



November 12, 2019

TO: Park Board Chair and Commissioners
FROM: General Manager – Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Northeast False Creek Parks – Project Update and Guiding Principles

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT the Vancouver Park Board approve the Guiding Principles for the parks in Northeast False Creek, including Andy Livingstone Park, Creekside Park, Creekside Park Extension, and Downtown Skateboard Plaza, as outlined in this report and attached as Appendix A; and
- B. THAT the Vancouver Park Board direct staff to advance the concept design of the parks in Northeast False Creek, subject to engagement with local First Nations, local communities, and park stakeholders.

REPORT SUMMARY

Through extensive engagement with the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, Urban Indigenous peoples, park stakeholders, and the general public, staff have developed Guiding Principles to address four key themes around the design of parks in Northeast False Creek: *Identity*, *Community*, *Nature* and *Destination*. This report summarizes the process to date, and seeks direction from the Park Board to advance the preparation of the concept design for the parks.

POLICY / PREVIOUS DECISIONS

The Northeast False Creek parks project is guided and informed by many policy documents, including:

- [VanPlay – Parks and Recreation Services Master Plan](#) (October 2019)
- [Park Board Reconciliation Mission, Vision & Values](#) (April 2018)
- [Urban Forest Strategy](#) (April 2018)
- [Park Board Reconciliation Strategies](#) (January 2016)
- [Biodiversity Strategy](#) (February 2016)
- [Greenest City Action Plan](#) (October 2015)

On February 22, 2016, the Vancouver Park Board approved the Northeast False Creek (NEFC) [Terms of Reference](#) for the NEFC Park Design Advisory Group.

On July 11, 2016, the Park Board appointed 12 members to form the NEFC [Park Design Advisory Group](#) to advise staff and consultant team on the concept design and engagement process for the parks in Northeast False Creek.

On October 3, 2016, the Park Board approved the [NEFC park schematic design contract award](#), for professional design services by the consultant team led by James Corner Field Operations.

On June 19, 2018, the Park Board appointed [four new members to the NEFC Park Design Advisory Group](#), replacing four existing members.

On February 25, 2019, the Park Board appointed [one new member to the NEFC Park Design Advisory Group](#).

BACKGROUND

For the past three years, the Park Board has received regular project updates in the form of memorandums, briefings, and workshops, including an overview of the project as part of the Commissioner's orientation session on Park Board Reconciliation in January of 2019.

Northeast False Creek Plan Context

In October 2015, Vancouver City Council approved in principle the removal of the Dunsmuir and Georgia Viaducts, and approved the Northeast False Creek Conceptual Plan to guide future planning of the area without the viaducts.

In February 2018, City Council approved the [NEFC Plan](#), which envisions the growth, development and public investment of Northeast False Creek, anchored by a 25-acre park district that includes Andy Livingstone Park, Creekside Park north of Science World, Creekside Park Extension, and the Downtown Skateboard Plaza (see Figure 1). In June 2018, City Council approved the [NEFC Infrastructure Project Implementation and Financial Strategy Guidelines](#), which provided financial support for ongoing planning and design of the parks.

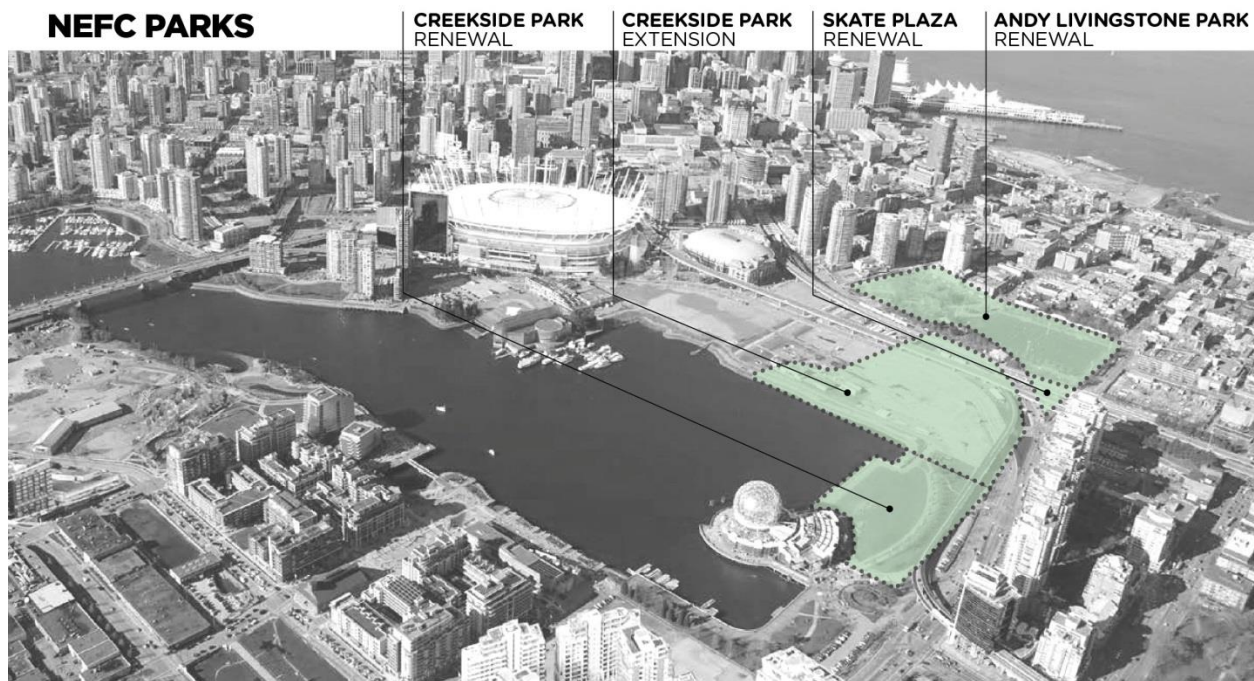


Figure 1: NEFC Parks Components

Northeast False Creek Parks are composed of four components that form the scope of park design process. The land for Andy Livingstone Park is owned by the Province of BC and leased to the City of Vancouver. The Park Board maintains and operates the park. Creekside Park is owned by the City of Vancouver, and maintained and operated by the Park Board. Creekside Park Extension is partially owned by Concord Pacific and the City of Vancouver. It currently includes a temporary park that is owned and operated by Concord Pacific. The Downtown Skateboard Plaza is located on City-owned right-of-way, and it is jointly maintained and operated by the Park Board and the City.

Park Design and Engagement Process

The design of the parks in NEFC is being undertaken by a project team led by Park Board staff, and supported by the landscape architectural firm [James Corner Field Operations](#) (JCFO) with expertise from local landscape architects, engineers, architects, biologists and cost consultants.

The design and engagement process illustrated in Figure 2 was initiated in the fall of 2016 and has since progressed through the following stages:

- Stage 1: Analysis + early directions (fall 2016 to spring 2017)
- Stage 2: Draft concept plan (spring 2017 to summer 2017)
- Stage 3: Extended engagement (fall 2017 to winter 2018)
- Stage 4: Revised concept (spring 2019 to present)

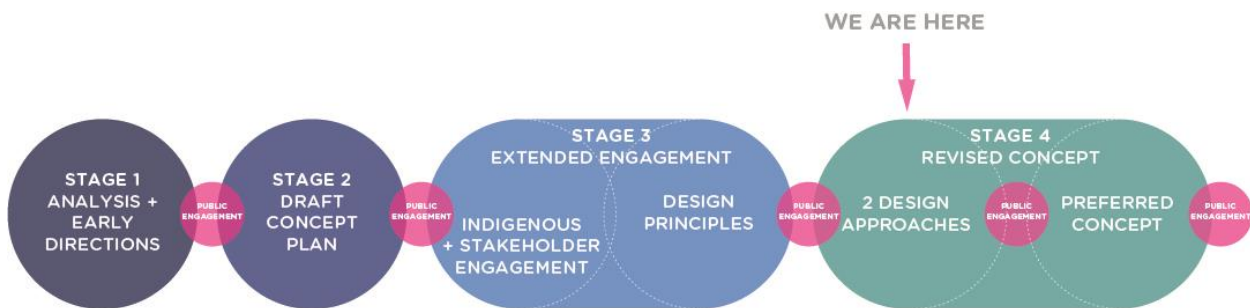


Figure 2: NEFC Park Design and Engagement Process

Stage 2: Draft Concept Design

The [draft concept design](#), released in June 2017, generated a high level of interest from a wide group of stakeholders, with over 5,000 people engaged. Highlights of the feedback on the draft concept design were:

- Meaningfully engage with the local First Nations;
- Design a bigger waterfront park;
- Ensure design is bolder, more unique and authentically rooted in Vancouver;
- Support nature, wildlife and habitat;
- Support, and concerns about, for large events in the park;
- Recognize rich cultural heritage of the area; and
- Define the big moves and be aware of fragmented spaces.

During Stage 2, staff engaged with the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations as part of regular government-to-government meetings, and received preliminary feedback on the draft concept design.

Stage 3: Extended Engagement

Building on the feedback and as part of the City of Reconciliation, staff determine that a pause the design work was needed in order to engage with the Musqueam, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh Nations and Urban Indigenous community in a deep and open way.

In the summer of 2017, a NEFC Indigenous engagement working group was formed with Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff who prepared an Indigenous engagement framework and stewarded more in-depth conversations with the local First Nations and Urban Indigenous peoples. The focus of the engagement was on ensuring that the Indigenous principles of cultural practice, ecological stewardship, and Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh visibility on their own lands were reflected in the revised park concept design.

The first step of the framework was to analyze the feedback collected to date on the park design and through related parallel planning processes. Ensuring the meaning of the input was fully understood was essential to establish a solid foundation for further engagement. Gaps in information were also identified. This resulted in a 'cultural translation', revealing the different definitions and world views associated with notions of *land, water, healing and belonging*. Through an iterative and reflective process, the project team developed a greater capacity to understand how to improve upon the first iteration of the park design.

The following three initiatives took place in parallel to the extended process described above, and helped shape the subsequent approach to the NEFC park engagement:

NEFC policy on reconciliation and cultural redress: In February 2018, City Council approved the [NEFC Plan](#) which includes specific policies on reconciliation with the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations and Urban Indigenous communities and cultural redress toward Chinese-Canadians and the Black community who were directly impacted by the construction of the Georgia and Dunsmuir Viaducts in the late 1960s and early 70s. These policies constituted the first time the City of Vancouver adopted this kind of policy in an area plan.

Confirmation of approach to Reconciliation by the Park Board: In April 2018, the Park Board approved the [Reconciliation Vision, Mission and Values](#) which have since become the compass for Park Board staff on its reconciliation journey.

Official apology to the Chinese Community: On April 22, 2018, Vancouver City Council convened a special meeting in Chinatown where Mayor Gregor Robertson delivered a [formal apology](#) on behalf of the City of Vancouver for past discrimination against residents of Chinese descent. This event demonstrated the importance of Andy Livingstone Park as a place of cultural expression for the Chinese Community.

Between September 2017 and December 2018, the project team met several times with the local First Nations and Urban Indigenous Peoples Advisory Committee, and expanded the project scope to meet with members of the Chinatown and the Black communities. At each step,

the project team listened deeply, documented the conversations in detail, and undertook a cultural translation from an Indigenous and/or racialized lens, to ensure the meaning of the words was being accurately understood. We heard a number of key themes from Indigenous peoples: orient to the waterfront and provide access to water, increase visibility of the local Nations on their own land, take an Indigenous approach to planting, and create a welcoming place to gather, heal and learn. These key themes and learnings from Chinatown, the Black Community, the local residents and other park stakeholders were summarized in the Guiding Principles.

During this time, staff continued to meet with the [NEFC Park Design Advisory Group](#) to inform this wider group of interested organizations and individuals, including residents and representatives from events groups, sports fields users, skateboarders, non-motorized watercraft, etc., about the process and findings and to gather advice. The Extended Engagement work undertaken in 2017 and 2018 was documented in the [Indigenous Engagement Summary Report](#) and [Stage 3 Engagement: Summary Report](#) along with other documents on the project website.

DISCUSSION

Guiding Principles

The Guiding Principles for the parks in NEFC represent the accumulated knowledge and input to date and act as a touchstone to measure and gauge proposed actions in the design process of the parks. A [public survey](#) conducted in the summer of 2018 showed that, while most people felt the Guiding Principles were headed in the right direction, further refinement was needed. Those findings were incorporated in the final version presented in this report (outlined below and attached as Appendix A).

The role of the Guiding Principles is to consolidate the values, and to guide the design, management, and stewardship of the NEFC parks with clarity and accountability. They are organized in four groupings – *Identity*, *Community*, *Nature*, and *Destination* – which emerged as common themes throughout the engagement process:

IDENTITY

ROOTED IN LOCAL FIRST NATIONS' CULTURES

- Make apparent in the park the long and continued presence of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh peoples in their own lands
- Reflect Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh values and principles
- Create a place inspired by and supporting Indigenous cultural practices

BELONGING

- Reconnect people to land and water
- Create a place to connect with each other
- Design a space that supports diverse cultural expressions
- Nourish a sense of belonging by connecting people to place

COMMUNITY

OPEN, SAFE, ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE

- Develop welcoming park edges, and entrances from land and water
- Balance active sport and recreation, leisure and cultural activities
- Design for all ages and abilities, especially with seniors in mind
- Welcome and support people with less social or economic privilege
- Ensure safe use of the park and respectful interaction between park users

ACKNOWLEDGING RACIAL AND CULTURAL INEQUITIES

- Redress exclusion by designing for racialized communities
- Design park spaces to accommodate a variety of cultural programming
- Mark entryways to Chinatown at Carrall Promenade, at Pacific Blvd & Quebec St.
- Create lively pathways between adjacent communities and the waterfront

FLEXIBLE

- Design multi-purpose spaces that serve daily functions and special events
- Allow program to easily change throughout the day and night, over the seasons and throughout the years
- Layer uses and activities so that they can happen concurrently
- Explore use of modular design features

CARED FOR

- Learn from indigenous models of stewardship
- Cultivate a feeling of ownership and stewardship from park users
- Provide robust and durable park elements
- Ensure support for a high level of on-going care, maintenance and operation of the park

NATURE

LIVING SHORELINE

- Nurture conditions that would allow for future water access to the park
- Create a green and lush habitat at the shoreline
- Enhance the ecological quality of the water's edge
- Create a resilient landscape that is adaptable to sea level rise and climate change

ECOLOGICALLY RICH

- Explore an Indigenous approach to planting

- Represent a coastal ecology that reflects the False Creek basin
- Enhance the variety of species to create ecologically and visually rich environments
- Balance human use and habitat creation

DESTINATION

DISTINCT

- Create a common place to meet, mingle and celebrate
- Create a park that provides local amenity and regional waterfront destination
- Create a vibrant place to host civic celebrations and a variety of gatherings
- Maximize long views of water and the mountains
- Balance destination park uses with community needs

AUTHENTICALLY ROOTED IN PLACE

- Recognize the full history of the site and all its contributors
- Celebrate arts and integrate public art
- Create casual spaces that allow for informality
- Maximize the use of natural materials
- Celebrate the rain

The Guiding Principles have evolved considerably since they were initially crafted during Stage 1 of the project. The extended engagement highlighted the need to affirm a priority to root the design in local First Nations' cultures and create a place of belonging and connection to nature. To this end a "belonging statement" to ground the new vision for the design of the parks was created. This statement, included in Appendix B, is meant to steer the revised park concept design, anchoring it with an Indigenous foundation.

It also reaffirmed the need for the parks in NEFC to function primarily as community parks for those who live and work in the area, and to act as destination parks as a secondary function. The engagement with Chinatown and the Black Community in particular highlighted that in order for racialized communities to feel welcomed in public space, there needs to be an intent to design with them in mind. This learning invalidated notions of 'cultural neutrality' presumed in the draft concept design prepared in 2017, and opened opportunities to explore how park spaces could be purposefully designed for these communities.

Advance the Concept Design

In January of 2019 the project team initiated *Stage 4: Refined Concept Plan* and re-started the design with the preparation of two approaches. The design approaches are informed by the Guiding Principles, and respond to the needs and aspirations of park users to varying degrees.

To date, these designs have been shared with members of the local First Nations' government representatives, Urban Indigenous Peoples Advisory Committee, the Chinatown community, the Black community and with the NEFC Park Design Advisory Group. These discussions are ongoing and iterative. In the spirit of reconciliation and cultural redress, these conversations

remain open until these communities have had the opportunity to comment and bring a cultural lens to the designs.

With Park Board's support, the project team will continue to develop the two design approaches with rights-holders and local communities, before sharing them more widely with park stakeholders and the public. The development of a single design will follow. The project team will continue to rely on the City of Vancouver's Planning and Engineering departments, and other departments, for support in the execution of this work.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The work plan outlined in this report can be completed by late 2020 within the existing budget for the NEFC Project Office approved by Council in June of 2018. As per Council direction, the NEFC Public Benefits Strategy is to be funded through development revenues, proceeds from land transactions, senior government contributions, and other strategic partnerships. The delivery of the NEFC parks is contingent upon securing funding from these sources and has not been determined at this stage.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will provide the Board with a progress update prior to the next round of public consultation, which is anticipated in the first quarter of 2020. Following this milestone, the project team will prepare a final concept design and share it with the local First Nations, community stakeholders, and the public before bringing it back to the Park Board for decision.

CONCLUSION

Northeast False Creek is the last piece of undeveloped land on Vancouver's downtown peninsula and a culturally significant site for Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh peoples, who maintain profound ties to these lands and waters. This site is also culturally significant for the Chinatown and Black Communities who built communities in this part of the city. Respecting this connection to place, staff recognize the significance of reconciliation and cultural redress in this project as they advance the design of the parks. This work speaks to a yearning for belonging from all communities, and a desire to create meaningful and long lasting relationships among each other.

With Guiding Principles developed through extended engagement, staff are looking to develop a concept design for parks in Northeast False Creek with significant opportunities for further participation by all parties, and including wider public engagement. The process documented in this report is an important body of knowledge that can be shared across the Park Board organization and other public agencies.

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Northeast False Creek Parks: **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

IDENTITY



ROOTED IN LOCAL FIRST NATIONS' CULTURES

- Make apparent in the park the long and continued presence of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh peoples in their own lands
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Northeast False Creek Parks: BELONGING STATEMENT

Belonging

We live busy lives, we devote our energies to many things. We deplete.

We need a place to replenish, to relate to the land and to the water, a way to nourish and to support ourselves and each other. We need to learn a new way to be, and a new way to belong. For millennia the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations nurtured and were nourished by the land we now call home. Their long and ongoing relationship with this land embodies goals we all have: sustainability, community, and wellness. Their gardening practices ensured food, clothing, and medicine for generation after generation.

Their stewardship shaped this place.

Imagine a space for Indigenous Peoples to practice their cultures. Imagine the open arms of the people and their welcome figures that once graced these shores. Imagine returning to that space, and restoring practices that connect people to land. Imagine what it is to belong to a place, and to learn how you belong.

We need to replenish.

We need to reconnect to the land.

We need a place inspired by and supporting Indigenous cultural practice.

We need Northeast False Creek Park.