



Heritage Vancouver

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October 27, 2021 Address to Vancouver City Council at Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities meeting regarding The Future of False Creek South: Advancing a Conceptual Development Plan and Addressing Lease Expiries

There have been questions around whether this proposal respects the original vision of False Creek South. The original vision subordinated the logic of the market to pursue housing and livability for a mix of income and social groups including those with low incomes and those interested in co-op values. Earlier in July you heard over five hours of testimony from co-op residents responding to the lease negotiation methodology. Co-op housing can't be understood as just affordable housing. It is a way of life about human cooperation, resilience, a responsibility and commitment to the wellbeing of others.

As a collective, False Creek South took in and welcomed refugees, it supported temporary modular housing when other neighbourhoods fought it, and you already know about their plans for the seniors facility and adding density. There are also many smaller but no less important human gestures like finding a cake on your doorstep from a neighbour after a bad day or taking care of the child next door because the parents have come up against something unexpected. To a city government, what is the value of a well functioning community with cooperative and socially motivated citizens? To a city government, what is the cost of losing a well functioning community with cooperative and socially motivated citizens?

The original vision is about these values and qualities. The ongoing expression of that vision to this day is the living community and social infrastructure that shapes the norms and behaviour that animate life in False Creek South.

The report you have to make a decision on is not about these values and qualities. That's clear when the very beginning slides say False Creek South's value is the prime waterfront land to be leveraged. It frames the starting point so that it seems to make perfect sense to transact business freely and in isolation from the values and qualities that make False Creek South meaningful and beneficial for our civic culture.

The report states that the proposed plan respects the neighbourhood's legacy character of building heights and green space. But there is much more than the heights and the green space. There are many parts including the legacy of when CMHC was active in providing vulnerable Canadians with housing. And this is something that so many Canadians lament for today.

This community that is embedded in the False Creek South landscape, they are the heritage. One of the most important characteristics of that heritage is that there are very strong social norms that animate life there. To a very important extent, in False Creek South, values do the work of prices. That comes from the design and layout of the buildings and space, the demographic makeup, the operation of the

neighbourhood association and the integrity of the ideas that created that community.

The city has a culture plan – Culture Shift- and a new heritage plan that intersects with each other. They both predicate heritage on culture. By culture I mean the matters of life, ways of living, how people see and engage with and behave in the world. False Creek South is a community with a distinct culture.

One of the richest forms of heritage is a place where the relationship between culture and place is strong. In False Creek South the social infrastructure keeps that relationship between culture and place strong.

Heritage is not only about what you save. It's about what you create. From all the testimony, poetry, videos and the neighbourhood's own plan, you can see that the community that was created from the original worldview is continually creating with that pro-social view of the world intact. That is a very rich expression of heritage.

This report recommends that you extend the reach of the market in a major way into a place and community that is largely created by and governed by social norms, that you extend the reach of the market into a place and community that protects people from the adverse effects of the market. It implies that it makes perfect sense to do so.

It presents numbers and units and people as interchangeable pieces useful to arrive at a calculable result. From the perspective of good community planning and good heritage planning, I cannot agree that that is the right starting point. It does not have the information that tells you what False Creek South means in order to make good decisions about how to plan change. I would agree that the report be taken for information only.

Bill Yuen
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