

# Recognition Programs

## Background

### Definition

Jurisdictions can develop a community recognition program to acknowledge community groups and agencies working to create and sustain healthy communities. Recognition programs can range in scale from acknowledgement through social media to a recurring awards program.

### Health, equity and sustainability considerations

Linking health, equity, and sustainable development programs and policies provides opportunities for collaboration among diverse stakeholders and may lead to greater involvement of disenfranchised and marginalized groups. Recognition programs also present opportunities for local leadership to get involved in health, equity and sustainable development issues through the award giving process.

The central Puget Sound region is home to numerous new and long-standing recognition programs. Given the large market of programs, developing and implementing a new program for the Planning for Whole Communities Toolkit may not be the most effective use of time and resources. This resource guide provides information on a variety of existing recognition programs that present award opportunities for local jurisdictions that utilize the Planning for Whole Communities Toolkit.

## Program Examples

### Program examples—Best practices

The following program examples fall into two categories: ongoing social media recognition and annual awards programs. The annual awards programs category includes creating a new program and working with an existing program to create a new award or category. Additionally, each program has direct ties to the Planning for Whole Communities Toolkit resource guides. Jurisdictions that utilize the resource guides have the potential to meet award criteria and apply for recognition.

### *Ongoing Social Media Recognition*

Puget Sound Regional Council [Blog](#), [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)—Social media recognition presents a less formal way to recognize work while still promoting leaders in public health, equity, and sustainability. It requires considerably less time and resources than a more traditional awards program. Social media can be easily forwarded on to other groups. Blog posts are linked on other sites, and tweets are “retweeted” by other users, helping to pass along the message. The Puget Sound Regional Council’s blog “Regional View” provides daily updates on the Council’s work and local efforts across the region. Many local jurisdictions and community groups also host and regularly update blogs that may be ideal ways to showcase work.

# Regional View

NEWS FROM THE PUGET SOUND REGIONAL COUNCIL

## Town center emerging in Mountlake Terrace

Posted on [March 14, 2014](#)

Mountlake Terrace is busy building a town center and getting ready for light rail that is anticipated in 2023.



Vineyard Park, a new development under construction in Mountlake Terrace's growing town center.

This entry was posted in [Economy](#), [Growth Management](#), [Transportation](#) and tagged [Mountlake Terrace](#), [transit-oriented development](#).

The city recently broke ground on Vineyard Park, an assisted living facility near the northern boundary of the revitalizing town center district. The development also includes over 8,000 square feet of commercial space, pedestrian features and open space.

More details are available on [the city's website](#), including a great [brochure describing the town center plan](#).

[← Deadline to submit VISION 2040 Award nominations is March 31](#)

[Futurewise honors PSRC with Livable Communities Award →](#)

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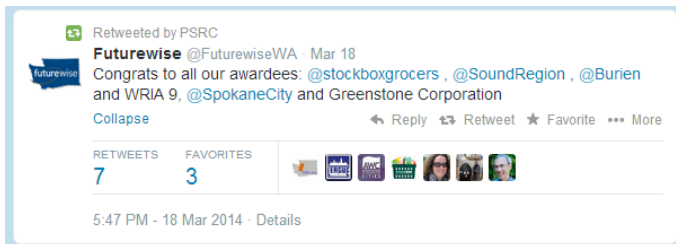
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## The PSRC Blog “Regional View” recognizing the smart growth planning work in Mountlake Terrace

Twitter, an online social networking service that lets users send and read short 140-character messages called “tweets” is another avenue for social media recognition. Users register for a free account and can read and post tweets. Unregistered users can only read tweets. A tweet can be “retweeted” by other users, helping to pass the message on to a broader audience.



## A “tweet” from Futurewise that was “retweeted” by PSRC

Facebook is another social networking site where jurisdictions can communicate with residents.



## A Facebook post by PSRC

### **Annual Awards Programs**

Puget Sound Regional Council [VISION 2040 Awards](#) — Each year the Puget Sound Regional Council honors real-life examples of how the central Puget Sound region is achieving its ambitious vision for smart growth. The awards are designed to recognize the exemplary working being done by public and private organizations to achieve VISION 2040, the region's growth, economic, and transportation strategy. The awards program has clear and well communicated [eligibility and criteria](#), and nomination process. While there are no distinct award categories, the Puget Sound Regional Council typically chooses five to seven award recipients, representing a broad range of programs and projects.

Washington State [Governor's Smart Communities Awards](#) — This annual award recognizes outstanding efforts throughout the state to create quality communities through achieving Growth Management Act objectives. Awards are presented in three categories: Smart Vision, Smart Choices, and Smart Partnership. The program is effective in linking local efforts to larger statewide policies and goals.

Seattle Human Services Coalition [Human Services Awards](#) — This annual award recognizes public and private human service providers and community members working to help Seattle-King County residents meet their basic needs. Awards are presented in five categories: Outstanding Program, Excellence in Advocacy, Innovative Program, Stewardship, and the Ron Chisom Anti-Racism Award. The Seattle Human Services Coalition nominates recipients for the annual City of Seattle Mayor's Award, linking the nonprofit coalition's award program with the public city-wide program.

The American Planning Association Washington Chapter provides an annual award for [Excellence in Planning](#) and [Awards to Individuals](#). The Excellence in Planning awards program is intended to bring attention and deserved recognition to public and private sector planning programs. Nominations are due in May and winners are presented at the APA Washington conference in the fall. The Awards to Individuals is presented to individual planners and officials who have made significant contributions to the chapter and/or profession.

[Futurewise](#), a statewide public interest group working to promote healthy communities and cities, presents annual [Livable Community Awards](#) in three categories: Equity and the Environment, Smart Growth, and Protecting Natural Resource Areas.

[Forterra](#) hosts an annual awards breakfast honoring leaders that work to create and sustain great communities and great lands. Awards are given in three categories: Visionary Game Changer, Community Game Changers, and Conservation Game Changers.

[Feet First's Walkable Washington](#) program recognizes, supports, and provides a springboard for action to communities dedicated to creating walking and vibrant places throughout Washington. Feet First's Online Case Study Library summarizes local projects and programs. Local jurisdictions may submit a project using Feet First's [online form](#). It also serves as a pool from which they select their Walkable Washington Innovation Award.

The [Center for Active Design](#) began its annual Excellence award program in 2014. This is the first Active Design award to recognize the role design plays in addressing the ongoing obesity and chronic disease

epidemic by encouraging physical activity through the design of buildings and public spaces. The [Greenbridge Master Plan](#) in King County won an award for integrating active design strategies in its site planning for housing mixed with recreational facilities.

### **Opportunities and challenges**

There are a variety of opportunities and challenges associated with the different types of recognition programs. These include:

#### Ongoing Social Media Recognition

##### *Opportunities:*

- Minimal time and resources needed
- Does not have to compete in larger pool of local and national awards programs
- Potential for message to be carried on by other users
- Opportunities to link work with other efforts and agencies
- Recognize work in real time

##### *Challenges:*

- Reach limited audience—only those with computer/web access
- Less formal recognition may seem less official to some recipients
- Requires a staff member to have time and skills needed to maintain posts

#### Annual Awards Program

##### *Opportunities:*

- More formal process can be important to awards recipients
- Potential to reach larger audience (dependent on outreach efforts and local awards market)
- Possible to add new award category to existing program

##### *Challenges:*

- Time and resources need to develop, implement, and maintain the program
- Difficult to establish new program in currently overloaded awards program market in Seattle-King County

## **Implementation**

### **Developing a recognition program**

Developing a new recognition program includes the following steps:

- Find a dedicated, long-term source of funding and staff time to develop, implement, and maintain the program.
- Tie award selection criteria to overall mission, goals, and values.
- Include a diverse group of stakeholders in the program design and recipient selection processes.
- Be as transparent as possible in the selection process/share the decision making process. This will also help to build buy-in and excitement for the program.
- Make the nomination process simple and accessible.
- Ongoing outreach is essential. Do not assume the program is well known/established after its first year.
- Explain/promote the program in person. Go beyond emails and flyers.

### **Opportunities for funding**

Two of the most accessible opportunities for funding are partnering with an existing recognition program and soliciting for local in-kind donations. Obtaining funding specifically for staff and/or program development can be more challenging. Typically, grants and other funding sources will include a portion of funds for a recognition program, rather than devoting an entire grant to the project. If using grant funds to develop a recognition program, it is essential to find ongoing funding to maintain the program.

Partnering with an existing recognition program (creating a new category within an established program) allows the new award to utilize that program's resources.

Many local businesses will donate in-kind goods and services that can be used as awards for recognition programs. In-kind donations are especially useful for award ceremonies and celebratory events. The [City of Kent](#) is very effective in securing in-kind donations from a variety of local businesses.