



Illustrative plan for Southeast False Creek, updated June 2009

A place “where people live, work, play, and learn”

The Official Development Plan (ODP) for SEFC set the bar high for integrated neighbourhood sustainability. The plan embraced the vision from the SEFC Policy Statement, incorporating an unprecedented level of commitment to sustainability. The plan established a foundation for urban design, determining the configuration of the neighbourhood’s parcels, parks, rights-of-way, public amenities, densities and massing. The SEFC ODP bylaw was approved by Vancouver City Council at a public hearing on March 1, 2005 and enacted on July 19, 2005.

The City’s goal was to develop a mixed-use neighbourhood with a diversity of residential uses. The development was to accommodate people of all incomes and all ages, with family housing as a priority. The City’s ambitious vision was to create “a place where people live, work, play, and learn in a neighbourhood designed to maintain and balance

the highest possible levels of social equity, livability, ecological health and economic prosperity.”

Twelve urban design principles detailed in the ODP provided a basis to govern the site’s physical form and character:

- Overall basin form legibility
- Distinct neighbourhood precincts
- Integrated community
- Street hierarchy
- Connected public open spaces and parks
- Integrated transit
- Vibrant commercial heart
- Waterfront animation
- Clustered community services
- Heritage recognition
- Incremental varied development
- Demonstrated sustainability

The sustainability principles in the SEFC Policy Statement informed the approach to sustainability in the ODP. The plan encompasses social, economic and environmental

sustainability with each Policy Statement principle addressed at length and integrated throughout.

Social sustainability: goals include affordable housing and access to nutritious food, health care, safety and childcare facilities. In addition, employment, education, arts, culture and recreation are discussed under the umbrella of “enhancing human capacity.”

Economic sustainability: includes a focus on long-term economic viability and security, local self-reliance, an ecological economy that supports green business and technology, and economic advantage linked to the benefits of social and environmental sustainability.

Environmental sustainability: the ODP, with the SEFC Green Building Strategy (see page 14), provides specific guidelines to inform the approach to land use, buildings and environmental sustainability.

PROFILE

Norm Hotson

MAIBC, OAA, FRAIC, RCA
Principal, Hotson Bakker Boniface Haden
architects + urbanistes

Norm Hotson became involved in the SEFC planning process at a pivotal moment in the inception of the urban design framework. In 2004, he spearheaded a peer review of VIA Architecture’s plan, and, together with a group of local architects, drafted a letter to Vancouver’s City Council saying there was a better way to design SEFC. This proposed alternative was based on low- and mid-rise building forms rather than the high-rise approach that had been pursued for several years. Council responded positively to the architects’ letter, instructing the City’s planning department to pursue this scaled-down alternative. Hotson was subsequently hired by the City in the fall of 2004 to conceive a redesign and solicit approvals in a three-month time frame. This formidable task was accomplished. The revised plan was approved and became the basis of the Official Development Plan for the site, its parameters largely informing what is being built today.

Norm Hotson has been practicing architecture and urban design in Vancouver since 1973 and is the founding partner of Hotson Bakker Boniface Haden architects + urbanistes.