

NO: R119

COUNCIL DATE: July 27, 2020

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **July 23, 2020**

FROM: **General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Culture**

FILE: **0290-01**

SUBJECT: **Update on the Civic Distinction Awards Program**

RECOMMENDATION

The Parks, Recreation & Culture Department recommends that Council:

1. Receive this report for information; and
2. Approve the recommendation to postpone the Civic Distinction Awards until fall 2021 as generally described in this report.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to obtain Council's approval to postpone the Civic Distinction Awards ceremony initially planned to occur on October 22, 2020, until 2021 in response to the impacts of the current COVID-19 pandemic.

BACKGROUND

The Civic Distinction Awards (previously City Awards) acknowledge business and community leaders who have made a major contribution to the City of Surrey in their respective fields. The awards program is indented to feature seven award categories, as follows:

1. Mayor's Choice
2. Design
3. Beautification
4. Environmental
5. Heritage and Art
6. Heart
7. Sport Tourism

Corporate Report R197; 2019 (attached as Appendix "I") discusses the plans for the event proposed in 2020.

DISCUSSION

2020 Event Planning

The proposed event was planned to occur on October 22, 2020 in Council Chambers. There are a number of significant components to planning this prestigious event with the schedule to start eight months in advance. A copy of the 2020 event schedule is attached as Appendix "II". The website for the awards program was scheduled to launch at the end of March and nominations were to open at the beginning of April and set to close for committee consideration on June 5, 2020. Throughout June and July, the nominations are typically reviewed by the various committees and by August 1, 2020, the recommendations for winners are planned to be put forward for Council approval in September. Many of these components were not able to be achieved due to the timing of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts.

COVID-19 Pandemic

In accordance with Provincial Health Orders and the necessary redirection of staff resources during the pandemic, a number of City Committee meetings were cancelled in March, and April as well, the launch of the Civic Distinction Awards marketing campaign was differed. Other required meetings for the coordination of the awards program where participants review the nominations were also cancelled.

Postponing the Event Until 2021

Staffs ability to plan and host this event has been greatly impacted and hindered by the COVID-19 pandemic. At this time, it is very unlikely that the event could be held in-person in October based on the phased approach to recovery as outlined by the Provincial Health Officer and the size of the anticipated guest list estimated at over 200 attendees. Staff propose postponing the Civic Distinction Awards to 2021. The event could be shifted to 2021, keeping to a fall date and allowing for an in-person gathering featuring a reception, formal award presentations, speeches and traditional recognition of winners and nominees. Following the 2021 event, the awards program could continue following a four-year program cycle (next event in 2025).

Postponing the event until 2021 will provide opportunity for staff to plan a prestigious event that can respond to the changing dynamics of the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff are hopeful that the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic may be less in 2021 and will also provide opportunity for more residents to participate and celebrate the major contributions by Surrey's businesses and community leaders.

Alternative Option to host a Virtual Event in 2020

Staff also explored the alternate option to host a virtual event in 2020. Should Council prefer a Virtual Civic Distinction Awards in 2020, Staff could expedite and simplify the nominations process and offer award recipients recognition through an online campaign, a variety of local publications and a video message from Mayor & Council. This version of the awards ceremony would not involve an in-person event and therefore may see savings of approximately \$40,000 through the reduction in logistics required for planning and execution of the event.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The Civic Distinction Awards Program supports the objectives of the City's Sustainability Charter 2.0. In particular, this work relates to Sustainability Charter 2.0 themes of Inclusion, Built Environment & Neighbourhoods, and Education & Culture. Specifically, this program supports the following Desired Outcomes ("DO"):

- Diversity & Accessibility - DO1 – Surrey welcomes, includes, embraces and values the diversity of people who live here.
- Diversity & Accessibility - DO 9 - Surrey supports and celebrates its diverse artists, cultures and community heritage through inclusive festivals, programming and events.
- Community Pride & Engagement - DO20 - Surrey residents are proud of their community.
- Community Pride & Engagement - DO21 - All residents have opportunities to be meaningfully engaged in civic issues and to contribute to community life.
- Community Pride & Engagement - DO23 – Numerous active local clubs, groups and agencies contribute to the community's well-being.

CONCLUSION

This report provides Council with two options to host a Civic Distinction Awards Ceremony. The Parks, Recreation & Culture Department recommends that Council support the recommendation to postpone the Civic Distinction Awards until fall 2021 to provide opportunity to host an event that is significant, safe and provides opportunity to appropriately acknowledge the many contributions by Surrey's businesses and community leaders.

Laurie Cavan
General Manager,
Parks, Recreation & Culture

Appendix "I" – Corporate Report R197; 2019
Appendix "II" - Civic Distinction Award Timeline



CORPORATE REPORT

NO: R197

COUNCIL DATE: October 7, 2019

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: Mayor & Council DATE: October 4, 2019

FROM: General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Culture
General Manager, Planning & Development
Acting General Manager, Engineering FILE: 0350-01

SUBJECT: Enhancing and Renaming the City Awards Program as the Civic Distinction Awards Program

RECOMMENDATION

The Parks, Recreation & Culture Department, Planning & Development Department, and Engineering Department recommend that Council:

- 1. Receive this report for information; and
2. Direct staff to initiate planning and implementation of the next Civic Distinction Awards Program ceremony starting in 2020 as generally described in the 'Award Program Update' section in this report.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with information regarding a recent review of the external-facing awards that the City supports (the "City Awards Program") and to receive Council support to initiate planning and implementation of the next iteration of the Civic Distinction Awards Program.

BACKGROUND

The City facilitates several recognition and award programs that celebrate outstanding individuals, groups and organizations who are dedicated to fostering a culture of care, compassion, inclusiveness, innovation and excellence in Surrey. These recognition and award programs encourage citizen involvement, connectedness, and a shared sense of civic pride.

The City has hosted the City Awards Program ceremony every three years, with award ceremonies previously held at City Hall in 2011, 2014 and 2017. In 2017, the City Awards Program categories included:

Award	Celebrating
Beautiful City Award	Contributions to community beautification
Clean Energy City Award	Innovation in energy conservation and efficiency
Green City Award	Leadership in environmental stewardship
Heart in the City Award	Achievements in social planning
Heritage in the City Award	Excellence in heritage stewardship
New City Design Award	Excellence in urban design and architecture
Sport Tourism in the City Award	Excellence in sport hosting

An overview of each award is detailed in Corporate Report R057; 2017 (Appendix "I") titled "2017 City Awards Program".

In addition to the awards listed above, the City facilitates a number of other annual awards outside of the City Awards Program which include:

- Good Citizen (Citizen of the Year) Award;
- Surrey Civic Treasure Award;
- SASSY (Service Above Self Surrey Youth) Awards (in partnership with the Semiahmoo Rotary Club); and
- Outdoor Sport Volunteer Appreciation Awards.

DISCUSSION

Prior to commencing the planning and implementation process for the next City Awards Program event, staff involved in the City's Emerging Leaders Program ("ELP") conducted a review of the awards program to:

- Identify any duplications or gaps in who the City recognizes through the various awards;
- Support responsible spending and program efficiency;
- Identify opportunities to enhance award prestige and recognition;
- Deepen collaboration opportunities between different City departments and Surrey's citizens; and,
- Ensure the City's recognition and award program aligns with current Civic priorities and initiatives.

Currently the awards are championed by different City departments, and in some cases, outside community groups or agencies. Each award has its own nomination, evaluation and selection process, and several have their own recognition event or ceremony. Final approval of award recipients is given by Council prior to the event.

The level of community awareness associated with each award varies, and there is not a consistent, comprehensive branding approach or civic communication to ensure that award recipients receive the appropriate and much deserved recognition for their significant contribution to the City.

During the review, it was identified that:

- There are benefits to having a lead department oversee each award (provide subject matter expertise, have extensive community contacts to promote award and solicit nominations);
- There are benefits to having a formal ceremony to recognize award recipients (though existing ceremonies could be combined to streamline resources);
- The award ceremony frequency should be moved to a four-year cycle;
- There are opportunities to increase marketing and promotion for the next ceremony that can increase the number of high-quality nominations for each of the award categories;
- There is good value in continuing a separate acknowledgment of each of the following awards: Good Citizen (Citizen of the Year) Award, Service Above Self Surrey Youth (“SASSY”) Award, and the Outdoor Sport Volunteer Appreciation Award; and
- There is an opportunity to add an award category to recognize excellence in contributions towards current civic priorities and initiatives as well as clarify intent and criteria for each award to eliminate duplications / overlaps.

Research was conducted on the current civic award programs at five Canadian municipalities to identify best practices. The Cities of Edmonton, Calgary, Saskatoon, Vancouver, and Brampton were identified as these cities offer major award programs under a single brand, with a streamlined nomination process, and a single annual awards ceremony to recognize recipients. Each award program offers a broad range of award categories, recognizing citizen contributions to a wide spectrum of civic life.

Key learnings from the research include:

- Edmonton and Vancouver offer awards that are specifically focused on current civic priorities and initiatives, where the award recipient is selected by the Mayor and Council.
- City websites include the award description, categories, nomination process and previous winners. Some municipalities allowed online submissions, creating a user-friendly and interactive experience for nominations.
- Budgets to host the awards ceremonies ranged from \$18,000-\$75,000 annually. Taking into consideration the historical three to four-year frequency of Surrey’s City Awards Program, the City’s cost associated with hosting this event are modest compared to other municipalities.

Award Program Update

Based on the above review, the following five key actions were identified to better this event;

1. Enhance Award Communication and Branding;
2. Adopt “Civic Distinction Awards” as the New Program Name;
3. Clarify roles of the Award Review Staff Committee and Move to a Four-Year Frequency; and
4. Update and Streamline Existing Award Categories.

A detailed breakdown of each recommended action is outlined in Appendix “III”.

FUNDING

There is a cost of \$75,000 to develop and administer the City Awards Program. Staff will bring forward a recommendation during the annual budget process to request funding for the City Distinction Awards Program ceremony.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The City Awards Program supports the objectives of the City's Sustainability Charter 2.0. In particular, this work relates to Sustainability Charter 2.0 themes of Inclusion, Built Environment & Neighbourhoods, Ecosystems and Education & Culture. Specifically, this program supports the following Desired Outcomes ("DO"):

- Diversity & Accessibility - DO1 – Surrey welcomes, includes, embraces and values the diversity of people who live here.
- Community Pride & Engagement - DO20 - Surrey residents are proud of their community.
- Community Pride & Engagement - DO21 - All residents have opportunities to be meaningfully engaged in civic issues and to contribute to community life.
- Community Pride & Engagement - DO23 – Numerous active local clubs, groups and agencies contribute to the community's well-being.
- Natural Areas, Biodiversity & Urban Forest - DO4 – Surrey residents support biodiversity conservation and are stewards of natural areas and urban forests on both public and private lands.

CONCLUSION

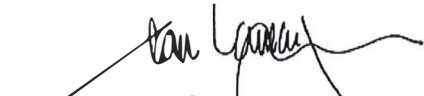
Based on the above discussion, it is recommended that Council direct staff to commence planning and execution of the next iteration of the Civic Distinction Awards Program.



Laurie Cavan
General Manager,
Parks, Recreation & Culture



Scott Neuman, P.Eng.
Acting General Manager,
Engineering



Jean Lamontagne
General Manager,
Planning & Development

Appendix "I" - Corporate Report R057; 2017
Appendix "II" - Community Consultation for Award Awareness
Results Appendix "III" – Detailed Breakdown of Key
Recommendations

Appendices Available Upon Request

Civic Distinction Awards Program – Timeline

