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| <b>To:</b>   | General Purposes Committee                                                                  | <b>Date:</b> | May 19, 2026              |
| <b>From:</b> | Jason Kita<br>Director, Intergovernmental Relations and<br>Corporate and Strategic Planning | <b>File:</b> | 01-0005-01/2025-Vol<br>01 |
| <b>Re:</b>   | <b>2026 UBCM Community Excellence Awards Program</b>                                        |              |                           |

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### Staff Recommendation

That the City of Richmond's submissions to the Union of BC Municipalities 2026 Community Excellence Awards program be endorsed:

1. Excellence in Governance: Building Our Future Together: Social Development Strategy (2025-2035);
2. Excellence in Service Delivery: Richmond Fire-Rescue Online Education Program;
3. Excellence in Asset Management: Murals Celebrate Richmond's Beauty; and
4. Excellence in Sustainability: Nature-Based Flood Protection Solutions Assessment.

### Executive Summary

Staff have prepared four submissions to the Union of BC Municipalities 2026 Community Excellence Awards program. The recommended submissions reflect the City's ongoing commitment to excellence in local government. Staff have reviewed the award criteria and identified nominations that align with the criteria in the areas of governance, service delivery, asset management, and sustainability.

The recommended submissions showcase City achievements that provide community benefit and demonstrate leadership among BC local governments. These include the Social Development Strategy; the Richmond Fire-Rescue Online Education Program; Murals Celebrate Richmond's Beauty; and the Nature-Based Flood Protection Solutions Assessment.

Endorsement of these nominations supports recognition of Richmond's implemented projects and programs that demonstrate best practices, innovation, continuous improvement, and leadership.

## Staff Report

### Origin

The Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) Community Excellence Awards recognize and celebrate UBCM members that have implemented projects or programs that demonstrate excellence in meeting the purposes of local government in BC.

Staff have submitted four award applications to UBCM on behalf of the City by the submission deadline of May 29, 2026. As part of the application process, entries for this year's awards submissions must also include a resolution by Richmond City Council indicating support for the project/program in order to be considered for a 2026 UBCM Community Excellence Award. UBCM accepts applications without a resolution, provided that a resolution is submitted by August 14, 2026. Should City Council choose not to endorse an application, staff can withdraw the application(s).

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2022-2026 Focus Area #1 Proactive in Stakeholder and Civic Engagement:

*Proactive stakeholder and civic engagement to foster understanding and involvement and advance Richmond's interests.*

*1.1 Continue fostering effective and strategic relationships with other levels of government and Indigenous communities.*

### Analysis

Awards and recognition received from peers in local government and other organizations demonstrate the City's commitment to excellence in local government. City awards can be located on the City's website at <https://www.richmond.ca/culture/discover-richmond/profile/awards.htm>.

Annually, the City applies for various awards, and in particular, the UBCM Community Excellence Awards program to showcase Richmond projects and programs in governance, service delivery, asset management, and sustainability. The 2026 application guide is included as **Attachment 1**. Staff have reviewed the eligibility criteria and are recommending submissions in the four award categories:

#### 1. Excellence in Governance

##### Criteria:

*Governance is the process of decision-making and the means by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented).*

*This category recognizes UBCM members that utilize governance processes and policies that are outcomes-based and consensus-oriented; support and encourage citizen participation in civic decision-making; are efficient, equitable, and inclusive, open and transparent; and*

*exemplify best practices in accountability, effectiveness, and long-term thinking. This may include projects focused on staff, elected officials, and/or the community at large.*

The City's 2026 submission to the Excellence in Governance award category is the *Building Our Future Together: Social Development Strategy (2025-2035)*.

Project Description:

Richmond's Social Development Strategy is an integrated, community-driven framework demonstrating strong local leadership as residents increasingly rely on local governments to address complex social challenges. Developed through a rigorous, multi-stage process including a jurisdictional scan, census and community-level data analysis, and extensive engagement with residents, community organizations, and government partners, the Strategy reflects transparent, accountable, and collaborative decision-making.

Its five strategic directions and 73 priority actions form a coordinated response to current and emerging needs, improving access to basic needs, enhancing inclusion and belonging, fostering safety and resilience, strengthening community voice, and supporting collective action. Aligned with Council-adopted plans, the Strategy integrates policy areas into a unified approach, positioning Richmond as an innovator in local governance and advancing a more inclusive, equitable community.

2. Excellence in Service Delivery

Criteria:

*Service delivery involves the actual production and provision of goods and services to the community and should be integrated with community plans and aligned with financial plans.*

*This category recognizes UBCM members that provide effective services in a proactive manner and demonstrate benefit to the community.*

The City's 2026 submission to the Excellence in Service Delivery award category is the *Richmond Fire-Rescue Online Education Program*.

Project Description:

Richmond Fire-Rescue developed an innovative online education program to address the need for fire and life safety education among young children. As the first program of its kind in North America, it has supported fire departments across British Columbia and Canada in developing similar initiatives, demonstrating broader applicability.

Designed to meet an identified need, the program delivers key safety messages through engaging and interactive methods. Participating teachers in Richmond School District No. 38 receive access to a series of online safety videos and accompanying materials that reinforce key learning outcomes. The videos and materials are currently available in English. Students can immediately apply their learning through hands-on activities, and upon completion, the

Community Relations team conducts in-person visits, including a fire truck tour or turnout gear demonstration.

Developed in-house, the program ensures accuracy, consistency, and strong local relevance. Since launching the Kindergarten and Grade 1 program with the Richmond School District in 2023, and expanding to Grade 2 and 3 in 2024, it has reached over 4,000 students.

### 3. Excellence in Asset Management

#### Criteria:

*Asset management is an integrated business approach that involves planning, finance, engineering, and operations to effectively manage existing and new infrastructure in order to maximize benefits, reduce risk, and provide satisfactory levels of service to community users in a sustainable manner.*

*This category recognizes UBCM members that have developed and implemented a comprehensive system of asset management policies and practices, meeting and/or exceeding accepted best practices such as the International Infrastructure Management Manual, ISO 55000, or Asset Management for Sustainable Service Delivery: A BC Framework.*

The City's 2026 submission to the Excellence in Asset Management award category is the *Murals Celebrate Richmond's Beauty* project.

#### Project Description:

Four public washrooms along Richmond's dyke trail were transformed by local artists into vibrant landmarks celebrating local culture and natural beauty.

The project was grounded in a comprehensive asset management approach focused on maximizing the value, performance, and lifespan of existing infrastructure. Staff collaborated with artists, sharing knowledge of Richmond's flora, fauna, history, flood protection, and sustainability initiatives. Planning and implementation emphasized efficient resource use, lifecycle management, and durable protective coatings to extend asset life and reduce maintenance needs.

The project also introduced an innovative maintenance strategy by redirecting funds previously used for graffiti removal toward mural creation and long-term asset enhancement. Since installation, the sites have remained graffiti-free, reducing maintenance costs and operational demands while fostering community pride, cross-cultural exchange, and engagement across generations.

### 4. Excellence in Sustainability

#### Criteria:

*Sustainability means meeting current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*

*This category recognizes UBCM members that incorporate a long-term sustainability lens by considering the four pillars—cultural, social, economic, and environmental issues—in planning, policy, and practice.*

The City's 2026 submission to the Excellence in Sustainability award category is the *Nature-Based Flood Protection Solutions Assessment*.

**Project Description:**

To advance Richmond's accelerated flood protection initiative, the City is planning to raise 49 kilometres of its perimeter dike over 50 years. The City's Flood Protection Management Strategy highlights the importance of coordinated habitat compensation to address the environmental impacts of dike upgrades while balancing flood protection, environmental stewardship, and community values.

To support this work, the Nature-Based Flood Protection Solutions Assessment was conducted to identify and evaluate opportunities to integrate natural infrastructure into the perimeter dike system, demonstrating leadership in environmental sustainability. These green solutions further reduce flood risks while enhancing biodiversity, recreational opportunities, and community access to natural spaces. The assessment informed an implementation strategy and monitoring plan for the Lulu Island perimeter dike that meets current flood protection needs while supporting long-term environmental sustainability.

**Budgetary Implications**

None.

**Conclusion**

The UBCM Community Excellence Awards program recognizes implemented projects or programs that demonstrate excellence in local government in BC. This annual awards program provides the City of Richmond an opportunity to be recognized for its commitment to excellence in municipal governance and service delivery.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Kita, Director, Intergovernmental Relations and Corporate and Strategic Planning

**Report Contributors**

This report was prepared by Trevor Penrose, Corporate Project Leader, Corporate Programs Management Group and reviewed by Arts, Culture & Heritage, Facilities & Project Development, Richmond Fire-Rescue, Community Social Development, and Engineering Departments.

May 19, 2026

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Endorsed by Serena Lusk, CAO

Att. 1: UBCM Community Excellence Awards – 2026 Application Guide

# Community Excellence Awards

## 2026 Program and Application Guide

Applications will be accepted March 18 to May 29, 2026 using the new [UBCM Awards Online Application Tool](#).

### 1. Introduction

The Community Excellence Awards recognize and celebrate UBCM members that have implemented projects or programs that demonstrate excellence in meeting the purposes of local government in BC. The awards are designed to profile promising practices and to encourage local governments to learn from the success of other members in order to implement changes in their own communities.

UBCM has offered the Community Excellence Awards since 2004.

### 2. Eligible Applicants and Projects

The Community Excellence Awards program is open to UBCM members only, including local government and First Nation members. UBCM members may submit one application per category.

To be eligible for consideration, projects:

- Must have been initiated after January 1, 2021 and be substantially completed.
- Cannot be the subject of an application that was previously awarded a Community Excellence Award.
- May have been funded by grant programs administered by UBCM.

### 3. Categories

The purposes of local governments in BC are set out in both the *Community Charter* and the *Local Government Act* and generally focus on good governance, providing services for community benefit, providing stewardship of public assets, and fostering sustainability. Based on this, the categories are:

#### Excellence in Governance

Governance is the process of decision-making and the means by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented).

This category recognizes UBCM members that utilize governance processes and policies that are outcomes-based and consensus oriented; support and encourage citizen participation in civic decision-making; are efficient, equitable and inclusive, open and transparent; and exemplify best practices in accountability, effectiveness, and long-term thinking. This may include projects focused on staff, elected officials and/or the community at large.

#### Excellence in Service Delivery

Service delivery involves the actual production and provision of goods and services to the community and should be integrated with community plans and aligned with financial plans.



This category recognizes UBCM members that provide effective services in a proactive manner and demonstrate benefit to the community.

### **Excellence in Asset Management**

Asset management is an integrated business approach that involves planning, finance, engineering and operations to effectively manage existing and new infrastructure in order to maximize benefits, reduce risk and provide satisfactory levels of service to community users in a sustainable manner.

This category recognizes UBCM members that have developed and implemented a comprehensive system of asset management policies and practices, meeting and/or exceeding accepted best practices such as the International Infrastructure Management Manual, ISO 55000 or Asset Management for Sustainable Service Delivery: A BC Framework.

### **Excellence in Sustainability**

Sustainability means meeting current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

This category recognizes UBCM members that incorporate a long-term sustainability lens by considering the four pillars – cultural, social, economic and environmental issues – in planning, policy and practice.

## **4. Program Criteria**

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All applications will be scored against the following overall program criteria:

- Leadership: the extent to which the applicant acted as a local or regional leader in the development or implementation of the project.
- Financial management and planning: the degree to which the project and/or organization has implemented financial best practices that support long-term financial planning, value for money, financial sustainability and/or economic development.
- Partnerships and collaboration: the breadth and depth of community and/or regional partnerships that supported the project and the extent to which internal (e.g. inter-departmental and/or staff and elected officials) and/or external collaboration was evident.
- Innovation and promising practices: the degree to which the project demonstrated creativity and innovation, and contributed to increased efficiency or effectiveness.
- Engagement and communications: the extent to which internal and/or external engagement was foundational to the success of the project, including the use of communication tools such as social media.
- Transferability: the degree to which the process or outcomes of the project, or other learnings, could be conveyed to other UBCM members.
- Performance measurement: the extent to which the project has identified and/or utilized performance measures, benchmarks and/or standards to demonstrate benefit to the community.

## **5. UBCM Presidents Committee Choice Award**

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The Presidents Committee Choice Award is an opportunity for an outstanding, unique and/or special project that would otherwise not be recognized through the adjudication process, to be recognized in the Community Excellence Award's program.

The award is not an additional category that applicants can apply under; instead candidates for the award are identified during the regular adjudication process.

The criteria for considering a candidate for the Presidents Committee Choice Award include:

- Exemplary demonstration of excellence in meeting objectives of local government (for example, as demonstrated by highest application review score in a given intake).
- Outstanding achievement in relation to a current issue faced by local governments.

## 6. Application Process

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The new [UBCM Awards Online Application Tool](#) is required to be used for all applications.  
Refer to Appendix 1 for full information.

### Application Deadline

The application deadline is May 29, 2026.

### Application Contents

All applicants are required to submit an electronic copy of the complete application package, including:

- Signed application form. Applications should be submitted as Word or PDF files.
- Council, Board or Band Council resolution indicating support for the project to be considered for a 2026 Community Excellence Award. Note: UBCM will accept applications without a resolution, providing the resolution is received by August 14, 2026. Please contact UBCM if the resolution cannot be submitted by the application deadline.
- Five representative photos of the project. Photos should be submitted as JPEG files at a high resolution suitable for display.
- Links to any publicly available videos related to the project.

### Submission of Applications

Applications are required to be submitted in two steps prior to the application deadline:

1. [UBCM Awards Online Application Tool](#): This online form must be completed for all Community Excellence Awards. When the UBCM Awards Online Application Tool is completed, the applicant will receive an email confirmation including the file number that has been assigned to the application, and a copy of the Application Worksheet that must be completed as part of Step 2.
2. Application Worksheet: This worksheet contains questions that are specific to the Community Excellence Awards and must be submitted by email to UBCM with all other required attachments.

Refer to Appendix 1 for the information that will be required to be submitted during each step, including all application questions.

Worksheets and required attachments should be submitted as Word, Excel, or PDF files. Total file size for email attachments cannot exceed 20 MB. All materials should be submitted to Local Government Program Services, Union of BC Municipalities by email at [awards@ubcm.ca](mailto:awards@ubcm.ca).

### Review of Applications

UBCM staff will perform a preliminary review of all applications to ensure the required application elements have been submitted and to ensure that basic eligibility criteria have been met. Only complete application packages will be reviewed.

Should UBCM staff determine that a submission is more suitable to a different category than the one submitted to, they may transfer the application to that category.

Subject matter experts will assess and score all eligible applications. UBCM's Presidents Committee will then review recommendations and scores from the subject matter experts and select category winners and, if recommended, honourable mentions.

The committee may also consider if applicants have received past awards and the location and type of each project.

## **7. Awards Ceremony**

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Awards will be presented during UBCM's 2026 Convention. All applicants are invited to the Community Excellence Awards; however, only delegates with a Convention badge will be able to attend the awards event.

Please note that in the case that an application for a project with multiple partners is selected for an award or honourable mention, only the local government that submitted the application will be identified as the recipient.

## **8. Additional Information**

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Please visit the [Community Excellence Awards](#) section of the UBCM website or contact [awards@ubcm.ca](mailto:awards@ubcm.ca).

## **Appendix 1: UBCM Awards Online Application Tool**

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As outlined in Section 6, applications are required to be submitted in two steps **prior to the application deadline**:

1. [UBCM Awards Online Application Tool](#): This online form must be completed for all Community Excellence Awards. When the UBCM Awards Online Application Tool is completed, the applicant will receive an email confirmation including the file number that has been assigned to the application, and a copy of the Application Worksheet that must be completed as part of Step 2.
2. Application Worksheet: This worksheet contains questions that are specific to the Community Excellence Awards and must be submitted by email to [awards@ubcm.ca](mailto:awards@ubcm.ca) with all other required attachments.

### **STEP ONE: UBCM Awards Online Application Tool**

The following questions are required to be answered on the LGPS Online Application Form:

1. Name of the intake of the program that you want to apply for (select from menu).
2. Name of the Applicant (select from menu). Please note: if the name of your organization is not included in the menu, contact UBCM in order to determine eligibility and next steps.
3. Primary and secondary contact information: full name, position, email, phone.
4. Category (select from menu).
5. Name of project/program.
6. Project summary.
7. Name and email of person submitting application.

When the UBCM Awards Online Application Tool is completed, the applicant will receive an email confirmation including the file number that has been assigned to the application, and a copy of the Application Worksheet that must be completed as part of Step 2.

### **STEP TWO: Application Worksheet and Required Attachments**

#### Application Worksheet

The following questions will be required to be answered on the Application Worksheet:

1. Primary Applicant full name (local government or First Nation).
2. File Number (this can be found on the confirmation email you will receive after the UBCM Awards Online Application Tool is completed).
3. Purpose. What problem or issue does this project/program address? In other words, why was it started?
4. Outcomes. What outcomes have you seen, or expect to see, as a result of the project/program?
5. Demonstrating Excellence. Describe how your project/program demonstrates excellence in meeting the purposes of local government in BC, including how it provides promising practices for others to follow.
6. Timeline: When was the project/program initiated? Is it now substantially complete?
7. Category Criteria. How does your project/program meet the objectives of the category you have applied under. (Refer to Section 3 of the 2026 Community Excellence Awards Program and Application Guide)

8. Secondary Categories. Does it meet the criteria of more than one category? If so, please identify one or more category and describe how the project/program meets the criteria.
9. Leadership. Describe the extent to which your local government acted as a leader in the development or implementation of the project/program.
10. Innovation. How does the project/program demonstrate creativity and innovation? Does it contribute to increased efficiency or effectiveness?
11. Partnerships and collaboration. What partnerships supported the project/program? To what extent was collaboration (internal and/or external) evident?
12. Financial management and planning. What is the financial impact of the program/project? Describe any financial practices that support long-term financial planning, value for money and/or economic development.
13. Engagement and communications. How has the program/project been communicated, and what engagement has been foundational to its success? (Internally and/or externally)
14. Transferability. In what way could other local governments in BC learn from or duplicate the process or outcomes of the program/project?
15. Performance measurement: What performance measures, benchmarks and/or standards have been used to demonstrate benefit to the community?
16. Please share any other information you think may help support your submission.

#### Required Attachments

The following attachments will be required to be submitted with the completed Application Worksheet:

- Council, Board or Band Council resolution indicating support for the project to be considered for a 2026 Community Excellence Award. Note: UBCM will accept applications without a resolution, providing the resolution is received by August 14, 2026. Please contact UBCM if the resolution cannot be submitted by the application deadline.
- Five representative photos of the project. Photos should be submitted as JPEG files at a resolution suitable for display.
- Links to any publicly available videos related to the project.