

# 2016 COMMUNITY EXCELLENCE AWARDS APPLICATION LEADERSHIP & INNOVATION, Green Initiatives

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**Name of Local Government**

City of Richmond

**Project/Program Manager Name**

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**The Mayor/Chair is aware that I am submitting this application on behalf of my local government.**

Yes

**Project/Program Title:**

Sustainable Event Program

**Project Summary Paragraph**

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

The City of Richmond is committed to being a municipal leader in sustainable practices. To support event organizers in planning sustainable events, while also contributing to the achievement of Richmond's sustainability targets, the City has committed to a multi-faceted Sustainable Events program that ensures dedicated resources, infrastructure and capacity are in place to successfully deliver the program.

Initiatives out of the Sustainable Events program, including the Richmond Sustainable Event 7 Step Quick Guide (the Guide) and Toolkit, have evolved out of a partnership between the City, the Richmond Olympic Oval and the International Academy of Sport Science Technology/Académie Internationale des Sciences et Techniques du Sport (AISTS) in Lausanne, Switzerland.

The Guide was launched at a one-day event solutions expo that featured three internationally recognized thought leaders in sustainable events alongside over a dozen sustainable event solution providers, and was attended by approximately 300 event organizers from across the region.

## Project Analysis

### 1. ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

***Please describe the mindful and future-focused project(s) and/or program(s) your local government is implementing to protect the environment and create a healthy, livable community.***

Focusing on a holistic definition of sustainability which takes into account the planet, people and profits, the City's "7 Step Quick Guide", along with the more detailed Toolkit, provides event organizers with a series of 'easy wins' that events of any scale can implement. Areas of focus include creating a sustainable event commitment statement, reducing waste and recycling, making smart water choices, leaving a positive local legacy, promoting public transportation and making smart food choices.

The City has implemented a number of initiatives to protect the environment and create a healthy, livable community. The Green Ambassadors program is a youth volunteer program that works to deliver environmentally focused initiatives, including waste diversion at City facilitated events. The City's volunteer management program provides community partners access to a customized volunteer software system and support from a dedicated Volunteer Coordinator. Through Richmond's Sustainable Events program, existing City resources and initiatives such as these, originally developed with environmental stewardship and livability in mind, are receiving an even higher profile, ensuring their sustainability into the future.

The investment into the Wheel Watch, Richmond's proprietary bike valet station, is another example of an initiative that demonstrates Richmond's commitment to protecting the environment and creating a livable community through the promotion of active transportation to events. Event organizers can use the Wheel Watch "kit" that includes bike racks, a branded tent and banners, valet tickets and sign-in sheets, so that event attendees can park bikes, strollers, scooters, etc. for free while attending the event.

### 2. PROCESS & RESULTS

***a. Please provide a brief outline of the steps involved in the program/project and the status of each step.***

Following Council approval to enter into a formal agreement in January, 2014, the City of Richmond and the Richmond Olympic Oval Corporation became co-

development partners with the AISTS to promote and continue development of their Sustainable Sport Event Toolkit (SSET). The International Olympic Committee is the supporting partner of the SSET.

A cross-functional program team (Core Team), comprised of City of Richmond staff from various departments as well as Richmond Olympic Oval staff, was formed to identify opportunities to implement and advance the SSET.

The program team developed several customized sustainable event resources for events hosted in Richmond including:

- The Richmond Sustainable Event Toolkit
- The 7 Step Quick Guide
- A Website – [www.richmondsustainableevent.ca](http://www.richmondsustainableevent.ca)

Phase II of the Implementation Plan was launched in 2016, including the launch of Wheel Watch, a bike valet program and delivery of a sustainable events symposium and expo - Cool 2016 Richmond – Cool event solutions for a cool planet.

***b. Describe the results achieved and provide measurable results where possible.***

A three year contract was signed in September 2014. The three year partnership agreement has allowed the City and AISTS to share knowledge as it relates to sport and community events and learn from each other's experiences. The AISTS typically works with national and international sport organizations; the partnership with Richmond has provided context for their work at a local level. This partnership has furthered the City's legacy of involvement with the Olympic movement, and has resulted in recognition for the City as a leader in event management and sustainability.

A workplan for the program was developed and implemented.

Program resources were developed and tested on local events in 2015.

The Bike Valet program (Wheel Watch) is on target to be utilized by over 500 event attendees in 2016.

More than 300 participants attended Cool 2016 Richmond expo.

### **3. CHALLENGES**

***What challenges did you face in implementing this program/project and how did you overcome them?***

The initial challenge was taking big ideas that were originally developed to apply to large scale international events and boiling them down to make them relevant for municipal day-to-day operations as well as community event organizers. Through ongoing meetings and the development and formative assessment of an Implementation Plan, the Core Team, made up of staff from diverse departments including Sport and Community Events, Major Events, Sport Hosting, Fleet and Environmental Programs, Sustainability, Marketing and Corporate Communications, has learned to think globally but deliver locally.

With competing demands on staff time, another challenge was to ensure that staff were committed to meet on a consistent basis. This challenge continues to be overcome through corporate recognition of the strategic importance of promoting sustainable events. In fact, strong leadership has been dedicated to the project, with the General Manager, Community Services serving as the project sponsor.

Since the launch of the Guide and Toolkit, the most significant challenge has been promoting and encouraging the use of these new resources. The Cool 2016 Richmond – Cool event solutions for a cool planet expo was a significant step to overcome this challenge, exposing 300 local event planners to the resources available for Richmond events.

Ongoing work is being done to integrate the resources into existing processes, such as Richmond's Online Events Application software. As a first step, the application now requires event organizers to provide a commitment statement outlining how the event will enhance sustainability, prior to receiving approval for their event.

#### **4. LEADERSHIP**

##### ***How does the project reflect leadership and excellence in the advancement of environmental stewardship?***

The development of the “7 Step Quick Guide” and the associated toolkit and website demonstrate that Richmond is taking a leadership approach to advancing environmental stewardship in the delivery of local major and community events. Not only do these resources encourage event organizers to look at events through a sustainability lens to influence environmental outcomes, but the City is demonstrating that these concepts are effective in the delivery of recent successful City-produced and supported events of all sizes.

The Cool 2016 Richmond expo demonstrated to event organizers from around the region that Richmond is not only taking a leadership role in sustainable event delivery and promoting sustainable event management practices, but that the City is

also willing to be a resource to help empower event organizers locally, nationally or internationally in being successful.

This project allows the City of Richmond and the Richmond Olympic Oval to play an active role in shaping the future for sustainable event practices not only locally, but in the global market. The City of Richmond is a member of the SSE Toolkit Advisory Board participating in setting direction for the international scope of the project. AISTS staff has presented at international conferences using the Richmond program as an example to other municipalities globally.

Richmond is demonstrating leadership in setting a new path for the international program as it is using the toolkit to apply to not only sport, but also arts and culture, community and general meeting and conference events.

## **5. ECONOMIC IMPACT**

### ***a. How was the project a good use of budget and resources?***

a) For the cost of \$30,000 over three years, as a development partner with AISTS on the SSET, there are a number of benefits to the City, including:

- Increasing the City's national and international exposure, thereby enhancing tourism and economic development opportunities.
- Strengthening the City's sport and event hosting competitiveness in relation to bids and proposals to bring major events to Richmond and the Richmond Olympic Oval.
- Strengthening ties to further leverage the legacies from the 2010 Winter Games.
- Building capacity for the City's local sport groups and event organizers.

The Cool 2016 Richmond expo also leveraged its budget and resources. The event took place at a City-owned facility, and staff were able to leverage relationships with suppliers to secure approximately \$60,000 in goods and services for \$28,000. The event was attended by more than 300 event organizers from across the region, providing exposure not only to Richmond's Sustainable Events program but also promoting the Oval as a potential event venue.

### ***b. How does the project encourage economic sustainability?(e.g. life cycle analysis, internalizing costs and alternative financing, economic instruments)***

b) Richmond's Sustainable Events program balances environmental, social and economic sustainability. As mentioned previously, much of the work to date has

involved realigning existing resources (e.g. water stations, icanhelp.ca volunteer software, Green Ambassadors program) and packaging them into one easily accessible, purposeful resource. Applying these principles not only can provide immediate economic cost-savings to local event producers (e.g. printing less material and collecting less waste) but also can have long term financial benefits due to more efficient use of resources. An increase in local event organizers embracing these resources ensures ongoing support for these City initiatives, with costs embedded in existing budgets. In addition, Richmond's commitment to sustainability increases Richmond's value in the eyes of residents, suppliers, event organizers and potential sponsors; increasingly, funders, partners, customers and the media are increasingly looking to align with organizations that are seen as sustainable.

## 6. ENGAGEMENT

***How does the project encourage engagement?(e.g. stakeholder engagement, public participation, equity and diversity, knowledge sharing, capacity building, community identity and marketing)***

All facets of the Sustainable Events program have been intentionally developed to encourage engagement in the City's event sustainability objectives. Stakeholders, including local sport organizations and event organizers, were engaged to beta test the SSET to inform the development of customized, "made in Richmond" resources.

These four resources are housed on an easily accessible website ([www.richmondsustainableevent.ca](http://www.richmondsustainableevent.ca)):

1. Richmond Sustainable Event 7 Step Quick Guide: This simple, brochure-style guide contains seven easy-to-follow recommendations to incorporate sustainability into the event planning process.
2. Richmond Sustainable Event Toolkit: This document is designed to promote a deeper understanding of the benefits of hosting a sustainable event.
3. Survey: Designed to track progress towards sustainability targets and collect feedback on how to improve resources to better suit the needs of event planners.
4. Sustainable Event Champion designation: Event organizers who report implementing sustainable practices in at least five of the seven areas identified in the Guide will be given access and permission to use the Sustainable Event Champion logo to promote future events.

The website is a central resource for knowledge sharing, including highlighting best practices through case studies and success stories.

Integrating existing resources such as the icanhelp.ca volunteer software and the Green Ambassadors program builds community capacity and helps to strengthen community connection and identity through promoting volunteer opportunities.

The co-branding of AISTS's SSET materials increases the City's national and international exposure but also increases perceived value locally, giving further credibility to Richmond's positioning as a leader in sustainable event management and practices.

## **7. INNOVATION**

### ***What makes your program/project innovative?***

The Sustainable Events program took a plan (AISTS SSET) that was focused on one segment (sport) and tailored it to be relevant for all types of community sport, arts and cultural events.

Events such as festivals, concerts, conferences and tournaments are often viewed as opportunities to achieve positive economic, as well as social outcomes, such as enhancing community connectedness and building community capacity. There is a trend towards implementing events in more environmentally, socially and economically responsible ways. Richmond's approach to its Sustainable Events program is innovative in that it looks not only internally to address how City-planned and delivered events can effectively manage adverse impacts and foster positive legacies, but also provides resources for local event organizers to use, thus extending the reach of the program and further contributing to the City reaching its sustainability targets.

The unique partnership between the City of Richmond and AISTS is innovative in that it allows the City of Richmond and the Richmond Olympic Oval to play an active role in shaping the future for sustainable event practices in the global market as well as at a local level.

According to AISTS Executive Director Dr. Claude Stricker, "This is an important initiative that will help event organizers easily adopt greater sustainability practices. The City of Richmond demonstrates how the AISTS SSE Toolkit - together with the commitment of a municipality or city - can be a blueprint for innovative programs that minimizes the negative impacts of events while promoting positive legacy outcomes."

## **8. TRANSFERABILITY**

### ***How is this program/project transferable to other local governments?***



The Cool 2016 Richmond expo was one example of how Richmond has already been able to share information about the Sustainable Events program and resources with others. By attending the event itself, event organizers were able to experience many of the concepts in action (for example, recyclable or compostable plates and cutlery were used by the food service providers, the Green Ambassadors were on hand to help guests properly dispose of organics and garbage, the event was promoted through social media rather than through printed posters and flyers).

The sustainable event resources, including the Richmond Sustainable Event Toolkit and the 7 Step Quick Guide are online and easily accessible for other local governments. The website, [www.richmondsustainableevent.ca](http://www.richmondsustainableevent.ca), features articles and case studies demonstrate ideas and concepts that can easily be applied in other cities.

## 9. KNOWLEDGE SHARING

***What helpful advice would you share with other communities looking to embark on a similar project?***

This initiative would not have been accomplished by one Division alone. The success of this initiative was achieved through a corporate commitment to sustainability from the top down and spanning departments who do not always have the opportunity to work together. In addition, an additional resource was made available to the team in the form of a university intern dedicated to supporting the project, freeing up other team members to maintaining many of their existing day-to-day responsibilities.

## 10. TELL US MORE

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

- The Richmond World Festival was a new festival produced by the City of Richmond that attracted over 25,000 people. The event was the first to fully embrace the Toolkit and implement numerous initiatives including:
  - o using the Green Ambassador program to achieve a 80% waste diversion;
  - o offering a free bike valet service (Wheel Watch) with approx.100 event participants using this service;
  - o mandating that all 36 food vendors use compostable service-ware and containers;
  - o offering three water stations;
  - o locating the festival in the City's core and close to public transit;

- o ensure the site was accessible for mobility challenged festival goers; and
- o providing numerous volunteer opportunities for the community.
- Portable tap water stations: There were 46 events in 2015 where the portable tap water stations were deployed. Ten of these events used the smaller station that currently does not record the water consumption. During the 36 events where the larger station was installed, 17.29 m<sup>3</sup> of water was used (17,290 litres) which equates to the diversion of 8,645 – 500mL water bottles.
- Green ambassadors: In 2015, 150 Green Ambassadors volunteered 3,650 hours by hosting recycling stations at 12 events.
- The City Volunteer Program has three major components: Recruiter (public website <https://icanhelp.richmond.ca>), eCoordinator (City facility or program or partner community group's staff portal), and Administrator. Each eCoordinator manages their own facility/program volunteers by:
  - o Creating/posting online volunteer opportunities
  - o Receiving, retrieving and reviewing applications through designated eCoordinator user accounts
  - o Placing and scheduling volunteers
  - o Other on-going volunteer management
- Over 90,000 volunteer hours were recorded in 2015.