



# **City of Vancouver** *Land Use and Development Policies and Guidelines*

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## REZONING POLICY AND GUIDELINES FOR THE FALSE CREEK FLATS

*Adopted by City Council on October 31, 2017*



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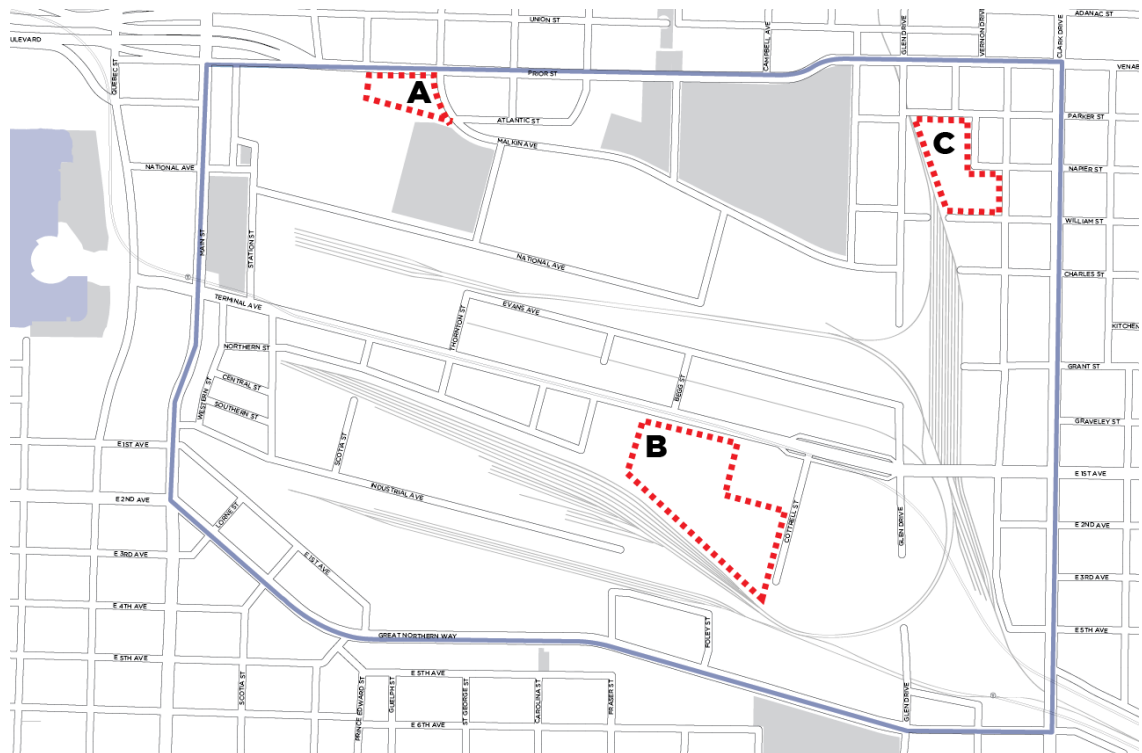
# 1 Application and Intent

The intent of this policy is to provide guidance on rezonings in the False Creek Flats (FCF) related to the implementation of development directions and policies contained within the **False Creek Flats Plan** (available online at [vancouver.ca/falsecreekflats](http://vancouver.ca/falsecreekflats)).

The rezoning policy and guidelines applies to three specific sites. One is intended to respond to the recommended realignment of the Prior and Venables replacement arterial and act as a transition from the future St. Paul's Hospital campus to the residential neighbourhood in Strathcona, while the other two sites are intended to establish 'Amenity-Rich Public Nodes' as a critical component of the public network of key places outlined in the FCF Plan (see map 1). Common features to these two locations would include the presence of plazas and public open spaces for gathering, celebration and business showcasing, unique character elements and heritage buildings, as well as the provision of space for community economic centres to support strategic segments of the economy as outlined in the plan.

Anchored around key character buildings the specific policies on heights, densities, urban design, and other requirements for the sites contained within this policy are described in these Policies and Guidelines as well as in Chapter 7 – Land Use and Built Form and Chapter 8 – Public Spaces and Public Life of the **False Creek Flats Plan**. The economic initiatives underlying the broader plan are established in Chapter 6 – Economic Development and should be reflected in future developments as well. In addition to the provisions that follow, development proposals under this policy shall adhere to the existing, applicable Council-approved plans, policies and guidelines for each site. Further, the provisions in this rezoning policy do not preclude additional requirements that will be determined during the enquiry or rezoning process.

Map 1 – FCF Planning Area and Rezoning Policy Areas



## 2 Definitions

For the purpose of this document:

**“Economic Enabling Activities”** means Community Centre space that supports economic enabling activities in the False Creek Flats. These Centres are community accessible and may include work spaces, equipment, storage, staging areas, multifunctional spaces, job training programs, rehearsal space and/or art production facilities, that are owned and/or operated by a non-profit society, non-profit co-operative association, First Nations Band Council, or a government.

**“FCF”** refers to the False Creek Flats Area as shown in Map 1.

**“Heritage Building”** means a building listed on the Vancouver Heritage Register, or could qualify for listing on the Vancouver Heritage Register.

**“Residential”** means any dwelling use identified in Section 2 of the Zoning and Development By-law.

**“Non-residential”** means any land use permitted in Official Development Plans, District Schedules, and policy documents, except residential and parking.

**“Public Benefits Strategy”** refers to Chapter 12, Public Benefits Strategy, of the False Creek Flats Plan, which identifies on- and off-site public benefits.

**“Site”** or **“Development Site”** means a contiguous, developable piece of land.

## 3 Early Review Process

Prior to submitting a written rezoning enquiry for any site in the FCF, applicants shall meet with City staff early in their concept development process. The purpose of this meeting is to review the development concept, ensure proper contextual influences are considered, identify potential community impacts and benefits that might arise from the proposal, and clarify the strategies needed to meet social, cultural, economic and urban design objectives, including massing, character and impact on public and private views.

The processing of rezoning applications that may result from this policy will include the typical review by City advisory bodies, including but not limited to the Urban Design Panel, Vancouver Heritage Commission, and other relevant committees. Depending on the nature of the proposal, additional special review may be required, and could include: presentation of proposals at the enquiry stage to the public and advisory bodies, joint committee workshops, inclusion of guest panel members on committees, etc.

## 4 Rezoning Policies

4.1 No applications for residential will be considered in the **“Railyards Heritage Hub”** (Area ‘B’ of Map 1) or the **“Cultural Hub”** (Area ‘C’ of Map 1).

4.2 In Area ‘A’ of Map 1, rezoning applications for secured market rental residential will be considered to establish a transition from the Health Hub to the residential scale of Strathcona to the north.

(a) Height: Support for height up to 100ft (30.5m).

(b) Densities: Retain density of up to 3.0 FSR

(c) Uses: Introduction of Rental Residential in addition to the employment uses within the I-3 zone. No residential at grade shall front onto the new Malkin alignment.

- (d) Conditions for change of use: Allocation of space for the construction of a new alignment of Malkin as outlined in the False Creek Flats plan, as well as potential new north south connection from the west side of Trillium Park to Prior street.
- (e) Design consideration, including neighbourliness and sun access to the neighbouring residential district in Strathcona.
- (f) Onsite provision, or contributions towards Community Centre space to support Economic Enabling Activities, or other identified public benefits in the Public Benefits Strategy, should be considered as a part of a rezoning.

4.3 In the “**Railyard Heritage Hub**”, Area ‘B’ of Map 1, rezoning applications for additional height and density will be considered for additional employment uses.

Anchoring the amenity and public life in the Terminal Spine, is the Rail Hub. This node is centred around the former CN maintenance building (which now functions as a refurbished station for the Rocky Mountaineer rail service), an old logistics cross-docks shed – with its long loading decks and numerous bay doors – and the adjacent Canada Packers Building. These iconic character buildings anchor a unique sense of place, and combine industrial materials along a wide span of rail lines with open and expansive views to downtown and the Northshore Mountains.

The Plan provides policy support for this node to develop into a vibrant and dense collection of industrial, office, retail and service uses. A key component of the Walk-the-Line connects a series of dead-end streets, including the foot of Cottrell Street, with a walking and cycling link at the convergence point of the various rail yards. This link would connect this node to the future Millennium Broadway Line Extension, the Emily Carr University and the broader Creative Campus, and would open the area up as a key public experience of the Flats. Taking advantage of this industrial location, the Plan will seek to support a more vibrant 24/7 activity at this location encouraging gathering and public celebrations throughout the year.

- (a) Height: Support for heights up to approximately 55m.
- (b) Densities: Support for additional density to approximately 5.0 FSR.
- (c) Uses: Support for a range of non-residential uses, with a significant component of industrial, artist studio, and creative products manufacturing.
- (d) Conditions for additional height and density: Connection over rail to VCC Clark Skytrain station would be required prior to support for a rezoning at 1725 Cottrell Street (CN Railyard and Rocky Mountaineer Station).
- (e) Delivery of public spaces and plazas that support flexible public life.
- (f) Plazas and outdoor spaces should include infrastructure to support a variety of public events on site including artist displays and business showcase opportunities.
- (g) Improved rainwater management and green infrastructure should be embedded in the area and include an improved tree canopy.
- (h) Buildings that front or back onto the cycling and pedestrian connection to Cottrell should provide interesting and animated uses with the potential to spill out towards the path.
- (i) The delivery of the public spaces and amenities identified in chapter 6 would be required for a supportable rezoning as well as urban design considerations.
- (j) The retention and integration of the Heritage A Canada Packers Building, the rail repair shop (Rocky Mountaineer Station) and significant portions of the cross-docks building

should be incorporated into future development and encourage public interaction with these historic buildings

- (k) New developments should be organized to establish a series of interesting views through the site that frame up iconic structural elements and expansive views to downtown and the mountains.
- (l) Onsite provision, or contributions towards Community Centre space to support Economic Enabling Activities, or other identified public benefits in the Public Benefits Strategy, should be considered as a part of a rezoning.

4.4 In the “**Culture Hub**”, Area ‘C’ of Map 1, rezoning applications will be considered to establish a permanent focal point for arts and cultural production in the City of Vancouver. With unique and interesting public spaces tucked between the historic buildings and the rail yards, this edgy district establishes a node of cultural production and celebration unique in our city. A rezoning application for additional employment uses could be considered subject to delivery of the following:

- (a) Height: Support for heights up to approximately 55 m.
- (b) Densities: Support for additional density to approximately of 5.0 FSR.
- (c) The incorporation and refurbishment of the original Restmore Manufacturing buildings.
- (d) A mix of Class A and B Artist Studio space to completely replace the approximately 15,500 sq. m of artist studio space contained in the 1000 Parker Street Studios, with a possibility of providing less space if it is transferred to the City or a non-profit organization acceptable to the City.
- (e) A minimum of 10,000 sq. m of light industrial production, distribution and repair spaces, which can include Artist Studio - Class B beyond the requirements outlined in 4.4.(d).
- (f) A small plaza of approximately 500 sq. m on the western edge of the site, that takes advantage of the sun access from the railyard and celebrates the presence and vantage points created due to the proximity of rail.
- (g) A larger plaza of approximately 1,000 sq. m connected to George Street designed to allow for expanded space for special events through temporary closure of George and Napier St.
- (h) A series of smaller public spaces and patios should be connected by a series of pedestrian pathways that connect key public places and the various buildings within the precinct.
- (i) Plazas and outdoor spaces should include infrastructure to support a variety of public events on site including artist displays and business showcase opportunities.
- (j) Improved rainwater management and green infrastructure should be embedded in the area and include an improved tree canopy.
- (k) Consideration for a potential rail expansion and reconfiguration.
- (l) Building-level connectivity for pedestrians and cyclist to the bridge structure of a potential William Street alignment, should that be the selected Prior-Venables replacement route.
- (m) Loading and industrial uses under the bridge structure, with a secondary level of public connections at the bridge deck height.



- (n) Onsite provision, or contributions towards Community Centre space to support Economic Enabling Activities, or other identified public benefits in the Public Benefits Strategy, should be considered as a part of a rezoning.

## 5 Minor Amendments to Allowable Uses

Rezoning applications may be considered in all areas for minor amendments to the uses permitted in existing zoning by-laws, provided that the amendments do not relate to height or density increases beyond what is outlined in the FCF Plan and do not contravene relevant Council-approved policies and guidelines.

## 6 Livability Impacts

Some sites in the FCF are close to areas with active industrial use, rail corridors and yards. As a result, rezoning applications adjacent to these areas should include measures to mitigate anticipated noise, safety and other related impacts from existing uses. Technical analyses, such as acoustic comfort and rail proximity studies, may be required for sites adjacent to these existing uses.

## 7 Sustainability and Neighbourhood Energy

New developments in the FCF shall be designed to include a hydronic heating system in order to easily connect to a district energy system when one becomes available. These developments will also require agreements to ensure that they connect to such a system when it is in place. Building design for connectivity and the connection agreement must be to the satisfaction of the City Engineer. For further information, please refer to the **Neighbourhood Energy Connectivity Standards - Design Guidelines** (March 2014 or later) available online at: <http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/neighbourhood-energy-design-guidelines.pdf>

Other Council-approved policies relating to the City's sustainability goals shall also apply, including but not limited to, the **Green Buildings Policy for Rezonings** available online at: <http://former.vancouver.ca/commsvcs/guidelines/G015.pdf>

## 8 Public Benefits through Rezoning

Appropriate public benefits shall be provided by developments rezoned through this policy, typically in the form of Community Amenity Contributions (CACs) or on-site public benefits. Public benefits will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis as part of a rezoning application, according to the Council-adopted policy **Community Amenity Contributions - Through Rezonings**, available online at: <http://former.vancouver.ca/commsvcs/guidelines/C025.pdf>

See Chapter 12 – Public Benefits Strategy in the False Creek Flats Plan for details on the identified public benefits for the area.

## 9 General Design Considerations

### 9.1 Unique Spaces and Places

The diverse combination of uses and forms of development in the False Creek Flats intentionally provides for opportunities to create unique and varied places. Places which create opportunities for public engagement in a variety of distinct places are highly encouraged.

## 9.2 Views

New development should be considerate of the impact on distant views. However as development progresses, the industrial and institutional scales and densities anticipated in False Creek Flats will have an impact on the ability to preserve these existing views. Development should therefore place a higher emphasis on the following strategies:

- (a) Provide an attractive near view. This can include a finer grained urban fabric and building modules, high-quality materials and detailing, visually permeable facades, programming for active outdoor uses and landscape elements.
- (b) Visually linking new open space to existing open space. This can serve to expand the depth of views and may be achieved with building separations and setbacks.
- (c) The form and shape of tower elements should be informed by view studies.
- (d) Site buildings to frame views towards nearby historic or iconic industrial structures and places of interest.
- (e) In sub area 'A' residential units should comply with standard Horizontal Access to Daylight requirements.

## 9.3 Topography: Floodplain

False Creek Flats has low topographic elevations and will be at risk of flooding during large storms by the end of the century if projected sea level rise occurs. The *Flood Plain Standards and Requirements* as adopted by Vancouver City Council should be referenced early in the review process. Existing grades including street right of ways, are often one to two meters below the anticipated ground floor elevations and, a plan to raise street elevations may be considered in the future. Therefore, new development should be designed to be adaptive when incorporating flood resilient construction methods and to accommodate public realm objectives for both the current and potential future at grade conditions. Solutions should be accommodated within the property, be visually interesting, relate to the pedestrian scale, and may include increased building setbacks, internalized stairs and ramping as well as adaptable entries, loading and parking.

## 9.4 Weather

In all cases, weather protection should be provided at common building entries and individual entries. Continuous weather protection should be provided along all street frontages except that, it may not be provided continuously where it can be shown the provision would interfere with well-functioning industrial uses and where pedestrian traffic is not anticipated. Explore opportunities for weather protection that can encourage use as functional outdoor workspace.

## 9.5 Privacy

- (a) Privacy in relation to other dwelling units, passersby, and adjacent development is a crucial aspect of residential livability and neighbourliness.
- (b) Unit orientation, acoustic construction techniques, window placement and screening should be used to enhance privacy;
- (c) Balconies and patios should be oriented, screened or landscaped to reduce direct overlook of adjacent residential uses and other units nearby;
- (d) Habitable rooms within the developments should be oriented away from pedestrian circulation routes; and
- (e) In developments with courtyards, stacked units are encouraged to reduce privacy conflicts due to access corridors.

## 9.6 Safety and Security

New development must provide a secure environment. The principles of “crime prevention through environmental design” (CPTED) should be incorporated in all new development. Some strategies include:

- (a) Maximize opportunities for natural surveillance;
- (b) Provide unobstructed and transparent sightlines to exits and destinations;
- (c) Foster territoriality and a sense of ownership;
- (d) No hiding places;
- (e) Lighting of public spaces;
- (f) Lobbies visible from the street and main entrances to buildings fronting the street;
- (g) Personal safety and security should be integral to the design of parking facilities and comply with the Off-street Parking and Loading By-law, Section 4.9.

## 10 Form of Development

Objectives in the Flats for intensified employment opportunities and well-functioning workspaces are anticipated to result in a form of development with greater densities, building heights, and floor plates. Form and massing should therefore be carefully considered with respect to other the objectives of these policies and guidelines including access to daylight on the public realm, creating engaging public spaces, building articulation, an attractive near view and finer grained urban settings.

- (a) **Massing:** Height, bulk and massing should be considered with respect to access to daylight and views on the adjacent public realm and developments. Proposals should include sun shading diagrams and context analysis, for evaluation of these objectives by staff, on existing and anticipated public spaces.
- (b) **Building Width and Depth:** Where long facades are proposed, consideration should be given to significant facade articulation and setbacks. Connections may be by transparent bridges and walkways on the upper floors. Break up long frontages and substantial expanses of wall planes with recesses, setbacks and building separations. Setbacks and yards should complement the provision of open space.
- (c) **Tower Elements:** Tower elements (considered to be any portion of a building over 22.0 m (72 ft.) in height) should:
  - (i) be separated from other commercial tower elements by 15.2 m (50ft)
  - (ii) be separated from residential tower elements by 24.0 m (80ft).

Where adjacent sites are not fully developed, the proposed tower should maintain a distance of 7.6m (25ft) from the interior side and rear property lines unless residential uses are permitted on the adjacent lots in which case the setbacks should increase to 12.5 m (41 ft).

- (d) **The Network of Public Space:** Building massing should respect the importance of sunlight on the ‘Network of Public Space’ and ‘Walk the Line’ as described in Section 8 of the **False Creek Flats Plan**.
- (e) **Street Wall:** The intent is for development to generally reinforce the existing or anticipated street wall and shoulder. In the Flats, this is expected to be built out to the front property line and to create a consistent 4 storey, 18.3 meter shoulder.
- (f) **Roof:** The profile and silhouette of roofs should be considered as part of the skyline. Elevator penthouses, mechanical rooms, equipment, vents and other appurtenances should be integrated with the architectural treatment of the roof and screened from view.

- (g) **Large Sites:** Large sites should be considered with respect to their sub-area and be based on their own unique qualities. Site design can lend itself to prioritizing grouped building arrangements that create community outdoor open spaces and internalized vehicular access.

## 11 Architectural Components

The intent for architectural components and materials is to recognize the areas unique industrial character as well as the following objectives:

- (a) Reinforce the near view with high-quality materials, detailing and active storefronts.
- (b) Express a finer grain urban fabric by articulating smaller structural bays and modules.
- (c) Generic “big box” building designs that exhibit little facade interest and transparency to the street should be avoided.
- (d) Storefronts should be transparent at grade and are encouraged not to contain long blank walls.
- (e) High clearance warehouse-type spaces should have clerestory windows at the upper storey of the facade.
- (f) Building interface with the public realm should emphasize details and proportions at the scale of the pedestrian with particular consideration to the objectives of animated streetscapes and showcasing functional outdoor workspaces
- (g) Reference the “heavy duty” context with details and expression.

## 12 Open Space

### 12.1 Public Places and Spaces

Creating unique, vibrant, attractive, interesting and amenity rich environments appealing to the increasingly mobile employees of twenty-first century is essential for unlocking the potential of any economic district in today’s cities. The False Creek Flats Area Plan aims to establish a network of places and spaces that repositions the area from a blank space in our collective mental maps, to a critical component of our cherished network of future public spaces in the city. It is hoped these interesting and inviting places will support innovation by providing venues that support the spillover of new ideas and breakthroughs within the local economy. Objectives are described in Chapter 8 of the **False Creek Flats Plan**.

### 12.2 Semi-Private Open Space

Social semi-private open space is desirable for employees, visitors and residents and should be provided to accommodate the intended users wherever possible. It could be located at grade or on the rooftop as part of a landscaped rooftop garden and should maximize sun exposure.

### 12.3 On-Site Public Open Space

The following should guide design and location of open spaces on private land.

- (a) Consider opportunities to compliment public open space design including:
  - (i) Create inviting and comfortable places for people;
  - (ii) Reintroduce water and natural systems;
  - (iii) Encourage lively building edges and more welcoming street experience;
  - (iv) Respect existing public views and explore creating new views of prominent features such significant landmarks;
  - (v) Support the display of local art, craft or industry;
  - (vi) Explore opportunities for unconventional open spaces;
  - (vii) Improve Wayfinding and legibility;
  - (viii) Encourage 24/7 activity and public life; and
  - (ix) Consider ways to ensure a safe, clean, clutter free environments

- (b) Open space on privately owned land should be considered with the same objectives to reinforce the network of public spaces. Enhanced front and side yard setbacks can provide opportunities that help link open spaces.
- (c) Where practical the public open space and greenways will be constructed on City owned land or City Right of Way (R.O.W.). In some circumstances, an additional R.O.W. may be requested from adjacent development to provide a more useable trail width.
- (d) Landscaping elements and public art, including temporary projects, are encouraged.
- (e) Reflect the industrial history of the area as well as contemporary life, innovation and experimentation.

#### **12.4 Public Art**

Public art should be considered based on the following process and objectives:

- (a) Consideration for 24/7 access and use of the site;
- (b) Opportunities for rotating installations and diversity of scale and material;
- (c) Opportunities for art to be embedded in public spaces and infrastructure;
- (d) Consider opportunities to create diversity throughout the site and in unexpected places; and
- (e) Create public spaces built upon people being together in innovative ways.

### **13 Landscaping**

#### **13.1 Streetscape**

Objectives for streetscapes include:

- (a) High quality public realm with street trees, landscaping, lighting, street furniture, signage and wayfinding, and green infrastructure where possible.
- (b) Continuous sidewalks for the site's full frontage to encourage pedestrian use.
- (c) Landscape design providing views into buildings for pedestrian interest, as well as special features such as opportunities to sit, view or take part in walking or active recreation.
- (d) Integrated rain water management.

#### **13.2 Site Landscape**

- (a) Existing trees and significant landscape features should be evaluated for retention where possible;
- (b) Landscaping should be used to help mitigate impacts between residential and industrial uses as well as rail;
- (c) Landscape design on other parts of the site should relate to anticipated activities;
- (d) A layered landscape treatment should be provided to screen surface parking and loading areas while providing strategic visual access to entries and access areas;
- (e) Strengthen urban forest connectivity;
- (f) Consider planted roof tops;
- (g) Enhance habitat for birds, pollinators and other flora and fauna and following the *Bird Friendly Design Guidelines*; and
- (h) Limit extent of underground parking layout and design to accommodate retention of existing trees and for the provision of new ones.