Summary of Emerging Directions

Welcome to your Flats!

Introduction

The emerging directions summarized on these boards were developed from public and stakeholder input in the first phase of this study. At the completion of phase one, a summary document of that input was generated and circulated to an internal technical team from various departments at the City of Vancouver and the Vancouver Economic Commission. From a review of those inputs the following directions have been prepared for further study and discussion. These emerging directions will be the basis of the policies and strategies for a new plan for the False Creek Flats.

A full version of the Emerging Directions is available on our website Vancouver.ca/FalseCreekFlats
OVERVIEW OF EMERGING DIRECTIONS

The Greenest City Action Plan targets the Flats to become the Greenest Place to Work in the World. In addition to this goal, the area has also been identified as well-served by transit and ideal to significantly intensify industrial and office employment. In order to achieve these goals, the emerging directions seek to establish a framework to harness the unique opportunities and unlock the untapped potential of the area.

The emerging directions focus on the following:
1. Creating the right kinds of spaces and infrastructure to meet business needs;
2. Developing interesting and active public places for employees to enjoy;
3. Establishing programs and supports for local businesses and strategic economic sectors;
4. Identifying connections that will link places and spaces and surrounding neighbourhoods; and
5. Addressing and responding to challenges of climate change and seismic vulnerability.

PLANNING PROCESS OVERVIEW

Pre-planning and the first phases of the False Creek Flats Planning Process
**KEY PRINCIPLES**

The future False Creek Flats will play a pivotal role in the City, involving diverse industrial, commercial and service enterprises offering a variety of mixed employment opportunities for neighbouring communities and the city-region. This could be achieved through several key strategic areas, including:

- Greater sustainability through green and resilient spaces, businesses, infrastructure and development.
- Economic diversity, with affordable work spaces, innovation and the circular economy leading to intensification of green jobs through mixed land uses.
- Well connected, safe, unique, vibrant places and amenities.
- Improved rail facilities, increased north-south transportation links, well connected and safe pedestrian/bike facilities, adequate parking and goods handling.
- Enhanced City lands, facilities and assets.
- Appropriate policies to enable future development while honouring industrial and cultural heritage assets and the historic link to water.
- Affordable and accessible spaces for artists’ diverse needs.
- Opportunities for the local food system with an inclusive food bank, food commissaries, community gardens, produce businesses and farmers market.
- Measures to support Aboriginal community priorities through local social impact employment, cultural inclusion and community benefit strategies.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

While a typical BIA may not suit all businesses, there appears to be a desire to establish some body to support innovative green business in the Flats.

- Explore opportunities for a business association or representative body to help advocate for area businesses, implement economic programs, and advance the goals of the area businesses.
- Investigate options for establishing a dedicated implementation fund to target innovative programs, projects and social enterprise initiatives proposed in False Creek Flats Plan.
- Facilitate partnerships with senior governments and other organizations to finance and instigate positive change in the area.
- Explore innovative partnerships with local businesses and stakeholders to support grassroots stewardship and animation of the public realm and public rights-of-way.
Built Form, Character & Sub-Areas

Associated with the historical development of mixed uses over time, there has been a tendency towards clustering of some uses in certain parts of the Flats (such as produce industries, arts and culture creators, auto motive retailers etc.). More recently, significant new developments have precipitated stronger trends towards clustering of certain land uses and institutions, located in such a way that they are defining the future character sub areas. These trends deserve investigation as to ways in which these clusters could be enhanced and help the economic transformation across the Flats over time. The emerging character of five sub areas and the emerging built form are described below.
With the anticipated development of a new, state-of-the-art St. Paul’s Hospital and health campus on an 18.5-acre site in the north-west corner of the False Creek Flats, this sub-area is being conceived as a world-class integrated health care, research and teaching hub to transform the future of health care for British Columbians. The area will leverage its new role in the provision of health care and wellbeing programs and services to local communities and people from across the province. It will also significantly intensify employment, deliver disaster-resilient infrastructure and create a well-connected public realm that integrates the new hospital and health campus into the city and adjacent neighbourhoods.

1. Leverage hospital relocation to intensify employment
2. Deliver disaster resilient infrastructure
3. Create a well connected public realm
4. Intensify employment around transit
5. Integrate accessible transit
CREATIVE CAMPUS

The Creative Campus sub-area in the west and southern sector is defined by the re-location of Emily Carr Art + Design University along Great Northern Way and the City-owned blocks along Main Street. With their distinct street grid and unique mix of industrial, office, IT, and creative industries, this transit rich sub-area could become the ‘public face’ of the Flats and provide a point of convergence where new connections link amenity and public spaces in this intensified employment node.

1. Create a ‘public face’ of the Flats that links amenity and public spaces
2. Integrate the distinct street grid
3. Intensify employment around transit and provide a transition from Main Street to industrial uses
4. Protect, promote and link arts and culture
5. Promote a distinct character for the area

EAST STATIONS

This sub-area located in the south east sector, provides another opportunity to intensify employment around transit in the longer term, with improved connectivity across the rail. Anchored by the heritage and character buildings this sub-area could see the establishment of an amenity node allowing for 24/7 activation. Integrating public realm and pedestrian/bike connections to connect the Central Valley Greenway from Clark Drive down through the Flats, also provides an opportunity to create unique public vantage points of the Flats and downtown.

1. Intensify employment around transit in the longer term
2. Integrate public realm and pedestrian/bike connections to connect the Central Valley Greenway through the Flats
3. Establish of an amenity node allowing for 24/7 activation that is anchored by heritage
4. Protect industrial back-of-house uses
These industrial areas in the north and eastern sector, provide a strategic back-of-house location for a variety of city-serving businesses, City of Vancouver facilities, an artist/cultural cluster, and the core of an established and growing food district. Home to two of Vancouver’s oldest community gardens and Strathcona Park, future connections will seek to link existing ecological habitats with new pathways, an expanded public realm and tree canopy.

1. Link existing ecological habitats and community gardens with new pathways
2. Protect industrial back-of-house
3. Expand public realm and tree canopy
4. Grow the established food district
5. Explore longterm support for artist/cultural cluster

Terminal Avenue is a highly visible street with large traffic volumes and the Skytrain running its length. This sub area currently reflects a central spine with service industrial, wholesale, storage and large scale retail activities. There is a need to seek ways to create a more comfortable pedestrian experience by greening the street with tree planting, encouraging active street frontages for businesses, and exploring creative ways to incorporate the Skytrain guideway into the public realm to soften its impact on noise reflection.

1. Explore creative ways to incorporate the Skytrain guideway into the public realm to soften its impact
2. Create a more comfortable pedestrian experience by greening the street with tree planting
3. Encourage active street frontages for businesses
4. Intensify industrial, wholesale, storage and large scale retail activities
TEMPORARY, FLEXIBLE & MOBILE LAND USE

- Investigate opportunities to ensure space is flexible overtime, allowing for an evolution in manufacturing and unforeseen future needs
- Explore a more permissive regulatory process for economic flexibility
- Explore potential of lower-cost, more temporary/mobile spaces/uses for start-up spaces
- Seek to use orphan spaces or temporarily underutilized buildings, lots, and rights of way for for places for demonstration zones, start-up spaces, and R&D projects

SCALE, DENSITY & BUILT FORM

- Explore for more intensified industrial/job space using existing buildings or surface parking lots
- Explore increased intensity around existing and future transit sites
- Explore ways to deliver a variety of building scales and spaces to support a broad spectrum of businesses: from incubators and start-ups to established businesses

BUILDING OFF INDUSTRIAL IDENTITY

- Consider ways to celebrate and embed industrial materials in the buildings and public realm
- Investigate having a vision and unique identity incorporating manufacturing and industrial character into the public realm as an educational showcase
- Explore the ability of new development to reference the historic industrial character and materiality
- Explore unique and appropriate built form and scale guidelines and policies
WE HEARD YOU SAY:

Create interesting places.

Places: Heritage, Parks & Amenity

Businesses are increasingly seeking out interesting and unique places to set up their operations. The realization that these types of high-quality and amenity rich environments attract new economy businesses and the mobile, highly educated employees they need is now seldom questioned. Emerging directions seek to build off of the unique elements in the specific areas with heritage and industrial character. This would create anchors for a lively and interesting public life seeking opportunities for interaction, celebration, and education that sets the area apart in a city of unique neighbourhoods.
HERITAGE
- Explore opportunities to balance older character with new development opportunities
- Seek ways to reflect the history of the area in the built form and public places and spaces
- Explore opportunities to utilize historic buildings as key anchors of activity and amenity nodes
- Consider improving public access and utilization of existing heritage assets
- Explore ways to reflect the history of water throughout the area
- Consider inclusion of identified buildings into the Vancouver Heritage Register

PUBLIC REALM AND AMENITIES
- Explore the introduction of additional services, amenities and key places for people to socialize, gather and meet, including restaurants, pubs, and cafés
- Investigate opportunities to celebrate ‘Flats Made’ products by creating retail opportunities for area businesses
- Consider introducing childcare and social amenities, to respond to changing needs

PARKS
- Investigate opportunities to program existing parks and public spaces
- Seek to connect a network of parks and public spaces, achieving biodiversity linkages
- Explore potential community centres or other shared facilities

PUBLIC EDUCATION AND CELEBRATION
- Explore ways to improve public knowledge and understanding by animating and showcasing local technologies, green businesses and area artists
- Consider creating a child-friendly landscape to invite exploration and education of the role of industry in the delivery of a healthy and livable city

EVENTS AND NOISE RELATED ACTIVITIES
- Explore flexible uses throughout the 24 hour cycle (e.g. potential night markets, live music venues, different uses, festivals, etc.)
- Consider a lighting policy for creating interesting evening places in the Flats
Local Economy

There are an estimated 600 businesses providing a wide range of essential services, industrial and creative manufacturing supports to the economy of the region. The Flats is also home to a number of innovative green business clusters in which individual businesses are often struggling to get established. Business to business networks could play a critical role, contributing to economic transformation, innovation and growth. Emerging directions and economic strategies need to investigate opportunities to develop ongoing business support, partnerships and business-to-business networking, leading to intensified mixed employment opportunities.

Directions also identify potential business decisions and choices that could place a renewed focus on innovation in environmental stewardship and sustainability.
SUPPORT GREEN ENTERPRISE

• Investigate opportunities to support innovation in the area
• Consider the development of niche online networks serving emerging business clusters
• Explore potential research, education, and training support for businesses
• Explore the barriers and develop programs or incentives to encourage green operations
• Seek connections between Flats businesses and the various digital and design support systems

SUPPORT THE TRANSITION TO A MORE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

• Explore opportunities to establish eco-industrial networks and circular economy infrastructure
• Explore ways to support enabling further deconstruction, reuse, and upcycling

CONNECTING BUSINESSES AND RESOURCES

• Explore assistance programs, incentives, education, workshops to encourage industrial intensification
• Identify opportunities for low-carbon public education at a future energy-centre
• Investigate opportunities to build and support economic incubators
• Explore ways to create places for area-wide product testing
• Explore and support programs and organizations for sharing resources and tools
• Find ways to connect not for profit and for profit businesses industries and institutions through digital and social networks to take advantage of potential synergies
• Consider support for programs that provide education and resources to employees and new businesses

ASSIST BUSINESSES IN GREENING THEIR OPERATIONS AND TRANSITIONING TO RENEWABLE ENERGY

• Explore opportunities for education, training, and financial support programs that can help businesses become more environmentally sustainable and resilient
• Explore opportunities to connect local businesses to district energy
• Explore opportunities to support the development of on-site renewable energy projects in the Flats, such as rooftop solar projects or heat-recovery projects
• Explore opportunities to use City facilities and new development projects as demonstration opportunities for renewable energy technologies

TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

• Explore opportunities to implement local initiatives from the Digital Strategy Framework: Digital Engagement and Access; Digital Infrastructure and Assets; Digital Economy; and Organizational Digital Maturity
• Investigate opportunities for access to fast, efficient, and free Wi-Fi
• Explore opportunities for intelligent way-finding
• Explore potential for integrated implementation of resilient digital, energy, and transportation infrastructure

CITY SERVING FACILITIES

• Protect and enhance public lands and civic operations to ensure long-term service of our city
• Investigate potential impacts of a new east-west connector on civic services and facilities in the area
• Explore the long-term expansion needs of civic land in the future
• Explore improved efficiency and intensification of civic facilities and holdings

SUPPORTING PORT GROWTH & EXPANSION

• Explore policies that support growth at the Port while minimizing the negative impacts on adjacent neighbourhoods if possible
WE HEARD YOU SAY:

Grow the local food district.

Food District

A variety of food related businesses call the Flats home and create the backbone of a long-term sustainable food system in our city. Relying on existing distribution networks, these businesses have largely clustered along Malkin, in what is often referred to as Produce Row. In addition to the variety of innovative food related businesses, the area is also home to two of the city’s oldest community gardens. With such a strong cluster already present, the emerging directions seek to support this sector in the development of an emerging ‘Food District’. Additional food related industries are clustered throughout the Flats, including food commissaries, food processing and storage.
PRODUCE ROW & FOOD PRODUCTION

- Support long term viability of food related businesses
- Explore the development of a ‘Centre of Urban Food Excellence’ to embed food and food related businesses
- Explore potential synergies with other food related businesses/community groups across the area
- Investigate impacts to produce companies and community gardens from potential the east-west road link
- Support intensification and improved efficiencies with produce wholesalers and other food related businesses
- Explore innovative opportunities for urban agriculture
- Explore ways to utilize food for social gathering and celebration in special places
- Examine the future space needs of wholesale, aggregation, and retail uses and review existing policy accordingly

COMMUNITY GARDENS & URBAN AGRICULTURE

- Consider the long term future of historic community gardens as anchors of the emerging Food District
- Work with gardeners to explore potential improvements to Cottonwood and Strathcona Gardens
- Explore potential urban agricultural opportunities

GREATER VANCOUVER FOOD BANK

- Investigate ways to support and facilitate the relocation of the Greater Vancouver Food Bank
- Explore synergistic opportunities and potential colocation of other food related businesses with any future Food Bank site

Cottonwood Community Garden

Direct Tap

Produce Row

Jules + Kent - Specialty Foods
WE HEARD YOU SAY:
Protect arts & culture.

Arts & Culture

The health of Vancouver’s arts and cultural sector relies heavily on the False Creek Flats. Not only do these industrial spaces provide places for artists to create, they are also home to essential ‘back of house’ users like the manufacturers and suppliers who support the city’s broader cultural activities. There is a desire to understand how strategic investment can ensure long-term affordability, suitability and viability for this economic sector.

Connected to this is a desire to embed existing creative clusters within the Flats. Supporting this critical mass of arts & cultural activities will ensure the exchange of ideas and innovations between artists and provide a foci for events and audience participation, thereby adding economic value to the Flats.
EMERGING PRINCIPLES FOR CULTURAL SPACE

- Explore solutions for long-term, affordable production space for artists
- Seek to identify and address gaps in cultural ecology
- Identify regulatory barriers to the sector and seek to overcome them for successful creation and operation of cultural spaces
- Consider possible investment to increase physical accessibility to cultural space
- Explore and pursue partnerships for the creation and operation of cultural spaces

PRESERVATION / CREATION OF ARTS & CULTURE SPACES

- Seek strategies to replace lost arts and culture spaces if possible
- In areas where residential use or policy already exist, explore opportunities to provide housing for artists and cultural workers
- Allow for flexibility in the design of cultural spaces to accommodate evolving uses or artistic practice
- Explore opportunities to support non-profit arts & culture groups through (re)development
- Seek to ensure that in the creation of multi-use space for art, culture and other activities that the required infrastructure for arts and cultural use is included
- Maximize opportunities for showcasing and sale of locally produced art
- Investigate ways to increase/intensify industrial arts & culture spaces within the industrial zones

CREATIVE CLUSTERING/ZONES

- Explore the intensification and growth of creative clusters around existing zones
- Explore development of new cultural spaces for creation, production, presentation, support and ancillary activities

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

- Continue support for festivals and events in the Flats
- Seek to identify and include outdoor festival infrastructure in outdoor parks and greenspaces to maximize opportunities for cultural use
WE HEARD YOU SAY:

Create safe & inclusive places.

Community Well-being

The Flats will play a critical role in achieving Vancouver’s goal of building a healthy, strong, safe and inclusive city. Opportunities to make ends meet (Healthy City Strategy) and better link the economic opportunities to help the more vulnerable areas of our City, will be sought. This would include a wide range of potential benefits from high-value tech-related employment opportunities to lower barrier employment opportunities contained within the industrial zones.
PROVIDING A FULL-SPECTRUM OF EMPLOYMENT

• Measures to support Aboriginal community priorities through local social impact employment, cultural inclusion and community benefit strategies.

• Developing a broad spectrum of employment opportunities that reflects the diversity of employees surrounding the Flats.

CHILD-CARE

• Consider opportunities to locate group childcare facilities near transit and within developments that are a good fit for childcare (e.g. large institutional uses).

• Explore innovative approaches to childcare including: onsite workplace childcare, flexible/multiuse spaces, and new program configurations that can respond to changing needs.

• Explore opportunities for co-location of childcare facilities with other social, cultural and community uses.

SAFE, HEALTHY & CLUTTER FREE SPACES

• Seek to deliver safe, healthy and inclusive work environments that support a clean and litter free environment in the Flats.

• Explore ways to create desirable, safe and active places to encourage more ‘eyes on the street’ with adequate lighting along pathways, key public places and sidewalks.

• Encourage a tidy and visually pleasing gateway to the city along the rail corridors.

HOUSING

While new housing opportunities will not be sought; a few sites have policies that support some of residential uses. The possible directions include:

• Seek policies to mitigate existing conflicts with residential development, rail and industrial operations.

• Seek creative transition from neighbouring residential areas to industrial/rail zones to mitigate potential conflict.

• In areas of existing housing policy, seek to ensure that innovative models of housing are explored that

• Explore opportunities to relocate the existing shelter to an area outside the industrial zones.
Transportation

A large focus of the planning process is focused on the desire for better connections to and through the False Creek Flats. While new connections and linkages will be explored, Council has also directed staff to seek a new alignment for the existing east-west arterial on Prior/Venables Streets. The ultimate goal of these improved connections will be a more accessible area, unlocking the untapped potential to transform it into a greener, healthier place to work.
SECURING & ENHANCING RAIL

The False Creek Flats, less than a kilometer from the Port and with over 95 acres of rail lands, plays a critical role in ensuring a healthy future for the Port, while also providing important passenger rail service.

- Explore increased efficiencies for both freight and passenger rail and the existing freight yards.
- Recognize rail infrastructure as an asset, while seeking to overcome the barrier it creates for all modes of transport in the Flats.
- Explore opportunities for increased rail oriented businesses.
- Support closure or realignment of at-grade crossings on local industrial streets to improve rail reliability while maintaining property access.
- Support improved passenger service including expansion of existing services, as well as potential for higher speed rail travel.

GOODS MOVEMENT & SMART LOGISTICS

Goods movement is challenged by high congestion, street and rail crossing conflicts, and the need to balance the need to move goods with various other modes competing for space.

- Explore a new east-west rail/road separated arterial alignment as an improved replacement truck route for the current Prior/Venables Street route, thereby providing for uninterrupted movement of rail, trucked goods, and emergency response vehicles.
- Explore and support strategies to facilitate efficient low-impact goods and service movement.
- Explore potential for new infrastructure for centralized alternative fueling.
- Investigate additional north/south road links to improve connectivity between sub areas.
- Seek solutions to increase safety on existing streets and reduced congestion at key intersections for all modes of travel.
- Explore and identify ideal infrastructure to support smart logistics in the Flats, including possible digital infrastructure (mesh networks, bandwidth, etc) or alternative fueling/charging infrastructure (existing capacity and future needs for hydrogen, electric, biodiesel, etc) among other possibilities.
**MOVING PEOPLE**

Build streets and sidewalks that support vibrant public life and encourage walking and cycling cultures, healthy lifestyles, and social connectedness. Focus on strategic links to overcome barriers, while expanding on the surrounding pedestrian and cycling network.

- Facilitate a feasibility study of possible infrastructure projects to improve overall pedestrian and cycling connections.
- Consider preparing a phasing plan for implementation of active transportation corridors in the Flats.
- Explore the possibility of incorporating protected bicycle facilities in the design and construction of any new major road and explore ways to ensure All Ages and Abilities connections.
- Explore a permanent route for the Central Valley Greenway.
- Explore opportunities to include interesting views and places into any infrastructure investment.

**TRANSIT**

In addition to the rapid transit, bus activity is also focused on the Flats periphery and limited rerouting goes along Terminal Avenue a few times a day. As a result, a large portion of the Flats requires a 5 minute walk or more (400 m distance) to access public transit and a future plan will need to address these challenges to provide a convenient alternative to private auto travel.

- Investigate opportunities for a fully accessible transit service throughout the area with improved connectivity to transit stations.
- Consider a new bus service on Terminal from Main Street to Glen Drive, with future consideration further east along East 1st Avenue.
- Explore new bus service with any relocated and grade separated east-west arterial.
- Consider the future Millennium Line SkyTrain extension to Great Northern Way Campus and onto Broadway in the planning of the area.
- Investigate possible future locations for a street car service, including a maintenance facility within the area.

**PARKING**

Parking shortages are being experienced in certain areas, and on-street parking bays offer limited opportunities to accommodate future demand from industrial intensification and employment growth.

- Explore pricing the street to manage parking demand.
- Explore ways to integrate car sharing into the area to serve different uses and reduce stress on available parking.
- Explore opportunities to introduce temporary uses for unused surface parking.
- Explore potential to accommodate coach fleets and tractor trailers servicing events and venues downtown.
- Motivation for parking demand generated by new and existing developments to be accommodated off-street, with consideration being given to implications related to subsoil conditions and possible effects of sea level rise.
WE HEARD YOU SAY:

Plan a resilient future.

Environment, Energy & Climate Change

Many of the key directions that emerged through the early stages of this process have focused on re-establishing the environment as a primary structuring element. This will require innovative approaches to contaminated site remediation, hazardous material management, material recycling and reuse, water conservation, and green buildings. Improving resilience in the area also means addressing existing seismic and sea-level rise vulnerabilities with new resilient infrastructure, and ensuring the continued operations of the City-serving facilities located in the Flats and a new St. Paul's Hospital, in the event of a post-disaster situation.
Emerging Directions

WATER IN THE FLATS
- Seek to implement an area wide storm water management strategy that minimizes the use of pipes
- Investigate opportunities for the introduction of filters for rain water prior to entering the creek and water table
- Seek ways to promote biodiversity and utilize water to animate and activate public parks and spaces, including the potential to mark the old shoreline
- Explore potential for and barriers to, future daylighting of area creeks

TREES, BIO-DIVERSITY, SOIL & HABITAT CORRIDORS
- Explore urban forest development opportunities
- Explore opportunities to achieve a more effective tree canopy and consider community stewardship partnerships
- Explore innovative approaches to dealing with contaminated site remediation
- Explore the introduction of habitat corridors through the Flats

SEA LEVEL RISE
- Manage the potential impacts of sea level rise and create policies for a resilient area
- Explore building design approaches that allow for adaptive alterations of future buildings that are able to accommodate changing sea levels and future storm incidents

SEISMIC VULNERABILITY & EMERGENCY RESPONSE
- Explore approaches to minimize impacts and potential damage to public infrastructure from a seismic event
- Ensure that Civic emergency management and response needs are a top priority with regards to coordination with new post disaster road network and post disaster response
- Explore opportunities for resilient infrastructure and efficient access and egress points for the proposed St. Paul's hospital site
- Consider developing an area wide strategy to ensure business continuity in the Flats

NEIGHBOURHOOD ENERGY
- Investigate a Neighbourhood Renewable Energy System (NRES) and seek to connect new or existing high density developments
- Pursue waste heat recovery and other potential NRES synergies with local businesses
- Investigate the potential to site a low carbon energy production facility that could supply energy to the area as well as replacing the downtown steam heat system
- Seek to identify suitable locations for future peaking and back up energy facilities

GREEN BUILDINGS, ROOFS & RETROITS
- Explore potential for Green Building Policy that would place the Flats in a leadership role in green buildings and technologies in the city
- Explore policies and tools to unlock potential uses and greening of roof tops
- Seek to incorporate passive design features where feasible in the Flats
- Encourage the demonstration of deep green re-purpose buildings
- Explore innovative partnerships with local businesses and stakeholders to support grassroots stewardship and animation of the public realm and public rights-of-way

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Green Roof - MEC Head Office

“Trillium” Park
Thank you for taking the time to help shape the future of the False Creek Flats! If you haven’t already done so, please sign up for our email list on our web page below to find out about upcoming events and future ways for you to provide input and help us shape the future of your False Creek Flats!

Vancouver.ca/FalseCreekFlats

#falsecreekflats