

Hastings Park - Park Watch

Date: Jan. 18, 2009

Time: 10:09

Weather Conditions: sunny, with early fog dissipated

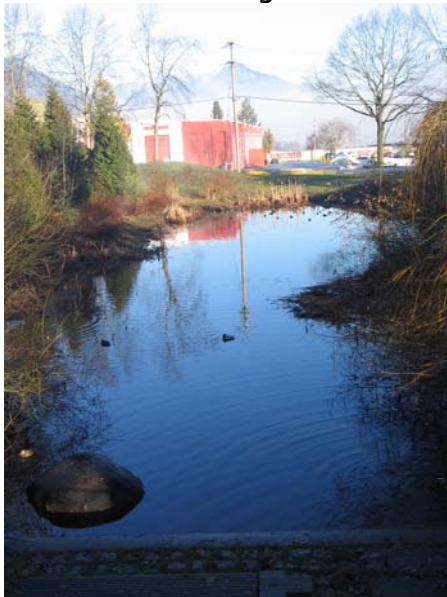
Completed by: John Alderete and Dean Sinnett

1. Sanctuary

1.1 Structures

1.2 Wildlife

Approx. 20 mallards and a dozen wigeons observed in upper pond, many more in lower pond where ice is melting.



1.3 Vegetation

Another collapsed tree due to shallow root system (two others have fallen in the last several months).



We recommend leaving the tree as is—it is good cover and adds complexity to the pond, which is much needed. In any event, the roots and base of the tree should be left intact in the ground to help stabilize the bank. The remaining portion of the tree should be placed somewhere along the shoreline of the pond or extending into the pond.

1.4 Terrain

Looks good in area by upper pond. Meadow to the east of upper pond very sparse: would be a good place for more tree planting (see below); also many damaged trees (see past pw reports).



1.5 Pond (*including water quality, water levels, water flow*)

Water level is fine, approx. 2/3rds of the lower pond is frozen.

1.6 Park Activities

Three groups walking dogs, total of 6 people, three dogs. One dog was untrained (puppy) and off leash.

1.7 Miscellaneous

2. Italian Gardens

2.1 Structures

2.2 Vegetation

2.3 Park Activities

Very few people, quite a lot of cars. We stood at an 'intersection' between the roadway connecting the parking for the Agrodome and the sanctuary for five minutes. During that time we observed 12 cars, moving rather fast, and only two people. We also noted that this high level of traffic is not due to a specific event at the Agrodome, as about half of the cars did not go there. There seems to be a lot of cars cutting through the park to get to the parking lot for the Racecourse, perhaps caused by the redirection of traffic to the McGill entrance (this redirection is very positive, however). However, there was additional traffic going to other destinations. This raises an important question: is the park for people or for cars?

Intersection for cars.



This broad question also raises specific logistical and administrative questions. If there is so much car traffic here, shouldn't the PNE create a traffic plan for the park? Shouldn't there be more enforcement of traffic laws? (We saw none.) Also, if a pedestrian is hurt, or, it must be raised, killed, as a result of the heavy traffic, who is responsible for this? Whose insurance covers it for one, and who is to be held accountable? What is the state of the PNE's insurance for pedestrians enjoying the park?

Another important question is the maintenance of the road at this intersection. We noticed that several cars, and perhaps maintenance vehicles, have been cutting the corner and actually driving on the grass and paving stone, shown below. This even involves driving over an electrical box.



In the short term, we recommend simply closing off gate 2 from Renfrew, in addition to the closing of the gate north of there that connects to Miller Drive. In the long term, we strongly believe that there is no need for people to drive through the park like they are currently doing. Even those that going to the Agrodome can park in the abundant parking lots on the north east side of the park. The park is not a place for cars. It's a public park for human beings.

2.4 Miscellaneous

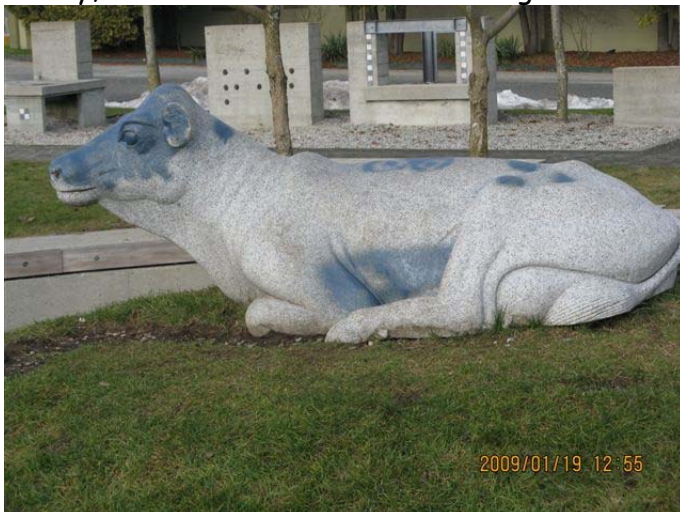
More damage to concrete sidewalks due to heave traffic at main west entrance to park (photo below, left). Why is the case that there are two roads leading to this entrance, when one would be enough for service vehicles. These vehicles could access this entrance from either the north or south (see second picture)?



Also, 'access road' between Renfrew and the sanctuary can accommodate four lanes of traffic (see picture below). Why so much asphalt and very little green space? Why not extend the gardens on both sides to allow root systems of trees to grow stronger?



Finally, the cow has been vandalized again with blue paint:



3. Momiji Garden

3.1 Structures

Garden and adjacent roadway damaged from heavy truck use. Much resulting erosion. This kind of damage should be prevented by reducing traffic flow, and repairs should be made immediately after the damaging event.

3.2 Vegetation

3.3 Park Activities

3.4 Miscellaneous

4. Empire Bowl and beyond

4.4 Miscellaneous

An example of a positive development is the creation of the gravel trail with proper signage, off Miller Drive, pointing to New Brighton—see below. Why isn't the whole park designed with pedestrians in mind?



Also, we note that new parking lot currently being used by the Racecourse patrons was plowed during recent snow storm (see large ice hills), but no work was done for the routes

that pedestrians use (Dean observed this during the storm). Again, why is this a place for cars and not a place for humans to enjoy?

