



July 22, 2009

UBCM 2009 COMMUNITY EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Organization: District of North Vancouver

Category: Best Practices – Annual Reporting
- District of North Vancouver 2008 Annual Report

SUMMARY

The District of North Vancouver 2008 Annual Report exhibits excellence in annual reporting and meets best practices criteria by improving upon existing annual reporting requirements and recent efforts in ways that are relevant to the District community. Moreover, the content features and process improvements incorporated into the District's 2008 Annual Report may prove transferable to other communities looking to increase awareness of local government in terms of activities, context and challenges among residents and stakeholders. In an environment of change including economic, communications technology and demographic aspects, the District's 2008 Annual Report focused on these elements: finding the right balance between traditional and innovative communications; providing a well-developed picture of the District to residents with comprehensive yet incisive supplemental reporting; integrating and simplifying the view of District operations by integrating the 2009-2011 Corporate Plan and the Annual Report, and enhancing the Annual Report production process through broader Council and staff involvement.

2008 ANNUAL REPORT PROJECT SUMMARY

Pursuing Excellence in Annual Reporting: An Overview of the District of North Vancouver 2008 Annual Report

The District has worked continually to increase accessibility and accountability through annual reporting. In recent years, we have pursued various approaches – traditional print, on-line only, newspaper inserts – with mixed reviews from residents and stakeholders. Our challenge, likely shared by others, was to find an effective balance of reporting and communications formats for our changing community. At the same time, we aimed to improve accountability for and awareness of the District's operations and fiscal health by providing additional and enhanced information, and to do so without increasing costs and negative environmental impacts. To address these challenges and aspirations, the 2008 Annual Report exhibits the features, below.

Balanced Approach

The 2008 Annual Report is available in a traditional printed format, with a small print run of 50 copies. The Report is also provided electronically on the District's web site and Facebook site, with additional promotion and links through Twitter. We recognize that we will be successful in our outreach if we engage citizens by utilizing a variety of communications tools, including emerging social networking sites.

Focus on Supplemental Information and Analysis

There was a strong focus in the 2008 Report on supplemental information and increased adherence to Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) best practices. The Report provides five-year trends on key financial health indicators such as Capital Reserves, Tax Rate Benchmarks and Accumulated Net Surpluses. Beyond financial measures, the supplemental information also includes a range of key activity and demographic indicators. The 2008 Report is distinguished in this section not only by the scope of supplemental information, but also by incisive narratives accompanying the statistical information. These interpretive features increase the relevance of the information to the reader and promote much greater awareness of our local government realities. To this end, the report also uses the Mayor, Chief Administrative Officer, and Chief Financial Officer messages to provide context, analysis and discussion of the impacts of broader regional and economic influences affecting community life. Continuing this approach at the divisional level, the Report's divisional summaries provide insight into the workings of each division. Besides an overview of each division's operations, the report also includes graphic representations of activities considered of interest to the community, with two or more years of data.

Integration with Corporate Plan for Clearer Accountability

We streamlined and simplified the overall view of District operations by explicitly aligning key strategic documents: the Financial Plan, the Corporate Plan, and the Annual Report to create a 'whole picture' of the organization. In the 2008 Annual Report, objectives and measures are therefore linked directly back to the District's 2009-2011 Corporate Plan.

Increased Engagement through Process Enhancements

The development and production processes for the District's 2008 Annual Report was enhanced by the increased engagement of Council and District staff in several ways. The foundation for future year's objectives and reporting is derived from the 2009-2011 Corporate Plan. The Plan, which sets out the key goals and priorities of the District, along with the actions and decisions necessary to achieve them, was developed early in 2009 through Council's leadership, along with staff involvement. Also early in 2009, Council reviewed the past year's annual report, its impact, and their aspirations for the 2008 Annual Report.

Lead by a core team from the Corporate Planning and Finance departments, a corporate-wide reference group was established to facilitate strong participation of the entire organization in securing relevant information and ensuring consistency in reporting. The cross-divisional approach increased both internal engagement in the annual report process and awareness of the importance of creating engaging and accessible content.

Further guidance was provided by the Finance and Audit Standing Committee of Council who reviewed the Report in draft form.

Best Practices Criteria: Improved Production, Transferable Lessons, Increased Awareness & Accountability

The District of North Vancouver 2008 Annual Report demonstrates excellence in meeting the general criteria for best practices. With this Report, we believe we have taken an efficient approach to annual report production and struck an effective balance between traditional and innovative reporting in a cost-effective manner that meets our community's evolving needs. While some residents still require print communication, we are very aware of a growing preference for electronic communication preferences among other demographic audiences. Therefore, for 2008, a limited number of printed copies (50) were produced, while users are encouraged to access the report and information contained therein electronically, and to print on an as-needed basis. The report is available through the District's website as well as on our Facebook and Twitter sites, as we strive to reach different audiences and expand awareness of local government. Public copies are also available for review at all District Libraries and District Hall.

The Report development and production process involved Council and a cross-divisional team, increasing the value and consistency of information for use by both the organization and community. Cost for design and a limited print run was approximately \$9,100 (\$0.30 per household), which compares to past years' on-line only production, allowing various options for accessing the report, while minimizing environmental impacts.

We believe our approach of balancing print, website and emerging social media access points may resonate with other communities experiencing a similar evolution in community demographics and communications preferences. This approach increases the potential for greater awareness and, therefore, public accountability.

Annual Reporting Criteria: Beyond Statutory Requirements, Approach, Council Role, Communications

The 2008 Annual Report meets all the statutory requirements outlined in the Community Charter for both content and process. The Report exceeds these requirements as outlined in the preceding sections and by reference to the annual reporting best practices criteria presented below.

Process to Establish Objectives & Measures

Using the Corporate Plan goals and actions as the future year's objectives in the Annual Report promotes accountability, transparency and consistent communication between the District and its residents. By explicitly integrating key strategic documents, we are striving to achieve a clear and consistent picture of objectives, progress and improved continuity in reporting over future years. The Corporate Plan process was inclusive of Council, the Executive Team and staff. Preceding the Annual Report production schedule, it accommodated reflection on goals, priorities and actions through strategic sessions, workshops and iterative reviews. The process also acknowledged the need to integrate community vision processes currently underway and includes active reporting and adaptive management initiatives.

Council's Role & Involvement

As noted, Council's role in the development of the Corporate Plan as foundation for the Annual Report included aspects of leadership, content development and endorsement. Prior to Annual Report production, Council also reviewed prior years' reports to identify improvements and aspirations for the 2008 Annual Report. At the draft Report stage, the Finance and Audit standing committee of Council participated in review and finalizing of the Report.

Public Meeting

A public meeting was held to consider the 2008 Annual Report on July 13, 2009. Advertising for this meeting was extensive: through the District's weekly news page in the local newspaper for five weeks leading up to the meeting, on the District's website, and through other public notices, such as notices to our Community Associations. The District also utilized social networking tools – Facebook and Twitter – in order to engage a wider audience and demographic.

Continuing Process

We are committed to monitoring the effectiveness of our Annual Reporting and related initiatives. We continue to pursue increased use of innovative communications, engagement tools and internet reporting in order to generate awareness and interest in municipal government. Visits to our web site are tracked to measure views of the Annual Report. Since posting on June 26, over 250 visits to the 2008 Annual Report have been recorded. We also monitor the visitor

demographics of our Facebook and Twitter sites to ensure that our communications are tailored to engage that audience.

Conclusion

The District of North Vancouver 2008 Annual Report demonstrates excellence in annual reporting. It represents a continual improvement in reporting approaches to meet our community's needs, while exhibiting increased evidence of best practices as articulated by professional associations and municipal peers. Our challenges in striking an effective balance in reporting approach, content and process may be common to others and our experience in arriving at solutions in the 2008 Annual Report may likewise resonate with other communities.

COMMUNITY EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2009 APPLICATION

NAME OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT: District of North Vancouver

PROJECT OR PROGRAM TITLE: 2008 Annual Report

SELECT YOUR CATEGORY: (CHOOSE ONE ONLY)

BEST PRACTICES

BEST PRACTICES, WEBSITE

BEST PRACTICES, ANNUAL REPORTING

LEADERSHIP & INNOVATION, SMALL COMMUNITY

LEADERSHIP & INNOVATION, MID-SIZE COMMUNITY

LEADERSHIP & INNOVATION, LARGE COMMUNITY

LEADERSHIP & INNOVATION, REGIONAL DISTRICT

PARTNERSHIPS: LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIPS SUPPORTING PHYSICAL
ACTIVITY & HEALTHY LIVING

CONTACT PERSON: Jeanine BRATINA

CONTACT TITLE: Communications EMAIL: bratinaj@dnu.org

PHONE: 604-990-2459 FAX: 604-987-9626

BY MAKING THIS APPLICATION, I UNDERSTAND THAT ALL MATERIALS WILL BE KEPT BY UBCM AND ARE AVAILABLE FOR VIEWING BY OTHERS THROUGH THE UBCM COMMUNITY EXCELLENCE AWARDS LIBRARY.

SIGNATURE:  NAME (PRINT): Jeanine Bratina DATE: July 22/09

APPLICATION CHECKLIST:

Remember to send 8 copies of your entire application package for distribution to the Selection Committee.
EACH copy should contain:

- A completed application form
- A one-paragraph summary of the project/program being submitted
- A five-page summary report (max. 5 pgs)
- A letter from the Mayor supporting the application

IF APPLYING TO ANNUAL REPORTING:

A copy of the Annual Report

IF APPLYING TO PARTNERSHIPS:

A copy of the partner contact info list

In addition to the eight complete application packages, please include:

- One CD/electronic copy of the entire submission

DEADLINE: FRIDAY, JULY 24, 2009

355 West Queens Road
North Vancouver BC
V7N 4N5

www.dnv.org



Mayor Richard Walton
Phone: 604 990 2208
Fax: 604 990 2403
rwalton@dnv.org

July 15, 2009
File: 1470-01/000

Union of BC Municipalities
60 - 10551 Shellbridge Way
Richmond, BC V6X 2W9

Attention: Ms. Angela Elliott, Executive Coordinator

Dear Ms. Elliott:

**Re: District of North Vancouver submission for the
UBCM Community Excellence Awards (Best Practices - Annual Reporting)**

On behalf District Council, I am pleased to support the District of North Vancouver's submission for the UBCM Community Excellence Awards in the category of "Best Practices – Annual Reporting".

Yours sincerely,



Richard Walton
Mayor

cc: Council