

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: City of Trail	Complete Mailing Address: 1394 Pine Avenue
Contact Person: David Perehudoff	Position: Chief Administrative Officer
Phone: 250-364-1262	E-mail: dperehudoff@trail.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:**
Trail Riverfront Centre

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

The Trail Riverfront Centre is a unique integrated cultural and education facility that houses a regional library, museum and archives as well as the Visitor Information Centre (VIC). The innovative design of the two story building results in a seamless service environment where all employees in the facility have been trained to offer support to users in all service areas. More information can be found at: http://www.trail.ca/en/Trail_Riverfront_Centre.asp?_mid_=15999

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 Trail & District Library was in excess of 60 years old and the vintage and design of the space greatly limited use and the programs that could be offered, even though there was strong demand for services; especially for children, youth and other types of programming. The museum operated out of a very small room in the City's arena, was completely substandard and unable to fully display the rich history of the area that for the most part was "lost" in storage. As an example of the public response in demonstrating excellence, the Riverfront Centre has been open almost 2 months and attendance through the upper museum galleries already exceeds 10,000 visits and this represents more visits than the old facility saw in TEN years.

The Riverfront Centre's final capital construction budget was \$8.2 million. The initial cost estimated increased when a decision was made to fully integrate the design. The building was also designed with an innovative rotated top floor that allows patrons to enjoy the beauty of the Columbia River and the new Columbia River Skywalk (<http://www.trail.ca/en/inside-city-hall/ColumbiaRiverSkywalk.asp>) as they sit and enjoy a book or visit with a friend.

Financing was arranged as part of two separate loan authorization bylaws, both of which received the consent of the electorate. The major industrial taxpayer in Trail, Teck Metals Ltd., agreed to be directly responsible for the debt servicing costs on a \$1.096 million debenture to be repaid over 10 years. Teck also provided a cash contribution of \$500,000 to reduce the net borrowing and their annual cost to repay the debenture. In addition, the Columbia Basin Trust contributed \$500,000. The facility's stakeholder groups were able to raise another \$400,000, primarily from the community.

Libraries serve a broad spectrum of the community and is a fully inclusive service. There is a demonstrated high demand for these types of services and the Trail library currently has issued almost 6,000 library cards, with almost 25% being BC One Cards, with the City serving non-residents who have their primary library card in another facility. The library has issued hundred of new cards since the facility has opened. By comparison, other similar size libraries do not experience this type of membership, demonstrating the quality of the service being provided.

As far as best practices go, the following are some critical considerations that had to be addressed in this context:

> The City lead the planning associated with ensuring appropriate staff training was provided and led the development of an Operations Manual for staff at the facility that provides guidance to address the majority of situations that may occur in the facility.

While the City lead this, input from the library and museum was critical to the successful outcome and ongoing use of this very important operating document.

> The City worked with the local Historical Society who had an office in City Hall. The parties entered into a Memorandum of Agreement that defines the relationship between the two organizations. The Society retains title to the collection and allows the City to use it under the agreement. Based on what the City was trying to achieve, other operating models were considered as part of identifying the "best practice". The City modeled an agreement that was used by another BC community. For the City, the agreement became necessary when the integrated option was selected and the organizational structure had to be created offering the most effective service delivery that also considered the shortcomings and sustainability risk of the Society. After this analysis was completed, the current employee of the Trail Historical Society was hired by the City in the position of Museum and Archives Manager (exempt), who also manages the Visitor Information Centre.

> The City had a longstanding service contract with the Chamber of Commerce to manage and operate the VIC on the City's behalf but their location was less than ideal and visitors had a difficultly finding and gaining access to their second story office in a strip mall. In consultation with the Chamber, the City decided to integrate this service and deliver it from the Riverfront Centre. The Riverfront Centre offers a superior location, accessible parking and takes full advantage of the other offerings in the facility. The City did not renew the \$65,000 fee for service contract with the Chamber as part of gaining further efficiency and effectiveness. Trail Council approved a \$10,000 grant to the Chamber for 2018 to deal with any organization transitioning and costs the Chamber may have had to deal with as a result of two agreements not being renewed.

> The City also retained a third party consultant to assist with the initial work associated with finalizing the integration model and to assist City staff to complete all necessary plans and documents so the facility could be open and would run effectively. Several members of City staff with specific expertise also assisted so there was strong understanding and ownership as part of enhancing sustainability.

> The Chamber of Commerce also retained a fee for service contract to run the City's campground and decided not to submit a proposal to run it in 2018 with the loss of the VIC contract and the need to restructure as a result. The City therefore assumed the operational responsibility for the campground and has integrated the operations and reservation system internally. The City has managed to hire an onsite attendant and this has resulted in improved reservations and notably longer stays once someone checks in. This will result in further financial gains to the City and came about as a result of the Riverfront Centre project and the administrative changes that were required.

> All necessary Union job descriptions were either amended or newly developed, shared with the Union, positions approved and posted as required. Besides the one full-time manager, the City retained a part-time archivist and several seasonal summer student positions who provide VIC service. The City applied for grants to offset this cost and were successful in obtaining grants both federally and locally.

>The City also assessed various support services required and made the decision to contract out the janitorial service at considerable financial savings when comparing directly to providing the service in house. Besides the janitorial contract, the City extended other building service contracts or hired additional contractors as required.

>The City retained a third party project manager who provided valuable services in dealing with the capital budget development, hiring the architect and prime contractor and then being the interface between the contractors and City as part of managing schedule and costs. The Project Manager reported to the CAO and would meet directly with the Building Committee. The Committee was charged with providing project direction, oversight and certain stakeholders were involved directly with interior design and programming of space. The Committee was comprised of several members of Council, various City staff, the Library Director, two library Board representatives and the President of the Historical Society and staff member (later hired directly by the City).

> The City undertook an intense review of the final operating budgets, recognizing that fully integrating Year 1 operational costs into the City's budget would result in a more significant increase in property taxes. The City was able to minimize increases in the budget in other areas as a way of mitigating the net impact recognizing the public's intolerance for ongoing increases in any form of tax.

> All Riverfront Centre service areas have been requested to provide the City with quarterly reports that will be consolidated with the report that is provided to Council and the public every three months. This will improve accountability as part of reporting on key performance indicators and benchmarks that are now in development.

> The Centre includes a gift shop and this has proved to be successful with the shop stocking Trail Smoke Eaters and other historical memorabilia. The revenue realized directly offsets costs and reduces the net property tax deficit. With the recent success of the current hockey club, the retro gear is in high demand and the City has a trademark on the Smoke Eater logo to protect this against unauthorized use for the purpose of maximizing sales revenue.

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.

The application is made for excellence in service delivery in consideration of the significant improvements and modernization of services that are now provided. While the library is not necessarily a core service in the pure sense, it is surely valued by the public and is seen to be critically important service in most municipalities.

Once the plan and construction budget was finalized, the Riverfront Centre was built within the approved level of funding and was only slightly delayed due to extreme winter conditions experienced in the year preceding. The modern facility, is strategically located downtown, adjacent the Columbia River and provides a direct connection to a sidewalk that includes a one-mile walking loop where a visitor can cross the Columbia on foot over two different bridges and return back to the Riverfront Centre.

The City is also experiencing considerable private sector investment. Currently an historic hotel that has been closed for years that is located a block away from the Riverfront Centre is being renovated. The estimated \$5 million private investment will see the City with a higher-end "boutique hotel" and conference Centre directly in the downtown core. There has also been a recent significant private investment of several million dollars by an investor who purchased the City's Junior A Hockey Club. In addition, a microbrewery, which is also located in the City's downtown core, along with several other new and interesting businesses have recently been established.

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.

It is also suggested this project meets the criteria for Excellence in Sustainability. The construction of the new building focused the City's attention towards the various services that would be provided out of the facility and at identified several that may have run into operational difficulties in the future. There was no question that the Trail Historical Society, with its current Board made of individuals, many of who exceed the age of 70 years old, was not sustainable and adjustments would need to be made to protect the important heritage of the City. The new facility forced both parties to take a close look at this and while there was not unanimous agreement of the need to make the transition, which lead the previous President of the Society's resignation, the Society is already seeing the benefits of the new structure and this much improved service is well positioned for the future. Sustainability is no longer seen to be an immediate risk or a concern.

In addition, while Council appoints a member to sit on the Library Board, the integration brought the library and City together and surely enlightened many people in terms of the services and challenges that the library faces. The City at this time is taking a more direct approach as part of assisting the library to move forward to address the new challenges the facility and public service demand creates.

As described, the facility is seen to be an economic anchor in the downtown and the City is already seeing spinoff benefits as a results. The downtown is also home to a 600-seat performing arts centre where the City has now successfully created a cultural hub with the Royal Theatre also in close proximity. The Royal not only shows commercial productions but also broadcasts special shows and productions, including the ballet. This clustering results in considerable activity and many local businesses have been very satisfied with the significantly increased level of activity.

From a social perspective, the facility is fully accessible and there are no charges associated with using the services. This opens up valuable services to all segments of the community and this is very much appreciated by those who may not otherwise have access to a computer or local paper. In addition, the facility by its nature is a community gathering place and provides a venue for people from all walks of life to come together in this positive and educational setting.

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.

The previous and current Council as well as City Administration were very proactive as part of advancing the original project and seeing the main source of funding get approved.

The Rivefront Centre development and where it is located is consistent with the Trail Downtown Plan that was developed over a decade ago. Since the plan was approved,

the City has proceeded with numerous capital projects and other initiatives (i.e. property tax relief for new commercial development) that have resulted in a renewed energy and confidence in the community. The City also strategically assembled property in the downtown so a development of this nature could proceed. This has resulted in positive urban renewal as many derelict properties are being demolished.

The development of the Downtown Plan at a time when the City was experiencing a lull and general erosion of the downtown was in retrospect a significant decision. The development of a more comprehensive vision is seen to be an important part of community leadership. The Downtown Plan, also resulted in the formation of the Downtown Opportunities and Action Committee (DOAC), a Committee that was comprised of some 21 individuals who represented organizations with a vested interest in the downtown and the City. Through this collaborative effort and demonstrated vision, the public were fully onboard and over the last five years the City has spent some \$25 million on new infrastructure in support of the vision. As noted above, the City is seeing significant benefits and most recently saw the most significant growth in its assessment roll since some 8 years ago. The downtown also hosts several significant public events each year and much of what is in existence now also comes from the formative work and continued relationship with members of the DOAC.

The Trail Riverfront Centre is truly a regional asset and the current use demonstrates this. The City does have an operating agreement with the Village of Warfield who provide some funding to offset the operating cost. The City sees the facility as a key anchor that will draw people in from near and far and this is clearly resulting in increased economic spinoff activity as a result.

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.

As the owner of the land and the service provider, collaboration and partnerships became important as part of the various funding raising initiatives that were undertaken. The City and building stakeholders connected with various businesses, service clubs and individuals who were advised about the building and the opportunity to support it. The City received enormous support as previously indicated. The Rotary Club made a significant donation and a room in the facility is named after this organization.

Collaboration was critically important in this development. There was scarce space and competing needs. The stakeholders worked with the City and came up with compromises to the benefit of the facility. Where possible, spaces are shared (offices, meeting rooms, lunchroom etc.) which allowed for more programmable space.

Through the implementation of the integrated service model, it has also enhanced the need to collaborate on an ongoing basis. The City believe the organization is stronger given the broadening of job descriptions that result in better-trained and more highly skilled public servants.

The stakeholders are now seeking out more partnership opportunities and most recently became involved with the BC Teachers in training and have secured a “student” to develop additional programming at the facility for the museum. The museum is already hosting different school groups and having a better-defined program is now being developed.

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 full integration of services of this nature is not common practice and where communities do provide the services, they are typically provided as part of a “traditional model” in different locations. While there was some initial concern associated with the plan to intermingle the stacks with the galleries, so far the response has been overwhelmingly positive. This also provides an opportunity to enhance service, when library books associated with special historical displays can be relocated in the immediate area as part of providing further information to those that may be interested in the specific topic being feature in display. This will also include traveling displays the facility will host.

The City does not charge an admission fee but does have opportunities for people to donate in the facility. Donations have been very strong to date and demonstrate that the users of the facility see value. The City did not want admission to be a barrier to people using the facility and further recognized with the library integration that charging an entry fee could be difficult to control based on the design.

The consolidation of services enhances what the City can provide (i.e. improved operating hours for both organizations) but results in considerable financial savings when providing service in one structure versus two. Further, for the end user, the experience is much more immersive and as a result, the facility sees considerable repeat traffic.

A bi-weekly Stakeholder Meeting is held and several more senior City administrators attend along with the Museum and Archives Manager. These meetings address any integration issues, building operations and scheduling, future use, maintenance needs and a review of customer comment cards. The integration has resulted in improved relations and understanding of the different organizations, challenges and individuals involved.

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.

The City of Trail has a Communication and Events Coordinator on staff. One of her core functions is to work with Council, City staff and external groups (when appropriate) to oversee any public engagement and communication programs.

Given the significance of the proposal and expenditure, not only with respect to the initial capital investment but the ongoing operating expenses, public engagement was viewed to be critical. In this regard, the City has found it most effective to communicate through its website, automated emailing system and social media platforms. The City has 3,350 follower on its Facebook page and many postings are liked or shared to increase the audience further. The City has a policy as it pertains receiving public

comments on its Facebook page and will typically publish a public post when it is deemed acceptable and also endeavors to answer any questions either posed directly or through social media.

The City also participated in a bi-weekly market in the downtown. The City's booth provided conceptual drawings and offered the public the opportunity to engage directly with Council and staff at a more informal venue, which resulted in hundreds of members of the public gaining a solid understanding of the project and its merits.

The City provided the public with information as part of its quarterly newsletter and did what was reasonably possible to ensure that the referendum remained top of mind and that any false information was addressed so the narrative always remained positive. The City is currently observing a process in a neighbouring community where a special interest group seems to be controlling a lot of the dialogue with the local government perhaps not adequately responding. In anticipation of a similar response in Trail, the City outlined a communication strategy and associated budget for the project as part of controlling the narrative.

The City's communication strategy is thought to be effective given the lack of controversy and all the positive feedback that has now been received that seemingly substantiates this claim.

SECTION 5: Additional Information

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

Discussions associated with the development of a new facility in Trail had gone on for some 20 years or more until this development finally came to fruition. The City was initially challenged to advance a project that the public would support and carefully considered all feedback received over the extended development timeline that saw several other options being presented to the public, only to fail. The project scope, including the organizations that would work out of the facility were adjusted based on feedback and public consultation (i.e. eliminate City Hall). The City believed it had put forward the project that had the highest chance of success at the referendum stage that was held as part of the last local government election to obtain the required borrowing authority. The referendum was strategically included with the local government election in the hopes that voter turnout would be more representative of the "public" than a separate referendum that could return a different result with considerably fewer people voting. The referendum successfully passed with 61% of the 49% of the electors who voted, being in favour of the project.

With borrowing authority in place, the City took a rather methodical approach in terms of assessing the best options as part of trying to take all reasonable action to ensure that the final project comes in on time and within budget. Despite some political pressure to commence the project immediately following the last local government election, the City

made sure all matters were considered and the necessary governance model for project management was put in place. Not only did Council remain fully engaged in the project, it also ensured the public was aware of how the project was advancing.

The City provided ongoing information to the local media during planning and construction. The City also installed a construction cam so anyone in the world could watch the facility being constructed each day. This also added to the excitement and the building slowly took shape.

SECTION 6: Signature

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

Name: David Perehudoff

Title: Chief Administrative Officer

Signature:



Date: May 24, 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