

# 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 Delta

Complete Mailing Address: 4500 Clarence Taylor Crescent, Delta, BC, V4K 3E2

Contact Person: Sean McGill

Position: Director of Corporate Services

Phone: 604-946-3218

E-mail: smcgill@delta.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:**

Birds and Biodiversity Conservation Strategy

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

The Birds and Biodiversity Conservation Strategy envisions that Delta's globally significant bird populations, unique biodiversity, and ecological functions are protected and enhanced for future generations. The intention of the Strategy is to identify, protect, enhance, and monitor habitat and biodiversity within the diverse landscapes of Delta (e.g. urban, agricultural, industrial, and natural areas).

The goals of the Strategy are as follows:

1. Delta's habitats are protected, enhanced, and resilient
2. The community understands and values Delta's natural resources
3. Collaborative partnerships are fostered with a shared vision for biodiversity protection and enhancement
4. Delta and the Fraser River Estuary are established as a world-class centre for birds and biodiversity
5. Delta works to conserve its heritage as a working landscape that is significant for birds and biodiversity

**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.

Having good biodiversity across the landscape means that ecosystems are sufficiently intact, a range of native species exist, and that species population dynamics are healthy. A biologically diverse landscape tends to be healthier because the diversity makes ecosystems more sustainable and resilient to changes both natural and human-caused disturbances. Within the municipality of Delta, large expanses of wetlands, estuarine, and upland habitats exist which support the largest wintering populations of waterfowl, shorebirds, and birds of prey in Canada. While the importance of the delta/estuary is recognized through various designations (RAMSAR, Important Bird Area, Wildlife Management Areas, and Western Hemisphere Shorebird Network) there are also opportunities to increase the survival of songbirds, which are in decline according to Bird Studies Canada. Thus Delta's Strategy has a unique focus on birds and their habitat. Recognizing the role Delta plays in sustaining these populations and the implications they can have on our residents and landowners Delta is looking to foster stewardship and appreciation of the environmental services our landscape provides.

The Strategy provides an opportunity to review current policies and programs and tie them into one comprehensive document in support of environmental commitments identified in the official community plan. The Strategy identifies new initiatives and will provide focus and clarity across departments to reduce the duplication of efforts and resources, and missed opportunities. The cornerstone of the Birds and Biodiversity Conservation Strategy is the Framework for Action, which lists the different objectives and associated strategies and actions needed to achieve them. Various departments will take the lead on assigned actions to work together towards achieving the objectives. This will be done through various policy and bylaw reviews, inventory and mapping,

development of best management practices, education and awareness, and communication. Delta staff are proud to have prepared this Strategy in-house.

It is our hope that this Strategy provides an example for other communities that wish to highlight and protect habitat for valued wildlife in Canada.

#### **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.

Delta's Birds and Biodiversity Conservation Strategy fits well under the Excellence in Sustainability category. The Strategy focuses on the protection and enhancement of habitat for birds and wildlife in Delta. The strategy ties together current programs and identifies new initiatives to provide clarity and direction for Delta and its partners moving forward. Adding a biodiversity lens onto Delta initiatives will allow Delta to grow and prosper and continue to provide excellent services without compromising the environmental attributes Delta is known for. It aims to ensure that globally significant bird populations are protected for future generations while it recognizes that the agricultural areas the birds use as habitat are part of Delta's heritage. It is a working landscape where the needs of humans and wildlife can both be met by implementing creative solutions. Throughout the strategy there is a strong reliance on community outreach, engagement, and education to foster stewardship of our natural assets and support for environmental policies and programs focused on protecting and enhancing biodiversity and habitat within Delta.

**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.

Delta has long recognized the value of wildlife and its habitat in our municipality. Over two decades ago, a rural land use strategy was developed in consultation with the community. The Birds and Biodiversity Conservation Strategy updates that previous strategy and ensures that the earlier good work of community groups is not lost over time.

The Delta Naturalists Society first proposed the idea of a birds and biodiversity strategy to the municipality. Delta Council, recognizing the importance of protecting wildlife habitat, was very supportive of the proposal and directed staff to undertake community consultation and develop a conservation strategy. At the staff level, several Delta departments were involved in providing input and reviewing the Strategy to ensure that the Framework for Action was realistic and achievable.

**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 development of the Birds and Biodiversity Conservation Strategy was informed through discussions with the Delta Naturalists Society, environmental community groups, the agricultural community, tourism and business associations, federal and regional government staff, and Delta staff from multiple departments. Three professionally facilitated workshops were held with these stakeholders to discuss the key elements that are critical for Delta's biodiversity, develop goals, and draft a list of action-oriented tasks. At the staff level, several Delta departments were involved in providing input and reviewing the Strategy to ensure that the Framework for Action was realistic and achievable.

The importance of partnership and collaboration are highlighted throughout the document. Community collaboration was included in the Strategy's mission and is listed as one of its values. One of the goals of the strategy is that collaborative partnerships are fostered with a shared vision for biodiversity an enhancement with the objective to expand current partnerships and working relations as well as foster new one with other community organizations. The ongoing collaboration and partnering with external and internal stakeholders will provide increased opportunities to reach the strategy's goals while meeting the local government mandate.

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

Unlike other municipal nature conservation strategies, Delta's Birds and Biodiversity Conservation Strategy has a unique focus on birds. Within the municipality of Delta, large expanses of wetlands, estuarine, and upland habitats exist which support the largest wintering populations of waterfowl, shorebirds, and birds of prey in Canada. Delta is also home to old field habitats, forested areas, and watercourse corridors that support a range of wildlife. It was the desire of local environmental groups and Delta staff that these highly valued bird populations receive the recognition and protection that they deserve.

**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 is one of the foundations of the Strategy. Apart from the stakeholder consultation (see #6 above) that was fundamental in developing the Strategy, three of the five goals of the Strategy focus on public engagement. One of these goals is to ensure that the local and regional community becomes aware of the unique and globally significant nature of Delta's habitats and bird populations, because education and awareness ultimately lead to respect of natural areas and wildlife. Another key goal is to foster a strong connection with community groups and assist them in promoting the value of Delta's natural areas. A third goal focuses on showcasing the world-class quality of Delta's natural assets to an international audience.

During the development of the Strategy there were already opportunities to take action on this goal. Delta was able to work with the contraveners of the 2018 International Ornithological Congress, being held in Vancouver in August 2018, to support birding tours to be held in Delta. Delta is also able to partner with the local tourism organization to promote Delta through a booth at the event.

In addition, a grant from Environment and Climate Change Canada was received while the strategy was still in development because there was such great support from local Canadian Wildlife Service staff. This allowed for a recent workshop on innovative funding for agricultural producers who are impacted by migrating birds that use their land during winter migration. A communication strategy to increase the awareness and appreciation for Delta's environment and the role agricultural lands play in biodiversity conservation has also been started through this fund.

When it was launched this past winter, the Strategy was placed on Delta's website, reported to Delta Council on live television, and shared with the public on social media (Facebook and Twitter). Bus shelter ads and bird focused street banners highlighting Delta's role in the pacific flyway are being developed with community partners as well.

**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 Birds and Biodiversity Conservation Strategy has been made publicly available on social media and Delta's website. Yearly council reports on implementation will be submitted to Mayor and Council which will be publicly available. We have also presented the Strategy to environmental managers of municipalities in Metro Vancouver at a meeting of the Municipal Environmental Managers Committee.

## SECTION 5: Additional Information

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

Website Link: [Http://www.delta.ca/environment-sustainability/plants-wildlife/birds](http://www.delta.ca/environment-sustainability/plants-wildlife/birds)

Strategy Document Link: <http://www.delta.ca/docs/default-source/climate-action-environment/finalbbcs---draftfeb2018.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

## SECTION 6: Signature

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

Name: Sean McGill

Title: Director of Corporate Services

Signature:



Date: May 25, 2018

All applicants are required to submit:

- Signed application form. Applications should be submitted as Word or PDF files.
- Five representative 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](mailto:awards@ubcm.ca)

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