



POLICY REPORT  
DEVELOPMENT AND BUILDING

Report Date: September 28, 2011  
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Meeting Date: October 6, 2011

TO: Standing Committee on Planning and Environment

FROM: Director of Planning, in consultation with the General Manager of  
Community Services and the General Manager of Parks and Recreation

SUBJECT: Northeast False Creek Issues Report

**RECOMMENDATION**

- A. That Council *endorse in principle* the Northeast False Creek conceptual diagram, generally as outlined in Appendix A, to ensure integration of future development in Northeast False Creek.
- B. THAT Council *endorse in principle* the reconfiguration of the future Creekside Park extension, generally as outlined in Appendix B, which facilitates the efficient and safe management of contaminated soils and enables an expedited delivery of a park that meets the needs of residents, and  
  
FURTHER THAT Council requests that staff embark on a more detailed design, soils management and park delivery plan that includes additional public consultation.
- C. THAT Council *endorse in principle* a change to the public benefits strategy for False Creek North ODP areas 7A ("Rogers Arena site, Aquilini Development") and 6b ("Plaza of Nations Site, Canadian Metropolitan Properties") to include a publicly-accessible sports and recreation centre, noting that the public benefits package will be further refined and analyzed through the rezoning process, including additional public consultation and public hearing.
- D. THAT Council *endorse in principle* the demolition of Enterprise Hall on the Plaza of Nations' site in order to accommodate a public plaza and performance space, noting the significant direct costs and opportunity costs involved in retaining and upgrading the building, and in consideration of other recent public investments in heritage retention in east False Creek.

- E. THAT Council's decisions pertaining to A-D above do not fetter Council's future decisions on rezoning applications in Northeast False Creek.

### ***CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS***

The City Manager recommends APPROVAL of the foregoing.

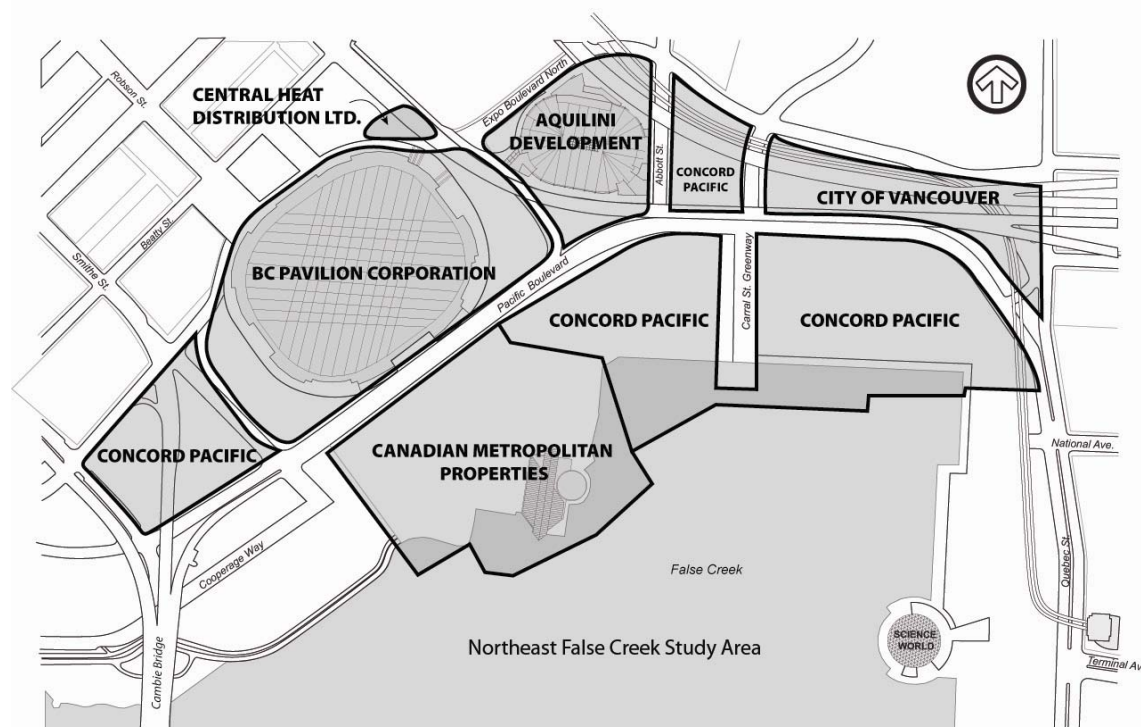
### ***COUNCIL POLICY***

- False Creek North: Land Use Policy- Special Event, Festival and Entertainment Functions (2005)
- Metro Core Jobs and Economy Plan: Issues and Directions (2007)
- Northeast False Creek: Directions for the Future (2009)
- Green Building Rezoning Policy (2010)
- Cultural Plan 2008-2025
- Cultural Facilities Plan 2008-2023
- Vancouver's Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2012-2021

### ***PURPOSE***

The purpose of this report is seek Council *endorsement in principle* of the following, which will help to guide discussions around future development in Northeast False Creek including forthcoming rezoning applications for False Creek North ODP subareas 7a (Rogers Arena, Aquilini Development) and 6B (Plaza of Nations, Canadian Metropolitan Properties):

- a conceptual diagram to ensure integration of Northeast False Creek individual rezoning applications;
- direction to pursue further analysis of the option for a reconfigured Creekside Park extension (developed through a facilitated process among various stakeholders in 2010), which greatly facilitates the management of contaminated soils and expedites park delivery;
- amended public benefits strategy for the two sites that includes a newly proposed, publicly-accessible sports and recreation centre, as well as the potential for a site for non-market housing, rental housing, heritage density transfers, a public plaza, daycare, contributions to other public benefits; and
- the demolition of Enterprise Hall on the Plaza of Nations site in order to accommodate a public plaza and performance space.



*Map 1: North East False Creek land ownership.*

### **SUMMARY / BACKGROUND**

In November 2009, Council approved “Northeast False Creek: Directions for the Future” which provided policy advice for the future development of Northeast False Creek (NEFC) on the topics of the roles of the area, area vision, land use mix, density, open space and public benefits and amenities.

During 2010 and 2011 staff have completed much of the “bridging” work needed to advance key policy and implementation issues while advancing detailed zoning applications and meeting regularly with the NEFC Joint Working Group (residents and NEFC develops as well as other stakeholders) to discuss emerging ideas and proposals. Over the past 18 months progress has been made on both high level issues that affect the future development of the entire area and on detailed matters related to specific sites.

While the NEFC Directions provide area vision and land use advice, it does not include a plan for the physical integration and connections needed to unify the development sites and public spaces. To communicate this important physical planning objective, staff have produced a Public Realm Framework diagram that considers both public objectives and the aspirations of the major land owners (developers) in the area. The diagram is proposed as a tool to provide unifying guidance for the future development of the area.

The potential reconfiguration of the Creekside Park Extension was an opportunity that Council directed staff to pursue to achieve a number of benefits including the early delivery of a park for the communities in Northeast False Creek. The NEFC Directions acknowledge the possibility that Creekside Park and the adjacent Concord lands could be reconfigured subject to a full assessment against specific performance criteria. During 2010 City staff, Concord

Pacific and representatives of the False Creek Residents association participated in a process led by a professional facilitator. The process produced a reconfigured option that all participants agreed was worthy of further consideration. Based on recent technical meetings with Concord and the Province, staff believe that the park reconfiguration option provides the greatest opportunity to expedite at least parts of the park. This report discusses steps to move forward with a public process on park design and program and further technical work on soils and timing.

The majority of this report is dedicated to several issues related to the staff assessment of a concept for the future development of the Plaza of Nations site and recommendations with respect to a future rezoning application. The proposal is for a large, mixed-use development on a 10 acres waterfront site in Northeast False Creek and includes significant residential development, a range of commercial uses, affordable housing, a childcare centre and a civic plaza. Since Council's original review of the proposed NEFC public benefits, the owners of Rogers Arena and the Plaza of Nations have introduced a new potential public benefit of a publicly-accessible sports and recreation centre that would be jointly used by the Canucks and the general public. Staff have assessed the proposal for compliance with the Council approved policy for the area (NEFC: Directions) and shared the major ideas with the public through open houses in December 2010 and June 2011.

Both the owners of the Plaza of Nations site and the Rogers Arena site would like to proceed with rezoning applications and concurrent amendments to the False Creek North Official Development Plan. This report identifies key issues and provides recommendations to guide a forthcoming rezoning application on the topics of open space, density and massing, land use and public benefits and amenities.

## ***DISCUSSION***

There are a number of issues that require direction from Council as they either divert from existing Council policy, or are new considerations that were not contemplated at the time when Council adopted the NEFC Directions Report. Direction on these issues is fundamental to the review of the forthcoming rezoning applications for the Rogers Arena and Plaza of Nations sites, as well as future applications from other landowners in the area.

### **1) The Need For An Overall, Conceptual Diagram For Northeast False Creek**

At the time of Council consideration of the NEFC High Level Review, staff were not yet able to illustrate how various design aspirations, connections and features might be coordinated for the larger area across property lines. Such a "bigger picture" perspective is critical though, in ensuring that various larger-scale city objectives can be achieved in a coherent way across property lines in NEFC and across the larger area.

Planning has proceeded sufficiently since then, such that a conceptual illustration of how larger city aspirations might be achieved can now be provided to Council. Staff recommend that Council endorse in principle this conceptual diagram to help provide the broader context to individual rezoning applications.

The illustration/diagram and recommendations are included in Appendix A. The intention of this illustration is not to be prescriptive or definitive, as there may be many alternate ways to achieve such coherent and connected relationships. Rather, the intent is to illustrate as least

one potential approach, and facilitate continued discussions toward a successful framework as individual rezoning applications are considered.

The public realm conceptual illustration considers both public objectives, and the aspirations of the major land owners (developers) in the area.

Staff have shared the draft diagram with the NEFC Joint Working Group at the September 8, 2011 meeting and in the context that this constitutes a conceptual plan, there were no concerns.

## **2) Reconfiguration of the Creekside Park Extension**

Creekside Park is one of several parks in the False Creek North Official Development Plan that were planned to be delivered overtime a 20 year time frame in conjunction with different phases of development. The land in False Creek North is comprised of former industrial lands and many of the sites have contaminated soils. As part of the sale of these lands following Expo '86 to Concord Pacific, the Province accepted both the financial and technical obligations of dealing with contaminated soils. To minimize risk and costs, some parks in False Creek North serve as permanent storage for contaminated soils from development sites within False Creek North.

The False Creek North ODP identifies the Creekside Park Extension as a 9 acre future park site with boundaries defined by False Creek, Pacific Boulevard Carrall Street. Legal agreements currently stipulate that the Creekside Park Extension is to be delivered with the development of Area 6c. Contaminated soils from the development of Area 6c (which has some of the worst soils in the entire FCN area) must be moved into the park for permanent storage and capped with a membrane. The park would then be constructed on top of the membrane.

The timing of the development of Area 6c has been delayed for various reasons. Concord Pacific has been clear that they now wish to proceed with rezoning to allow for a residential development on Area 6c. The NEFC Directions allow for the consideration of a mixed-use development on Area 6c including significant residential development.

At the time of the approval of the NEFC Directions Concord raised the possibility of reconfiguring the park as a solution that could meet their development aspirations and could expedite delivery of Creekside park by allowing some of the contaminated soils to stay in place. The NEFC Directions allow for the possible reconfiguration of the park subject to adhering to specific criteria. Council instructed staff to continue to work with the developer, citizens and Parks Board to expedite the provision of the Creekside Park Extension.

Based on this instruction staff engaged a facilitator and engaged in a process with Concord and area residents to explore options for the delivery of Creekside Park. The facilitated process produced a reconfigured park option that all participants agreed was worthy of further consideration.



**Map 2:** *A comparison of the Creekside Park extension as anticipated in the False Creek North ODP, and the reconfiguration determined through the facilitated public process.*

In recent months, senior city officials have confirmed through technical meetings with Concord and the Province that the park reconfiguration option provides the greatest opportunity to expedite at least parts of the Creekside Park extension.

The original park design requires significant disruption of the contaminated soils area involving greater environmental risk, time and costs. The reconfigured park would allow for a significant portion of the most highly contaminated soil to be capped in place rather than being moved. This would be safer and would expedite the delivery of the park.

The reconfigured park would be the equivalent size as the original contemplated park and would be designed to achieve the performance criteria of the original park. The reconfiguration would also provide more waterfront green space, improving the waterfront experience.

### 3) Public Benefits Strategy for the Plaza of Nations and Rogers Arena Sites

Council has approved a public benefits proposal outlining the array of items to be delivered in conjunction with future rezoning applications in NEFC. To date, Council has not approved any rezoning applications or related public benefit offerings (the rezoning application for Area 5b West and the related public benefits package has been referred back to staff for further work.)

In consideration of the Council approved public benefits package, staff have evaluated the public benefits and amenities proposed in conjunction with the future development of the Plaza of Nations and Rogers Arena sites as follows:

#### ***Non-Market Housing Sites & Guaranteed Market Rental Units***

The *Vancouver Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2012-2021* adopted by Council earlier this year emphasized the need to address housing demands across the full continuum. In addition to market condominiums (some of which will be rented at market rates), the NEFC Directions require that 20% of the housing in NEFC be non-market housing and that 10% of the market units in NEFC be purpose-built market rental. The financial analysis conducted by G.P. Rollo and Associates in June of 2009 concluded that there would be sufficient development value created through future rezoning applications to support both the provision of sites (free) to provide 20% non-market housing and 10% guaranteed market rental units.

The NEFC Directions requirement that non-market housing sites be designated and transferred to the city at no cost at the time of rezoning will provide greater flexibility in housing programs (compared to some current arrangements in north False Creek) and should reduce the likelihood of sites sitting empty for lengthy periods.

At 10 acres, the CMP site is one of the largest in NEFC and has the greatest amount of new residential floor space potential of all sites in NEFC (based on NEFC Directions policy advice). For these reasons Area 6b offers the greatest flexibility in accommodating designated non-market housing sites. To achieve the target of 20% non-market units, approximately 17% of the residential floor space (238,000 sq.ft.) needs to be allocated for non-market housing and this is equivalent to one tower along Pacific Boulevard.

Council's direction on the provision of a site for non-market housing is critical since inclusion will directly impact the site planning, land lift and public benefits offering. The inclusion of market rental units will also impact the land lift but could be more easily fit into the existing site plan since the units do not need to be in a separate building on a separate site.

If new non-market housing sites are not secured on this site through rezoning, the only large site remaining that could include any affordable housing site is Concord Pacific (Area 6c). Only Area 6b (CMP) and Area 6c (Concord) were identified as sites large enough to provide sites for non-market housing in NEFC. It was anticipated that the smaller sites that are constrained in design and have less floor space would provide cash-in-lieu of non-market housing.

Although our discussions with the landowner have been unsuccessful in reaching agreement on the identification of a site, staff recommend that the primary housing objective for a future rezoning of Area 6b continues to be the securing a site for affordable housing. With Council's endorsement of this recommendation, staff will continue to work to secure the provision of a site for non-market housing as part of a future rezoning application and continue to explore the inclusion of guaranteed market rental units (feasibility to be determined pending further costing/ CAC negotiations.)

### ***Sports and Recreation Facility***

Subsequent to Council's approval of the public benefits package for NEFC, Canadian Metropolitan Properties and Aquilini Development have proposed to construct and provide operating funding for a Sports Centre on the Plaza of Nations Site as part of the future development of area 6B.

The Sports centre includes a publicly accessible ice rink (to be shared with the Canucks), indoor recreation space and a childcare centre in addition to private components including a Canucks Training centre, offices, sports/med clinic and restaurant. The developer has proposed a shared facility, with the Canucks utilizing 20% of the available rink time and the public being able to access the ice rink for the remaining 80%. The Canucks would utilize the ice rink in the morning until noon and the ice would be available for public programming from noon to midnight, the most desirable time for public access. The multi-purpose community space (e.g. fitness centre, studios, etc.) would be available to the public 100% of the time. The facility would provide the opportunity for the Canucks to create a "Rogers Arena Campus" which will be a place for their practice sessions, a location to mentor young hockey players, and as a base from which to continue their work with under-privileged youth. CMP and Aquilini are requesting that the Sports Centre be considered as an addition to the public benefits package for NEFC.

Based on discussions and information provided to date the working assumptions on the proposal include the following:

- The facility should have the look and feel of a community centre and provide a similar range of services at comparable costs (i.e. Park Board access card, programs for low-income residents).
- City of Vancouver to own the air space parcel for the publicly accessible spaces (ice rink, indoor recreation space and childcare)
- Publicly accessible spaces would be exempt from property tax
- The ice rink, indoor recreation space and childcare would be FSR exempt
- Construction costs for the publicly accessible spaces would be CAC eligible to be split between CMP and Aquilini Development
- The Canucks would operate the rink facility
- The City would operate the publicly accessible multi-purpose community space
- The City would contract independently with a childcare operator as is the standard model
- the developers would fund on a going forward basis the full annual operating costs of the public sport and recreation facilities (80% of the ice rink, 100% of the indoor recreation space)



This proposal and the potential partnership with the Canucks organization is a unique and exciting opportunity for enhanced recreation programming and amateur sport hosting at no incremental operating cost to the City and Park Board. The vision for a Sports Centre Complex with adjacent hotel, restaurants, and other commercial and residential space will also contribute to the local economy.

Staff have reviewed the basic structure of the proposal in terms of the developers' offer and the City's role in securing this public benefit and are confident that it fits within the range of options that the city utilizes to achieve public benefits.

The benefit of a new ice rink would allow for increased access to ice-based recreational opportunities in an area of the city that is presently not well-served by rinks. The demand for skating lessons, public skate sessions, minor sport activities, as well as adult hockey in the city remains strong.

The Sport Centre proposal would also provide additional indoor recreation space and services in an area of the downtown core that will experience significant density and associated population growth in the coming years. In recent years, the Park Board has confirmed the need for additional indoor recreation space based on population projections.

#### *Non-motorized Boating Centre*

When Council approved the NEFC: Directions for the Future, they asked that staff work to secure a future location for a boathouse and that rezoning applications along the waterfront not be advanced without a workable solution for locating a permanent non-motorized boat facility in NEFC. Although this facility was not included in the original public benefits strategy for NEFC, the paddling, rowing and long boat community is a large user group in the Eastern False Creek basin and there is a strong Council desire to find a location for these activities.

Planning and Parks Board staff have met with representatives from the Paddling and Rowing groups to explore and share ideas for a new boat house. The current thinking is that the most feasible location for a future boathouse is either on land in Creekside Park or on the water at the east end of the Creek. This finding is based on the need for paddlers and rowers to have some parking available nearby the facility (at least for the foreseeable future) and the preference to locate the boat house at the end of the race course.

Staff does not recommend the consideration of a boat house on the Plaza of Nations site as co-locating a boat house with a waterfront event space would cause significant logistical problems. As some non-motorized boating operations are being run out of the Creekside Community Centre (CCC), proximity to CCC is ideal.

The approved Public Benefits Package for NEFC does not include funding for the construction of a future non-motorized boating centre (boat house, docks, ramps and supporting spaces). Staff will work with the non-motorized boating community and the landowners to determine the best possible approach to achieving the facility through development related benefits, corporate fundraising or other funding approaches.

## Update on Public Benefits

The following table outlines the overall public benefits package that was approved by Council in the NEFC Directions for the Future report:

Public Benefit	Cost	% of Total
Non-Market Housing (sites for 20% of units)	\$19,339,817	15%
Market-Rental Housing (10% of units)	\$31,335,195	25%
Heritage Density Transfer (10% of Resi. Floor Area)	\$13,000,000	10%
Inner City Employment and Procurement Requirements	0	0%
Georgia Street Pedestrian and Cycling Link on BC Place Land	\$15,000,000	12%
Civic Plaza and Outdoor Performance Space	\$10,000,000	8%
Pacific Blvd. Upgrades	\$600,000	0%
Carrall Greenway Completion	\$1,200,000	1%
Hard Surface Recreation Space Under the Viaducts	\$4,300,000	3%
Upgrades to Existing Parks and Open Spaces	\$1,500,000	1%
2 Child Care Centres	\$16,000,000	13%
A Family Place Out of School Care	\$4,000,000	3%
Contribution Towards Renewal of the Vancouver Aquatic Centre	\$8,500,000	7%
A Contribution to Vancouver Central Library	\$500,000	0%
	\$125,275,013	100%

**Table 1: Cost of the Approved NEFC Public Benefits Package (November 2009)**

With the exception of the sports and recreation facility, all of the above amenities were anticipated in the public benefits package as approved in the NEFC Directions Report in 2009. The CAC eligible costs of the sports and recreation facility are currently estimated to be in the range of \$22M, with a more precise figure coming as part of the ongoing design and rezoning process.

The sports and recreation centre was not anticipated when the original public benefits package was brought to Council in the NEFC Directions report. Assuming the total available CAC is consistent with the 2009 estimate, staff have reviewed potential areas of offset should Council approve proceeding with the sports and recreation centre amenity. The following potential offsets from the original public benefits package are the results of the discussions at the Corporate Management Team (CMT):

- **Renewal of the Vancouver Aquatic Centre (\$8.5M):** This is a priority project which will be reviewed in the context of the aquatic review underway by the Park Board. The estimated cost for renewal of the Aquatic Centre is in the range of \$50M. This project is identified in the 10-year Capital Plan and can be funded through the Capital budget. This would allow allocation of \$8.5M to the sports and recreation centre.
- **After school care (\$4M):** This project has already been partly delivered through the construction of new classrooms at Dorothy Lam School. A \$2M allocation could be taken from this amenity and attributed to the sports and recreation centre.
- **Civic Plaza (\$10M):** this important amenity could be phased with later delivery of some of the planned enhancements, ensuring that basic performance infrastructure is in place; this would allow a portion of the \$10M to be attributed to the sports and recreation centre.

- **Market Rental Housing (\$31M):** Rental Housing remains a key priority for Council and numerous strategies are underway through the Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2012-2021 to enable construction of purpose built market rental units across the city. For this particular rezoning, the major priority is the 20% non-market housing. A \$10M reallocation (a one third reduction from original public amenity strategy) from the Market Rental housing could be allocated to the sports and recreation centre, knowing that evidence consistently shows that for the first 10 years of a strata development, at least a third of the units are rented. This would leave a significant commitment to purpose-built rental on the site while staff continue to pursue purpose-built rental housing opportunities across the city under the framework of the Housing and Homeless Strategy.
- **Pedestrian and Cycling Links (\$15M):** a review of the opportunities to manage costs related to this amenity may result in opportunities to reallocate to the sports centre amenity.

### **5) Opportunities for Public, Open Space Arising from the Demolition of Enterprise Hall**

The structures that comprise the Plaza of Nations - with the exception of Enterprise Hall - were designed as temporary facilities for Expo '86. While not listed on the heritage inventory, Enterprise Hall is a "legacy building" and its value resides primarily in the physical relationship of the site to the Roundhouse and Science World that expresses the spatial extent of the world's fair and its relationship to the Plaza of Nations covered outdoor performance space. The glass roof over the performance space was removed in 2006 when extensive corrosion was discovered. Enterprise Hall and the entire Plaza of Nations Site is owned by Canadian Metropolitan Properties.

As part of the High Level Review various locations for a new major public open space along the waterfront in NEFC have been evaluated. The current location of Enterprise Hall has been identified as having many desirable attributes for public open space. The NEFC Directions for the Future, endorsed by Council in November 2009, explores a range of options, noting that Enterprise Hall could be retained and adapted to house a smaller attraction or it may need to be eliminated. The Directions state that "a decision on the future of the building would follow an evaluation of the feasibility of retention in light of other public objectives for the site."

The essential consideration in the retention of Enterprise Hall is land use. The Directions recommend the provision of an 80,000 sq.ft. open space on Area 6b (Plaza of Nations). This space is needed to create a new civic plaza for daily use by residents and for special events. During Council's consideration of the NEFC Directions concerns were voiced by the public about the balance between proposed population of NEFC and the provision of open space.

Staff recommend that Council endorse in principle the demolition of Enterprise Hall in order to meet the public, open space objectives on the Plaza of Nations site and in NEFC as a whole. It would be very difficult to secure both the retention of Enterprise Hall and the provision of 80,000 sq.ft. of open space as part of the future rezoning of this site. Staff did explore the feasibility of retaining Enterprise Hall and concluded that retention is not feasible based on the following:

- A seismic assessment indicated that there will be a premium cost associated with the retention of the building to address seismic issues.

- The upgrade and renovation of the building is likely to cost \$10 million or more.
- Considerable public investment has been made in other buildings of heritage value in the False Creek area. Specifically, Science World (also an Expo Legacy building) has received funding from the federal and provincial governments in support of the \$30 million renovation that is underway. The Salt building in Southeast False Creek was retained and renovated by the City of Vancouver at a cost of \$ 15 million.
- The retention of Enterprise Hall would mean that other priorities for this site would need to be traded off.

Canadian Metropolitan Properties is currently proposing approximately 70,000 sqft of open space as part of the redevelopment of the Plaza of Nations site. The current proposal provides a series of open spaces including:

- Civic plaza ~50,622 sq.ft.
- Public Dock ~ 8,826 sq.ft.
- Retention of the Expo Treed Area ~ 10,613 sq.ft.
- Semi-public open spaces of approximately 24,627 sq.ft. (spaces used for outdoor seating adjacent to cafes and other spaces with some public access)

Staff generally support this configuration. Further work will be completed to achieve the 80,00 sqft target in the NEFC Directions report. Staff note that the demolition of Enterprise Hall is a requirement to meet the open space objectives.

### ***SUMMARY OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION***

To date, public engagement on the proposal for Area 6b (Plaza of Nations) has consisted of:

- Discussions at the Northeast False Creek Joint Working Group meetings;
- Two Open House opportunities for the general public and on-line comment forms

### ***NEFC Joint Working Group***

The Northeast False Creek Joint Working Group (JWG) consists of representatives from each of the major land developers in Northeast False Creek, area residents and other representatives from the community. In total, the JWG discussed issues pertaining to the Plaza of Nations redevelopment on nine occasions between July 2010 and April 2011. Throughout these meetings, members of the group have consistently expressed significant support for the proposed indoor community space, childcare and rink, and have emphasized that the majority of the Community Amenity Contributions (CACs) resulting from development in Northeast False creek should be used for amenities that serve local residents.

The FCRA believes that a publicly-accessible Canucks practice rink and the youth-focused programs run by the Canucks organization, which will serve to inspire local youth and build community pride, make the overall development proposal very desirable. The FCRA has also expressed support for cash-in-lieu as offered by CMP for supportive housing (their rationale is included in their letter attached as Appendix C).

Concerns raised during NEFC Joint working group meetings on the proposed redevelopment of the Area 6b include:

- potential shadow impacts of public spaces from the tower forms
- need to ensure that open spaces are adequate and activated; and
- require more clarity on the operation of the proposed sports complex (costs, who owns, operates, etc.)

*Open House December 2010*

The redevelopment of the Plaza of Nations site (including the ice rink) was shared with the public at an Open House held December 8, 2010, jointly hosted by the City and CMP. The open house included a site tour and presentation. Approximately 120 people attended the event. The public comment form was also available at the event and online following the event. Key themes in the public commentary include:

- Overall, general support for the proposal as presented
- Interest in maximizing public amenities and open space
- Support for commercial uses but some concerns around residential use, particularly the question of livability around the stadiums
- General support for the proposed additional commercial density as long as it could be proven out with good design and balanced with additional open space and amenities
- Strong support for achieving the City's goal of providing at least 80,000 sq. ft. of open space given the density being proposed
- Significant support for the proposed multi-purpose community space and ice rink (the sports and recreation centre), and childcare centre
- Concerns regarding the activation of the public spaces
- Interest in ensuring architectural excellence and great public spaces in the area

*Open House June 2011*

Two open house meetings were held at the Roundhouse Community Centre, Thursday June 9 from 6:30 to 9pm and Saturday June 11<sup>th</sup> from 2 - 4:30pm.

In attendance were City of Vancouver staff from Central Area Planning, Urban Design and Development and the Park Board. The applicant was also in attendance along with architectural and landscape architectural consultants. Both events were attended by approximately 40-50 people. A site walking tour, of approximately 1 hour, took place on both days.

On Sunday, June 12, 2011 two staff members from Central Area Planning attended to a booth at the Rio Tinto Alcan Dragon Boat Festival in Olympic Village from 10am to 6pm. The booth was very well attended by approximately 200 people.

A questionnaire containing four questions was handed out at each of the meetings and was posted online. Responses were accepted up to one week past the open house dates until June 19, 2011.

The majority of comments received for questions one and two were in support of the overall development proposal for the Plaza of Nations site and the emerging concept for the Civic Plaza. Many comments stated that it would be an improvement to the area through better cycling and pedestrian connections, a mix of uses and the public benefit of the ice rink and a civic plaza.

Several comments were not in support of the overall development, stating that there is too much density on the site, creating too many new residents with not enough green space provided. Commentary specific to the Civic Plaza included concerns regarding noise levels for surrounding residents and the desire for less hard surfaces and more green areas.

Questions 3 and 4 asked opinions regarding the Plaza Sports Centre proposal and the potential trade offs of public benefits. A larger percentage of respondents left these questions blank.

Of those that did respond, a majority were in support of the Plaza Sports Centre Proposal stating that it would be a good amenity as long as public access is maintained; many also felt that potential public benefit trade offs were acceptable. Three respondents felt that trade offs were not acceptable.

### ***Staff Response to Public Consultation***

The public dialogue on the Plaza of Nations redevelopment is ongoing and the site will be subject to the City's full consultation process for a comprehensive rezoning. At a minimum, this will include an additional round of public open houses, meetings with interested groups and review by Council's advisory committees once a detailed rezoning proposal has been prepared and submitted.

Staff note that the issues and concerns heard thus far related to form, density, open space and amenities are legitimate issues that will be addressed during the more detailed analysis at the rezoning phase. The rezoning will also require a public hearing as part of Council's consideration of the application.

### ***Correspondence Received***

The False Creek Residents Association has provided a letter outlining the views on a number of topics covered in this report (Appendix C)

The Vancouver Public Spaces Network has also provided commentary on the open spaces and public benefits discussed in this report (Appendix D)

### ***FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS***

The recommendations contained in this report have no financial impact for the current operating budget. There will be implications on future capital plans and budgets and these will be addressed at the time of any of the rezonings.

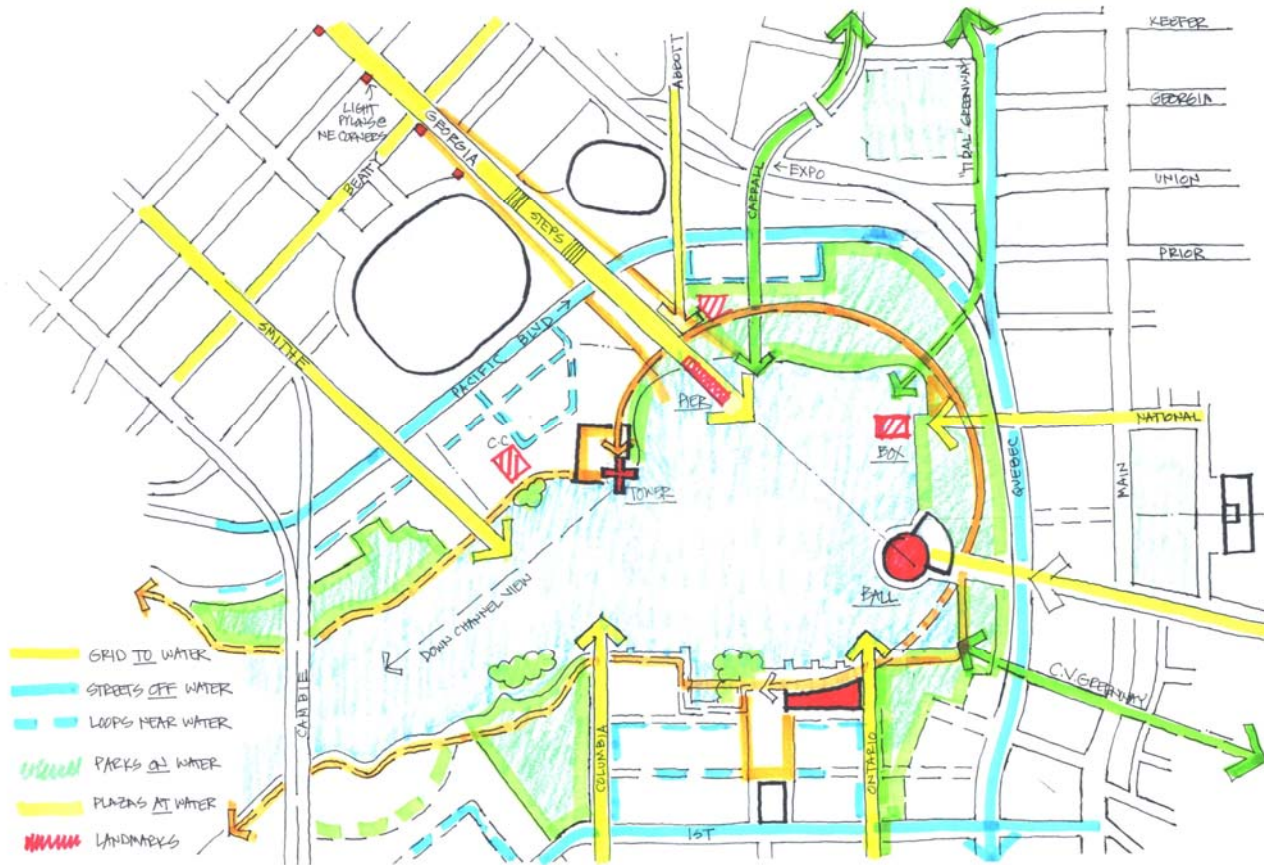
### ***CONCLUSION***

The purpose of this report is to bring clarity to a number of important issues that will assist staff, the landowners and the community in implementing the Council-approved *Northeast False Creek Directions for the Future* report. The ongoing implementation of the directions will help to ensure that Vancouver's next great waterfront community is sustainable, liveable and a vibrant neighbourhood for generations to come.

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## NEFC Public Realm Conceptual Diagram

The Public Realm Conceptual Diagram (below) to provide unifying guidance to the future development of the NEFC area.



## Creekside Park Reconfiguration

The reconfiguration of the Creekside Park extension generally as illustrated on the diagram below.







September 9, 2011

Dear Mayor and Council:

We are writing to seek your assistance in avoiding the situation that we faced earlier this Spring with the four unsuccessful development permit applications brought forward for Northeast False Creek. At that time, Council was faced with the unhappy choice of supporting staff recommendations **or** supporting the community. It appears from the September 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Northeast False Creek Joint Working Group that unfortunately we are heading down the same path.

There are the four major issues we wish to bring to your attention:

### **1. Rental Housing**

We know that Council supports the development of purpose built rental housing. In support of that objective, the FCRA is very supportive of the Aquilini Developments proposal to build a rental tower on the southeast corner of Abbott and Expo Boulevard.

- The FCRA supports the "scattered site" approach to supported housing, i.e. a strategy which integrates social housing into the fabric of the community rather than 'stand alone' developments which tend to isolate low income and special needs citizens. In that regard, we were very encouraged that Aquilini Developments was working to establish a partnership with BC Housing that would see 10 floors of the rental tower leased to BC Housing for its clients.
- The tower development would build a ramp from the Skytrain station, over Expo Boulevard to the Arena. This would improve the flow of traffic for residents, significantly improve pedestrian safety, and reduce the need for traffic police to staff that intersection on event nights.

We are therefore quite dismayed to learn that staff will not bring forward this proposal for Council's review. This concern is exacerbated by the knowledge that the rental tower will attract CAC's which could be used to provide much needed community amenities.

### **2. Social Housing**

As indicated above, the FCRA supports Council's commitment to social housing. However, we were advised at the JWG that Staff will require a "dirt site" for social housing from CMP. The FCRA cannot support yet another vacant lot in our neighbourhood. Given that senior governments do not have a robust social housing program, we fear that yet another "dirt site" will not produce any more social housing. CMP has offered 'cash in lieu'. This cash could be used to convert one of the existing vacant lots in our neighbourhood into real housing. The requirement for a "dirt site" comes very late in the game. We have been meeting on the CMP/ Aquilini proposal for over 2 years and this recent demand comes as a most unwelcome surprise. Staff have advised that they will not support a 'cash in lieu' approach, yet have not provided any reasons for this. We ask that you have the 'pros and cons' of all options in front of

you rather than simply the staff recommendation for a “dirt site”. We ask that you support an option that will produce real social housing rather than simply another vacant lot.

### **3. The Community Centre/Ice Rink**

As you know our association is in support of the proposed multi-purpose facility that will accommodate the Vancouver Canucks training centre as well as a myriad of community uses. We appreciate that the developers have confirmed that they will pay all operating costs for this facility. The developer has offered this facility and will accommodate the city’s demand for a open performance space - now planned for the Enterprise Centre site. Understandably CMP has indicated that it simply cannot afford to do the community centre, the performance space **and** a provide a “dirt site”.

We urge you to support a strategy that provides our community with a much needed amenity, **and** delivers real social housing **and** an adequate outdoor performance space. The initial proposal from the developer allows for all three priorities. It is staff’s position on the “dirt site”, that has created this unnecessary need for Council to make a most difficult choice between the community centre so welcomed by the community and a vacant “dirt site” that will be a blight as are the numerous other such sites in the vicinity.

### **4. Timing**

We have devoted countless volunteer hours to 3 years of participation on the Joint Working Group. It is therefore very disappointing at this last minute to know that staff are still not ready to bring this application forward. Apparently there was a last minute need for a business case review of the community centre and performance space. As the community centre operating costs will be paid by the developer, it is difficult for us to understand why a business case review is required. As the performance space is something demanded by the City, it is also difficult for us to understand why a business case is required now-- why wasn’t this required before the city made the demand of the developer. We appreciate the need for an independent QS to establish appropriate values, however, this work should not have been left to the last minute.

In conclusion, we reiterate our request for you to provide direction to staff that will avoid unnecessary confrontation and discord:

1. Bring forward to proposal for a rental tower on the Aquilini property
2. Provide a ‘cash in lieu’ option to accommodate social housing requirements
3. Ensure the community centre/rink moves forward.
4. Expedite approval so that the way forward is clear during this council’s term of office.

Thank you for your attention. We are available to answer any questions or provide any additional detail.

Yours truly,

Patsy McMillan and Fern Jeffries  
Co-Chairs, False Creek Residents Association



September 27, 2011

Ms. Paula Huber  
City Of Vancouver Planning Department  
453 West 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Vancouver, BC V5Y 1V4

RE: Issues Report for NEFC

Dear Paula,

The following is a follow up to our March 30<sup>th</sup> letter regarding the form of development proposed for 6B and the overall Community Amenity Contributions (CACs) for NEFC. It contains an outline of the Vancouver Public Space Network's recommendations for amendments to current and future rezoning applications in this area. We feel these are vital to addressing a number of concerns about the proposed development and provision of CACs. In sum, these recommendations are provided based on the critical need for the adequate provision of high quality public space and facilities for the new and existing residents to enjoy and interact with their neighbours.

To remain a desirable place to live, attract people, business and tourists, Vancouver must continue to retain and develop a variety of open spaces to allow for a diverse range of activities and recreational opportunities. This is particularly true in NEFC, where the scale of development is substantial. The need to 'get it right' from the outset is extremely important.

1. **Overall Parksapce Allocation** - It is to be noted that the comparable existing North False Creek neighbourhood surrounding David Lam Park has been developed to have the historical 2.75 acres of public open space for each 1000 residents. This neighbourhood is a world-renowned example for livability and urban development, and has won numerous awards for its high quality and plentiful public open spaces. The 6B rezoning proposes 2450 new residents and would require 293,485ft<sup>2</sup> of public open space to emulate the David Lam Park neighbourhood example. The 80,000ft<sup>2</sup> of open space suggested for the site is a drastic departure from this respected urban example with an extreme reduction in the amount of public space (less than 1/3<sup>rd</sup>).

Recent iterations of the 6B proposal indicate that the original target of 80,000 ft<sup>2</sup> of dedicated public open space may not be met. To supplement this loss, it has been proposed that approximately 20,000 ft<sup>2</sup> of semi-public space be included, in lieu. While the addition of the semi-public space can act as a lively 'buffer' between the public open space and the private areas, and help to animate the neighbourhood by adding people and activity, its value is not equal with space that is truly public. While some of this proposed semi-public space could be cafes and patios, some of the areas shown on the recent plan would not be ideal for such people-gathering activities (example: along the western edge of the sports/community

centre.) It is recommended that the City require the target of 80,000 ft<sup>2</sup> of dedicated public space be an absolute minimum for any rezoning.

2. **Complete and Permanent Creekside Park** - It is well understood that the 9 acres of Creekside Park is a major desire for current residents to provide needed greenspace, access to False Creek and new facilities like public washrooms. It is recommended that the City require the completion of the full and permanent Creekside Park as a requirement for any Concord rezoning.

3. **Amenities to Support Performance and Open Space** - As you know, there is great demand for public outdoor performance space in downtown Vancouver and it is exciting to see that a public plaza will be included in the 6B development. The southern exposure of the plaza area has the potential to make this space a popular location along the seawall throughout the year. We strongly encourage the City to include the provision of permanent public washrooms on site, a key element that *will keep people at the plaza, reduce conflicts with adjacent business owners and animate the space throughout the day*. It is recommended that public washrooms are made a requirement for development of the site and included as a CAC.

The 6B proposal includes substantial private marina space and a restaurant on the edge of the site. The current rezoning proposal does not provide sufficient space along the seawall to accommodate access and operation of the proposed marinas and waterside restaurant and reduce conflicts with the everyday use seawall and events at the plaza.

4. **Access to False Creek** - The proposed development along the edge of False Creek is a prime opportunity for the public to reconnect with False Creek, a dynamic natural feature of the neighbourhood and “borrowed” open space. The proposed plaza can be a venue for numerous community celebrations such as the Taiwanese Festival, Dragon Boat Festival and other cultural events. Direct access to the water is essential for this space to provide the flexibility for the largest range of events possible plus retaining visual and physical public access to False Creek.

5. **Recreational infrastructure to support the use of False Creek by residents** - It is recommended and strongly noted by the public and the community members of the NEFC Joint Working Group that a boat house, docks, showers, washrooms and change facilities for paddling and rowing activities is developed as a CAC for the NEFC area. This would prove to be a key facility to all residents of Vancouver and the region and venue for international festivals. A boathouse facility would prove to be a key factor in animating the north side of False Creek and an excellent opportunity for residents to reconnect with False Creek.

6. **Community Meeting Space** - The 6B rezoning application includes a proposal for a privately operated facility that will include a daycare and community/recreational space. This type of facility has the potential as a venue for neighbours to meet, connect and share experiences if operated as a true community space that is accessible, affordable and inclusive. In addition, this facility would be a welcome addition to the other recreational opportunities in the False Creek area. The new facility, however, must be responsive to the needs of Vancouverites, inclusive in programming, access, affordability and the services

provided. We are pleased with the level of cooperation between the developers and the City on the operations and accountability of this facility, and would encourage this type of open dialogue be continued in order to reduce any potential concerns from citizens about this proposed private facility.

Like False Creek North, the success of the entire NEFC development will be determined on how well residents and visitors will judge the livability of the neighbourhood. It is our fear that providing 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the amount of public open space that other Vancouverites enjoy will reflect poorly on the new development and the planning of the area in the future. **The VPSN recommends that the amount of public open space is maximized during this rezoning phase and that the public realm be developed and maintained to the highest quality possible** to ensure that it can withstand the substantial use and demand the area plan will create.

We would ask that you include the points noted above in your "NEFC Issues Report" to ensure that Council is aware of the extent of the community concerns and observations from participating in meetings for the past three years with local community groups and staff.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide input and we look forward to reading the report.

Submitted Respectfully On Behalf of the Vancouver Public Space Network,

Adam Vasilevich & Scott Erdman

Cc     Brent Toderian, Michael Gordon