



# City of Richmond

## Report to Committee

**To:** Planning Committee **Date:** August 30, 2021  
**From:** Wayne Craig **File:** 01-0083-09/2021-Vol  
 Director, Development 01  
**Re:** **2022 Lulu Awards in Urban Design – Proposed Schedule and Categories**

### Staff Recommendation

That Council endorse the Richmond Urban Design Awards Program as outlined in the report titled, “2022 Lulu Awards in Urban Design – Proposed Schedule and Categories” dated August 30, 2021 from the Director, Development.

For  
 Wayne Craig Director,  
 Development  
 (604-247-4625)

<b>REPORT CONCURRENCE</b>	
<b>CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER</b>	
Acting GM	
<b>SENIOR STAFF REPORT REVIEW</b>	<b>INITIALS:</b>
<b>APPROVED BY CAO</b>	

## Staff Report

### Origin

On April 14, 2008, Council endorsed the implementation of a biennial Richmond Urban Design Awards Program (the Lulu Awards) in order to enhance urban design principles in Richmond. The first Lulu Awards were presented in 2009 and subsequently in 2011 and 2013. In 2013, a decision was made to go from a two-year awards cycle to a four-year awards cycle in order to increase the number of submissions for the awards. The Lulu Awards is now an event that runs every four years with the last awards presented in 2017.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2018-2022 Strategy #2 - A Sustainable and Environmentally Conscious City:

*Environmentally conscious decision-making that demonstrates leadership in implementing innovative, sustainable practices and supports the City's unique biodiversity and island ecology.*

*2.2 Policies and practices that support Richmond's sustainability goals*

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2018-2022 Strategy #6 - Strategic and Well-Planned Growth:

*Leadership in effective and sustainable growth that supports Richmond's physical and social needs.*

*6.1 Ensure an effective OCP (Official Community Plan) and ensure development aligns with it.*

*6.2 "Green" and circular economic growth and practices emphasized.*

### Analysis

#### Lulu Awards Program

The Lulu Awards are intended to recognize, celebrate and inspire excellence in urban design in the City of Richmond. Design awards will be given for exceptional projects that represent visionary thinking and "raise the bar" for design excellence. Private and public sector projects are eligible if they are completed up to five years prior to the awards year. Submissions can be made by a project owner, a member of the team that is associated with the project, City of Richmond staff or members of the general public.

Due to COVID-19 Pandemic and associated Public Health Orders, staff recommend that the Lulu Awards originally scheduled for 2021 be deferred to 2022 in order to facilitate a focused, efficient, and robust process. The proposed revised schedule would start with a call for nominations commencing in January 2022, with an award presentation anticipated to occur at a Council meeting in October/November 2022. If the revised schedule is endorsed, the next Lulu Awards Program would be held in 2026.

The current categories are:

- **Buildings:** Residential, mixed-use, commercial, industrial, public and institutional buildings.
- **Open Space:** Landscape innovation, public and institutional open space.

#### Proposed new sub-categories

Staff have received feedback from members of the public about the importance of universal accessibility and ecological design in developments in the City. In order to create more awareness and encourage innovation in universal design and ecological design, staff recommend the addition of two new sub-categories under Open Space.

**Universal Design and Innovation:** To promote, encourage and recognize universal design that provide barrier-free access for everyone regardless of age or ability and create truly inclusive and safe open spaces.

#### **Criteria:**

- Space is accessible and welcoming to everyone and incorporates design that provides barrier-free access for all forms of disability (physical, sensory, cognitive, mental health).
- Reflects the principles of universal design and is consistent with the City of Richmond's *Enhanced Accessibility Design Guidelines and Technical Specifications*.
- Advances a level of accessibility that goes beyond the BC Building Code requirements.
- Provides innovative solutions to removing typical barriers for persons with disabilities in the built environment.
- Promotes social inclusion through design that reflects the diversity of Richmond's community.
- Promotes a stronger relationship to the public realm, including accessible design features to ensure safe transitions from open spaces to public realm (e.g., roads, parking lots and sidewalks).

Staff discussed the potential introduction of this new award sub-category with the Richmond Centre for Disability (RCD). RCD has advised staff that they support the initiative as a means of promoting and recognizing inclusivity and accessibility.

**Ecological Design and Innovation:** To promote, encourage and recognize sensitive and regenerative design that responds to the ecological features of the site, its context and supports diverse habitats.

#### **Criteria:**

- Provides thoughtful attention to the site's larger context-ecology and hydrology to balance the built environment with the natural environment.
- Advances landscape design that protects, restores and regenerates natural systems, reduces water consumption, preserves water quality, prevents soil erosion, while providing enjoyable and learning environments for people.
- Promotes rewilding and creates a diverse habitat for birds, insects and pollinators that contribute towards more resilient ecosystems.

- Incorporates creative strategies to deal with invasive species.
- Promotes landscape design that increases the capacity of carbon sinks through revegetation.
- Incorporates innovative use of native plant material and/or plants that are regionally adaptive to our climate thus demonstrating a response to climate change.
- Develops innovative tree planting design that overcome urban challenges, thereby reducing the effects of the urban heat island effect and mitigating the effects of heavy rain events.
- Landscape design that fosters environmental stewardship and create healthy ecosystems that uphold the quality of life for present and future generations.

#### Proposed Award Process

The proposed awards schedule is outlined below:

- January 2022: The call for submissions commences at the beginning of the month.
- February 2022: Submission deadline.
- May 2022: Jury tour and recommendations.
- October/November 2022: Welcoming reception and awards presentation at Council Meeting.

The Jury tour is a critical step in the award process. Moving the awards as proposed would allow the site tours to occur in the spring season (instead of fall/winter), which will allow site landscaping to be evaluated in the right conditions.

The awards are proposed to culminate with a reception and an awards presentation at a Council meeting later in 2022. A specific Council meeting date would be identified subject to scheduling considerations. Should any further changes to the proposed schedule be required in response to the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic, a staff report outlining any scheduling adjustments would be brought forward to Council for consideration.

#### Award Promotion

Should Council endorse the revised schedule, Development Applications staff will work with Corporate Communications staff to raise awareness in the community. This may include: issuing a news release, use of the City's website, social media, advertising in local newspapers and mail-outs/emails to members of the design, architecture, landscape architecture, planning, and development industries.

After the awards are announced, the information about the award winning projects would be publicized via the same communication channels, as well as an award presentation at a City Council meeting, as in previous years.

#### **Financial Impact**

None. The Awards Program will be accommodated within existing budgets.

## Conclusion

Staff recommend that the Lulu Awards Program originally scheduled for 2021 be deferred to 2022 with the four-year awards cycle continuing thereafter.

To support Council's Strategic Plan, staff are also recommending two new sub-categories under Open Space, *Universal Design and Innovation* and *Ecological Design and Innovation*. These new award sub-categories are intended to help create awareness and encourage innovation in universal accessibility and ecological design.

Subject to Council's endorsement of the revised schedule, staff will work with Corporate Communications and Development Community to promote the awards program.



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