



PACIFIC NATIONAL EXHIBITION

The first Pacific National Exhibition Fair took place in 1910. For about two decades, the fair was the second-largest in North America after the New York City Fair.

Since that time, the site has played host to many famous events, including the Miracle Mile at Empire Stadium. In this now-historic race, which took place in 1954, John Landy of Australia and Roger Bannister of England both broke the four-minute-mile barrier.

Today the PNE operates three business streams: the 17-day annual summer fair, Playland and year-round facilities rentals. About one million people visit the fair and 286,000 enjoy the rides at Playland each year. Numerous community groups and film production companies rent the facilities at the park, as do the Western Hockey League's Vancouver Giants.

The PNE contributes about \$115 million to the gross domestic product of the Greater Vancouver Regional District and creates approximately 4,000 direct jobs at the height of operation in the summer. The PNE is also a significant source of temporary employment for youth. In the summer, especially during the fair, about 2,600 jobs are created for young people.

In 1997, Vancouver city council and the park board approved the Hastings Park Restoration Plan, which called for the gradual restoration of the area to abundant green spaces and trees. The PNE was expected to relocate to another location as soon as possible.

Following an intensive review by the provincial government's core services task force in 2001, the PNE was directed to begin discussions with the City of Vancouver for the transfer of its operations to the city, and to dispose of the land in Surrey acquired for relocation purposes.

Significant progress has been made toward the implementation of the Hastings Park Restoration Plan with the creation of the Sanctuary, the Italian Gardens and the Empire Fields. Of the total 45 hectares of Hastings Park intended for restoration to parkland, about 12 hectares has been completed, at an estimated cost of \$13 million.

This spring and summer, city, park board and PNE staff will begin a public process to discuss the future of the PNE fair and Playland operations. The goal will be to work with stakeholders and residents of Vancouver to create a new vision for the PNE and determine if and how its operations can be compatible with the community and the park setting. Staff is expected to report to council on May 15, 2003, with a plan for this visioning exercise. This process will occur outside the city plan community visioning process currently underway in the Hastings/Sunrise community.

The greening of Hastings Park will continue. However, the pace of change and ultimate appearance of the park will be influenced by the visioning exercise. Other factors like annual funding allocations will also affect the rate at which the park is converted to green space.

The PNE will add three city staff as observers to the 2003 fair planning and operations group to facilitate an orderly turnover of operations.

Visit the province's Web site at <http://www.gov.bc.ca/> for online information and services.