

# **MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **CITY OF ABBOTSFORD WINS BCRPA 2022 PARKS EXCELLENCE AWARD**

**Whistler (May 5, 2022)** - BC Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA) presented its Parks Excellence Award to the City of Abbotsford today for Grant Park. The award recognizes outstanding design and development of park spaces using natural elements or repurposing materials. The park space must reflect innovative community culture, which is accessible to all patrons and encourages individuals and communities to get out into nature. The park must also positively impact the well-being of the community and of the recreation and parks sector.

Grant Park is Abbotsford's first fully accessible all-in-one baseball themed park. In developing the park, the city, along with its community partners, aimed to enhance and refurbish safe spaces for young people of all abilities to play baseball, develop life-skills and learn from positive role models and through play.

The park's innovative design includes the use of recycled materials and reflects an overarching goal of inclusion in each step; with wheelchair accessible surfaces, dugouts, washrooms, and playground and picnic facilities that welcome people of all abilities. The park's multi-language community consultation process also engaged community members near and far.

Grant Park includes high-level ecological and climate considerations. The design retained 80% of the park's existing trees and included new rain gardens to support site run-off without adding pressure to the City's storm water system, while also rehabilitating the natural park habitat.

"We are proud to award the City of Abbotsford the BCRPA Parks Excellence Award for Grant Park," said Rebecca Tunnacliffe, CEO of the BC Recreation and Parks Association. "This state-of-the-art park reflects new levels of creativity in how park design can respond to the needs of community members while also prioritizing inclusion, community building, and the natural environment to ensure its sustainability for generations to come."

The Parks Excellence Award is one of five provincial Awards of Excellence presented during BCRPA's annual Symposium conference in Whistler. Each award is presented on behalf of over 4,000 recreation and parks sector members from across BC working to enhance the physical and mental health, wellness, connectedness, and quality of life of their communities.

**For more information:**

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**BACKGROUND**

***BCRPA: Inspiring and connecting professionals to build healthy and resilient communities through the power of recreation and parks.***

The British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA), a not-for-profit organization, plays a central role in leading the enrichment and improvement of the quality of life of British Columbians and their communities. We do this by championing the power of recreation and parks.

Ours is a story of creating community connectedness and individual well-being based on the knowledge and recognition that recreation and active living, as well as access to parks and the natural environment, have significant impacts on our physical and mental health.

Since 1958, the BCRPA has provided leadership, training and support, fostering the principles of accessibility and inclusiveness, to help its members meet provincial and local mental health and physical activity priorities that improve the quality of life of every British Columbian.

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