows:

- *Civic Treasures Awards*, which recognize and celebrate Surrey’s highest achievers in the cultural (Arts & Heritage) sector;
- *Good Citizen Award*, which recognizes exceptional individual contributions and commitments to the City of Surrey; and

- *Youth Recognition Award*, which recognizes youth that have made positive contributions to their community and/or have demonstrated high personal achievements.

These awards support the City's goals related to encouraging citizen engagement, developing and maintaining a thriving cultural sector and supporting the healthy development of youth. In addition to these awards, the City recognizes the contributions of volunteers and community members through receptions and other City events.

Over the past year, staff has investigated additional opportunities to acknowledge the achievements, contributions and best practices of community groups and related to private development activities. Staff has completed a survey of award programs and related practices in other cities including Richmond, Vancouver, Calgary, New Westminster, Sault Ste. Marie, Kingston and San Francisco and of the Architectural Institute of British Columbia (AIBC). The information gathered through this survey was taken into consideration by a staff working group that developed the information and proposed program that is the subject of this report.

DISCUSSION

This report provides a summary of proposed recognition and award opportunities that are being recommended as part of a new City Awards Program. A framework is presented for this Program that will act to acknowledge outstanding citizen and group achievement in the fields of social planning, civic beautification and environmental sustainability and to recognize the efforts of businesses, groups, academic partners and individuals that make substantial contributions to building Surrey's clean energy sector. It also presents the proposed structure for a formal Urban Design Award to recognize best practices and outstanding achievements in land and building development.

It is expected that the awards within this Program would be developed to complement the existing Civic Treasures, Good Citizen and Youth Recognition Awards to form a broader more comprehensive program of formal civic recognition.

The following sections list the various proposed award categories and provide a description of each proposed award.

Social Planning Award:

Surrey's Sustainability Charter is based on the three pillars of sustainability – environmental, economic and socio-cultural. The activities undertaken by Council and staff to implement the recommendations of the Plan for the Social Well-Being of Surrey Residents demonstrate the City of Surrey's commitment to building a socially sustainable community. The Social Planning Award would be an annual award that would formally recognize and celebrate the contributions of community groups, businesses, and citizens in relation to the social sustainability of Surrey.

The Social Planning Award process will be overseen by the Social Planning Advisory Committee (SPAC). The award selection criteria and related processes will be developed by the SPAC, with the assistance of the Social Planner and other relevant staff. It is intended that this Award will not duplicate or compete with existing City and/or community-based awards programs.

The concept of a Social Planning Award was discussed by the SPAC at their September 23, 2010 meeting where members expressed general support for the idea, and indicated that they would be interested in developing the award program in the coming year, with the understanding that the inaugural presentation would be in the fall of 2011.

Civic Beautification Award:

The enhancement of the public realm is an important element in relation to the development of sustainable healthy communities. Beautiful public spaces create a sense of comfort and safety and can minimize negative social, economic and environmental impacts. The proposed Civic Beautification Award would recognize commendable achievements in landscape redevelopment and community-led beautification efforts. The Civic Beautification Award would be an annual award that would acknowledge projects that enrich the public realm and improve the liveability and beauty of Surrey.

The Civic Beautification Award process would be overseen by the Civic Enhancement Committee (CEC), an interdepartmental staff committee that is responsible for providing advice and direction in relation to the beautification of public spaces and which assist in establishing the annual work program for the Civic Beautification Coordinator. This award will be developed as a formalized annual version of the existing Beautification Recognition Program that involves the presentations to community groups and individuals related to civic beautification. Special consideration will be given to businesses, which show the greatest improvement to an established commercial landscape or exterior facade, and to improvements to landscapes that present challenges from a public safety perspective.

Details on application guidelines and award criteria will be developed in conjunction with the CEC with the inaugural presentation to be in the fall of 2011. The guidelines and criteria will be developed in coordination with the proposed Urban Design Award to avoid overlap. The focus will be on the contributions of members of the community including individuals, groups and non-profit organizations as well as on the improvement and revitalization of commercial properties.

Environmental Sustainability Award:

To complement proposed awards in social planning and civic beautification (which relate to the Socio-cultural pillar of the Sustainability Charter), the proposed Environmental Sustainability Award would provide recognition for achievements related to the Environmental pillar of the City's Sustainability Charter.

The development of the Award process would be overseen by the Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) and coordinated by the staff of the Sustainability Office and other appropriate staff. This award will dovetail with the EAC's earlier discussions on an award of recognition to be presented to community groups and individuals who make a significant contribution to the environment of the City. It is expected that the Environmental Sustainability Award would be an annual award that would encompass activities such as environmental programming and education, tree planting, climate change action, stream stewardship, and other innovative stewardship measures across the City.

Details on application guidelines and award criteria will be developed in conjunction with the EAC with the inaugural award presentation to be in the fall of 2011. The focus would be on members of the community including individuals, groups and non-profit organizations.

Clean Energy Award:

The development of Surrey's clean energy sector is a key component of the City's strategy to meet a number of economic development objectives as outlined in both the Clean Energy Action Plan and the Sustainability Charter, including creating a more diversified economy, increasing local employment and reducing greenhouse gas emissions generated by City operations and by residents and businesses in the City. The Clean Energy Award would provide the City with an opportunity to recognize the efforts of businesses, groups, academic partners and individuals that make a substantial contribution towards building Surrey's clean energy sector. The award would be focused on organizations and individuals that take a leadership position in the City to create a strong clean energy economy, increase the use of clean energy and reduce energy consumption.

The Award would raise the City's profile as a preferred location for clean energy investment, showcase innovative technology in municipal operations and engage the community in reducing the community impact on the environment by greenhouse gas reduction.

The award would be overseen by the Mayor's Clean Energy Advisory Network and signatories to the Letter of Intent (LOI) "Advancing Sustainability in Surrey Through Clean Energy Initiatives," which include SFU Surrey, BC Hydro, Powertech Labs and the City of Surrey. Details on application guidelines, award criteria and selection process will be drafted by a team of staff from various Departments in consultation with the Mayor's Clean Energy Advisory Network. The guidelines will be developed in consideration of the Environmental Sustainability Award to avoid overlap. The inaugural award presentation would be in the fall, 2011.

Urban Design Award

This Urban Design Award would recognize best practices and outstanding achievements in land and building development in Surrey. The award would assist in achieving the Sustainability Charter objectives for sustainable building, quality of design and the promotion of green technology and business. The award would raise the public image of Surrey as a beautiful city by showcasing positive examples of the built environment; raise the quality of design of the built environment in Surrey by setting design as a priority for the development industry and design professionals and build Surrey civic pride and awareness by showcasing positive examples of design.

The Urban Design Award will be juried at arm's length from the City. The development of the award process would be overseen by the City Architect and other relevant staff. Details on application guidelines, award criteria and the selection process will be developed in consultation with advisory consultants and with external guidance from the Architectural Institute of British Columbia (AIBC). Under the direction of the City Architect, an awards coordinator would oversee nominations, jury selection, evaluation and selection processes. The City Architect would act as staff liaison to the jury while the award coordinator may be contracted to assist staff with some phases of the work.

It is expected that the Urban Design Award would be a bi-annual award that would encourage innovation and high standards in Surrey's ongoing urban development. This award program can also provide a positive way to educate the public and the development industry about the City's urban design policies. In a broader sense, it will also serve to advance Surrey's commitment to building its civic brand and attractiveness to new residents and investors. It is anticipated that the inaugural presentation of this award would be in the fall of 2011.

Recognition of Community Achievement

In addition to the development of the abovementioned awards, staff has explored opportunities to provide ongoing formal recognition for outstanding achievement within the community. The intent would be to enable Council to acknowledge citizens and groups for their outstanding achievements in sports, academics and other community activities. Such a procedure would also enable Council to provide ongoing acknowledgment of community contributions made by businesses and institutions.

The recognition process would be administered by the City Clerk's office, with nominations received from the public. The Clerk's office would maintain a list of nominations, which would be presented on an ongoing basis to Closed Council for consideration. Council would make decisions on a case-by-case basis as nominations are received.

Coordination and development of the application process and related guidelines would be led by the current staff awards working group in conjunction with staff in the Clerk's office with a view to making the inaugural presentation in the fall of 2011.

Awards Coordination

A staff working group will be established to guide the overall program coordination and marketing. The working group will ensure an effective and timely delivery of the proposed award and recognition program.

It is expected that the proposed awards and recognition process will be communicated in a variety of media including a webpage on the City's website. This webpage would provide opportunity for public and staff to nominate candidates for any of the City's award or recognition programs using online eforms. The website will also serve as a support for program profiling and promotions.

As the processes and criteria for each of the individual awards is completed a further report will be provided to Council.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

These proposed awards support the objectives of the City's Sustainability Charter. They acknowledge outstanding contributions to community building through the encouragement of social connections, volunteerism, community ownership and citizen engagement. They support enhancements to the public realm that create a sense of comfort and safety and minimize negative social, economic and environmental impacts. They acknowledge efforts to enhance and protect natural areas, fish and wildlife habitat, as well as efforts to enhance biodiversity, and improve land, water and air quality management. They encourage efforts that increase universal access, provide welcoming socio-cultural services and advance cultural awareness in the community. They also encourage best practices in sustainable building and development and in quality of design in new development.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussion, it is recommended that Council approve the development of a City Awards Program that includes the following specific awards all as generally described in this report:

- a. a “Social Planning Award”;
- b. a “Civic Beautification Award”;
- c. an “Environmental Sustainability Award”;
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