2026 CUTA AWARDS

Submission Guidelines

CUTA ACTU
CANADIAN URBAN TRANSIT ASSOCIATION
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DU TRANSPORT URBAIN

The CUTA Awards recognize the outstanding achievements of people, organizations and businesses in Canada's public transit industry, as represented by CUTA. The best of the best.

The program honours the very best in the Canadian transit industry by recognizing and celebrating the contributions CUTA members have made to the advancement of public transit, and how the public transit industry contributes to the growth and success of our country.

Past winners have demonstrated how their exceptional achievements have helped the transit industry respond to, and influence, the changing landscape of our municipalities and the expectations of Canadian society.

CUTA Award winners are trailblazers in their respective fields. As a result, the CUTA Awards have become a highlight of achievement in the industry, and at CUTA annual conferences.

CUTA's prestigious awards program recognizes the accomplishments of a transit systems, organizations, municipalities and business members accomplishments in two categories:

1. **Corporate Awards** increase positive exposure and prestige by highlighting notable/outstanding and award-worthy public transit initiatives, advancements and products by operating and business members.

2. **Individual Awards** boost morale and recognize the notable and outstanding work, dedication and innovation of transit employees, volunteers and industry supporters towards the betterment of public transit products and services.

Awards are selected by the CUTA Awards Committee based on nominations submitted by CUTA members. All members of CUTA may submit nominations in any category.

NOMINATION CATEGORIES FOR CORPORATE AWARDS

1. Marketing and Communications

Recognizes an exceptional development and implementation of a marketing, communications or public engagement program/initiative by a business or transit organization. The achievement must demonstrate how it contributed to the betterment of the organization and had a significant impact on the transit industry i.e., increased use of public transit, change in the way customer receive information, etc. Nominations must include a rationale/reasoning why the initiative or program was implemented and demonstrate proven benefits and results towards the objective of the initiative or program.

2. Environmental Sustainability

Recognizes businesses and transit organizations whose activities or projects achieved a positive impact on current environmental issues and challenges facing public transit and the transit industry. The outcomes may include entirely new concepts, processes or the redevelopment of existing equipment that result in protection of scarce resources, effectiveness and efficiency, or measurable environmental benefits. Nominations must include a rationale/reasoning why the initiative or program was implemented and demonstrate proven benefits and results towards the objective of the initiative or program.

3. Safety and Security

Recognizes businesses and transit organizations for their commitment to enhancing the safety and security of their organization through the development and implementation of effective safety and security programs. Nominations must include a rationale/reasoning why the initiative or program was implemented and demonstrate proven benefits and results towards the objective of the initiative or program.

4. Innovation

Recognizes businesses and transit organizations that focus on technological innovation or innovation through non-technical programs, activities, service delivery, accessibility and product/service development. The outcomes may include any of the following that result in increased operational efficiency, effectiveness or cost savings through the implementation of new ideas, devices or methods:

- New technical processes, programs or equipment
- New non-technical processes or programs (i.e., workforce development, management best practices, mentorship programs, etc.)
- Enhancement of existing technical or non-technical processes or programs
- Enhancement of existing equipment

Nominations must include a rationale/reasoning why the initiative or program was implemented and demonstrate proven benefits and results towards the objective of the initiative or program.

5. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Nominations will demonstrate a commitment to building, and promoting an inclusive, workplace and community, that supports/welcomes/promotes persons of all genders, religion, race, colour, abilities and backgrounds. This could include hiring practices, employee benefits, workplace culture, initiatives and programs, and overall customer and community experience. Nominations must include a rationale/ reasoning why the initiative or program was implemented and demonstrate proven benefits and results towards the objective of the initiative or program.

6. Lorna Stewart Corporate Leadership Award

This NEW award highlights the outstanding efforts of public transit and specialized transit systems, as well as businesses, that go above and beyond to remove barriers and provide accessible, inclusive transportation services. The award recognizes those who ensure that all riders—regardless of ability—can access transit where and when they need it.

Recipients stand out for their ongoing commitment to innovation and excellence, demonstrated by their willingness to:

- Continuously explore and implement new services that promote spontaneous and accessible travel
- Constantly improve their systems to remain at the forefront of accessibility
- Provide an exceptional experience to all customers, especially those who rely most on transit
- Use innovative technologies to make transit more accessible and user-friendly

Award recipients clearly demonstrate that the customer is at the heart of everything they do, making transit simple and seamless for everyone. This award is a testament to their dedication to improving accessibility and making transit a viable option for all.

NOMINATION CATEGORIES FOR INDIVIDUAL AWARDS

1. Excellence

Recognizes **one** major contribution made by an individual which has resulted in the betterment of a public transit initiatives, culture or work practices on behalf of their organization/industry. This can be awarded to an employee of a CUTA member, a volunteer or a community advocate.

2. Edward J. Dowling Distinguished Service

Recognizes individuals who have demonstrated outstanding service over a period of 10 years or more as a public transit professional. This award is meant to recognize a CUTA member who has furthered the standing of the public transit profession in Canada.

3. Heroism

Recognizes individuals who have performed a heroic act defined as one which saves or prevents the loss of life and/or demonstrates an exceptional act of courage or bravery. The act must be one in which there is no link of responsibility between the nominated individual and the party at risk and must go above and beyond the call of duty.

4. Young Leaders

Recognizes individuals 35 years of age and younger, working in the public transit industry, who have demonstrated exceptional leadership, initiative and involvement towards the advancement of public transit. Individuals deserving of this award have gone above and beyond and are inspired and committed to implement innovative projects and programs and are able to positively impact and influence others to learn and grow.

5. William G. Ross Lifetime Achievement

Named after CUTA's first president (1904-1906), the William G. Ross Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes individuals with exceptional involvement and advancement in the promotion of public transit in Canada. Recipients have made an outstanding and consistent effort to the public transit industry for a minimum of 25 years. William G. Ross Award winners are inducted into the CUTA Hall of Fame and may attend that CUTA conference without payment of the registration fee.

CRITERIA AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

ELIGIBILITY

- Nominees (Corporate and Individual) must be CUTA members in good standing
- Any project being nominated must have been completed within the last two years

NOMINATIONS

- Nominations may be in English or French
- Companies/agencies may submit in more than one category; however, may only submit o**ne nomination per award category**
- Submissions must be completed fully to be considered for an award including relevant statistics, proven results and detailed information outlining why the nomination is worthy of a national award
- Each nomination must be submitted and uploaded individually using the links provided
- Submissions must be free from grammatical errors, clear and concise

SUBMISSION SUMMARY

There are three main areas which must be answered in the submission**: Background and Objective, Implementation and Evaluation and Results**. Table 1 outlines questions to consider when preparing submissions. Nominators need to be as specific as possible.

Table 1

Corporate Awards	Individual Awards
BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES	
• Outline the initiative and/or achievement in detail	• Outline the nominees background and experience
• What goal/objective did the initiative addresses?	• What is significant about their contributions to the Canadian transit industry?

IMPLEMENTATION	
• Describe how the initiative/achievement was implemented	• Describe the overall achievements of the individual
• Outline any opportunities and/or challenges faced	• What challenges or obstacles did they overcome
• Describe how the initiative/achievement is creative, significant and/or original	• How did the individual implement different programs or services to advance public transit
EVALUATION AND RESULTS	
• Outline the proven statistics and results from implementing the initiative	• Outline what impacts the individual has had on the Canadian transit industry
• Provide qualitative analysis of the results of the achievement and its impact on the transit industry	• What are the proven results from their time working in public transit
• Outline any efficiencies or cost-savings because of the initiative/program/process	• Outline their leadership accomplishments and proven results
SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION	
• Supporting documentation is encouraged to showcase the submission and is limited to a two-page PDF	• One reference letter required for the Excellence, Young Leaders and Heroism Awards • Two reference letters required for the Distinguished Service Award • Three reference letters required for the William G. Ross Lifetime Achievement Award

Nominations will also be evaluated on the following:

- Well written, free from errors, clear and concise
- Required support material has been included
- Creativity, originality and award worthy
- Overall impacts on Canadian transit industry

JUDGING PANEL AND PROCESS

The Award's judging panel is composed of the CUTA Awards Sub-Committee, who are transit professionals and CUTA members in good standing.

Award nominations are judged through the submission of CUTA's online nomination forms. The judges evaluate each nomination following the category criteria from the online entry form.

Points for each criterion range from zero to five depending on the judges' discretion. Selection of an award is reached based on discussion and consensus amongst the Awards Committee. In reaching a decision, the Committee may:

- Ask for further information or clarification to be able to make an informed decision
- Change the category of the award nomination to best suit the nomination as appropriate
- Defer consideration of an award to a subsequent year if deemed appropriate (i.e., more results or information are needed to be able to make an informed decision)