

COUNCIL MEMBER'S MOTION

*For consideration at the Standing Committee on City Finance and Services meeting on
July 15, 2026*

10. Rising Tides: Governance Reform and Stewardship of False Creek

Submitted by: Councillor Orr

WHEREAS

1. False Creek is a globally significant civic, ecological, and cultural asset — central to Vancouver's identity, public life, and economic vitality;
2. False Creek lies within the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̅əm (Musqueam), Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), and sə̓lilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, whose peoples have stewarded these lands and waters since time immemorial;
3. False Creek is home to long-established residential communities, including floating-home co-operatives, liveaboard residents, recreational boating communities, and marina operators that contribute to housing diversity, community stewardship, marine activity, and the economic and cultural vitality of Vancouver's waterfront;
4. Governance of False Creek is currently fragmented across approximately 22 municipal, provincial, and federal bodies with overlapping and often conflicting jurisdictions covering navigation, public safety, environmental protection, infrastructure, shoreline management, and water quality — with no single authority responsible for the whole;
5. This fragmentation has left False Creek without a unified steward, creating persistent gaps in long-term planning, ecological restoration, climate adaptation, and intergovernmental coordination;
6. False Creek faces mounting environmental and public safety pressures, including:
 - a. Toxic sediment disturbance from unmanaged anchoring;
 - b. Derelict and abandoned vessels;
 - c. Discharge from unmonitored vessels;
 - d. Water pollution from urban runoff and combined sewer overflows;
 - e. Habitat degradation and biodiversity loss; and
 - f. Accelerating risk from climate change and sea level rise;
7. The Supreme Court of Canada has affirmed provincial authority over the seabed of inland waters in British Columbia, including False Creek, and the Province may issue water lot tenures under the BC Land Act for stewardship, moorage, conservation, and public administration;
8. The City of Vancouver operates civic marinas within False Creek whose revenues could help fund enhanced stewardship, ecological restoration, public amenities, and coordinated harbour management; and

9. There is a timely opportunity to build a governance framework that advances Nation-to-Nation relationships, integrates Indigenous stewardship, improves public safety and ecological health, and ensures False Creek remains a living, accessible, and resilient part of Vancouver's waterfront for generations to come.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Council direct staff to initiate formal discussions with the Province of British Columbia, the Government of Canada, and the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations regarding the feasibility of establishing a coordinated governance and stewardship model for False Creek — including consideration of a False Creek Harbour Authority or equivalent body with clear mandate, accountability, and capacity to act.
- B. THAT Council direct staff to report back by Q3 2027 on:
 1. Jurisdictional mapping — a comprehensive inventory of existing responsibilities across municipal, provincial, federal, and Indigenous authorities, identifying gaps, overlaps, and opportunities for consolidation;
 2. Governance models — options for coordinated management, with particular emphasis on co-governance frameworks developed in partnership with the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations;
 3. Seabed tenure consolidation — the legal and operational feasibility of consolidating unleased provincial seabed tenures within False Creek into a unified stewardship framework;
 4. Marine management improvements — tools and infrastructure to better manage anchorage, transient moorage, derelict vessels, and marine pollution in environmentally responsible ways;
 5. Funding and revenue models — including marina revenues, intergovernmental grants, development partnerships, and environmental stewardship funds;
 6. Ecological and cultural priorities — opportunities for habitat restoration, biodiversity enhancement, climate adaptation, improved public access, cultural programming, marine education, and collaboration with existing community groups and NGOs active in False Creek; and
 7. Indigenous youth and guardianship — potential models for Indigenous youth engagement, stewardship training, and marine guardianship programs tied to False Creek restoration and management.
- C. THAT Council formally request that the Province of British Columbia convene an intergovernmental and interjurisdictional working group — inclusive of the host Nations and all relevant agencies — to explore long-term governance reform and coordinated stewardship mechanisms for False Creek.
- D. THAT Council affirm its commitment to a future False Creek that is healthy, publicly accessible, climate-resilient, ecologically restored, and culturally vibrant — a shared marine environment that reflects the values and aspirations of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Vancouverites alike.

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