



NEWS RELEASE

Abbotsford's Grant Park wins Award of Excellence by provincial parks association for innovative, inclusive design

ABBOTSFORD, BC – May 5, 2022 – The City of Abbotsford is proud to share that the newly designed and redeveloped Grant Park has won the Parks Excellence Award from the BC Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA).

Grant Park was reopened in 2020 as Abbotsford's first inclusive park and was selected as the winner of the Parks Excellence Award on May 5, 2022 at the BCRPA Symposium for exemplifying how innovative recreation, parks and culture contribute to a high quality of life in a community. The once-aging sports field has been fully repurposed as an "all in one" amenity and intentionally centres around accessibility. The new park design includes a wheelchair-friendly synthetic baseball field, accessible year-round washrooms, a picnic shelter and inclusive playground for children of all age, as well as eight additional accessible parking spots adjacent to the facilities.

"Building a complete community, where all residents feel encouraged and able to participate is one of the key goals for us as a City," said Mayor Henry Braun. "Grant Park, and all it offers by means of accessibility and inclusivity, is an example of what can be achieved when we work together to remove barriers. I am very proud of the Parks, Recreation and Culture team for their dedication to making Abbotsford a more accessible place."

The City of Abbotsford partnered with the Abbotsford Angels Baseball Association, Blue Jay's Care Foundation and the Abbotsford 2016 BC Summer Games Legacy Association on the redevelopment of the park and consulted with the Abbotsford Diverse Abilities Committee and an occupational therapist with the Fraser Valley Child Development Centre to ensure all elements of the park would be accessible for all. The insight and feedback received through community input helped ensure the park would meet the real needs of everyone in the community.

"The new fields at Grant Park are amazing. Not only can we safely push my daughters' wheelchairs around the bases safely, but they can also engage with their team, peers, and coaches in the dugouts," said Desiree Robinson, whose twin daughters Skyla and Jayde plays Challenger baseball. "We are so thankful for the efforts and dedication to this park from The City of Abbotsford and Jays Care Foundation allowing our kids to feel welcome and eliminate some of the barriers we face every day. We look forward to the endless memories and smiles to take place here in Grant Park for many years."

"Grant Park baseball diamonds allow us to provide a safe and accessible facility to enjoy baseball for athletes with disabilities," said Tim Hall, coordinator of the Abbotsford Challenger Baseball program. "The specially designed diamond with synthetic turf provides a perfect level playing surface making it easy to use for wheelchairs, power chairs, and athletes with walkers. The three diamonds in close proximity allows us to grow our participation, giving more athletes who could benefit from adaptive baseball the opportunity to join."

Grant Park aligns with the Council's vision of a complete community and with the 2018 Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan of providing spaces that remove barriers and improve accessibility in order to increase participation of the whole community. In addition to the synthetic turf baseball field, the newly designed park

includes two additional U-9 baseball fields and dugouts to accommodate tournaments, and league games and practices.

In addition to making Grant Park more accessible, Abbotsford's Parks, Recreation and Culture Parks Planning Team also incorporated environmentally friendly considerations and natural elements into the park by integrating rain gardens into built structures to absorb storm waters and rehabilitate the natural habitat of the park, retaining 80 per cent of the site's existing trees and using recycled materials in the construction of site fixtures and furniture.

Additional Information:

- To learn about parks and playgrounds in the City of Abbotsford, please visit www.abbotsford.ca/parks-recreation-culture/parks-trees-trails/parks-playgrounds.
- [BCRPA's News Release](#)
- [Photos of Grant Park](#)

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