

To: City Council

From: Tracy Adams, Chief Administrative Officer,
Office of the C.A.O.

Report Number: CNCL-26-01

Date of Report: January 21, 2026

Date of Meeting: January 26, 2026

Subject: Oshawa Community Awards

Ward: All Wards

File: 03-05

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to outline a proposed framework to consolidate the City's multiple award programs into one streamlined and cohesive program for coordinated communication and delivery.

2.0 Recommendation

It is recommended to City Council:

1. That based on Report CNCL-26-01 dated January 21, 2026, regarding Oshawa Community Awards, Council reconsider its direction of April 26, 2010 to present the Resident Accessibility Recognition Awards at the Council's annual Special meeting concerning Accessibility Issues;
2. That Council approves the consolidation of the City's various award programs into a single, unified awards program branded as the Oshawa Community Awards.

3.0 Input From Other Sources

- Corporate Communications
- Economic and Development Services
- Legislative Services
- Recreation Services
- Other municipalities: Ajax, Mississauga, and Pickering

4.0 Analysis

4.1 Award Background

The City currently administers eight separate awards, two of which are not included in the proposed consolidation. Not included are: The Urban Design Award which is specifically targeted to developers and design professionals rather than residents and volunteers, and the Exceptional Student Award which awards a scholarship to a student with special needs who has been most successful in adapting to an educational facility. The Student Achievement Award recipient is chosen from nominees by the schools.

The remaining awards are community and volunteer focused, and each award is communicated, selected, and awarded according to its own timelines. The full list of community awards recommended for consolidation is provided below:

- **Accessibility Improvement Award** — Celebrates individuals, businesses, or organizations that make significant efforts to enhance accessibility and inclusion within the City of Oshawa (e.g. through accessibility improvements to facilities or services).
- **Citizen Volunteer Award** – Recipients are nominated by an Oshawa-based community organization/agency. Recipients must be volunteers with the organization (e.g. no payment given) and must have at least 5 years of continuous volunteerism with the organization.
- **Community Legend Award** — Recognizes a person or an organization/group whose volunteerism, community service, or grassroots-level contributions (in arts, culture, sport, or other community initiatives) have significantly improved quality of life in Oshawa.
- **Culture Counts Awards** — Celebrates and honours the creative and cultural achievements of Oshawa's arts, culture and heritage community. It includes three categories: Culture Counts Professional Artist Award, Culture Counts Emerging Artist Award, and Innovation and Creation Champion Award.
- **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Champions Award** – Recognizes individuals, community organizations and businesses that have taken efforts to enhance equity and belonging in the city. It includes four categories: individual champion, youth champion, organization champion, and business champion.
- **E.P. Taylor Windfields Farm Champion Award** — Recognizes a person or group who exemplifies innovation and has overcome adversity. It celebrates champions within the community whose achievements reflect perseverance and significant positive impact.

Table 1 details the department lead, current timelines, and where the awards are presented.

Table 1: Current List of Awards

Award / Program	Department Lead	Nominations Open / Close	Council Approval	Award Timing	Where
Accessibility Improvement Award	Legislative Services	March	April	May	Special Council meeting on Accessibility, Diversity and Inclusion
Citizen Volunteer Award	Legislative Services	January to March	N/A	April	City Council Meeting
Culture Counts Awards	Business and Economic Development	Opens early January; closes early February submissions by the public are due.	April	May	City Council meeting
Community Legend Award	Community Operations Services	Opens early January; closes early February	April	May	City Council meeting
D.E.I. Champions Award (new in 2026)	Corporate Performance and Strategic Initiatives	Opens early January; closes early February	April	May	Special Council meeting on Accessibility, Diversity and Inclusion
E.P. Taylor Windfields Farm Champion Award	Community and Operations Services	Opens early January; closes early February Every four years at end of Council term	April	May	City Council meeting

4.2 Rationale for Consolidating City Awards

To support more effective communication and the efficient use of resources, it is proposed that all City awards be consolidated into a single, cohesive program named Oshawa Community Awards. Coordinating awards under a unified framework will reduce duplication and create efficiencies related to staff time, communications, and outreach, while expanding the overall reach and awareness of the City's recognition efforts.

A consolidated program will also create a clearer and more accessible experience for residents, community organizations, and businesses by making it easier to understand available awards and participate in nomination processes. Consistent branding and centralized communications will strengthen public awareness and engagement.

In addition, situating individual awards within a broader, citywide awards program elevates their collective profile and prestige. Shared promotion and cross-marketing efforts are expected to attract a larger and more diverse pool of applicants and nominees and encourage participation across multiple award categories.

A unified awards program also presents an opportunity to strengthen community connection and civic pride by bringing award recipients together in a shared celebration. Hosting a single coordinated event recognizes the breadth of contributions made across Oshawa and aligns with approaches used by neighbouring municipalities.

4.3 Review of Other Municipal Award Programs

The concept of a combined awards program is already practiced in several other municipalities, including Ajax, Pickering, and Mississauga.

4.3.1 Ajax Community Awards

The Ajax Community Awards are an annual celebration recognizing the outstanding contributions of individuals, groups, and organizations that make a meaningful impact in the Town of Ajax. The 2025 ceremony brought together community members, local leaders, and supporters for an evening of recognition, appreciation, and celebration. There are a number of award categories, including Community Awards, the Ajax Senior of the Year Award, and the highest honour, the Town of Ajax Civic Award.

4.3.2 Pickering Civic Awards

The City of Pickering presents Civic Awards annually to members of the community who have made a significant contribution to the City. The Civic Award Ceremony is hosted by Pickering City Council annually each year in May. The Civic Awards are presented by the Mayor and Members of Council in a formal ceremony. The Award presentation consists of an award medal, City of Pickering civic pin, and a certificate of recognition bearing the embossed seal of the Corporation of the City of Pickering and the Mayor's signature. There are a number of award categories, including but not limited to the Cultural Diversity Award, Urban Design Award, and Sustainability Award.

4.3.3 City of Mississauga Civic Recognition Program

The Civic Recognition Program in the City of Mississauga recognizes volunteer community service, achievements in sports, the arts or other fields of endeavour, philanthropy and significant milestones of individuals and organizations. The Civic Award of Recognition is a certificate bearing an embossed seal of the Corporation and signed by the Mayor. The certificate includes the recipient's name and a description of the achievement. Civic Awards of Recognition are presented at a civic recognition evening hosted by the City for award recipients and their guests. Generally held in the spring of each year, the evening features an awards ceremony with presentations by the Mayor and/or Members of Council, followed by a brief reception.

4.4 Strategic Connection and Internal Alignment with Existing Awards Programs

The proposed consolidation of City awards into the Oshawa Community Awards supports the Oshawa Strategic Plan goal to embrace innovation and advance continuous improvement initiatives and actions. Streamlining multiple awards into a coordinated framework modernizes civic recognition practices, improves operational efficiency, reduces duplication, and strengthens consistency across programs while maintaining the intent of each award.

The Oshawa Community Awards also aligns with the Oshawa Strategic Plan goal to enhance effective communication and encourage all community members to actively participate and learn about City services, programs, and spaces. A unified awards program with centralized communications will improve awareness and encourage broader community participation.

More broadly, the consolidated program supports inclusion, accessibility, and community connection by reducing barriers to participation and creating a shared opportunity to celebrate achievements across the city. Bringing award recipients together through coordinated communications and a unified ceremony strengthens civic pride and reinforces a sense of belonging.

4.5 Communication and Nomination Process

Consolidating all City awards into a single program will establish consistent branding across City recognition initiatives, increase the visibility and civic profile of individual awards, and improve public understanding of the City's recognition efforts, while maintaining the unique purpose and intent of each award.

Communications and outreach will be delivered through a coordinated approach under the Oshawa Community Awards, with centralized messaging directing residents, businesses, and organizations to explore all award categories. A dedicated webpage will provide consolidated access to award information, nomination forms, and timelines.

This approach will not result in changes to eligibility criteria, nomination requirements, or selection processes. Individual awards will continue to be administered by the respective City teams using existing evaluation and approval processes.

4.6 Award Ceremony

Currently, most City awards are presented at the beginning of a regular Council meeting, across multiple dates throughout the year. While this approach provides formal recognition by Council, it limits the opportunity to celebrate recipients collectively and reduces the overall profile of the awards as it is combined with other Council agenda items.

To elevate the awards and enhance the recipient experience under a consolidated award program, a special Meeting of Council would be convened to present all awards under the Oshawa Community Awards Program at the same time. This ceremony would highlight the range of community contributions being recognized and create a more meaningful and celebratory experience for recipients, members of Council, and the public.

A modest reception for recipients, their guests and members of Council will be held following the Special Meeting. This approach enhances the prestige of the awards, strengthens community connection, and reinforces the importance of civic recognition.

4.7 Next Steps and Timeline

Upon approval of this Report, staff will proceed with finalizing the branding and communication materials for the Oshawa Community Awards Program. The inaugural consolidated awards will be presented in June to allow sufficient time for outreach, nomination review, and selection.

Moving forward, staff will work to consolidate the timing of all the awards to align the nomination and award dates for subsequent years. Below is recommended timing:

- Nominations open – September
- Nominations close – December
- Committee and Council approval of award recipients – First Quarter
- Award ceremony – Second Quarter

5.0 Financial Implications

All award-related expenditures will be managed and funded within approved departmental operating budgets.

6.0 Relationship to the Oshawa Strategic Plan

This report responds to the Oshawa Strategic Plan Priority Area “Lead: Governance and Service Excellence” with the goal to enhance effective communication and encourage all community members to actively participate and learn about City services, programs, and spaces.



Enez Perkins, Director,
Corporate Performance and Strategic Initiatives



Tracy Adams, Chief Administrative Officer,
Office of the C.A.O.