Report to Council

City of
Kelowna

Date: May 6, 2024

To: Council

From: City Manager

Subject: 2024 UBCM Community Excellence Awards Applications Submission

Department: Partnerships Office

Recommendation:

THAT Council receives, for information, the report from the Partnerships Office dated May 6, 2024, with respect to the 2024 UBCM Community Excellence Awards Applications Submission.

AND THAT Council authorizes staff to submit award applications for the following City projects:
- Governance category: Shift to a Performance-Based Culture
- Service Delivery category: Artificial Intelligence (AI) Digital Permitting
- Sustainability category: Climate Vulnerability and Risk Assessment Study (CVRA)
- Asset Management category: Implementing Computerized Maintenance Management Systems (CMMS)

Purpose:

To approve staff to apply to the 2024 UBCM Community Excellence Awards.

Background:

The annual Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) Community Excellence Awards recognize and celebrate member local governments that have implemented projects or programs that showcase outstanding initiatives. The awards are designed to profile innovation and unique approaches and serve to inspire other communities to adopt similar projects and programs in their own communities.

The City has submitted applications in all four categories for the past two years, through a Council resolution. In 2022, the City was bestowed the highest achievement award, the President's Committee Choice Award, for the Real Time Flood Response EOC Dashboard.

Discussion:

Pursuing awards is an opportunity to reflect on and celebrate the achievements by City teams that deliver on Council's priorities and support our vision of being a City of the Future. It also puts a spotlight on the innovation, service, teamwork and leadership delivered by the City of Kelowna. In turn, receiving awards

positions Kelowna as a desirable place to live, work, play and invest to the community, our residents, and senior levels of government. Below are the four proposed projects, identified by project leads, that exemplify excellence in each of the UBCM Community Excellence categories.

Excellence in Governance
Shift to a Performance-Based Culture

Over the course of the past five years, the City of Kelowna has made a concerted effort to shift to a performance-based culture to maintain trust with its residents and uphold financial accountability, transparency and delivering value to residents. The shift was enabled by a series of key moves that focused on planning, monitoring, measuring, and refining the City's strategies and services. The key moves to implement effective change have included:
- City Manager's prioritization of measurement and data-driven decision making in the corporate priorities.
- New results-based approach to Council priorities and public reporting at regular intervals.
- Renewed emphasis on strategic internal communication across the organization.
- Performance measurement framework and intensive work with teams.
- New service-based budget and quarterly financial health reporting.
- Participation in Municipal Benchmark Network Canada.
- Ongoing investment in the Data Analytics team and data infrastructure.

These moves have helped the City to formalize and scale the management practices that will enable it to adapt to the challenges and opportunities of a rapidly growing municipality.

Excellence in Service Delivery
Artificial Intelligence (AI) Digital Permitting

Embracing innovation and digital transformations to improve service to fast-track housing development in the community, the City launched an artificial intelligence-powered chatbot, KAI (Kelowna AI) that provides 24/7 information and guidance on the building permit process for homeowners, contractors and homebuilders. The chatbot, available on kelowna.ca, helps users navigate the complex and varied requirements, bylaws, fees and processes for different permit types, from signs to swimming pools, sheds to secondary suites. It does this by removing barriers (time, process, paperwork, business hours, in-person contact) to delivering housing in Kelowna by providing faster and more efficient support through AI.

Since its launch in October 2023, the chatbot has handled more than 9,500 questions, with 18 percent of them occurring outside regular work hours. The chatbot is part of the City's Intelligent Cities Strategy and makes Kelowna the first municipality in Canada to use AI for permitting, with the intention of building more homes faster. The project received a Local Government Development Approvals Program grant from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, administered by the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM).

Excellence in Sustainability
Climate Vulnerability and Risk Assessment Study

The City of Kelowna conducted a Climate Vulnerability and Risk Assessment (CVRA) between 2022 and 2023 to assess how the community can adapt to the impacts of climate change until 2070. The study is unique as it used a spatial and dynamic model to analyze the natural and built hazard risks and vulnerabilities for existing and future buildings, infrastructure, and people. The study used this innovative approach for three prevalent local climate hazards (wildfires, extreme heat, and flooding) and provided qualitative insights on other local climate hazards (e.g., landslides, invasive species, extreme cold). The study revealed the need for proactive adaptation and readiness actions to reduce climate hazards, ensure the security and resilience of Kelowna's community and ecosystems, and cope with the changing weather patterns, warmer temperatures, and more heat and drought in the summers.

The CVRA provides a technical foundation for the resilience components of the upcoming *Climate Resilient Kelowna Strategy*.

Excellence in Asset Management
Implementing Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS) - Cityworks

The City implemented a CMMS to manage and maintain its diverse and valuable municipal assets, such as water, wastewater, drainage, transportation, recreation and community infrastructure. The CMMS supports the City's vision of advancing digital transformations and asset management practices.

The CMMS is a digital solution that replaced many manual paper processes, automated business processes to minimize human error and expedite data collection, enabling real time data analytics. It is used by over 700 staff to plan maintenance and monitor the condition of more than 30,000 City infrastructure assets worth more than $7 billion. This proactive approach has improved the efficiency, effectiveness and cost management throughout the entire lifecycle of municipal assets as well as set up the foundation to exercise preventative and predictive maintenance.

The project was initiated in January 2019 and has been implemented to 28 City business areas and concluded at the end of 2023.

Conclusion:
Applying for awards is a chance to recognize projects and accomplishments that have aligned with Council and Corporate priorities, helped the community and demonstrated excellence in public service. Awards are a means to highlight and establish Kelowna as a leader among other municipalities in the Province. Award winners will be revealed in-person at the 2024 UBCM Convention in September in Vancouver.

Internal Circulation:
Information Services
Corporate Strategy and Performance
Planning, Climate Action, Development Services
Asset Management & Capital Planning

Considerations not applicable to this report:
Legal/Statutory Authority:
Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements:
Existing Policy:
Financial/Budgetary Considerations:
Consultation and Engagement:
Communications Comments:

Submitted by: A. Bazett, Intergovernmental Relations Manager

Approved for inclusion: M. Kam, Acting Partnership Office Director

cc:
M. McGreer, *Corporate Strategy & Performance Department Manager*
R. Smith, *Divisional Director, Planning, Climate Action & Development Services*
J. Brennan, *Acting Information Services Director*
A. Boehm, *Intelligent Cities Manager*
J. Shaw, *Asset Management & Capital Planning Manager*
C. Ray, *Climate Action and Environment Manager*