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Town of Aurora
Memorandum
Community Services

Re: 2026 Community Recognition Awards – Evaluation Matrices

To: Community Recognition Review Advisory Committee

From: Shelley Ware, Cultural Services Supervisor – Special Events

Date: February 11, 2026

Recommendation

1. That the memorandum regarding 2026 Community Recognition Awards – Evaluation Matrices be received; and
2. That the Community Recognition Review Advisory Committee comments regarding 2026 Community Recognition Awards – Evaluation Matrices be received and referred to staff for consideration and further action as appropriate.

Background

The Community Recognition Review Advisory Committee (CRRAC) is responsible for reviewing nominations and selecting recipients for each of the Community Recognition Award categories on an annual basis.

In 2023, the CRRAC identified the need for a more structured, transparent, and equitable approach to evaluating nominations. In response to this direction, staff developed a set of Evaluation Matrices in 2024 to support the CRRAC's review of each nomination submission and selection of award winner. These matrices were designed to:

- Reduce the influence of innocent or unconscious biases
- Provide a consistent framework for assessing nominees across all award categories
- Support more focused, evidence-based discussions during the selection process
- Enhance fairness, clarity, and accountability in decision-making

The Evaluation Matrices were implemented for the 2024 awards cycle and used again in 2025. With two full years of application, the CRRAC has expressed interest in reviewing

the matrices to ensure they remain relevant, effective, and aligned with the Committee's expectations and the evolving nature of the awards program.

This review will support continuous improvement and help prepare the CRRAC for the 2026 selection meeting.

Analysis

The Evaluation Matrices have been developed by Staff to be a valuable tool for the Selection Committee.

The Evaluation Matrices currently in use were developed following a comprehensive review of:

- Award categories and their intended purpose
- Nomination form questions and criteria
- Best practices in municipal recognition programs
- Approaches to mitigating unconscious bias in group decision-making

Since their introduction, the matrices have been positively received by Committee members. They have contributed to:

- More structured and consistent evaluation of nominees
- Improved clarity around how each nomination aligns with award criteria
- More balanced and equitable discussions during deliberations
- Enhanced confidence in the fairness and transparency of the selection process

Given that the matrices have now been used for two award cycles, a formal review is timely. Committee feedback will help determine whether:

- The scoring criteria remain appropriate and reflective of the award categories
- Any criteria require refinement, expansion, or clarification
- The weighting of evaluation components continues to support fair and meaningful assessment
- Additional guidance or tools would further support the Committee's work

Staff will compile and assess all Committee comments and, where appropriate, prepare revisions for future Committee consideration.

Attachments

Attachment 1 – Community Recognition Awards – Evaluation Matrices