**The impact of place-based grassroots activism**
**when challenging the real estate state:**
**Strategies and successes of the**
**False Creek South Neighbourhood Association**

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Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Urban Studies

in the
Urban Studies Program
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

# Declaration of Committee

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# Abstract

This project examines the place-based activism of residents of the False Creek South neighbourhood in Vancouver in their efforts to engage with the City of Vancouver about the planned redevelopment of their model community. Using the concepts of place identity, collective nostalgia, and place disruption, along with an analytical lens of place frames, I show through this case study how neighbourhoods and community organizations might, under the right conditions, leverage place identity, social capital, and alternative visions for the future to challenge the dominance of neo-liberal planning and the real estate state. My research also demonstrates how city governments and other levels of decision-makers can avoid vilifying local community groups protesting new development and create collaborative engagement relationships by reframing community reactions as place-protective actions.

**Keywords**: place identity; community planning; community activism; place frames; False Creek South

# Dedication

This thesis was borne out of my love for my community and my neighbours. While the planning of False Creek South has been explored in other academic papers and books, I wanted to honour the people who live here and the incredible commitment that they have made to their neighbourhood and its future. This work, and my entire foray into Urban Studies, would not have been possible without the care and support of my friend and mentor, Nathan Edelson. Nathan was a wise, kind, generous, funny, incredible person who also happened to be an accomplished city planner and community builder. His fingerprints are all over Vancouver, not only because of his urban planning and policy work, but in the countless people that he mentored and gave guidance to along the way. His influence during and after my time with RePlan changed my life, and I am a better person for having known him. How I would have loved for him to read this paper, and to receive an email or phone call letting me know what he thought of my findings, or whom he thought I let off the hook too easily. It is heartbreaking to know that that will never happen, but I will forever carry the lessons that he taught me.

For Nathan

March 1, 1947 – September 3, 2023

# Acknowledgements

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# List of Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| AWG | Authorized Working Group |
| BCNPHA | BC Non-Profit Housing Association |
| CAC | Community Amenity Contribution |
| CHFBC | Co-op Housing Federation of BC |
| CMHC | Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation |
| COPE | Coalition of Progressive Electors |
| CPG | Community Planning Group |
| FCS | False Creek South |
| FCSNA | False Creek South Neighbourhood Association |
| FSR | Floor-space ratio |
| NDP | New Democratic Party |
| NIMBY | Not In My Back Yard |
| NPA | Non-Partisan Association |
| NRP | Neighbourhood Revitalization Program |
| ODP | Official Development Plan |
| REFM | Real Estate and Facilities Management |
| SEFC | Southeast False Creek |
| SLS | Strata Leaseholders Subcommittee/Strata Leaseholders Society |
| SPOTA | Strathcona Property Owners and Tenants Association |
| TEAM | The Electors' Action Movement |
| YIMBY | Yes In My Back Yard |

# Chapter 1.
# Introduction

The neighbourhood of False Creek South (FCS) was a unique development in the city of Vancouver. Beginning in the 1970s the City of Vancouver began a process of de-industrializing the public land around the False Creek basin in order to develop residential communities. False Creek South was the first area to undergo redevelopment. Its planning was spearheaded by the municipal party in power at the time, The Electors Action Movement (TEAM), a party made up of liberal progressives focused on urban livability and community input in planning. After decades of top-down, business-oriented planning and decision-making by the Non-Partisan Association (NPA), the municipal party that had held a majority position on Vancouver City Council for 35 years, TEAM was elected to a majority on City Council in 1972 (Hutton, 2019). TEAM's election was a response to the public disapproval of the scale and density of the NPA's planning program, particularly in the Downtown area, and TEAM committed to working collaboratively with neighbourhoods on planning and land use policies (Punter, 2003), beginning in False Creek South.

Spurred by 1970s progressive, bottom-up planning ideals of community-led "power" over the physical and social design of neighbourhoods consistent with TEAM's reformist politics (Thompson, Berwick, Pratt & Partners, 1974), the original development of the False Creek South neighbourhood was an attempt to embed mixed-income, welfare state principles into municipal public land use policy. The goal was to create a model neighbourhood that showcased how urban development could foster the conditions for a connected community and for an increased sense of community control over local governance that would serve as an example for future neighbourhood planning. This was achieved through four key decisions. First, three specific types of housing tenures were chosen and spread equally across the neighbourhood to promote social mixing: private market condominium (called Strata in British Columbia), non-market co-operative housing societies, and non-profit housing societies. This ratio of non-market to market housing types, built on leasehold land, was meant to protect most of the housing in False Creek South from market forces, keeping housing affordable for as long as the leases were in place, and maintaining a higher-than-average percentage of affordable housing types. Second, planners set targets for a resident base that was

one-third lower-income, one-third middle-income, and one-third higher income, with a similarly equal distribution across the neighbourhood. This created opportunities for social mixing among residents and prevented the segregation of any one income level. Third, for the first and only time, the City established a Neighbourhood Association in the community; the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association was created as a democratically elected non-profit society with representatives from each of the co-op and strata buildings in the neighbourhood (False Creek South Neighbourhood Association, n.d.-b). It was meant to be both a forum for neighbours to gather and discuss community issues across incomes and housing types, and a conduit between the City and its new experimental neighbourhood. Finally, the City maintained ownership over most of the land in False Creek South, which enabled the housing and income-mix because of the use of low-cost public land. The decision to build on City-owned land also recognized that the land would be a valuable asset for the City in the future, and that land use changes in the area might need to be made depending on the priorities of future City Councils.

The first generation of residents moved into the new neighbourhood from 1976-1986 to buildings with 40-60-year land leases, and they embraced the mixed-income and empowered-community values, just as city planners and TEAM politicians had hoped. In a 1977 open letter responding to criticisms in the *Vancouver Sun* that False Creek South was a "visual and social failure" that had "trashed" False Creek (Croome, 1977) Alderman Mike Harcourt wrote that "The residents have set up a…council, and the community problems are being dealt with by those residents" (Harcourt, 1977, p. A6). This statement demonstrated that, within a year of moving in, residents had already embraced the opportunity for self-governance and self-determination that was facilitated through the Neighbourhood Association, and that, in the eyes of the City, the organization was a legitimate forum for neighbourhood problem solving. A few years later residents continued to promote the values of the FCSNA and self-governance in the neighbourhood, saying "it's a social organization that makes everyone… community oriented. If they aren't that way when they move in, they'll learn in a few months' time" (Bohn, 1980, p. B1).

Despite the neighbourhood's success in self-governance and its emergence as a national and international showcase of successful progressive, post-industrial urbanism, very few provisions were made in the beginning or in subsequent years for the

neighbourhood and its residents at the end of the building leases; there was no guarantee that they would be extended at the end of their terms, and in fact, legally, buildings were to be handed over to the City. The City retained final decision-making authority over land use. Decisions about lease ends were left for future City Councils, ultimately creating a collision course between legal authority over the land and the embedded principles of self-governance, community, and social equity on which the neighbourhood was founded and that were embraced and upheld by residents.

As those 40- to 60-year land leases approached their expiry date conflict between the real estate development potential of the land and the success of the existing community began to emerge. The large amount of waterfront public land that would become available at the end of the leases represented an opportunity for the City of Vancouver to rethink the approach to development in False Creek South. Since the development of False Creek South in the 1970s, Vancouver had become one of the most unaffordable cities in the world, with sharply rising housing prices and limited supply, and, like many cities across North America, had become increasingly dependent on development levies from market-rate real estate development to fund city priorities like infrastructure and affordable housing. In addition, the withdrawal of upper level government support for affordable housing left cities, including Vancouver, dependent on rising real estate prices to raise property taxes and developer contributions in order to fund much-needed affordable housing, and they were thus incentivized to develop as much as possible. Samuel Stein calls this dependence on market real estate development to fund essential community amenities the real estate state, in which "real estate holds something approaching monopoly power to shape the narrative around urban planning and urban futures" (Stein, 2019, p. 48). This political and economic environment meant that the City faced incredible pressures from significant voting blocs, developers, and the market to carry out their fiduciary responsibility to all Vancouver residents and maximize the development potential of the land by redeveloping based on principles of "highest and best use."[1] According to principles of the real estate state and highest and best use, the City could realize the potential of land in False Creek South by

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[1] Highest and best use is defined by *The Appraisal of Real Estate* as a utilitarian analysis of locational attributes of a property, economic demand for the property based on use, and estimates of possible financial gains ("The Application of Highest and Best Use Analysis," 2020, p. 249), or the most valuable use for a property based on potential zoning and financial return, and is a common neo-liberal approach to urban development.

building as many units of market-rate housing as possible, rather than maintaining the affordable, but medium-density, existing housing.

The False Creek South Neighbourhood Association, knowing that lease expiries were imminent and that the City was contemplating redevelopment, created a committee called RePlan tasked with creating an alternative, community-led vision for the future of the neighbourhood and engaging with the City of Vancouver in attempt to ensure that significant community consultation was part of any future community planning. Of utmost importance to RePlan was that any future development in the neighbourhood would uphold the place-specific founding values of the neighbourhood that had been upheld by the FCSNA, in particular the income- and housing-mix and the strong sense of local governance (False Creek South Neighbourhood Association, n.d.-a).

These two opposing visions for the future of False Creek South --  the City's and the FCSNA's -- resulted in over a decade of conflict between the two competing objectives. That conflict reached its tipping point in October 2021, when the City's Real Estate Department's report on the future of False Creek South was released. That report, entitled *The Future of False Creek South Lands: Advancing a Conceptual Development Plan and Addressing Lease Expiries*, imagined a significant change in the housing and demographic make-up of the neighbourhood. Instead of the two-thirds non-market housing that existed in False Creek South, the Real Estate Department put forward a plan that would see two-thirds of the housing become market-rate (Levitt, 2021b). Additionally, the existing non-market housing would be demolished and rebuilt elsewhere in the neighbourhood, essentially segregating the neighbourhood by income level, and meaning that the greatest negative impacts of the plan would be borne by the lowest-income members of the community (Levitt, 2021b). The release of the plan ignited significant public push back and a strong response from the False Creek South residents and the Neighbourhood Association, which led a campaign opposing the plan. Ultimately, Vancouver City Council amended the City Real Estate Department's proposal for lease-end redevelopment and enshrined the existing values of mixed-incomes and mixed-housing types into future community planning. This outcome represented a significant victory for the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association and for affordable housing advocates across the city.

City Council's decision to amend the recommendations within that report to include the place-based values espoused by TEAM in the 1970s and reinforced by the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association since then was an unexpected rebuttal to the real estate state-based proposals put forward by City staff. My research question, then, is how did the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association organize around place identity and place attachment to successfully influence the October 2021 Vancouver City Council decision to significantly amend City staff's recommendations for the redevelopment of False Creek South?

The strong sense of alignment between the False Creek South residents and the values embedded during the neighbourhood's original development are evidence of social-psychological concepts called place attachment and place identity. Place attachment can be described as "the process of attaching oneself to a place" and as a "positive emotional connection" with a particular place, which in turn can lead to collective action (Devine-Wright, 2009, p. 427). Place identity outlines the way in which a person's values are both reflected in and informed by their attachment to a place (Devine-Wright, 2009). A strong internal sense of place identity within a community can result in a cohesive and connected neighbourhood, and deepens resident engagement with community issues, "whether it be to maintain or improve [the community], [or] respond to changes" (Manzo and Perkins, 2006, p. 337). Strong internal organization and collective action also facilitate a cycle of place identity (Waine and Chapman, 2022), wherein place identity and place-based action are sustained over time. The neighbourhood of False Creek South was both a place in which some "pioneers" believed that they could live their personal values of creating community and local democracy, and a place that shaped or informed the values of new residents - as they would learn "in a few months' time". Those values continued to be an integral part of the neighbourhood and to inform the direction and principles of the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association. Place identity can also exist externally. Outsiders or non-residents can form strong bonds and attach certain values to a place based on personal or public perception. For many urbanists and observers of False Creek South, the neighbourhood continued to represent a 1970s planning ideal that had been accomplished due to strong political will and resident buy-in, and a neighbourhood that had successfully removed its housing from the market, in direct opposition to the real estate state. For these proponents of the neighbourhood, it represented an alternative,

community-centered view of city building and a stark contrast to the neo-liberal, market-based development of Vancouver's planning history.

A strong sense of place identity in False Creek South and the equally strong sense of place attachment held by both residents and influential outsiders, led to the FCSNA's ability to leverage social capital in the community's efforts to extend land leases and play a leadership role in neighbourhood redevelopment. We can understand social capital as a "community asset that can be accessed or created through participation in community planning" and as the networks and social ties that can benefit a community (Manzo and Perkins, 2006, p. 341). By understanding social capital in the context of place identity and place attachment, urban studies scholars can better understand how community organizations with strong social connections and networks can play a role in the development and planning of their neighbourhoods (Manzo and Perkins, 2006). Like place identity and place attachment, social capital can exist both internally (bonding), and externally (bridging). Internally, the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association was able to leverage many residents' professional expertise as planners, architects, and community organizers, rely on a considerable amount of volunteer time, and raise funds from neighbourhood co-op and strata buildings. Externally, the strength of place identity and place attachment that drew outsiders to False Creek South also gave the Neighbourhood Association a significant amount of bridging social capital upon which to draw, including volunteer time, political connections, and grassroots campaigning.

The strength of social capital and the strong sense of place identity that existed about False Creek South meant that the neighbourhood was able to become a persuasive opponent to the real estate state principles that had prevailed in Vancouver for decades. In its opposition to the Real Estate Department's plan, the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association was able to revive and articulate an alternative view of city building that resonated with residents, external supporters, and with City Council. Throughout this thesis I will explore the place-based strategies that the Neighbourhood Association employed and the arguments that convinced City Council to amend staff recommendations, including the inequitable nature of the Real Estate Department's plan, the ongoing stewardship of neighbourhood values, the treatment of residents by City staff, and the alternative city building approach endorsed by the neighbourhood. Finally, I will examine how strong local governance, the nature of the conflict, and place

attachment, can inform other neighbourhood-based approaches to community redevelopment.

The conflict between a state dependent on the real estate state and ideals of welfare state planning is inherent. How could – or should – a government plan cities that promote local governance and removal of housing from the market when planners and policymakers are also beholden to a system of maximizing profit and land use as one of the only means of creating social good? Neighbourhoods are particularly well-suited as a lens through which to analyze this conflict because they are an arena that municipal governments can shape – or not – through zoning and by directing development into specific areas. At the same time, residents feel strong social and emotional attachments to their neighbourhoods, and those attachments can shape how they feel about the "formulation, implementation, and consequences of public policy" (Hoekstra in Drozdzewski and Webster, 2021). False Creek South is a unique case in which the City of Vancouver shaped both the built form through land-use planning and the social attachments through the establishment of the Neighbourhood Association. How might the legacy of 1970s empowered and mixed communities and the real estate state co-exist in Vancouver? How can values of affordable mixed-income communities overcome what Purcell calls the "unquestioned assumptions" of neoliberalism as an "ideology, a form of governmentality, and…a 'public pedagogy'" (Purcell, 2008, p. 14)? With its simultaneous top-down land tenure arrangement and progressive governance structure, False Creek South provides a uniquely stark example of this conflict which allow me to explore critical issues of place identity, activism, land use, and land governance facing cities today.

# Chapter 2.
# Conceptual Framework

The three bodies of literature that I am focusing on are the tensions between the financialization of urban space and equitable planning, community identity and place-based activism, and local participation in place governance. Tensions between the financialization of urban space and equitable planning will lay the groundwork of False Creek South as a community founded on 1970s ideals of community-based democracy and welfare state principles, how those principles continue to be valued, and how they challenge the market-based premise of the City of Vancouver's Real Estate department conceptual development plan. Community identity and place-based activism will provide context for community organizing around place, as well as a framework through which to analyze the actions of the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association (FCSNA). Finally, local participation in place governance will establish the importance of local community involvement in neighbourhood planning and governance as part of a healthy democracy, active citizenry, and just outcomes. This body of literature will build off the concepts outlined in community identity and place-based activism, and will frame my normative stance, which is that local communities should be deeply involved in planning the future of their neighbourhoods.

## 2.1. Tensions between financialization of urban space and equitable planning

The financialization of urban space, and in particular the financialization of housing, is defined as "governments' influence on property markets through subsidies to private developers, rather than through building housing themselves, and the value of housing [that] can be accumulated and traded in financial markets," (Fainstein, 2016, p. 1503) and is marked by a shift from profit accumulation based on "commodity production and trade" to a focus on "financial transactions" (Haffner and Hulse, 2021, p. 66). Rather than defining the value of space through its use or other characteristic, land value is determined by the potential for profit, which in turn impacts the size, density, and location of new buildings, and the perception and treatment of existing buildings. Stein links the financialization of housing to his concept of the "real estate state," in which government policy is disproportionately aimed at increasing property values. In the real

estate state, capital and exchange value have an "inordinate influence over the shape of our cities, the parameters of our politics, and the lives we lead" (Stein, 2019a, p. 13). Within the realities of financialization, cities, which are increasingly dependent on the revenues and amenities created by continuous and high-density development, are hard-pressed to achieve equitable planning goals, like affordable housing, without contributions from development-based levies or density bonuses. Planners are pressured to find ways to maintain or raise property values – because landowners' financial equity and city budgets depend on it – but in doing so create a domino-effect of gentrification, rent increases, and displacement (Stein, 2019b).

When land and housing are thus commodified and financialized, flows of capital and the international nature of finance seem "disconnected" from local economies, and are so pervading that they seem "incapable of either regulation or contestation" (Fields, 2017b, p. 2). For those institutions or individuals who seek to move away from this paradigm and towards a more just and equitable approach to city planning, the reliance on financialization can seem inevitable and insurmountable (Purcell, 2008; Stein and Mironova, 2020). Vike calls this tension the difference between "utopian time" – or a future with goals that motivate [and] provide hope" – and "contemporary time" – or a present-day time in the "temporal mode of the market transaction" (Vike, 2016, pp. 36-37). For those looking to change the system, the challenge is to then quantify what utopian time will bring, and how to make it a reality within the confines of contemporary time.

Some pragmatic planners and scholars do believe that equitable cities can be built within the real estate state, and that allowing increasingly commodified and expensive housing is a necessary trade-off for extracting the maximum rent or land value so that cities can then use that rent to build infrastructure or provide community amenities like libraries, community centres, and affordable housing. The potential of these collective benefits is a driver of many planning decisions. However, other scholars believe that in order to achieve truly equitable outcomes, cities cannot rely on neoliberal, trickle-down economics, but must require a redistribution of wealth through the elimination of the market value of land.

By encouraging principles of highest and best use and the extraction of benefit from development, Fainstein argues that low-income households become excluded from

the spaces that they previously inhabited (Fainstein, 2012). Financialization could, according to her definition above, allow for government subsidy to build housing types that create more opportunities for low-income households to find appropriate and affordable housing, including housing co-operatives and non-profit rental (Fainstein, 2016). Indeed, that was the model first used in False Creek South in the 1970s, when a private developer, Thomson, Berwick & Pratt, was chosen by the City of Vancouver to develop the neighbourhood's unique housing tenure-mix. However, financialization in combination with the neo-liberal approach taken by many cities in the twenty-first century – as opposed to the welfare-state principles in practice during the development of False Creek South – creates inequity. Examining the linkages between neo-liberalism and financialization, Susan Fainstein writes that "it is the ideology and the accompanying [neo-liberal] politics of austerity that prevent the realisation of this potential" (Fainstein, 2016, p. 1507). According to Fainstein, planners and policymakers must find both the ways and the political will to eliminate the market-value of land if they also seek to create equitable cities (Fainstein, 2012).

While the processes of financialization and development based on highest and best use are unfolding, it is residents who pay the price of gentrification and displacement. Planners and policymakers may try to extract as much affordable housing as possible from development-based contributions, but the constant threat of redevelopment and neighbourhood disruption creates insecurity and housing precarity, particularly for tenants and underhoused residents. These residents become "unwilling" subjects of financialization (Fields, 2017a, p. 592) who are more likely to come together in opposition to financialization and in pursuit of more just planning outcomes (Fields, 2017a), as was the case in False Creek South.

As the simultaneous crises of lack of housing availability and soaring prices have heightened, the stark dichotomy between the persistent need to extract profit from urban space and the growing inequities between citizens becomes clearer. It is in these times that researchers must "document the effects of speculative investments on the urban landscape and its social actors" (Fields, 2017b, p. 7). This body of literature helps to frame the David and Goliath battle that the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association faced – the democratic and empowered-citizen ideals of the 1970s versus the commodification and financializaton of land in the twenty-first century.

## 2.2. Community identity and place-based activism

As identified by Fields, the ongoing financialization of urban space and citizens' collective experience of inequitable outcomes creates a catalyst for community organizing and activism. In urban centres, grassroots activism has formed around many different identities, including cultural, religious, and socio-economic. As the trends of neoliberal urbanization have advanced and as neighbourhood redevelopment and gentrification have continued mostly unabated, activists have also coalesced around ideas of place identity and place attachment. Deborah G. Martin identifies place as an "important…identity for collective action" (Martin, 2023, p. 730). When community members organize around concepts of place, that connection can supersede other identities. Place-based issues can create a "shared interest" that are common amongst all residents and similarly generate a sense of shared responsibility for solving those problems (Martin, 2003). Place identity, or the ways in which individual's sense of self is created or enhanced by a physical place (Devine-Wright, 2009) creates a collective vision of place that produces a shared emotional and psychological attachment and impacts how residents participate in their communities (Bradley, 2017b, p. 238; Fu, 2019, p. 2; Manzo and Perkins, 2006, p. 336; Foell and Foster, 2002, p. 14). This shared sense of place and its importance in everyday lives creates a sense of engagement, commitment, and a collective imaginary of how our neighbourhoods are and should continue to be (Fu, 2019, p. 2). When that collective imaginary or identity is under social, environmental or physical (such as redevelopment) threat, residents are more likely to be drawn into activism, or place-protective behaviour (Devine-Wright, 2009). Ideas of place identity and place attachment are an important aspect of the False Creek South community, dating back to its original development, when residents were called "pioneers," and the unique nature of the neighbourhood was lauded by planners, politicians, and residents ("False Creek 'pioneers'," 1976). And, as will be discussed in future sections of this thesis, more recently neighbourhood residents rallied around a collective imaginary of place as an alternative to the place-disruptive redevelopment proposed by the City of Vancouver.

Place identity and a strong sense of place is not a universal or given fact. For a strong sense of place identity to exist, certain elements must exist within a specific place. Fu describes two approaches to defining what factors are essential in establishing

place identity. Using the social-capital approach, communities must have "social cohesion, reciprocity, and trustworthiness." The community-psychology approach outlines "affective, emotional, or sentimental bonds between people and a place" as essential for creating place identity and an inclination for increased civic engagement (Fu, 2019, p. 1). Echoing the community-psychology approach, Manzo and Perkins note that if a place is in line with or informs a person's values, individuals are more likely to feel a strong bond or sense of attachment to that place and therefore be more invested in its future (2006, p. 337).

Martin uses the concept of place identity as the basis for her concept of "place-frames," or framework, a method of framing "goals and activities in order to appeal to a collective group" to encourage collective activism by defining and addressing neighbourhood problems (Martin, 2003, p. 733). Frames are made up of multiple "particular combinations of narratives, concepts, ideologies and signifying practices" (Barnes and Duncan in Martin, 2003, p. 733), and analysis using place-framing involves a "co-bundling process" of three place frames which are "mobilized towards particular ends or goals to claim a set of rights pertaining to space" (van Eck, 2002, p. 549). Martin specifically employs neighbourhoods for her analysis of place – neighbourhoods being a clearly defined residential area in which people are "grounded" and carry out their daily lives (2003, p. 732). Building on Martin's work, I use place-frames as an analytic framework through which to examine the actions of the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association in response to the City's redevelopment report.

Place-frames analysis involves three "co-bundling processes" or discourses, which Martin also refers to as frames. The first is motivational and involves defining the group or community that is acting collectively. Motivational place-frames include defining and exploring the daily social and physical experiences that members of the group have in common within their neighbourhood, and forming imaginaries – or shared sets of values and institutions – amongst "activists or potential active participants" (Martin, 2013, p. 89). In False Creek South, this motivational place-frame includes positive commonalities, like the democratic ideals of the neighbourhood and strong attachment to the mix of housing types, and negative commonalities, most notably the expiring land leases and related insecurity. The second place-frame process is diagnostic, in which the problem and actors at fault, as defined by the group, are identified and the spirit of collective activism is developed. This often involves describing physical elements that

are "out of place" in a neighbourhood, but should also involve creating an ideal vision of what the neighbourhood would look like without the identified problem (Martin, 2003, p. 739). These "out of place" elements are what Devine-Wright calls disruption to place, the threat or change to a place that can impact social and physical aspects of a neighbourhood, and that can be gradual or abrupt (2009). In False Creek South this diagnostic step could involve the identification of potential types of development of housing tenure that would be antithetical to the original values of the neighbourhood, and the collective identification of what social or emotional values are most important to the community. The third step of place-frames is prognosis, when a solution to the problem is identified and collective action is proposed (Martin, 2003, p. 742). At this stage, residents and neighbourhood organizations must cope with potential or impending disruption to place by creating trusted networks and "re-interpreting place change… to maintain positive place identities," often by becoming more involved in their communities and mobilizing others through their shared sense of place (Devine-Wright, 2009, p. 435). Bradley expands on these ideas, adding that change or success is achieved by the group when there is "collective efficacy or belief in the ability of the group" to accomplish such change (2017b, p. 237).

The concepts of place identity, place-protective behaviour, and place-based activism will provide a context for the actions of residents of False Creek South and the steps taken by the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association to oppose the City's redevelopment plan. As a framework, place-frames provides an important method for analyzing the actions of the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association. The collective nature of place-frames will demonstrate how the FCSNA was able to create a common vision and set of actions amongst neighbourhood residents over a period of several years (motivational and diagnostic) and catalyze a period of intensive activity to counter the October 2021 Real Estate department plan (prognosis). By framing the efforts of the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association through the lens of place-frames I will establish how the proposed redevelopment plan was a rallying point for community organization, helped to confirm a common community identity amongst residents, and developed solutions-based alternatives that advanced community and city-wide needs.

## 2.3. Local participation in place governance

Building off ideas of contesting the financialization of urban space and place-based community activism, I turn to ideas of local participation in place governance. The questions of if, how, and to what extent local communities should be involved in local area planning is key to many cities' approaches to urban governance. A foundational document to the question of how much citizen participation is warranted in order to achieve a legitimate democratic process is Susan Arnstein's *A Ladder of Citizen Participation*, which outlines degrees of citizen involvement ranging from "manipulation" (Level 1) to "citizen control" (Level 8) (Arnstein, 1969, p. 217). Arnstein's ladder is echoed in the Spectrum of Public Engagement used by the International Association for Public Participation, an international standard of public participation used by many jurisdictions, including the City of Vancouver, which spans participation goals from "Inform" to "Empower" ("IAP2 Spectrum", n.d.). However, higher levels of citizen participation in traditional planning processes are rarely achieved.

Among other reasons for this lack of participation involving the radical potential of power sharing, Purcell argues that this is because the same principles of neoliberal entrepreneurialism that inform the real estate state have diluted the democratic decision-making process (Purcell, 2008) because the only realistic, contemporary time choices given to citizens are those based on the abiding principles of neoliberalism (Purcell, 2008). Nevertheless, recently ideas of increased citizen control over local-area planning have been explored by planners and decision-makers in different planning jurisdictions with some degree of success. In England, beginning in 2011, three local communities became deeply engaged in discussions about the allocation of land for densification as part of their neighbourhood development planning processes. In the towns of South Oxfordshire, Broughton Astley, and Tattenhall, through processes that emphasized the importance of place identity and sense of place, a set of criteria for where new homes should be built was agreed upon by community members. In each town "social relations…informed market relations, and enabled decisions on housing development to be popularly agreed and defended," ultimately allowing for much-needed new housing to be built (Bradley, 2017b, pp. 240-241). Another community planning process in England in Old Oak, an area of North-west London, resulted in residents opposing density, not because of aesthetic or neighbourhood character, but because they worried about how

the "extractive ambitions" of developers would negatively impact their housing insecure neighbours (Robinson and Attuyer, 2020, p. 1299). In 2004, in Toronto, the Annex Residents Association, most known for the involvement of Jane Jacobs and its 1960s campaign against the Spadina Expressway, successfully lobbied for a seat at the decision-making table of a dense redevelopment in their neighbourhood. They subsequently received developer funds for community-led projects and continue to be actively involved in visioning for the future of their neighbourhood (Sorensen and Sagaris, 2010). Finally, in the early 1990s the City of Minneapolis started the Neighbourhood Revitalization Program (NRP), which gave non-profit neighbourhood associations a budget and city staff to support neighbourhood-led planning (Fagotto and Fung, 2006). The program resulted in "unprecedented" opportunities for neighbourhood residents to engage with local area planning, with many associations holding focus groups and special meetings aimed at engaging people and groups that may not normally take part in planning initiatives (Fagotto and Fung, 2006, p. 644). This decentralized model gave neighbourhood associations a sense of legitimacy within their communities because their power was transferred to them by the municipality, and it resulted in benefits and engagement "of a much more general, even redistributive, nature" than traditional top-down planning processes (Fagotto and Fung, 2006, p. 647).

Fung calls this model "accountable autonomy," a type of local democracy that "stresses the capacity of local actors to accomplish their own ends" (2009, p.6). In a model of accountable autonomy, the decentralization of local-area planning, with the right supports and checks in place, can result in increased citizen participation and more just outcomes (Fung, 2009, p. 26). The assertion that accountable autonomy and neighbourhood-led planning processes can lead to more redistributive planning is bolstered by Fainstein's questions about the presence of justice and equity in urban planning. Fainstein defines equity as the redistribution of economic, political, social, and spatial goods; she insists that asking the questions of who benefits, and to what extent, must be answered about any policy if equity is to be realized. As discussed in the first body of literature, when urban space becomes financialized, planners and policymakers face increased pressure to maximize the highest and best use of land, relying on trickle-down economics to provide equitable outcomes, ultimately exacerbating disparity (Fainstein, 2010, p. 4). Local area planning within a structure of accountable autonomy can achieve more just outcomes, as opposed to canvassing the city at large or assuming

"best practices." Accountable autonomy processes, because of their scale, are more easily able to recruit and maintain the participation of residents who are traditionally excluded. Greater gains for equity and social justice can be achieved through direct local planning participation because processes are more relevant to residents who may normally choose not to participate and because recruitment of traditionally excluded residents can be simpler (Holsen, 2021, p. 1199). Additionally, outcomes may be more just because "the agenda of expanding participation in decision-making will very often involve resisting the neoliberal project to some degree" (Purcell, 2008, p. 56).

Increased local participation in place governance may result in more equitable and just outcomes, including pushing back against the seeming inevitability of the neoliberal real estate state. Fearing that outcome, or unsure how to proceed outside of planning norms, cities may be reluctant to decentralize local area planning to neighbourhood groups. However, programs in the United States, Canada, and England, demonstrate that positive outcomes for both community groups and cities – outcomes that result in more equity and are supported by a majority or local residents while still enabling some level of growth – have been achieved through such a model. When residents are given parameters or planning goals that include an increase in housing, neighbourhood groups are able to arrive at a plan that meets local values while achieving housing targets. To achieve similar success in models of strong local participation and influence in place governance, neighbourhood organizations should demonstrate a willingness to pursue equitable outcomes and present realistic alternative visions for the future of their communities, while cities should transfer a significant degree of autonomy to those communities. The False Creek South Neighbourhood Association was able to use its strong connection to place and the welfare state ideals established in the 1970s to oppose and propose a strong alternative to the City of Vancouver's real estate plan. This body of literature will provide context to explore the False Creek South neighbourhood's approach to their organization around justice for lower-income members of their community, and how they were successful in convincing City Council to support the neighbourhood's vision of stronger community involvement in democratic decision-making.

The False Creek South Neighbourhood Association sought greater levels of participation in the future redevelopment of the neighbourhood, advocating for a co-created planning process with the City of Vancouver that would ensure the continued

presence of neighbourhood values. In Arnstein's ladder, this level of local involvement would be, at minimum, a partnership, wherein planning and decision-making are shared between government and residents (Arnstein, 1969, p. 221).

These three bodies of literature will come together to demonstrate the challenge that the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association faced in its confrontation with the real estate state-based redevelopment plan from the City of Vancouver's Real Estate department as the FCSNA pursued ideals of democracy and high levels of affordable housing. Then, using Martin's place-frames as a basis for my analysis, I will demonstrate how the FCSNA identified its constituency, organized its activities, and created a compelling alternative vision of False Creek South. Finally drawing from Fainstein's ideas of equity and justice in city-building and Fung's model of accountable autonomy, I will show how the FCSNA was ultimately successful in persuading Vancouver City Council to significantly amend the Real Estate Department's report to include False Creek South community values, including enshrining the original non-market-to-market-rate housing ratio and support for strong FCSNA involvement in community planning.

# Chapter 3.
# Methodology and Research Design

## 3.1.  Document Analysis

My research content consisted of five main sources of information: City of Vancouver planning documents, documents from the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association, transcripts from the October 21, 2021 public hearings, news media related to the redevelopment of False Creek South, and qualitative, semi-structured interviews. To better understand the City's approach to planning in False Creek South, I focused first on City documents related to land lease extension and public planning in False Creek South. Although the first City Council motion relating to lease extension in FCS was passed in 2012, no significant planning or discussions between the City of Vancouver and the FCSNA took place until 2016. For that reason, I limited my preliminary document analysis to the period of 2016-2018, when a City-led community planning process was started, before ultimately being put on hold to resolve lease end issues. These documents set the context for the City's vision for redevelopment in False Creek South as well as the history of interactions between the City and the FCSNA. These documents include:

- False Creek South Engagement Principles - 2016

- False Creek South, Report Back and Next Steps – 2016

- False Creek South Planning: Terms of Reference – 2017

- False Creek South Provisional Resident Protection and Retention Plan – 2018

- False Creek South Provisional Vision Statement and Guiding Planning Principles - 2018

Then, I took a deep dive into the City's 2021 Real Estate Department plan, *The Future of False Creek South Lands: Advancing a Conceptual Development Plan and Addressing Lease Expiries*. This document informed most of my analysis of City documents since, although some community planning had been done in the neighbourhood, the 2021 report was the first released by the Real Estate Department from the point of view of City as landowner. Additionally, the documents from 2016-2018 were generally supported by the neighbourhood; the 2021 report was the only one to elicit such intense and

significant push back. I analyzed these documents as individual reports and as a collective whole, to determine if the City's position changed throughout the years, or if reports written by different departments – for example the Real Estate Department and the Planning Department – demonstrated different values or approaches. I looked for themes relating to the real estate state and neoliberal economic imperatives as defined by Stein and Purcell, like growth, fiscal responsibility, and land value. I used latent content analysis to see if other themes emerged during my analysis.

Documents from the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association included committee meeting minutes, public communications to residents, and recordings from community town halls. This analysis established the work done behind the scenes in working within FCSNA committees to craft a message and alternative vision that would be compelling to False Creek South residents and City Councillors. Communications with residents, stakeholders, and partners demonstrated how the FCSNA created support within and outside of the community, and how it established networks of support. Potential themes for analysis within FCSNA documents included affordability, social equity, community-led development, and mixed-income, as well as themes about accepting growth and density.

Next, I analyzed local news media from February-October 2021, including articles from CBC, *The Tyee, The Georgia Straight*, and *The Globe and Mail*. These articles were revealing, because there were several interviews done with City staff from the Real Estate Department, the Mayor, and with residents of False Creek South. These articles were useful in determining how the City and the FCSNA attempted to "sell" their respective visions of the neighbourhood to the general public and revealed supporters or detractors within the broader Vancouver community.

Then, I analyzed transcripts from the October 2021 Council meeting, including the presentation from City staff and contractors, comments from the public, and questions and comments from City Councillors to staff and the public. This was done using qualitative coding. I anonymized and numbered each of the speakers, because many shared personal, and often emotional, stories. I identified speakers who spoke in their official capacity as representatives of an organization; before including their remarks using their name, I asked their permission. This analysis provided information on what themes were mentioned most often by residents during the Council meeting,

and, from their questions and comments, which themes seemed to be resonating most with City Councillors.

I did content analysis using latent content (Babbie, 2021, p. 244). As described above, I was looking for underlying concepts within the materials, focusing on themes pulled from my conceptual framework, including themes of real estate, growth, affordability, place attachment and identity, and community-led democracy. However, I also performed an exploratory examination of the materials using an inductive, grounded theory method that allowed for other concepts to be discovered during the analysis process. Grounded theory method relies on comparing different incidents and relating different themes together (Babbie, 2021, p. 345). This approach was integral for comparing and connecting the materials from the City and the materials from the FCSNA to see how they differ, how they were similar, and which were favoured in the amendments made by City Council.

## 3.2. Interviews

To strengthen my understanding of the events of October 2021 and corroborate or expand on my findings, I conducted seven qualitative, semi-structured interviews with a variety of involved parties or stakeholders. I chose my interview subjects based on their understanding of the False Creek South neighbourhood and its ongoing advocacy work, their familiarity with the Real Estate Department's report, and their expertise in non-market housing operations and development.

Three of my interview subjects were members of the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association's RePlan Committee, which was established in 2010 to pursue land lease renewal and a new community plan with the City of Vancouver. One interviewee was a City of Vancouver staff member familiar with the False Creek South Neighbourhood. I interviewed two members of Vancouver City Council who were involved in the October 2021 City Council meeting and who had long-standing personal and professional relationships with the False Creek South Neighbourhood. I also interviewed an external stakeholder with non-market housing expertise and familiarity with both False Creek South and the City's Real Estate department.

**Interview Subjects**

- Thom Armstrong – CEO, Co-op Housing Federation of BC

- Christine Boyle – Vancouver City Councillor

- Nathan Edelson – Project Manager, RePlan

- Richard Evans – Chair, RePlan, and resident of False Creek South

- Pete Fry – Vancouver City Councillor

- Nancy Hannum - Chair, Co-op Authorized Working Group, and resident of False Creek South

- Senior Planner - City of Vancouver

I believe these interview subjects reflects a balance of False Creek South insiders and residents, City staff, non-market housing experts, and City Council's inner workings. Interviewees were able to corroborate statements and provide alternative viewpoints of the same events, providing robust data.

My questions for all interview participants focused on their knowledge of the neighbourhood and its community organizing capabilities, their impressions of the City's Real Estate plan, their impressions of the alternative vision presented by the FCSNA, and their perceptions of the City Council meeting and the amendments by City Council. I also asked all participants if they identified any shared or common values in False Creek South residents, and what their perceptions of both the neighbourhood and neighbourhood advocacy work were. When interviewing participants from the neighbourhood, I asked more questions about their behind-the-scenes work, how they shaped any alternative visions with neighbourhood residents, how those visions were communicated and achieved a level of broad support, and how they built support from stakeholders outside the neighbourhood. I also asked questions related to place identity, and how being a resident of False Creek South has, or has not, shaped their sense of self.

## 3.3. Place-Frames

Once I began to uncover themes, I organized them within the framework of place-frames. Martin defines frames as "a term that refers to how individuals organize

experiences or make sense of events" (Martin, 2003, p. 733). Place-frames "highlight the potential relationship between activism based on an idea of neighbourhood" and impact the way that a place or neighbourhood is perceived both internally and externally (Martin, 2003, p. 733). My hypothesis was that the FCSNA successfully used a method of place-framing to organize residents and create an alternative narrative and vision of False Creek South that resonated with Vancouver City Councillors, who subsequently decided to significantly amend the Real Estate department's proposal for redevelopment of False Creek South to favour the FCSNA's alternative vision.

Using Martin's place-frame approach, I first defined the group, meaning the physical and social boundaries of the FCSNA and its spheres of influence or external networks. I also investigate the notion of shared, co-operative values in False Creek South, which play a significant role in defining the group. I found most of this information through interviews and FCSNA internal and external communications. This stage will be explored in Chapter 5. In Chapter 6 I then diagnose the problem and the actors at fault as defined by the FCSNA. I also explore the lasting legacy of the neighbourhood, the alternate vision created by the FCSNA, and the actions taken by the Neighbourhood Association to create cohesion and socialize the alternate vision amongst neighbourhood residents. This was found in the City materials, FCSNA materials, news media, and interviews. Finally, in Chapter 7, I will outline the prognosis stage, or how the FCSNA countered the Real Estate department's proposal, and how their counterpoints ultimately influenced the final City Council decision. This was uncovered through FCSNA materials, news media, City Council meeting transcripts, and interviews.

## 3.4. Insider-Outsider Researcher Positionality

From June 2019-April 2022 I was the Community Planning Assistant for the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association and its RePlan community planning committee. I have also lived False Creek South, on privately-owned freehold land, since July 2018. The Community Planning Assistant position was a paid contract position that involved extensive engagement and relationship-building with the residents of False Creek South and external stakeholders, including several of my interview subjects, within the context of land lease extensions and community advocacy. I am very familiar with the issues raised by the FCSNA over the past several years, and in fact took part in developing and executing the strategies explored within this thesis. However, because I

do not live on leased land and my housing security is not tied to the decisions made by City Council, I am not a true insider. Bukamal refers to this as insider-outsider positionality, wherein "the researcher is familiar with, and accepted in, two distinct cultural contexts" (Bukamal, 2022, p. 328).

This insider-outsider researcher positionality informed my research throughout, and required a constant reflexiveness in my research and how I approached my own involvement in the topic. Although insider researcher reflexivity has been called "self-indulgent" by some (Bukamal, 2022, p. 329), others have cited its effectiveness in shaping research through a "pre-understanding" of the topic and material (Collins and McNulty 2020, p. 215), particularly when developing "meaningful questions" (Amabile and Hall in Collins and McNulty, 2020, p. 203) for interviews.

To balance this insider positionality, I relied on two things: my outsider positionality to help ask probing questions of people that I knew well in order to dig deeper and challenge assumptions that they, and I, may have held about the events of October 2021. I also framed some interview questions, particularly directed to external stakeholders, so that they could confirm or challenge my understanding of events. For example, in order to understand if and how the False Creek South residents distanced themselves from viewpoints commonly labelled as Not In My Backyard (NIMBY), I asked interview participants to explain how they evaluated the comments from the October 21 Council meeting in comparison to comments made by other residents during similarly disputed public hearings, particularly as they pertained to topics of density or new development. I also asked interview participants from outside False Creek South how the needs or desires of a very engaged community should be balanced with other demands on the government, like delivering financial returns to the City or providing land for more housing. In this way I hoped to arrive at a clear understanding of what happened in October 2021, and explore the differing viewpoints and the ongoing tensions that may exist between residents of False Creek South and external stakeholders.

# Chapter 4.
# Creating a Collective Vision of a Community

## 4.1. Building False Creek South



**Figure 4.1.     Map of the False Creek South neighbourhood**
Source: City of Vancouver, False Creek South Lands: Opportunities for the Future

The neighbourhood of False Creek South sits between the Cambie and Burrard bridges, with False Creek to the north, and 6th Avenue to the south. The area is an important one to the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations, and is known as Sen̓áḵw/sən̓aʔqʷ in the Squamish and Halkomelem languages. Several streams fed into the waters of False Creek, providing a bounty of fish, elk, and plant life. This abundance of food led to the area being called the "supermarket" of the three First Nations (Maracle, 2010, p. 15). In the early colonial development of Vancouver, the land surrounding False Creek was deemed a valuable transportation route, and a railway right of way was established, forcibly displacing the First Nations people who frequented the area. Eventually, the Squamish Nation was restricted to False Creek Indian Reserve no. 6, or Kitsilano Indian Reserve, on the south shore of False Creek, while the Musqueam and Tsleil-Waututh were given no legal rights to the area, in spite of its significance to their Nations (Maracle, 2010, p. 16). Eventually, the Squamish reserve

was eradicated to increase space for the railway and industry; the Squamish were forcibly removed from the reserve, and their village was burned down.



**Figure 4.2.    Sen̓áḵw/sən̓aʔqʷ looking east**
Source: City of Vancouver Archives

The area became dominated by industry, including sawmills, metalworks, and marine industries (Ley, 1980, p. 253). By the 1960s, after several prosperous decades, primary resource industries in British Columbia were on the decline, and families began leaving Vancouver for the more affordable suburbs. At that point, the land surrounding the False Creek basin was mostly owned by three owners - the City of Vancouver, the Province of BC, and Canadian Pacific Railway. In the 1960s, with industry-held land leases set to expire, the City of Vancouver decided to de-industrialize and redevelop the land and executed a series of purchases and land swaps to acquire the majority of the land around the False Creek basin (Donaldson, 2019, p. 128-129). The first area proposed to be redeveloped into a residential community was the neighbourhood of False Creek South.

The redevelopment was first proposed by the Non-Partisan Association (NPA), the city's establishment's municipal political party that had been in power for four decades. However, it was Alderman Walter Hardwick, one of two aldermen from the upstart and progressive The Electors Action Movement party (TEAM), who championed the project. He was a geography professor at the University of British Columbia and had

stewarded several student projects about post-industrial residential redevelopment around the False Creek basin (Punter, 2003, p. 34). Hardwick was chosen as Chair of City Council's False Creek Planning Committee, and he used the opportunity to push for TEAM's preference for pedestrian-focused, mid-density neighbourhoods, where connectivity was prioritized and the "automobile [was] downplayed" (Hardwick, 1994, p. 347).

In addition to the rapid decline in the industrial economy, which prompted the redevelopment plan, this was also a period of major social change in Vancouver. The decade leading up to the planning and development of False Creek South had seen many uprisings and protests, including by so-called hippies in Kitsilano, who were in conflict with the local Ratepayers Association, and the Chinese community in Chinatown-Strathcona, who had rallied against a proposed freeway and high-density, modernist housing projects in their neighbourhood. City Council, then dominated by the Non-Partisan Association, had attempted to regulate and manage these communities through strict land-use planning and coordinated displacement to less desirable areas of the city. A series of conflicts between the City and hippies led to riots, violence, and allegations of police brutality (Ross, 2014, p. 40), while in Chinatown, an alliance of community organizations and liberal academics resulted in activism led to Vancouver City Council rejecting a proposed freeway that would have cut the Chinatown community in two.

This rejection of urban renewal and car-dominant city planning was the end of the modernist era of planning in Vancouver. After decades of NPA-led City Councils, and years of opposition to proposed development and top-down community planning, there was a decisive electoral shift in 1972. TEAM, a newly formed political party which up to that point had two elected Aldermen, was elected to a majority in 1972, in the wake of the Chinatown debate and anti-hippie violence. Unlike the NPA, which had attracted mostly businessmen, TEAM's base was made up of professionals and academics. TEAM's election was part of a post-industrial movement across Western countries focused on the "livability" of cities. The concept of livability first became popular in the 1960s, and is generally assessed by the "social, political, and natural environment; education, infrastructure; and health" of a city or region (Gurstein, 2018, p. 138). In Vancouver TEAM's livability goals were in contrast to the NPAs policies of high-density, car-focused urban development, and included reducing suburban sprawl, improving the

local natural environment, and creating more pedestrian-friendly neighbourhoods (Hutton, 2019, p. 58). 1972 also saw the election of the social democratic New Democratic Party (NDP) to the British Columbia provincial government, a notable first for the party, while Pierre Trudeau's socially progressive Liberal government prevailed in Ottawa (Hasson and Ley, 1994, p. 243). With this shift to "progressive" politics came a change in planning approach in Vancouver. Like in many cities in North America, most planning decisions had been shaped top-down, in Vancouver's case by City Commissioner Gerald Sutton-Brown, who oversaw the administration of building, planning, social services, and the budget from 1960-1973 (Langford, 2012, p. 28). As Commissioner, Sutton-Brown singlehandedly wrote planning policy memos that were then endorsed by Council, and he used this power to advocate for modernist planning principles that promoted a growth machine agenda (Langford, 2012, p. 29; Molotch, 1976, p. 310). Once described as "the most powerful person at City Hall" (Punter, 2003, p. 18), following the election of TEAM, Sutton-Brown resigned in what he called a "guillotine" job (Donaldson, 2019, p. 126), and planning decisions were put in the hands of newly-appointed Director of Planning Ray Spaxman. Spaxman, whose legacy continues to loom large over planning in Vancouver, was committed to working with neighbourhoods and moved the Planning Department away from the business-oriented development that had been the hallmark of the NPA (Punter, 2003, p. 28). TEAM's victory was a result of neighbourhood activism and calls for a decentralization of planning, and their policy approach demonstrated that (Hasson and Ley, 1994, p. 33).

Although planning for False Creek South had begun under the NPA and the leadership of Sutton-Brown, the election of TEAM was fundamental for shaping the decisions made about the neighbourhood. Under the NPA, the direction had been set for a post-industrial residential neighbourhood that would entice suburbanites back into the city's core. The growth machine agenda of the NPA and Sutton-Brown saw public land as an area for production, and with heavy industry in decline, production came to mean real estate development and residential growth (Langford, 2012, p. 30). However, with the election of TEAM, the focus of development in False Creek South became livability, and the party set about creating a neighbourhood that would appeal to the middle class.

Recent civil unrest and conflict in nearby Chinatown-Strathcona and Kitsilano had made politicians wary that the new development might attract a similar population of young activists and agitators who would cause trouble. Therefore, careful consideration

was given to what kind of demographic makeup would result in a conflict-free community. Ultimately, a mix of 25% families, 25% young and mature couples, 15% elderly, and 35% singles was settled on (City of Vancouver, 1974, p. 15). This reflected a higher-than-average proportion of families and older couples than the rest of the city, partly in an attempt to encourage families who had moved to the suburbs to return to the central city area, and partly because of a "fear [from Councillors and planners] that the waterfront housing might…be taken over by the large baby boomer cohort that was coming of age" and who had led the citizen uprisings in Kitsilano and Chinatown-Strathcona (Hardwick, 1994, p. 350). After several years of conflict with the activist and organized baby boomer population in Kitsilano, the City was apprehensive about the possibility of a young, combative population moving into their new, showcase neighbourhood in large numbers. Doug Sutcliffe, Project Manager of the False Creek project, wrote to an account manager at the Royal Bank of Canada, attempting to reassure the bank about the unusual prospect of lending to mixed-income residents on leased land. "[We] have taken great pains to make sure that future residents have ample opportunity to understand the project… We have already embarked on a [resident] selection process… They and we want to know now if they are acceptable" residents in the new community, and unlikely mortgage risks (Sutcliffe, 1975).

When it came to planning and urban design, and with Ray Spaxman now leading the Planning Department, the City made use of official development plans, which gave City officials more power over zoning and design guidelines, rather than leaving decisions in the hands of private developers. This led to a departure from "growth boosterism" in planning and to new urban ideals of livability, or landscapes "in harmony with human sensibility" (Ley, 1980, p. 239). Ley calls the planners and consumers of this type of urbanism the "emergent elite," characterized by an appreciation for aesthetic and amenities over economic success (Ley, 1980, p. 243), although the design guidelines and livability features implemented in the neighbourhood applied to all types of housing, not just that which was targeted to the middle class. In False Creek South, this manifested in planning documents and zoning through descriptions of the "neighbourliness" that was a prime objective for the neighbourhood, and that would be achieved through design principles including access to sunlight for all units, protection of water and mountain views, and privacy (Punter, 2003, p. 29). The False Creek South Official Development Plan (ODP) states that each community or subarea within False

Creek South must have a "local forum" or "a place where people can come together" (City of Vancouver, 1974, p. 8). The housing types and mix chosen for the neighbourhood also supported TEAM and Spaxman's commitment to neighbourhoods. Augmented by significant funding commitments from the federal government's Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), non-profit and co-operative housing made up almost two-thirds of the housing in False Creek South, while the remaining one-third was leasehold strata. These housing types were chosen, in part, because they required significant involvement of residents during both the design phase and the building management once completed (Ley, 1993, p. 250). In addition to the mix of housing, income levels would see the same mix, with a goal of one-third low-income, one-third middle-income, and one-third higher-income residents. Housing for families, seniors, and people with disabilities would be mixed in with other housing types (Ley, 1980, p. 254), and no one should be able to distinguish one type of housing from another. Even the form of the buildings should be anti-modernist and support connectivity and social connections between residents. Buildings – or "enclaves" according to the False Creek South ODP - were designed to be round, rather than linear (City of Vancouver, 1974, p. 8), with public courtyards in the middle and walking paths connecting each enclave to its neighbours (Hardwick, 1994, p. 349).



**Figure 4.3.    False Creek Co-op in 1977**
Source: City of Vancouver Archives

These early decisions about False Creek South reflect TEAM's vision of generative, community-led planning principles, which had received broad support in the 1972 election, but they were still met with considerable resistance within both City Council and City staff. The decision to include any housing at all, particularly low-income housing was cause for concern. Some, in particular George Puil, a longtime Park Board Commissioner and eventual City Council Alderman, felt that the land should designated entirely for park space. One staff member of the False Creek Planning Committee, Craig Campbell, quit his job at the City over the decision to create a residential neighbourhood and published an open letter, calling False Creek South "among the very worst places in Vancouver on which to build a lot of housing" (Donaldson, 2019, p. 130). Others supported building housing, but worried that the inclusion of low-income housing would create a slum on the waterfront (Donaldson, 2019, p. 130). Frank Stanzl, a prominent local developer who was tasked with building the housing in False Creek South, said in a meeting with the BC Housing Management Commission that the City "must get [the] idea through to lower-income families that they are privileged to move into this project and [that they] must govern themselves accordingly" (BCHMC, 1976). Even after the first phase of the neighbourhood was developed and over 850 families had moved in, choices about the design and housing mix were openly criticized in the media (Croome, 1977).

To counter this criticism and to quell skeptics, Mayor Art Phillips and his wife, Carole Taylor, purchased one of the leasehold strata units, bringing credibility to the development (Ward, 2013). Other young professionals soon followed; two interview subjects identified the "high representation" and "disproportionate number" of urban planners, architects, and urban designers who lived in False Creek (Senior Planner, Interview, February 17, 2023; P. Fry, Interview, March 6, 2023). From the beginning, the neighbourhood began attracting "leftist, visionary type people" (P. Fry, Interview, March 6, 2023), who were drawn to the idea of the community as a place with shared values, and who brought with them values that had roots in the counterculture. These values included the prioritization of experience and lifestyle (Ley, 1980, p. 242), and a

deliberate celebration of plurality and diversity (Ley, 1980, p. 254), which was exemplified in the housing and social mix[2].

With the election of TEAM and the appointment of Ray Spaxman to the Planning Department, neighbourhoods, rather than business-oriented development, became the focus, leading to several years of generative, community-based processes that culminated in the completion of False Creek South in the 1980s. The decisions made about False Creek South's redevelopment from industrial to residential use were unprecedented and continue to represent a symbol of progressive urbanism and an alternative method of city-building. Those decisions were influenced by the aftermath of civil unrest and community opposition, and reflect the TEAM government's prioritization of livability, neighbourliness, and appealing to the middle-class demographic. One decision, which may have seemed uncontroversial at the time, has ironically become a linchpin in the conflict between the neighbourhood and the City of Vancouver – the creation of the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association.

## 4.2. Early Organizing in the Creek

The creation of the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association (originally called the False Creek Community Association) was another unprecedented decision made by TEAM and City planners. It was the first and only time that the City would take it upon itself to create a neighbourhood organization, rather than local organizations emerging organically based on resident need, often in opposition to government action or inaction. Although little public documentation about the establishment of the Neighbourhood Association exists, it is generally accepted knowledge that the Association was set up by the City of Vancouver when the first residents were moving

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[2] It is interesting to note that while these decisions and controversies were playing out in Council and in the media, another vacant parcel of City land was being developed with similar housing-mix goals in mind, but with considerably less fanfare. Champlain Heights is located in the south-east corner of Vancouver, a residential neighbourhood tucked away near the industrial areas of the Fraser River District. The neighbourhood achieved a similar income- and housing-mix to False Creek South. An article by Alderman Walter Hardwick, who was involved in the development of both False Creek South and Champlain Heights, goes into extensive detail about the development process of False Creek South, but spends less than two pages outlining the decision-making process about Champlain Heights (Hardwick, 1994, pp. 353-354). False Creek South, with its prime inner-city location and its dramatic change from industrial to residential, was, and continues to be, a focal point for urbanists and a lightning rod for critics who continue to question TEAM's choices.

into the community (False Creek South Neighbourhood Association, n.d.-e; Levitt, 2017, p. 5). The Association was set up as a democratically elected body, with elected representatives from all the co-operative and strata buildings in the neighbourhood (False Creek South Neighbourhood Association, n.d.-b). The decision to create the Neighbourhood Association is even more unusual when considering the development of Champlain Heights that was happening at the same time. Even in that neighbourhood, with its similar demographic makeup and land lease agreements, the City elected not to create an equivalent community organization for residents. With its prime waterfront location and large amount of public scrutiny, the City was under pressure to achieve its lofty social mix and local governance goals in False Creek South. The Neighbourhood Association was part of its recipe for success.

The decision to create a neighbourhood organization in False Creek South matched the social movements of the times. The 1960s were a decade of social critique and demands for more local control over neighbourhood affairs. In Vancouver the period from 1967 to 1975, with its rapid development and deindustrialization combined with social change, saw the emergence and deep engagement of many neighbourhood organizations in neighbourhood affairs. (Hasson and Ley, 1994, p. 32-33). As discussed above, the City of Vancouver was determined to make its showcase waterfront neighbourhood a successful, connected community, while simultaneously proving critics wrong and mitigating the potential for civil unrest like that which had taken place in Kitsilano and Chinatown-Strathcona. In Kitsilano the clash between residents and City Hall had been heightened by the tension that existed between several different neighbourhood groups, each representing a different interest. Some at City Hall, including Mayor Tom Campbell, supported the Kitsilano Ratepayers Association, which was primarily made up of wealthier homeowners. On the other side, Alderman Harry Rankin of the left-wing Coalition of Progressive Electors (COPE) supported tenants' and hippies' rights (Ross, 2014, p. 30). This division between two groups with competing interests had led to sometimes violent conflict. In Chinatown-Strathcona, the Strathcona Property Owners and Tenants Association (SPOTA) had had strong support from communities outside of the Chinese population and was a signal to City officials that neighbourhood groups could not be ignored. SPOTA had also received support and advice from the federal government in its quest to stop the freeway, which infuriated Mayor Campbell, and demonstrated that neighbourhood organizations were gaining

legitimacy with all levels of government (Hasson and Ley, 1994, pp. 123-124). Additionally, SPOTA built alliances in Chinatown with other neighbourhood organizations, planners, and middle-class academics – many of whom would go on to support TEAM. This highlighted the need to involve more local stakeholders in city planning or risk those groups organizing and aligning against City Hall (Macleans, 1971, p. 32).

The False Creek South Neighbourhood Association therefore served several purposes for the City of Vancouver. First, it provided a representative body that acted as a liaison between the City and its residents as issues and topics of discussion arose. Second, it gave residents an organized forum in which to meet and foster dialogue and connections across incomes and housing types. And third, it had the added benefit of aligning with TEAM's philosophy of facilitating greater levels of neighbourhood empowerment. Inspired by Jane Jacobs and other urban reformers of the time, TEAM recognized that it was not only disenfranchised youth or racialized populations in the city for whom a strong sense of community was important, but that that was needed across Vancouver, and that there was an opportunity in the blank slate of False Creek South to be part of shaping that community. "Viable communities require... places where people can assemble, have shared experience, and communicate" (Hardwick, 1994, p. 347). The City hoped that the Neighbourhood Association could be that place. By creating one neighbourhood organization that represented the entire community, City Hall hoped to avoid conflict and set a path for successful communication and local governance in False Creek South.

The new residents of False Creek South embraced the structure of the Neighbourhood Association. The "leftist, visionary" people who moved into the neighbourhood saw themselves as pioneers and stewards of the goals for the neighbourhood, and they supported the City's and Association's efforts to build relationships across the new community. Since 1976 each co-op and strata has sent elected delegates to the monthly FCSNA meetings, and each building provides funding for the Association's activities through an annual per-unit contribution. But early into their adventure, residents and the Association also took on bigger land use and amenity issues. Frank Stanzl, who was the builder for the first phase of development in False Creek South, proposed a waterfront townhouse and commercial building called Caesar's Bridge that would have blocked waterfront access along the new seawall. Without this

development, he argued, he would not be able to make enough profit to make the entire venture in False Creek South worth his time. Residents of a nearby strata, supported by the Neighbourhood Association, protested and convinced the City to reject the proposal. Instead, strata residents paid the City $176,000 for lost revenue and landscaping costs (False Creek South Neighbourhood Association, 1987). In 1980 the Neighbourhood Association also successfully campaigned for a community centre for the new neighbourhood – the False Creek Community Centre on Granville Island – persuading the City and provincial governments to contribute $625,000 for the facility (Bohn B1).

These efforts, along with less impactful happenings, were documented in the monthly neighbourhood newspaper called *The Creek.* An initial attempt at a community newsletter began in 1976 when residents first moved into the neighbourhood, but after two years it ceased publication. *The Creek*, which was first published in 1982 by strata resident Beryl Wilson, ran for more than twenty years and 220 issues (False Creek South Neighbourhood Association, n.d.-d). While monthly events and neighbourhood happenings made up the majority of the content, *The Creek* also brought attention to City proposals for False Creek South and the surrounding Fairview neighbourhood, and it documented the FCSNA's efforts and successes in impacting the outcome of those proposals. Wilson's editorial voice and her commitment to the neighbourhood shone throughout each issue, with headlines such as "A Stay of Execution? Don't Bank On It" (March 1987) and "We don't trust you" (February 1989), both of which referenced land use conflicts with the City of Vancouver. Other neighbourhood residents contributed articles as well, writing about the topics that mattered most to them, and soliciting support for their various causes and concerns. *The Creek* became the paper of record in False Creek South; the Neighbourhood Association supported it by contributing to its monthly printing costs and the eventual digitization of the archive. This money was "a tangible expression of the community's support for its own paper" (False Creek South Neighbourhood Association, 2002) and for residents' efforts at organizing the community. This means of regular, hyper-local communication reflected the early sense of connection and care that residents felt for their community, and its content demonstrated that, from the beginning, they were unafraid of critiquing decisions made by City Hall. Its presence was a consistent reminder of the issues impacting the new neighbourhood, and Wilson's strong editorial voice and calls to action kept the community informed and prepared to organize if necessary.

The decision to include a significant amount of co-operative housing in False Creek South also played a role in early organizing in the neighbourhood. Thanks to a funding program from the federal government, co-ops were chosen for one-third of the housing in False Creek South, which was a higher percentage than anywhere else in Vancouver. Co-ops are governed by democratically elected volunteer Boards, and the co-ops in False Creek South had an income mix that mirrored the broader False Creek South neighbourhood. By including co-ops in the housing mix in False Creek South, the City intentionally chose a type of housing that requires a significant involvement of residents in building maintenance and governance, and which are built on foundational principles of democracy and dialogue. This was intended to break down any barriers and obstacles between classes and social groups. Co-ops also require a certain intentionality of community; residents choose to apply and live in housing where, in exchange for lower housing charges, they are required to give their time in service to their community. Co-operative principles generally require consensus, and they use dialogue methods to solve problems. Within a socially mixed, democratic structure, where residents may have opposing ideas of how to live together (Suter and Gmur, 2018, p. 771) the use of dialogue to solve problems reduces conflict and creates a community with the skills of negotiation and diplomacy (N. Hannum, Interview, February 20, 2023). This value shaped how the Neighbourhood Association worked internally, as most decisions are agreed to by consensus, and it had a ripple effect throughout the neighbourhood as the FCSNA matured and began to take on the larger issues of expiring land leases. The presence of co-ops in False Creek South helped to shape early resident imaginaries of the neighbourhood as a place with strong principles of voluntarism, where governance was in the hands of the residents, and where housing was removed from the market. Jane Jacobs called this type of supportive community an "urban village," wherein neighbours support and provide care for each other across demographics and identities. This "tight bonding of society and space, place and identity… [creates] a communitarian sense of place" (Ley, 2011, pp. 61-62) that spilled over from co-ops into the larger False Creek South neighbourhood.

The Neighbourhood Association quickly established its legitimacy as the central community organization in False Creek South. The fact that it was democratically elected, represented residents from across False Creek South, and was imbued with a certain responsibility for the neighbourhood by the City, made it the most obvious choice

through which to mobilize residents against possible disruptions of place (Hasson and Ley, 1994, p. 11). And in spite of the early neighbourhood organization against some City proposals, like Caesar's Bridge, the Association also retained its legitimacy with City Hall, which maintained a working relationship with the organization. For example, some Neighbourhood Association meetings included presentations and updates from City officials like the Director of False Creek Development Cameron Gray (Wilson, 1982).

Hasson and Ley identify specific attributes that make a neighbourhood organization like the FCSNA successful. First, organizations must have access to the financial resources necessary to continue activities (1994, p. 13). The budget of the FCSNA, paid for by the dues from its co-operative and strata members, gave it a predictable annual budget with which to support community initiatives and eventually hire paid staff. Second, the organization must have access to "skilled professionals" (Hasson and Ley, 1994, p. 13). False Creek South, as identified by David Ley and in my interviews with planners and City Councillors, had a wealth of resident academics and professionals. Architects, planners, and labour organizers had moved to the neighbourhood from its inception (Senior Planner, Interview, February 17, 2023), drawn by TEAM's urban design and social principles that underpinned the neighbourhood, and they volunteered their professional knowledge in support of Association initiatives. These professionals buoyed the other resident volunteers of the Neighbourhood Association, like Beryl Wilson, who took on important roles of community organizing and communications. In a 2021 article in *Between The Bridges*, the False Creek South community newsletter established in 2018, the editorial staff examined the beginnings of the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association and reasons why residents may have connected to its purpose so quickly.

> Why did False Creek South residents [embrace the FCSNA]? Perhaps it was the very process of literally building something from nothing that fostered a deeply-held sense of community among people ready and willing to co-exist on shared turf and principles. Perhaps it was the influence of hundreds of co-op members whose housing depends entirely on pooling resources of time and labour as well as money. Perhaps it was the very design of the enclaves that consciously sought to bring people together, in part through the absence of physical barriers such as locked gates and walled off gardens... (False Creek South Neighbourhood Association, 2021a)

The article points to early decisions made by city planners, including the urban design and the high proportion of co-ops in the neighbourhood, and the willingness of early residents to embrace the values of the community. Whatever it was, the Neighbourhood Association was cemented as a fixture and the primary organization in the neighbourhood through which to take collective action. As False Creek South transitioned from a 1970s urban experiment to a twenty-first century proof-of-concept, and as the disruptive consequences of the unique land leases became apparent in the early 2000s, the FCSNA grew, taking on a primary role of political advocacy in the pursuit of land lease extensions and increased involvement in land use decisions. The City's early decisions that resulted in a large proportion of co-op housing, an educated and progressive population, and one central organization as a means of connection and mitigating civil unrest inadvertently contributed to the attributes of False Creek South that has enabled residents to effectively organize against City Hall proposals for over forty years.

## 4.3.  False Creek South and a Collective Perception of Place

The final phase of False Creek South was completed in 1984, and by all accounts, the neighbourhood was an early success. A study of Phase 1 residents showed that the neighbourhood had met the original income and social mix goals that had been set by TEAM (Hulchanski, 1984, p. 132), and that residents were very satisfied with both the social mix and the much-lauded urban design of the neighbourhood (Hulchanski, 1984, p. 169). The development was also a financial success for the City. David Hulchanski estimated in 1984 that the neighbourhood would produce a surplus of $7 million for the City; the original goal for the development was to break even (1984, p. 192). But in spite of this achievement, by the time that construction finished in 1984, the municipal party that had championed the neighbourhood was essentially obsolete. The 1978 municipal election saw former TEAM Mayor Jack Volrich defect from the party, running and winning as an independent, and only one incumbent TEAM Councillor was re-elected. The party limped through a few more elections before ultimately disbanding, which left an electorate split between the right-wing NPA and left-wing COPE. The split favoured the NPA and a perceived return to pro-developer planning in City Hall (Punter, 2003, pp. 59-60). However, TEAM and its transformation of planning practices, in particular the leadership position of Ray Spaxman, did contribute some lasting changes

to planning policy in Vancouver. Its emphasis on the importance of urban design, and the implementation of transparent planning policies and processes, continue to be used in Vancouver today (Punter, 2003, p. 57). TEAM's values of livability and aesthetic priorities also carried on and influenced future policies, including the NPA's 1990s Living First policy, which redeveloped Vancouver's industrial downtown core into primarily residential, high-density neighbourhoods with a mix of housing types and land uses (Beasley, 2019, p. 51). TEAM also set the stage for "Vancouverism," which would become Vancouver's signature form of urbanism, and which focused on urban design, livability, and environmental sustainability (Hutton, 2019, p. 47). Under Living First and Vancouverism, the provision of social and affordable housing continued to be a primary concern, but with the withdrawal of most federal funding from housing initiatives in the 1980s, the City of Vancouver had to take a different approach. The City's then Director of Housing, Cameron Gray, began a trend that continues in Vancouver and is a key part of the real estate state: the use of community amenity contributions and density bonuses to fund affordable housing (Beasley, 2019, p. 189). Thus, the provision of affordable housing in Vancouver shifted from the welfare state model of the 1970s to the neoliberal, development-based model that we see today.

In spite of these successes and the continued influence of TEAM's policies on planning in Vancouver, once the neighbourhood was completed there was no attempt to replicate False Creek South elsewhere in Vancouver. This may have been the case for several reasons. First, the NPA return to power at City Hall signalled a return to a more right-wing government, while at the same time, property market conditions led to a surge in private condominium development that favoured high-density residential development over affordable housing (Punter, 2003, p. 61). Second, the possibility of False Creek South existed because of the large amount of empty publicly owned land. Although the original social mix and urban design principles for False Creek South applied to the entire False Creek basin, development around the area slowed. After Expo '86 the land on the north shore of False Creek was sold to Li Ka-shing in a deal that critics later called a "goldmine" for the developer, due to the high development potential of the land in comparison to the price paid by Ka-shing (Punter, 2003, p. 194). Meanwhile, the land to the east of False Creek South, known as Southeast False Creek (SEFC), remained empty until the early 2000s, when it was developed as the Athlete's Village for the 2010 Winter Olympics. The original goal for SEFC had been to meet the same affordability

targets as False Creek South, with 30% of the housing targeted to low-income residents. However, after a fierce public debate, that goal was lowered to 20% and the land was sold to a private developer (Ley, 2011, p. 64). By the time construction was completed in the neighbourhood, federal and provincial housing subsidies had vanished, and the developer faced considerable financial problems in the wake of the 2008 global economic crisis. Due to these factors, only 11% of housing in SEFC was ultimately affordable to low-income residents (Westerhoff, 2015). The development of Southeast False Creek was a clear signal that the City of Vancouver, without significant financial investment from upper levels of government, was unable to produce the amount of affordable housing that it had done in decades previously. At the same time, while City policy goals in the 1990s and 2000s were analogous to the 1970s welfare state goals of sustainability, density, and livability, the City's new, preferred approach of private or public-private partnerships was also unable to deliver a significant amount of affordable housing (Ley, 2011, p. 65). Thus, False Creek South remained an outlier in Vancouver city planning approach.

From the beginning, the uniqueness and success of the development in False Creek South had caught the imagination of urbanists in Vancouver and beyond. In a letter from Project Manager Doug Sutcliffe to Vancouver City Council, he quoted from an article by the editor of the *Architectural Review of London*, who had recently visited the neighbourhood: "False Creek South encapsulates, probably better than anywhere in the world, the housing dream of the 1970s… [and] it shows no signs that its dedicated sponsors were wrong in any of their calculations. If it succeeds… it will prove historic indeed and a model for future developments" (Sutcliffe, 1980). The success of the neighbourhood in meeting its goals changed public perception of the False Creek area (Hulchanski, 1984, p. 169), which had previously been run down and industrial, and created a collective vision of the kinds of social mix goals that were possible when there was the political will. Shortly after the development of False Creek South was completed, and in the wake of Expo '86, an event which put Vancouver on the world's stage, Vancouver saw a boom in the construction and sale of condominiums, especially in the redeveloped Downtown peninsula. The rapid development of this type of housing changed the way planners and developers approached housing in Vancouver; it created a market for land and housing that was "increasingly global" in which condo units were often marketed overseas before they were put on sale in Vancouver (Harris, 2011, p.

715). Canada's immigration policies targeted investors from Hong Kong and other parts of Asia who saw residential real estate as a secure investment (Ley, 2017, p. 19). Condominiums also contributed to the continued proliferation of private community associations whose interests excluded "all but owners" (Harris, 2011, p. 722) and led to gentrification and displacement of lower income residents in the neighbourhoods in which they were built (Harris, 2011, p. 707). The change in approach from building a neighbourhood that was centered on income mix and non-privately owned housing to a focus on private home ownership and free market development was swift.

The encapsulation of this brief period in the city's planning and development, and the inability or lack of political will to recreate False Creek South, has created a nostalgic attachment or collective memory in people's minds. Nostalgic attachment in this sense is not necessarily a "conservative or backward-looking" lens but rather a "force for change" (Jarvis and Bonnett, 2013, p. 2350); those who believe in the underlying values of False Creek South continue to champion its model and call for the expansion of its principles throughout the city. This nostalgic attachment has been shaped by a collective memory of place, which links the physical elements of place to a shared impression of the past that has been created through interactions, shared values, and a sense of community (Li, 2015). Nostalgia as a force for change is shaped by how locals – in this case not only residents of False Creek South but Vancouver urbanists who admire its development and continued existence – understand a neighbourhood's past and how that past then shapes identities and plans for the neighbourhood's future (Aptekar, 2017, p. 101). As the planning approach in Vancouver shifted from a welfare state model to one dependent on private development to achieve social goals, the existence of False Creek South was and continues to be a symbol about the possibilities that exist for city building outside of the demands of private real estate development and the real estate state (Alexander, 2021, p. 32). Former Co-Director of Planning Larry Beasley, who was at the forefront of implementing Vancouverism, writes that False Creek South "changed the way that everyone [in Vancouver] looked at planning" (Beasley, 2019, p. 180), and that the innovation in False Creek South planning that most informed Vancouverism was the "notion that housing should be available [in all neighbourhoods] for a wide spectrum of people" (Beasley, 2019, p. 183). The continuation of the neighbourhood therefore represents an essential landmark for alternate forms of city building.

As the land leases in False Creek South drew closer to their expiration date, the City signaled its intention to redevelop False Creek South. To residents and supporters of the neighbourhood, redevelopment represented not only a struggle for people's homes, but a struggle to defend the goals and values that had been part of the neighbourhood's development, and which had been successfully achieved and sustained for four decades. In the face of wholesale redevelopment and displacement, the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association organized once again.

# Chapter 5.
# Organizing in Earnest

## 5.1. Place Disruption

The first sign of real lease end trouble in False Creek South began in the early 2000s. Most buildings in False Creek South had been given 60-year leases from the end of construction, although two co-ops received only 40-year leases. This meant that the majority of leases in False Creek South would end between 2036 and 2042 (the two 40-year leases expired in 2021 and 2023). Lease agreements stated that leases could be renewed at the sole discretion of the City of Vancouver, but that decision was left to future City Councils to decide. The leases also laid out what would happen if leases were not renewed. Co-op buildings, which were to be maintained in good condition, would be handed over to the City of Vancouver at no cost to the City. Strata lease language was less clear. Strata leases stated that the City would purchase the leasehold tenant's "interest" in the strata lot at "fair market value… as if the strata lot lease did not expire" (Woodward et al., 2016, p. 19). These twelve words would become the major sticking point for strata owners in False Creek South, who believed, based on the language in the lease, that they should be compensated for their properties based on the freehold value of their units. They also disputed the City's interpretation that they should be compensated only for the "improvement" – aka their unit – and not for the value of the land.

With no sign from the City that leases would be renewed upon expiry, residents began to face numerous issues relating to the diminishing time left on their leases. When banks provide a mortgage to a leasehold property, they do so for a period of five years less than the remaining term of the lease. So, a leasehold property with 30 years remaining on its lease would receive a typical mortgage term of 25 years. A leasehold property with 20 years left on its lease would receive a mortgage term of only 15 years. This has dramatic impacts for both co-ops and stratas. Co-ops set their annual budgets and residents' housing charges based on building asset management plans that include large capital projects and regular maintenance; that ongoing maintenance is also a condition of the lease. An inability to secure long-term financing for these projects can lead to higher housing charges in order to pay for that maintenance, which affects the

overall affordability of the co-op, and therefore impacts the lowest-income members of the co-ops most of all. In the case of a strata unit for sale, in addition to difficulties with ongoing maintenance, a shorter mortgage term can mean that it is more difficult to sell a unit. Prospective buyers would need to finance their mortgage over a shorter term, leading to higher down payments and monthly mortgage costs. At the same time, potential sellers and buyers have no guarantee of a lease extension at the end of the current leases, and no clear idea of the lease end value of their property. Strata owners faced another complication in the form of lease-rate negotiations. When strata units were originally put for sale, potential buyers were able to choose from two basic payment options. The first was prepayment of the total land lease amount upon purchase of the unit. The second was annual payments at a fixed term, with lease rates negotiated at regular intervals, generally every ten years (Frank Stanzl Construction Limited, 1978). While this arrangement had been relatively smooth for the first thirty years of the leases, by 2006 the gap between the original prepayment values and current land values in False Creek South meant anticipated lease rate increases of over 700%[3]. Strata owners who had not prepaid their leases entered into a protracted and sometimes contentious arbitration period that lasted from 2006 until December 2010 (Woodward et al, 2016, p. 14). Within this uncertainty about the future of False Creek South and the ability of residents to remain in their neighbourhood, a shared sense of anxiety about the City's plans for the future of False Creek South began to grow across housing types.

While the leases were maturing, the political and development landscape of Vancouver had changed considerably since the development of FCS. On the north side of False Creek, the neighbourhood of Yaletown, a former industrial railyard, had been developed into high density condominiums, which stood in stark contrast to the medium-density buildings in False Creek South. Following Ray Spaxman's departure as Director of Planning at the City of Vancouver, two new co-Directors were appointed – Larry Beasley and Ann McAfee. They oversaw the implementation of "Vancouverism," which built on the ideas that Spaxman championed while he was at City Hall, including an emphasis on good urban design and high architectural standards, but often at much higher densities than Spaxman had implemented. Vancouverism also makes extensive

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[3] Although detailed information about individual leases is not publicly available, according to calculations done by RePlan, average individual strata lease prepayments in 1976 were $43,185 (Woodward et al, 2016, p. 13).

use of Community Amenity Contributions (CACs), in which the City leverages private development rezonings in order to fund amenities like community centres, libraries, and non-market, affordable housing (Gurstein, 2018, p. 142)[4].

Politically, there had also been a shift at Vancouver City Hall. A new centrist political party called Vision Vancouver had emerged after a split with Vancouver's leftwing municipal party, COPE, and had been elected to a majority on Council in 2008, led by a charismatic Mayor named Gregor Robertson. At the core of Vision Vancouver's platform were green economy-based policies that promoted "compact, efficient" cities, including "appropriate housing density" and walkable, sustainable neighbourhoods (Quastel et al, 2013, p. 1072). However, critics of Vancouverism and Vision Vancouver's green policies have posited that these policies have contributed to an astronomical increase in housing prices, rapid gentrification of the downtown core, and displacement of lower-income residents from their homes (Gurstein, 2018; Hyde, 2022, p. 721). As residents of False Creek South watched this rapid change unfolding around them, the extension of leases and continuation of a neighbourhood that was relatively immune to market forces became paramount.

The uncertainty surrounding the end of leases in False Creek South created significant insecurity for residents. Patrick Devine-Wright calls this kind of uncertainty "place disruption." Place disruption can be acute – for example, a natural disaster – or it can be chronic – for example, a neighbourhood in decline due to disinvestment. In some cases, like in False Creek South, a sense of place disruption can happen even when a physical change has not occurred, but the ongoing threat of change produces a "psychological anxiety" at the prospect of future change (Devine-Wright, 2009, p. 429). These threats and anxiety in turn lead to place-protective actions, which are often actions in opposition to proposed change, and which are "founded upon processes of place attachment and place identity" (Devine-Wright, 2009, p. 432). Devine-Wright's understanding of place disruption and place-protective actions inform the first step in Martin's use of place-frames as an analytical tool. She calls this step motivation place-frames, wherein the community in question defines itself based on common

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[4] Linked to Stein's concept of the real estate state, the City's dependence on CACs to provide essential social infrastructure has been criticized by those who believe the municipal government is overly reliant on private development, leading to a financialization of housing and increasing inequity.

neighbourhood experiences and encourages others within the community to see themselves as having a shared responsibility for that community (Martin, 2003, pp. 736-737). Motivation frames can be based on socioeconomic conditions, physical characteristics of a neighbourhood, or a perceived need to improve one's neighbourhood, among other things (Martin, 2003). Motivation frames can also appeal to neighbourhood outsiders, including media, networks, and allies. They may be driven to participate in place-protective action based on their support for local activism and their recognition of the importance of that place (Martin, 2003).

In False Creek South, the community was easy to define both geographically and socially. The clear boundaries of the iconic development had not changed since the 1970s, and in the early 2000s the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association was still the main organization in the community. No new housing had been built in the neighbourhood since the 1980s and many of the original residents remained, creating a stable population that had been actively or passively engaged in neighbourhood issues and events for years. However, some of the early activism of the 1970s had faded; the FCSNA carried on its community-oriented activities, but there were fewer instances of perceived need for advocacy. For the most part common neighbourhood experiences, as defined by motivational frames, were positive, as residents continued to participate in Neighbourhood Association activities and benefit from the physical and social design of the neighbourhood. As the issues surrounding lease expiry began to emerge, those common neighbourhood experiences became more negative. Residents in both co-ops and stratas began experiencing housing insecurity. Many wondered if they would have to leave their affordable housing and move out of False Creek South altogether. Their concerns were supported by external groups, who recognized False Creek South as a significant place in Vancouver. Organizations such as Heritage Vancouver, Simon Fraser University's Vancity Office of Community Engagement, and the Urban Land Institute held events, debates, and walking tours that considered what the future of a "values-based planned community" could be in the "ever-evolving fabric" of Vancouver (SFU Vancity Office of Community Engagement, 2018). In local media, *The Tyee* online newspaper ran a four-part series that reinforced the "experimental" nature of False Creek South's development and examined potential futures for the neighbourhood (Ball, 2014-2014). Meanwhile in False Creek South, residents began sharing information within Neighbourhood Association meetings, and they once again decided to organize,

creating a community planning committee of the Neighbourhood Association that would become known as RePlan.
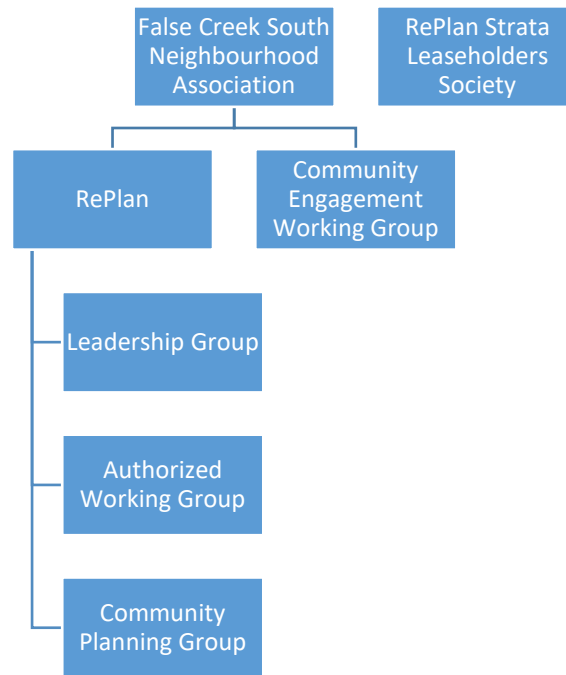
## 5.2. RePlan

The strata lease rate negotiations and arbitration were a catalyst for the creation of RePlan. Co-op members, having watched the strata arbitration process, and seeing the challenges that strata owners faced with their leases, recognized the need for the neighbourhood to come together in a coordinated approach between co-ops and stratas. The Neighbourhood Association was the obvious venue for those conversations to start. John McBride, then President of the Neighbourhood Association, saw the potential of the organization to do more than plan community events; he saw it as an entity that could also take on advocacy and social issues. Jerry Roy, a strata resident who had taken on a leadership role in the strata lease payment negotiations, was also instrumental. He recognized that issues being raised by the City about redevelopment at lease end were part of a bigger conversation about what was important about False Creek South and how the values that continued to exist in the neighbourhood could be preserved and enhanced. Richard Evans, a co-op resident and architect who would become Chair of the new RePlan committee, described False Creek South's process of community organizing as "concentric circles," as more people were brought into conversations about how to organize while simultaneously sharing those ideas outward through the neighbourhood. Central to those first discussions were principles of community values, mutual care, and collaboration (R. Evans, Interview, March 8, 2023). Evans was also concerned about the challenge before them, and saw the community coming together as a necessity if they were to be successful against the larger opponent of the City of Vancouver and the real estate state. In an interview he described the neighbourhood's opponent as a Goliath:

> "The strategy in my mind was that [our opponent, the City] might be an 800 lb. Goliath, but we are each a couple hundred pounds, so a hundred of us are way bigger than the Goliath. The enormity of the challenge meant that we [had to] get together or we would die. It was that striking. The implications of not getting together were huge" (R. Evans, Interview, March 8, 2023).

In 2010 RePlan was formed as a subcommittee of the Neighbourhood Association. The name RePlan was chosen because it represented the need to re-plan

False Creek South for the twenty-first century, in keeping with the original 1970s values. RePlan was structured to reflect the housing makeup of the neighbourhood, with a Leadership Group, Strata Leaseholders Sub-Committee (SLS), and a co-op Authorized Working Group (AWG). As the focus of RePlan's activities evolved, it added a Community Planning Group (CPG) in 2017; in 2018 the SLS formed a separate non-profit society called the RePlan Strata Leaseholders Society, with a mandate to act as the official lease bargaining agency for strata leaseholders.



**Figure 5.1.     False Creek South Neighbourhood Association structure in October 2021**

Working within this structure, RePlan established several key parameters for taking on the city, including the establishment of a common narrative about the community and its future, maximizing the neighbourhood's bonding and bridging social capital, and establishing a cross-neighbourhood network built on existing place-based values of co-operation and mutual support.

## 5.2.1. Establishing a common narrative

Once RePlan was created, the committee held community conversations to establish the mandate and mission of the committee, which was "to create a dialogue with the City of Vancouver to establish a process to preserve and enhance the False

Creek South community beyond lease end, enabling the community to evolve and diversify in a way that is sustainable for existing residents and the City of Vancouver" (False Creek South Neighbourhood Association, n.d.-a). Five guiding principles based on the neighbourhood's place identity were also established to steer the committee's work:

1. "Provide residents with an affordable option to remain in the community beyond lease expiry dates. Certainty around lease renewal is a priority in moving forward;

2. Achieve a demographic mix that is similar to that of the region, but with an increased proportion of housing for low- and middle-income workers and households with children;

3. Seek opportunities for increased density while respecting the historic urban design pattern of buildings and open space;

4. Continue to embody City of Vancouver initiatives: greenest city, affordable housing, and financial sustainability;

5. Model a process for dialogue, decision-making, partnership and change that is inclusive of all stakeholders" (False Creek South Neighbourhood Association, n.d.-c).

The mission and principles reflected the desires of False Creek South residents to extend their leases and preserve the affordable housing and income-mix across the neighbourhood, but they also acknowledged common criticisms of the neighbourhood in the wake of a burgeoning housing crisis and pressure to increase densities. They were also meant to address City of Vancouver priorities under the Vision Vancouver government, including environmental and financial sustainability.

RePlan's early activities follow what Foell and Foster identify as a first step in effective collective action, in which a common issue or narrative is framed that appeals to a broader neighbourhood group. If this common issue is compelling, groups are more likely to assemble resources, including volunteers, allies, and funding (2022, p. 5). The second step in Martin's place frames, diagnostic frames, takes this a step beyond finding a narrative, and includes the description of common problems and the collective assignation of blame for those problems (Martin, 2003). In False Creek South, common problems and their sources were easy to identify. At this early stage of organizing, it was not necessarily the City of Vancouver that was the adversary, but rather the real estate state forces that existed outside of False Creek South, which were putting pressure on

the City to redevelop the neighbourhood in the same way as other large parcels of land in Vancouver, including nearby Olympic Village and Yaletown. To find a common narrative in support of the "preservation and enhancement" of False Creek South, residents returned to the original values that had been embedded in the 1970s, and which had continued to resonate within the community, including affordable housing, mixed-incomes, and mixed-housing types. As more and more of that type of housing was lost to large-scale private development, and as "towers of unaffordability scrape the sky, more and more False Creek South residents recognize[d] that the designers of [their] neighbourhood got it right" (False Creek South Neighbourhood Association, 2021a). With a compelling common narrative and source of blame established, the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association and RePlan were able to take the next step in organizing, including the use of extensive social capital and goodwill built up in the neighbourhood.

## 5.2.2. Social Capital

Once a common narrative was established, False Creek South was able to leverage the collective perception of place and nostalgic attachment that had been part of Vancouver urbanism since the neighbourhood's development. The real estate state forces that were cause for concern for residents of False Creek South were the subject of much debate in Vancouver planning circles. There was an ideological split between two different approaches to the growing housing crisis. On one side, there were those who believed that building as much dense housing supply as possible, no matter the type of housing, was a solution to the both the housing crisis and environmental issues caused by sprawl. On the other side was the belief that urban planning should focus on building certain types of housing, specifically affordable, non-market housing, instead of prioritizing private development and market strata condominiums. Within this debate, False Creek South was a lightning rod for both sides, and the Neighbourhood Association and RePlan were able to use some of that social capital to its benefit.

In broad terms, social capital is defined as the "extent and effectiveness of formal and informal human networks, as well as the impact of social ties on opportunities" and the "ability…to secure benefits as a result of…social networks and other social structures" (Manzo and Perkins, 2006, p. 341). As a neighbourhood, False Creek South made good use of its networks in early organizing. One early decision made by RePlan's

leadership was to bring in outside help that was familiar with the inner workings of the Planning Department at the City of Vancouver. Richard Evans, the Chair of RePlan and an architect, reached out through his network to Nathan Edelson, a former Senior Planner at the City of Vancouver who had been deeply involved in collaborative community planning in the Downtown Eastside. Edelson and Evans first met during a planning process for Victory Square Park, a heritage park in Vancouver that had been the location of conflict between Downtown Eastside residents and local businesses. That planning process had involved many stakeholders, including Downtown Eastside residents, businesses, low-income housing providers, and architects. Edelson and Evans had formed a connection based on their shared values of collaboration and engagement with the community. Since retiring from the City, Edelson had maintained friendly relationships with past colleagues in Planning and on City Council, and his networks were extensive. He initially joined RePlan as a volunteer, and eventually was hired as a part-time project manager in 2010, with the expectation of working with the False Creek South community for two to three years (N. Edelson, Interview, March 1, 2023).

RePlan also leveraged social capital to fund its activities. Early RePlan initiatives were funded by the Neighbourhood Association budget, but as the scope of activities grew, so did funding needs. Some work was funded by Vancity, whose then-Vice President of Community Investment was supportive of RePlan's initiatives, while smaller research projects received support from funders like the Real Estate Foundation of BC. However, once Vancity funding ended, RePlan, like the Neighbourhood Association, was almost entirely self-funded by co-op and strata residents. Collectively, residents contributed over one hundred thousand dollars per year, using the same per-unit fee model as the Neighbourhood Association. That money paid for the project management role of Edelson, ongoing legal advice, and a part-time Community Planning Assistant.

The large number of urban design professionals in the neighbourhood also made a significant impact on RePlan conversations. RePlan counted among its leadership group architects, including some who had worked on the original drawings of False Creek South, city planners, and part of the urban design team that had done the master planning for the north shore of False Creek and Olympic Village. Those professionals were able to speak in depth to the physical design that made False Creek South unique, including the scale, open spaces, and floor-space ratio (FSR), a commonly used

measurement of density (Senior Planner, Interview, February 17, 2023). What may have been abstract or vaguely understood concepts in some neighbourhoods became terms that were commonly used across the neighbourhood as RePlan educated residents about the neighbourhood's unique urban design. As conversations about the future of False Creek South progressed, those professionals brought in their networks, who volunteered both their time and professional services. The neighbourhood's abundance of co-ops also made it a focal point for the Co-op Housing Federation of BC (CHFBC). CHFBC is the province-wide representative of co-ops in BC, with a mandate to support and expand co-op housing across the province. When it became clear that co-op lease renewal was going to be an issue, CHFBC recognized that False Creek South would be a unique case and became a key ally and advocate.

Aside from the urban design of the neighbourhood, social capital also informed the organizational capacity of False Creek South. Among the "leftist visionaries" in the neighbourhood were skilled community organizers and labour relations negotiators who became an integral part of RePlan's leadership and shaping ongoing strategy. Those key members of RePlan worked with a deep understanding of diplomacy, how to solve problems, and deal with differences of opinion with respect, which came as a benefit of experience and being established in their careers. Nancy Hannum, who was Chair of the co-ops' Authorized Working Group and had extensive community organizing experience described RePlan as "a wonderful combination of people with experience in our [different] professions, [and] they all required that we had those kinds of skills" (N. Hannum, Interview, February 20, 2023). This, in addition to the academic and professional skills provided by planners and architects in the neighbourhood, demonstrates the necessary "softer" skills like experience in diplomacy and advocacy (Hasson and Ley, 1994, p. 13) that benefitted RePlan.

## 5.2.3. Establishing Values and Trust

According to Manzo and Perkins, a strong sense of place attachment is conducive to a collaborative approach across different interests; motivations may be different, but a with strong sense of place and common interest in a neighbourhood, people can work together towards a common vision. When place attachment is combined with values of self-governance and co-operation, residents are more likely to feel empowered and take collaborative action (2006, p. 340). And, like the

Neighbourhood Association, RePlan took a collective action approach, wherein the "actions, activities, and strategies" of residents and groups are used to "influence the social, economic, physical, and political environments of their neighbourhood" (Foell and Foster, 2022, p. 3). In False Creek South this was made easier by the close physical geography and existing interconnectedness of neighbourhood residents. Daily interactions like co-op meetings, walks along the seawall, and school drop offs made information and resource sharing part of a daily routine, which further created a shared sense of trust and reinforced shared values (Foell and Foster, 2022).

While RePlan had a clear governance structure, it was also important to its founders that the committee have a foundation based on creating good relationships within the community. Like the Neighbourhood Association, RePlan used a model of dialogue and consensus to make its decisions. RePlan was a venue for conversation and creating a collective vision, and it was important that the committee and its activities felt like a natural extension of the supportive place identity that already existed within the neighbourhood; the structure emerged from a "certain way of being in the world that a lot of us share" (R. Evans, Interview, March 8, 2023). The strength of an organization built on strong relationships and a familiarity with dialogue as a method of solving problems is the ability of residents to express their positive and negative emotions about the ongoing place disruption, be heard, and then be able to move forward in a positive, constructive manner. Evans said that RePlan modelled this behaviour in its meetings, which allowed committee members to express themselves and receive support from the group, before moving on productively. As he summarized RePlan's benefits as a forum, he told me "I can be angry [about what's happening with the leases]. The value of [RePlan] is that I can express it, and people accept my anger, and I accept theirs… Anger is necessary sometimes" (R. Evans, Interview, March 8, 2023). But in RePlan, that anger is redirected to serve the purpose of the group, and to enable continued dialogue and positive outcomes. The capacity of residents to communicate their emotions in a safe place, with supportive neighbours, allows them to move beyond a negative emotional cycle and into a sustained sense of community identity and coping (Devine-Wright, 2009, p. 435).

Along with dialogue, democracy and voluntarism were cornerstone values in both the structure of RePlan and the way the neighbourhood came together to make decisions. As previously mentioned, the decision of the 1970s planners to include co-op housing and a democratically elected neighbourhood organization enabled democracy

as an integral part of False Creek South, and that had continued. Volunteers continued to power the function of the neighbourhood, from co-op and strata boards to RePlan and its committees. As new generations of children were growing up in False Creek South, Nancy Hannum said they witnessed their parents spending the evening in meetings, speaking in front of groups, voting, and working together to solve problems (N. Hannum, Interview, February 20, 2023). The social skills of dialogue and conflict resolution that can take years to learn as an adult were an inherent part of the neighbourhood's identity, and continued to regenerate as children grew up in the community and as new residents were brought into the Neighbourhood Association and RePlan.

The beginnings of RePlan were focused on bringing the neighbourhood together and solidifying the need for a common approach to lease end resolution. By creating a coherent, shared understanding of the neighbourhood and its potential, by making constructive use of its social capital, and by building a strong organizational foundation based on values of collaboration and dialogue, RePlan was ready to take the next step in its strategy – taking on the real estate state.

## 5.3.  The Solution, Not the Problem

The third and final step in Martin's place frame analysis is the prognostic frame. In this third step, organizations identify the collective actions and solutions that they will take in countering the problem identified in the diagnostic step (Martin, 2003, p. 742). During this phase the neighbourhood scale and co-operative aspects of a local community are often emphasized; movements that are operating at this scale often depend on the clear identification of neighbourhood and place attachment that took place in earlier phases (Martin, 2003, p. 744). At this point, in the context of place disruption based on potential redevelopment, communities come together to articulate an alternative, ideal vision for their neighbourhood. In a neighbourhood like False Creek South, which continued to be a symbol of an alternative way to build cities for its residents and allies, collective memory and nostalgic attachment can evolve into collective imagination (Borer, 2010, p. 98). Collective imagination, like nostalgic attachment, is future-oriented, and it relies on the emotional, and in some cases, financial, investment of the community in the possibilities for the neighbourhood as an alternative vision is developed (Borer, 2010, p. 108).

### 5.3.1. Early Strategy

RePlan had clearly identified that the problems facing False Creek South were the result of the considerable tension between the need for the City of Vancouver to generate revenue from residential real estate development and the simultaneous need to retain and expand a large amount of non-market, affordable housing. With a goal of renewing existing land leases and mitigating the stresses caused by imminent lease expiry RePlan's first step was to communicate that message to City Council and staff. They were met with relative success. City Council unanimously passed four motions in 2012, 2016, and 2017, requesting that City staff determine a process for addressing expiring land leases and supporting the continued existence of co-op housing on City land (False Creek South Neighbourhood Association, 2021b). They also received written support from Mayor Gregor Robertson in 2015 after a meeting with RePlan leadership, in which he wrote that he committed to "support and uphold [the] key principles RePlan has identified" as important, and that future planning should "[build] on the historical and much valued aspects of design and livability" (False Creek South Neighbourhood Association, 2021b). Following further meetings between the Mayor and RePlan, Mayor Robertson reiterated that he saw a relationship between the City of Vancouver and RePlan that was "effective" and "inspiring" and that the City was "fortunate to have a group of neighbourhood volunteers who are dedicated to improving their community and are engaged in important public policy issues" (False Creek South Neighbourhood Association, 2021b). Two members of Council were appointed as "liaisons" between City Council and False Creek South – Andrea Reimer of Vision Vancouver, and George Affleck of the NPA – who would share information between City Hall and the community. A community planning process was approved by Council, and in 2017, five years after the first Council motion, and seven years after the creation of RePlan, it seemed like the neighbourhood was finally on track to resolving lease end issues and co-creating a vision for False Creek South that recognized the continuing values of the neighbourhood.

The community planning process that began in 2017 was well-received by residents of False Creek South. The Terms of Reference for the process outlined that lease issues and modifications would be explored concurrently with the community planning, with an anticipated plan and lease resolution set for the end of 2018. City staff acknowledged RePlan and the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association as

"instrumental" in advancing planning to this point, as well as their support for an "inclusive and holistic…refresh" of the neighbourhood vision (Munro, 2017, p. 5). RePlan also informed the City that the committee intended to continue internal work with neighbourhood residents so that residents were prepared to participate in the formal planning process and speak to the issues at hand (Munro, 2017, p. 5-6), thus maintaining a strong connection to residents and ensuring that they were prepared to speak to the collective vision. The first phase of planning would focus only on the undeveloped edges of the community and set general directions for the redevelopment of existing housing, but decisions about that redevelopment would only come after further Council direction and community engagement (Munro, 2017, p. 7). Community planning sessions were held on a wide variety of topics, and RePlan representatives helped introduce each session as co-hosts of the events. Residents appreciated the transparency and commitment of planning staff in creating a collaborative environment (N. Edelson, Interview, March 1, 2023). Planning staff recognized the challenges of providing more housing while simultaneously respecting the livability and unique urban design of the neighbourhood. They also appreciated the long-standing commitment of residents and the work that had already been done to articulate a common set of values that could be incorporated into the planning process. City staff perceived a recognition from residents that the neighbourhood did have to change and add new housing, but noted that they may have had less understanding about the financial realities of new development, including infrastructure development, soil remediation, and construction costs (Senior Planner, Interview, February 17, 2023).

The first year of community planning led to several outcomes, including a provisional Resident Protection and Retention Plan, building condition assessments, and a Provisional Vision Statement and Guiding Planning Principles. The vision statement outlined a future for False Creek South that was equitable, innovative, and sustainable. This vision was agreed upon by both City staff and False Creek South residents and called for a future for the neighbourhood where "creative, experimental, and bold" planning would result in a diversity of residents across incomes, ages, and household types, in keeping with the original neighbourhood values. The vision statement also said that development would be done "incrementally" as part of a long-term redevelopment (City of Vancouver, 2018, p. 1). However, it was the building condition assessments and Guiding Planning Principles that were red flags for RePlan about the City's intentions for

the neighbourhood. The building condition assessments, done by an assessor hired by the City, determined that most buildings in False Creek South should be torn down upon lease end. This determination was disputed by RePlan, which felt that the buildings were well-maintained and would last years beyond the end of the initial leases (False Creek South Neighbourhood Association, 2021d). Meanwhile, the City had added a tenth principle to the Guiding Planning Principles that had not been endorsed by the community. Principle 10 stated that the planning should "Develop a Fiscally Responsible Approach", with a fiduciary duty to the "long-term health and sustainability of the City's Property Endowment Fund" (City of Vancouver, 2018, p. 2)[5]. This principle had not been reviewed by residents before being presented to Council, and many felt that it would be used to override the spirit of the preceding nine principles, which built off the vision statement, and which were generally supported by residents (N. Edelson, Interview, March 1, 2023). The building condition assessments and the inclusion of Principle 10, combined with lease discussions that had been less than fruitful, created a shift in who was assigned blame by RePlan. While RePlan had generally focused on broader concept of the real estate state and the financialization of housing as its opponent, the inclusion of a financially-motivated principle put RePlan's target on a new and very tangible antagonist – the Real Estate Department at the City of Vancouver. In the eyes of RePlan's leadership, the Real Estate Department was less focused on the values of the community, and more focused on the monetary value of the land on which the community sat. It was imperative, then, to resolve outstanding lease extension issues that would enable the continuation of existing housing, rather than complete a plan that may result in significant change and wholesale redevelopment. As a result, in mid-2018 RePlan and City staff mutually agreed that the community planning process should be paused until lease issues were settled (N. Edelson, Interview, March 1, 2023).

## 5.3.2. Building Relationships

In 2018, while the community planning process was underway, the political landscape in Vancouver was going through yet another shift. After three consecutive majorities on Council, Vision Vancouver began to struggle in the polls, and looked to be

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[5] A fiduciary duty is a legal obligation that one has, in this case the City of Vancouver, to act in the best financial interest of others, in this case the Property Endowment Fund and all residents of Vancouver.

facing a huge defeat on election day. Several political parties were jockeying to take its place. The three parties that sat on the left of the political spectrum, COPE, the Green Party, and One City Vancouver, hoped to capitalize on Vision's progressive voting bloc, while the right of the political spectrum was occupied by two parties, the NPA and Yes Vancouver. The race for Mayor was also wide open. For the first time since 1986, an independent candidate appeared to have a chance at being elected, with a three-way race between independents Kennedy Stewart and Shauna Sylvester, and NPA candidate Ken Sim. The Neighbourhood Association and RePlan recognized that relying on City staff to achieve the neighbourhood's collective vision was not the way forward, and they capitalized on the opportunity to build early relationships with candidates. They organized a 2018 Election Report and held a series of interviews with many of the mayoral and Council candidates. While similar conversations in 2014 had focused primarily on lease end issues, in 2018 RePlan articulated the collective vision for the neighbourhood to the candidates, as well as the challenges that RePlan had faced when it came to challenging the Real Estate Department's financially-driven mandate for City-owned lands. City Councillor Pete Fry, who was a newly elected Councillor for the Vancouver Green Party in 2018, remembers well his earliest conversations with members of RePlan and how its early articulation of the issues facing the community made an impression on him. He said, "I really distinctly recall being impressed with the tenor [of the conversation with RePlan], obviously the academic knowledge and experience, but also how thoughtful folks were around approaching inevitable densification and recognizing the need for compromise that, at the time, you weren't hearing from a lot of other communities" (P. Fry, Interview, March 6, 2023).

With eight years of work and strong support from the community, RePlan was able to communicate the strong sense of place identity and collectivism that existed in the neighbourhood. The fact that the Neighbourhood Association and its committees were so organized within a democratic structure that represented all of the co-op and strata housing in the neighbourhood, also made a strong impression on Council candidates. Candidates Fry and Boyle (OneCity Vancouver) were also impressed by the intentional nature of the community, and the fact that many residents had chosen to live in False Creek South because it was a place that reflected their own values of community and mutual care, rather than maximizing property values and financial equity. This collective attitude played a significant role in bringing some Council candidates on

board to RePlan's issues, because they recognized that the neighbourhood had a "different dynamic" than other neighbourhoods, where concern about property values created a sometimes-tense relationship between homeowners, renters, and people who lived in social housing (P. Fry, Interview, March 6, 2023; C. Boyle, Interview, February 14, 2023).

RePlan's conversations with candidates elicited statements of support for its work, and commitments to work with RePlan as allies, particularly in support of RePlan's goal to retain existing affordable housing and build more co-ops and affordable housing in the neighbourhood. Several parties also acknowledged the tension that existed between City staff and False Creek South residents, citing siloed departments within City Hall and the use of the term "fiduciary duty" as a "scare tactic" (False Creek South Neighbourhood Association, 2018, p. 13). Mayoral candidate Kennedy Stewart stated that "You [RePlan] have actually done all the hard work here. You've brought together all the various components of your community and you said this is what you want. I think the job of City Council is to listen and say 'Well, how can we facilitate this vision that you have?'" (False Creek South Neighbourhood Association, 2018, p. 6). Whether or not those commitments by politicians were genuine would remain to be seen.

### 5.3.3. Insider Researcher Reflection

It's around this point that I became involved in RePlan. I was hired in 2019 as the Community Planning Assistant on a contract basis. As Community Planning Assistant, I coordinated and documented all RePlan meetings as well as the meetings of its subcommittees and the SLS. I also conducted research into a wide variety of issues that were identified by RePlan leadership as potential avenues for engagement with the City, including creating a non-profit community housing trust, tiny home villages, and the principles of aging in community. From this point forward, I was present and involved in the activities of RePlan that are outlined in this thesis. When conducting research about this time period or conducting interviews I did my best to remain curious about what I might uncover, or what others' perspectives might reveal about something that I had experienced. I also asked interview subjects to reflect on common criticisms that I had heard or read about False Creek South and RePlan's work, such as a lack of diversity or perceived NIMBYism, so that I could evaluate their answers against my personal account and against the literature.

### 5.3.4. Community-Led Community Planning

When the City and the Neighbourhood Association agreed in 2018 to pause the community planning process it was mutually agreed that discussions between the two parties would focus on lease end terms and extensions before the planning process would restart. Instead, however, RePlan was generally met with silence from City Hall, as most conversations between City staff and Council moved in-camera. Anything discussed within in-camera meetings is legally prohibited from being discussed outside of that meeting. In the vacuum of information, and without a clear idea of what approach to take with City staff, RePlan decided to continue with the work that it had been doing with residents, by coming up with what they called a "community-led community plan". The goal of the community-led plan was to address many of the common criticisms of the neighbourhood, including the large number of seniors "overhoused" and living in multi-bedroom non-market housing units, levels of ethnic diversity that were lower than average compared to the rest of Vancouver, and the lack of new housing since 1984 (N. Edelson, Interview, March 1, 2023). The community-led plan would build off of the planning work done during the City-led community planning process by incorporating the Guiding Planning Principles that had been approved by City Council and endorsed by False Creek South residents. However, False Creek South residents decided to focus their planning process on how to maximize affordable and social housing in the neighbourhood and continue to push back against the market-based financial drivers that the Real Estate Department saw as necessary in any redevelopment scenario. When residents "[mobilize] to defend the quality of urban life and access to the city in the present, residents' groups contest the [inequitable] nature of the future city" (Robinson and Attuyer, 2020, p. 1300). Their approach was consistent with the strong sense of place identity and nostalgic attachment that had underpinned previous work.

Once again, RePlan relied on the social capital that had been built up since the neighbourhood's development to take on a community planning process and expand its network. Graham McGarva, an architect whose firm was responsible for the master planning of Southeast False Creek (Olympic Village) as well as other major projects in Vancouver, was a long-term resident of False Creek South. Along with other architects and urban designers in the neighbourhood he formed the Community Planning Group, a subcommittee of RePlan, which was tasked with identifying early opportunities for new development in False Creek South that would address neighbourhood and City priorities.

The goal was for False Creek South to be, as coined by McGarva, "the solution, not the problem" to the City's many priorities, by including the provision of more affordable housing, designing walkable, pedestrian-friendly neighbourhoods, and creating supportive communities. RePlan's Leadership Group also brought in Simon Neill, the CEO of the Broadway Group, which managed a long-term care home and supportive housing for adults with disabilities in False Creek South. Neill had developed a positive relationship with many residents during the City's community planning process, and his involvement was crucial in addressing the needs of seniors and connecting RePlan with the non-profit housing providers in the neighbourhood (N. Edelson, Interview, March 1, 2023). At the same time, Neill and the Board of the Broadway Group were interested in expanding their operations in the community. RePlan's support provided them with legitimacy for their ideas in the neighbourhood and a platform to share their ideas with the broader community (N. Hannum, Interview, February 20, 2023). RePlan also received support from PHS Community Services Society, a prominent non-profit supportive housing provider that operated 52 units of temporary modular supportive housing in False Creek South.

The first visioning of the community-led community plan landed on the concept of a Campus of Care, which would be located on an under-developed parcel of land in the eastern portion of False Creek South. The idea included an expanded long-term care home, seniors housing, permanent housing for the supportive housing residents, and a new co-op building. The Campus of Care was strategic for two reasons. First, it gave RePlan and False Creek South residents a concrete proposal around which to rally support and fit with the community's values and vision for their future. And second, it demonstrated that RePlan was looking to the future and new development in the neighbourhood. The Campus of Care showed that RePlan was taking feedback from the City's formal planning process seriously, and that it was committed to collaborating on City priorities, including the provision of more non-market housing, housing for the homeless, and the gradual densification of False Creek South. By putting this concept forward, RePlan opened up new conversations with City Councillors and staff that were not only related to lease end issues.

To build out the concept before presenting it to residents, in an example of the neighbourhood's extensive social capital, McGarva called on his friend and former colleague, Scot Hein. Hein was the former Senior Urban Designer for the City of

Vancouver who had worked closely with McGarva on the Southeast False Creek master plan and had extensive experience leading residents through community planning processes. Hein also connected RePlan to an architect who created professional renderings of the Campus of Care buildings. In early 2020 McGarva and Hein led the community through design charrettes and community engagement sessions at the False Creek Community Centre, where over 200 residents gave tacit support for the Campus of Care, both as an addition to the neighbourhood and as a strategy for re-engaging with the City (False Creek South Neighbourhood Association, 2021c).

The beginning of the community-led planning process was a galvanizing point for False Creek South residents. It was their opportunity to engage in collective imagining, this time in response to perceived conflict with City staff about the future of their neighbourhood and homes. In the face of "development-induced identity transitions" a strong sense of collective action that centres neighbourhood identity and place attachment is particularly effective (Foell and Foster, 2022, p. 5). The silence from City staff only exacerbated feelings of conflict and reinforced the David vs. Goliath narrative within the community. On the other hand, the activities of RePlan, which reflected the collective and co-operative values of the neighbourhood, strengthened feelings of place identity and a commitment to the collective vision. That commitment would be necessary as the conflict with the City dragged on for another year, culminating in 2021 when multiple City of Vancouver processes threatened the future of False Creek South.

# Chapter 6.
# Goliath is Coming – February-October 2021

The period following the public planning process and February 2021 was relatively quiet between False Creek South and City of Vancouver staff. While there were indications that internal conversations were happening within the City about False Creek South's future, very little information was making its way out of City Hall. Two Councillors who had been appointed as liaisons between False Creek South and City Council – Andrea Reimer of Vision Vancouver and George Affleck of the NPA – had decided not to run for re-election, and no replacement liaisons had been appointed, so contact with Councillors was often limited. In fact, Councillors had been instructed and been given legal advice by City staff not to engage with False Creek South residents directly on issues related to lease extension, as those conversations were happening in-camera. Messaging from the City reiterated its two roles when it came to False Creek South. The first was the regulatory, or planning role, which had been put on pause until lease issues were resolved. The second role was that of landowner, which oversaw the leases. It was through this role that staff was tasked with continuing work that included developing a broad vision for the future of False Creek South.

The City's dual roles created tension between a community that was eager to move forward with planning and City Councillors and staff who had legal obligations and a fiduciary responsibility to the whole city. While some Councillors acknowledged that they were frustrated by the in-camera nature of conversations about False Creek South during this period, they also recognized that the constraints of in-camera meetings had some merit. Councillor Pete Fry spoke about the how the in-camera discussions and advice to maintain some distance from RePlan made it easier to keep an open mind when hearing from City staff:

> "I think it was an important kind of firewall…to maintain some degree [of separation], because otherwise it is just too easy to [share in-camera information] … [Looking at the distinction of False Creek South and other neighbourhoods], False Creek South does have more capacity and people who can speak the [planning] language. Is that necessarily a fair process? So, I appreciated having that kind of separation so that we can have those less influenceable kind of conversations" (P. Fry, Interview, March 6, 2023).

But for RePlan leaders, those in-camera conversations and lack of communication contributed to a growing distrust of City staff and processes (R. Evans, Interview, March 8, 2023). Others also recognized the challenges and distrust caused by a lack of transparency from the City. One interview subject said that the City's tactic of silence was like a war of attrition on community members: "These are real people, they're community leaders. And [City staff] was following a deliberate strategy to wear them down until they couldn't take the emotional and physical strain of keeping that effort up anymore" (Interview, 2023).

In this vacuum of information, RePlan continued to meet regularly. The Leadership group met weekly, while the Co-op's Authorized Working Group and the Strata Leaseholder Society met bi-weekly. This pattern, which had continued over nine years, prepared the community for eventual re-engagement by the City about False Creek South planning. The frequent meetings allowed the groups to create a strong identity within the community, and to reinforce the shared values that had been articulated during early phases of work. Meetings were used to raise awareness and education within the community, to build up knowledge and experience speaking to the various issues that were impacting residents (N. Hannum, Interview, February 20, 2023). In essence, the neighbourhood was repeating the cycle of place frames by reaffirming a common vision and possible solutions to place disruption. The length of time that had passed since the planning process was paused without any meaningful discussions about lease extensions, although frustrating, gave the community more time to grapple with possible futures for the neighbourhood, including increasing densities and different housing forms, and to explore how these changes could be informed by the existing neighbourhood values. RePlan was able to have conversations about these possibilities within the community, and to achieve some level of consensus about what the community would support. This consensus building was helped by the long time period over which conversations happened, and by the strength of place meanings and place attachment within the community (Manzo and Perkins, 2006).

Then, in early 2021, two City processes directly impacted False Creek South. The first was a public engagement program called *False Creek South Lands: Opportunities for the future,* which was launched in February 2021, and included public meetings and an online survey. The engagement sought input from Vancouver residents on how public lands in False Creek South should be better used to deliver more housing,

while simultaneously addressing climate change, increasing equity, and building the local economy (City of Vancouver, 2021a). The engagement was notably different from other processes led by the City of Vancouver because it was spearheaded by the department of Real Estate and Facilities Management (REFM), rather than the Planning Department. Deputy City Manager Karen Levitt emphasized that the goal of the engagement was to move False Creek South planning forward as quickly as possible, and that public input on future land use was needed before expiring land leases could be negotiated. The precedent set by this public engagement was noted in local media; this was the first time that opinions from all Vancouver residents would be solicited about the future of a particular neighbourhood, rather than primarily consulting with existing residents. Levitt framed this approach as "due diligence" of the City on behalf of the landowners – the residents of Vancouver (Bula, 2021).

In preparation for the engagement RePlan organized communications materials that were circulated to residents, which included concerns about the framing of some survey questions and information about RePlan's recent work. RePlan allies were also engaged, including the Co-op Housing Federation of BC (CHFBC) and the BC Non-Profit Housing Association (BCNPHA), with a request to put information about the engagement process into their internal communications with stakeholders and residents (Authorized Working Group, 2021a). Political allies were also engaged, including local area MLA Brenda Bailey, and then-Minister of Housing David Eby, who had been a colleague of Nathan Edelson's during Edelson's time working in the Downtown Eastside. Meetings were also set up with City Councillors to discuss the potential impacts of the engagement and to reiterate the community's collective vision for the future of the neighbourhood (Authorized Working Group, 2021b).

The public engagement took place through February 2021 with online public meetings and an online survey. The engagement was framed as being from the City's perspective as landowner. The City described this distinction as "connected but independent from [any] False Creek South neighbourhood planning program" (City of Vancouver, 2021b). Several online meetings were organized, with separate sessions held for False Creek South residents and residents of the rest of Vancouver. At each session an overview about the process and the potential future for False Creek South was presented by Karen Levitt, followed by a question-and-answer period. Due to the online nature of the sessions, there was no opportunity for conversation or dialogue

between presenters and the participants. The engagement process also presented a profile of the neighbourhood, entitled *About False Creek South*. The document gave details about the housing types in the neighbourhood, the nature of leased land, and the demographics for the False Creek South census tract, which included residents on both leasehold and freehold (non-City owned) land. RePlan expressed concern that including residents of freehold land in the demographics unfairly presented the neighbourhood as wealthier and less diverse than reality, because the freehold land was made up of 86% market stratas and only 14% non-market housing (Baas, 2016, p. 3), and freehold residents had significantly higher household incomes than those who lived on leasehold lands (False Creek South Neighbourhood Association, 2021e, p. 4). RePlan was concerned that conflating the freehold and leasehold residents' incomes would negatively influence responses from the public.

In response, RePlan organized residents to write dozens of letters to City Council and coordinated the purchase and analysis of specific leased land census data from Statistics Canada (False Creek South Neighbourhood Association, 2021e). The procurement and analysis of the census data represented the clear delineation of place by the community. Their goal was to reaffirm the boundaries of leased land in False Creek South and to make clear to the City and the public which areas were being discussed. The data also reflected the social capital of the neighbourhood, as residents were able to coordinate and pay for the purchase of the census data from Statistics Canada and had skilled volunteers in the neighbourhood to carry out the analysis and production of the report.

The February 2021 engagement process ended with a published engagement summary that reflected the survey and online meeting feedback received from the public, but gave no clear indication what direction the City would be pursuing in False Creek South, or when any future report would be put forward. The engagement summary stated that the community planning work, done by the City's regulatory arm in the Planning Department, would continue once City Council had determined a long-term vision for the future of the neighbourhood, based on recommendations from the Real Estate Department (Kirk and Co. Consulting Ltd., 2021, p. 6).

The second City process that impacted False Creek South was the *Methodology for Co-operative Housing Lease Renewals*, which was presented to City Council in July

2021. There are over 50 co-ops on City-owned land, each with a separate land lease. As most of the co-ops were built during a period of federal investment in housing during the 1970s, many of the leases were approaching expiry. In False Creek South, two co-ops – Marina and Creekview – had leases that expired in 2021 and 2023, respectively. The City, after several years of discussion and changes in approach, put forward their proposal for payment terms for lease extensions in July 2021. The proposal represented a significant change in how co-op leases had originally been determined and how co-ops would set their housing charges. In the 1970s the leases were set based on the market value of the land and housing charges were determined by each individual co-op at a level that would cover their expenses (Chungath and Sarnetsky, 2021, p. 4). However, the City was concerned that some co-ops' housing charges had not been adjusted to reflect the real incomes of co-op members. In most new non-market housing leases, the City required housing charges to be set at approximately 30% of household income, and City staff wanted co-op lease renewals to meet these same targets. Additionally, the financialization of housing and the enormous increase in the market value of land in Vancouver meant that co-ops were no longer able to pay market rates for their leases (Chungath and Sarnetsky, 2021, p. 8). The City proposed a complicated methodology for determining the lease cost for each co-op based on the median income of Vancouver residents and with a standard assumption for operating and capital costs.

Co-op members in False Creek South were worried that the new methodology would significantly increase housing charges and result in many low-income families being priced out of the co-ops. But most importantly, the City's report singled out co-ops in False Creek South. The City report called False Creek South a "phased large site redevelopment," or an area where the City owned a "significant proportion" of the land and had future redevelopment of the area in mind. In phased large site redevelopment areas, co-op lease renewal terms would be contingent on the timeline of any future redevelopment plan proposed by the City (Chungath and Sarnetsky, 2021, p. 14). This represented a clear departure from the way in which all other co-ops' leases were being handled that were not in phased large site redevelopment areas. Co-ops in False Creek South saw this approach as an affront to the neighbourhood's co-ops. By putting forward, in writing, the possibility that co-ops in False Creek South would not have their leases extended, and that the entire neighbourhood was a potential "large site redevelopment," the City was threatening some of the core tenets of the neighbourhood.

City Council met on July 7 and 8, 2021 to discuss the proposed lease renewal methodology. Over 40 co-op residents from False Creek South spoke at the Council meeting, supported by RePlan and the AWG with shared messaging and information. Speakers shared personal stories about the ways that living in co-ops had made a positive impact in their lives, and many detailed how the proposed methodology would negatively impact the governance and income-mix of their co-ops. Ultimately, City Council amended the proposed methodology, changing some calculation criteria to ensure higher levels of affordability for co-op members, and affirming the value of co-ops' autonomy over their own governance.

Both the February 2021 public engagement on the future of False Creek South and the co-op lease renewal methodology processes demonstrated the ability of RePlan to quickly organize residents, to call on allies, and to leverage social capital. They were also an early demonstration of the community's ability to clearly articulate the importance of place and the impact that living in False Creek South had on their identity. The co-op lease renewal Council meeting and outcome also showed that Councillors could be swayed by what residents shared in public hearings, which informed the development of RePlan's strategy for October 2021, when the City released its most ambitious plan for False Creek South yet.

# Chapter 7.
# October 2021
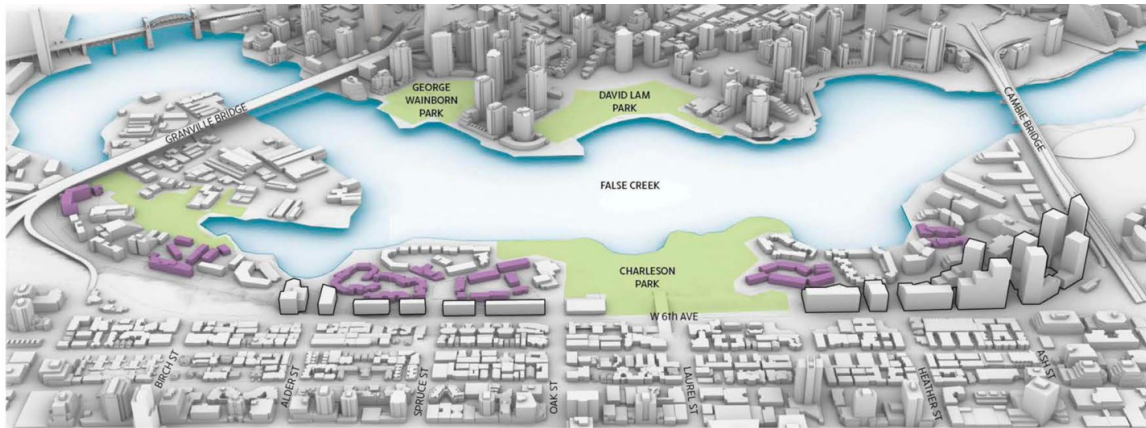
## 7.1. The Future of False Creek South

On October 12, 2021 the City of Vancouver released a report entitled *The Future of False Creek South: Advancing a Conceptual Development Plan and Addressing Lease Expiries.* RePlan had been notified in advance that the report was imminent, and in preparation had held a virtual Town Hall meeting in September that was attended by 200 residents. The Town Hall presented RePlan's work and engagement with the City since the February 2021 public engagement and detailed the concerns and approaches of both the Strata Leaseholders Society and the co-op's Authorized Working Group. Simon Neill, the Executive Director of the Broadway Group, which managed two care homes in False Creek South, presented his proposal for a campus of care, looking to solidify the concept with residents as a key part of the alternative future vision for future redevelopment of the neighbourhood. Finally, RePlan leadership issued a call to action for False Creek South residents, asking them to be prepared to write letters and sign up to speak at the October Council meeting (False Creek South Neighbourhood Association, 2021f). The upcoming City Council meeting would be the only opportunity for False Creek South residents and their supporters to speak publicly to City Council about the report and its potential impacts on the community before City Council made its decision. It was therefore crucial for RePlan to galvanize as many residents as possible, as this would be their only chance to influence Council's decision.

On the day of the report's release, RePlan was given a high-level overview of the report's contents in a private presentation. The presentation was led by Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager at the City of Vancouver, and Chuck Brook, a real estate advisor and consultant who had drafted the conceptual development plan. Several members of RePlan attended, including representatives from the co-ops' Authorized Working Group and the Strata Leaseholders Society. I attended the meeting in my capacity as RePlan's Community Planning Assistant. As Levitt and Brook presented the plan, the fifth slide in the presentation showed the demolition of eight of 11 non-market and co-op housing buildings in the neighbourhood and their replacement with a mix of housing, including strata and market-rate rental (Levitt, 2021a). The existing co-op and non-market rental

residents, Brook said, would be moved into new buildings that would be constructed for them along Sixth Avenue. Notably, none of the market-rate strata buildings would be demolished at the end of their leases. Instead, they would receive lease extensions, with terms to be determined in upcoming negotiations between the City and the Strata Leaseholders Society (Levitt, 2021b). Brook also covered proposed changes to the housing mix in the redeveloped neighbourhood. Non-market rental and co-op units would make up 33% of the total housing in the neighbourhood, while market-rate rental and strata units would make up 67%, effectively inverting the proportion built during the neighbourhood's original development (Levitt, 2021a). This proposed housing mix would also significantly impact the income mix in the neighbourhood. False Creek South Co-ops and non-market rentals have and continue to provide housing for people with a range of incomes (RePlan, 2021a); the City's proposal assumed that only lower-income residents would live in these housing types.



**Figure 7.1.    Current residential development in False Creek South**
Source: City of Vancouver, The Future of False Creek South: Advancing a Conceptual Development Plan and Addressing Lease Expiries, Levitt, 2021.

■ Relocate to New Parcels

**Figure 7.2.** **Buildings slated to be demolished and redeveloped upon lease expiry from 2036-2040**
Source: City of Vancouver, The Future of False Creek South: Advancing a Conceptual Development Plan and Addressing Lease Expiries, Levitt, 2021.



**Figure 7.3.** **Proposed new development in False Creek South.**
Source: City of Vancouver, The Future of False Creek South: Advancing a Conceptual Development Plan and Addressing Lease Expiries, Levitt, 2021.

The full report, once released, offered more detail as to the City's perspective. It highlighted that this was an "unusual procedural step" in City planning – that the Real Estate Department would not normally conduct the business of setting a future vision for public land in public, but that this step was taken in order to share information with False Creek South residents (Levitt, 2021b, p. 5). The report also tacitly acknowledged the unusual situation of planning for the redevelopment of an entire neighbourhood where there were existing residents, and that the relationship between City roles of landowner and regulator is complex due to different approaches and priorities (Levitt, 2021b, p. 13). Finally, the report and the conceptual development plan were based on the assumption

that redevelopment costs such as soil remediation and engineering infrastructure would be funded through the development of the market-rate housing. Meanwhile, all of the non-market housing proposed in the plan, including the replacement of existing non-market and co-op housing, as well as social and cultural amenities and public infrastructure, would rely on securing senior government and partner funding. Without this funding, the proposal would see a "material impact" that would result in necessary alternative options being presented to Council (Levitt, 2021b, p. 5).

The release of the report resulted in a swift reaction from residents, stakeholders, and the media. The immediate demolition of the majority of non-market housing upon lease end, while the market-rate housing received lease extensions, created a rapid and negative impression of the plan among residents and allies. While RePlan leadership had been prepared to see redevelopment within the plan, the extent to which non-market housing would be impacted was unexpected. Reflecting on the report, Nancy Hannum said, "I wasn't naïve that City staff saw this piece of property as revenue… [but] the first glimpse was 'they're pushing us [co-ops] out'" (N. Hannum, Interview, February 20, 2023). Additionally, the redevelopment of non-market housing along Sixth Avenue and its replacement with market housing was seen as "disrespectful" of the original planning principles of the neighbourhood and of the neighbourhood's success as an urban experiment (N. Edelson, Interview, March 1, 2023). Allies like CHFBC were also shocked, calling the plan "flawed," and saying that the process leading to the proposed redevelopment had served to "poison the well" between False Creek South and the City (T. Armstrong, Interview, February 17, 2023), making cooperation and community support unlikely.

Outside of False Creek South, reaction to the City's conceptual development plan mimicked the split in housing debates between supply-side and affordable housing advocates. Some said that the plan was not ambitious enough, comparing it unfavourably to the densities on the north shore of False Creek and the imminent nearby development at Sen̓áḵw, which would see the same number of units (six thousand) on one sixth of the land (Chan, 2021). Others raised concerns about the demolition of existing affordable housing and the perceived inequities of moving non-market housing to the edges of the neighbourhood, pointing out that the construction of non-market housing in the plan was dependent on financial investments from senior levels of government (Gold, 2021). Mayor Kennedy Stewart, who had adhered closely to the

City's directives not to meet with RePlan, published an op-ed in *The Georgia Straight* which lauded the plan, saying that it "respected the past" while planning for a more "sustainable, affordable… and community-minded" future (Stewart, 2021). Former City Councillors and staff also published op-eds, but in opposition to the proposal, citing a lack of transparency and lack of recognition of the value of an engaged community that was open to new development (Beasley, 2021; Louis, 2019). Current Councillors had similar concerns with the process and the "transactional" nature of the plan (P. Fry, Interview, March 6, 2023) but were told by the Real Estate Department that this was the necessary first step before community planning could start – in spite of the fact that community planning had been underway for over a year in 2018 before it was paused. However, they also recognized the need to move the process forward so that lease issues could be resolved (C. Boyle, Interview, February 24, 2023).

The proposed changes to what residents and allies viewed as integral parts of False Creek South – a high proportion of low-income and middle-income housing, the mix of housing types throughout the neighbourhood - represented a schism between the "abstractions of finance" and the very real "concreteness of urban places and everyday lives" (Fields, 2017b, p. 7), and a drastic threat of place disruption. For co-op residents in particular, the perceived focus of near-term redevelopment and displacement of their housing type was a threat to the autonomy and self-governance that was a core value of co-op housing. When displacement is expected, it can present not only as a loss of housing, but as a personal loss and threat to personal autonomy (Bradley, 2017a, p. 167). For the community, the way in which the conceptual development concept was formulated and announced, not through a community planning program, but as part of a "transactional" and in-camera decision-making process also represented a threat. The long-standing tradition of an engaged community that had stewarded the original values of the neighbourhood since the 1970s would not be possible, or would be harder to achieve, if the conceptual development plan moved forward. With only one City Council meeting at which they could respond, residents were anxious about their ability to convince City Councillors to reject the plan. Sorensen and Sagaris write that these types of short-term engagement events are structured to favour individual feedback on a proposal, rather than collective participation at the neighbourhood scale (2020, p. 298). As RePlan formulated a strategy to respond to the report, a significant focus was on how

to harness the power of collective action in order to have more influence over the final outcome.

## 7.2. Developing a strategy

There were nine days from the release of the report on October 12, 2021 to its presentation to City Council on October 21, 2021. RePlan had prepared for the release but the contents of the report was unknown to them, and with only a few hours to digest its contents, RePlan's early responses to media inquiries on October 12 were reserved, but focused on increasing the amount of affordable housing in the neighbourhood, security for current residents, and for significant community involvement in planning processes moving forward. However, RePlan leaders also maintained a sense of positivity, in keeping with the long-term values established by the group, and they expressed hope for a positive working relationship with the City (Fumano, 2021). After the initial shock of October 12, RePlan moved quickly. The AWG met on October 13 to discuss the report's implications for the co-ops in the neighbourhood. In another example of the neighbourhood's social capital, Graham McGarva, a False Creek South resident and architect with extensive community planning experience, gave a presentation of his early analysis of the report and what the proposed densities and square footage would mean for the neighbourhood's physical form and urban design. They discussed in that meeting about drafting an amendment for the report that could be circulated to Councillors and supported by the community (Authorized Working Group, 2021c). By October 15, RePlan had firmed up its messaging about the report. A communique was sent out through the neighbourhood's *Between The Bridges* newsletter, noting that RePlan had been calling for increased density in False Creek South to meet neighbourhood and City priorities, but highlighting several areas of concern within the report, including: uncertainty of lease extension terms; uncertainty of funding for new and re-development of co-op and non-market housing; the dramatic increase of market-rate housing; and, inequitable treatment of non-market housing residents compared to market housing residents (False Creek South Neighbourhood Association, 2021g). Richard Evans said that this initial strategy was intuitive. The groundwork for a strategy was already in place after years of working together and preparing for such a moment, and the community was ready to ramp up its efforts at what was seen as the biggest challenge to the neighbourhood's alternative vision to

date. As Evans put it, "I think everybody sensed immediately that unless we spoke [out] the Goliath would crush us" (R. Evans, Interview, March 8, 2023).

On October 17 and 18 RePlan hosted three virtual Town Hall sessions for residents. The Town Halls included a presentation by McGarva with a "Big Picture" assessment of what the plan meant for False Creek South. He was followed by Nancy Hannum, Chair of the co-ops' AWG, who presented the impacts of the report on co-ops, including the relocation of almost 1000 co-op residents. Hannum highlighted that the conceptual development plan referred repeatedly to the need for senior government funding to replace the existing co-op housing, and called for clarity on any funding before the plan could be approved. She also drew attention to the imminent lease expiries of Marina and Creekview Co-ops, which were not explicitly addressed in the plan, and which were creating significant financial and emotional stress for residents. Hannum was followed by Richard Marchant, President of the Strata Leaseholders Society, who spoke about the report's inclusion of lease extensions for all strata properties, but the uncertainty of lease terms for those extensions. Finally, Richard Evans closed the meetings by giving an overview of RePlan's main concerns with the report and the key issues that Council would have to determine, including continuing lease uncertainty, the inversion of the neighbourhood's market and non-market housing mix, and the early demolition of existing affordable housing. He also gave an overview of the Council meeting process and how residents could share their thoughts with City Councillors (RePlan, 2021b). Hundreds of residents attended the Town Hall meetings, and the first meeting was recorded and distributed upon request to any False Creek South resident that could not attend the meeting.

Between the first Town Hall meeting on October 17 and the second meeting on October 18, RePlan shifted its approach. While the initial plan was to present City Councillors with one or more amendments to the REFM report that might make the conceptual development plan more palatable to neighbourhood residents, a decision was made to change tactics and push for the report to be referred to for information only. This phrase is innocuous but important. If the conceptual development plan "informed" future land use planning in False Creek South, which was the wording in the staff recommendation, the plan would set the vision for redevelopment and drive future planning. However, a referral for information would mean that the report would instead become one of many pieces of input into land use planning. Strategically, asking for a

referral for information also signaled the community's discontent with the proposed plan, and that residents were prepared to publicly oppose the plan because of its misalignment with the neighbourhood's alternative vision. The subsequent Town Halls on October 18 were attended by hundreds of residents who agreed with the approach. Messaging from the Town Halls and speaking points were circulated through co-op and strata mailing lists, via emails from RePlan, and through impromptu conversations between neighbours. Explaining how word spread throughout the community, Evans said, "We had the community, the [Neighbourhood] Association, the relationships. I'd go walk along the seawall and people would [stop me] and say 'I really want to speak to this…' So, it was easy in that sense [to spread the word]" (R. Evans, Interview, March 8, 2023). The existing social and organizational infrastructure made the dissemination of key information easier within the connected neighbourhood.

Media also played a role in RePlan's strategy. The money raised by co-op and strata residents had funded a communications consultant since early 2020, and with her guidance RePlan and False Creek South residents were able to publish several articles at key moments. Earlier pieces in the *Vancouver Sun* had highlighted the City's lack of transparency in creating a vision for the future of False Creek South (Fumano, 2021), and the capacity of co-ops to provide housing for diverse, mixed-income communities (White, 2021). On October 20, Jason Forsyth, then President of the False Creek Co-op Board and economic development officer for Tsleil-Waututh Nation, published a response to Mayor Kennedy Stewart's op-ed in *The Georgia Straight*. Forsyth's article called attention to the values of False Creek South, the stated desire by RePlan for more new housing, and the secrecy and in-camera nature of the City's conceptual development plan (2021). These articles served to put RePlan's alternative vision into the public discourse, shone a light on the secretive nature of the plan's development, and attempted to dispel any accusations of NIMBYism.

Behind the scenes, conversations were happening with key allies and City Councillors. As Community Planning Assistant, I made use of my personal and professional relationships with City Councillors and had phone calls and text exchanges over several days, trying to convey the feelings of the neighbourhood and find where there might be common ground. I paid particular attention to the equity issues that were raised by the community, including the redevelopment of the non-market housing and the relocation of almost all non-market housing residents, and the importance of the

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existing income-mix that would be inverted under the REFM plan. Nathan Edelson was also reaching out to Councillors, letting them know that there would be considerable community opposition that would continue if the conceptual development plan was approved by Council as it was written (N. Edelson, Interview, March 1, 2023). And Nancy Hannum was having frequent conversations with staff at CHFBC, making sure that their analysis of the financial and social implications for co-ops was aligned with RePlan's, and that RePlan had the support of CHFBC in asking for a referral for information (N. Hannum, Interview, February 20, 2023). Between each conversation RePlan members were checking in with each other and the community, floating the different possibilities for approaches, and supporting residents who were preparing their remarks to Council.

Outside of False Creek South, supporters of the neighbourhood's position as a model neighbourhood in Vancouver were also coming together to oppose the plan. They were galvanized by how they perceived the plan as a violation of False Creek South's unique place identity within Vancouver and by the high proportion of affordable housing in the neighbourhood. These supporters demonstrated the strong and enduring bridging social capital that existed in False Creek South, and that the neighbourhood was important not only to existing residents, but that others related to the neighbourhood's place identity of a of a supportive, collaborative community (Robinson and Attuyer, 2020). Some of these allies were made up of traditional supporters of False Creek South, including former Co-Director of Planning at the City of Vancouver, Larry Beasley, and UBC Professor Patrick Condon, who had both published earlier articles in support of RePlan's alternative vision (Beasley, 2021; Condon, 2021). Others were groups who saw the potential impacts of the REFM plan on an area known for low- and middle-income housing, and the precedent that a massive redevelopment could set for other areas of the city in the future. Members of the Vancouver City Planning Commission also supported RePlan, signing up to speak at the Council meeting and rallying support on social media[6]. They, too, were concerned about the loss of existing affordable housing and supportive communities, and the precedent that could be set for other communities if the conceptual development plan moved forward. Another resident of False Creek

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[6] I sat as a Commissioner and Co-Chair of the City of Vancouver's City Planning Commission, a volunteer advisory body that provides advice to City Council on long-range planning in Vancouver, but I was unable to speak publicly in that capacity due to potential conflict of interest.

South who was active in the AWG was the Co-Chair of the City's Seniors Advisory Committee, which similarly supported RePlan's vision of building more supportive seniors housing in the neighbourhood. Other important allies emerged from the Vancouver Tenants Union and Democratic Socialists of Vancouver, who reached out to RePlan for more information and started a letter writing campaign in support of the neighbourhood and the preservation of existing affordable housing. This mix of professionals and grassroots organizations bolstered the efforts of RePlan and gave legitimacy to the messages coming from the neighbourhood, demonstrating the power of place identity. With these pieces of strategy in place RePlan began to prepare for the Council meeting, and their one opportunity to persuade City Council that their alternative vision for the neighbourhood was a superior option to that presented by the Real Estate Department.

## 7.3.  The meeting

The City Council meeting to discuss the REFM conceptual development plan began in the afternoon of October 21, 2021. The meeting began with a presentation from City staff, led by Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager, and supported by Chuck Brook, the consultant who had drafted the conceptual development plan. The opening slide of the staff presentation described the expiring leases in False Creek South as an "opportunity" on "prime waterfront land" that could be "leveraged" to achieve City priorities over the coming decades (Levitt, 2021b), highlighting the difference in approach between the Real Estate Department and RePlan. It went on to describe the findings from the February 2021 engagement sessions, the neighbourhood's designation as a potential area for large site redevelopment in the co-op lease renewal framework from July 2021, and the proposed change in housing mix from two-thirds to one-third non-market housing. The presentation also noted the "important caveat" that all non-market housing proposed in the plan would require "significant senior government/third-party funding" and that additional costs, not accounted for within the conceptual development plan, would be further identified and refined through the community planning process (Levitt, 2021b, p. 31). Levitt also noted the Real Estate Department's intent to reflect the "scale and intensity of development" happening around False Creek basin, including on the north shore of False Creek and in nearby Sen̓áḵw, and that Council had a responsibility to act in the best interests of all Vancouverites who own public land (Levitt, 2021b, pp.

17-18). Finally, the presentation outlined the City's various relationships with False Creek South residents through its roles as landowner, landlord, and regulator. In each, residents of False Creek South were to be informed or consulted as one of several stakeholders through the City's "established consultation processes" (Levitt, 2021b, p. 33). In her comments to City Council, Levitt also noted that Council was "legally bound" to maintain the distinction between landowner and regulator through all of its discussions on the conceptual development plan (City of Vancouver, 2021c, Karen Levitt, October 21, 1:13). In effect, the conceptual development plan was a clear example of the real estate state and the privatization of city land, as defined by Stein and Mironova. In this state, although land remains publicly owned, private market-rate development is seen as the only way to deliver community goods. Under these planning conditions "public land becomes just another deal-making tool" rather than a means of addressing the affordability and housing crises (Stein and Mironova, 2020, p. 10). Following the presentation, City Councillors were permitted the opportunity to ask questions of staff. Councillors asked questions about the change in housing type and income mix, and there were specific questions about what types of amendments would be needed in order to maintain the existing housing mix in the neighbourhood. Councillors also directly referenced comments that they had received from residents and the media, including the perception that moving almost all of the non-market housing to Sixth Avenue would create an "inherent social inequity" (City of Vancouver, 2021c, October 21, 1:42), demonstrating that early conversations and messaging from RePlan had some impact in framing the discussion from the onset. Initial answers from staff on questions related to changing the recommendations indicated that any amendments to the recommendations or changes to the proposal would be "significant" and would require a "rework" of the entire plan (City of Vancouver, 2021c, October 21, 1:41).

After questions from Councillors, the public hearing portion of the meeting started. Over 120 people signed up to speak at the Council meeting – the majority of whom were current or former residents of False Creek South. To support residents, RePlan had circulated key messages, and as Community Planning Assistant I fielded dozens of emails asking for information on how to sign up and what to say. We advised everyone to speak from the heart – to say what living in False Creek South meant to them, and how the conceptual development plan would impact their lives. The diversity of residents who signed up to speak meant that a wide range of stories was told. Nancy

Hannum said about the people who signed up to speak that "often when there's a group of people speaking, they've got a script. Different order with a little personality thrown in. This was not that. Every single person spoke from the heart. And every single person had a different experience that was real" (N. Hannum, Interview, February 20, 2023). The sharing of personal stories was both a political strategy and a way to support residents who wanted to stand up for their neighbourhood. As a strategy piece, RePlan had seen that sharing personal stories during the co-op lease renewal framework Council meeting had been effective, and that some Councillors were still undecided about how they would vote. Personal stories are also an effective and compelling way for residents and activists to foster an understanding about why they are opposing a particular proposal or development, particularly when they are tied to concepts of place attachment and place identity (Manzo and Perkins, 2006, p. 340). For residents who were looking for support in writing their statements, encouraging them to tell their own stories often made it easier to come up with something to say. Although False Creek South was home to many urban planners and professionals who could speak to the technical specifics of the plan, it was an important part of RePlan strategy to avoid planning jargon, and to root the messaging of False Creek South as a collective symbol in Vancouver and a home to thousands of people.

Although each resident wrote their remarks individually, because of the longstanding and existential threat of redevelopment, they inevitably touched upon similar themes of place attachment, place identity, and place disruption (Foell and Foster, 2022). The strong sense of place attachment that had existed in False Creek South since its development, as well as the community's shared alternative vision, came through in speakers' stories and shared memories through four common themes. The first, the inequitable treatment of the neighbourhood's lower-income residents, demonstrated the commitment of False Creek South residents to maintaining a mixed-income neighbourhood in which residents of all incomes lived alongside each other and partook in neighbourhood activities equally. The second theme was the long-standing importance of co-operative values in the neighbourhood, which had been implemented by the original community planners and stewarded by False Creek South residents over several decades. These values, which residents described as essential to the neighbourhood's success, included the importance of co-operation, mutual care, and voluntarism. Third, residents and supporters spoke about the negative place identity that

had resulted from the decade-long conflict with the City, and how the lack of transparency and perceived disregard for the neighbourhood's historical significance and original principles had caused residents stress and a strong sense of place disruption. Finally, the fourth theme from the Council meeting was the strength of local governance from the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association and the community-wide support for implementing a redevelopment plan that respected the neighbourhood's place identity.

## Theme 1 – Inequitable treatment of lower-income residents

One of the most common themes from speakers was the inequitable treatment of non-market housing residents within the City's conceptual development plan. The plan stated that replacement non-market housing would be built along 6th Avenue, and that upon lease expiry the vast majority of current non-market housing residents would move into those buildings, while their existing buildings would be demolished and redeveloped, often into new market strata or rental buildings. The proposal was seen as deeply incompatible with the original values upon which False Creek South was established, wherein lower- and middle-income housing would be evenly distributed across the neighbourhood, undetectable from the housing for higher-income residents. While the consultant Chuck Brook noted in his presentation that this step was necessary in order to ensure that existing non-market housing residents could move without "disruption" into the new buildings (City of Vancouver, 2021c, Chuck Brook, October 21, 1:32), many residents and supporters noted that strata owners were not being asked to move, and in fact, were receiving lease extensions. Some called attention to the value of the waterfront property occupied by some existing co-op and non-market rentals and noted that if they were redeveloped as market rental or strata buildings, they would yield much higher incomes for the City (City of Vancouver, 2021e, October 27, 3:38), implying that the potential higher revenue was driving the City's plan.

Speakers also brought up the plan's inversion of the original income-mix in the neighbourhood through the construction of thousands of new units of market-rate strata and rental housing, while proposing proportionately fewer non-market housing units. They spoke to False Creek South's unique position in the city as a neighbourhood with proportionately more non-market housing and called for that ratio to be mandated into any future planning for the neighbourhood. In speaking to this issue, many speakers

brought up their perception that the City was beholden to private development and the real estate state, and that the City's reliance on real estate development to achieve social benefits was inequitably harming both existing and potential future lower- and middle-class residents. Some pointed out that although the plan spoke of creating more inclusion and equity in False Creek South (Levitt, 2021b, p. 19), there were no discernable measures to indicate how the City would achieve those goals while focusing on market-rate housing, nor how the potential displacement of hundreds of existing lower-income families would serve to increase equity and inclusion in the neighbourhood (City of Vancouver, 2021c, October 21, 3:27). Others asserted that by linking the redevelopment of housing False Creek South to the market, it would be impossible to provide the affordable housing goals set out in the plan, which they contended were already too low to begin with and challenged Councillors to be more ambitious, referencing the lowered, and eventually missed, low-income housing targets in Olympic Village. One resident stated that "They say that no plan survives contact with the enemy, by which I mean the housing market. This proposal aimed low and will achieve lower. Aim higher" (City of Vancouver, 2021c, October 21, 9:28).

These positions were supported by non-profit housing experts that signed up to speak, including the CEO of the Co-op Housing Federation of BC, Thom Armstrong, and CEO of the BC Non-Profit Association, Jill Atkey, who each lamented the loss of the housing and income-mix in the proposed plan, and who called for the ratio of non-market to market housing to be "rebalanced" to the original neighbourhood makeup (City of Vancouver, 2021c, Thom Armstrong, October 21, 9:07), by prioritizing "community-owned [housing] on community-owned land" (City of Vancouver, 2021d, Jill Atkey, October 26, 4:48).

## Theme 2 – The stewardship of co-operative values

The second theme that was brought up throughout the meeting was the strength of co-operative values in False Creek South, and how those values had played a significant role in creating a successful community from the 1970s urban experiment. A strong sense of stewardship of those values among residents had been identified by City staff during the 2017-2018 community planning process, with a Senior Planner noting that residents felt not only a sense of stewardship in the present, but "for the future, even after they [current residents] are gone" (Senior Planner, Interview, February 17, 2023).

Co-op and strata residents alike spoke to the importance that co-operative values and played in the neighbourhood, and how these values had been passed down to both children and new residents living in False Creek South. People who had recently moved into the neighbourhood spoke about the positive impact that living in False Creek South had had on their lives, and how they had found a place where they could "live their values" (City of Vancouver, 2021c, October 21, 6:56). One resident commented that in her experience, "[Children in False Creek South] live in a beautiful growing community where adults are role models showing how a community work. Kids see when the parents go to community meetings and spend their volunteer time to make their home a better place" (City of Vancouver, 2021d, October 26, 3:46). Another told Council that "I raised two boys who grew into young men who value and embody inclusivity, diversity, and empathy with all people. The community [of False Creek South] indelibly nurtured this outlook in them through lived experience. It is the air you breathe here" (City of Vancouver, 2021d, October 26, 6:40).

According to residents, the concentration of co-ops in the neighbourhood, as well as the existence of a strong Neighbourhood Association that had relied on volunteers for over 40 years, was a testament to the strength of the community and its commitment to carrying on the original values. Co-operative values also emphasize the importance of democracy, autonomy and self-governance, and multiple residents spoke to their pride in having managed and maintained affordable housing and supportive communities for over 40 years (City of Vancouver, 2021c, October 21, 7:01). A loss of those values, which the Real Estate Department plan represented, would represent a failure of stewardship on the part of current residents (City of Vancouver, 2021d, October 26, 4:23).

## Theme 3 – Treatment by the City

Place identity is often associated with positive factors of one's neighbourhood, but the negative elements of place disruption can also play a strong role in creating a sense of place identity among residents (Devine-Wright, 2009, p. 428). During their speeches, current and former residents of False Creek South identified the perceived negative treatment of the community by the City of Vancouver as one impetus for creating such a strong sense of place identity in the community. In particular, they spoke about the City's lack of transparency in developing the plan, the lack of communication

from the City to RePlan about the contents of the plan, and the responsibilities that the City had to residents as both landowner and landlord. Speaking about the City's role as their landlord, one resident said that, "This report was directed in closed door meetings and residents found out from the news that their homes are to be demolished. A normal, transparent communication should not have come as a surprise from [our] landlord" (City of Vancouver, 2021c, October 21, 7:30).

The Real Estate Department had also declined to share any of the financial assumptions underpinning their plan, only saying that the pro forma – or the financial assumptions and projections of the development plan – could not be shared publicly at this time. This left the community, as well as housing and development experts, unable to directly respond to many of the conclusions and proposals made in the plan. This lack of transparency was cited as part of a pattern of behaviour by the City's Real Estate Department that had contributed to a lack of trust between the neighbourhood and the City. Residents spoke about how the lack of communication and the shock of seeing their homes demolished, particularly after the City had recently passed a framework for co-op lease renewal, had created a common sense of fear and uncertainty amongst residents (City of Vancouver, 2021c, October 21, 7:45).

The plan's apparent disregard for previously passed City policies, including the co-op lease renewal framework and the community planning principles from the 2017 planning process in False Creek South, were another common talking point for speakers. That community planning process had been well-regarded by both the community and the City planners. But where that process had been "hopeful" (Senior Planner, Interview, February 17, 2023), some speakers stated that the Real Estate Department process and release of the conceptual development plan had left them anxious and unable to sleep (City of Vancouver, 2021d, October 26, 4:17). Residents also connected this perceived lack of attention and lack of transparency to the real estate state, pointing out that by not sharing their pro forma, City staff was making it easier to call for a huge increase in market-rate housing and inversion of the current housing mix without having to divulge why that was necessary.

## Theme 4 – Local self-governance and an alternative vision

The fourth common theme raised during the City Council meeting was the strong presence of local governance within False Creek South, and the work that the community had done to create an alternative vision for redeveloping False Creek South that took into account the original principles of the neighbourhood, while also addressing City priorities like densification and more affordable housing. They spoke about the long history of the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association and how it had advocated within the community for equity and inclusion, including sponsoring a family of Syrian refugees and creating a welcoming committee for the new residents of Margaret Mitchell Place temporary modular housing. Wendy Herdin, President of the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association, spoke about how the FCSNA took its role as representative of the community "seriously," organizing residents on a variety of social issues, hosting community planning workshops to ensure everyone's voice was heard, and working diligently to create a collaborative relationship with the City of Vancouver (City of Vancouver, 2021d, Wendy Herdin, October 26, 9:14).

The alternative vision for the neighbourhood, which had been developed over several years within the community, also came up frequently, and echoed many of the points calling for more lower-income housing to be included in future redevelopment. Residents spoke about the community's vision for a campus of care that would allow older residents to age in community while freeing up larger units in the neighbourhood for new families. They mentioned the community planning workshops that had been done after the City's formal process had been paused, and how those workshops had brought people together to create a sense of collective imagination for what False Creek South could look like in the future. Many spoke about the need to increase density so that more people could live in False Creek South, but added that that density should come in the form of more affordable housing, rather than the mostly market-rate housing proposed by the City. RePlan's work was also brought up frequently, with residents citing the capacity and organization within RePlan in bringing together the community, and their dismay that that work had been largely dismissed by the Real Estate Department (City of Vancouver, 2021e, October 27, 3:43). Many people called on City Council to move the planning process back to the Planning Department and to re-engage with RePlan and the alternative vision that had been co-created with residents

over several years (City of Vancouver, 2021c, October 21, 6:47; City of Vancouver, 2021d, October 26, 7:29).

Finally, some speakers brought up the benefit that such a community brought to the City, and how a community committed to keeping housing costs separate from market forces enabled inclusion and equity more than others. Wendy Herdin, in her speech to Council, noted that False Creek South had been one of the only neighbourhoods in Vancouver that was supportive of temporary modular housing for unhoused people being built in their neighbourhood – where others had protested (Little, 2019), False Creek South had welcomed it. Other considered the importance of having engaged communities in a city. In an interview, Thom Armstrong said that "The City [of Vancouver] should be saying 'We are so lucky to have this community'…fighting back against ideas that aren't in their best interest, because that's what builds a city'" (T. Armstrong, Interview, February 17, 2023). Bill Yuen, Executive Director of the Heritage Vancouver Society, echoed this sentiment in his comments to Council, asking, "To a city government, what is the value of a well-functioning community with cooperative and motivated citizens? To a city government, what is the cost of *losing* a well-functioning community with cooperative and socially motivated citizens" (City of Vancouver, 2021e, Bill Yuen, October 27, 3:34)?

Behind the scenes, RePlan and allies continued to speak to Councillors about a path forward that would work for the community and the City. Councillors were also speaking regularly to City staff, asking for clarification on procedure and what could be done to shift the path of the plan with amendments. Initially, staff told Councillors that Council approval of the REFM conceptual development plan was required before community planning could begin; this was apparently normal City procedure. However, when Councillors pressed staff during private conversations, staff agreed that community planning could begin without Council's full endorsement of the directions set out in the REFM plan. This initial lack of clarity about the process created some confusion amongst Councillors. Some, including Mayor Stewart, had praised the conceptual development plan, with the assumption that it would be approved as written. They were taken aback by the reaction from the neighbourhood and its supporters, and the new direction from staff gave them an opportunity to pivot their approach in support of the community (C. Boyle, Interview, February 24, 2023). Although Councillors and City staff expected some negative reaction from the community, it was generally

believed that the plan would be accepted by Council with a few minor amendments. The swift pushback from False Creek South residents and their allies, as well as the nature of the opposition, was surprising. Councillors were expecting to hear resistance to the proposed densities within the plan, but the feedback being focused on the proposed changes to the housing mix and the inequitable treatment of lower-income residents caught them off guard (C. Boyle, Interview, February 24, 2023; P. Fry, Interview, March 6, 2023). They quickly began reaching out to outside experts for their opinions. Thom Armstrong, the CEO of CHFBC, was a frequent speaker in favour of affordable housing, and had a long history with Councillors due to the discussions surrounding the co-op lease renewal framework earlier in 2021. He described the release of the plan as "lobbing a grenade into the community" and expecting no "collateral damage" (T. Armstrong, Interview, February 17, 2023). As he spoke to Councillors behind the scenes, he recommended that those Councillors who had spoken out in support of the plan listen to the community and walk back their support of the plan gracefully, and he reinforced the messages coming from False Creek South, including that the conceptual development plan be referred for information only as part of a fulsome community planning process (T.Armstrong, Interview, February 17, 2023).

For Councillors, the strong negative community reaction put them in a difficult situation as they grappled with how to move the planning process forward in False Creek South, while also recognizing that the conceptual development plan, and the process, were flawed. Backroom conversations, led by Councillors Christine Boyle of OneCity Vancouver and Pete Fry of the Green Party, centered around finding a "landing place" that would be accepted by the community and City staff. Because Councillors understood that the future of False Creek South was a difficult issue that had spanned a decade and three previous Councils, and they had all generally made commitments to RePlan during the 2018 election, no one wanted to land on the "wrong side" of the issue by not supporting the community (C. Boyle, Interview, February 24, 2023). Councillors had to decide to overcome their differences and work together on a solution, but ultimately "knew where things needed to go" to make the outcome workable for False Creek South residents, City staff, and for Council (P. Fry, Interview, March 6, 2023). In order to do that, there had to be an agreement that everyone would work together to find a successful solution that would result in an "engaging" process for the community, rather than a "transactional" one. "This [wasn't] about political points. This was about

delivering for the community and showing leadership. There was a very tacit understanding that we [Councillors] were not going to politicize this" so that all stakeholders were satisfied – or could live with – the final result (P. Fry, Interview, March 6, 2023). Then, once the drafted amendments were supported by RePlan and City staff, the possibility of unanimity amongst Councillors created a "juggernaut" effect, as no one wanted to be seen as being on the wrong side of history (P. Fry, Interview, March 6, 2023).

As conversations between Councillors and staff progressed, RePlan was kept apprised through the relationships that Edelson and I had established with certain Councillors, and we gave feedback on what Councillors were hearing both from other Councillors and from City staff. This communication was made easier by the strength of the existing community organization within False Creek South, and the trust that had been established between RePlan and City Councillors. "For me to be able to reach out and have people who were touchpoints… talking to a diverse, representative sample of neighbours… creates a very different kind of process" than a neighbourhood with multiple community groups with self-appointed leaders, who may not be representative of the wishes of their communities (C. Boyle, Interview, February 24, 2023).

On October 28, after three days of speakers and a third round of questions from City Councillors to staff, Councillors entered into final discussion and debate on the report. This part of the proceedings moved quickly. Councillor Boyle began by introducing an amendment that clearly reflected the wishes of the community and the behind-the-scenes conversations of the previous several days. Councillors Carr, Kirby-Yung, and DeGenova also introduced amendments that built on the requests from residents, advice from outside experts, and the questions that Councillors had directed to staff. The final amendments included the following changes (see the Appendix for the final motion as approved):

1.  That Council receive the report for information only;

2.  That the report "inform but not constrain" the community planning process;

3.  That the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association be deeply engaged in an open and transparent community planning process that give consideration to the significance of social and spatial equity in the neighbourhood, with a goal of achieving the 1/3 lower-income, 1/3

middle-income, and 1/3 higher-income mix, and that existing buildings be kept for as long as possible;

4. That the plan set a goal of working with the non-profit housing sector to deliver all housing types in the neighbourhood;

5. That existing residents be able to return to new homes in their original area within False Creek South;

6. That Council liaisons be appointed as a link between City Hall and the neighbourhood (City of Vancouver, 2021g).

Each amendment and the final recommendations were approved unanimously by Council. Their support for the amended motion and the community was reflected in their closing statements. Almost every Councillor spoke, acknowledging the emotional nature of the discussions, and the earnestness with which residents called for more housing for lower- and middle-income people. Mayor Stewart called the proceedings a "signal to all neighbourhoods… to embrace the ethos of False Creek South," (City of Vancouver, 2021f, Kennedy Stewart, October 28, 5:19) while Councillor Swanson acknowledged the work that Council had done across party lines to achieve several unanimous amendments, calling the closing comments a rare "love-in" for this often fractured Council (City of Vancouver, 2021f, Jean Swanson, October 28, 5:20). Councillors also spoke to what the original principles of False Creek South represented in Vancouver as a neighbourhood that was built to create a supportive community, and they spoke of their own personal connections to the neighbourhood, reflecting on the public image and collective nostalgia that they also felt (City of Vancouver, 2021f, October 28, 5:27).

Throughout the community, most of whose members were watching the proceedings online, there was shock that what they had been asking for years was acknowledged by Councillors and reflected so clearly in the amended motion. Richard Evans recalls the moment that Boyle's amendment was introduced as "profound" and "enormously satisfying" (R. Evans, Interview, March 8, 2023). Edelson, who had continued to talk to Councillors until the final moments of the meeting, had received an advance copy of some of the proposed amendments to get his take on whether or not the community would support them. "Up until the very last minute, it wasn't clear what was going to happen. And then the day before the [October 28] meeting, Christine Boyle phoned me and said, 'I think we have the votes now'" (N. Edelson, Interview, March 1, 2023). Councillor Boyle, who had stickhandled many of the conversations between other

Councillors and RePlan, recalls that finding a compromise was one of her strongest memory of the two-week period - a moment when staff, Councillors, and the neighbourhood found a path forward that would also reduce the "heat" of the conflict between RePlan and City staff (C. Boyle, Interview, February 24, 2023).

# Chapter 8.
# Discussion

What made the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association's arguments so compelling that a fractured City Council would work for two weeks to find a unanimous solution that both supported the community wishes while recognizing City staff work on a complex and challenging portfolio? Ideologically, the housing debate in Vancouver in 2021 was split, both among the public and within City Council. The 2018 election had resulted in a divided Council, made up of an independent, progressive Mayor, and four political parties that spanned the political spectrum. Public opinion was divided among advocates for supply-side solutions, so-called NIMBYs, and those who believed that new housing development should focus on increasing non-market housing supply. Supply-side supporters argued that that scarcity of all housing types drives housing prices up, and that by increasing the total number of homes housing and rental prices will go down. Advocates for increased non-market housing argued that relying on market-rate housing supply as a means to counter the affordability crisis served to increase inequity, as the combination of global capital and the financialization of housing as an investment opportunity restricts access to new housing from those in need (Fainstein, 2016). NIMBY – a term often used as an insult to describe anyone opposed to a housing project (Devine-Wright, 2009, p. 430) – opposition varied depending on the specific development, but frequent points of contention included the provision of lower-income housing in middle- and higher-income neighbourhoods, such as the construction of temporary modular housing in the Marpole neighbourhood (Little, 2019), the development of non-market rental buildings (O'Connor, 2019; Smith, 2020), and high-density developments that "threatened" the existing neighbourhood character of Kitsilano (Chan, 2022). To support their positions each group followed a similar strategy at public hearings, rallying dozens of speakers to speak in an attempt to overwhelm proceedings with their specific talking points.

These three viewpoints exerted varying levels of influence over Council decisions depending on the specific development proposal and talking points. With no clear mandate for any party, Councillors demonstrated that they were willing to make a decision or change their mind based on public feedback (McElroy, 2022) rather than sticking to ideological party lines, as had been the case with past Councils. This dynamic

often resulted in frequent close and unpredictable results during Council votes as Councillors sometimes made up their minds about which way to vote at the last minute. As a result, the public became savvier about the impact that they could have at public hearings, resulting in a "numbers game" in which opposing sides encouraged as many people as possible to sign up to speak at each hearing in an attempt to sway Councillors' opinions (P. Fry, Interview, March 6, 2023). Council meetings and public hearings often stretched for hours, and sometimes, days (McElroy, 2022). Some middle- and higher-density projects were approved, with Councillors speaking to the need to build more housing in Vancouver quickly. Others were rejected when communities spoke out en masse, for example against the potentially harmful impacts of the project on Chinatown's cultural legacy and existing low-income residents (Siggers, 2021), or the construction of townhomes that were deemed to be "not affordable enough" (Lee-Young & Fumano, 2019).

The challenge for RePlan and residents of False Creek South was how to walk the line between a progressive vision for the future that included new housing while preserving the values that were most important to them, and without taking on the unflattering NIMBY label. The False Creek South community and members of RePlan had been labelled for years by supply-side supporters as NIMBYs who had won the lottery (Bradshaw, 2021). To those critics, False Creek South represented a past era of urban planning that was no longer able to provide the needed housing and services in a city with a growing population and housing crisis. Even some supporters of the neighbourhood said that they felt that RePlan's messaging could be repetitive and naïve to the challenges facing the city, which they felt could make it difficult for RePlan and False Creek South to maintain their relevance as a viable alternative for city-building (T. Armstrong, Interview, February 17, 2023; P. Fry, Interview, March 6, 2023). However, for many other urbanists, residents of Vancouver, and residents of False Creek South, the neighbourhood was an emblem of a political moment before the advent of the real-estate state when co-operatives, federal government funding, and municipal land use planning united to build a different kind of neighbourhood. It was a concrete example of the type of city building that was possible with enough political will, where land and housing could be removed from market forces, and where people of all income levels could live side-by-side. The fact that the original values that planners had hoped would become part of the neighbourhood fabric had been realized, like a strong sense of local self-governance

and an acceptance of a mix of incomes, was confirmation for proponents that the 1970s experiment had worked.

In its efforts to persuade City Council that the existing neighbourhood housing and income mixes were worth preserving RePlan tried to connect with those feelings of nostalgia and the value placed on the original neighbourhood planning principles in its messaging, while simultaneously minimizing anything that might make False Creek South residents seem to be NIMBYs. RePlan's main messages were the importance of renewing existing land leases at an affordable rate, maintaining the neighbourhood's original income and housing mix, and building new housing on the empty lands in the neighbourhood that reflected the neighbourhood's historical equitable urban design and housing distribution. For RePlan, the consistency, or what some referred to as the repetitiveness, of their messaging was a key component of organizing. According to Richard Evans, in the leadership's view that messaging resonated with residents, both long-term and new, and as a result residents were able to understand and speak confidently to the issues facing the neighbourhood. The key messages were also adapted to reflect the feedback and input that RePlan heard from the community over years of organizing (R. Evans, Interview, March 8, 2023). In the end, in spite of critiques from supporters of supply-side housing solutions, RePlan's messaging persuaded City Council to amend the City staff report, and many points made by RePlan and False Creek South residents were reflected in those amendments.

According to the evidence presented in my thesis, the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association effectively used the concepts of place identity and place attachment to achieve its goal of convincing City Council to amend City staff recommendations for the future redevelopment of False Creek South. It did so in three ways. The first was by exemplifying a strong local governance model that had stewarded local values of community and was able to mobilize residents and supporters to speak out in support of the neighbourhood. The second was by successfully presenting the neighbourhood as the antithesis of the Goliath of the Real Estate Department and the preconditions of the real estate state. The FCSNA did so by emphasizing the possibilities for city building when affordable housing and a mix of incomes were prioritized over market-based development approaches. Finally, messaging from the Neighbourhood Association and its supporters reiterated to City Councillors over and

over that the unique nature of False Creek South's development and the continuity of such a strong sense of place identity and collective nostalgia were worth saving.

**Strong neighbourhood-level governance**

The first place-based factor that influenced City Council was the existence of the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association as a legitimate and long-standing community organization in the neighbourhood. The strength of the neighbourhood movement has fluctuated over many decades, but it was at strongest and most active in the 1970s, when the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association was established (Hasson and Ley, 1994, p. 32). That fortuitous start legitimated FCSNA from the very start by giving residents of the new neighbourhood one clear place to come together and work collectively.

We can use Martin's three-step place-frames framework to analyze the steps taken by the Neighbourhood Association to establish itself as a legitimate vehicle for neighbourhood organizing, and how it was able to identify problems and possible solutions. As discussed earlier, the FCSNA clearly established the community's physical boundaries (motivational frame), its common problem and source of antagonism (diagnostic frame), and a solution in the form of a collectively supported alternative to the city's vision for the future of the neighbourhood (prognostic frame). According to Martin, the use of place-frames establishes a community organization as the natural representative of the neighbourhood and as the best entity to carry out the solutions uncovered during the prognostic frame (2003). By 2021 RePlan had lasted through four City Councils and was an established structure with political legitimacy. The Neighbourhood Association was able to leverage this legitimacy and the strong sense of place identity associated with False Creek South to engage with City Councillors. After years of outreach and communicating about the serious issues of place disruption that threatened False Creek South, there was a sense that Councillors understood the core issues in the neighbourhood. And, through the alternative visioning that the Neighbourhood Association and RePlan had led, RePlan had positioned itself as a willing partner in future development in the neighbourhood (N. Hannum, Interview, February 20, 2023), as long as the development was in keeping with the existing place-based values. The ongoing communication between Councillors and RePlan demonstrated that there was a strong desire within City Council to make good on the

commitments that they had made to False Creek South residents during the 2018 election campaign, including the preservation and expansion of those important neighbourhood values. RePlan's focus had always been on communicating the importance of continuing and expanding the model neighbourhood's success to City Councillors and staff, and that strategy ultimately paid dividends by influencing the decision makers (P. Fry, Interview, March 6, 2023).

The existence of residents' established sense of responsibility over local governance and multiple levels of democracy within the neighbourhood – both within individual buildings and at the Neighbourhood Association level – combined with a strong collective sense of place attachment facilitated residents' ability to organize and speak out at the City Council meeting. The sheer volume of people who came out to speak in support of False Creek South was one demonstration of that. At the co-op lease renewal framework meeting in July 2021 over 50 False Creek South residents spoke. City staff may have assumed that a similar number of residents would sign up to speak in October 2021, but according to Co-op Housing Federation of BC (CHFBC) CEO Thom Armstrong, whose organization led the lease renewal framework negotiations on behalf of co-ops, "[City staff] were not only wrong," in that estimate, "but they were wrong by an order of magnitude" (T. Armstrong, Interview, February 17, 2023). Over 150 people signed up to speak at October 2021 meeting. That number may have helped, not only to outweigh the comments from any critics of the neighbourhood, but also to contribute to the image of RePlan as a coordinated, prepared, and representative of the community. As Nancy Hannum told me in an interview, "I think [City staff] misread us. We did our research, and we knew our stuff" (N. Hannum, Interview, February 20, 2023). For RePlan, being able to demonstrate the capacity of the neighbourhood to organize and show up was an important display of social capital and the collective action that had been done in the community. If hundreds of residents had not written letters to Council and shown up to speak at the Council meeting, RePlan leadership believe that there may have been a very different outcome. Evans believes that "if we [FCS residents] weren't there, then I think Council's reservations [about the plan] would have been reassured by staff… I think we were able to focus their attention to [their reservations]…without us they would have been overridden by the Goliath" (R. Evans, Interview, March 8, 2023). Sorensen and Sagaris describe the cumulative benefits of such organization as a form of social capital; organizations with multi-

generational history can build and pass on skills to new residents, allowing them to better respond to place disruptions like the threat of redevelopment. These skills and ability to articulate alternate visions for city-building can bring new objectives and approaches to city planning. They also made the point, like many speakers did at the City Council meeting, that "it seems certain that [a] city would be poorer without the emergence and successful completion of such projects arising from community-led processes" (Sorensen and Sagaris, 2010, p. 311). Fagotto and Fung echo this sentiment; their analysis of the Minneapolis Neighbourhood Revitalization Program revealed that the presence of strong, resourced, and empowered neighbourhood associations in Minneapolis resulted in more residents being engaged and in more equitable project outcomes (Fagotto and Fung, 2006, p. 653). This was demonstrated in False Creek South by the Neighbourhood Association's ability to effectively organize residents, provide the information and resources needed for residents to feel confident speaking at the meeting, and in the final amendments which included provisions for more affordable housing to be included in the community plan.

**The role of Goliath**

The second factor that may have contributed to the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association's success was the system that was designated by the community as the Goliath to their David in the diagnostic frame step of place-frames. Although the Real Estate Department was part of the City of Vancouver, and although the role of City Council as landowner versus regulator was laid out many times, the "right" way for the City to approach real estate development and provide appropriate housing was a complicated and contentious issue. Despite years of housing supply-side-oriented City Councils, housing prices and the number of unhoused people in Vancouver had continued to rise. Political observers saw the divided City Council elected in 2018 as a reaction to the previous Vision Vancouver Council's inability to make any significant headway in solving the housing crisis, and the new Council had no clear mandate on what type of approach to take. The Real Estate Department represented the real estate state argument, and the plan put forward for the future of False Creek South was a clear illustration of that, with its focus on huge increases in market-rate housing at the expense of current lower- and middle-income residents. This gave the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association and RePlan a clearly defined Goliath at which to focus its efforts. They made their target the Real Estate Department's inability to

understand the importance of False Creek South's unique place within Vancouver's development history and to imagine an alternative way to plan cities outside of the real estate state (Stein, 2019, p. 3). After years of collective visioning RePlan was able to give City Councillors a clear, desirable alternative for the neighbourhood that respected the original community values and that was supported by residents.

The fact that the Goliath identified by False Creek South and RePlan was the market-based real estate market played a role in the Neighbourhood Association's success. RePlan focused on the inequities presented in the Real Estate Department's plan, including the inversion of the income mix and the inequitable treatment of existing lower-income residents. In doing so, RePlan was able to highlight that community planning based on market-rate development assumptions would result in lower overall levels of affordable housing and displacement of existing lower-income residents. RePlan and the Neighbourhood Association were also able to leverage the existing neighbourhood as an example of what was possible if communities were built based on the premise of maximizing affordable housing and income mix, rather than on assumptions of market development and profit; the success of the neighbourhood itself gave their argument more legitimacy.

RePlan's opposition to the seemingly inevitable market-rate development of the real estate state and the extraction of limited community benefit from that development touched a nerve with City Councillors and many members of the public who believed that affordable housing needed to be built with "intention" and that free-market development does not have that intention (P. Fry, Interview, March 6, 2023) but were often stymied by community opposition to affordable housing or developer's profit margins. The FCSNA was able to clearly articulate their support for building more housing for lower- and middle-income people, and because of the long-standing relationships with Councillors and the bridging social capital employed by the Neighbourhood Association, the arguments made by the FCSNA and supporters were viewed as genuine and legitimate (C.Boyle, Interview, February 24, 2023).

The real estate state as Goliath also allowed larger questions about the use of public land to be part of the discussion. While the City's internal and public messaging focused on the public ownership of the land and its potential to help address city-wide priorities, their approach was the in-camera development of the market-based Real

Estate Department conceptual development plan. But for critics of the process, the public ownership of the land meant that the vision for the neighbourhood should be determined in public, by the public. Fainstein cites Rawls and Lefebvre in her argument that public land should be used to increase equity for disadvantaged residents (Fainstein, 2012). She further elaborates by stating that equity is achieved through public land not through the development of "highest and best use" – which results in trickle down benefits that disproportionately benefit higher-income residents – but by the distribution of "possession of space" that grants lower-income residents more equitable access (Fainstein, 2012, p. 25). If, as the City stated in its report on the future of False Creek South, increasing equity and inclusion on public land is a priority, then according to Fainstein, that can only be achieved through the removing the land from the market (Fainstein, 2012). Sorensen and Sagaris also argue that public land necessitates the right for citizens to take part in collective decision-making over the use of land (2020, p. 302). The conceptual development plan, which had been developed in-camera by the Real Estate Department and a private consultant, proposed to set a vision for the public land in False Creek South that would have set the direction for future community planning. This secrecy, along with the City's refusal to share its pro forma for the proposed redevelopment, gave RePlan and its supporters a target at which to aim, and to raise the issue of who public land is for. Although City staff spoke about City Council's responsibility to the broader Vancouver public when dealing with the public land in False Creek South, for Thom Armstrong, the lack of transparency about the financial assumptions behind the plan resulted in an uneven and unfair playing field for opponents of the plan. "This is the commons. We're talking about stuff that's a public good… [What] drove me crazy was the secrecy and the lack of engagement with the community. Put [the pro forma] on the table and let people play with it" (T. Armstrong, Interview, February 17, 2023).

**Confirmation of collective nostalgia**

The final factor that led to the Neighbourhood Association's success was the strong sense of collective nostalgia and imagination that existed in the minds of many people in Vancouver, including City Councillors. False Creek South, with its unique development history, served as a symbol of an alternative form of development and the type of city building that is possible with enough political will. Bradley writes that a particular place can have many, and sometimes competing, images within people's

mind, and so the role of a successful community group is to promote one "convincing social construction of place identity that can secure universal acceptance" (2017b, p. 168). The key messages put forward by RePlan and residents of False Creek South aligned with the collective nostalgia and strong sense of place attachment that existed for both residents and outsiders, despite a similarly strong organization on the supply-side of the argument. Abundant Housing Vancouver, which often organized dozens of speakers for redevelopment proposals that called for increases in density, published op eds and sent out newsletters to supporters during the February 2021 public engagement, calling for more housing of all types in False Creek South, and characterizing current FCS residents as old, less diverse, and wealthy (Bradshaw, 2021). However, the group and their supporters were notably absent during the October 2021 discussion around the conceptual redevelopment plan; only three members signed up to speak. Councillor Pete Fry said that if Abundant Housing had been more active in the public discussion surrounding False Creek South, there may have been a different outcome at City Council. He noted that" if [Abundant Housing's] message [in February 2021] had resonated with people, it probably would have turned Council's mind" and led to approval of the conceptual development plan (P. Fry, Interview, March 6, 2023). Instead, RePlan's call to maintain the housing and income mix in the neighbourhood, and to focus on the retention and new development of affordable housing types rather than on market-rate housing, seemed to strike a chord with the public and with Council. After years of a worsening housing crisis and conflict with neighbourhood groups over the development of non-market and social housing, it was a change of pace to hear a neighbourhood demand, en masse, more low-income and non-market housing. For others who were also working behind the scenes with Councillors, it was easy to reinforce the messages from the community, because they were aligned with the mission and values of so many others (T. Armstrong, Interview, February 17, 2023).

While long-term residents and supporters had a sense of collective nostalgia and placed importance on the original values of the neighbourhood, City Councillors did, too. The personal stories shared by residents and the diversity of people who showed up to speak, representing a wide range of age groups and income levels, stood out as particularly impactful (N. Edelson, Interview, March 1, 2023; C. Boyle, February 24, 2023). As a long-time resident of Vancouver who was familiar with False Creek South's original development, Councillor Pete Fry recalled that many of his assumptions about

the community values in False Creek South were confirmed as he listened to speakers during the City Council meeting. He said about the Council meeting that:

> For people who have grown up in the city, there's a sense of pride of what False Creek South represents. I think the residents really did a good job of articulating the sort of values that those of us who never lived in False Creek South but always assumed were there, were in fact there, with the community, intergenerational support, and friendships and extended families. I think we saw the value in that. And the FCSNA did a really good job of articulating that and why we should support it, and centering community values in the conversation. (P. Fry, Interview, March 6, 2023)

In articulating commonly held notions of the community, Fry expressed a key part of the collective nostalgia for False Creek South. False Creek South was, and continues to be, a point of pride in the city of Vancouver, an experiment in urban design and community building that had been successful for decades (Senior Planner, Interview, February 17, 2023). Residents from False Creek South were able to articulate that their neighbourhood was more than just a nice place to live, but a place that centered community-based values and that had realized the strong sense of place identity and place attachment that the original 1970s planners had hoped to achieve. For those, like Councillor Fry, who did not live in False Creek South but knew its history, the messaging from RePlan and False Creek South residents confirmed that the neighbourhood continued to be a place about which Vancouver residents should be proud.

The long-term relationship that Councillors had with RePlan, along with their understanding of the neighbourhood as a unique part of the fabric of the city, helped to legitimize and give credence to the stories that residents were sharing. While other neighbourhoods and community organizations had sometimes used similar messaging to RePlan – for example, a particular development not being affordable enough – those arguments were often seen as NIMBY talking points that used equitable planning principles as a shield to block new development. However, the trust that had been built up through years of conversation and relationship-building between RePlan and local politicians also meant that City Council believed the messages being shared by residents to be authentic and credible (C. Boyle, Interview, February 24, 2023). According to Hannum, the biggest reason for the Neighbourhood Association's success was that the FCSNA gave Councillors credible arguments Councillors needed to amend the Real Estate Department plan (N. Hannum, Interview, February 20, 2023). In a city in

the midst of housing and affordability crises, a neighbourhood calling for more affordable housing and welcoming more lower-income residents resonated with Councillors and gave them the impetus to make amendments that sided with that vision.

## 8.1. Lessons from the False Creek South Experience

This case study of the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association and its October 2021 success in changing the proposed direction of neighbourhood redevelopment can inform both future neighbourhood-based movements as well as municipal approaches to working with communities where redevelopment is proposed.

It is first important to acknowledge in relation to other neighbourhoods in Vancouver that the False Creek South neighbourhood and the Neighbourhood Association are in a uniquely advantageous position in terms of getting their voices heard. The Neighbourhood Association was established by the City of Vancouver at the beginning of the development of False Creek South, and it remains the sole organization representing the entire community. Its make-up, with delegates elected from all of the co-op and strata buildings in the neighbourhood, gives the Neighbourhood Association exceptional legitimacy and authority both within the neighbourhood and externally. With a relatively stable population and an established venue for bringing together residents around common issues, the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association has facilitated strong social connections and community organizing to take place in False Creek South.

Secondly, False Creek South has been an iconic place in Vancouver's history since its inception. The fact that the neighbourhood is built primarily on public land, the unique housing and income mix that has never again been replicated, and the urban design have given the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association access to an immense amount of social capital from external supporters. Its development remains something of a unicorn in city planning, the result of a specific moment in time when support for co-operative housing, significant federal funding, and welfare state urban policies aligned. False Creek South is not only important to the residents who call the neighbourhood home, but to urbanists, affordable housing advocates, and citizens looking for examples of city building that are removed from the neo-liberal market-based approach taken by many North American cities.

Finally, False Creek South's victory over the Real Estate Department's conceptual development plan involved a significant amount of bonding and bridging social capital. The professional backgrounds and networks of many residents facilitated the work that RePlan has undertaken over the last decade, including their capacity to hold the design charrettes and to discuss planning and community organizing techniques. Residents also contributed extensively, both financially and through volunteer time, while outside supporters gave their time, expertise, and influence as needed.

While other neighbourhoods will likely be unable to replicate the housing and income mix and the unique democratic governance structure and political influence of the Neighbourhood Association, the actions and strategies taken by the FCSNA over its 45 years of existence can nevertheless suggest a path forward for other neighbourhood groups under threat of place disruption that are looking for ways to organize. In fact, when asked if False Creek South was a unique case in urban studies, Nathan Edelson pointed to his experience working with other Vancouver neighbourhood groups, including Little Mountain and Joyce-Collingwood, as examples of communities that had organized around collective visions for the futures of their neighbourhoods in the face of large-scale redevelopment. In both of those instances, community members had contributed significant amounts of volunteer time, taken on capacity-building activities, and worked with City planners and developers on a neighbourhood plan that the community could support. For Edelson, the key was a mutually agreed upon collaborative community planning process and strong community leadership (N. Edelson, Interview, March 1, 2023), both of which exist in False Creek South, and which can be identified and mobilized in other neighbourhoods. Place, and the possibility of a collective future-oriented vision for community, can be a galvanizing force that brings to the surface internal social capital and joins people across other identities, including culture, religion, and socio-economic status (Martin, 2003, p. 730).

Using the case study of False Creek South as an example, neighbourhoods looking to organize against issues of place disruption may first want to focus on creating or articulating a shared sense of place identity or place attachment. This can be done through a collective process that identifies the common values that are intrinsically important to the neighbourhood. Using this approach allows residents to come together and express their hopes and fears about potential changes to the community (Foell and

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Foster, 2022, p. 28). This is not a fast process, and so communities undertaking this process will want to allow enough time for conflict or disagreements to surface so that they can be addressed (Heath, 2021, p. 1260). Within RePlan, disagreements or anger often came from a sense of frustration at a lack of progress with the City. At leadership group meetings, Richard Evans noted that if a member expresses the anger or insecurity that is inherent in place disruption, space is created within the meeting to allow them to share and for others to validate their feelings, until the initial feelings have dissipated, and the conversation can continue (R. Evans, Interview, March 8, 2023). This type of coping response can be channeled into collective visioning activities, as a way for residents to create "positive place identities" (Devine-Wright, 2009, p. 435), like False Creek South's strong sense of allegiance to maintaining the housing and income mix in the neighbourhood. By establishing the essential common values of the neighbourhood communities will be ready to articulate a community-supported alternative future.

Once the process of identifying place-based values has started, communities can consider creating an organization with the mandate of fostering those values and facilitating future-oriented collective community planning can be created. While the size and structure of this organization will depend on the neighbourhood and its identified needs, building social capital and capacity in the group may be an effective way for the organization to first establish itself (Sorensen and Sagaris, 2010, p. 311). Through this process, which Sorensen and Sagaris state should be rooted in "openness, good ideas, success, and capacity-building," community organizations can create the conditions needed to become recognized as legitimate representatives of their community. This legitimacy makes it easier and advantageous for decision-makers to collaborate with the organization, as it becomes easier to work together, rather than in opposition (Sorensen and Sagaris, 2010; Bradley, 2017a, p. 244). As demonstrated by the case study of False Creek South, activities undertaken by the organization do not need to be solely focused on the future of their neighbourhood or potential threats. While these types of activities may attract some people, they may also be intimidating to those who believe that they lack the skills or knowledge to contribute. A strong sense of place attachment and place identity can also be built through day-to-day activities and community events, including community gardening, art projects, and neighbourhood clean ups (Foell and Foster, 2022, pp. 13-14). While the RePlan committee was focused on lease extension issues and working with the City of Vancouver, the Neighbourhood Association continued to

meet monthly on a wide variety of local issues, ranging from the ordinary (parking issues), to the extraordinary (the community sponsorship of a Syrian refugee family). Once the organization has established a sense of trust within the community, visioning for the future of the neighbourhood can begin.

The events of October 2021 can also guide cities as they undertake redevelopment planning processes in existing communities, particularly communities with long-standing populations who face displacement. The very threat of displacement and of the financialization of existing affordable housing creates the conditions under which residents organize against place disruption and create solidarity through a sense of place attachment (Fields, 2017a; Foell and Foster, 2022). In many cases, including in False Creek South, a narrative may emerge that the existing residents are NIMBYs who are standing in the way of progress and are too attached to past forms of planning. However, dialogue with communities may be more productive if decision-makers take care to avoid labelling communities as NIMBY, and rather re-examine community reactions as place protective action. This may be done before and during public engagement by evaluating how impending new or redevelopment may be perceived by the existing community, and taking care to communicate with the community what goals and tradeoffs are possible. In order to involve communities on many different levels that allow residents to participate as much as they are able, engagement activities may vary. Dear proposes community-based solutions such as community education and outreach, the creation of community advisory boards, or concessions and incentives to the community, arrived at through dialogue and an understanding of community needs. In some cases, these processes are led by the municipality itself, while in others the individual developer or landowner may take part (Dear, 1992, p. 295). The City of Vancouver's process, led by the Real Estate Department, was cited by City Councillors, outside experts, and residents of False Creek South as "flawed," due to the limited engagement of residents in development the plan, which only added to feelings of distrust between the community and City staff (P. Fry, Interview, March 6, 2023). The reframing of residents' actions from NIMBY to place protective shifts the dynamic between city staff and communities and allows for them to work together on defining what is important about a community, and to imagine a future for the community that enhances those important values for future residents (Robinson and Attuyer, 2020; Devine-Wright, 2009, p. 437). In False Creek South, the shared values of local

governance, mixed-incomes, and mixed housing types was recognized by City Councillors and enshrined in the amendments that were unanimously approved.

The False Creek South Neighbourhood Association and community opposition to the City of Vancouver's real estate state conceptual development plan demonstrate the capacity for communities to come together to counter the financialization of housing and the continuing march of market-driven city planning. As a case study, False Creek South is an example of the potential for communities to successfully organize around concepts of place identity, place attachment, and local democracy. Its unique position as a neighbourhood with a democratically-elected, self-funded, and representative neighbourhood association make the community a noteworthy place that merits further study. The case of False Creek South and its organizing capacity reveals the need to further study the linkages between place identity and social capital, as well as the relationship between place identity and the regeneration of social, place-based values.

# Chapter 9.
# Conclusion

On October 28, 2021, Vancouver City Council significantly amended a Real Estate Department conceptual development plan for the redevelopment of the False Creek South neighbourhood. Councillors' unanimous support to amend the plan in favour of existing residents' calls to protect the neighbourhood's original income mix in future community planning was the culmination of a City Council meeting that spanned seven days and saw more than 100 speakers speak out against the conceptual development plan. The amendments reflected a significant departure from the original Real Estate Department conceptual development plan, which proposed a much more typical market-dependent redevelopment that would have materially altered the neighbourhood's income mix and potentially displaced hundreds of current residents. The changes represented a significant victory for the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association which, after more than 12 years of community organizing, had presented its most cohesive and persuasive case to date against the advancement of the real estate state onto public land. This thesis explored the original 1970s development of False Creek South, the factors that led to a cohesive and connected community, and how that community came together to articulate a collective vision for redevelopment that was compelling to both the public and decision-makers. The research question guiding this work, then, was how did the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association organize around place identity to successfully influence the October 2021 Vancouver City Council decision to significantly amend City staff's recommendations for the redevelopment of False Creek South?

I was particularly interested in this topic and research question because of my employment with the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association, my personal interest in the development history of False Creek South, and my own involvement in the October 2021 Council meeting. I wanted to better understand the multiple tensions and priorities that municipal decision-makers face when it comes to public land use decisions, and how the events of October 2021 reflected those tensions. How does the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association distinguish itself from other neighbourhood-based groups who may, on the surface, stand for similar ideas while simultaneously opposing affordable housing? And how can community organizations

capitalize on a shared idea of place to oppose the seemingly inevitable creep of the real estate state and the financialization of housing? To answer these questions, I used a conceptual framework grounded in the tensions between the financialization of urban space and equitable planning, community identity and place-based activism, and local participation in place governance. Specifically, I used Martin's concept of place-frames as a framework through which to analyze the Neighbourhood Association's actions, and I drew heavily from Devine-Wright's writings about place-protective actions and Fainstein's concept of the just city. I used archival documents and articles about the planning of False Creek South, recent planning documents from the City of Vancouver, local media, and meeting minutes and neighbourhood communications provided by the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association. I interviewed local residents, City staff, City Councillors, and housing experts; I was unable to secure an interview with a City staff person who had been involved in the October 2021 conceptual development plan. I also analyzed over 20 hours of public hearing audio and transcripts. These interviews and transcripts, along with the many documents that I collected and analyzed, gave a robust picture of the complexities of any proposed redevelopment of False Creek South.

False Creek South was and remains a unique neighbourhood in the City of Vancouver. Its redevelopment in the 1970s from waterfront industry to residential marked a shift in Vancouver city planning as the City of Vancouver looked to densify its downtown core and entice suburbanites back into the city. The decision-makers at the time, led by Mayor Art Phillips and Alderman Walter Hardwick of TEAM, envisioned False Creek South as the hallmark of the party's priority of urban "livability," rather than the previous NPA regime's focus on business-oriented development. TEAM made several key decisions that would influence the neighbourhood for decades to come: a demographic mix of one-third lower income, one-third middle income, and one-third higher income residents, a proportionately high number of housing co-operatives, sixty-year land leases, and the creation of the democratically elected False Creek South Neighbourhood Association. The result of these decisions was an organized and collaborative community where residents saw themselves as stewards of the neighbourhood's legacy, and were prepared to organize in order to ensure its continuation. The dynamic of a community looking to preserve its collective values and existing affordable housing, along with a Vancouver housing market that had continued

to become more and more unaffordable, has, in recent years, made False Creek South a locus for tensions in Vancouver housing discourse.

Vancouver and other cities across North America continue to grapple with housing crises, with increasing housing prices and lack of overall supply causing drastic increases in homelessness and unattainable rents for lower- and middle-income residents. City planners are tasked with ensuring that property owners do not lose property value as a result of city decisions, and they are also reliant on private market development in order to extract social benefits, such as community centres, libraries, and affordable housing. This contradictory system of the real estate state is ubiquitous across North America and has been a driving force in Vancouver real estate development since the 1980s, as planners have used tools such as community amenity contributions and development cost levies to pay for community amenities. However, decision-makers at multiple levels of government are also grappling with ensuring greater equity in city-building, including equitable access to public space and increasing amounts of affordable housing, goals which are often at odds with the increasing financialization of public and private space.

The neighbourhood of False Creek South represents a unique case study through which to examine these issues. The False Creek South Neighbourhood Association, established at the beginning of the neighbourhood's development in the early 1970s, remains the only neighbourhood organization of its kind in Vancouver - a democratically elected body with delegates representing each of the co-op and strata buildings in the community. Early residents were framed as "pioneers" by the media and politicians, and the unique form and housing-mix of the development drew a certain kind of demographic to the community, including planners, architects, and activists. It was this combination of a representative community organization and engaged residents ready to make the new neighbourhood a success that made it easier and more straightforward to come together when tension with the City first arose. When the first sign of conflict over land leases emerged in the early 2000s, the Neighbourhood Association came together to form a committee it called RePlan, tasked with reaching out to the City of Vancouver to find a mutually beneficial path for lease extension and preservation of existing neighbourhood values. Examined through the lens of Martin's place-frames analysis, RePlan successfully followed each of Martin's defined steps of motivation place-frame, diagnostic place-frame, and prognostic place-frame. They did so

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by delineating clear community boundaries, using the original geographic boundaries set out by the City of Vancouver during initial development. Then, they established a collective narrative that included describing common issues as well as a common enemy – the City of Vancouver's Real Estate Department and the extractive nature of the real estate state. Finally, RePlan and False Creek South community members came together over several years to create a shared, place-based vision for the future of their neighbourhood that included the retention of existing affordable housing and the neighbourhood's original income-mix. Importantly, this shared vision also connected with many urbanists and potential allies, who recognized the possibility for alternative forms of city-building in False Creek South that was less dependent on market-driven private development.

By 2021, when RePlan received word that the Real Estate Department was putting together a plan for the redevelopment of False Creek South at the end of current land leases, the community was already engaged and educated about the issues at hand and prepared to speak. Their strong sense of place identity and their perception of themselves as stewards of False Creek South's legacy prepared them for a united opposition to the City's proposed plan. When City Council amended the Real Estate Department's conceptual development plan in favour of the arguments made by the community, three place-based elements ultimately played a role: the existence of a community-based, representative organization that acted on behalf of all residents; the role of the Real Estate Department and the concept of the real estate state as the perceived Goliath in this David vs. Goliath conflict; and, the position of False Creek South as a symbol of progressive urbanism that resonated with residents, academics, and, ultimately, City Councillors. Together, these three factors were successful in convincing City Council to amend the conceptual development plan to incorporate the place-based values articulated by the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association, and resulting in an unusual case of a neighbourhood prevailing over the dominant city planning narrative of the real estate state.

The future of False Creek South remains uncertain. In the two-year period since the October 2021 City Council meeting one co-op land lease has expired and another's lease expiry is imminent. Similarly, although the conceptual development plan was referred for information to the City's Planning Department, there is no timeframe for community planning on the horizon. At City Hall, new plans were passed for the nearby

Broadway Corridor and for Vancouver more broadly, both calling for increased densification while acknowledging the challenges in providing adequate affordable housing in a housing market where prices continue to be disconnected from the incomes of Vancouver residents. Meanwhile, RePlan leadership continues to meet weekly, ensuring that False Creek South is prepared for whatever comes next.

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# Appendix.
# Final Motion as Approved

A. THAT Council receive the General Manager, Real Estate and Facility Management's False Creek South recommended conceptual development plan outlined in the Report dated October 21, 2021, entitled "The Future of False Creek South: Advancing Conceptual Development Plan and Addressing Lease Expiries", for information.

B. THAT Council direct the General Manager, Real Estate and Facilities Management, to present the recommended conceptual development plan described in the Report dated October 21, 2021, entitled "The Future of False Creek South: Advancing Conceptual Development Plan and Addressing Lease Expiries", to the General Manager, Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability, to inform but not constrain a community planning exercise that may propose an update to the existing False Creek Official and Area Development Plan (FCS ODP), and that will include robust engagement with the community and other key stakeholders, and with the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.

C. THAT Council direct the General Manager, Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability, to undertake an open and transparent community planning process that deeply engages the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association and other interested community groups and stakeholders, including the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, as well as other relevant levels of government, through a robust consultation process, giving priority consideration to:

   i. The significance of building, landscape, and environmental design in helping form a strong sense of community and situating housing for residents of different incomes, ages, cultural backgrounds and household types in ways that are integrated throughout the community to facilitate social and spatial equity;

   ii. Advancing a goal of ultimately achieving the original tenure types that support targets of 1/3 lower income, 1/3 middle income, and 1/3 upper income residents, based on Vancouver renter household income, across all False Creek South residents on City lands; and

   iii. Optimizing the contribution of the affordability of existing non-market and co-op housing for as long as possible, informed by the community planning process, while building additional affordable and co-op housing;

FURTHER THAT Council direct staff in their work on the False Creek South conceptual development plan to further the City's goals and policies to achieve sustainable

communities and aspire to the bold, visionary goal of False Creek South as a model livable city community, as it was in its inception, that:

i. Provides a model of affordability, social equity and inclusion by targeting a variety of housing unit sizes and tenancy types within the 1/3 lower income and 1/3 medium income units that meet the needs of families, seniors, people with disabilities, vulnerable and marginalized populations, and working families including teachers, childcare workers and essential service workers including first responders, healthcare and public safety workers;

ii. Provides a model of sustainability by protecting as much park, natural habitats and green space for recreation, community food gardens and protection of biodiversity as possible; and

iii. Provides a model of climate action through exploring measures to mitigate and provide resilience to the accelerating climate crisis, including targeting zero emission new construction and ultra-low or zero emission renovations as well as ensuring climate adaptation measures such as sea level rise mitigation are integrated into the development planning through the General Manager, Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability's community planning process.

D. THAT A, B, and C above be adopted on the following conditions:

i. THAT the passage of A, B, and C above creates no legal right for the City, as landowner, or any lessee or any other person or any obligation on the part of the City, and any expenditure of funds or incurring of costs is at the risk of the person making the expenditure or incurring the cost;

ii. THAT the passage of A, B, and C above and any approval, support in principle or direction that may be granted herein by Council shall not in any way fetter Council's discretion in its regulatory role in making any future decisions or obligate the City to enact any bylaw rezoning any of the False Creek South Lands or any amendments to the False Creek Official and Area Development Plan or otherwise approving any future use of the False Creek South Lands, and any costs incurred in proceeding with any development plan or commencing or making any Land Use Regulatory application shall be at the risk of the property owner; and

iii. THAT the City and its officials, including the Approving Officer, shall not in any way be limited, fettered or directed in the exercise of their authority or discretion, regardless of when they are called upon to exercise any such authority or discretion.

E. THAT Council supports the goal of working with the non-profit sector to develop and deliver all forms of housing tenure on the False Creek South site with the aim of maximizing affordability and deepening it over time, and directs the General Manager, Real Estate and Facilities Management, to explore the feasibility of this approach and report back to Council;

FURTHER THAT such exploration as noted above include consultation with the non-profit sector.

F. THAT Council supports the goal that Charleson Park be designated as permanent public park upon completion of the land use plan, in order to ensure a green and livable community for generations to come, and directs the General Manager, Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability, to include this consideration as part of the community planning process.

G. THAT Council direct the General Manager, Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability, and the General Manager, Real Estate and Facilities Management, to incorporate consideration of pollution mitigation measures in building design, features and siting strategies, in order to support healthy homes for any buildings that may be located on the southern edges of the False Creek site and planning area. H. THAT Council direct the General Manager, Real Estate and Facilities Management, the General Manager, Arts, Culture and Community Services, and the General Manager, Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability, to include consideration and exploration of the use of swing siting and accommodation to give residents the opportunity to return to new homes in their original area within the False Creek South community where possible and feasible.

I. THAT Council direct staff to work in collaboration with the Squamish Nation, the Sen̓áḵw Partnership and TransLink, to explore and advance a case for a transit service that would connect Olympic Village to the renewed False Creek South Neighbourhood, the Molson site and to Sen̓áḵw, building off of current City of Vancouver streetcar policy.

J. THAT Council appoint Councillors Fry and Hardwick as Council Liaisons to the planning process for False Creek South;

FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to provide Council with information on the scope and role Council Liaisons have in this process.