

December 17, 2009

Mayor & Council  
City of Vancouver  
453 West 12<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Vancouver, BC  
V5Y 1V4

RE: Hastings Park  
Dear Mayor & Council,

Allan DeGenova solicited my opinion about the future for Hastings Park. As you know, that part of the city has been an area of great interest to me for a long time. Hastings Park has the potential to be the Stanley Park of the east side of the city. And now with urban sustainability emerging as the critical issue of our time, and with the City of Vancouver's stated ambition of being the world's greenest city, that possibility compels us to think boldly.

It suggests that Hastings Park should really be a *park* - a park with a fair in it certainly - but a *park* first and foremost. In such a context, and at such a time as this, it seems critically important that the city return most of the site to park purposes, purposes that can include fair functions while not being overwhelmed by them.

But of even more importance than the "fair in the park" concept is the concept of the park as the *ecological heart of the district*, providing not just recreation, but crucial ecological services as well. As cities rebuild for sustainability they must look for ways to work with Nature's systems, not against them. It is easy to forget that Hastings Park is the site of the original salmon stream that drained this district. The Sanctuary project begins to acknowledge this legacy, capturing discharged storm water that falls in upper parts of this urban watershed. The Sanctuary restores a tiny fraction of the ecological function of this district, but much more can be done. The restoration of the park creates the opportunity to restore not just the whole park, but to extend green tentacles up into the surrounding streets, greening the streets, lanes and playgrounds upstream in a linked system of ecological parks and green public ways. Now is the time, now that this park's future is being decided, to place this park in its rightful place: at the heart of a future green district, within the world's greenest city.

Sincerely



Patrick M. Condon, UBC James Taylor Chair in Landscape and Liveable Environments

