



2017 Community Excellence Awards

Application Form - Partnerships

Please complete and return the application form by **Friday, June 23, 2017**. If you have any questions, contact UBCM at awards@ubcm.ca or (250) 356-5193.

SECTION 1: Applicant Information

Local Government: Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD)

Complete Mailing Address: 45950 Cheam Avenue, Chilliwack, BC V2P 1N6

Contact Person: Dawn Smith

Position: Planner II - Electoral Area Planning

Phone: 604-702-5074

E-mail: dsmith@fvrd.ca

SECTION 2: Staff Contact

An invitation to attend the UBCM Community Excellence Awards Breakfast Reception will be sent out via e-mail in early September. Winners will not be named before the ceremony.

Please provide the contact information for the person in your office who should receive and reply to the invitation, on behalf of the elected officials/staff who will be in attendance at the UBCM Convention.

Staff Contact Person: Dawn Smith

Position: Planner II - Electoral Area Planning

Phone: 604-702-5074

E-mail: dsmith@fvrd.ca

SECTION 3: Project/Program Information

1. Name of the Project/Program:

Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of British Columbia (APEGBC) and Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD) Geo-Hazard Assurance Statement

2. Project/Program Summary. Please provide a summary of your project/program in 150 words or less

The Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD) and the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists (APEGBC) partnered to create an improved geo-hazard assessment review and assurance process. We have streamlined the reporting process and reduced four forms into one. The old process was time consuming for everyone; from the engineer/geoscientist, to the local government and the client. It didn't result in

standardized information, resulting in a lot of back and forth on both sides seeking clarification. All of which bogged the process down.

APEGBC and FVRD worked together over the past 1.5 years to draft a harmonized reporting process that provided:

- clear and consistent expectations
- streamline paperwork – one digital document
- reduce the back and forth, additional site visits, and resulting unexpected costs
- ensure collaboration with other technical reports (eg. Riparian Area Assessments)
- improve review and approval times

The Geo-Hazard Assurance Statement was implemented in phases to allow; (1) focus group trial, (2) Electoral Area wide trial use, and (3) Operational phase. Focus group feedback with APEGBC members provided valuable feedback to improve clarity and remove redundancy in the document. In addition a 'Guide to Geo-Hazard Assurance Statement' was developed to answer common questions and provide guidance to consultants.

3. **Partners.**

A) Please list all the partners involved in this initiative. (no word limit)

Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientist of British Columbia (APEGBC)

Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD)

B) Why did you choose to work with this/these particular partner(s)?

Leading agency representing Professional Engineers (P.Eng) and Professional Geoscientist (P.Geo) in the province. APEGBC shared similar concerns to the FVRD regarding the need for consistent expectations, improved review timelines, and co-ordinating similar requirements - reducing paperwork.

SECTION 4: Project Details

Please answer each question in 250 words or less (our judges value directness and brevity). If you experience difficulty answering a particular question, consider the aspects of your program that may relate to the question and show us how they are linked. Remember to include measurable results whenever possible.

4. Objective. Please explain the decision-making and thought process behind your decision to take on this initiative.

The FVRD is a region of mountains, lakes and rivers. Within our region is complicated and hazardous lands which an increasingly subject to development proposals and density. Ensuring safe development in our approval processes is critical and necessary. However our day to day process of reviewing and approval of key geo-hazard reports was becoming

challenging for the FVRD, consultants and clients/property owners. Increasingly, the FVRD was encountering problems with the process. Therefore in partnership with APEGBC, we sought to meet the following objectives in a re-modeled geo-hazard review process by providing:

- Clear and consistent expectations
- streamline paperwork – one digital document
- reduce the back and forth, additional site visits, and resulting unexpected costs
- ensure collaboration with other technical reports (eg. Riparian Area Assessments)
- improve review and approval times

5. Challenges. Please provide examples of challenges you faced in taking on this program/project and how you overcame them.

Ensuring support within the engineering/geoscientist community was identified critical. Without the member support, the project would be difficult to implement. The partnership with APEGBC provided credibility to the FVRD in this regard. We also recognized that we needed early feedback from industry to test whether the project would find support.

The phased-in approach of introducing the assurance statement was gradual process that gave everyone time to revise the document as we moved along. The Phase 1 - focus group provided insight in whether members supported the concept and what worked and not. With this early insight we amended the document, gained 'champions' out of the four members, and also enhanced our credibility with industry.

6. Goals. What did you set out to accomplish with the program/project? How effectively did you meet your goals?

The project has been well received by the Regional Board, consultants and with FVRD staff who handle development approvals. Geo-hazard reports received to date have been efficiently processed. The FVRD has received positive comments from consultants regarding their experience with the document, and just as important is that it demonstrates that the FVRD is innovating our processes to ensure efficiency.

7. Benefits. Please provide examples of how this program/project benefited the community.

Ensuring safe development in our Electoral Area communities is important to everyone. The geo-hazard reports are critical to that process, however they are lengthy and technical. The new process benefits clients/property owners by reducing costs, local governments benefit by receiving a high quality report that can be used by non-technical audiences, and the consultant benefits by reducing inconsistent or unclear requirements.

8. Innovation. What makes this program/project innovative and creative?

Working together with professional association such as APEGBC to address a matter of public policy is a unique approach in local government. Rather than adding new rules in isolation of each other, the partnership approach built upon the requirements of both agencies to create one document from four and thereby reducing bureaucracy.

9. Sustainability. What measures have you put in place to ensure the continued operation of this initiative? (e.g. staff time, resources, financial)

The FVRD Regional Board has approved the Geo-Hazard Assurance Statement as Board policy with the financial and staff support within the Electoral Area Planning Department. Annual updates or amendments are anticipated to the document to ensure relevancy and improvements.

10. Best Practices. How do the processes behind the program/project, and the subsequent results, serve as an example of best practices?

From a local government perspective, the identification of a partner in APEGBC and their members serves as a reminder that working together on issues of common concern can lead to even better results. While this can add time and complexity to the process, it can often strengthen the result.

11. Transferability. How is this program/project transferable to other local governments?

In approving development such as rezoning, subdivision and building permits, local governments typically receive geo-hazard reports to determine whether the proposal is safe. However identifying geo-hazard report requirements for applicants/consultants and reviewing the technical content is challenging for many local governments. What are the standards? Especially in small to medium local government offices, there is no in-house geo-hazard expertise.

The APEGBC-FVRD identifies clear expectations for the consultant which ensures a quality report and reduces the back and forth of follow up questions, avoiding unnecessary delay and cost. Also the report content is summarized by the consultant in the assurance statement so local government review staff can quickly understand the report and identify key recommendations for permitting.

The assurance form can be transferred for use by any local government with a few local refinements. The assurance form is designed to be transferable so other local governments can implement and a consistent approach is applied across the province.

12. Knowledge Sharing. What helpful advice would you share with other communities looking to embark on a similar project?

Yes, the APEGBC and the FVRD would be pleased to share this information with our communities. The greater use of the Geo-Hazard Assurance Statement creates a consistent approach which improves development approval processes.

The FVRD and APEGBC presented the Geo-hazard Assurance Statement at the 2017 Planning Institute of BC conference in Prince George, and received positive responses from other local governments attending.

13. Additional Information. Please share any other information you think may help support your submission.

APEGBC and the FVRD prepared the Geo-Hazard Assurance Statement with the intention of sharing the document across the province. A consistent approach benefits everyone. Engineers and Geoscientists no longer are uncertain of requirements community to community. Clients/property owners benefit by less back and forth, delay and cost. Local governments benefit by receiving clear, high quality reports that are accessible and concisely written for non-technical staff and resulting approval processes go smoother.

Everyone benefits when development is done safely in hazardous locations.

SECTION 5: Signature

Applications are required to be signed by an authorized representative of the applicant.

Name: Dawn Smith

Title: Planner II

Signature:

Date:

Applications should be submitted as Word or PDF files. If you choose to submit your application by e-mail, hard copies do not need to follow.

Submit applications to Local Government Program Services, Union of BC Municipalities

E-mail: awards@ubcm.ca or mail: 525 Government Street, Victoria, BC, V8V 0A8