

Grandview Woodland Area Council
Britannia Community Centre
1661 Napier Street
Vancouver, BC V5L 4X4
www.vcn.bc.ca/gwac

January 10, 2011

Mayor and Council
City of Vancouver
453 West 12th Avenue
Vancouver, BC
V5Y 1V4

Dear Mr. Mayor and Councillors:

Grandview Woodland Area Council is deeply concerned about the proposed casino development at BC Place in downtown Vancouver.

Our concerns arise from several issues and their ramifications. Traffic through the Grandview Woodland neighbourhood has always been of major concern to us, and we can only see this development as resulting in increased traffic, especially late at night. Since we also understand that the so-called entertainment complex will include nightclubs and other drinking establishments, you will certainly understand why this would cause a measure of alarm since Prior and Venables streets are the direct route from downtown to the eastern side of Metro.

There are larger and even more vital reasons for serious consideration of the social impact of this proposed development.

It has recently come to public attention that large casinos are a special attraction to organized crime. Council has already recognized the infiltration of organized crime and accompanying gang violence into our community. Mayor Robertson has spoken publicly about this issue and has stated his determination to rid our city of the violence resulting from organized crime and the drug trade. Surely, the addition of this large casino would only exacerbate this very serious problem.

We are also concerned about the social implications of increased gambling, especially with regard to vulnerable young people. We draw your attention to this November report from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health:

www.camh.net/News_events/News_releases_and_media_advisories_and_backgrounders/PGIO_report_osduhs.html

While youth may not have direct access to casino gambling, the presence of an expensive and “glitzy” gambling facility in a central location, and adjacent to a sports stadium, can only encourage dangerous and addictive behaviours.

It is our understanding that the operator of the existing Edgewater Casino, the Las Vegas-based Paragon Gaming, will have control of the proposed mega-casino. We see this as diverting gaming funds to a for-profit corporation and further eroding the original intent of raising money through gambling: support of British Columbia charities.

Finally, we feel compelled to mention the aesthetic issue of having a huge gambling establishment as a major feature of downtown Vancouver. This would not only place us at odds with most large cities in the world that do not have gambling as a city-centre attraction but it would also send, in our opinion, a very negative message about the cultural and social values of our city. This development would change the face of Vancouver forever.

With these issues in mind, we ask that Council deny requests for rezoning of the BC Place property for this purpose.

Sincerely yours,

Grandview Woodland Area Council