

Vancouver's Southeast False Creek neighbourhood exemplifies the world's most advanced thinking in urban development. It has been hailed as the world's greenest neighbourhood, and certified Platinum under LEED® for Neighbourhood Development standards.

Southeast False Creek: A Model of Sustainable Community Living

HISTORIC TRANSFORMATION

The Southeast False Creek development is transforming 32 hectares of former industrial land into a sustainable mixed-use neighbourhood. This change parallels Vancouver's reinvention of its whole economy, from depending on mining, forestry and fishing, to pursuing advanced technology, hospitality, finance, and digital industries.

Historically, Southeast False Creek played a pivotal role in Vancouver as the centre of many key industries. In the 1800s, it accommodated sawmills, foundries, shipyards, a slaughterhouse, warehousing, and the City's public works yard.

GREEN VISION

In 1991, members of Vancouver City Council re-imagined the south shore of False Creek as a single community in which people could live, work, play and learn. Socially, the design aimed to achieve the greatest possible equity, livability and economic prosperity. Environmentally, the design proposed strategic reductions in energy use, high performance green buildings, and easy transit access.

SUSTAINABLE AND EQUITABLE COMMUNITY

Southeast False Creek has lived up to that vision. Only the second LEED Platinum neighbourhood, it was developed at high density for livability and sustainability. When completed, it will include 600,000 m² of residential development, in which family housing is a priority. The 6,200 units will house 12,000–16,000 people.

To foster a sense of community, Southeast False Creek includes lots of open spaces and pathways that integrate the entire site, link to adjacent neighbourhoods, and maintain harmony among pedestrians, cyclists and transit. Shops, services and transit access are all within easy walking distance.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Implement principles of sustainable development in an urban setting
- Improve the ecological health of False Creek itself
- Encourage resource conservation and waste reduction
- Ensure economic viability without subsidy
- Encourage a vibrant and vital community
- Build a livable community that supports social networks and enhances quality of life for everyone in the neighbourhood

* Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design – awarded by the US Green Building Council in February 2010.



The Southeast False Creek development is a leading model of sustainability in North America - turning a former industrial brownfield site into a mixed use, mixed-income neighbourhood that incorporates forward-thinking infrastructure, strategic energy use reduction, high-performance green buildings and easy transit access.

The waterfront area has become parkland, and includes the final link in the 22 km Seawall pedestrian-bicycle route. The development has re-established intertidal fish and shellfish habitats, native vegetation, and a bird habitat on a man-made island, and also provides for urban agriculture.

When fully developed, the neighbourhood will offer exceptional amenities: a community centre and boating facility, three to five licensed daycare facilities, two out-of-school care facilities, an elementary school, an interfaith spiritual centre, and five restored heritage buildings.

MODEL FOR NORTHEAST FALSE CREEK

The City's experience in Southeast False Creek informs its thinking on the one large parcel of land still awaiting a sustainable redesign: the underdeveloped lands at the northeast end of False Creek, near BC Place Stadium and GM Place.

In some ways, development there will parallel Southeast False Creek. It will offer increased residential density, affordable housing, and innovative architecture meeting the highest sustainability objectives. There will be waterfront public spaces, and protected routes for cyclists and pedestrians.

In other ways it will differ dramatically: the neighbourhood's frequent events and public activities, including those in a new event venue and civic plaza, will appeal to people who want to live in a busy vibrant area and see the noise and bustling crowds as part of the attraction. Proposals call for as much as 167,000 m² of job space (offices and working spaces), addressing a possible office shortage downtown.



The restored Salt Building, originally built around 1930

A HISTORIC CONVERSION

Built as a salt refinery in 1930, later used for recycling paper, the Salt Building sat empty for years. The City has reconstructed it as a gathering place for the 2010 Winter Olympics. The revitalized building uses energy and water efficiently, and offers a healthy interior environment. After the Games, the historic building will become a hub for the community, housing a bakery, coffee shop, restaurant and brewpub.

False Creek, looking south in 1921, W.J. Moore - City Archives



Current Olympic Village