



To: Richmond City Council **Date:** June 6, 2005
From: Ted Townsend **File:**
 Manager, Communications, Richmond
 Olympic Business Office
Re: **UBCM Community Excellence Awards**

Staff Recommendation

That Council support the City of Richmond's entries in the Union of British Columbia Municipalities' 2005 Community Excellence Awards, including:

- Best Practices/General: RAV Public Consultation
- Best Practices/Website: Redesign and re-launch of City of Richmond Website
- Best Practices/Best Annual Reporting: City of Richmond 2004 Annual Report

Ted Townsend
 Manager, Communications, Richmond Olympic Business Office
 (4399)

REVIEWED BY TAG	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DW
REVIEWED BY CAO	YES GD <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Staff Report

Origin

The UBCM Community Excellence Awards program are designed to profile excellence in local government. The City of Richmond is a past winner of a number of UBCM Awards. The entry deadline for the 2005 Community Excellence Awards is June 20, 2005. This year, the UBCM requires entry submissions to be supported by resolution of Council.

Analysis

The UBCM Community Excellence Awards program is described as “an opportunity to showcase municipalities... who want to ‘lead the pack’, take risks to innovate, have established new partnerships or who don’t hesitate to question established ways of doing business and pioneer new customer focus practices.” This aptly describes the City of Richmond’s commitment to excellence and its vision to be the most appealing, livable and well-managed City in Canada.

Upon reviewing the award categories, TAG has selected three entry submissions, which it is recommending Council support for entry in this year’s UBCM awards.

Best Practises: The Best Practises Award recognizes initiatives that improve efficiency, effectiveness and demonstrated cost-effective solutions, have applicability and transferability to other UBCM members and improve public accountability and awareness of local government.

In 2004, the City of Richmond faced an unprecedented political and community relations challenge with regard to the RAV project. Although this project would change the face of the community, tight timelines and other considerations meant the City had limited opportunities to engage the community in a public input and consultation process. The City of Richmond launched two distinct community consultation programs, both of which were planned and executed within three-week time frames respectively, with timing constraints largely out of Council’s control. Despite the challenges, the City was able to mount effective consultation campaigns that obtained high-level of community interest and participation, and the achievement of our goals in an extremely limited time frame. The quick and effective delivery of these public consultation campaigns allowed Council to base its decisions on reliable research

The RAV Public Consultation has already been selected as a finalist in the Canadian Public Relation Society’s annual awards competition and is an excellent example of best practises in public consultation.

Best Annual Reporting: This award recognizes creativity, ingenuity and good communications in the content and presentation of the annual report. The City of Richmond’s 2002 and 2003 Annual Reports were both honoured with the Government Finance Officers Association’s Canadian Award for Financial Reporting. These awards recognize the Annual Reports for being easily readable, efficiently organized, for going beyond the reporting requirements of generally accepted accounting practices, and for conforming to the GFOA financial reporting standards.

However, Richmond’s Annual Report is far more than just a financial reporting tool. The Annual Report provides an opportunity to highlight for Richmond residents the achievements the City

has made over the year and the ways in which the City has worked to enhance the quality of life in this community. The professional quality and design of the report, which is produced entirely in house, make it easy to read and appealing to readers. The 2004 Annual Report is also a keepsake in that it commemorates the City's year-long celebration of the 125th anniversary of Richmond's incorporation as a municipality.

Best Website: The website award honours communities that successfully and comprehensively bring information to their citizens via web technology. The City's commitment to innovation has made it a leader in the use of online technologies to improve customer service and to better inform and communicate with its residents and other stakeholders. The City website won unprecedented back-to-back awards for Best Website from the UBCM in 2000 and 2001. However, the City's website design had become dated and the sheer volume of information contained on the website was making it difficult to navigate.

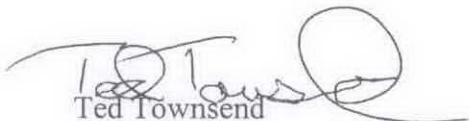
Beginning in 2003 and continuing through 2004, a major initiative was launched to redesign and update the City's website. An innovative and detailed research campaign was undertaken to identify users' needs and a new website design and navigation system was designed around those findings. The redesigned website has a new look and feel; a more user-friendly interface and introduced a simplified site address: www.richmond.ca The new website illustrates an original approach to site architecture and navigation that effectively accommodates a very large, comprehensive, municipal website while making all of the site content more accessible to users. Expanded content, new databases and interactive features add to the site's usefulness, while incorporating innovative, new Content Management software that makes the site easier to manage and maintain.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact.

Conclusion

The City of Richmond has a reputation and one of the most innovative and outstanding municipal governments in BC. This reputation has been reinforced by the more than 60 regional, national and international awards received by the City over the past decade for excellence, innovation, leadership, customer service and more. Many of these awards come from the City's peer groups within the local government field, where Richmond has an unprecedented record of achievement. The City's entries in the 2005 UBCM Community Excellence Awards reflect the City's continued commitment to excellence.



Ted Townsend

Manager, Communications, Richmond Olympic Business Office
(4399)

TT:tt