

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **VANCOUVER BOARD OF PARKS AND RECREATION WINS BCRPA PARKS EXCELLENCE AWARD** **sθəqəlxenəm ts'exwts'áxwi7 Rainbow Park Honoured with Award for Parks Excellence**

**Penticton, BC (May 2, 2024)** -- BC Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA) presented its **Parks Excellence Award** today to the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation for sθəqəlxenəm ts'exwts'áxwi7 Rainbow Park. ([www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards](http://www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards)).

The award recognizes outstanding design and development of park spaces using natural elements or repurposed 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.

sθəqəlxenəm ts'exwts'áxwi7 Rainbow Park is situated in a highly urban setting in the City of Vancouver, replacing a pre-existing parking lot and servicing more than 30,000 people who live and work within a five-minute walk of the park.

Located in the heart of downtown Vancouver, sθəqəlxenəm ts'exwts'áxwi7 Rainbow Park, is a dynamic space acting as a community porch for residents, office workers and tourists, enriching the urban experience in an accessible and memorable way. It boasts accessible transport and parking spaces, barrier free entrances, wide and level paths throughout the park, seating for visitors with mobility challenges, accessible washrooms, wayfinding (including braille signage) and safety sightlines through to the playground.

Over 50% of the space is covered with plants, including native species that are significant to the host Nation's culture, food, and medicine, as well as local pollinator plants. Rainwater is collected in a series of pocket wetlands and in the plaza, water from the splashpad is collected, filtered, and recirculated to on-site lush fixtures and irrigation.

"The Vancouver Park Board has managed to turn a parking lot into an urban oasis for thousands of Vancouverites and visitors alike," said Katie Fenn, BCRPA CEO. "sθəqəlxenəm ts'exwts'áxwi7 is a model of accessible and universal design, creating a barrier free and accommodating environment for all."

The Parks Excellence Award is one of six Provincial Awards of Excellence presented during BCRPA's annual Symposium conference held this year in Penticton. Each award is presented on behalf of more than 5,000 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.

The City of Coquitlam also received an honourable mention for Sheffield Park.

**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.

[www.bcrpa.bc.ca/about-us/](http://www.bcrpa.bc.ca/about-us/)