

# **MEDIA RELEASE**



**Embargoed until Friday, April 29th at noon**

## **CITY OF NEW WESTMINSTER WINS BCRPA AWARD OF EXCELLENCE**

*St. Mary's Park honoured with 2016 Parks Excellence Award*

**Whistler, BC (Friday, April 29, 2016)** - The BC Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA) today presented its Provincial Parks Excellence Award for 2016 to the City of New Westminster for St. Mary's Park.

Saint Mary's Park is located in downtown New Westminster, a growing multi-family neighbourhood in need of parks and green space. The park is adjacent to the new École Qayqayt Elementary School which was formerly occupied by Saint Mary's Hospital. The boundary between the sites is intentionally 'blurred' such that the combined amenities, for example the playground, nature play, community gardens, sports fields, open lawn and sport courts augment the play experience for the school children and meet the needs of the broader community.

The project was singled out for its innovative use of recycled materials, from the more commonly used rubber surfaces made from tires to the use of reclaimed granite bricks, salvaged from the historic streets of New Westminster, to build the gabion bench seats located in the community garden. Since completion last spring, Saint Mary's Park has proven to be a very successful neighbourhood park, largely due to meaningful engagement with stakeholder groups and the public throughout the planning and design process.

"As a result of sound planning techniques, St. Mary's Park is a great success as its design responds to the needs of the community and enhances the play experience and educational opportunities for the school site," said BCRPA CEO Rebecca Tunnacliffe.

The awards were presented at the BCRPA's annual Symposium today in Whistler. The conference brings together members of the parks and recreation sector from across BC, including elected officials, volunteers, members of the business community and others interested in building and sustaining active, healthy lifestyles and communities in BC.

-30-

Images available  
Background included

## **BACKGROUND:**

The British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association is a not for profit organization dedicated to building and sustaining active healthy lifestyles and communities in BC. Established in 1958, the Association is a central resource agency for members and stakeholders of the parks, recreation, physical activity and culture sector, providing leadership, training and support to help meet national, provincial and local priorities. Through a diverse network of partners and extensive programs and services, BCRPA actively advocates accessibility and inclusiveness to recreation and physical activity.

<http://www.bcrpa.bc.ca/>

### **For more information:**

Connie Mah

Administrative Assistant, BCRPA

p) 604.629.0965 ext 258

[cmah@bcrpa.bc.ca](mailto:cmah@bcrpa.bc.ca)