

NORTH EAST FALSE CREEK CIVIC GATHERING PLACE

Planning Review Workshop Summary
April 2008



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Civic Gathering Place on North False Creek

The City of Vancouver assembled a group for a thinking session on the potential for a large public open space on the north side of False Creek to host special events, now that the Plaza of Nations is being redeveloped.

The following summarizes some of the thoughts that emerged from the discussion. From these thoughts, a set of draft criteria for site selection are proposed and three options that may meet these criteria are suggested.

Summary of Key Thoughts

1. This new space should become a great public destination of equal stature to Stanley Park, Granville Island, and the Beach on English Bay.
2. The new space should be different from the many green, largely landscaped, and passive open spaces around False Creek. It should be urban, high-energy, and fun. The design process should challenge the open space typology for Downtown Vancouver to move towards more activity. This is an opportunity to redefine our open space system.
3. To be successful, the space will need to generate a critical mass of users: residents, workers, visitors, people moving along the Seawalk, shoppers, theatre goers, and stadium goers.
4. The space must accommodate a multidimensional and multiuse program of activities through all seasons and weather conditions – it should be a ‘mixed-use’ space. It should facilitate up to 20,000 people for large events yet readily transform to host small gatherings and everyday use. Having big events spill out into streets like Pacific Boulevard that are closed for the day may help with adjusting to events of differing sizes.
5. The space should function as an extension of Downtown reaching to False Creek.
6. The space should integrate with its larger context as the focus of the north side of False Creek from the Cambie bridgehead to Science World.
7. The water of False Creek should be a central part of the program with seating and amenities to support a wide range of water-based events: entertainment on a floating, moveable stage, dragon boat and rowing races, canal ships and sail pasts. The routes, lengths, starts and ends, and other planning considerations of all water-based events should be mapped as part of the planning process.
8. Connectivity into the city is essential – an “octopus” of routes and linkages to Georgia, Robson, Smythe, Abbott, Carrall, and the Seawalk.
9. The types of land use around the open space need to be part of the design process so that they will be supportive of the big idea. All the edging land uses should be understood with consideration of how they will contribute to the energy of the new space.
10. It is important to “think big”. The context along North False Creek is big, especially at the edges of BC Place, the Garage, and the transportation infrastructure of roads and the SkyTrain. The design needs to bring this big scale down to a comfortable human scale.

Suggested Planning and Design Criteria

1. Locate the new space along the waterfront to support water-based event viewing.
2. Accommodate events of up to 20,000 people. This requires a space of at least 20,000 square meters for standing room plus another 5,000 to 10,000 square meters for staging and support purposes. Having some of the participants seated increases the space per person from 1 square meter to 1.5 square meters each.
3. Optimize proximity to transit, especially both SkyTrain stations and the future streetcar route.
4. Provide direct, attractive and appropriately dimensioned routes to nearby neighbourhoods and other public destinations.
5. Support the roles of Georgia Street and Robson Street as City designated Cultural Corridors and parade routes as well as the intention of Cultural Affairs to expand the cultural and entertainment districts in Downtown.
6. Integrate the process with the current Cultural Infrastructure Study being undertaken by Cultural Affairs.
7. Plan the new space to facilitate outdoor celebrations related to events in the two big nearby indoor spaces: BC Place and the Garage.
8. Consider the land use adjacencies of different space options with regard to noise and visual impacts, especially on residential uses.

Three Preliminary Options for Consideration

Three options for siting the proposed plaza are listed in the following pages.

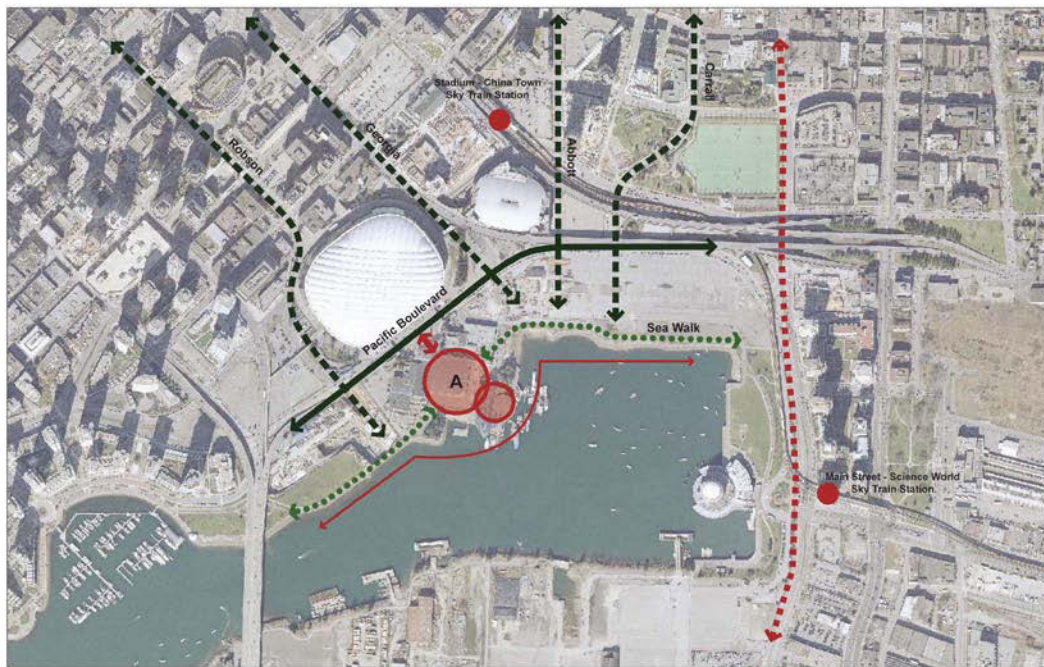
A. Existing Plaza of Nations Site

Advantages:

- Potential for an excellent relationship to and prospect over False Creek if BC Pavillion is demolished
- Potentially less shadowing of future buildings than other options
- Good access to Pacific Boulevard for special event closures

Disadvantages:

- Not as well connected as other options to Downtown, the cultural precinct
- No direct connections to Robson or Georgia Streets
- Not well connected to Abbott Street Greenway
- Not central to the two stadiums as a celebration space
- Close to existing residential uses around the Cambie bridgehead
- Not between the two SkyTrain stations



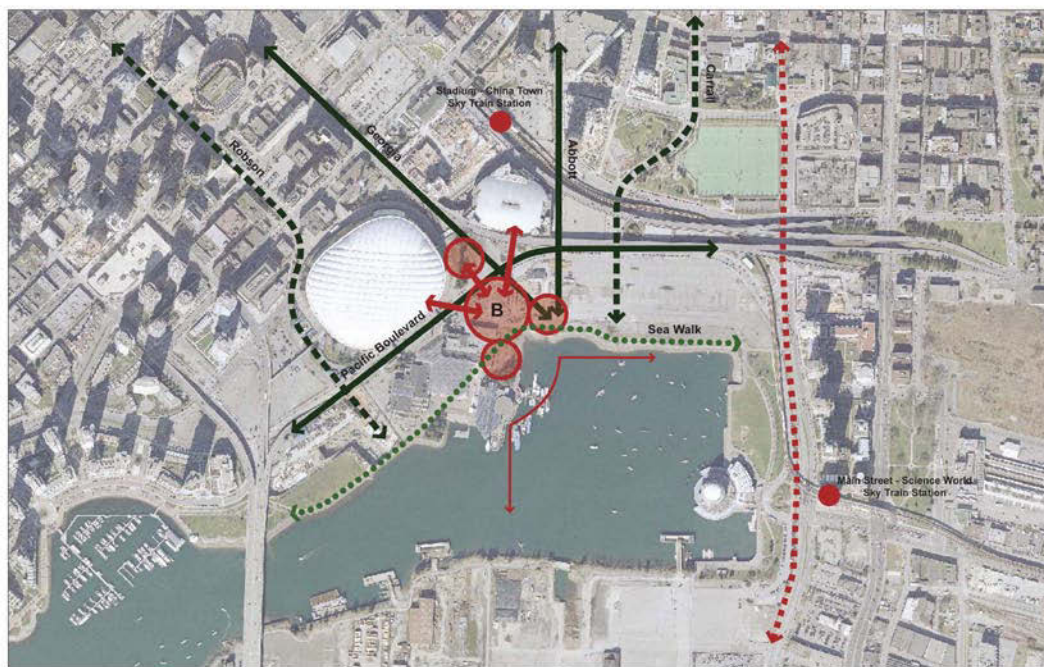
B. Foot of Georgia Street

Advantages:

- Well connected to Downtown and the cultural precinct along an extension of Georgia Street
- Well connected to Abbott Street
- Central to the two stadiums as a celebration space with potential for both an upper space between the two venues and a lower space at the waterfront
- Good access to Pacific Boulevard for special event closures
- Distant from existing residential uses around the Cambie bridgehead
- Central to the two SkyTrain stations
- Forms two 'arms' around a bay that would readily accommodate the suggested floating stage venue

Disadvantages:

- Has an east-facing prospect – sunrise but not sunset
- Potential shadowing from future buildings



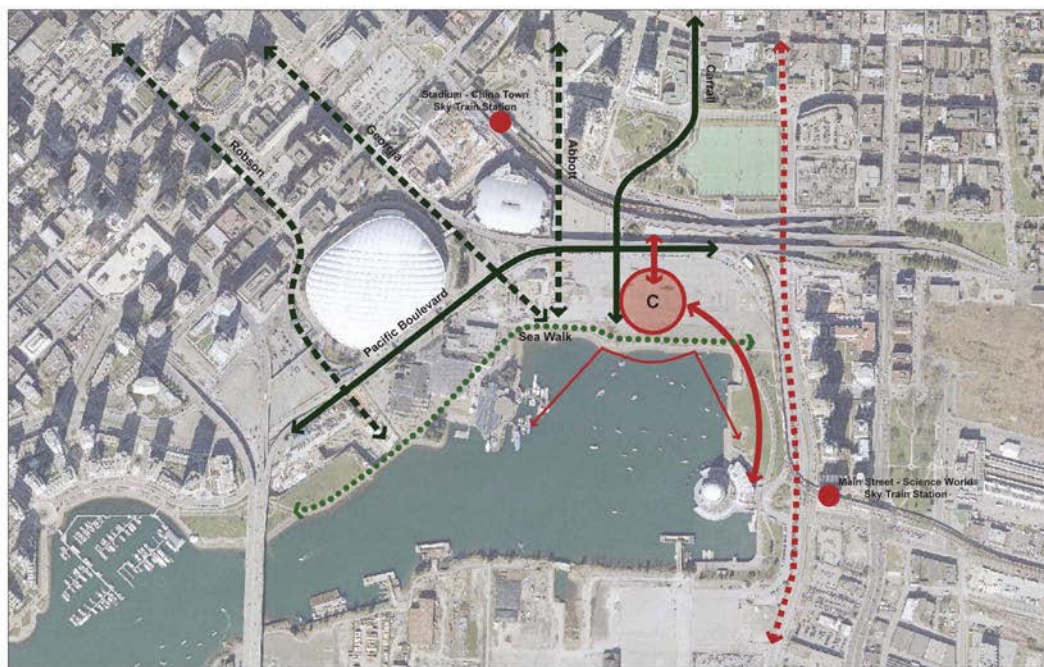
C. East Creekside Park

Advantages:

- Potentially well connected to Gastown and Chinatown
- South prospect on False Creek with good sun orientation
- Forms an edge to False Creek with potentially good viewing of boating and other water-based events
- Lower potential shadowing from future buildings than other options
- Close to Science World as a possible animator of the public space
- Good access to Pacific Boulevard for special event closures
- Central to the two SkyTrain stations
- Well connected to Abbott Street

Disadvantages:

- Not as well connected as other options to Downtown, the cultural precinct
- Not central to the two stadiums as a celebration space
- Close to existing residential uses around Quebec Street
- No direct connections to Robson or Georgia Streets



APPENDIX A

Ten Essentials of Good Public Space

1. ENCLOSURE

CONTAINED SPACE

SPACE IS DEFINED BY EDGES

CREATES THRESHOLDS, ENTRIES, VISTAS



2. CONTRIBUTING EDGES

PUBLIC ACTIVITY AT THE EDGES CONTRIBUTES TO THE LIFE OF THE SPACE

BUILDING EDGES THAT ARE TRANSPARENT AND ACTIVE

INDOOR AND OUTDOOR RELATIONSHIPS

"If the edge fails, then the space never becomes lively." – Christopher Alexander



3. PROGRAM

THE ACTIVITIES ARE THE LIFE OF THE PLACE

VISIBLE ACTIVITIES ATTRACT PEOPLE

FORMAL PROGRAM – THE PLANNED THEATRE OF THE PLACE:

- Organized events throughout the year
- Shows, celebrations, music, drama, olympics, Sidewalk sales, skating events, camps, car shows, Christmas caroling
- Audience and actors

A PROGRAMMER / SPACE MANAGER

INFORMAL PROGRAM – THE EVERYDAY THEATRE OF THE PLACE:

- How people gather or hang-out, people watching
- Impromptu theatre i.e. Granville Island buskers
- People attract people



4. TRANSFORMATION

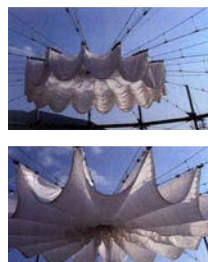
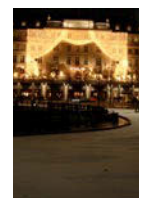
ABILITY TO ALLOW THE SPACE TO EXPRESS SPECIAL EVENTS I.E. OLYMPICS, SKATING, FESTIVALS, EVENTS, CELEBRATIONS

FLAGS, BANNERS, LIGHTING, DIGITAL TOTEM, VIDEO SCREEN, TEMPORARY STAGES, EVENT SEATING, ROOF/NO ROOF EVENT SETTING

TRANSFORM SPACE TO TRANSFORM THE EXPERIENCE

CHANGES OVER THE SEASONS

FLEXIBILITY

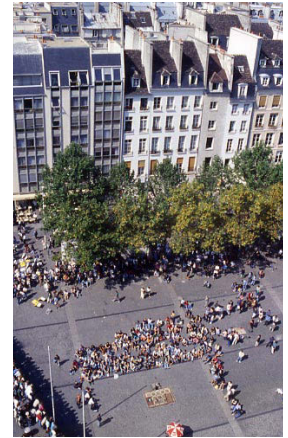


5. TWO SCALES

SCALE REFLECTS IMPORTANCE OF THE PLACE

SCALE OF THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE SCALE OF LARGE SOCIAL GROUPS

INTIMACY AND GRANDNESS



6. CONNECTIONS

PART OF A NETWORK THAT BRINGS PEOPLE THROUGH THE SPACE

INVITE PEOPLE THROUGH

PART OF EVERYDAY ROUTES



7. FOCUS + INVITATION

INVITATION INTO THE SPACE

EVENTS, PROGRAMS

FOOD AND DRINK

FEATURES

- Fountain
- Public art
- Technology (big screen)

THE BEST KIDS PLAY

THE BEST BAKERY



8. PLACE + MEMORY

STRONG IDEAS TRIGGER IDENTITY AND SENSE OF PLACE

CULTURE

- Reference the history, the arts, the people

ARCHITECTURE

- Civic
- Fit or stand out from the city's venacular

LANDSCAPE

- The city setting
- The town centre character
- Authentic
- Fit or contrast with setting



9. SITTABLE

OPPORTUNITIES TO STAY

THOUGHTFUL PLACEMENT OF SEATING CREATES AN INDIVIDUAL QUALITY OF EXPERIENCE (INTIMACY, SECURITY, MICRO CLIMATE, SOCIAL, GOOD VIEWS OF ACTIVITIES OR OUTWARD)

VARIETY OF OPPORTUNITIES (FIXED SEATING OR MOVEABLE CHAIRS)

OTHER OBJECTS (WALLS, STEPS, BOLLARDS, SCULPTURES)

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE SLOPE



10. COMFORT

FULLY ACCESSIBLE FOR DISABLED

DESIGN FOR ALL AGES AND ABILITIES

SECURE AND SAFE

WEATHER PROTECTION (WIND, RAIN, COLD, HOT)

LIGHTING



APPENDIX B

Precedents



PLACE GEORGES POMPIDOU Paris - France

The *Place Georges Pompidou* in front of the Centre Pompidou is noted for the presence of street performers, such as mimes and jugglers.

In the spring miniature carnivals are installed temporarily into the place in front with a wide*variety of attractions; bands, tables set up for evening dining, and even skate boarding competitions.



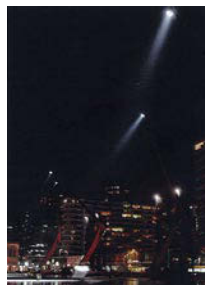
RYNEK KRAKOWSKI SQUARE - Krakow - Poland

Main Market Square in Krakow (Polish: Rynek Główny w Krakowie, also known as Rynek Krakowski — Krakow Market Square) is the main square of the Old Town, Kraków, Poland. It dates back to the 13th century and – at 200 by 200 meters in both dimensions – it is the largest medieval town square in Europe.

The Square is a popular place for public events and festivities — such as the annual Gala Concert of the Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity and the largest New Year's Eve party in Poland.



SCHOUWBURGPLEIN - Rotterdam - The Neatherlands



Schouwburgplein is a place for culture and modern urban recreation surrounded by buildings with active and open facades that contain shops, entrance to cultural institutions, such as a concert hall and a cinema complex, and a large number of sidewalk cafes.

The crane-like light masts provide the lighting for this urban stage. The lighting can be changed by the users.

LA DEFENCE - Paris - France



HOTEL DE VILLE - Paris - France



PIAZZA NOVONA - Rome - Italy



PIAZZA DI SPAGNA - Rome - Italy



PIAZZA DEL CAMPO- Sienna - Italy



PLAZA REAL (PLACA REIAL) - Barcelona - Spain



TRG BANA JELACICA - Zagreb - Croatia





PIONEER COURTHOUSE SQUARE - Portland - Oregon - USA

Pioneer Square is a main square whose design emphasizes on urban activities and functions as a meeting and gathering place.

Buildings surround the square on all four sides and have for the most part have urban functions at the ground level such as a department store, banks, some hotels and several shops.

Pioneer Square is a flexible multi functional space. As well as being a main meeting place for the people of Portland, it is a public transportation hub and Portland's main "living room".



YONGE-DUNDAS SQUARE - Toronto - Ontario - Canada

The Square is minutes from several major attractions including the CN Tower, Skydome, the Art Gallery of Ontario, the Royal Ontario Museum, the Elgin Theatre, the Canon Theatre, the Air Canada Centre, the Princess of Wales Theatre, the Royal Alexandra Theatre, the Hummingbird Centre, the Hockey Hall of Fame and the Metro Toronto Convention Centre.

The Yonge-Dundas Square influence area contains the highest concentration of hotels within the GTA with a total of more than 10,000 rooms.

Two major Universities are within the influence area – Ryerson and the University of Toronto.

The Yonge-Dundas Square influence area contains over 21, 000 residents. Each day over 860,000 people enter the influence area to work.

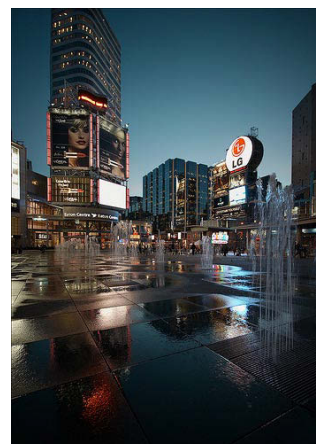
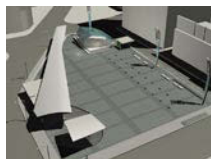
There are over 500 restaurants within walking distance.

Pedestrian Zone Area: ~ 2,100 m²

Total Annual Venue Circulation 28,506,500 visitors
(source: Clear Channel Outdoor, 2003)

Event Specific Attendance, 2006 660, 235

Source: Yonge-Dundas Square Official Website



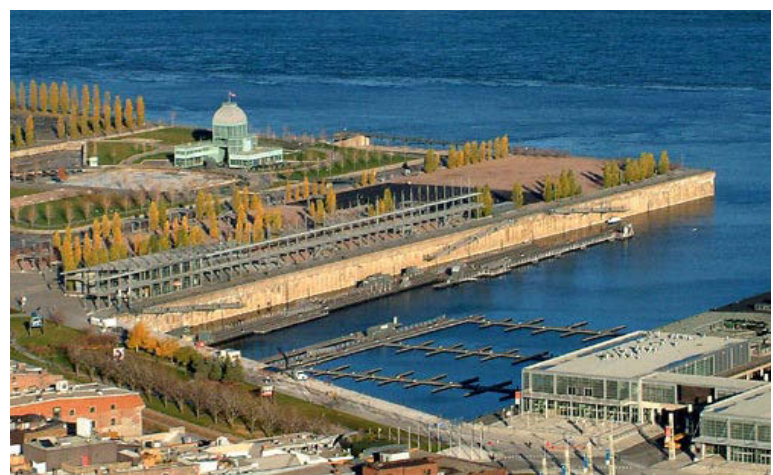
PLACE BERRI - Montreal - Quebec - Canada

Recreational square located outside of the historic city centre with an area of 10,800 m²



PLACE JACQUES-CARTIER and QUAI JACQUES-CARTIER - Montreal - Quebec - Canada

An active plaza and promenade lined with restaurants and cafes and house to artist, buskers and street performers. The plaza connects to the Montreal's waterfront and Quai Jacques Cartier which is also used for outdoor performances with stages for events such as Montreal's International Jazz Festival.



WATERFRONT - Montreal - Quebec - Canada



LES PLAINES D'ABRAHAM and TERRACE DUFFERIN - Quebec City - Quebec - Canada



PLACE D' YOURKVILLE - Quebec City - Quebec - Canada



FELLS POINT - Baltimore - Maryland - USA



MILLENNIUM PARK - Chicago - Illinois - USA



BRYANT PARK - New York - New York - USA



NATHAN PHILLIPS SQUARE - Toronto- Ontario - Canada



SKIERS' PLAZA - WHISTLER VILLAGE - Whistler - British Columbia - Canada



CARIBBEAN FESTIVAL - WATERFRONT PARK - North Vancouver - British Columbia - Canada



DEER LAKE PARK - Burnaby - British Columbia - Canada



FALSE CREEK - Vancouver - British Columbia - Canada



ENGLISH BAY FIREWORKS - Vancouver - British Columbia - Canada



BARD ON THE BEACH - VANIER PARK - Vancouver - British Columbia - Canada



PLACE BERRY - Montreal - Quebec - Canada



Area: 10,800 m²
 Location: District Outside of Historic City Centre
 Type: Recreational Square
 History: New Public Space

PIONEER COURTHOUSE SQUARE - Portland - Oregon - USA



Area: 5,100 m²
 Location: City Centre
 Type: Main City Square
 History: New Public Space

GAMMELTORV / NYTROV - Copenhagen - Denmark



Area: 7,300 m²
 Location: City Centre
 Type: Central City Square
 History: Renovated Public Space

PLACE DES TERREAUX - Lyon - France



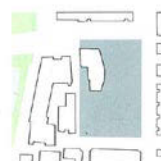
Area: 9,800 m²
 Location: City Centre
 Type: Main Square / Recreational Square
 History: Renovated Public Space

PLACE KLEBER - Strasbourg - France



Area: 12,000 m²
 Location: City Centre
 Type: Main City Square
 History: Renovated Public Space

SCHOUWBURGPLEIN - Rotterdam - The Netherlands



Area: 10,800 m²
 Location: City Centre
 Type: Main City Square / Urban Stage
 History: Renovated Public Space