

Community Excellence Awards 2018 Application Form

Please complete and return the application form by Friday, May 25, 2018. All questions are required to be answered by typing directly in this form. If you have any questions, contact awards@ubcm.ca or (250) 356-5193.

SECTION 1: Applicant Information

Local Government: Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (RDBN)

Complete Mailing Address: PO Box 820, Burns Lake, BC, V0J 1E0

Contact Person: Jason Llewellyn, MCIP, RPP

Position: Director of Planning

Phone: 250-692-1225

E-mail: jason.llewellyn@rdbn.bc.ca

SECTION 2: Category

- Excellence in Governance.** *Governance processes or 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.*
- Excellence in Service Delivery.** *Projects/programs that provide effective services in a proactive manner, demonstrate benefit to the community, and utilize performance measures, benchmarks and standards to ensure sustainable service delivery.*
- Excellence in Asset Management.** *Projects/programs that demonstrate a comprehensive system of asset management policies and practices, meeting and/or exceeding accepted best practices.*
- Excellence in Sustainability.** *Projects/programs that incorporate a long-term sustainability lens by considering cultural, social, economic and environmental issues in planning, policy and practice.*

SECTION 3: Project/Program Details

1. Name of the Project/Program:

Village of Burns Lake, and Electoral Areas B and E, joint Official Community Plan Review.

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

In 2016-2017 the RDBN, in conjunction with the Village of Burns Lake, undertook a joint review of the RDBN's Official Community Plan (OCP) for Electoral Areas B and E, and the OCP for the Village of Burns Lake. This project involved RDBN planning staff leading the process to review and develop the municipal OCP on a contract basis at the same time as they reviewed the OCP for the rural area adjacent to the municipality.

"Burns Lake Rural and Francois Lake (North Shore) Rural Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 1785, 2017" and "Village of Burns Lake Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 970, 2017" were both adopted in 2017.

3. Demonstrating Excellence. Please describe how your project/program demonstrates excellence in meeting the purposes of local government in BC and provides promising practices for others to follow.

The project involved the RDBN and the Village of Burns Lake cooperating in the sharing of staff expertise and the merging of land use and development planning processes, resulting in the provision of improved planning services to the regions' residents.

The project allowed the RDBN planners to effectively and efficiently research, understand, and plan for the land use and development issues that exist in the region and overlap jurisdictions. This ensured that the goals, objectives, and policies of both OCPs were coordinated, complimentary, and consistent. The result is improved land use and development planning, and an improved working relationship between the Village of Burns Lake and the RDBN.

The project increased local capacity to deal with planning issues while achieving cost savings. These reduced costs allowed the municipality to undertake land use planning in a more timely manner utilizing local Registered Professional Planners with regional knowledge and understanding.

The project allowed for the sharing of resources, and coordination of processes allowing both the RDBN and the Village of Burns Lake to provide a higher level of service in a cost effective manner. For example, single public meetings were held for both the rural and municipal OCPs, and there were multiple opportunities for shared advertising and promotion.

Small municipalities in the north typically do not have Registered Professional Planners on staff given existing financial constraints. Planning work for small municipalities is commonly performed by staff whose training is primarily in another field. Often larger projects require the hiring of consultants from outside of the region who are hired at notable expense. This project demonstrates how jurisdictions can cooperate to share staff expertise, take advantage of the efficiencies associated with increased collaboration, and benefit from addressing challenges in a coordinated manner.

Given the success of the project the RDBN and the Village of Fraser Lake have embarked on a similar joint OCP-review process utilizing the RDBN's Registered Professional Planners.

4. Category Criteria.

A. Please describe how your project/program meets the objectives of the category you have applied under. Refer to S. 3 of the Program & Application Guide.

Excellence in Service Delivery

The project resulted in the Village of Burns Lake and the RDBN adopting OCPs which approach land use and development in a highly coordinated, complimentary, and cooperative manner. This results in improved land use and development planning services to both rural and urban residents.

The process of jointly reviewing the Electoral Area's and the municipality's OCPs, and the holding of combined public input processes for both plans, facilitated the understanding of land use issues independent of jurisdictional boundaries. This increased understanding of the need of cooperation, and the interrelationship between urban and rural land use. The outcome was improved land use and development planning services to both rural and urban residents.

The project resulted in the Village of Burns Lake utilizing the RDBN's Registered Professional Planning staff to lead their OCP review process on a cost recovery basis. This reduced cost allowed the Village's OCP review to be completed in a timely manner, and allowed the Village to sooner act on the priority actions identified in the plan.

Given the success of the project, and the demonstration of the benefits of undertaking joint municipal and rural OCP reviews, the process is being repeated in conjunction with the Village of Fraser Lake, and it is anticipated that the process may continue in other areas of the region. The expected result is that the RDBN, and its member municipalities, will be able to maintain regularly updated and coordinated OCPs for the entire region.

B. In many cases projects may meet the criteria of more than one category. If applicable, please describe how your project meets the criteria of one or more other categories.

SECTION 4: Program Criteria

5. Leadership. Describe the extent to which your local government acted as a local or regional leader in the development or implementation of the project/program.

In 2015 the RDBN recognized the challenges experienced by its member municipalities in providing land use planning services to its residents as the cost of retaining Registered Professional Planners on staff may not be practical. The RDBN demonstrated leadership by undertaking a study to evaluate the most critical planning needs for each municipality, and the municipal interest in obtaining land use planning service from the RDBN. The study demonstrated that the priority municipal need involved updating of the municipal OCPs.

The RDBN again took a leadership role in proposing to the Village of Burns Lake that they work with the RDBN on a pilot project involving a joint review of the municipal OCP with the OCP for the surrounding rural area, with the RDBN offering to lead the

municipal OCP review process on a cost recovery basis. The Village agreed with the proposal and worked closely with the RDBN to make the project a success.

The RDBN subsequently made a similar offer to the Village of Fraser Lake. The RDBN and the village are currently working together on a joint review of the municipal OCP with the OCP for the surrounding rural area, with the RDBN's planners leading the municipal OCP review process on a cost recovery basis.

6. Partnerships and collaboration. Describe the breadth and depth of community and/or regional partnerships that supported the project/program and the extent to which internal and/or external collaboration was evident.

The joint OCP review process involved very close collaboration and coordination. RDBN planning staff provided overall project management, made land use and process recommendations to the Village Council, lead the public consultation processes, managed the issue evaluation process, and prepared the draft OCP text and mapping. Village staff provided technical expertise regarding public works, engineering, and other issues, provided clerical support, took a lead role in facilitating public engagement and notification, and provided advice from an administrative perspective.

This integrated process involved a high level of commitment to ensure cooperation and coordination to best take advantage of the opportunities that the project offered. This collaboration was particularly important to the success of the project given that the RDBN was also concurrently working on the rural OCP. The project required that the review process for both OCPs proceeded at a coordinated pace so that the advantages and benefits associated with combined public consultation events, advertising, and other cost sharing opportunities could be realized.

The required collaboration was achieved, as were the benefits.

7. Innovation and promising practices. Describe the degree to which the project/program demonstrated creativity and innovation, and contributed to increased efficiency or effectiveness.

The high level of cooperation and trust required to make the project a success is notable. Addressing land use and development issues can be controversial and there are many opportunities for conflict and disagreement. This is particularly the case when the land use issues are viewed from either an urban or a rural lens. The Village of Burns Lake trusted that the RDBN led process would properly represent the municipality's interests in the event of disagreement, and both parties were required to view the area's land use issues from a regional perspective.

This level of cooperation on land use planning issues, outside of the formalized Regional Growth Strategy process, is unique and innovative. This high level cooperation in the undertaking of a joint OCP review process resulted in improved service delivery, cost savings, improved relationships, and increased understanding between jurisdictions. It is an example of both increased efficiency and increased effectiveness.

8. Public engagement and communications. Describe the extent to which public engagement was foundational to the success of the project/program, including the use of communication tools such as social media.

Public engagement and communications with First Nations and stakeholder groups is a critical component of any successful OCP development process. An OCP should accurately represent a community's vision regarding the manner in which it develops over time. Accurately representing this vision in an OCP requires meaningful public engagement. The combined public consultation opportunities allowed by the project facilitated improved public consultation opportunities. Rural residents were encouraged to comment on the municipal OCP and municipal residents were encouraged to comment on the rural OCP. All residents were encouraged to consider land use issues and the function of the community independent of jurisdictional boundaries. This fostered a better understanding of the issues, and an improved sense of community and cooperation. This in turn assisted local government staff and elected officials to take a regional approach in consideration of land use issues.

The joint OCP review process, lead by RDBN planning staff facilitated improved engagement with First Nations and stakeholder groups. RDBN Planning staff engaged with First Nations and stakeholders in meetings that discussed specific land use issues involving both the municipal and rural OCPs. This simplified the consultation processes, encouraged the local governments to present a unified position on land use issues, and facilitated the identification of mutually acceptable resolutions to land use and development related issues.

The joint OCP review process involved the following public consultation processes.

- The distribution of a public survey.
- The holding of a series of open houses in the municipality and the rural area.
- The establishment of a public advisory group.
- Formal written referrals, followed by in person follow up, to local First Nations, community groups, and stakeholders.
- Various meetings were arranged with First Nations and stakeholder groups.
- A total of 2 public hearings for the municipal OCP and 1 for the rural OCP.

The public engagement opportunities were widely advertized by twitter, facebook, and local government web sites.

9. Transferability. Describe the degree to which the process or outcomes of the project, or other learnings, could be conveyed to other UBCM members.

The lessons learned from this project can be of value to UBCM members that are challenged with capacity related issues. The project has demonstrated that there is opportunity for smaller local governments to cooperate to a greater degree in providing services, strategically developing areas of expertise, and sharing resources. This collaboration can be expected to be of increased importance as the responsibilities of local governments become more complex, and resources become increasingly stretched.

The project has also demonstrated that increased cooperation can improve service delivery, facilitate a greater understanding between jurisdictions, and create opportunities for further collaboration.

SECTION 5: Additional Information

10. Please share any other information you think may help support your submission.

"Burns Lake Rural and Francois Lake (North Shore) Rural Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 1785, 2017" and "Village of Burns Lake Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 970, 2017" are submitted with this application.

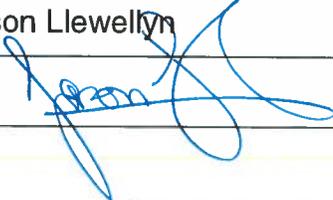
Also submitted is a letter of support and gratitude from the Village of Burns Lake.

SECTION 6: Signature

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

Name: Jason Llewellyn

Title: Director of Planning

Signature: 

Date: May 25, 2018

All applicants are required to submit:

- Signed application form. Applications should be submitted as Word or PDF files.
- Five representatives photos of the project. Photos should be submitted as JPEG 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

Mail: 525 Government Street, Victoria, BC, V8V 0A8