



Impact on Community Coalition



BC Coalition of People with Disabilities



ACORN CANADA

## **South East False Creek Working toward an Inclusive and Sustainable Neighbourhood**

Since 1995 substantial public involvement and City resources have been dedicated to the principle of creating South East False Creek as a model of “sustainable development”. Sustainable development is defined by the United Nations in 1987 as:

*“...development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”*

This City owned parcel of land presents an exciting opportunity to become an inclusive and innovative neighbourhood with residents of low, moderate and high incomes, families with children, singles, seniors, and people with disabilities. The South East False Creek Vision Statement established by Council in 1999 states:

*“SEFC is envisioned as a community in which people live, work play and learn in a neighbourhood that has been designed to maintain and balance the highest possible levels of social equity, livability, ecological health and economic prosperity, so as to support their choices and live in a sustainable manner.”*

**What SEFC should be:** For the past ten years the public has called for an equitable housing mix at SEFC that includes households representative of the whole city, with low, moderate and higher incomes. Inclusion of all income levels is vital to the social and economic sustainability of this new neighbourhood. A wide variety of highly respected researchers have studied mixed developments and found that social and economic outcomes for low income children and families in such developments are uniformly more positive than when different income groups are isolated from one another, either by default or design. The City has a chance to have a direct impact on the futures of hundreds (thousands over time) of families by showing leadership with a vibrant housing mix for the development in question.

The so-called “twenty per cent solution” (the City policy of 20% of land in major developments to be set aside for non-market housing) does not create a balanced community. A neighbourhood with twenty per cent low-income households and eighty per cent wealthy households is neither desirable nor

sustainable. A genuine mix is required to ensure the long-term economic health of neighbourhood businesses and services.

London England has a target for major developments that includes 50% market and 50% “affordable” housing, meaning 15% intermediate income and 35% low-income households. Intermediate incomes are defined as ‘workers essential to the functioning and economy of the City of London’: bus drivers, service and clerical workers, teachers, health care workers.

### **Use of the Property Endowment Fund**

It is appropriate that the Property Endowment Fund contribute to SEFC in a significant way. The PEF is not a rainy day fund. In a report to Council on January 15, 2005, Director of Finance Ken Bayne stated that PEF is:

*...“to be treated as an endowment for the current and future residents of the City. And the objective is to protect and increase the value of the fund... to contribute to the City’s public policy objectives... the net income is shared between current and future residents.”*

Given the inadequate supply of low and moderate income housing in Vancouver, there is a dire need for the one-third inclusive housing mix at SEFC. With a minimum 15 year build out, the contribution from the PEF would be balanced, appropriate and in the best interests of Vancouver citizens; now and in 2020. Currently there are 13,000 households on the BC Housing waitlist for an affordable housing unit.

It would be simply unacceptable and unconscionable for the City of Vancouver to close the door on families, seniors and people with disabilities while the PEF grows.

The suggested fifty million dollar contribution to affordable housing over 15 years will not drain the PEF. In January 2005 it was reported that the PEF earns interest of \$7 million annually. A PEF contribution of \$50 million over 15 years is an investment in the development of affordable housing units which then become City-owned assets with significant value over the long term.

### **Will an Olympic Commitment be cancelled?**

In January, 2003 the City of Vancouver, along with the Vancouver 2010 Bid Corporation and the province signed onto the Inner-City Inclusive Commitment Statement that was included in the Guarantees File of Vancouver’s successful bid for the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games. One of the key bid commitments clearly identified an affordable housing legacy as a critical Olympic outcome. Further, the bid stated that planning for such a legacy must start now. If the City of Vancouver reneges on the commitment to the one third housing mix at SEFC, Council will be breaking a highly visible Olympic promise. Vancouver won the right to host the 2010 Olympics based, in no small part, on the assertion that these were to be the first “inclusive” and “socially sustainable” Olympics. Backing down on this housing commitment will give the Games a black

eye and the City of Vancouver will be criticized internationally for this broken promise.

**What can you do?** The Services and Budget Committee will meet on Thursday January 19<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m. at City Hall to receive the staff report on the financial plan and strategy for SEFC. Citizens have a right to speak to this issue. Delegations can register to speak by calling Denise Salmon at 604.873.7269.

You can write to Mayor and Council with your concerns to [mayorandcouncil@vancouver.ca](mailto:mayorandcouncil@vancouver.ca) or 453 West 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Vancouver, V5Y 1V4. Call your Councillor of choice or call them all.