

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 East Kootenay

Complete Mailing Address: 19 - 24th Avenue South, Cranbrook, BC V1C 3H8

Contact Person: Andrew McLeod

Position: Planning & Development Services Manager

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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:

Accelerate Kootenays

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

Accelerate Kootenays is Canada's first community-driven, collaborative strategy to build a clean transportation network. This 2-year, \$1.8 million initiative of the Regional Districts of East Kootenay, Central Kootenay and Kootenay-Boundary has funding and implementation support from Columbia Basin Trust, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Province of BC, FortisBC, BC Hydro and Teck. The project has created an electric vehicle (EV) charging station network to address a key infrastructure gap in BC.

With charging stations in place, the long-term impacts and benefits of the initiative include:

- Reduced transportation emissions;
- Action on local climate commitments; and
- Enhanced tourism and economic development.

The strategy, inspired by a vision of the Highway 3 Mayors' and Chairs' Coalition and initiated by the 3 Kootenay Regional Districts, exemplifies a collaborative approach to tackling local challenges of transportation emissions in a way that delivers numerous co-benefits to communities region-wide.

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 purpose of a local government is providing services equitably and at the proper scale; allowing for evolution and adaptation for new technology; working collectively rather than individually to be most effective and efficient; and ensuring accountability to the residents served. Local governments plan and shape their communities by exercising forward thinking and vision and implementing these plans and strategies.

Accelerate Kootenays is an example of excellence in meeting the purpose of local government. The project implemented a strategy to provide a robust network of public electric vehicle charging stations in rural British Columbia and, using the lessons learned from program delivery, created a replicable program for the rest of rural BC.

Accelerate Kootenays used a regional collaborative approach to provide public charging infrastructure for residential and tourist use. This cooperative approach allowed for efficiency so individual municipalities did not have to "reinvent the wheel" or waste resources on researching, choosing and implementing station infrastructure. This uniform regional approach has further become an economic tourism brand.

The impetus for this "lead by example" project is to reduce community wide GHG emissions in the transportation sector, a vision and plan for excellence by the three Kootenay Regional Districts. The collaborative approach was designed to be replicable, and indeed, is being pursued now by a collaboration of five Regional Districts in northern BC, replicating and modeling the approach taken by Accelerate Kootenays. Beyond BC, southern Alberta has developed a collaboration to extend the Highway 3

network into that Province, enhancing opportunity for visitors and tourists to access the Kootenays.

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 Sustainability

Sustainability means meeting current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

An outcome of Accelerate Kootenays will be to reduce the 61% of GHG emissions currently attributed to the transportation sector in the region. The rural context requires a heavier reliance on personal vehicles for travel, in comparison to dense urban centres where more public transportation options exist. The rural context of the Kootenays demands a unique solution in order to address the significant contribution transportation has towards our community-wide emissions.

Sustainability is about balancing four key pillars:

Cultural: address the rural “car culture” and provide green and alternative fuel sources to reduce GHG emissions.

Social: build social change to demonstrate EVs are practical in rural environments and a way to reduce GHGs.

Economic: a regional strategy to brand Hwy 3 as the electric highway and bring EV tourism to the region.

Environmental: a way to reduce GHGs in the transportation sector.

Further, embedded in each of the pillars are the approach to planning, policy and practice that supports the sustainable outcome:

Planning: a collaborative exercise to ensure that EV stations are spaced to create a robust network, and placed to support local amenities and municipal infrastructure.

Policy: a standardized approach to choosing, locating, installing and maintaining EV infrastructure on municipal sites.

Practice: a regional program launched to educate decision makers and residents on the performance of EVs in winter and mountainous, remote areas. Public charging stations with their Accelerate Kootenays branding, provide a visual reminder of the benefits of low carbon transportation.

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.

The three Kootenay Regional Districts guided the project and provided resources to the member municipalities. The Regional District of East Kootenay, through their Community Energy Manager, initiated the development of a network plan for the East Kootenay. It was quickly realized that there was an opportunity to expand and enhance the network through a collaboration with Central Kootenay and Kootenay-Boundary. All three Regional Districts demonstrated commitment and leadership by providing the seed funding and initial investment in the project, which would be significantly leveraged and become the first community-driven regional EV charging network in Canada.

The Regional Districts demonstrated leadership in addressing the challenge of regional transportation initiatives, and their commitment to long-term climate change mitigation. Working together as a collaboration has inspired other similar regions to explore opportunities to replicate the Accelerate Kootenays approach. This leadership has been highlighted and recognized nationally and internationally, through participation in major EV conferences in Toronto, Ottawa and Portland.

Leadership on climate action is most nimble and critical at the local level. Through Accelerate Kootenays, the three Kootenay Regional Districts have demonstrated that collaborative leadership can result in locally appropriate solutions to greenhouse gas emissions associated with transportation.

- 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.

Accelerate Kootenays is the epitome of partnership and collaboration to build a public electric vehicle charging station network of 13 DC Fast Chargers and 40 Level 2 stations. The entire southeastern portion of BC has rallied to build this network: 3 regional districts, 24 municipalities, 2 National Parks, plus BC Hydro and Fortis BC, Columbia Basin Trust, Teck, the province of BC (Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure / Ministry of Energy, Mines & Petroleum Resources) and the Government of Canada, through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

It is a unique collaboration that truly reflects the priorities of the Region. Unique to any of the other charging infrastructure in the Province, this network was entirely locally designed, funded and managed. Through the persistence of collaboration from the Regional Districts, both BC Hydro and FortisBC are partners in the long-term ownership and operation of the charging stations.

Every community in the Kootenays has been engaged on the project, and for every site for both the fast charging infrastructure and Level 2 infrastructure, municipalities were involved in the planning and siting of the stations.

Collaboration with Kootenay Rockies Tourism has further formalized the tourism lens of the project, with electric vehicle circle routes under development for tourists looking to visit the Kootenays.

Local residents and car dealers have been engaged, with several dealers formally partnering on station launches and outreach activities. A partnership with a Cranbrook-based car dealer has resulted in a test drive vehicle dedicated to the project.

Partnerships have been developed with local electric vehicle drivers, resulting in a #RuralEV Ambassador program, which tells the story of electric vehicle travel in the Kootenays, by local residents.

All of these partnerships and collaborations have led to a successful project that is now being looked to as the model for regional-scale electric vehicle infrastructure deployment.

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

Accelerate Kootenays will increase local adoption of electric vehicles (plug-in hybrid and battery electric) in the Kootenay region and drive local tourism and economic development. This is a region of BC characterized by relatively small and dispersed communities, with some of the highest transportation-sector greenhouse gas emissions in the Province. The initiative pilots the effectiveness of a comprehensive, collaborative approach to the transition toward low and zero emission vehicles in a rural context.

A network of public charging stations provides green driving alternatives, reduces range anxiety for tourists to the area and visibly transforms the market from internal combustion engines to electric engines. Results are notable. At project onset in 2016, there was one known EV driver in the area. Two years later Accelerate Kootenays has ten #RuralEV ambassadors, plus many more local EVs are seen on the roads.

The innovative approach to the project has resulted in a much faster, more coordinated deployment of electric vehicle charging stations than would have taken place had each community pursued this on their own. The process of network design, procurement of equipment, siting and installing the equipment and supporting outreach and marketing is a significant undertaking. As a region defined by its small, rural communities, there is simply not the capacity at individual communities to manage an initiative like Accelerate Kootenays. Developing the core criteria and objectives at the outset, and gaining consensus on the approach and implementation made for a process that was significantly more efficient. Consistency is important, and will result in a better experience for electric vehicle drivers.

The Regional Districts and supporting partners formed an Advisory Committee that would guide and advise on the project over the two-year period, ensuring the objectives were being met and that communications from the Committee to the member municipalities were consistent.

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 has been fundamental to project success. Early presentations to the RDEK, RDCK and RDKB Boards plus many municipal Council presentations laid the foundation, provided Board endorsements and seed funding, and an outlet to launch the concept to the media. Branding of the initiative to be reflective of the local context was

an important element to the initiative and has resulted in consistent communications across the region.

Acceleratekootenays.ca is the landing page for information about partners, station locations and the criteria and priorities that informed the design of the network. The project released a winter experience EV video to promote the capacity of EVs in winter and mountain driving. The first known local area EV driver (and star of the video), acted as the Accelerate Kootenay technical advisor and worked closely with our team to model and design the network.

The project uses volunteer local EV owners as champions for local electric vehicle use. Referred to as the #RuralEV Ambassadors, these volunteers are proudly showing their vehicle and explaining their experience at local festivals, conferences and markets. This offers an opportunity for the public to ask detailed and technical questions to actual owners and drivers of EVs, providing a more personal and less intimidating experience as compared to going to a dealership to learn about electric vehicles.

Plugshare.com is for EV owners to find the closest charging station. Comments posted to the site as the Accelerate Kootenays network goes live, show the enthusiasm and gratefulness of EV drivers to explore this new EV station served area.

The project has active twitter, Instagram and Facebook accounts: /acceleratekootenays and @acceleratekoots. The project has seen significant exposure through social media campaigns, with over 4,400 views of the winter driving experience video on Facebook alone. Social media posts are often picked up and shared by other organizations, such as the North American wide 'Plugshare' company and local tourism and retail shops. Emotive Campaign, the Province-wide EV engagement initiative will often share and react to the Accelerate Kootenays social media posts, providing exposure to an even wider audience.

Major events have been organized, with our Project Celebration taking place on May 25th, attended by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, VPs from FortisBC and BC Hydro, Columbia Basin Trust and many other partners in the initiative. These types of celebrations provide additional opportunities to engage communities and communicate the success of the project.

In April 2018, Cranbrook Mitsubishi loaned a plug-in hybrid electric (PHEV) Accelerate Kootenays branded Outlander to the project team. This allows further promotion, visibility and test driving options plus showcases EV driving in the Kootenays. Additional planning for Phase 2 of the Accelerate Kootenays initiative is underway in order to expand the public engagement efforts.

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

Whereas in densely populated, high-growth regions of Canada, public transportation and urban design can be effective approaches to GHG emission reductions, the opportunities for addressing transportation-sector emissions in the rural context is limited. The distance between communities and the limited inter-community public transit options contribute to the dependence on personal vehicles for transportation in the Kootenays. Fuel shifting is one of the few opportunities for significant GHG emission reductions in the Kootenays.

Accelerate Kootenays has transferability to regions all across Canada. In fact, a northern BC coalition along Hwy 16 and a southeastern Alberta collaboration are already working with Accelerate Kootenays to develop EV charging station networks in their areas. The project has been contacted by communities and organizations in the Yukon, Ontario, Montana and Alberta with interest in replicating the collaborative approach, and the methodology of aggregation on the design, procurement and management of the network, which has proved to be much more efficient than individual community efforts.

The Federation of the Canadian Municipalities (FCM) acknowledges:

“The model created by Accelerate Kootenays demonstrates the innovation that exists at a local level and the impact municipalities and regional governments can have in advancing clean transportation. We are very happy to support this initiative which takes into account the unique geographical and climatic characteristics of the Kootenays to create a strategy that other rural communities can replicate to advance electric vehicle technology.”

SECTION 5: Additional Information

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

The Kootenays have a history of collaboration. With the experience of working together and their commitment to reducing GHGs, the Accelerate Kootenays collaboration was a natural fit.

The Accelerate Kootenays project is receiving national and international interest. The project team presented in Portland and Toronto at electric vehicle events, and seek more opportunities to share their success with other regions looking to transform their communities and tackle emission reduction opportunities in the transportation sector.

Ultimately, with the launch of the network in Creston on May 25, 2018, our local expert and early EV adaptor will drive his older model Leaf, with low battery range, over the Kootenay Pass (the highest paved mountain pass in BC) to attend the event. Our Minister of Energy and Mines will also travel within her riding, over the pass in an EV. These milestones are to be celebrated and regarded as a demonstration of the success of regional collaboration and leadership.

Within a relatively short project period, Accelerate Kootenays has made EV driving in the Kootenays a reality.

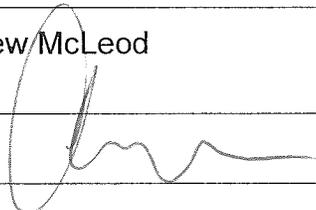
SECTION 6: Signature

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

Name: Andrew McLeod

Title: Planning & Development Services Manager

Signature:



Date: May 23, 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

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