MEDIA RELEASE

CITY OF SURREY HONOURED WITH AWARD FOR PROGRAM EXCELLENCE

April 30, 2026 (Vancouver, BC) Today the BC Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA) awarded the City of Surrey with the **2026 Program Excellence Award** for their **Skating at Civic Plaza** initiative. The award was presented at BCRPA's Symposium conference.

BCRPA's Program Excellence Award recognizes innovative programs that have improved individual and community-level social and physical well-being and that serve as a model for other local governments and organizations to enhance their services.

Skating at Civic Plaza transformed Surrey's downtown into a vibrant winter destination through a temporary real-ice skating rink and covered public gathering space. The program offered accessible skating and amenities including seating, fire pits, games, live programming, and a pop-up café.

The program activated a highly visible civic space and attracted families, youth, newcomers, downtown workers, and visitors from across the region. More than 23,000 people skated at the rink, while over 20,000 additional visitors used the plaza's non-skating amenities, reinforcing Civic Plaza as a true year-round community hub.

Accessibility and inclusion were central to the program, with free admission, affordable rentals, and enhanced on-site staffing support helping remove barriers for first-time skaters and newcomers to Canada.

"Skating at Civic Plaza exemplifies how creative programming can transform public spaces and bring communities together," said Katie Fenn, BCRPA CEO. "The City of Surrey has demonstrated how accessibility, inclusion, and placemaking are essential and can create spaces for everyone to move, play, and connect."

The Program Excellence Award, sponsored by RC Strategies, is one of four Provincial Awards of Excellence presented during BCRPA's annual Symposium, held this year in Vancouver. Each award is presented on behalf of BCRPA's more than 5,700 members across the province who work to enhance the physical and mental health, wellness, connectedness, and quality of life of their communities.

The District of Saanich also received an Honourable Mention in this category for their **Willing Youth Leading Diversely (WYLD) Leadership Program**.

ABOUT BCRPA

BC Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA) convenes, educates, and empowers professionals who transform lives. With a network of over 8,500 professionals who support more than 95% of British Columbia, we champion policy, empower and educate leaders, train fitness professionals, and deliver programs that create safe, active, and inclusive communities where everyone belongs. Through this essential work, communities across the province grow stronger, healthier, and more connected.

Learn more about how BCRPA is working with their members, fitness professionals and community partners in its work of shaping healthier futures at www.bcrpa.bc.ca.

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