

Report to Council



Date: May 12, 2025
To: Council
From: City Manager
Subject: 2025 UBCM Community Excellence Awards
Department: Partnerships Office

Recommendation:

THAT Council receives, for information, the report from the Partnerships Office dated May 12, 2025, with respect to the 2025 UBCM Community Excellence Awards Application Submission.

AND THAT Council authorizes staff to submit award applications for the following City projects:

- Governance category: GEID Transition
- Service Delivery category: City at Work Docu-Series
- Sustainability category: DeHart Community Park Built to Net-Zero

Purpose:

To approve staff to apply to the 2025 UBCM Community Excellence Awards.

Background:

The annual Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) Community Excellence Awards recognize and celebrate members that have implemented projects or programs that go above and beyond in meeting the purposes of local government in BC. These awards, part of the annual fall convention program, showcase outstanding initiatives across the province, encouraging local governments to learn from each other and implement successful practices in their own communities.

Kelowna has previously received recognition from this awards program including the 2024 Excellence in Asset Management Award for Cityworks implementation, and the 2022 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 who deliver on Council's priorities, results for the community, and support our vision of being a City of the Future. Awards also enhance Kelowna's profile as one of Canada's fastest-growing communities, supporting advocacy and investment efforts and fostering connections with partners, stakeholders, and other levels

of government. Below are the three proposed projects, identified by project leads, that exemplify excellence in their respective categories:

Excellence in Governance – GEID Transition

The Glenmore-Ellison Improvement District (GEID) was a financially stable and well-run improvement district with over a century of history supplying drinking and agricultural water to 24,000 people across 37 km². In alignment with provincial policy and Kelowna's Integrated Water Supply Plan, GEID and the City collaboratively developed a three-year Transition Agreement to ensure a reliable, resilient water supply, improved emergency response, and economies of scale. The transition was formalized through a Provincial Order in Council and is a model for future improvement district conversions across BC. GEID staff and operations were retained as a business unit within the City to ensure continuity and a smooth operational shift. Customers will benefit from consistent service levels, enhanced system integration, and long-term value in response to population growth and climate change. This governance success demonstrates a commitment to collaboration, sustainability, and effective service delivery between the City of Kelowna, GEID and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs.

Excellence in Service Delivery – City at Work Docu-Series

"City At Work" is an engaging three-part documentary-style video series that takes viewers behind the scenes of the intricate and important services keeping Kelowna running smoothly. Garnering over 41,000 views on YouTube, the series provides an inside look at municipal departments and their dedicated staff, showcasing the City's commitment to service delivery in addressing resident priorities and fostering community well-being. With compelling storytelling, insightful interviews, and stunning videography, the series invites viewers to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation for the essential service operations that sustain Kelowna every day.

Designed to both educate and entertain, the videos offer residents, current and future employees, and even other municipalities a unique perspective into the complex workings of a growing city. By humanizing the organization's efforts, the series strengthens brand authority, building a reputation for reliability, expertise, and value for taxpayer dollars while deepening connections with audiences through thoughtfully crafted, engaging content.

Excellence in Sustainability – Dehart Community Park Built to Net-Zero

The newly constructed DeHart Community Park, located in Kelowna's Mission neighborhood, exemplifies sustainability and community-driven development. Designed to be carbon neutral, the park aligns with Kelowna's Official Community Plan and greenhouse gas reduction targets, showcasing a commitment to green infrastructure, ecosystem services, and climate resilience. The preservation of mature trees and naturalized areas reflects the community's priorities, emphasizing harmony with nature while providing community space for diverse uses.

The park's design was shaped by extensive community engagement, ensuring accessibility, safety, and inclusivity for all ages and abilities. Thoughtful planning also incorporated cultural and social considerations, resulting in a space that balances sport, active and passive recreation. Long-term performance will be measured using carbon modeling developed during design, ensuring alignment with sustainability goals. DeHart Community Park is set to become a gem of a destination, meeting current and future needs of the community while championing environmental stewardship.

Additional considerations:

Through consultation with staff, no project for the fourth Asset Management category was identified to meet the criteria for a 2025 submission.

Awards are reviewed by the UBCM President's Committee – comprised of the president, the first, second and third vice-president and the Metro Vancouver representative. Amongst all the submissions, the committee also selects one project for its unique outstanding submission for the President's Committee Choice Award. All submissions are automatically considered for this category.

Conclusion:

Should Council approve, staff will submit three applications for the 2025 UBCM Community Excellence Awards in the outlined categories. The application deadline is May 30, 2025. Award recipients will be announced in-person during the 2025 UBCM Convention in Victoria in September.

Internal Circulation:

Utility Services

Communications

Parks Planning & Design

Considerations not applicable to this report:

Consultation and Engagement:

Communications Comments:

Legal/Statutory Authority:

Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements:

Existing Policy:

Financial/Budgetary Considerations:

Submitted by: C. McGuinness, Partnerships Coordinator

Approved for inclusion: A. Bazett, Intergovernmental Relations Manager

cc:

K. Van Vliet, Utility Services Department Manager

M. Douglas, Communications Consultant

M. Steppuhn, Parks Planning and Design Manager