

FALSE CREEK SOUTH SHORE:  
Evaluation of Social Mix Objectives



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## Summary

One of the major goals in the redevelopment of the south shore of False Creek was to create a socially mixed community. Redevelopment of the area began in the mid-1970s and was completed over the next dozen years. With the release of socio-economic data from each Census, the City has reviewed the extent to which its social mix objectives for the area have been met. This report is the fourth in that series of evaluations.

The 1996 Census data indicates that the south shore of False Creek is a socially mixed community. The degree of social mix achieved is significant but is less than the original targets. In terms of age, the area has considerably fewer children and more middle-aged persons than the region. In terms of household mix, False Creek has fewer families with children and more elderly than was targeted. In terms of income, False Creek has a much higher proportion of high-income groups and a lower proportion of low-income groups than the target.

While there are differences between the original intentions and today's social mix, False Creek is considerably more balanced in terms of household types and groups than is the neighbouring area of Fairview Slopes, developed over similar time period but with no social mix policy. In Fairview Slopes, redevelopment has produced a population that is predominantly single, 25 to 39 years of age, with very few children or elderly. The two areas are more similar in terms of their income mix.

The divergence from the intended mix of residents has increased since 1981, but this was not unexpected. The earlier development phases had much higher proportions of non-market and family housing than the later stages and development of the area was not completed until the late 1980s. Social circumstances have also changed since the original mix policy was adopted in the early 1970s – income differences are increasingly a function of the number of income-earners in a household, the neighbourhood has aged and children have grown up and moved out of home, and the Creek has become a more desirable place to live.

## Introduction

One of the major goals in the redevelopment of the south shore of False Creek was to create a socially mixed community. Redevelopment of the area began in the mid-1970s and was completed over the next dozen years. With the release of socio-economic data from each Census, the City has reviewed the extent to which its social mix objectives for the area have been met. This report is the fourth in that series of evaluations.<sup>1</sup>

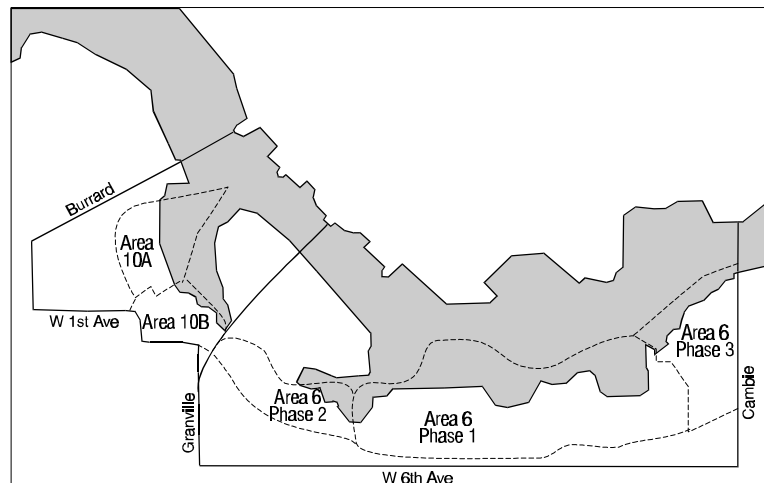
The first section of this report provides background information on the redevelopment of the area. This is followed by a short discussion on the data used to evaluate social mix. The next sections look at each of the three social mix objectives in turn, asking how well the objectives were being met in 1996 and whether the area is moving closer to or further away from what was intended. The last section looks at the differences in social mix between the City-owned land and the market-freehold land within False Creek.

## Background

Lying between the Burrard and Cambie Bridges, the south shore of False Creek was originally developed as an industrial area, with a mix of lumber mills, open storage and warehouses. In the late 1960s, public discussion on the future of the area ended with Council deciding that it should be redeveloped for residential and recreational use rather than industrial. In 1968, a land exchange with the Province left the City owning eighty acres of land in the area, allowing the City to take the lead in redeveloping the area, based on plans and policies adopted by Council in 1973 and 1974.

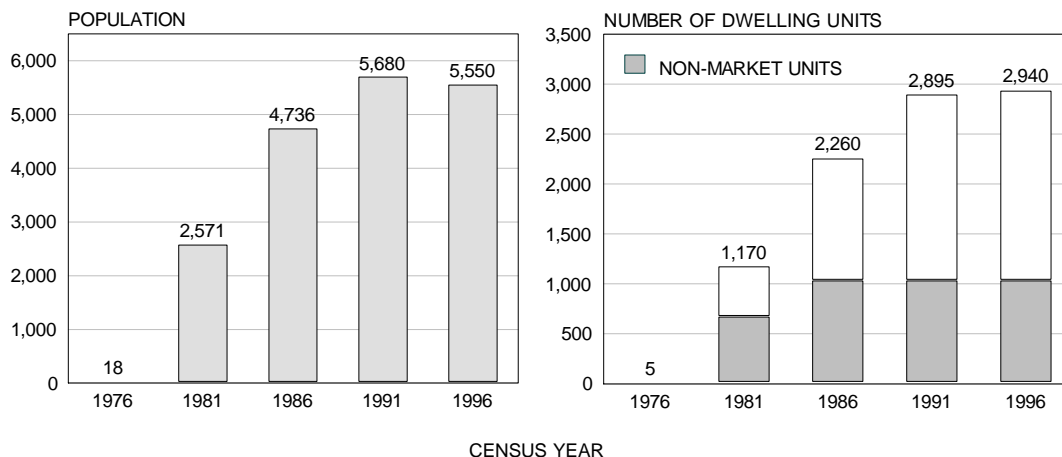
Site preparation began in the fall of 1973 and construction in the summer of 1975. The first areas to be developed were all on City-owned land, beginning with the fifty-two acres in the first phase of Area 6. This first phase consisted of 852 units grouped into the Spruce and Heather neighbourhoods (separated by a fifteen-acre regional park) and was completed in 1977. Phase 2 of Area 6 (twenty-one acres) was completed in 1984, and remaining seven acres in Area 10B in 1986. The development of the privately owned land in Area 10A was completed in 1988, while redevelopment of the privately-owned Johnston Terminal site (Area 6, Phase 3) was completed between 1983 and 1989.

FIG 1. FALSE CREEK SOUTH SHORE - SUB-AREAS



Between 1976 and 1991, about 2,900 dwelling units were built in the census tract 49.02, housing just under 5,700 people and accounting for nine percent of the total net increase in dwelling units in the city over the period. Since 1991, the number of units has increased slightly, while the total population has declined by about 130 people.

FIG 2. GROWTH IN POPULATION & DWELLING UNITS IN FALSE CREEK (CT 49.02)



One of the major goals of the redevelopment was to create a socially mixed residential area, accommodating all income groups, age levels, and household types. This was partly in reaction to redevelopment in areas such as the West End that was seen as having reduced social diversity. The “social mix” objectives that were formally adopted for the south shore were based on achieving the same mix of age and income groups as in the Vancouver region as a whole, together with a mix of family and non-family households.

The social mix objectives were to be achieved through providing a variety of housing forms and tenure types, and by designing an urban environment that would encourage families to remain in the city. Housing forms included townhouses and apartments designed for families, while tenure forms included non-market housing (in the form of co-ops and non-profit rental projects), market condos, and market-rental units.

On the eighty acres of land that the City owned (see Figure 4), ownership provided the City with control over how, and by whom, different parcels of land were to be developed. City land was made available only on a leased basis, partly to retain long-term public control over the land and partly as a means of lowering the cost of market housing on the land. On the privately owned land, zoning restrictions specifying the mix of housing forms and density were used, with less emphasis on non-market housing.

The previous reports on social mix concluded that the City had been successful in meeting its objectives, but that there had been movement away from the intended mix. The 1989 report noted that changing demographics and market pressures make it difficult to maintain social mix objectives over the longer term.

Over time, changes in the characteristics of False Creek’s population are to be expected as a result of:

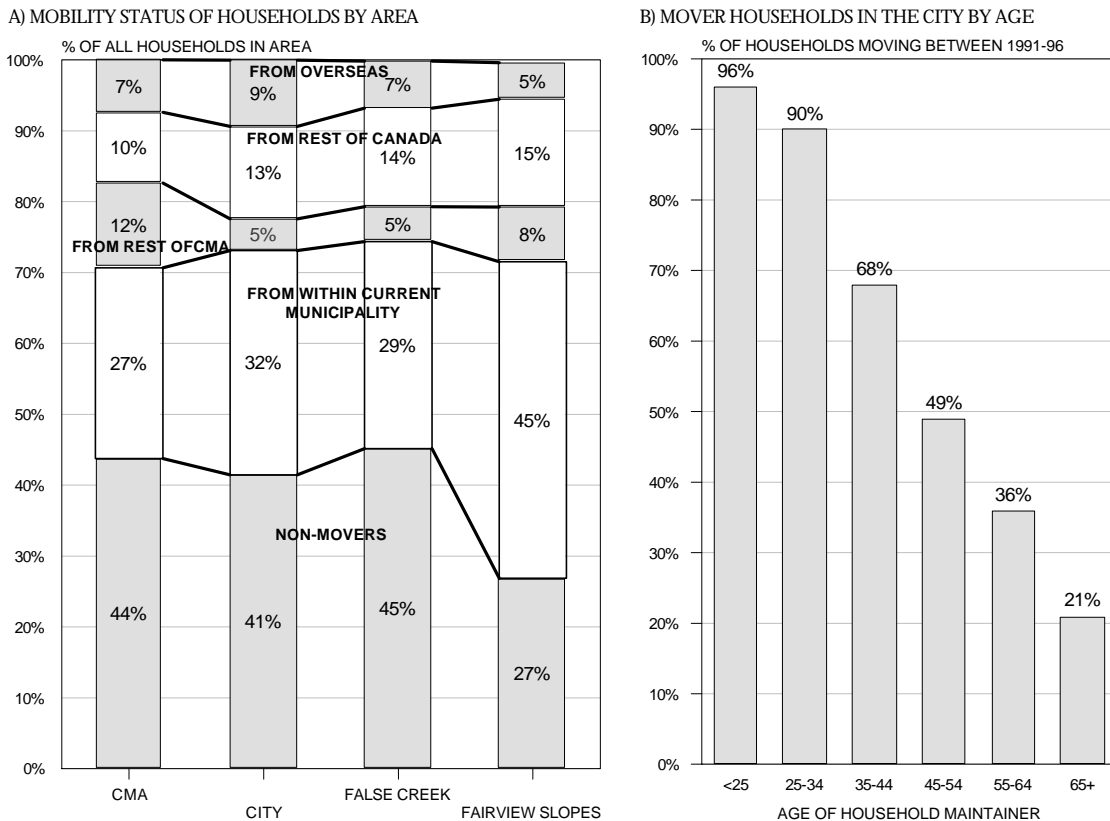
- Changes in the type of projects built - all the units completed before 1981 were on City-owned land, and over half of these were non-market units. Others were in two “limited-dividend” projects with 25% of the units allocated to BCHMC to rent on a rent-geared-to-income basis. Many units were designed for families.

Since 1981, most of the projects completed have been on private land, with much less of a family orientation and with a lower proportion of non-market units - four out of every five non-market units in False Creek are on City-owned land. The changes in the mix of housing types as redevelopment proceeded have acted to shift the social mix away from families and lower-income households.

- Changes in the existing housing stock - the limited-dividend projects became entirely market-rental projects in the early 1980s, resulting in a loss of rent-geared-to-income stock. In addition, by the time of the 1991 Census, the market-rental projects built under the early 1980s Federal MURB program had been sold off as condominium units. And both market rental and condominium units have experienced the same kind of price inflation as the housing stock in the rest of the city. These changes have reduced the opportunities for low- and moderate-income households to live in the area.
- Changes in residents - about 55% of households living in False Creek in 1996 had been living in a different dwelling in 1991. As Figure 3A shows, this level of mobility is not unusual. Areas with a high proportion of young and renter households have even higher rates, as renters and younger households are much more mobile (Figure 3B).

As residents “age in place,” they usually move through occupational and family life cycles, with changes in their income and household characteristics. Those who do move out of the area are replaced by households who can afford the current housing prices.

FIG 3. HOUSEHOLDS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE FIVE YEARS EARLIER, 1996

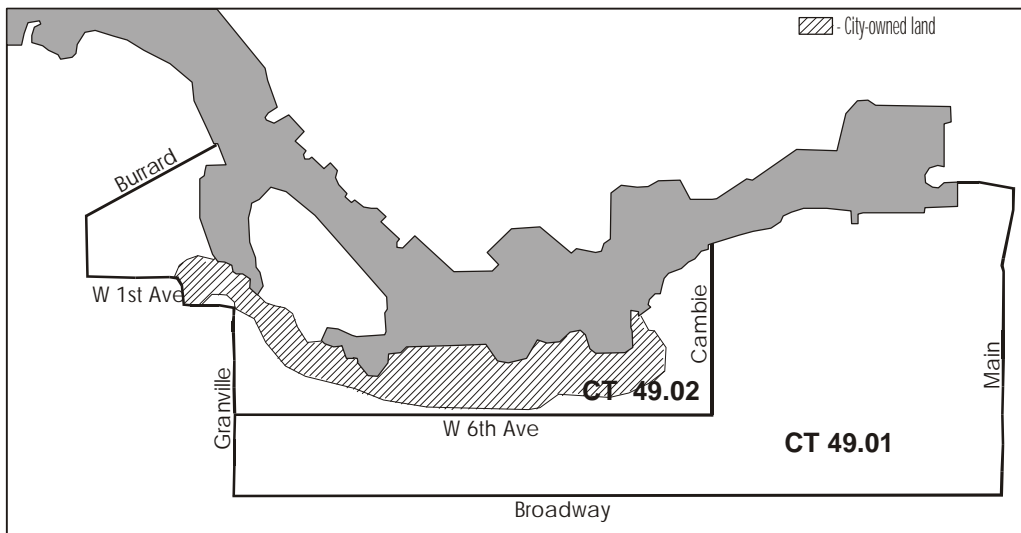


## Methodology

The data used in this report is from the Canada Census for 1981, 1991, and 1996. Data for the Vancouver Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) is used to measure the regional mix. For the south shore of False Creek, Census data is available for two areas - census tract 49.02, and the area owned by the City. Although census tract 49.02 includes some residential projects outside the False Creek boundaries, the area otherwise corresponds to False Creek south shore. Statistics Canada has digitised the area owned by the City as a user-defined area, and the City has run custom tabulations for this and other user-defined areas. Almost two-thirds of the population in census tract 49.02 live on the City-owned land.

Data for the adjoining census tract (49.01) is used for comparison purposes. Almost of the residential land in census tract 49.01 is in the Fairview Slopes area, which redeveloped over the same period as False Creek - although Fairview Slopes redeveloped from residential use rather than industrial use as in the case of False Creek, and redevelopment is still continuing. In this report, we will refer to census tract 49.01 as “Fairview Slopes,” even though the census tract includes a small number of dwellings in the industrial area between Cambie and Main.

FIG 4. CENSUS TRACT BOUNDARIES AND CITY-OWNED LAND IN FALSE CREEK



# Age Mix

The age-mix objective was that False Creek's age distribution should reflect the region's mix of age groups. As the graphs below indicate, in 1996 there were significant differences between the two populations. Compared to the CMA, False Creek has substantially lower proportions of children (15% are 19 years or younger, compared to 25% of the CMA's population) and young adults (the 20-24 age group). It has much higher proportions of its population in the 35-70 age groups in general, and in the 45-59 age groups in particular. The city's population as a whole has a closer match than False Creek to the region, despite the city's "bulge" in the 20-34 age groups. False Creek's "bulge" is in the late middle-age groups.

FIG 5. AGE DISTRIBUTION, 1996

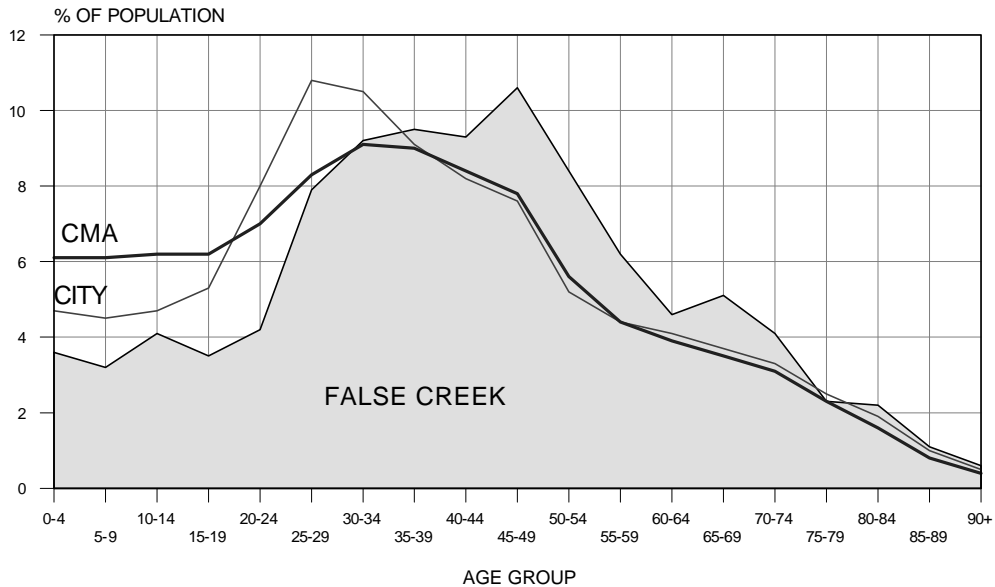
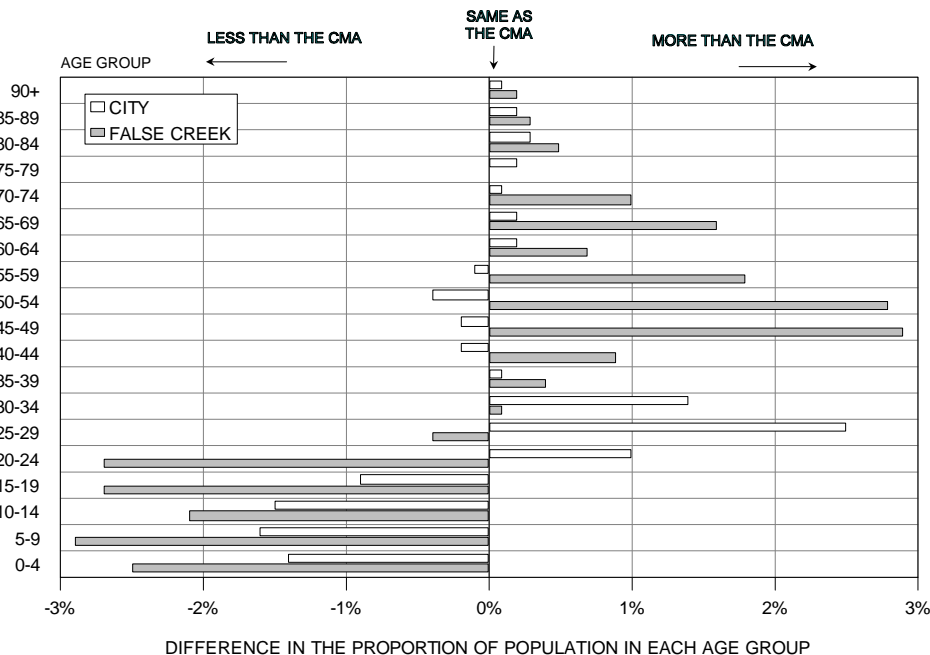
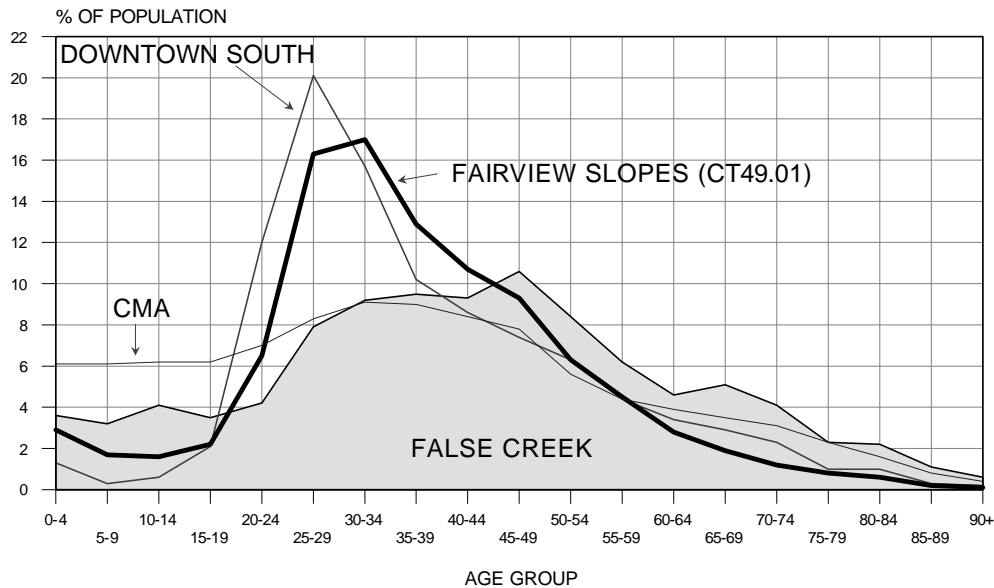


FIG 6. 1996 AGE DISTRIBUTION OF FALSE CREEK & THE CITY RELATIVE TO THE CMA



While the population of False Creek does not meet the age-mix target, it is significantly more “balanced” than other inner-city areas. For example, Downtown South and Fairview Slopes have a divergence from the regional age mix that is almost twice that of False Creek<sup>2</sup>. Both have a pronounced concentration of their population in the young-adult age groups and correspondingly less children and seniors. In Fairview Slopes, one-third of population are 25-34 (17% in the CMA) while the Downtown South population is even younger, with almost one-third of its population in their twenties (compared to 15% in the CMA). Children under 15 account for 2.2% of Downtown South’s population, compared to 6.2% in Fairview Slopes, 11% in False Creek, 13.9% in the city, and 18.4% in the region as a whole.

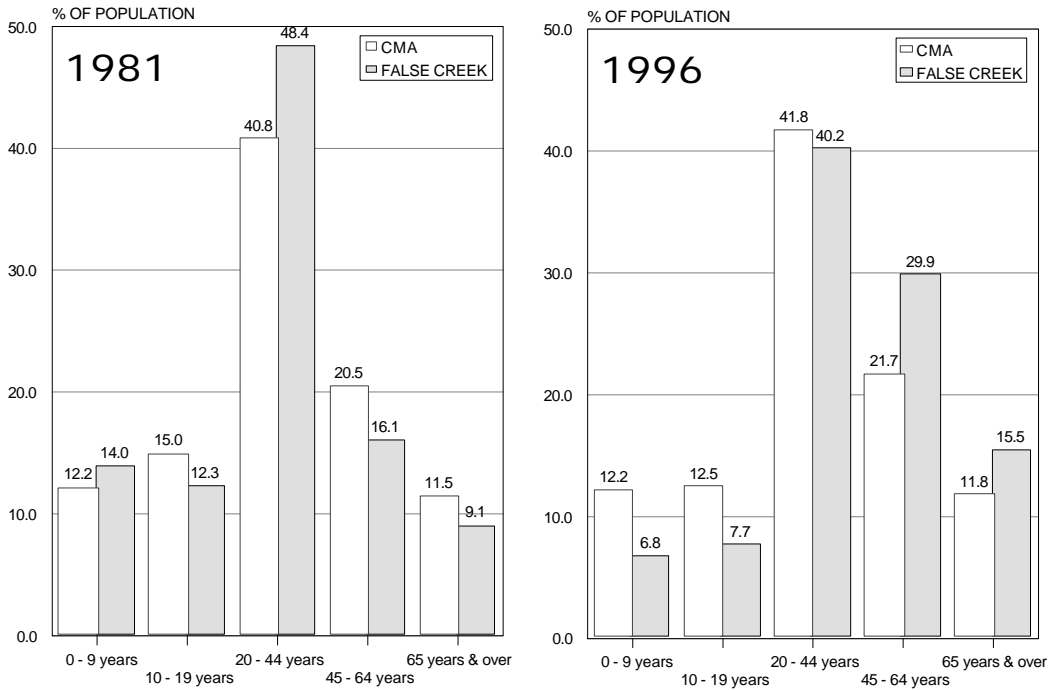
FIG 7. AGE DISTRIBUTION - DOWNTOWN SOUTH & FAIRVIEW SLOPES



Since 1981, the divergence between False Creek and the region has increased, and the nature of the differences have changed (see Figure 8). In 1981, False Creek was quite similar to the CMA in terms of children, and False Creek even had a higher proportion of younger children (0-9 years) and their parents than the region as a whole. The middle-aged and the elderly were under-represented in False Creek compared to the region. Between 1981 and 1996, both the regional and False Creek populations have “aged,” but the decline in the proportion of children and young adults, and the increase in the proportions of mature adults and elderly, have been significantly higher in False Creek than in the region as a whole.

The change in False Creek’s age mix is not surprising given the nature of development in the 1980s. Inner-city areas have lower proportions of children because a relatively small proportion of their stock is suitable for families, and that stock is expensive compared to suburban areas. The City-owned land in False Creek developed in the first two phases had higher proportions of family and non-market housing than subsequent developments (see pages 14 and 15 for a comparison of the differences between the City-owned and freehold areas of False Creek). As the area continued to develop, the proportion of the stock that can accommodate young families and their children was reduced.

FIG 8. AGE DISTRIBUTION, 1981 AND 1996



The other sources of change in the age mix are “turnover” and “aging in place”. With over half the households moving home in a five-year period, there can be significant shifts in the population mix if the characteristics of the people moving into the area differ from those of the people moving out. The likelihood of moving decreases significantly with age, so as an area’s population becomes more elderly, aging in place becomes a more important source of change in the area’s mix of age groups.

We do not have data on the people or households moving out of False Creek, but the table below shows the change in households by the age of the household maintainer. Between 1991 and 1996, the area had net losses of households with maintainers younger than 45, and had net gains in the 45 years and over groups. Although younger households accounted for 57% of all households moving in to the area,<sup>3</sup> the number of younger households moving out or aging into the older age groups was larger.

TABLE 1. HOUSEHOLDS BY AGE OF HOUSEHOLD MAINTAINER & MOBILITY STATUS, FALSE CREEK, 1991-96

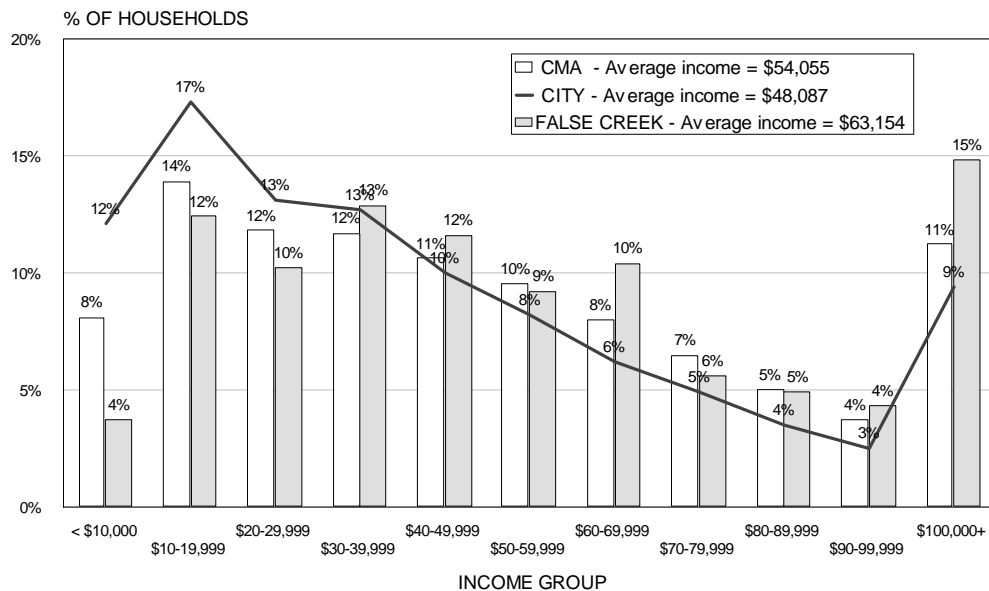
HOUSEHOLDS		1991 - 1996			
AGE OF HHLD MAINTAINER	1996	NON-MOVERS	MOVERS INTO AREA	CHANGE THROUGH AGING & OUT-MIGRATION	NET CHANGE
TOTAL	2,945	1,330	1,615	-1,565	50
15-24	45	15	30	-65	-35
25-34	525	45	480	-605	-125
35-44	640	225	415	-565	-150
45-54	740	370	370	-215	155
55-64	365	225	140	-125	15
65+	630	450	180	10	190

## Income Mix

The income-mix objective approved by Council was that False Creek’s population should have equal representation from the low, middle, and high-income groups. Again, this objective was based on the income distribution in the region at the time.

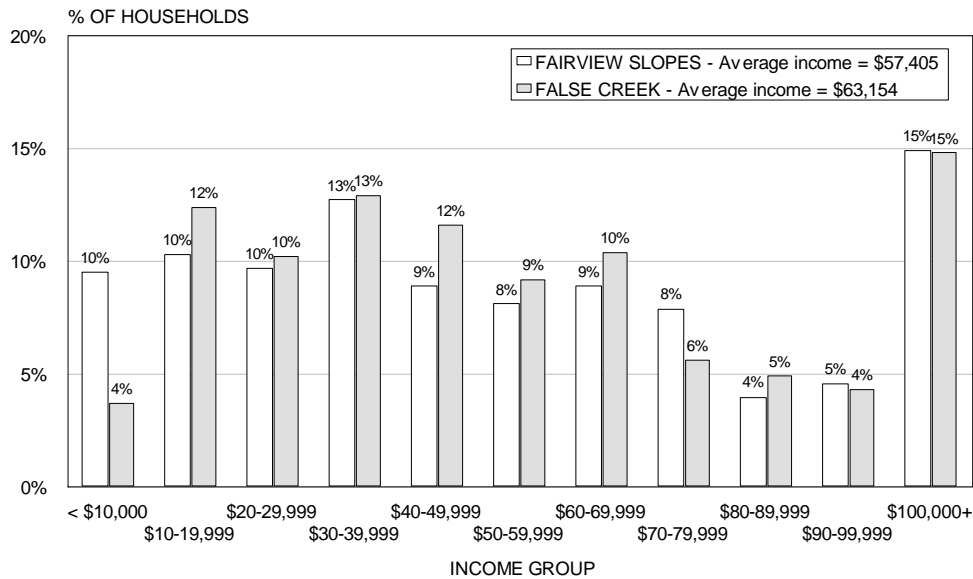
The income distribution of households (1995 incomes<sup>4</sup>) is shown below in Figure 9. Compared to the CMA, False Creek has a higher proportion of households earning over \$100,000 and lower proportions of low-income households, particularly in the lowest (under \$10,000) income group. Overall, False Creek and the CMA are slightly more similar to each other than to the city distribution of income groups. The city has significantly higher proportions of the lower income households and lower proportions of the higher income households than either the CMA or False Creek.

FIG 9. 1995 HOUSEHOLD INCOME - CMA, CITY, AND FALSE CREEK



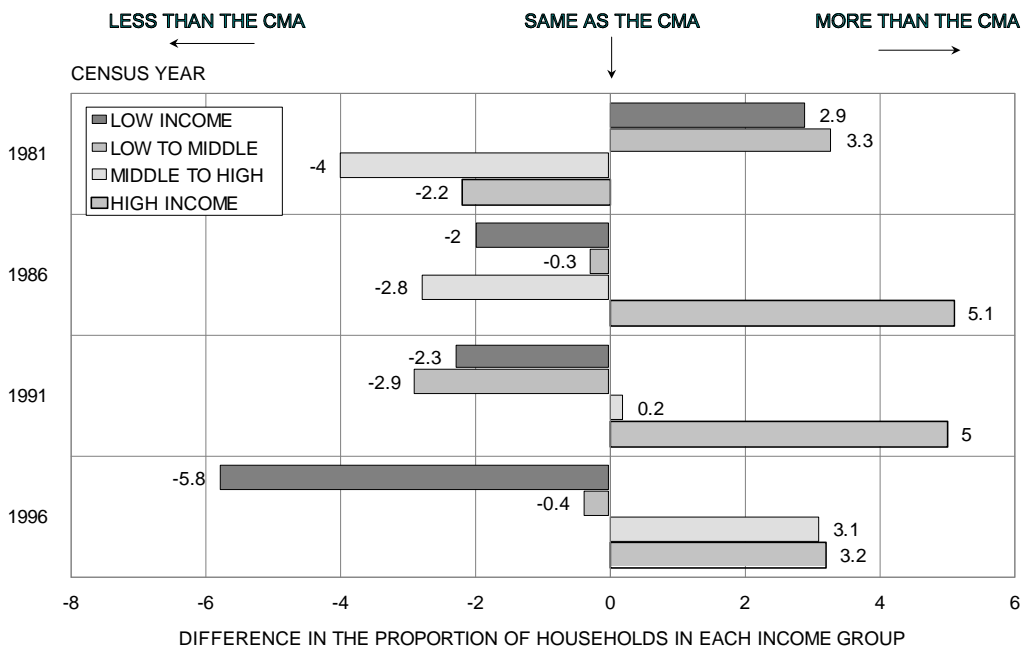
False Creek and Fairview Slopes are more similar to each other in terms of household income (see Figure 10) than they are in either their age distribution or the mix of household types. This is unusual, as household income is strongly associated with the age and type of household. The two main differences are that False Creek has higher proportions of middle-income groups and a lower proportion in the lowest income group than Fairview Slopes. The similarities at the upper end of the income spectrum are probably the result of dual-income professional households being attracted to the areas. One-person households account for 42% of False Creek households and 45% of households in Fairview Slopes, but the average income for one-person households in False Creek is \$49,300, compared to \$38,700 in Fairview Slopes and \$27,800 for one-person households in the city as a whole.

FIG 10. 1995 HOUSEHOLD INCOME - FAIRVIEW SLOPES AND FALSE CREEK



Looking at change in income distributions over time is difficult because of inflation. For each Census, we have grouped households into the four income categories that are the closest approximation to quartiles. Figure 11 shows the difference between False Creek and the CMA in the proportion of households in each of these groups in the last four census years. For example, in 1981 2.9% more of False Creek’s households were in the low-income category than in the region as a whole. By 1996, this had changed so that False Creek had 5.8% less of its households in that category than the region. Between 1981 and 1996, the mix of households shifted so that False Creek now has a more affluent mix of households than the CMA as a whole, instead of the less affluent mix it had in 1981.

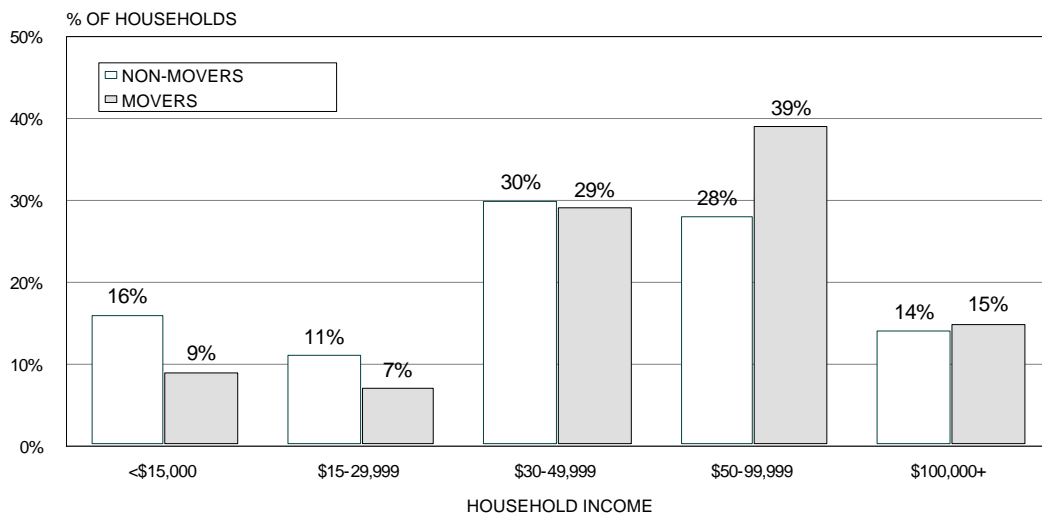
FIG 11. DIFFERENCES IN INCOME GROUPS BETWEEN FALSE CREEK & CMA, 1981-1996



Most of the change in the proportion of low-income households in False Creek between 1981 and 1991 is probably associated with the decline in the proportion of non-market housing from 58% to 35% of the housing stock. The conversion of rental housing to condominiums and the loss of the limited dividend rental units also reduced the proportion of the stock available to those with lower incomes.

The decrease in the number and the proportion of low-income households between 1991 and 1996 is the result of higher-income households moving into the area and/or existing residents becoming more affluent. Households moving into the area during the period were more affluent than those who did not move (see the chart in Figure 12 below), with average household incomes of \$68,000, compared to \$57,000. Part of this difference is the result of differences in the age mix of movers and non-movers, as household incomes vary significantly with age<sup>5</sup>. Looking at movers and non-movers by age of the primary household maintainer, movers in the 35-44 and 65+ age groups were significantly more affluent than their counterparts who had been living in False Creek since 1991 (see the table portion of Figure 12 below).

FIG 12. 1995 HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN FALSE CREEK – BY MOBILITY STATUS & AGE OF PRIMARY HOUSEHOLD MAINTAINER



PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLDS		HOUSEHOLD INCOME, 1995					
AGE OF HOUSEHOLD MAINTAINER	MOBILITY STATUS	ALL HHLDS	<\$15,000	\$15-29,999	\$30-49,999	\$50-99,999	\$100,000+
25-34	Non-Movers	100	-	-	33	44	22
25-34	Movers	100	9	3	30	49	6
35-44	Non-Movers	100	9	16	38	27	9
35-44	Movers	100	4	6	33	41	18
45-54	Non-Movers	100	8	4	27	41	22
45-54	Movers	100	9	5	27	32	24
55-64	Non-Movers	100	9	7	36	33	16
55-64	Movers	100	11	7	18	39	14
65+	Non-Movers	100	31	19	27	14	9
65+	Movers	100	14	17	31	22	19

## Household Mix

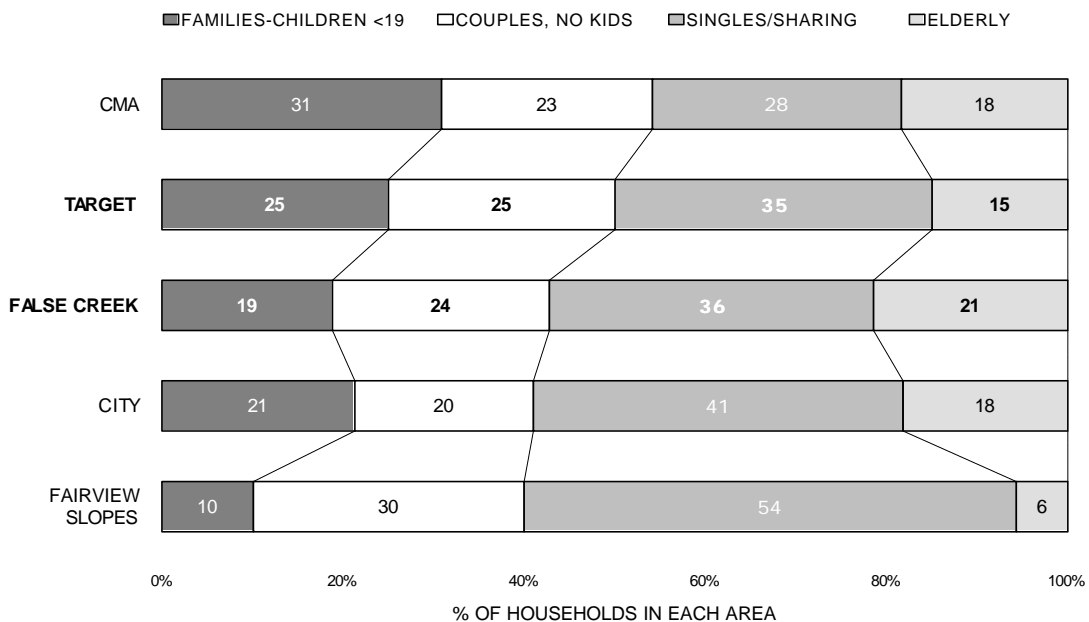
In terms of household mix, the City set the following targets for households:

- 25% were to consist of families with school-aged children<sup>6</sup>;
- 25% were to be young and mature couples with no school-aged at home;
- 35% were to be non-elderly singles; and
- 15% were to be elderly (65 years and over).

In 1971, 50% of the households in the CMA consisted of families with children. The target for False Creek was half the regional figure, but this was still seen as an ambitious target because of concerns about providing a family environment in an inner-city area.

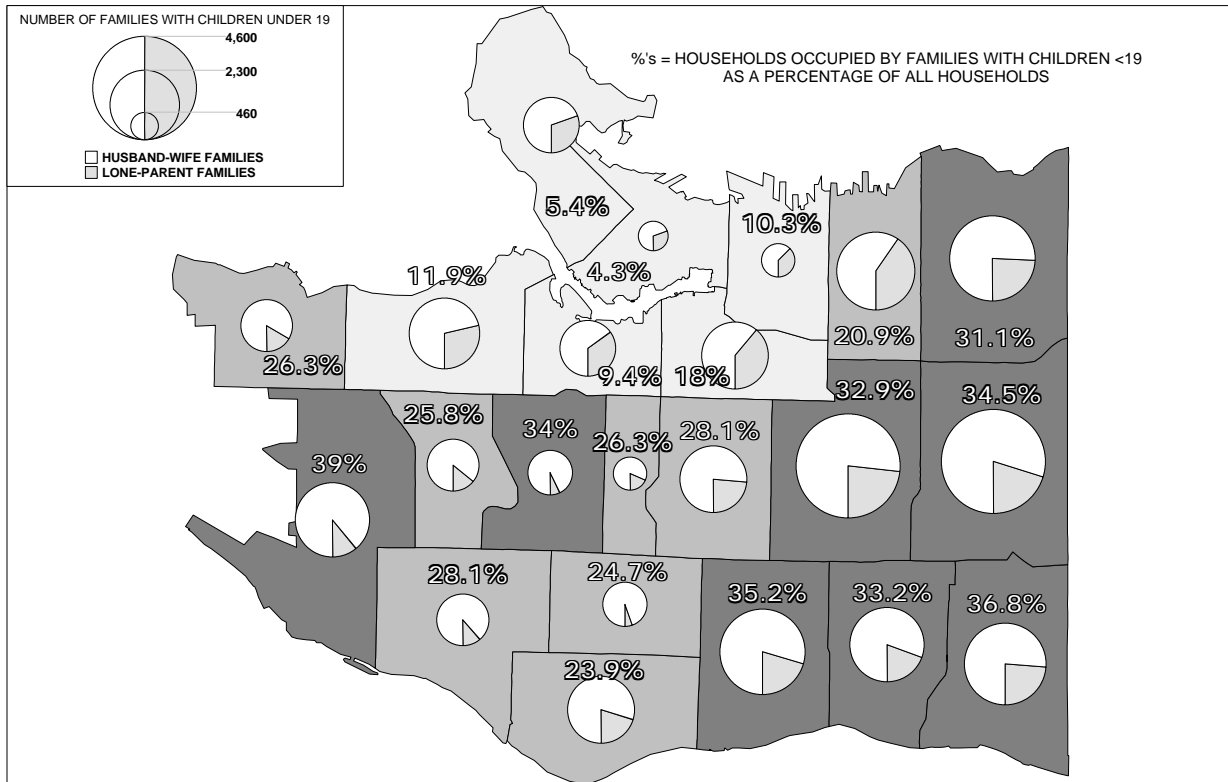
As the graph below shows, in 1996 False Creek was fairly close to the target distribution in terms of young/mature couples and non-elderly singles. However, it did have a higher proportion of elderly households and a correspondingly lower proportion of families with school-age children<sup>7</sup>.

FIG 13. HOUSEHOLD TYPES, 1996



While the household mix in False Creek in 1996 does fall short of the target mix, False Creek is much more “balanced” than the neighbouring Fairview Slopes area. Fairview Slopes has significantly higher proportions of one-person households and young/mature households, and lower proportions of family and elderly households. False Creek also has a considerably higher proportion of households consisting of families with school-aged children than other inner-city neighbourhoods. The shading and numbers on the map on the next page show the proportion of households that consist of families with school-aged children. As one would expect, the predominantly single-family zoned areas have the highest proportions, while the predominantly high-density inner-city areas have the lowest proportions, ranging from 18% in Mount Pleasant to 4% in the Downtown.

FIG 14. PROPORTION OF HOUSEHOLDS THAT ARE OCCUPIED BY FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN, BY LOCAL AREA, 1996



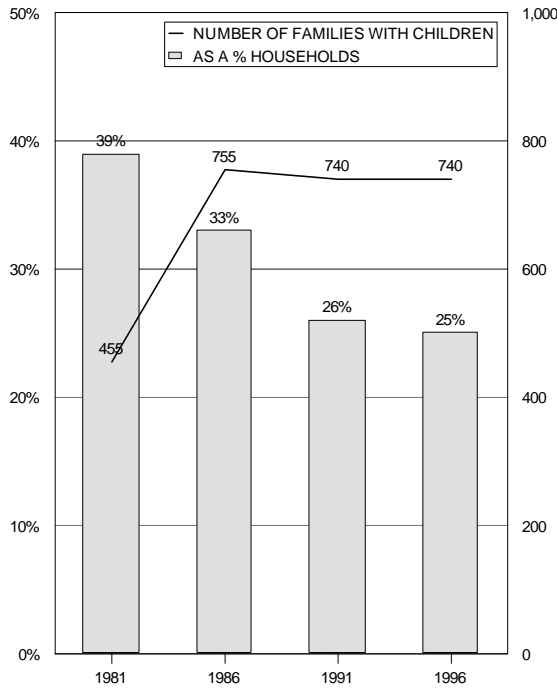
The circles on the map are proportional to the number of households with school-age children in each local area. Figures on the proportion of households in a particular group can give a misleading impression if there are substantial differences in the total number of households. For example, the West End has the second smallest proportion of family households, but has more families with school-age children than the predominantly single-family areas of West Point Grey, Shaughnessy, or South Cambie.

There are also significant differences by area in the type of family household. In 1996, 42% of the households with school-age children in False Creek were lone-parent families, compared to 23% in the city and 19% in the CMA. While all the inner-city areas have high proportions of lone-parent families (see the pie charts in the map above), False Creek has a higher proportion than any local area.

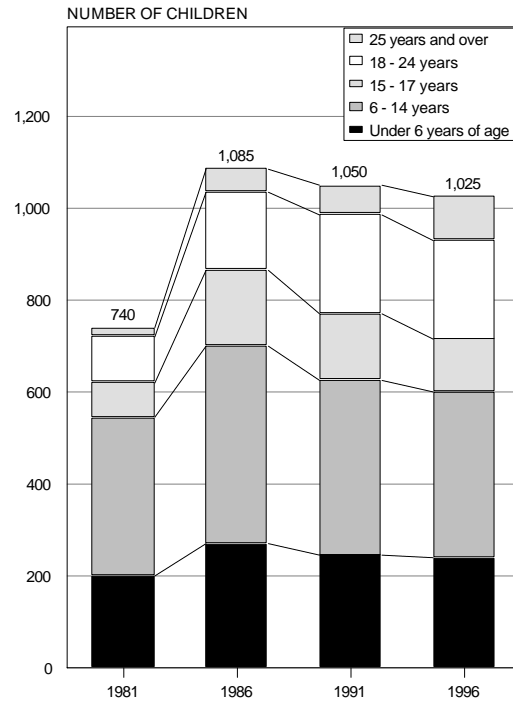
Earlier data comparable to the 1996 data used above is not available, so less precise data has to be used to look at change in household mix. Between 1981 and 1996, the proportion of households consisting of one person in False Creek increased from 38% to 42%, while the CMA proportion remained constant at 27%. The proportion of one-person households in False Creek that are elderly increased from 22% to 33%. Families with children (of all ages) relative to all households declined from 39% to 25%, while in the CMA the proportion increased slightly to 44% over the period.

FIG 15. FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN, AND NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN FALSE CREEK

A) FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN IN FALSE CREEK



B) NUMBER OF CHILDREN BY AGE IN FALSE CREEK



The decline in the proportion of families with children occurred even though the number of families with children increased over the period (although all of the increase occurred between 1981 and 1986, and the number has declined slightly since 1986 - see Figure 15A). And although the number of children 18 years and over has been increasing, there were still more school-aged children in False Creek in 1996 than there were in 1981 (Figure 15B).

These changes in numbers suggest that the decline in the proportion of families is largely a function of the change in the nature of development in False Creek over time. The majority of low-rise units with two or more bedroom units were completed before 1986; development between 1986 and 1991 was in higher density projects that are less suitable for families with children.

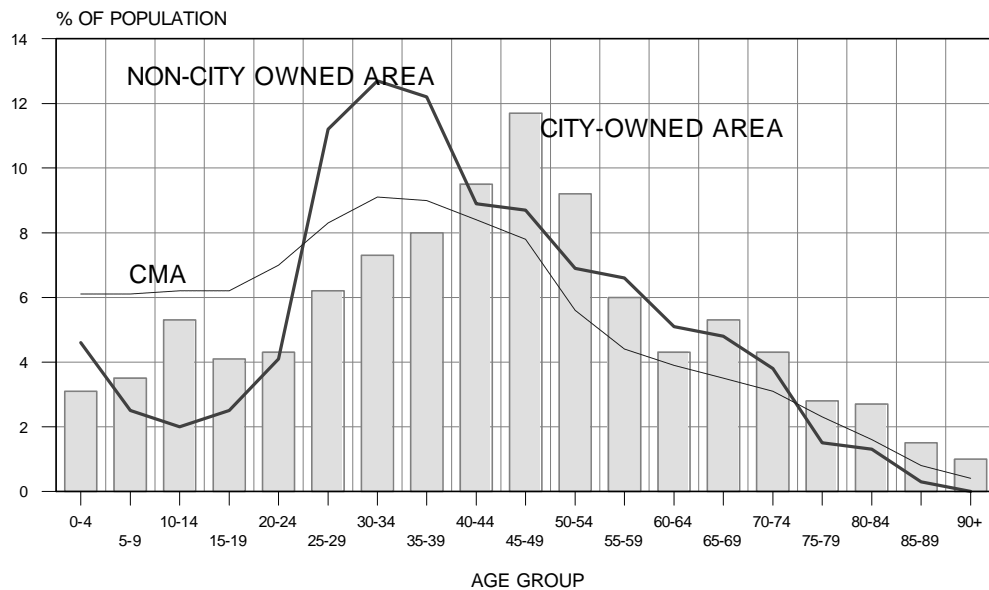
## City and Non-City Owned Areas

The City-owned portion of False Creek has considerably more non-market and family projects than the freehold land. Of the 1,038 non-market units in the area, 842 are on City-owned land accounting for 46% of the total housing stock on that land. On the freehold land, there are three projects with 199 units, accounting for 18% of the total housing stock. In addition, the City-owned land has two special needs residential facilities with 141 beds. Almost two-thirds of the non-market stock is designed for family households.

These differences in stock are reflected in differences in the social mix of the areas. It should be noted though that not all of the non-market units house low-income households. Sixty percent of the non-market units in False Creek are in co-op projects. The co-op program itself was intended to provide a social mix of income groups *within* each project and so only some of their units have rents geared to income.

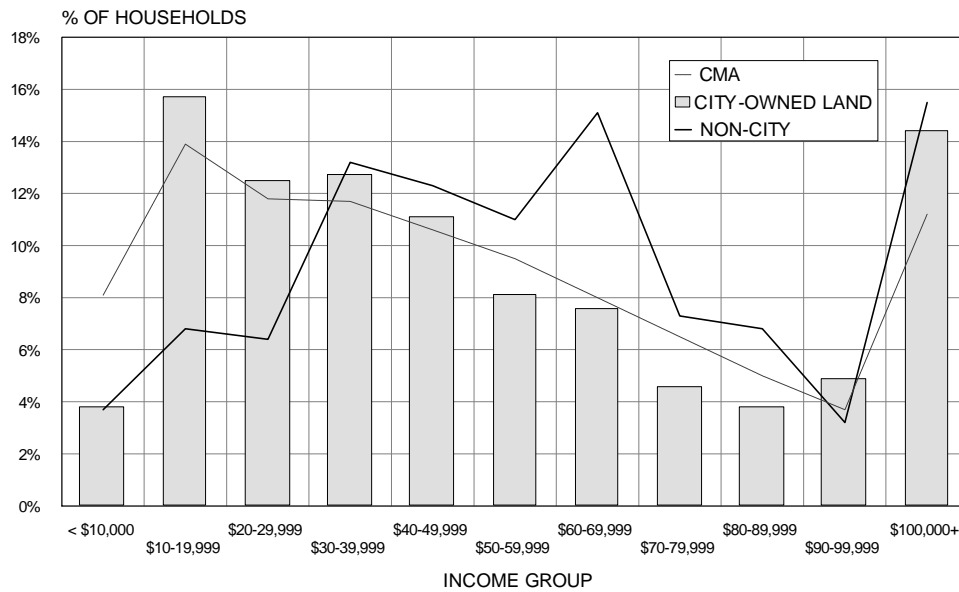
The age distributions for the two areas are shown below (Figure 16). The population on freehold land has much higher proportions of its population in the 25-39 age groups, and lower proportions in the 5-19, 40-54, and the over 65 age groups. Its age profile is more similar to Fairview Slopes than to the City-owned land. The City-owned land also has a higher proportion of family households, and 54% of families have children living at home, compared to 44% of the families in the non-City-owned area.

FIG 16. FALSE CREEK AGE DISTRIBUTION, 1996 – CITY-OWNED & FREEHOLD AREAS



The differences in the proportion of non-market housing between the two areas are reflected in their income mix. Almost one-third of the households in the City-owned area have incomes below \$30,000, compared to 17% in the freehold area. However, the proportion of households with incomes over \$90,000 is similar. Income mix and producing a desirable residential environment are probably the hardest two objectives to achieve simultaneously. The more successful redevelopment is in producing an attractive, desirable residential environment, the harder it is to retain a mixed-income community - as the more affluent “bid out” the less affluent for market housing.

FIG 17. FALSE CREEK INCOME DISTRIBUTION, 1995 – CITY-OWNED & FREEHOLD AREAS



## Conclusion

The 1996 Census data indicates that the south shore of False Creek is a socially mixed community. The degree of social mix achieved is significant but is less than the initial targets. In terms of age, the area has considerably fewer children and more middle-aged persons than the region. In terms of household mix, False Creek has fewer families with children and more elderly than was targeted. In terms of income, False Creek has a much higher proportion of high-income groups and a lower proportion of low-income groups than the target.

While there are differences between the original target and today's social mix, the south shore of False Creek is considerably more balanced in terms of household types and groups than the neighbouring Fairview Slopes, developed over similar time period but with no social mix policy. In Fairview Slopes, redevelopment has produced a population that is predominantly single, 25 to 39 years of age, with very few children or elderly. The two areas are more similar in terms of their income mix.

The divergence from the intended mix of residents has increased since 1981, but this was not unexpected. The earlier development phases had much higher proportions of non-market and family housing than the later stages and development of the area was not completed until the late 1980s. Social circumstances have also changed since the original mix policy was adopted in the early 1970s – income differences are increasingly a function of the number of income-earners in a household, the neighbourhood has aged and children have grown up and moved out of home, and the Creek has become a more desirable place to live.

The age and income objectives were originally adopted as “basin-wide” targets - applying to the whole of the False Creek basin. The objectives for Pacific Place on the north shore of False Creek are now more modest, although a mixed development is still desired. Twenty-five percent of the units are to be designed for families, and twenty percent of the units are designated as non-market housing.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> City of Vancouver, Planning Department, 1983, Evaluation of False Creek Phase 1 Social Objectives, Report to Council, November 1<sup>st</sup>; City of Vancouver, Planning Department, 1989, Evaluation of False Creek South Social Objectives; City of Vancouver, Housing Centre, 1995, False Creek South Shore – An Evaluation of the City’s Social Mix Objectives.

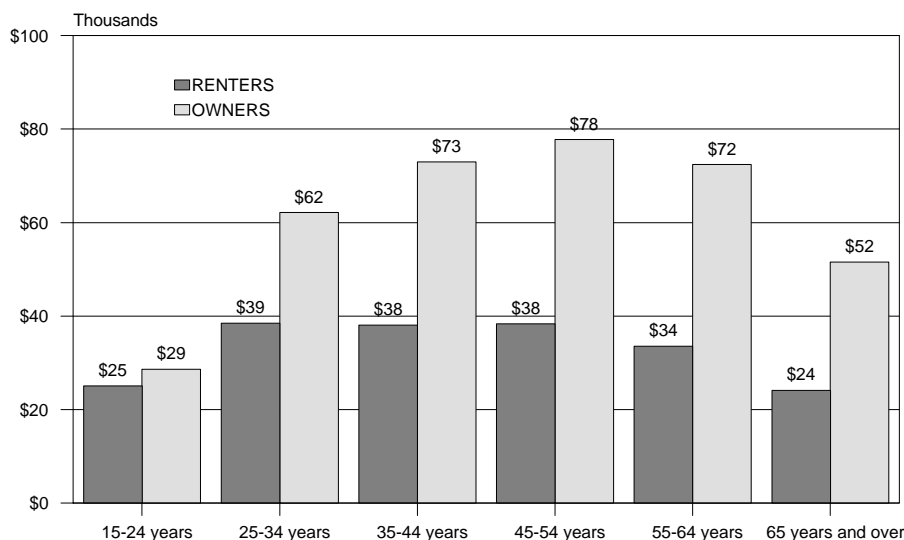
<sup>2</sup> Measured in terms of the sum of the absolute differences in the proportion (percentage) of the population in each five-year age group in 1996, the City is 13 percentage points different from the CMA. Relative to the region, the figures for False Creek, Fairview Slopes, and the Downtown South are 27, 49, and 51 respectively.

<sup>3</sup> Not all households who have moved in the last five years will have moved into the area, as we have assumed here. A small proportion of households will have moved within False Creek.

<sup>4</sup> The Census asks respondents for their income in the year prior to the Census.

<sup>5</sup> The chart below shows the relationship between age and income for both renters and owners.

AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY TENURE & AGE OF HOUSEHOLD MAINTAINER, CITY OF VANCOUVER, 1995



<sup>6</sup> In the Census, children are defined as sons and daughters living at home who have never been married, regardless of age. The household mix objective refers to families with school-age children, so families whose children are all 19 years or older are excluded from this target group and placed in the “young and mature couples” category. For the city in 1996, this means excluding 26% of all “husband and wife-families with children” households and 38% of lone-parent family households.

<sup>7</sup> A household can belong to more than one of the target household types. For example, a household can have a household maintainer 65 years and over and still have children under 19 years living at home (in 1996, 1.8% of households in the city with children under 19 had an elderly household maintainer). A household can also be occupied by more than one family. In classifying household types, the following logic was used:

- ▶ Households occupied by husband-wife and lone-parent families were first classified according to whether or not there were children under 19 (multi-family households were excluded from this test);
- ▶ Households without children under 19, together with multi-family households, were then split into two groups according to whether the household maintainer was under 65 or over 64; and
- ▶ Finally, households with household maintainers under 65 were classified into a) those living on their own or sharing with others, and b) young or mature households. The latter includes couples without children, and husband-wife and lone-parent families with children 19 and over.