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HOLLAND PARK, CITY OF SURREY

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2009 BCRPA Provincial Awards Parks and Open Spaces

*Holland Park
City of Surrey*



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The City of Surrey has breathed new life into an old public space with the Holland Park project, in the process creating a new, green centre for the community.

For years, the 29-acre park had been mostly ignored and left to decline. But the city decided to revitalize this resource and launched an extensive consultation process. First Nations and other community groups were asked for input on the cultural significance of the area. Seniors, the business community, city staff and the RCMP also had a say. There were a series of open houses to get feedback for the design as well. Just as the park would eventually bring people together for recreation, so the entire community had to be brought into the effort to give the plan a vision.

This notion of the park representing the community was carried forward into its layout, with its walkways and gardens representing suburbs growing out from the city centre. Care was taken to make the park universally-accessible – paths are wide and level and there are plenty of places to rest. The site has open spaces and wooded areas filled with native plants – some of which are threatened species. New trees have been planted. The plants are fed using stormwater, which is also used to fill the watercourses. More land was added to the park by reclaiming an adjacent Skytrain parking lot. The park is also filled with art, with some of the sculptures designed to last 120 years before they require maintenance. A new “Rose-Holly” fountain and pavilion now graces the centre of the park. And the city even commissioned the cultivation of a new type of dahlia, the “Miss Holland”, in honour of Alice Holland, an avid gardener and owner of the homestead that originally stood on the property.

And the project has been a resounding success. People from all walks of life come to the park to play, rest and interact with one-another. The local library uses it as part of a program to bring young readers outdoors. Community events such as the Jazz Festival and the Fusion Festival are held there. It’s the location of the city’s Christmas tree. And

it will be used as an official Olympic celebration space during the 2010 Games.

The City of Surrey's experience with reimagining Holland Park shows what can happen when a community comes together to save its green spaces. For this remarkable effort, BCRPA is pleased to present Surrey with the 2009 Parks and Open Spaces Award.

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