



# Arts + Culture workshop for Northeast False Creek Thursday, November 17, 2016

Ken Lum, Vancouver Especially (A Vancouver Special scaled to its property value in 1973), 2015  
Photo credit: Roland Tanglao (Flickr Public Domain)

## Thank you!

On November 17th, 2016, 31 stakeholders from the arts and culture community attended a workshop to learn about the Northeast False Creek (NEFC) plan and to provide their professional and community-based input.

Attendees discussed the 3 areas of the new neighbourhood, including:

- Main Street City-owned blocks,
- Adjacent Areas to the NEFC neighbourhood
- Parks and Entertainment District

City-wide and neighbourhood-specific priorities were outlined by the attendees. Detailed workshop notes follow a summary of key points below.

If you would like to provide feedback or additional input, please contact the NEFC project office by January 27, 2017 at [nefc@vancouver.ca](mailto:nefc@vancouver.ca)

From a broad perspective the attendees suggested that the NEFC Project Plan needs to:

- Ensure robust engagement with the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations and local Urban Aboriginal Community and nearby cultural communities as part of the planning process.
- Further incorporate the recent Downtown Eastside (DTES) Local Area Plan priorities into the NEFC planning process.



# General feedback specific to arts + culture

- Incorporate meaningful recognition of sites of historical and cultural significance, including Hogan's Alley recognition in Main Street City-owned blocks.
- Support securing, enhancing and expanding existing inclusive and accessible arts and cultural spaces in the DTES (including Chinatown).
  - Prioritize support for existing galleries, artist studios, and artist-run, performance, rehearsal, and administrative spaces.
  - Consider transfer of public benefits, such as Community Amenity Contributions, towards securing adjacent arts and culture spaces impacted by NEFC development.
- Support the creation of spaces that are inclusive, accessible, and affordable, that balance City-wide and neighbourhood needs:
  - Non-profit operated hubs that enable co-location and resource sharing with arts and culture organizations, and complementary social, health, and housing organizations, and locally-serving businesses.
  - Expansion of Creekside Park that includes occasional outdoor programmable space with supporting infrastructure.
  - Artist housing and live-work spaces that address vulnerable artist populations.
- Consider new outdoor semi-covered programmable space with infrastructure.
- Consider re-evaluating noise impact/mitigation of the new proposed areas that involve large-scale outdoor and indoor programming.
- Consider new indoor arts and culture programming space opportunities, including performance space and community arts space.
- Continue to remove regulatory barriers for arts and culture programming, vending, and production space.
- Integrate Arts and Culture as the Fourth Pillar of Sustainability

# Background + Context

In 2015 City Council chose to move forward with a plan to replace the viaducts with a new street network that will better serve the future area. In addition to new housing, community amenities, parks expansions, new streetscapes and infrastructure, Northeast False Creek (NEFC) has been identified as an inclusive space of celebration and connection. Part of this plan focuses on uncovering its cultural and historical significance to a variety of communities. With only a few designated cultural spaces, the NEFC presents opportunities to explore the creation of new arts and culture spaces as well as support the existing cultural fabric of the adjacent areas.

## Citywide Culture Policies and Context

The central vision of the Culture Plan: Strategic Directions (2013) is to cultivate and enhance a diverse and thriving cultural ecology that enriches the lives of residents and visitors. Key goals include to: enhance diversity, innovation, artistic excellence; increase community engagement and participation; enable vibrant, creative neighbourhoods and public spaces; and support dynamic robust creative economy.

The NEFC plan is an opportunity to address the growing City-wide and neighbourhood needs for securing affordable and suitable spaces through some key investments. In addition to the Cultural Spaces Map, a pilot project mapping cultural spaces in Vancouver, <http://fluidsurveys.com/surveys/vanculture/cultural-spaces-map/>, the City is also engaged in a study examining the gaps in Vancouver's cultural infrastructure. Slated for delivery in early 2017, the

study will inform a larger City-wide cultural space planning strategy and will feed into the NEFC plan.

The arts and culture workshop is an additional and critical tool. This workshop will inform decision-making processes for the area.

## Stakeholders and Ideas

Experts from the arts and culture sector, including artists and cultural workers from various disciplines and cultural communities were invited to attend and contribute. 31 participants attended, bringing a wealth of expertise and experience to the table. They provided feedback on the general plan and specific questions regarding future arts and culture spaces in the NEFC and existing adjacent spaces in the Downtown Eastside (DTES). Though focused on arts and culture, broader concerns regarding impacts of the NEFC development and plans for an expanded neighbourhood and city-wide Entertainment district and Park were also discussed.

Participants broached three main geographic areas of discussion, including:

1. Main Street City-owned blocks
2. Adjacent Areas to NEFC
3. Parks and Entertainment District

At each table participants identified the needs, challenges and opportunities of each geographic area. In this document we have compiled the information into priorities and challenges, as well as overall hopes and fears.

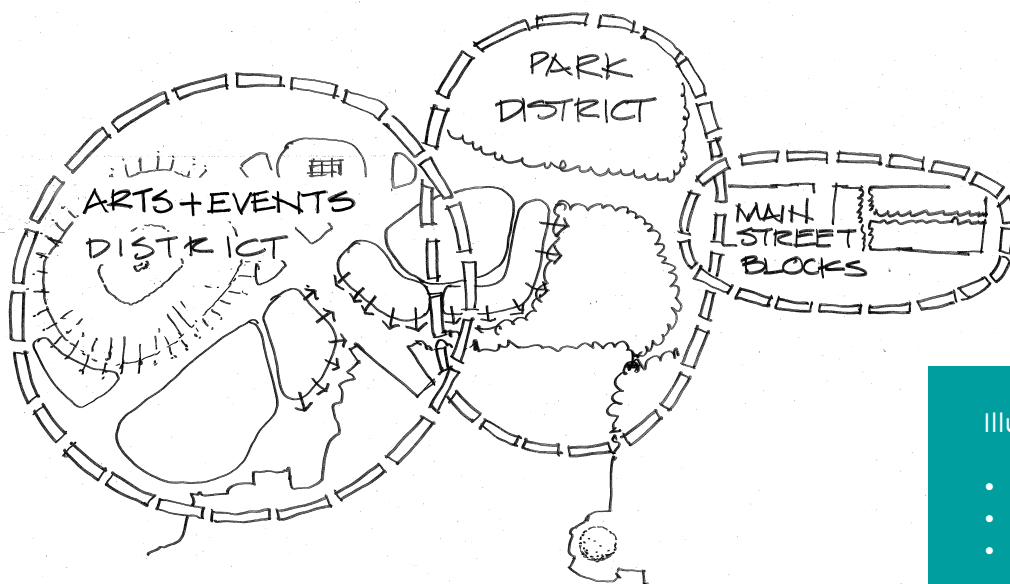


Illustration of the 3 NEFC 'Districts'

- Arts + Events (Entertainment District)
- Park
- Main Street Blocks

# City-owned Blocks

The removal of the viaduct down ramps will free up two city blocks of land located immediately east and west of Main Street between Prior Street and Union Street. The eastern block was part of Hogan's Alley, a Vancouver neighbourhood that was home to multiple immigrant communities but was known largely for its African-Canadian population. These blocks have been identified as a site for meaningful recognition of the displaced Black community and neighbourhood.

These blocks are within the area covered by the DTES Local Area Plan (2014). That plan and previous Council direction from 2013 identifies new mixed income housing opportunities in the development of both blocks above and behind the retail spaces. This housing will include a mix of market and non-market housing opportunities including 200-300 affordable housing units. This site is also being considered for various community facilities and amenities.

Given this demand and the proximity to the DTES and the planned new hospital, the blocks present arts and cultural organizations with potential synergistic co-location opportunities, as well as opportunities to respond to the unique needs of the adjacent communities and cultures.

## WHAT WE HEARD

### Priorities

- Support Black community to lead development of space that meaningfully recognizes vibrancy of Hogan's Alley and Vancouver's Black community
- Support creation of accessible, inclusive arts and culture spaces in co-located city-owned and/or non-profit operated hubs that reflect neighbourhood context of DTES, Chinatown, NEFC and new hospital—providing opportunities for exchange, and offsetting space lost to development pressure.
  - Arts and culture, social, health, food and housing hubs with co-location opportunities, including businesses in the neighbourhood.
  - Publically accessible spaces for people of all ages, cultures, abilities and income-levels.
  - Programming spaces that encourage intergenerational and intercultural exchange, including mentorships and learning opportunities.
  - Support of arts and culture spaces that benefit DTES and Chinatown communities, including vulnerable residents, and recognize the cultural vitality of neighbourhoods, i.e. spaces that support the transmission of culturally-specific knowledge and techniques, and spaces/signage that recognize greater history of cultural and economic displacement.
- Support creation of operationally sustainable spaces that are shared and affordable for users: long-term leases with fixed terms and renewal options.
  - Including affordable rental rates for occasional non-tenanted non-profit users.
- Support creation of high quality artist live-work housing that meets a variety of needs, accessibility, and affordability, including for families, seniors, loud musicians, low-income artists, Indigenous artists, Cantonese-speakers, etc.
  - Create low-barrier inclusive application process.
  - Innovative design: creative flexible spaces, including communal areas and consider various ways to live together, green space.
  - Explore innovative governance models, including co-housing, cooperative models.
- Consider diversity of lot-size and built form.
- Consider variety of indoor arts and culture spaces including, music spaces, housing, etc. in other NEFC sites, especially if demand on City blocks is high.
- Consider opportunities to support creation of spaces that are identified by studies, and are known needs.

## Challenges

- Housing: high demand and need from variety of communities.
- Social, cultural and economic impacts of NEFC and hospital development on existing nearby DTES communities.
- Capacity: ability to co-locate large number of social and cultural amenities.
- Artist live-work integrity: spaces remain legitimately used by practicing artists.
- Space: high demand to provide numerous community amenities in City blocks.
- Long term vision: maintain and support a sustainable the socially and culturally diverse neighbourhood as NEFC develops.
- Architectural homogeneity and imposition of large scale buildings.
- Social and cultural isolation of individuals, organizations, and communities.
- Affordability: high costs of new buildings, associated rental fees and costs of sub-leasing programming spaces.
- Balancing need for public arts and culture spaces and private live-work spaces.

# Adjacent Areas

NEFC borders on Chinatown in the DTES, Downtown, and False Creek Flats. The development of NEFC and the removal of the viaducts will potentially create greater geographic continuity between the neighbourhoods. However, there is concern about the social, cultural and economic impact of the NEFC plan and development on the adjacent DTES.

In the DTES, there exists a rich cultural community and an extensive number of important arts and culture facilities. In addition to a hub of non-profit galleries and artist run centres, there are a significant number of music performance spaces, artists' studios (work; live/work), and office spaces. There is also a rich cultural ecology that includes contemporary and historical members of the Urban Aboriginal, First Nations, Cantonese-speaking Chinese Canadian, Black, Japanese Canadians, low-income, street living/ working populations, and their communities of residents and small business operators.

## WHAT WE HEARD

### Priorities

- Secure permanent tenure of existing non-profit arts and cultural institutions vulnerable to displacement in the DTES that make up the adjacent neighbourhoods' cultural ecologies, including galleries and artist-run centre spaces, music performance spaces, rehearsal spaces, artists' studios (work; live/work), office space and storage.
- Prioritize support for existing non-profit organizations that reflect the ethno-cultural and socio-economic characteristics of the neighbourhood. Secondary priority is to support creation of new spaces for similarly-mandated non-profit organizations. Prioritized support of organizations that are:
  - Representative of the arts and culture practices of Cantonese speaking Chinese Canadian, Black, Urban Aboriginal, First Nations and Japanese Canadian communities.
  - Committed to supporting the intergenerational passing of artistic practices and cultural traditions and the works of emerging artists from the above historically represented groups.
  - Supportive of values that include inclusivity, connectivity, criticality, civic engagement and commitment to underrepresented groups at risk of displacement.
- Structured to cultivate and nurture new practices, artists and groups in the lineage of these traditions, histories and values.
- Regulatory revisions to allow for flexible, adaptive multi-disciplinary artistic and cultural use of spaces
  - Review zoning and building bylaws regulating permitted arts and culture space uses, including restrictions on:
    - Disciplinary practices in artist studios
    - Numbers of residents allowed in live-work studios and studios with associated residential
  - Review bylaw restrictions on live performances in restaurants and bars
  - Review monitoring tools to ensure that live-work studios and studios with associated residential are inhabited by practicing artists.
- Consider granting opportunities for organizations exploring short-term leases, space operating, and rental offsets.
- Integration of Arts and Culture as the Fourth Pillar of Sustainability to create accountability mechanisms.
- Explore streetscapes and public spaces designs that connect and preserve the histories in the public realm.

## Challenges

- Limited capital: available to purchase buildings.
- Short leases: create precarious tenure and potential displacement.
- Cultural Infrastructure Grants: restricted to long-term lease holders and eligibility restricted to immovable objects.
- Disconnection: between the NEFC plan and the DTES plan.
  - NEFC maps identify only the smaller districts of the DTES—fear that this creates opportunity to erase DTES' actual presence.
- New property developments increasing property taxes: pricing out tenants, including locally serving non-profits, businesses and residents.
- New purpose-built spaces: prohibitive maintenance costs and rental rates



# Parks & Entertainment District

The renewal of Andy Livingstone and Creekside Parks and the Entertainment district presents opportunities for outdoor performance sites in waterfront settings, including a large-scale occasional event/performance area in Creekside Park. Options in the Entertainment district include 1 to 2 new outdoor multi-purpose hard-surface open spaces. As a city-wide destination that includes Rogers Arena and BC Place, the Entertainment district has some challenges, including the impacts posed by increased usage and noise.

Workshop attendees prioritized the need for public spaces being inclusive and accommodating local neighbourhood users such as DTES low-income residents. Structures and hard and soft landscapes should reflect local cultural and historical significance/memory, accommodate flexible uses, and flexible numbers of users (single users, small groups/large events).

## WHAT WE HEARD

### Priorities

- Support creation of inclusive public spaces and neighbourhood engagement
  - Design public spaces (including park and plazas) that are approachable and accommodating for all communities, including users of all ages, abilities, income-levels, and backgrounds (e.g. Oppenheimer Park).
- Support creation of multipurpose accessible, adaptable and programmable park
  - Design park that provides integration with nature and opportunities for calm/quiet zones, waterfront/water access, sun and shade areas
  - Design flexible multi-use park for everyday usage that includes unobtrusive back of house infrastructure for occasional small to large scale multidisciplinary performances and events.
  - Provide indoor community arts spaces, i.e. Park Board fieldhouse models or covered areas for programming – potential for social enterprises
  - Innovative stewardship options to manage programming/permitting spaces to allow for spontaneous uses.
- Locate, determine, and meaningfully recognize sites of historical and cultural significance, especially Indigenous, through architecture, streetscape and landscape design, flora, signage and/or public art, etc.
- Support accessibility and connectivity along roads and path to accommodate large-scale influx for all Park and Entertainment district performance areas.
- Support creation of covered adaptable hard surface outdoor plaza(s).
  - ‘Plug and play’ sites accommodating small to large scale multidisciplinary performances and events with back and front of house infrastructure (including equipment, staging infrastructure, seating, power, water, sewage, storage, etc.).
  - 1 covered or partially-covered site that is multipurpose day and night for: gathering, piazza-like seating, exercise, performances, rallies, festivals, various markets including artist-vending opportunities, buskers, screenings and projections, events, buskers, food trucks, spontaneous events for under 1,000 people, etc.
  - Waterfront access.
- Support creation of indoor arts and cultural spaces or other covered spaces in the Entertainment district, i.e. performance, or community arts spaces.
- Sound/noise study to determine acoustic capacity of outdoor venues as well as conflict with concurrent events (in stadium and other outdoor venues).



## Challenges

- Access: creating welcoming public spaces for all types of users, particularly DTES low-income residents, seniors, youth, and skateboarders.
  - Restrictions posed by inclement weather for presentations on grass and uncovered outdoor areas.
- Recognition: ensuring that historical and cultural significance of area is meaningfully recognized, including Indigenous sites and traditional land use.
- Capacity: increased pressure on infrastructure and neighbourhood communities during (stand-alone and concurrent) large scale events (at stadia, park and plazas), including impact of large audiences, traffic, parking, alcohol consumption, and noise.
- Repetition: avoid over-programming and creating similar outdoor programming spaces.
- Flexibility: ensure public spaces are flexible and accommodating for multiple users including everyday use and special events programming.
  - Bureaucratic processes, permitting and scheduling required to use spaces –does not encourage spontaneity.
- Ensuring accessibility with regards to affordability (i.e. private / pay-to-enter events with fencing, and operational costs for programming organizations).

# What We Heard - Overall Hopes

- NEFC public benefits monies and mechanisms allocated to support priorities established in the DTES plan with the intent to preserve the rich cultural ecologies and histories.
  - Preserve the DTES neighbourhood character, secure and expand housing for existing low-income and racialized communities.
  - Prioritizing support of existing DTES facilities through reallocation of Community Amenity Contributions.
  - Creation of new facilities that address needs and identities of DTES communities.
  - Creation of job opportunities and mentorships for DTES residents, i.e. construction, service, outdoor/indoor artist-vending opportunities.
- Architectural, spatial, cultural and economic connections created between DTES and NEFC.
- Investments into housing and small business preservation to allow the existing culturally rich, unique and historically important residents and small businesses to remain in place to preserve the unique culture of the adjacent neighbourhoods.
- Food accessibility/security included in plan, as part of cultural exchange opportunities.
- Consider indoor arts and culture spaces and housing in other parts of the NEFC
- Set up framework and opportunities for culture that will evolve with the growth of the neighbourhoods.
- Support Healthy City and other City goals.
- New arts and culture facilities meet needs outlined by the community.

# What We Heard - Overall Fears

- NEFC plan is too late to address the needs and concerns of the DTES community and the market pressures that will cause displacement.
- Market pressures of the NEFC development will create, exacerbate and accelerate the displacement, erasure and policing of vulnerable communities in the Downtown Eastside.
- Art prioritized over culture: i.e. plan for new art venues and city hub for celebration in NEFC will engender erasure of rich cultural history in DTES/ Chinatown.
- Concern of food access and asset loss around food service hub near Venables.
- Community Amenity Contributions from NEFC development rezoning will be allocated only to the Entertainment district spaces or spaces that are exclusive to NEFC or tourist use, rather than to also support the adjacent arts and cultural institutions and cultural communities to remain in place.
- Exclusivity: NEFC as luxury neighbourhood where low-income residents are not welcome
  - Policing of and control of public spaces against vulnerable populations by police and neighbourhood business improvement association.
- Noise and impacts on area, residents, and performances during competing events.
- Affordability of accessing of public venues, both for attendees, and for programmers of events and performances (costs of associated permits, rentals and accessing infrastructure, etc.).
- Assumed hierarchy of values and systems: fear that non-Western European arts and culture, including Chinese Canadian culture and arts production, and community arts will not be prioritized.
- Insufficient engagement of Squamish, Musqueam and Tsleil-Waututh Nations and the Urban Aboriginal community.
  - Tokenistic recognition of cultural and political history and significance (i.e. signage only).