

WALKING TOUR 1:

false creek south east

walking tour summary
november 25, 2017

WALKING TOUR EAST

Participants met in front of Olympic Village station, and walked north along Spyglass Place, passing the railway tracks, community garden, and the Southeast False Creek Neighbourhood Energy Utility. Upon arriving at Starboard Square, it was noted that we had walked past buildings of different housing tenures: co-op, non-market rental, and market strata. At Leg-in-Boot Square, participants discussed the evolution of the Square over the years. We wandered into two enclaves and reflected upon public vs. private open space. The tour ended at the waterfall in Charleson Park, where it was clearly evident that the park is a well-used and well-loved place in the community.

November 25, 2017
9:30 am - 11:30 am

False Creek South
Vancouver, BC

17 walking tour participants

False Creek South



False Creek South Walking Tour 1 (east)

Saturday November 25th 2017

9:30am - 11:30am

Meeting Place: In front of Olympic Village Transit Station



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WHAT YOU THINK!

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WALKING TOUR - NOTES

Conversations throughout the tour included:

- Where is the heart of the community?
 - Charleson Park & FC School playground;
 - For a time, Leg-in-Boot Square hosted community events and supported a restaurant & grocery store, but the arrival of big box stores impacted these businesses;
 - The co-ops have played a key role in fostering the social element in FCS
- Access to services for children and schools is challenging - reported 64 kids applied for kindergarten, only 1 class of 17 accommodated
 - Community was weakened when choice of schools (cross-boundary) became available
 - Neighbourhood kids not consistently accommodated
- FCS used to/can feel like a small town, particularly for kids and families connected via school, daycares, pre-school & community centre; and for long time residents who know their neighbours and are engaged in community activities and use of spaces (eg dog park)
- Enclave interior spaces may feel privatized for adults, but kids/youth go everywhere through the community
- To some, the community feels safe at all hours; others have concerns re: poorly lit park pathways
- Starboard Square: It was observed that the space was empty. A discussion ensued about seasonal use and use of public spaces at different times of the day, and the idea of busy spaces (eg seawall) and quiet 'oasis' spaces such as this nearby square.
- Leg-in-Boot Square: Agreement that this space is 'dead', though there was a time when it was used and could be lively.
 - Not enough density to support businesses here
 - There have been noise complaints from overlooking neighbours; strata did not approve outdoor seating for tenant restaurant(s) and a series of them failed
 - Lack of car access is a challenge for retail spaces
 - Through-ventilation of the housing units was a key design principle, modelled after the European "maisonette" style. Double-loaded corridors were deliberately avoided.
 - Shape of the square + surface material = echoes
 - Consider ambient noise - waterfall was meant to cover up noise
 - What if it was smaller? Infill with development to reduce the depth of the space to more street-like dimensions; incorporate different uses eg live/work (services, arts/crafts, etc.)
- Enclave spaces - the 'backyard' of each housing group: sometimes ambiguous if public or private
 - What is it? Whose space is it - maintained by each enclave, not by City [?]. Given walking routes and presence of some gates vs. no gates, there is a question, and some tension.
 - Presence of transients, concern for noise, protection of safe play space for younger kids - more so in eastern end of the community
 - Arguments for a variety of spaces - some that read more 'public' vs. ambiguity to allow for 'discovery'
 - Moving forward, should redesigned enclaves be outward-oriented or inward-oriented? With double-loaded corridor building types likely, both aspects can co-exist.

WALKING TOUR - NOTES

- Accessibility is an issue in a number of the co-ops with stacked townhouse design – lack of elevators
- “Downhousing” – non-profit co-ops provide member owners with security of tenure but no equity to take into the current housing market; membership is very stable and a large number are ‘aging in place’. They may be ‘empty nesters’ without options for smaller units, depending upon co-op unit mix and nature of 1970’s/80’s design. Co-op expansion with ‘universal design’ units would facilitate “down housing” of older members to appropriate units and a new generation of families to become co-op members.
- Charleson Park: The waterfall area was a children’s play and picnic area in the first decades of FCS; there used to be a beach/sand brought in annually and kids swam in the pool. With the changing demographics and designation of Charleson Park as a destination dog off leash park, it is now a well-used dog play area, and not suitable for baby/ toddler /small children beach play.
 - Considerable interest expressed in adding FC ferry stop in Charleson Bay, to link Yaletown etc to Laurel St land bridge and direct walking route to Broadway and VGH
 - Enthusiasm for more invitations to interact and have quiet use of Charleson Park - eg tables and chairs near playground for family picnicking; a coffee stand near the waterfall
- Consider courtyards in the parks i.e. smaller scale protected play or picnic spaces- to reflect the strengths of the enclave interiors pattern, but for public use
- Units facing into enclaves (eg False Creek Co-op) vs. units facing onto the street (eg Millyard). What are the pros and cons? What’s better? Not necessarily one size fits all!
- Social mix forces the populating of a community (i.e. non-profit housing and co-ops) vs. empty homes. FCS is 97% occupied, vs. 91% for City as a whole - 2016 census
- A beaver recently took a tree out near the pond
- Other wildlife seen in the area: coyotes, skunks, raccoons, rats
- The issue of the location for a new public toilet has been contentious - community prefers location more central to playing fields, dog park, playground