

Southeast False Creek (SEFC) City Lands Official Development Plan (ODP) Proposal

Professional Urban Design Workshop - June 17, 2003

GENERAL THEMES
Staff Summary

About 30 urban design and sustainability professionals, including architects, landscape architects, planners, engineers and developers from the business, non-profit and private sector were invited to a workshop June 17th to provide a critique of the City Lands Official Development Plan Proposal. This session was complimented by a Public Urban

AREAS OF SUPPORT

- Support general sustainability ideas of the ODP Proposal and the objectives of developing a sustainable community with educational value. In particular there is support for the following strong design concepts of the current Proposal:
 - green roofs
 - proposed stormwater management approach of streets (i.e. street swales) and features in the park,
 - 'green fingers' or generously landscaped north-south streets connecting with 2nd ave and to Mt. Pleasant surround.
- Support for 2.2 million sq. ft of density distributed across the site;
- Support for variety of building forms and heights, particularly areas with lower height (Western Area)
- Support for the idea of retaining remediated soils on the site.
- Support for flexible zoning concepts on the ground plane.
- Support for the basic north-south street layout.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR CHANGE

Parcel Size

Critique:

- The Proposal overemphasizes large parcels which will likely lead to large scale developments. The large parcel size represents an abrupt change from surrounding areas and needs to be further considered in order to achieve better integration with the surround and a more fine-grain development.



Suggestions:

- Consider introducing smaller parcel sizes, in at least portions of the site, to encourage fine grain development.
- Explore ways in which smaller parcel can be used but maintain overall density target.

Advantages of Smaller Parcel Sizes:

- Helps achieve better integration with the surround (i.e. Mt. Pleasant, Western False Creek South neighbourhood).
- Opens up opportunities for a wider variety of development forms (i.e. some smaller scale development in portions of the site).
- Allows for the creation of smaller, human scale public spaces.
- Provides opportunity for smaller developers to be involved with development of the site.

Building Patterning & Typology

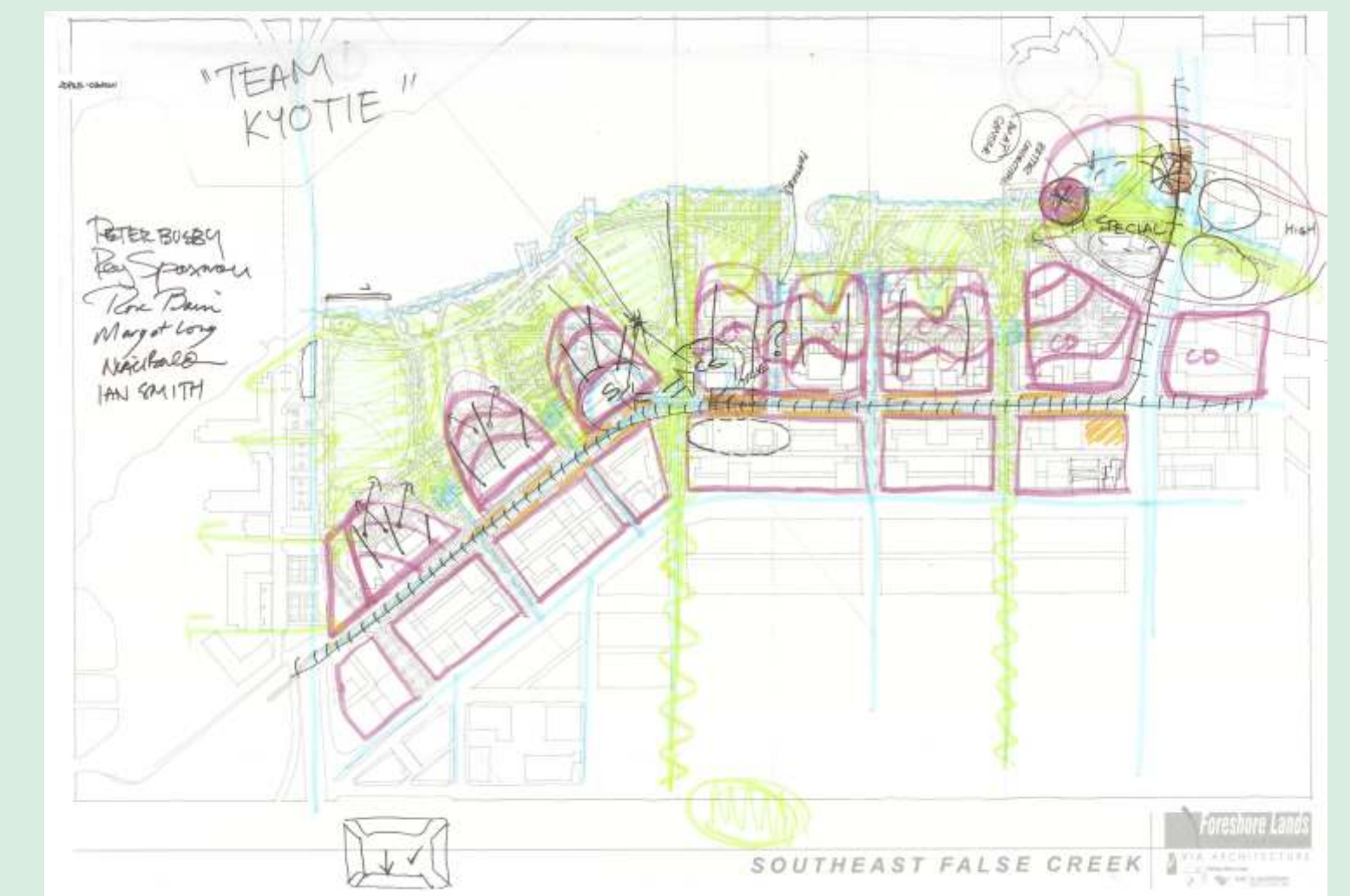
Critique:

- The overall density target for the site is supported, but generally the Proposal shows a built form and patterning of density that is very typical in Vancouver i.e. tower and podium form.
- The Proposal needs to be better integrated with built form proposed for the Private Lands and other surrounding communities.
- The design currently splits the site into two areas the East and the West neighbourhoods. The focus should be on creating distinct districts through the patterning of density and open spaces.

Suggestions:

- Consider patterning that breaks down the large-scale parcels and allows for smaller and medium scale development at least in portions of the site.
- Consider a patterning that creates greater height contrast between the east and west areas.
- Consider how massing can be used to frame open space, entrances, and linkages of the site and the surround.

Linkages to Surrounding Areas

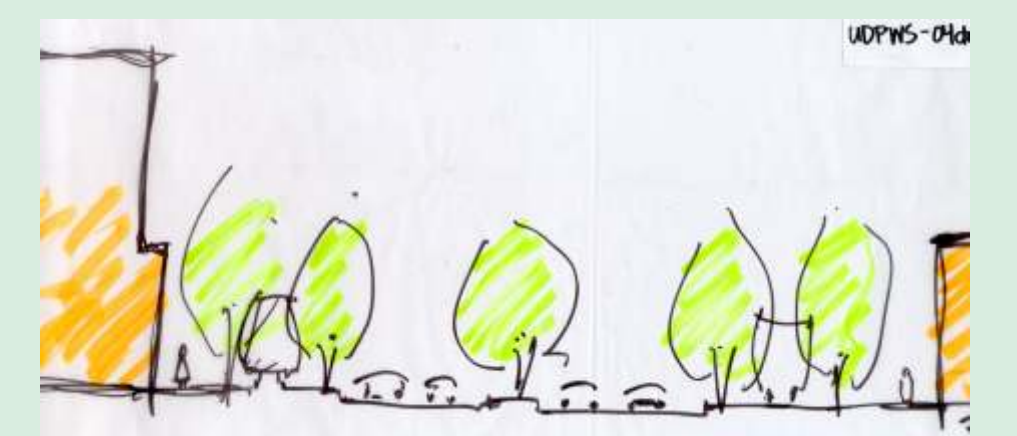


Critique:

- Linkages to surrounding areas need further consideration.

Suggestions:

- Consider a bolder linkage to the Flats on the east side of the site via Central Valley Greenway.
- Consider a bolder emphasis of the north-south streets as green connections to the Mt. Pleasant neighbourhood area and the water.
- Secure an Ontario Street greenway connection with community centre at Main and 7th Avenue.
- Consider 2nd Avenue street as part of a 'Great Street Network' connected to the North Side of False Creek (i.e. consider treating as a necklace extension of the 'Great Street' design of Pacific Boulevard). The street design of 2nd Avenue needs serious consideration.



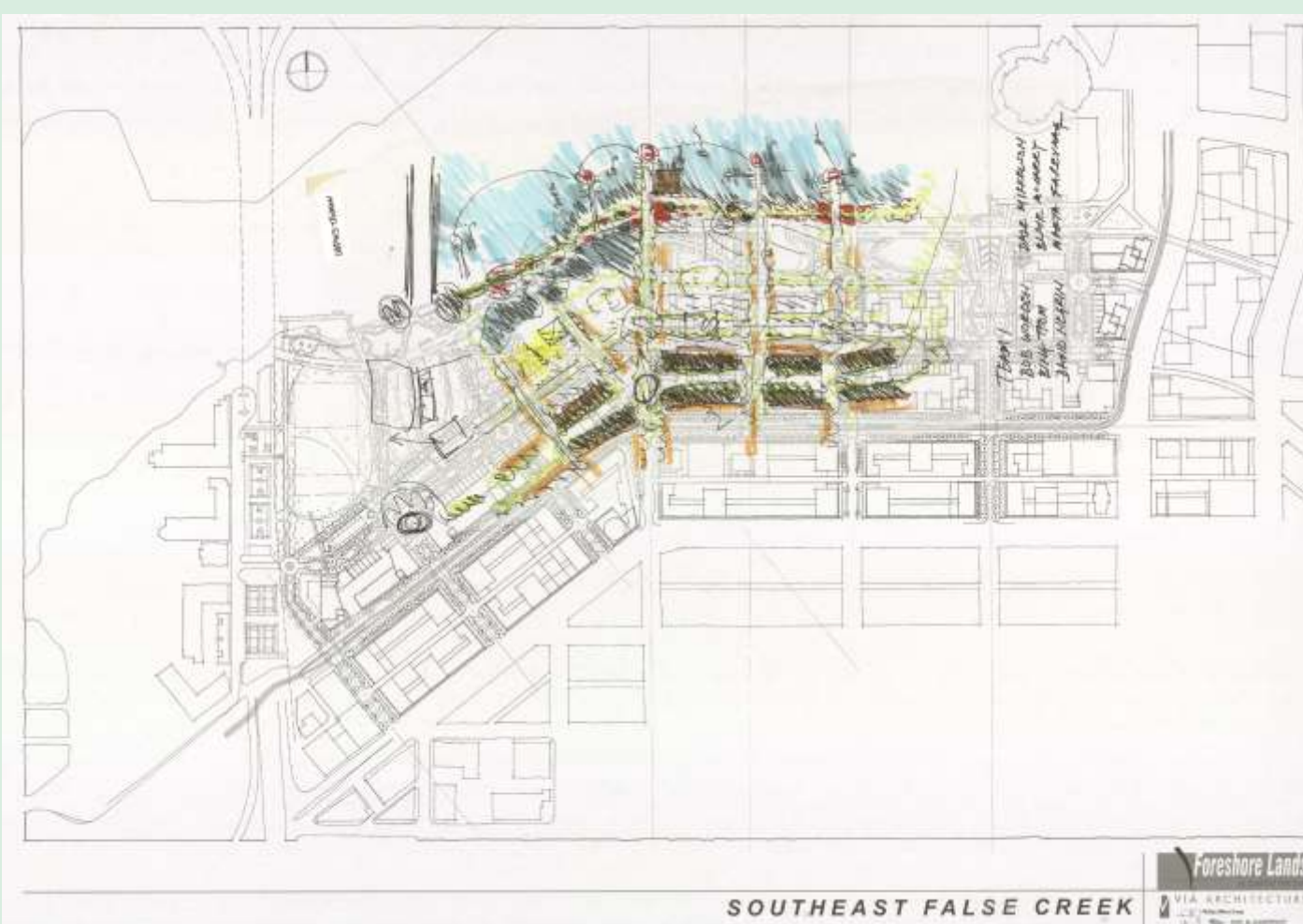
Waterfront

Critique:

- The Waterfront Walkway character on this site needs to be more distinctive and in contrast to other parts of the walkway in Vancouver.

Suggestions:

- Consider ways in which to engage people on the water's edge, for example, more docks/piers on water.
- Consider how to further integrate facilities for non-motorized boating and water sport and increase accessibility of the water's edge.
- Consider commercial uses along the walkway to create a different character from other parts of Vancouver, including restaurants, bars, other commercial opportunities and/or public courts to create a different character.



Park

Critique:

- The Proposal appears to separate the built environment from open spaces and needs to be better integrated.

Suggestions:

- Consider breaking down the scale of the park, especially on the west side, and moving smaller parks into the neighbourhoods (i.e. quality small block size parks, with considered relationships with housing, other uses) to create district character.
- Consider creating a more generous park area on the east side, where higher density sites are proposed.

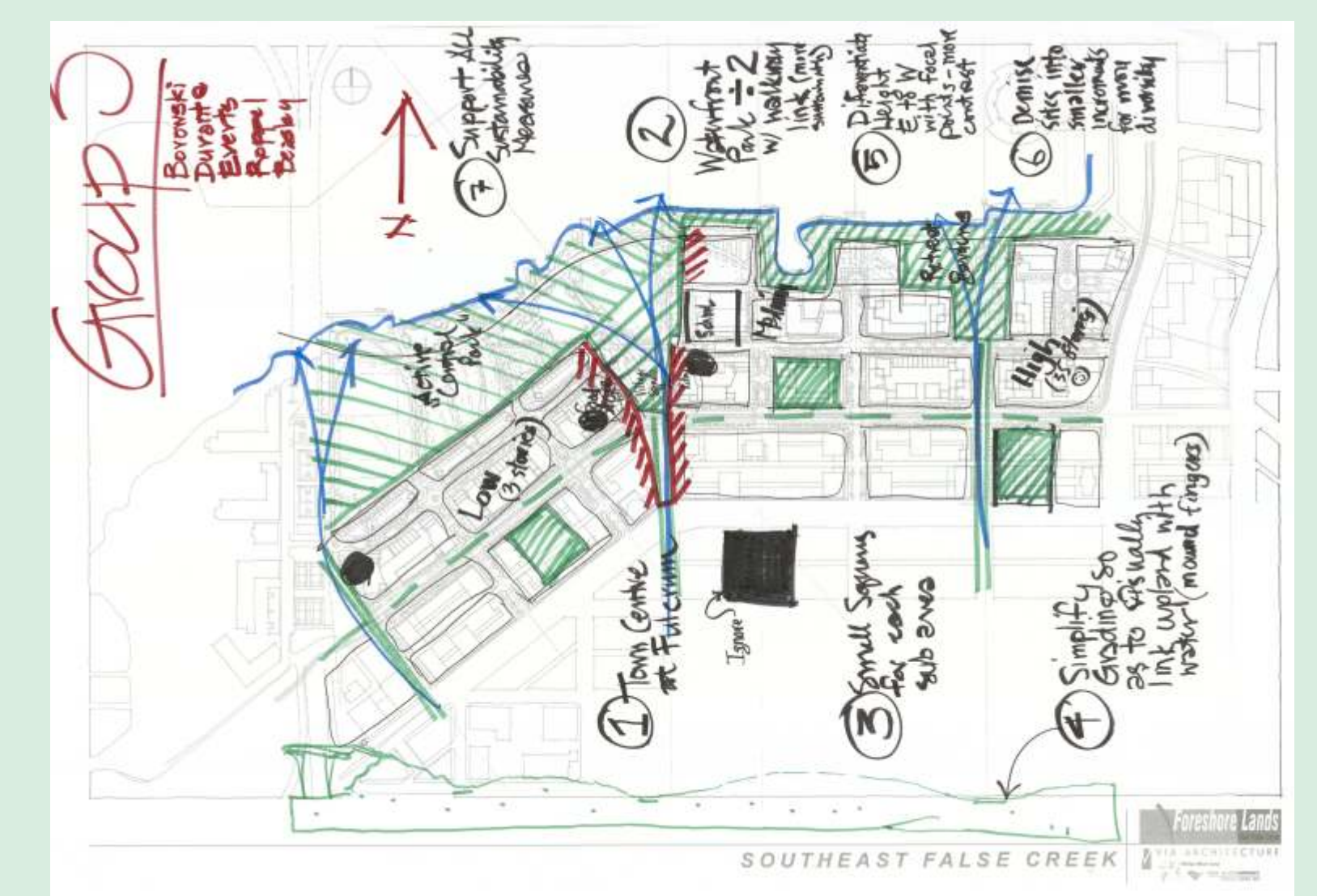
Neighbourhood Centre

Critique:

- The neighbourhood centre in the Proposal seems to lack strong definition, a strong sense of arrival and focus.

Suggestions:

- Consider moving the neighbourhood centre to a location more central to the entire site i.e. at the base of Columbia Street, to increase visibility from 2nd avenue or another location more to the west than it is currently to centre more in the middle of the site.
- The neighbourhood centre needs strongly defined spatial relationships between the school, a community centre, plazas, and commercial uses such as a restaurant and retail uses.



* The purpose of these summary boards is to report what the public has said in the various forums for the SEFC ODP Proposal. The Proponent is to respond in the Fall 2003 by addressing the comments through changes in the plan or by giving a rationale as to why suggested changes can not be incorporated

Heritage

Critique:

- The Proposal needs to do more to recognize the heritage and the unique character and history of the site.

Suggestions:

- Consider remembering the Canron steel factory site by creating an urban plaza in its original location inspired by the work that was done in that factory.
- Consider marking the Domtar Salt Building's current footprint by creating an open space on the site.



Street Network

Critique:

- "The street network of the Proposal is generally supported; however there are some areas that improvements could be made".
- There is a need to define the hierarchy of the streets more clearly, down to the mews or lane level.
- There are too many east-west streets.

Suggestions:

- Consider eliminating 0 Avenue
- Consider how to make the north-south streets more pedestrian friendly across 2nd Avenue.
- Consider 1st Avenue as an alternative 'high street' i.e. with retail, particularly if the neighbourhood centre is re-located.
- Consider putting the streetcar on 2nd, and creating a more neighbourhood character on 1st Avenue.

Response to Sustainability Objectives

Critique:

- There is support for the Proposal's sustainability measures; however there are a few areas where the Proposal could be more progressive:

Suggestions:

- Consider cutting the amount of parking spaces in half, one space per two units and having car storage options, car co-ops, and transportation alternatives.
- Have the City consider sustainable density bonusing based on evaluating projects for their environmental, social, and economic sustainability merit.
- Design streets for pedestrians and cyclists not so much for the car.

Site Grading

Critique:

- There are concerns about the proposed grading of the Proposal (creating the highest point at 0 Avenue).

Suggestions:

- Consider simplify grading of the site so as to visually link the upland areas with the water.
- Consider NOT raising 0 Avenue as it will serve to separate the City lands from the surrounding communities.
- Consider how soil remediation could be handled in the courtyards to allow the streets to remain at existing grades.

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