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The Role of Expo 86 and BC Place Limited in the Economic and
Social Restructuring of Vancouver's False Creek Waterfront

by

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ABSTRACT

This MDP explores the role played by Expo 86 and BC Place Limited in the economic and social transformation of the north shore of Vancouver's False Creek waterfront during the 1980s and 1990s. These changes benefitted offshore investors, land developers, and middle-class professional workers and homeseekers. Blue collar workers and the poor were displaced from the spaces they once occupied.

The Expo 86 World's Fair and the quasi-public urban development corporation BC Place Limited were effective instruments for achieving this restructuring. The world's fair consolidated a large block of land, created public expectations that change would occur, and provided an excuse for overriding public input. The urban development corporation enabled corporate-sector interests to bypass established planning mechanisms.

The redevelopment approach pursued by these two agencies affected Vancouver's urban form, local politics, and planning directions. The resulting changes reflect middle-class social, economic and aesthetic priorities. Alternative land use plans (such as the maintenance of False Creek as an industrial area), which would have distributed the costs and benefits of restructuring in a different way, were foreclosed without any significant debate.

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Chapter I

A Brief Introduction to World's Fairs

Vancouver's Expo 86 was quite a party. It lasted for six months. Guests came from around the world; the final attendance figure of more than 20 million well exceeded that forecast. Visitors could explore pavilions and displays from nine provinces and territories, 54 countries, and major corporate exhibitors like General Motors (GM) and Canadian Pacific (CP). They could also amuse themselves on the many midway rides or dine at one of numerous fast food establishments, including a floating restaurant on False Creek nicknamed the "McBarge."

When the decorations and the temporary pavilions came down, however, something very valuable remained -- over 200 acres of prime waterfront land. Now called Pacific Place, this tract of land is touted as one of the largest urban renewal projects in North America. The high-rise residential and commercial development under way here will greatly affect Vancouver's city form.

Facilitating such urban redevelopment is what contemporary World's Fairs like Expo 86 are really about. Early fairs functioned as instruments by which elite aesthetic and cultural values were transmitted to a mass public. However, the social circumstances which made this

possible have changed. Few recent expositions have made any lasting contributions to art, architecture or urban design. World's Fairs today belong primarily to urban land development interests and their political allies. According to Jennifer Craik (1991),

expositions are merely pretexts for developers to gain control over derelict urban land for purposes of redevelopment, as part of the wider restructuring of the economic and social base of urban sites (108).

I believe Vancouver's experience with Expo 86 substantially bears out Craik's thesis, though her "merely" is perhaps too strong. This World's Fair played a number of roles. It gave provincial politicians an excuse to remove control over key land use decisions from a local government deemed to be hostile to business interests. It was terrain on which the provincial government could attack union and labour interests which stood as its political opponents. It attracted media attention to Vancouver and boosted local aspirations to be seen as a "world-class" city. Nonetheless, it is clear that urban redevelopment was front and centre among the aims of Expo promoters, and it is this aspect of the fair which I wish to focus upon.

The germ of what would become Expo 86 first emerged in Vancouver circles during the late 1970s. Important waterfront land with ready access to the downtown core had become available with the relocation of Canadian Pacific's False Creek rail yards to Port Coquitlam. However, initial

proposals for redevelopment of the site faltered when the city and Marathon Realty, CP's property management arm, failed to agree on a suitable proposal (Vancouver Sun, 1980A). Staging a World's Fair was seen by both business and political leaders as a way to get redevelopment of the north shore of False Creek off the blocks. In 1980, ownership of this land was consolidated under the control of a provincial crown corporation, BC Place Ltd., which was expected to push development ahead, over the city's objections if necessary. While BC Place drew up plans for the conversion of False Creek's industrial land to office and housing developments aimed at middle- and upper-class constituencies, a separate provincial body, the EXPO 86 Corporation, was entrusted with the responsibility of staging the fair itself.

Together, the activities of these two crown corporations demonstrate the potential of quasi-public¹ and largely unaccountable bodies to bring about significant transformations of the urban landscape and economy. Vancouver is not unique in this regard; while such bodies were uncommon prior to the 1980s (McKee and Axworthy, 1978), the urban development corporation (UDC) has since become "a dominant player in the urban redevelopment game" (Kiernan,

¹As used here, quasi-public agencies are those in which unelected individuals have authority to exercise certain public, or governmental, powers, such as control over land use planning decisions.

1990, 70) in Canada. Harbourfront in Toronto and the North Portage Development Corporation, established as part of Winnipeg's Core Area Initiative, are other examples of quasi-public bodies with control over significant pieces of urban real estate.

The use of UDCs as instruments of redevelopment is disturbing because such bodies are explicitly designed to facilitate urban restructuring while limiting public input and local control. UDC plans are often made behind closed doors in cooperation and partnership with major private sector land developers. Citizen and community groups are excluded from this decision-making forum.

Nor do the urban changes resulting from such a redevelopment process serve some sort of general interest, as is often suggested. Rather, they reflect a very clear class bias. UDCs tend to pursue residential and commercial developments suited to middle-class and white-collar employment and family situations. Blue-collar industrial and manufacturing jobs are displaced from central city locations, often to peripheral or suburban sites ill-served by public transportation. The city's loss can be measured in aesthetic as well as economic terms, however. UDC projects sweep away sites rich with the history and heritage of diverse users and replace these with a new landscape that speaks to the aspirations of ascendent social groups. The more this form of development proceeds, then, the more the

face of the city is homogenized towards a single cultural image which obscures the true diversity of values and lifestyles common to any large urban area.

Yet despite the potentially significant impacts of UDC-led redevelopment in Canada's urban centres, there has been little written to date on their nature or activities.² An investigation into the links between UDCs and redevelopment such as I aim for here is thus certainly warranted.

World's Fairs, too, offer a significant yet largely unexplored area of study. Though numerous cities have hosted or propose to host such hallmark events, there has been "relatively scant attention" given to "issues such as the effects of hallmark events on local politics, community attitudes and the existing planning process" (Syme et al, 1989, 218). This MDP is intended to provide such information, particularly concerning the first and third of these points, for the specific case of Vancouver and Expo 86.

²Leo and Fenton wrote in 1990 that "to the best of our knowledge there is no literature on UDCs as such. . . . Substantial bibliographical research by both authors has failed to reveal any literature that treats urban development corporations in themselves as a subject of study" (186).

IMPACTS OF WORLD'S FAIRS

Hallmark events like World's Fairs are today most often promoted as an economic boon. They are said to put the host city "on the map" with a national and international audience of both tourists and investors. Other touted economic impacts include jobs for residents in the construction of facilities and in providing services during the event itself. The deficits which such events incur, often paid off with public funds, are supposed to be offset by the long-term economic benefits. However, few fairs have tried to, or been able to, produce convincing evidence to support these claims (Blackorby et al, 1986).

Unlike their economic effects, the physical consequences to a city of hosting a hallmark event are clear. Most World's Fairs have promised and delivered permanent additions to the built environment. These range from landmark structures like the Eiffel Tower (Paris 1889) to cultural and sporting facilities (Seattle 1962), convention centres (Spokane 1974), rapid transit or subway lines (Montreal 1967), public parks (New York 1939 and 1965), restoration of heritage buildings (San Antonio 1968) or the opening of additional areas for housing and commercial expansion (San Francisco 1915).

Hallmark events also have social, cultural, and psychological effects upon urban residents. They can

symbolize a city's transition from outpost to centre of culture. Backers of Seattle's 1962 fair, for instance, hoped to erase the local image of being unsophisticated and provincial. One marker of its success in this was a shifting of local attitudes and behaviours towards those prevailing in presumably more worldly centres -- such as a new-found acceptance of liquor sales on Sundays (Findlay, 1992). Hallmark events can also create opportunities for city dwellers to participate in a shared experience which becomes part of the collective memory, as Harry Hiller (1990) argues the 1988 Calgary Olympics did. They can strengthen regional traditions and build local pride -- one consequence of the Scottish Exhibition of National History, Art and Industry in 1911 (Kinchin and Kinchin, 1988). However, they can also change urban residents' perceptions of and feelings about their city in negative ways. For example, the loss of familiar landmarks and disruption of established personal routines in Perth, Australia, as a result of the 1962 Commonwealth Games and 1987 America's Cup defense are outlined by Kimberly Dovey (1989).

In this MDP, I will focus upon the urban physical consequences for Vancouver of hosting Expo 86 -- how the form of the city was altered -- and the political factors which influenced and shaped those outcomes: in whose interests were the resulting changes? Who had input into, and control over, these decisions? What alternative land

use arrangements were foreclosed in the wake of Expo?

As will be clear, my view of planning shares Norman Krumholz's emphasis upon equity. I agree with equity planning's assertion that the questions of "who pays?" and "who benefits?" are central to any analysis of urban development processes (Krumholz and Forester, 1990, 49); I will assess the restructuring of the False Creek waterfront from this perspective. I am influenced as well by John Forester's progressive planning, in particular his argument that a key role of the planner is to "nurture well-informed, genuinely democratic politics and discourse" (1989, 22). My evaluation of the Expo 86 experience will therefore dwell extensively on whether the ends of False Creek redevelopment were arrived at after full and public debate over alternatives, and whether the means of this urban transformation (the hallmark event and the UDC) were conducive to public input and accountable to the local citizenry.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Several authors have attempted to typologize world's fairs. Zimmerman (1974), for instance, identifies seven eras:³ Crystal Palace (1851-76), Centennial (1876-89),

³Zimmerman's text gives the Neoclassical era as 1889-1893 and Art Nouveau as 1893-1925. This disagrees with the list of Fair's he provides in a side-bar, and I have taken

Neoclassical (1889-1900), Art Nouveau (1900-1925), Modern (1925-40), Atomic/Pop Art (1940-67) and Expo (1967-76).

John Mullin (1972) divides Fairs into four groups, based upon "the general philosophy of planning existing during the years that each fair was held" (2) -- City Beautiful (1890-1930), City Practical (1930-47), City Beneficial (1947-70) and City of Spreading Amenities (1970 onward). Harris (1993), dealing with North American fairs only, separates them into three categories: those held between the US Centennial and the end of World War I, characterized by "confident visions of progress [and] racial hierarchy" (7); interwar fairs, featuring "modernist visions of a world to come" (7); and the less grandiose and more mundane years of 1950 to the present.

It is not my intent to construct any comparable typology of my own here. I will be content simply with dividing fairs into pre-and post- World War II eras; my analysis will pertain primarily to the latter. I find this division to be reflected in the three schemes above, and echoed by other writers as well.⁴ The nature of, motives for, and consequences of pre-WWII fairs differ significantly from those of recent years. The early fairs served an

the liberty of using what I perceive to be the more accurate dating.

⁴Burton Benedict (1983) asserts, for instance, that "The New York World's Fair of 1939 represents a watershed in international expositions. Though there have been many world's fairs since, their character has altered" (59).

important role in constructing and transmitting to the mass public a view of social reality which conformed closely to the interests of the dominant classes that sponsored and supported these spectacles. This worldview showcased racist presentations of non-white cultures and promoted oligopolistic capitalism.

According to Gilbert (1994), "the great organizing principle of the Victorian Fair was the idea of universal culture, defined in part by European ... opposition between civilization and savagery" (17). In other words, European culture was depicted as the pinnacle of historical evolution, one achieved only by the naturally superior white races. Most fairs of this era propagated this concept through prominent social darwinist and eugenic displays that proclaimed the glory and necessity of European (and American) colonial empires. Some fairs, such as London 1924 or Paris 1931, were explicitly devoted to imperial or colonial themes. This emphasis upon racial solidarity was intended to diffuse tensions over class and gender which began to threaten elite hegemony in European and North American nations during the late nineteenth century (Rydell, 1984). However, fairs did not wholly succeed in convincing fairgoers that they were members of an homogeneous people with a single shared interest. Strong labour movements in Portland, Seattle and San Francisco refused to put the success of local expositions ahead of their own priorities

(Rydell, 1983; Dobkin, 1983). Similarly, the planners of New York's 1939/40 fair may have glorified the "typical American" (Susman, 1980), but the persistence of counterposed ethnic identities is described in fictionalized form in E.L. Doctorow's 1985 novel, World's Fair.

Corporate participation was a feature of World's Fairs from the very first. These events served not only to sell particular products but to instill in visitors an appreciation of the modern business corporation. This is felt to be one of the roles of the 1893 fair in Chicago, which took place at a time when large-scale corporate industry and finance was supplanting the Jeffersonian self-reliance of a rural republic (Muschamp, 1992). Later fairs, particularly those during the Depression of the 1930s, sought to restore public faith in its corporate leaders and convince the masses they were at the threshold of a technological utopia. This was most evident in the Chicago and New York fairs of that decade, which Rydell (1985) argues succeeded in "perpetuat[ing] the corporation-run state into the post-war period" (542).

Pre-World War II fairs, in sum, were important instruments of elite ideological hegemony. After the war, such motives played a lesser role. The Cold War and environmental crises shook the previously dominant faith in scientific beneficence. The lingering romanticization of progress sold in Brussels in 1958 or Seattle in 1962 gave

way to the subtle scepticism of Montreal in 1967.

Meanwhile, television provided an alternative way of informing and shaping public opinion (Segal, 1981; Benedict, 1983). Both the message and the medium had changed, and the overall cultural significance of fairs waned. The interests of local leaders and local economic demands thus became increasingly more important as a rationale for staging them.

Some critics still expect contemporary World's Fairs to live up to their pre-1939 cultural influence. Robert Fulford (1986), for example, condemned Expo 86 as "business-like, artistically safe and comfortable nothing whatever to do with the spirit of an international exposition" (10). I suggest that this reflects a misunderstanding of the real intentions behind today's expositions. Robert Moses had the more accurate insight when he said, in reference to New York's fair of 1964/65,

what finally remains in the ground when the pageant has faded, the brickbats have been removed by the wreckers and scavengers, and [the planners] have gone to work is of more concern to the next generation than any spectacle (quoted in Caro, 1974, 1086).

Likewise, in Vancouver the content of Expo itself paled in comparison to its more important role as a catalyst for urban regeneration.

Contemporary fair proponents feel, if anything, that such a focus should be more explicitly acknowledged. Peters (1982), for instance, says "if future fairs are going to live up to their enormous redevelopment potential ... they

must be viewed as a means to [that] end, not a single-shot exercise in civic promotion" (19). Perhaps the model here is the British Garden Festivals established under the Thatcher government in the 1980s. The rules for staging these events demand that the sites be "100 acres or more and derelict" (Kinchin and Kinchin, 1988, 173). The redevelopment aim is obvious.

The linkage between urban revitalization and hallmark events like World's Fairs is primarily a North American phenomenon, though some European fairs (like Seville 1992) had urban renewal aspirations, as did Brisbane in 1988. Asian fairs like Osaka (1970), Tsukuba (1985) and Taejon (1993) have been constructed mainly in suburban sites rather than in central city locations; the site proposed by the Japanese city of Nagoya in its current bid for the 2005 exposition is a wooded hillside approximately 40 kilometres outside town. This key difference makes the latter fairs inappropriate comparisons for this study.

Finally, I will compare Vancouver primarily with other World's Fairs. Hallmark events such as an Olympic Games do bear certain similarities; the 1900, 1904 and 1908 Games were staged in conjunction with World's Fairs, and some argue that the Olympics increasingly share the corporate sponsorships and emphasis upon entertainment so obvious at World's Fairs (Benedict, 1983; Hill, 1984). They can also be used as catalysts for urban redevelopment; Barcelona was

able to replace a derelict waterfront area in order to construct its Olympic village (Stevens, 1992), and urban regeneration was a major selling point of the city of Manchester's bid for the millennium Olympiad (Law, 1994). However, despite what may be interesting parallels, time and length restrictions allow me to make only limited use of literature dealing with hallmark events other than World's Fairs.

OBJECTIVES

This MDP has four objectives. I will show

- (1) that Expo 86 was a catalyst for the redevelopment of Vancouver's north False Creek waterfront;
- (2) that since Expo 86 ended, its site has been transformed from an industrial to a post-industrial landscape in accordance with a corporate redevelopment agenda; that spin-off effects of this change have affected the entire urban form of the city; that these changes have had significant negative social and aesthetic impacts; and that the corporate redevelopment strategy foreclosed other land use alternatives, with a different distribution of benefits, without adequate public debate;

- (3) that the UDC form of management given to Expo and BC Place made these changes easier to achieve by limiting local political and public input into decision-making about the future of an important urban site; and
- (4) that the use of these redevelopment mechanisms has transformed local politics and planning processes in the Vancouver urban region.

METHODOLOGY

This MDP utilizes a case study approach. Vancouver's experience with Expo 86 and BC Place Ltd. will be situated within a framework that relates hallmark events and quasi-public development corporations to the urban restructuring process. This framework will be developed from a review of published literature in urban planning, political science, geography and related fields.

Information about Vancouver's case will be obtained from original planning documents and available secondary sources. I will also rely upon the extensive media record of events leading up to Expo 86. This coverage includes many interviews with provincial and municipal politicians, as well as key players in the BC Place development corporation, the City of Vancouver Planning Department, community organizations, and academia. The views held by

these individuals upon the issues to be addressed here have been well-represented in this record. I am confident that this substantially reflects any information which might have been obtained through informant interviews. Such interviews were considered for this study, but rejected due to time and resource constraints, and to the potential difficulty of tracing individuals after the passage of so many years.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS TO FOLLOW

In Chapter II, I will identify the interests which perceive benefits to themselves arising from the redevelopment of derelict urban areas, and discuss the redevelopment strategies favoured by such groups. I will argue that World's Fairs serve as an effective catalyst for redevelopment. They provide a convenient excuse for the assembly and clearance of large tracts of land. They demand new infrastructure necessary for future land use changes. They bring public attention to derelict areas and build popular support for renewal activities. However, the need to meet event deadlines can provide an excuse for restricting public involvement in decision-making.

The redevelopment process is often handled by arm's length, quasi-public development corporations. I will look at the history of UDCs and the reasons why they have become important instruments of renewal activity: they are seen as

more business-like or efficient than local government, better able to work in partnership with the private sector, and capable of avoiding time-consuming democratic debate and public participation. I will also look at how UDCs affect local planning procedures and political methods of public accountability.

In Chapter III, I will outline the origins of Expo 86, including the original uses of the site, early proposals for redevelopment, and the emergence of the Expo idea. I will describe BC Place Ltd.'s plans for the site and the public response to them. I will explore some of the key dimensions of conflict between the UDC and the City of Vancouver, over matters like residential-commercial mix, density, and urban design.

In Chapter IV, I will identify the Expo legacy -- what has happened on the north shore of False Creek since 1986. I will explain why the BC government chose to terminate crown involvement in North Shore redevelopment, and will describe its procedure for disposing of the land and the controversies surrounding this. I will also outline the actual developments which have taken place on the site to date.

My argument in Chapter V is that assembling the BC Place lands and staging Expo 86 through urban development corporations greatly contributed to the outcomes described in the preceding chapters. I will assess BC Place in terms

of the advantages and disadvantages of UDCs identified in Chapter II. I will concentrate upon the changes to Vancouver's urban form which followed Expo, such as the corporate city redevelopment of False Creek and the gentrification of surrounding residential and commercial areas.

In my final chapter, I will investigate how Expo 86 and UDC-led development on False Creek affected Vancouver civic politics and local planning procedures. I see BC Place as an attempt to impose the provincial government's policy agenda upon the local scene. This takes in both physical redevelopment (how the corporations' vision differed from that favoured by city officials and by local community groups) and social policy (the attempt to deny construction unions an exclusive presence on public sector jobsites). I will show how civic priorities were distorted by BC Place/Expo 86 and how established planning directions were undermined. I will also explore alternative land uses for north False Creek which were foreclosed by the Expo redevelopment strategy. Finally, I will suggest some ways in which the process might have been reformed to take more account of the needs and interests of those groups who suffered most from the strategy pursued in Vancouver over the last decade.

Chapter II

World's Fairs, UDCs, and Urban Renewal

Notable physical changes have occurred in the downtown areas (that is, central business districts and immediately adjacent industrial or inner-city residential neighbourhoods) of many North American cities in the years since World War II. These areas have lost much of the employment function they originally performed. Manufacturers, for instance, were drawn to suburban areas where cheaper land was available to build single-storey factories suited to horizontal flow assembly processes. Certain office jobs followed, relocating to suburban business parks and so-called Edge Cities (Garreau, 1991). Many existing downtown buildings are now deemed unsuitable for modern business needs and go lacking for tenants, for instance because their wiring is inadequate for current telecommunications technology (Durlak, 1994).

Changing transportation systems have had an impact on the shape of central cities as well. Older ports have gone into decline (Newman and Mayo, 1981); tourist attractions have taken their place in Montreal, Toronto, and Halifax (Bourne, 1991). The decline of passenger rail and the emergence of containerized trucking has made downtown rail facilities largely redundant. In cities like Vancouver,

Edmonton, Regina, Winnipeg, and Windsor, large tracts of prime real estate were vacated when existing tracks were relocated to peripheral corridors.

The cumulative effect of such economic and technological changes has been to throw the role and needs of the downtown into debate. This chapter will discuss how different interests in the city have perceived the need for urban centre revitalization, and how hallmark events and UDCs have found their place in planning for such change.

PROPONENTS OF REDEVELOPMENT

Steps which might restore vitality to presumably stagnant center cities are supported by a number of different organized interests. Civic boosters who associate a vibrant downtown with urban stature and prestige are among the earliest to speak out for redevelopment. They are joined by existing downtown businesses, downtown land owners, property development corporations, and the financial sector. The motives and desired strategies of players in the pro-redevelopment camp perhaps differ; some may fight to bolster existing uses while others pursue a restructuring and transformation which promises greater profit opportunities.

Civic boosters and philanthropists often see the downtown as the symbolic heart of the city; when it is

dysfunctional and decayed, they feel their city's prestige diminished. Booster organizations take the initiative in preparing and promoting plans and schemes for downtown regeneration. Tangible downtown redevelopment sometimes arises out of these philanthropic urges. Renaissance Centre in Detroit, for instance, is portrayed by Frieden and Sagalyn (1989) as "basically a civic gesture by Henry Ford II" (221). They describe the genesis of the project this way:

Using political and economic clout, [Ford] persuaded the heads of fifty large corporations, including other giant auto manufacturers and tire producers, to join him in putting up \$155 million in equity capital Although he argued that the project was economically sound and would in time turn a profit, that was not a prime consideration (221).

Such altruism is not the norm, however. Most businesses are reluctant to remain in, or return to, declining central areas without being assured that government power (and dollars) will be used to support reinvestment. For example, the original business proposal for one of the earliest of the well-known inner-city revitalization efforts, Baltimore's Charles Centre, argued that "the growth potential of the region cannot be tapped as a resource for downtown's revitalization without the application of the urban renewal power of the City to create the opportunity for downtown investment" (Fosler and Berger, 1982, 36).

Revitalization can set up conflicts between different factions of capital, however. Businesses and industries already occupying downtown space seek government assistance to improve the local environment and make it more attractive for their employees and customers. They want, for instance, to have remedied what they perceive as outdated street systems, poor automobile access and limited parking.

However, other capitalists covet the same land in old central cities for different uses based on a post-industrial economy. There are two complementary yet distinct strategies associated with this.¹ One is the corporate or executive city strategy, which focuses upon financial services, head offices and other command and control functions of the modern global economy. Philadelphia is a well-known case of this approach. Over a 20 year period the city consciously strove to attract corporate functions to replace its declining industrial base. The extent of the city's transformation is symbolized by the destruction of the downtown Pennsylvania Railroad terminal for the

¹Many authors do not distinguish between redevelopment led by office and quaternary services and that led by tourism and consumption oriented strategies. I follow Robertson (1995) in treating them separately. As the value of central city land is driven further up and profit opportunities concentrated in high density development, the two strategies may yet conflict. Ericksen (1992) foreshadows this possibility when he writes, "Just as railways and freeways are being removed in response to real estate values, so [Vancouver's] stadium must eventually be rebuilt on a more suitable site The present site must complete the ring of high-density housing surrounding the downtown core that is so essential to this city" (150).

construction of Penn Centre: "the railroad ... developed the property for use by banks, insurance companies, and other offices and commercial establishments in recognition of the new, corporate base of the central city economy" (Kleniewski, 1984, 209).

The other strategy seeks to acquire central city land for major sports facilities, artistic and cultural centres, convention centres, and festival markets. This approach links downtown redevelopment to an expansion of the tourism and leisure-consumption sectors of the economy. New Orleans provides a fairly typical example (Smith and Keller, 1983; Whelan, 1989; Brooks and Young, 1993). Downtown redevelopment there began with the construction of the Superdome and was followed by a series of projects which eventually included the 1984 World's Fair. The legacy of this fair included a publicly financed convention centre and a festival market of shops and boutiques built by the Rouse Corporation along the lines of its initiatives in Boston, Baltimore, and elsewhere. A casino complex was also planned. None of these new land uses or legacies of the World's Fair directly served the same groups which benefitted from or depended upon the previously existing uses of the land in question. Inner city working class and poor residents found that businesses serving their needs and industries offering them jobs had been driven out.

Corporate leaders insist that government's proper role in redevelopment and restructuring is to facilitate private sector initiatives (Clavel and Kleniewski, 1990). This can involve the utilization of expropriation or eminent domain powers, extension of tax breaks or incentives, and provision of public amenities like parkland. The goal is to abet market forces rather than to attempt "politically motivated" or redistributive transformations. Redevelopment is seen as a partnership within which private developers reclaim urban land and reap the resultant profits. Such partnerships are well-effected by entrusting government's redevelopment powers to arm's length, quasi-public development corporations with close personal and ideological ties to the corporate sector. I will return to this idea shortly.

WORLD'S FAIRS AND REDEVELOPMENT

I wish to argue that World's Fairs are an important way of spurring urban redevelopment. This is because preparation for a fair involves many actions which increase the development potential of land. To begin with, the provision of important infrastructure like water or sewer connections and road/transit access for a fair also makes future redevelopment of the land easier. In Vancouver, for instance, expansion of the Cambie Street bridge and construction of LRT (light rail transit) from the suburbs to

the Expo site and into downtown were both undertaken for the 1986 fair.

Expositions can also provide an excuse for the consolidation through sale or expropriation of large tracts of land in the hands of one agency. This overcomes the fragmentation problem, that is, the fact that dispersed ownership of downtown land means that single investments alone are not enough to disperse the "blight" and dispel the unsavoury image many people hold of the downtown. This makes reinvestment on the part of individuals or single businesses a somewhat risky proposition. Total clearance and redevelopment, by contrast, can change the character of an urban area practically overnight.

However, working with large blocks of land can also limit future redevelopment partnerships to those firms possessing substantial capital and the expertise to handle complex multi-year projects. Such firms operate in a national, or international, marketplace. Some suggest that dealing with big corporations on large projects offers planners the best opportunity to realize "planning gains," or the inclusion of desired public amenities (Griffiths, 1990). Large firms likely have sufficient resources to include supposedly unprofitable features in their projects if they can be convinced of the wisdom in so doing. On the other hand, large firms are not dependent upon the opportunities available in any particular locality and are

thus better able to obtain concessions from local authorities dedicated to the redevelopment process. Power may be disproportionately on the side of the private actor when it comes to negotiating redevelopment.

Another problem with large-scale renewal at the hands of corporate giants is its tendency to sweep away the local character, heritage, and individuality of a city and replace it with homogeneous landscapes. The economics of large-scale projects favour complete clearance and rebuilding. Rehabilitation of older structures can be expensive and fraught with the potential for unexpected delays. New structures make it easier to provide the kinds of floor layout, telecommunications infrastructure, and road access favoured by many tenants. Marketing such projects is therefore easier. Preservation efforts tend to be limited to single landmark or heritage structures, which are left isolated and decontextualized.

Redevelopment pursued through small business and homeowner upgrading of individual properties is much more effective at preserving community and its established connections intact. In addition, its benefits are more widely distributed -- profits do not flow solely to large private developers whose roots and decision-making functions are elsewhere. World's Fairs, however, tend more to the former than the latter approach. Total site clearance avoids the possibility that small individual developers will

fail to take action in keeping with event deadlines. It makes it easier as well for fair designers to apply a consistent thematic treatment to the site.

Fairs focus public attention upon their sites and produce expectations among the population that some fitting legacy or sequel will emerge. Redevelopment proponents promise that the urban transformation hinted at by the glitter of the fair will become permanent reality through the realization of sweeping development plans. Progress is monitored by the media, which in both Knoxville and Vancouver ran a number of stories contrasting the vitality of the exposition at its height with the desolation of the sites over subsequent months. Such pressures likely make it more important to politicians to reach quick agreements with developers on post-fair projects. Brisbane, for instance, took note of Vancouver's post-fair difficulties and made sure that its Expo site was sold to private developers before the fair even began (Hamilton, 1988). Even so, the site sat empty for three years before development was initiated.

Historical experience finds World's Fairs and UDCs frequently conjoined (C. Hall, 1989). The powers and purposes of UDCs result in a particular way of settling land use issues that facilitates the staging of hallmark events. For instance, consolidating large sites under a single authority is much easier for quasi-public bodies with the

powers of eminent domain; they can expropriate recalcitrant owners if required (Frieden and Sagalyn, 1989). Agencies constituted by government and often having recourse to the Treasury or government-secured bond issues also have more financial flexibility; they are able to hold large parcels for Exposition use while awaiting the opportunity to pursue revenue-generating development (Wolf, 1970).

World's Fairs must meet opening day deadlines; the need for speedy construction encourages limits to public input and provides an excuse for "autocracy in urban planning" (Thorne and Munro-Clark, 1989). An example of tight timelines having this effect comes from Calgary's experience in preparing for the 1988 Olympics. Council asked the provincial government to suspend city planning regulations and any Development Board appeals to allow the construction of the Saddledome arena on the Exhibition and Stampede grounds. This was justified as necessary "to demonstrate ... that Calgary was capable of hosting the Winter Games" (Campbell, 1984, 118). It shows, I suggest, how hallmark events provide an excuse to override established mechanisms for the public to express its views.

Finally, corporate support and participation is needed for World's Fairs to succeed. Since the UDC form of management is one corporate leaders can feel comfortable working with (Leo and Fenton, 1990), they may be more willing to assist in an event which is geared towards

advancing the corporate redevelopment agenda than one in which decisions will be made according to more overtly political criteria.

The remainder of this chapter will explore the reasons why urban development corporations are thought to be an appropriate way of managing renewal activities, whether or not connected to a hallmark event. I will assess the impact of UDC-led redevelopment on local spending priorities, the urban planning process, and public control over changes to the urban environment.

URBAN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS

Through the powers they are given to spearhead revitalization of urban areas, urban development corporations are able to alter the built form of the city in a substantial way. UDCs, according to Leo and Fenton (1990),

are relatively new to urban politics, but they are rapidly becoming the urban development vehicles of choice, not only in Canada, but also in the US, where scores of them are busily reshaping city centres, and in the UK, where the London Docklands Development Corporation [LDDC] is engaged in one of the world's best-known "downtown revitalization" schemes (189).

I will draw upon examples from all three countries in my effort to assess the advantages and disadvantages likely to arise from this form of redevelopment. I am not going to

draw sharp distinctions between development corporations, renewal authorities (a term commonly used in American cities)², and the public-private partnership, first because I believe the type of development generated by any of these forms will be comparable, but also because the available literature does not generally provide enough details about the organizational structure of particular entities to draw such distinctions.

Advantages and Disadvantages of UDCs

UDCs are felt by many to be more "business-like" than governments. This is supposed to result in the most cost-efficient, and hence most desirable, form of development. However, efficiency is often wedded in the minds of its proponents with absence of debate and elimination of democratic mechanisms of public participation: "UDCs do things. . . . they are free from the inevitable delays of the democratic process" (UK Secretary of State Michael Heseltine, quoted in Thornley, 1991, 181). Too often, this means that UDCs do not respond to any interests which are not already part of the status quo and not already benefitting from the established order.

²Gaffikin and Warf (1993) assert that British UDCs are similar to American urban renewal authorities, and "from the perspective of those keen to advance the privatization of urban policy, they share similar virtues" (77).

The ability to act quickly and flexibly is another UDC characteristic. They are thus considered more responsive to market signals, able to seize opportunities as they arise. However, this results in a piece-meal approach to development; projects which proceed are determined by what private investors are most willing to contribute towards at any given time. "The bias is to action rather than to a particular outcome" (Batley, 1989, 179). This makes long-range planning on the part of civic officials difficult.

UDCs tend to adopt business standards of management (and are often run by veterans of the private sector). This can lead to the same problem as the emphasis upon quick and flexible response: "deal-making and profit opportunities, rather than systematic planning of how best to deploy public resources to create good jobs and meet pressing neighbourhood needs" (Levine, 1989, 27) begin to drive central city redevelopment.

The above features of UDCs, despite their weaknesses from a progressive, democratic planning perspective, make development corporations attractive partners for private entrepreneurs interested in joint efforts to address downtown decline. Both parties operate with similar ethics and similar views of the world. Both see benefits in cooperation. UDCs are expected to lever money in private investment to supplement public expenditures and thus achieve maximum benefits at minimum cost to taxpayers. In

return, they employ public powers to the advantage of private businesses, providing increased opportunities for profit at minimal to no risk.

All of this deal-making, which can have great impact upon the form of central cities, is done in secret, with decisions made in closed-door meetings (Deakin and Edwards, 1993). Leo and Fenton (1990) find this aspect of UDCs particularly troublesome. After an extended discussion of rumoured misdealings between Toronto's Harbourfront and a private developer, they conclude that

Secrecy has become as integral to Harbourfront Corporation as bricks and mortar. It seems clear that Harbourfront started out with the best of intentions, on the part of Harbourfront officials at least, but it is anybody's guess what the Byzantine wheeling and dealing that is endemic to the development industry has made of those intentions (202).

Because they are driven by the need to be profitable, projects initiated by UDCs are felt by some to be more reflective of public taste in architecture and design and thus more likely to lure back downtown the middle-class workers and shoppers who have taken up the suburban lifestyle. Frieden and Sagalyn (1989) call this "build[ing] for the crowds rather than for the elite" (61). Seen another way, however, the search for the bottom line and the desire to expedite investment in redevelopment treat high quality design as an expensive frill, as demonstrated in Bristol, England, where Punter (1993) suggests that "the

threat of the UDC encouraged the city council to be less demanding than it would otherwise have been, and led to ... a fall in the generally high standard of architectural design" (535). Similarly, critics of Brisbane's Expo 88 feared that

the economic and political need for the Queensland Government's Expo Authority to break even on Expo may well mean that the end use of the site will be determined more by immediate profit than by what is most aesthetically and architecturally appropriate (C. Hall, 1989, 27).

ASSESSING THE IMPACTS OF UDCs

Distortion of Local Priorities

Local government priorities can be distorted by the "free" money available to UDCs, that is, money which comes from higher levels of government, bank loans, or the bond market and not directly from the municipal budget. Fainstein and Fainstein (1983) argue that "in the absence of specifically designated and separately funded renewal agencies, city government will proceed incrementally to disperse its resources across various functions and geographic areas" (246). UDC money, by contrast, is not subject to the political process which allocates other expenditures within the city. It is spent on downtown revitalization whether or not that would be the first priority of city residents. Such expenditures often draw

along money from local government, for road improvements, public amenities, financial guarantees, office space rental, tax incentives and other measures necessary to make the redeveloped core areas attractive to business. Central city redevelopment thus jumps the queue for spending priority because it is presented as a bargain that government would be foolish not to buy into.

Corporate pressure to make such allocative decisions can also be very persuasive. Some benefits or desired amenities might be dangled before councils as a "reward" for backing the redevelopment agenda. The London Docklands Development Corporation, for instance, promised cooperative local authorities support with social housing and community facilities so long as they acquiesced to the Corporation's own development goals (Deakin and Edwards, 1993).

Relationship to Local Planning Power

UDCs exist outside the established parameters of local planning processes, and always serve to weaken the same. Though local governments have some ability to implement UDCs of their own, and may do so for all the reasons given above, they are more often imposed upon local authorities against their wishes; the impetus behind this decision on the part of higher levels of government is the belief that local officials have failed to deliver redevelopment where and when it is needed.

This happened, for instance, in New York when Governor Nelson Rockefeller established the State Urban Development Corporation (SUDC). It was portrayed as "an outside force that could come in like a *deus ex machina*" (Brilliant, 1975, 52) where local authorities had been unable or unwilling to act. One expectation of the SUDC was that it would construct public housing projects and industrial complexes in suburban counties dominated by wealthy, conservative, anti-growth interests. However, vigorous opposition from upstate elected officials and party leaders forced the State to remove the SUDC's override powers for all areas except New York City. There, the low-income areas affected were less vocal and the SUDC was a convenient screen for local pro-growth politicians. In conjunction with a similar agency set up by the City, the Public Development Corporation, the SUDC has actively pursued prestigious projects like Battery Park City. In the process, New York's Department of City Planning has been "relegated ... to a limited research and regulatory function" (Fainstein and Fainstein, 1989, 67).

The Thatcher government in the United Kingdom made perhaps the most extensive use of UDCs. Thatcher and her colleagues did not believe that local governments were prepared to endorse the ideology of privatization, reduced regulation, entrepreneurship and the "trickle-down" effects of growth which they saw as the solution to Britain's

decline. Nor were they pleased with the efforts of community organizations to exert greater control over the development process. In Conservative thinking,

as important as the creation of [UDCs] ... was the exclusion from any prominent role of those agencies whose approach and values might not be compatible with the new orthodoxy. This meant principally local authorities -- in particular the Labour-controlled councils responsible for almost all inner city areas; and most community and voluntary organizations, especially those that could be categorized as "pressure groups" (Edwards and Deakin, 1992, 361).

The perceived advantages of UDCs, noted earlier, are their sensitivity to market signals, ability to win the confidence of business leaders, and potential to cut through bureaucratic process and speed project construction. Certain powers are needed to achieve these goals, most importantly the ability to circumvent local planning legislation and public participation processes.

Powers to override local plans are quite common among the UDCs established by higher levels of government. The New York State Urban Development Corporation was vested with powers to "override local ordinances and make critical decisions about land use without regard to traditional jurisdictional boundaries" (Brilliant, 1975, 3). In the United Kingdom, London Docklands and the other prominent UDCs were established under the terms of the 1980 *Local Government, Planning, and Land Act*. Although there is some

variation, most were given "full development control powers in their areas including control over listed buildings [and] conservation areas" (Thornley, 1991, 166). Similarly, in Vancouver, BC Place Ltd. was established as a crown corporation of the provincial government with "the authority to raise and disperse its own funds, the power of expropriation, and [the ability to] override all city by-laws and zoning regulations" (Ley, 1987, 53).

With the powers they have received, Matthew Kiernan (1990) argues that

the track records of these new corporations in radically reshaping ... urban centres have been truly impressive [However] they have, unfortunately, exacted a rather steep price: the evisceration of much of the urban planning capability of local government (70).

What is lost is the ability of government to ensure that development is orderly, balanced, beneficial to inner city residents who might be affected, and within the means of the city as a whole to support. Local authorities without control over projects built within UDC-held territory are forced into a reactive rather than proactive position.

Thornley (1991) argues that UDCs may even find their own interest to lie in opposing plans which local governments have already established. London Docklands, for instance, objected to the Borough of Southwark's plan for territories within their mutually overlapping jurisdiction. The Borough's plan called for public housing, more

industrial employment, and a ban on further office construction. London Docklands wished to see instead a focus on revitalization through further office development and construction of high-end residential accommodation. The Borough's plan had been developed through extensive consultation with community groups and better reflected the needs of the current residents of East-End London, who had neither the skills for white-collar employment nor the income to afford luxury housing.

Public Control and Accountability

To be concerned about accountability reflects a fundamental choice of values. It flows from a belief that citizens should have some say over decisions which will profoundly affect them and which are generally characterized as being in their interest. There are, of course, multiple publics, such as those living within a UDC-controlled area, those in adjoining neighbourhoods who will be impacted by development, and residents of the city (or province or country) who might benefit from the economic growth supposedly stimulated by redevelopment. The Thatcher government, for instance, defended its UDCs on the grounds that stimulating urban redevelopment was a matter of national interest, and that the proper forum for debate of this issue was Westminster (Thornley, 1991). Spatial and structural changes will weigh differently upon different

groups, however, and as a general rule it seems most fair that those who will bear the greatest part of the cost have most say in those choices. Like Krumholz, I reject the view that local interests should always be subject to larger ones (Krumholz and Forester, 1990). I suggest that, if anything, the weight should be the reverse, that developments within a municipality should be answerable primarily to those resident there, with the balance between neighbourhood and city-wide needs best decided through local political processes.

UDCs have an accountability problem in these terms because they are intentionally designed to limit local input into and control over their activities. If UDCs were not at arm's length from local councils, then at least in theory, the public would be able to dictate their strategic direction; changes could be implemented by voting out one set of councillors and electing another. However, as noted earlier, political airing of concerns and public participation in decision-making is often time-consuming and controversial. It is thus unattractive to those whose idea of efficiency is the ability to get things done quickly. For instance, after the first proposals for redevelopment of Winnipeg's Portage Avenue met public opposition, the project was spun off to a UDC with tri-governmental participation, the North Portage Development Corporation, which expressed its intent to "recover lost ground" and "get things done" in

this key downtown location. (Lowe, 1987/88, 10).

Whether politicians and UDCs can ultimately escape public accountability entirely is questionable, however. Voters may not accept the subtle distinctions between local government and autonomous renewal agencies. In Winnipeg, for instance, a public unhappy with development plans for the former railway lands at the forks of the Assiniboine and Red Rivers put pressure on City Councillors. The City responded with a report calling on the UDC charged with planning the area -- the Forks Renewal Corporation -- to freeze development and draw up new plans paying more attention to heritage and green space (Gerecke, 1990).

This demonstrates that the public is searching for some control over urban development decisions, and some way of holding those who make them accountable to public concerns. With UDCs, however, local governments are unable to deliver this accountability. The Forks Renewal Corporation, in the case above, chose to ignore the citizens and Council (Lowe and Nozick, 1993). There is danger in this route, though. UDCs which attempt to exclude all public input from decision-making encourage protest against both their methods and their goals. Such protest can be quite unorthodox, such as the civil disobedience and traffic disruption plotted by some groups opposed to the Expo 86 and BC Place plans (Ritchie, 1982). The unrest and controversy generated can make conservative investors shy away from inner-city

projects. UDCs which recognize this have established advisory councils and other mechanisms for citizen input (Thornley, 1991), but they cannot give local citizens any real control over decision-making without undermining the supposed efficiency and freedom from procedural delay which are seen as their strengths. Democratizing UDCs in any meaningful way, even allowing the same degree of input as is sometimes seen today in the writing of community plans, is probably not possible.

CONCLUSIONS

World's Fairs are often advocated as catalysts for redevelopment of derelict or industrial lands in central areas. There are a number of reasons why fairs might promote development: they introduce improved infrastructure, they consolidate ownership of fragmented land, they attract the attention of national and international investors, and they raise public expectations that new and exciting developments will carry on the vital urban life experienced during the fair's run.

Proponents of urban redevelopment often support the establishment of UDCs to push renewal activities ahead. Such corporations are felt to share the efficiency and flexibility of private organizations; they do indeed commonly share business attitudes and work willingly in

cooperation with the corporate sector. The great disadvantage of this approach from the standpoint of accountability and democracy is that there is little opportunity for public input into UDC decisions. They can thus pursue a restructuring and privatization of key urban lands to the benefit of their private allies. Existing uses, often industrial and valued by working and lower class interests, are transformed into white-collar enclaves and tourist playgrounds. If decisions about city centre redevelopment continued to be in the hands of elected local officials, either in dealings with the private sector, or through public sector leadership and direct government action, then at least the wisdom of such transformations could be considered in open, democratic debate.

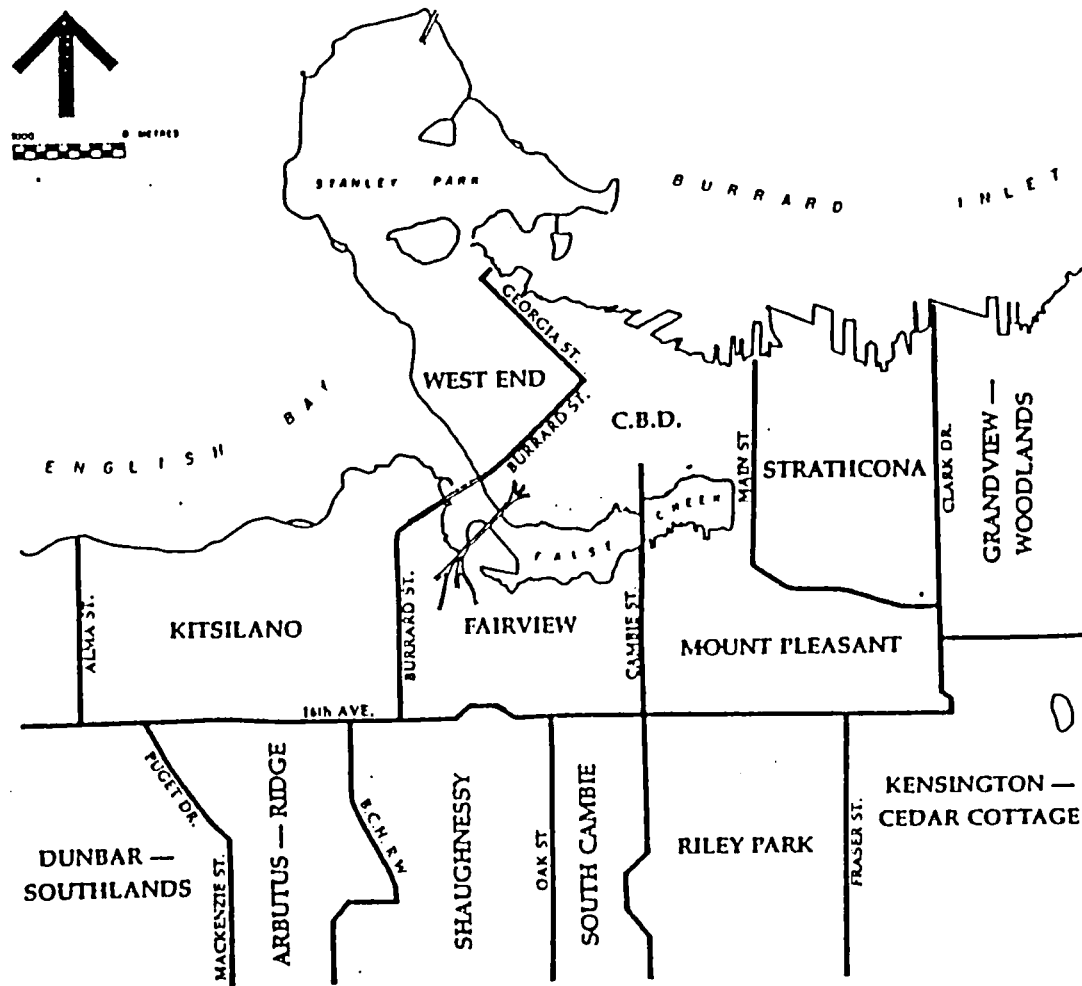
In Chapter V, I will apply the framework of analysis developed here to show how BC Place Ltd. and Expo 86 imposed this corporate-centered form of redevelopment on the City of Vancouver. First, however, it is important to understand how Expo came to be and what has happened subsequently. This will be the subject of the next two chapters.

Chapter III
Prelude to Expo: False Creek Before 1986

FALSE CREEK AS AN INDUSTRIAL AREA, 1886-1980

The lands bordering False Creek which are the subject of my attention here were among 6,000 acres deeded by British Columbia to the CPR in order to buy the selection of Vancouver, rather than its upstream rival Port Moody, as the terminus of the transcontinental railroad (Gutstein, 1975). The CPR built marshalling yards and other rail facilities on a portion of these lands and leased out the remainder to assorted industrial enterprises which did business with the railway -- saw mills, furniture manufacturers, and a coal gasification plant, among others.

Vancouver's early civic leaders expected industry to lead their city to economic prosperity; thus, they concerned themselves with meeting its needs. Bonusing, tax exemptions, and utility rate discounts were all employed to attract new firms (Gutstein, 1983). Provision of attractive industrial land was a further strategy. The 1928 Bartholomew plan, Vancouver's first comprehensive municipal plan, set aside large areas for industrial expansion. This included the False Creek basin, which Bartholomew (1928) recommended "be encouraged as an industrial entity of



Neighbourhoods Surrounding False Creek
Source: City of Vancouver, 1982

Figure 1

extreme usefulness to Vancouver" (147). He identified a number of improvements which could be made to better integrate the area with the rest of the city.

Few of Bartholomew's suggestions were implemented, however. Investments needed to maximize False Creek's desirability as an industrial location were postponed. Consequently, decline set in during the post-war years. In 1951, the 81 major firms operating on the Creek still employed 5400 people -- 4% of the city's total employment representing 6% of its gross payroll (Oliver, 1955) -- but many of these firms found their expansion potential on the Creek limited. These were attracted by the new availability of relatively low cost suburban industrial land. Other firms were eliminated by mergers within the extractive and manufacturing sectors (Hardwick, 1974). The long-term survival of the Creek as an industrial precinct came into question.

In words, if not actions, city officials remained committed to the existing pattern of development. As late as 1967, council adopted a resolution stating that "it is [our] policy at this time, that the land abutting False Creek be retained as an industrial area" (quoted in Hulchanski, 1984, 196). Yet even as Council expressed this sentiment, events further undermined the industrial option. In quick succession:

- a) the somewhat confused ownership of False Creek properties was simplified in a deal which consolidated CP ownership of the North Shore and provincial government ownership of the South Shore;
- b) the provincial government thereupon turned around and traded its parcel to the city in exchange for lands on Burnaby Mountain (the site of Simon Fraser University);
- c) and the CPR announced its intention to relocate its rail facilities and build a \$185 million residential development on its North Shore lands, the largest project proposed for Vancouver up to that time.

Faced with such powerful new pressures for change on False Creek, city council asked its planning department to evaluate the options. In early 1970, staff responded with a report entitled False Creek: Development Concepts. This document outlined five alternatives for the False Creek area: light industrial uses; predominantly residential with a recreational component; mixed residential-industrial uses; residential and commercial development with some recreational amenities; and predominantly parkland with some residential and commercial components.

Public input on these options was solicited and 36 briefs submitted to the city. Significant themes in these submissions included the following:

- phase out industrial uses;
- make the area affordable to a wide array of population groups;
- base development on the long-term environmental interests of the city, not on short-term financial considerations;
- proceed with development under the auspices of a joint public/private redevelopment agency.¹

The divisions which were so evident in the BC Place debate were already present at this time. Citizen groups were concerned about the housing densities anticipated by planners, finding them excessively high (a final population for the False Creek basin of nearly 60,000 was considered). Business groups, in contrast, favoured intensive development; they "advocated a more commercial function for the Creek, a major theme of their submissions being the promotion of Vancouver as an executive city, as a center of office-based quaternary functions and of tourism" (Cymbriwsky, Ley, and Western, 1986, 110).

¹This list is selected from the summary given in Hulchanski (1984), which in turn is derived from the original, Report on Submissions -- False Creek Brochure (City of Vancouver Planning Department, 1970).

The City subsequently prepared a False Creek Policy Plan, which endorsed redevelopment to residential uses and envisioned a future population for the entire False Creek area of 45,000 people in 28,000 dwelling units. These high density proposals were trimmed back after the reformist Electors Action Movement (TEAM) won a majority of Council seats in the 1972 civic election. The TEAM council endorsed development policies which allowed a population of 30,000 and set basin-wide goals for residential mix which included 25% families with children and 15% elderly; one-third of homes would be available at below market rents. In June 1974, Council rezoned False Creek from industrial use to a comprehensive development district and held public hearings on area development plans (dealing with form, heights and densities) for Marathon's north shore lands between the Granville and Cambie Street bridges and its own south shore lands.

After this, the history of the north and south shore diverged. The city lands were developed in three phases, initiated in 1974, 1976 and 1978, with construction proceeding from east to west. When development of south False Creek was completed in the early 1980s, approximately 4,000 new housing units had been built (Budgen, 1982). Over the same period, federally-owned Granville Island was transformed into a haven of small boutiques and specialty stores. Certain industrial activities were allowed to

remain on the Island. These were considered not to be in too great conflict with the new entertainment and recreational functions; some felt they might even prove to be attractions in themselves.

Marathon's plans, however, stalled. Their initial grandiose scheme -- 11,000 units housing 20,000 people (Kiss, 1969) -- was scaled down to a proposed 4500 units (accommodating 7900 people) in four neighbourhoods; this still allowed for towers up to 30 stories high and densities of 180 persons per acre², rivalling those of the West End (Marathon Realty Company Ltd., 1974; Gutstein, 1975). Furthermore, the 1974 proposal contemplated 1.5 million square feet of commercial and institutional space, ten times the amount originally sought. Opponents took exception to the extent and character of the plans, even as revised. Nonetheless, by 1975, Marathon had received approval in principle for the first phase of its project, 165 residential units in one 14-storey tower and clusters of townhouses, located near the Cambie Street bridge (Vancouver Planning Department, 1975). Final approval, however, was subject to a suitable agreement being reached regarding the social housing component of the development, and the city and Marathon could not come to terms. As in its own south

²The formula used by Marathon to calculate population densities, used throughout the period under study in documents by all parties, assumed an average of 1.7 persons per housing unit.

shore development, the city wanted one-third of north shore housing to be affordable to low-income groups, while Marathon would promise only that "accommodation of a wide range of income levels, *as economically feasible*, will be catered to [sic]" (Marathon Realty Company Ltd., 1974, 3; emphasis added). In the end, Marathon shelved the entire project.

At this time, the provincial government began to take new interest in False Creek. Then-Minister of Recreation and Conservation, Sam Bawlf, commissioned Vancouver architect Rand Iredale to draft a "concept study" of ways to mark Vancouver's centennial in 1986. The Iredale plan identified Marathon's False Creek lands as a preferred site for centennial celebrations (Gutstein, 1986). Iredale envisioned pavilions for international trade expositions, convention facilities, a provincial museum of industry, and a 60,000 seat domed stadium as lasting legacies of the celebration.

The domed stadium idea, in particular, caught fire. The provincial government and local politicians enthusiastically endorsed the concept. Only the stadium site was disputed. In the 1978 civic elections, independent mayoral candidate Jack Volrich campaigned for a location on the Pacific National Exhibition (PNE) grounds, while False Creek was supported by a business lobby called the Downtown Stadium Committee and by TEAM, transformed now from a mildly

reformist party into one with many of the same pro-developer biases it had once opposed. Volrich won the election and quickly had council pass a resolution endorsing the PNE site (Persky, 1980).

However, the downtown stadium had powerful friends. The premier appointed Paul Manning to a one-person committee in late 1979 to consider and choose between the two locations. Manning, who had close ties to TEAM and its business backers, came out in favour of the downtown location. His choice was confirmed in January, 1980, when the province delivered its own vision for the north False Creek lands, throwing the stadium into a package including a 1986 World's Fair [Transpo³], a convention centre, and a light rail transit system. The province would set up a crown corporation, BC Place Ltd., to implement this redevelopment initiative.

Bryan Fawcett (1986) argues that it is impossible now to reconstruct who, whether politician or business leader, first came up with the idea to host a World's Fair in Vancouver in 1986. Both quarters voiced early public support, however. The province had already decided by June of 1979 to bid for a BIE sanctioned event coinciding with

³Transpo was the original name of the Vancouver World's Fair, reflecting its transportation-oriented theme but it was soon changed to the presumably "more marketable" Expo 86 (Mulgrew, 1986, 52).

Vancouver's centennial.⁴ Vancouver's council endorsed the concept at a meeting on December 4 of the same year. Over this same period, key downtown business figures were pushing the World's Fair idea with the Social Credit cabinet (Mulgrew, 1986).

Expo 86 was from the start viewed as a catalyst for long-term urban redevelopment of the False Creek site. Premier Bennett asserted at the 1980 unveiling that "the trigger for [development] will be Transpo" (Mulgrew, 1986, 46). As we saw in Chapter II, hallmark events elsewhere have generated urban redevelopment by creating needed infrastructure or focusing public and investor attention on derelict or underused sites. Chapter V will explore in detail how successful Expo and BC Place Ltd. were in achieving this for Vancouver.

The establishment of BC Place Ltd. as an urban development corporation to direct the transformation of False Creek was meant to prevent the delays and city-developer disputes which had scuttled Marathon's plans. As a crown corporation, BC Place would not be subject to the city's land use and zoning powers. It could proceed regardless of any civic opposition. Where in another

⁴Technically, Canada would be bidding for the fair, as the Bureau of International Expositions (BIE), which sanctions official World's Fairs under a 1928 convention, only recognizes national sponsors. The provincial government, however, was clearly the driving force behind the bid, which was duly pursued on its behalf by federal officials.

situation, Granville Island, the federal government had cooperated with city officials in drawing up acceptable development plans (Seelig and Seelig, 1995), Premier Bennett bluntly declared that the city had nothing to do with BC Place "except provide access" (Odam, 1980, A1). He made clear that firm and persistent city opposition could kill Expo, but he judged that city politicians would not be prepared to take the blame for derailing both a spectacular party and its supposed economic spin-offs. Bennett's calculations proved right.

BC PLACE MASTER PLANS, 1980-1986

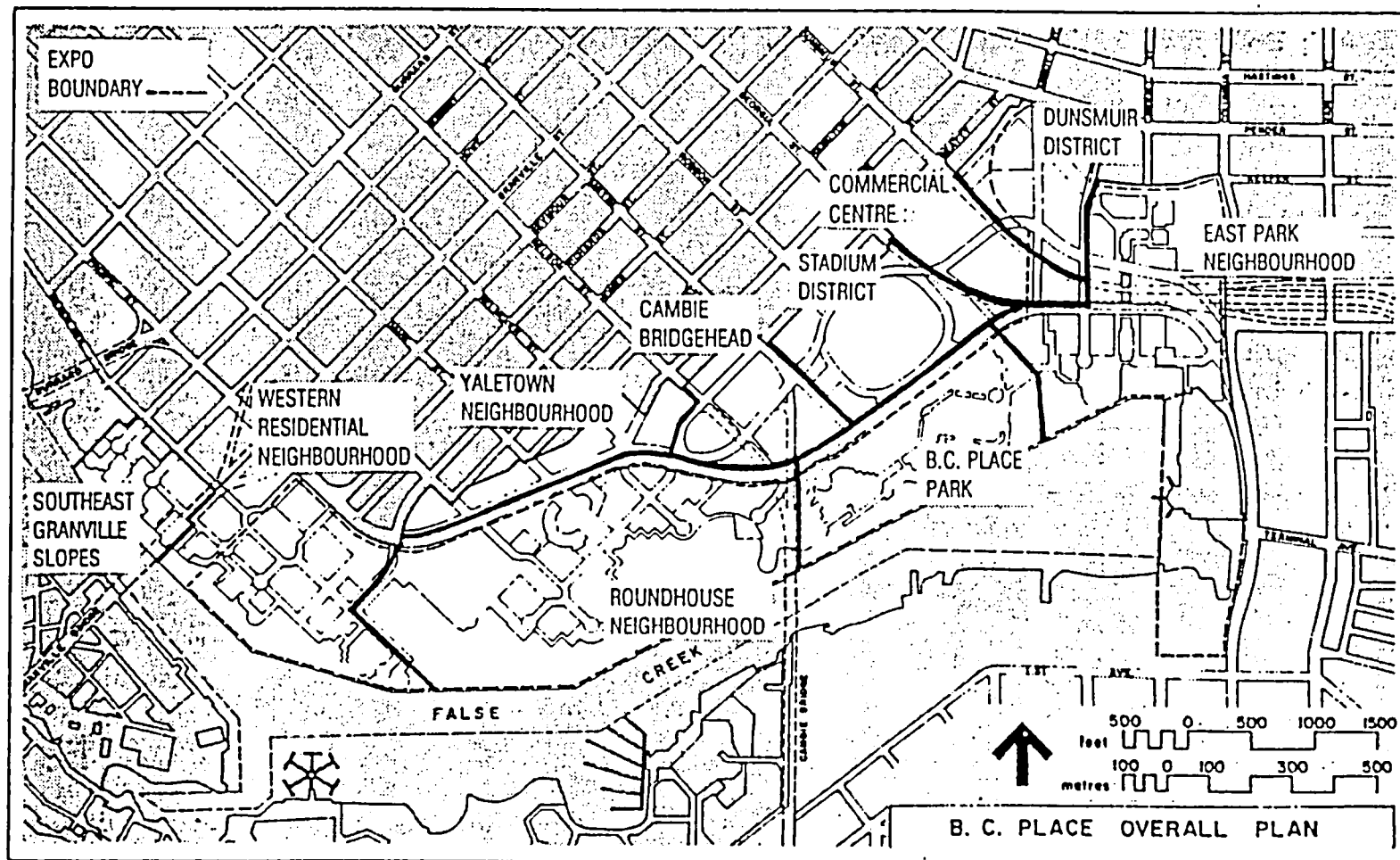
From the first, BC Place planners asserted their independence from the city. The crown corporation drew up its master plan for the post-Expo future of north False Creek in isolation from the city and the public. The city responded by preparing its own proposals for what it would like to see on the site, emphasizing waterfront access, community amenities, and housing, especially non-market housing. Office and commercial development was frowned upon (City of Vancouver, 1982).

The corporation appeared deaf. Its priorities were to follow rather than lead market trends and in so doing make as much money as possible. Thus, the vast development scheme it released in the summer of 1981 called for 14,000

residential units, accommodating a population close to 20,000, and a massive 6 million square feet of office and commercial space. This would employ a workforce of 20,000 to 30,000 (equivalent to 18% of the total existing downtown employment).

Criticism was harsh and immediate. Planners from the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) stated that the BC Place development would sabotage their Liveable Region strategy, which advocated spreading future office growth among a number of regional centers and reducing long-distance commuting (Vancouver Sun, 1981A). Neighbourhood groups objected to the density of the proposed development, the blockage of water and mountain views, the lack of affordable housing, the traffic which would be generated -- nearly every aspect of the proposal. Several watchdog groups were organized. Some simply wanted input into the UDC's decisions, complaining for instance that "BC Place is the biggest project in downtown Vancouver and to think the public has been excluded is bizarre" (Bocking, 1981, A3). Others, like the Save the Downtown Eastside Committee, opposed the philosophy and purposes of BC Place itself (Ritchie, 1982).

In the face of such anger, BC Place retreated. In January, 1982, the corporation launched a public relations campaign seeking input into a new master plan with an April release date. Many felt this new concern for public input



BC Place Development Plan, 1983

Source: Howard, 1984

Figure 2

SELECTED DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS FOR NORTH FALSE CREEK
1969-1986

	Marathon 1969	Marathon 1974	BC Place Sept 1981	BC Place March 1982	City Development Objectives May 1982	BC Place Official Development Framework August 1983
Number of Units	11,780	4,500	12-13,000	12,000	7.5-8,000	11,752
Population	20,000	7,900	20,000	19,000	15-16,000	20,000
Non-residential footage (Square feet)	140,000	1.5 million	6.9-7.8 million	7.7 million	3.2 million	8.04 million
Maximum Building Height	35 storeys	30 storeys		50 storeys		42 storeys
Public open space		28 acres	24-31 acres	49 acres	50 acres	50 acres
Maximum net densities (units per acre)		100 u.p.a.			40-50 u.p.a. (Family) 150 u.p.a. (non-family) 110 u.p.a (net average)	214 u.p.a.

Note: Not all proposals provide the same level of detail and they are therefore not comparable across all of the aspects given in this table.

Table 1

was no more than show, given the very restricted time allowed (Bocking, 1982A). BC Place certainly cared more for the advice of its elite design advisors, who "told us we had the most exciting project in North America ... they told us we weren't being bold enough on increasing density"

(Vancouver Sun, 1982B, A2). The revised master plan, not surprisingly, satisfied few critics. It still projected a massive population, 19,000 people, living in clusters of high-rises up to 50 storeys tall. 10% of this housing would be aimed at the luxury market, with 15% subsidized and 75% targeted to middle-income earners. 15% of the units would be suitable for families. 7.7 million square feet of office commercial space were proposed, plus up to 1000 hotel rooms. The city, by contrast, wanted to see a maximum population between 15 and 16,000, with one-third of the housing being in low-rise developments suitable for families (City of Vancouver, 1982). More social housing continued to be a city demand; mayor Harcourt characterized the BC Place project as "an executive ghetto" (Bocking, 1982B). City leaders also wanted to see the commercial component halved and park space doubled (Krangle, 1982).⁵

Further revised plans were presented in February 1983. Major changes included the addition of a public seawall

⁵Citizens groups took an even harder line. The Save The Downtown Eastside Committee wanted to see a maximum of 7-8,000 residential units, with 50% set aside for low income earners, and no more than 2 million square feet of non-residential development (Vancouver Sun, 1982A).

walkway and the extension of the existing downtown street grid into the site. However, while aldermen and staff said the new plans were an improvement over their predecessors, concerns about "the density, housing mix and cost, and the amount of park space" (Banks, 1983A, A1) persisted. BC Place was still seeking 7.7 million square feet of commercial space (Council's preference was for 3 million), 10,000 housing units (where the city desired 8,000) and a housing mix with 10% luxury and 22% subsidized units (Banks, 1983A).

Confrontation between the city and the UDC was expected to peak in November, 1983, when BC Place took its plans for the first of 10 neighbourhoods -- Southeast Granville Slopes, a 3 block square area between Granville and Burrard bridges south of Beach Avenue -- for council approval. Yet the two sides were slowly coming together. BC Place made a number of concessions as the date for public hearings approached, proposing more park space and easier waterfront access (Krangle, 1983B). Heights and densities remained the key areas of disagreement: BC Place wanted a floor area ratio (FAR) of 5.5, allowing it to build three 32 storey towers, one of which would be a 400 room hotel, where the city offered a 4.0 FAR for 15 storey towers (Banks, 1983C).

At the December 15 public hearing, BC Place sprang some last minute concessions. Newly appointed corporation chairman Jimmy Pattison said he would be willing to accept

826,000 square feet of hotel, residential and commercial office space, rather than the 900,000 he had previously insisted on (but still more than the 669,000 sought by the city). He also offered to reduce the two apartment towers to 21 stories and the hotel to 25 stories. But he proclaimed this to be his absolute minimum requirements, and threatened that without the city's acquiescence, the project would not proceed at all. The city met his demands, and on March 13, 1984, in a 7-4 vote, approved a SE Granville Slopes official development plan reflecting the December position (Gutstein, 1986). Opposed were left-progressive councillors like Harry Rankin, who said "There has never been a development with a spread between the planners and developers such as this one passed by council" (Banks, 1984A, A3).

Despite winning this confrontation with the city, BC Place had little to show for four years of effort -- nothing besides the domed stadium (completed in 1983) had actually been built on its north False Creek lands. Most of the UDC's property, of course, was tied up for the Expo site, but even on those portions of it available for immediate development, nothing was happening. Worse, even the first project proposed for its first zoned neighbourhood, the 25-storey hotel in SE Granville Slopes, was shelved in July of 1984, as the provincial economy began to slump (Banks, 1984B).

However, prospects for agreement on the scope of the entire BC Place proposal were better in 1984 than at any time previous. Pattison and new BC Place president, Stanley Kwok, were more willing to negotiate with city officials and planning entered a more cooperative phase. Most significantly, a joint planning team with representatives from both the city and BC Place was established to work out plans for the first post-Expo neighbourhood. An area called North Park was selected, a 75 acre tract in the northeast section of the site, bounded by Beatty, Pender, Quebec and False Creek. In late 1985, the joint plan was brought to community meetings in downtown and the West End (Krangle, 1985B). In April of 1986, as the World's Fair was preparing to open its gates, Council approved North Park development plans which projected 2600 dwelling units and 1.4 million square feet of commercial space, as well as an 8.8 acre park around the Expo Centre dome, a permanent legacy building from the fair (Droettboom, 1986). According to the city, "close communication with the public, adjacent neighbourhood organizations, and special interest groups [had] produced a plan which met little opposition" (Whiting and Farevaag, 1987, 5). There was a feeling that, at last, things were coming together on the Expo lands.

PLANNING FOR EXPO, 1980-86

Preparations for Expo itself had been proceeding throughout this time. They were managed by the EXPO 86 corporation, a separate crown UDC. City opposition to the fair was defused early on. No local politician wanted to be fingered as the one opposing an extravaganza sure to put the city on the international map. For councillors like TEAM's May Brown, it was "critical that [Expo] be a success the reputation of Vancouver hinges on it" (Krangle, 1985A, A3). Public support for Expo, gauged by opinion polls, was near unanimous (Mulgrew, 1986), though this undoubtedly reflected the feel-good atmosphere and cannot necessarily be interpreted as approval of all aspects of Expo management. As for media coverage, "local newspapers may have been early critics of the fair and its cost, but when it was nearing completion they transformed themselves into unabashed boosters" (Fulford, 1986, 9). Vancouver media were, of course, also significant commercial sponsors of the 1986 Fair.

The biggest threat to Expo was labour strife. BC's powerful construction unions were in favour of the jobs which Expo could create, but they wanted them to go entirely to union contractors, as had been provincial practice in the past on major projects (Mickelburgh, 1986). The Expo Board in fact first recommended that a closed-shop policy be

implemented (Ouston, 1984), but they were overruled by the government, which saw in Expo an opportunity to break the unions' strength. Ultimately, the government introduced amendments to its *Labour Code* which gave it the power to force unionized and non-unionized workers to share the same job site (Mickelburgh, 1986).

Expo made few attempts to cooperate with adjacent communities either. No impact studies were done of how fair decisions would impact surrounding neighbourhoods. The North Gate episode is one example. Merchants in Chinatown expected to benefit from spillover business and were therefore greatly upset when Expo organizers cancelled plans for site access from the north. The city's Citizens' Advisory Committee accused Expo of "doing everything possible to exclude the city." Expo, they said "doesn't care about the city. As far as they're concerned, they're an enclave" (quoted in Gutstein, 1986, 94).

Expo may have alienated its workforce and its neighbours in these ways, but it was clearly little perturbed by this. Their protests had little chance of influencing the only audience the fair cared about, the visitors from across the lower Fraser Valley, the rest of British Columbia, nearby provinces, and the United States whose patronage would ensure Expo met its attendance and revenue goals. If Expo had been accountable to local political leaders, things may have been different.

Chapter IV

Expo's Legacy: The Transformation of False Creek since 1986

The purpose of BC Place at its inception was to kickstart False Creek redevelopment by using the provincial government's power to create more favourable conditions for private sector investors. Crown corporation control over the pace and nature of development was presumed in all early working plans. The 1983 Official Development Plan for the Expo lands, for instance, explicitly identified leasehold rather than freehold participation by private developers as being in the best interests of the province (British Columbia Place Ltd., 1983).

The key post-Expo decision, then, was the choice to wind down BC Place and privatize its assets. Ostensibly, this was in keeping with the mandate described above. The government's long-term plan had always been to sell its False Creek land holdings for profit, once the economic climate in BC improved and the Expo lands were ready for private sector investment and bureaucratic obstacles to redevelopment had been cleared away (Vancouver Sun, 1980B). Expo had succeeded in weakening provincial labour unions. And, perhaps, the now amicable relations between the city and BC Place and the increase in citizen input were leading to development agreements less attractive to business and

their Social Credit supporters. The first, and only, joint development plan worked out between the city and BC Place, for the North Park neighbourhood, was scuttled by the provincial government in early 1987. The reason: it would not produce a sufficiently high return. Too many concessions had been made to the city and organized community opposition. BC Place management was no longer a reliable ally. The province now felt happier turning to private developers for north False Creek (Cox, 1987A).

The EXPO 86 Corporation ceased to exist when the World's Fair closed in October, 1986. Its assets and responsibilities were transferred to BC Place Ltd. That crown corporation too was soon wound up. Along with other government land holdings around the province, BC Place was rolled into a new body, the British Columbia Enterprise Corporation (BCEC). Its mandate was to oversee the disposal and privatization of False Creek and the rest of these assets. Since the focus of my research is upon BC Place Ltd. as an urban development corporation, I am mainly concerned with the 1980-1986 period. However, subsequent events are the culmination of forces set in motion during the early 1980s. I include this chapter therefore for the insights it can offer and in order to bring the chronology of development up to the present date.

The decision to return BC Place lands to the private market had both benefits and costs. The city regained its

power to control the shape of development through its regular approval process. However, it was still not entirely free from provincial pressure; the province made a number of efforts to ensure the new private landowners received favourable treatment.

The terms of sale themselves went badly against the province. Rather than produce a profit for British Columbians, the land was sold at a price and under conditions which did not even recover the initial investment. Furthermore, any possibility of direct benefit from the greatly increased value of False Creek land was surrendered when they were handed over to the private sector. Development would be initiated by private interests which professed no need to consider the broader public interest in their plans (Cox, 1988).

THE LAND SALE

An international search for potential buyers of the Expo site commenced late in 1987. The process was shrouded in secrecy. Provincial officials overseeing the sale made it plain that public scrutiny was unwelcome; according to BCEC chair Peter Murphy, "Developers are very competitive and some companies won't compete if this matter becomes a public circus" (Farrow, 1987, A9). BCEC saw the sale as a straight business deal, not a political or social issue with

important implications for city residents. Vancouver's City Planning Commission worried that what this really meant was "developers will decide the future of the site without public consultation" (Cox, 1987A, A3).

Given the size of the Expo lands and the challenges of developing them as a single parcel, only two bidders came forward. In May of 1988, the province closed a deal with Li Ka-Shing, a Hong Kong developer who was represented in Canada by Stanley Kwok, former BC Place President. Li and his company, Concord Pacific, gained control of the BC Place lands for \$320 million -- actually \$145 million in cash and \$175 million in interest payments accruing on those monies. The other bidder was a consortium of British Columbia developers called Vancouver Island Corp., headed by Jack Poole. Their bid was rejected because it included 25% provincial participation, which did not meet the province's privatization goals, even though the option of keeping a minority provincial holding in the lands had been left open when the sale was first announced (Constantineau, 1987).

Civic politicians were upset by a clause in the BCEC-Concord agreement under which the province would share a portion of the sale revenues with the city if the high densities desired by the developer were approved.¹ Clearly,

¹Concord agreed to pay an additional \$10 per square foot for every foot of density between 12 and 13.2 million it would ultimately be allowed to build, and \$12.50 per square foot for everything exceeding 13.2 million square feet. It was the proceeds of these bonus payments that the

this was intended by the province as a way of pressuring the city to allow the kinds of intensive development which could no longer be imposed through a provincial UDC. Council wanted no part of what it called "blackmail" and angrily demanded that the clause be deleted (Cox, 1988).

At the end of 1988, BC premier Bill Vander Zalm created a small sensation when he suggested the agreement should be re-opened because the province had not received a good deal (Lee, 1988B). Vander Zalm pointed to the government's responsibility for the clean-up costs of contaminated soil, Concord Pacific's ability to flip the land after three years should it so wish, and the limited participation in development afforded to BC citizens and companies. Vander Zalm claimed that the confidentiality of negotiations had kept him from knowing the details of the deal before it was signed. Both the minister in charge and the head of BCEC denied this, however (Lee, 1988B).

Later investigations confirmed the critics' fears. BC's Auditor General found in 1992 that the province had sold the land for \$150 million less than its book value (Matas, 1991). By 1994, the accounting was that BC taxpayers "may have lost as much as \$500 million because of the government's poorly handled sale of the public lands" (Matas, 1994, A4). Site clean-up requirements totalled up to ten times more than had been initially forecast, all of

province offered to share with the city (Matas, 1989A).

which fell to the province under its deal with Concord. The province was unable to go back to the original owners (and original polluters), either because they had bought the land with that undertaking or because they had taken it through expropriation.

THE CONCORD-PACIFIC DEVELOPMENT

Concord's initial proposals for the Expo site, revealed in support of their spring 1988 bid to purchase the lands, were close in many ways to those BC Place had advocated. Li Ka-Shing wanted to build 10,000 housing units aimed largely at the middle- and upper-income markets. Hotels, commercial/office space and marinas were prominently featured. The shoreline would be reshaped to offer a number of protected lagoons around which high-rise towers would be clustered. In addition, the whole proposal had a notably futuristic flavour. All of the new buildings would be wired with fibre-optic cable, the first development in Canada to offer this. Artists' conceptions gave the proposal a "high-tech" look, fully in keeping with the latest international architectural styles. Concord proposed to spend \$2 billion over 15 years to realize its scheme.

While Concord's architects worked to put more details to their proposal, Vancouver's council debated and approved target densities for the site. The 1986-88 council proved

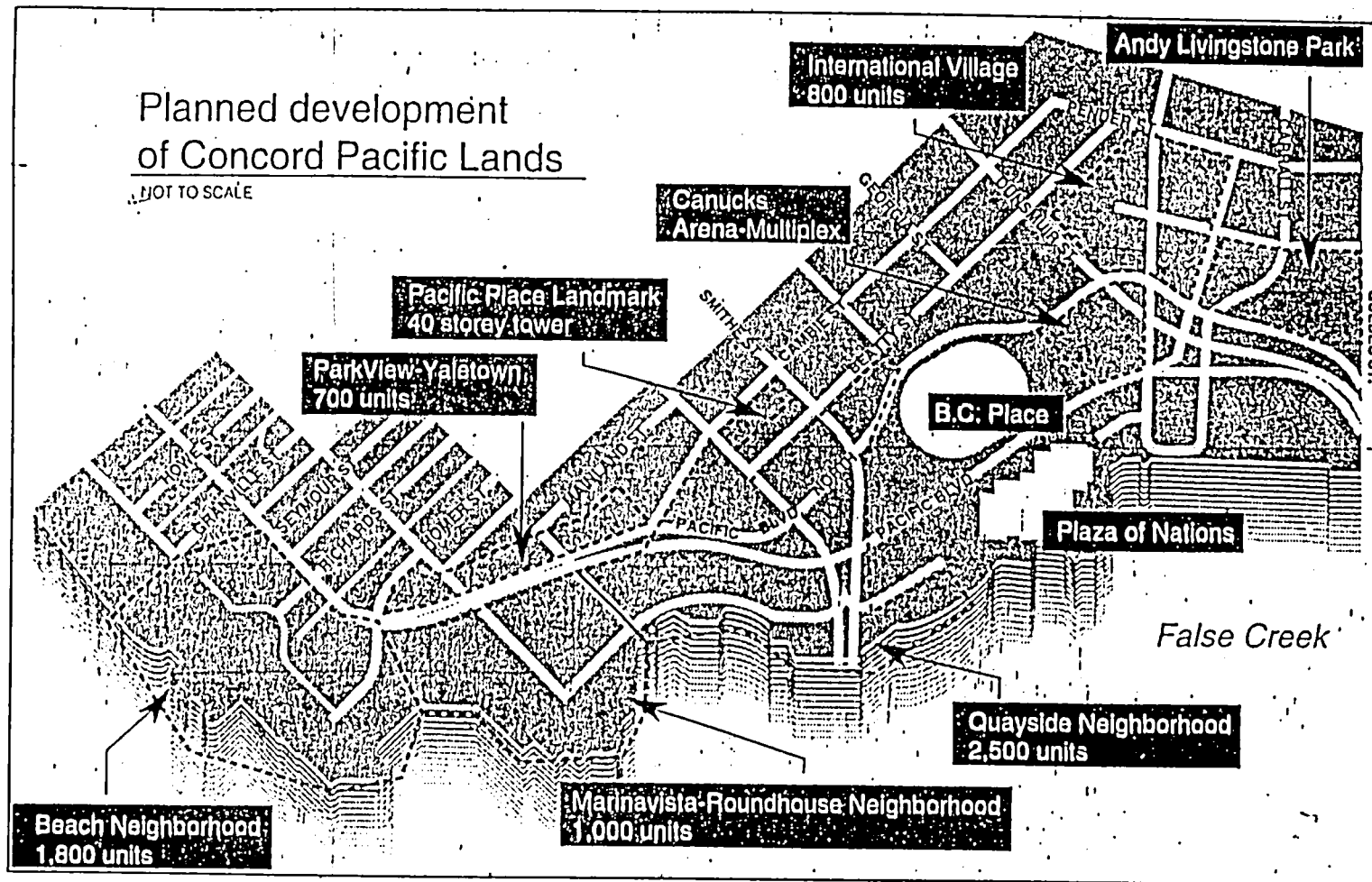
more willing to support intensive development than its predecessors had been. The developer was asked to set aside one-quarter of the site for family housing (vs. one-third under the earlier False Creek guidelines), which could be built at densities of 50-80 units per acre (compared to a maximum of 50 units per acre advocated in earlier policy statements), while areas intended primarily for childless couples or singles would be allowed densities of 110 units per acre. 20% of housing was to be non-market (vs. one-third earlier). Council even agreed to consider higher densities when it received a specific proposal from Concord. This open-endedness concerned left-leaning councillors, who feared that it would give the developer incentive to push for the highest possible figure (Bryson, 1988).

Concord's first master plan for the site requested a total of 15 million square feet of residential and commercial development. 17,400 people would be housed in 10,000 units: a population density 50% greater than that of the West End. Much of this would be in high-rises up to 45 stories tall (Bramham, 1989). Concord promised to set aside 20% of its units for social housing and to make 25% suitable for families, in accord with council's 1988 guidelines. They would build 3 million square feet of commercial space, including two 400 room hotels.

This comprehensive plan met with no happier response than earlier B.C. Place designs. Architecture critic Roger

Kemble (1989) slammed the proposals as "more a layout for a suburban shopping mall than a living addition to the downtown of a vibrant growing city" (13) with "no understanding of how public urban space can be integrated with the street pattern as an amenity that adds to the pleasure of living in the city" (16). Other critics attacked the social aspects of the design: The office developments would generate too much additional traffic. Densities were too high. Family and social housing was insufficient. The development would encourage gentrification in adjacent neighbourhoods and displace lower-income residents and occupants of rooming houses and hotels. At the same time, provincial politicians pushed the city to accommodate the developers' preferences. One Social Credit minister, for instance, expected the city to approve densities "well in excess" of those projected by the BCEC-Concord Pacific 1988 deal (quoted in Matas and York, 1989).

Revisions to Concord's plans were conducted through a fast-track process similar to the BC Place-city collaboration on North Park. Concord provided the city with \$100 million dollars to hire the staff necessary to work exclusively on its proposals. Critics of this process argued that the city had given up its role of protecting the public interest to become the developer's accomplice. "They're in bed together," UBC planning professor Brahm Weisman charged; "Deals are made in the back rooms that the



Concord-Pacific Development Plans, 1992
Source: McMartin, 1992

Figure 3

SELECTED DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS FOR NORTH FALSE CREEK
1986-1994

	City of Vancouver Policy Broadsheets 1988	Concord-Pacific Development Proposal Spring 1989	Concord-Pacific Official Development Plan November 1989
Number of Units		9,400	7,650
Population		17,400	13,300
Non-residential footage (Square feet)	3 million	3.1 million	2.7 million
Maximum Building Height		45 storeys	34 storeys
Public open space	50 acres	42 acres	42 acres
Maximum net densities (units per acre)	110 u.p.a. (family) 150 u.p.a. (non-family)		

Note: Not all proposals provide the same level of detail and they are therefore not comparable across all of the aspects given in this table.

Table 2

public doesn't know about" (Matas and York, 1989). And despite the time frame set for the full build-out of the Concord project, David Hulchanski of UBC's Centre for Human Settlements feared that "no one is looking at the effect on the future of the city over the next 10 or 20 years" (Matas and York, 1989).

In November, 1989 Concord unveiled its Official Development Plan for the Expo lands. They accepted many restrictions "imposed to ensure that the construction does not obstruct spectacular views of the nearby mountains from strategic locations on the opposite side of False Creek" (Matas 1989C, A15). The projected population was reduced to 13,300 living in 7650 units, with 2700 people paying below market rents. 42 high-rise towers would be built, the tallest now being 34 stories. 390,000 square feet of commercial space was eliminated, including a "futuristic" 42 storey office tower with satellite technology intended as Vancouver's International Finance Centre (Bramham, 1989; Matas, 1989B). Also dropped from the plans were the lagoons and islands with their high-rise clusters, which city planners had felt would alienate the public from the waterfront. Concord agreed to provide a 2.5 kilometre long waterfront pathway along the entire site. The developer would also contribute 42 acres of parkland as well as public facilities like schools, day care centers, sports fields and libraries. Opponents still found the plans "too dense, too

tall, and too exclusive" (Hunter, 1989, B1), but this time the majority of speakers at the public hearings on these plans supported them. On November 23, council endorsed these site plans, with decisions on specific heights and densities set aside until detailed zoning applications were submitted (Bramham, 1989).

Concord's first rezoning had in fact already passed council. In June 1989, the six square block Parkview-Yaletown area had been given the necessary zoning to allow for 800 housing units, in 3 towers of 29-32 stories and some low rise buildings, one 400 room hotel, and 200,000 square feet of retail space (Bramham, 1989). This zoning passed by an 8-3 margin, with only the three left-wing Committee of Progressive Electors (COPE) councillors opposed.

Actual construction was delayed for the needed removal of contaminated soils, but in late 1992 the first buildings in Parkview-Yaletown began to go up. Two other neighbourhoods, International Village and Marinavista, had also received zoning approval by this time. Pre-selling of condominium units had begun and construction was set to follow shortly.

STATE OF THE SITE, 1996

Concord Pacific's first buildings were completed and occupied in 1993. 726 units were available in eight high

rise towers in a three square block area adjacent to the Yaletown district and bordered by Pacific Boulevard. These initial developments included some of the promised social housing; two-bedroom apartments at the subsidized rate of \$250 per month were offered. Some architectural critics lauded the development, stating that "the new buildings carefully respond and relate to this fragile context [Yaletown] in both form and material" (Berelowitz, 1995, 21). Concord marketed this development as "a high-tech village of the 21st Century" (Bell, 1994, B5), a clever slogan appealing both to the technophilic tastes of its well-educated target market and to the growing demand in North America for residential neighbourhoods with a sense of place. However, close to one-half of the units had been sold to offshore buyers and thus sat unoccupied.

Concord's 200 acre holdings have been valued at three-quarters of a billion dollars. Their total investment package was estimated to be worth \$3 billion over its lifetime. Concord convinced the city in 1992 to increase the number of residential units allowed on the site to 8500; the new, smaller units were a concession towards increased affordability (McMartin, 1992). In 1995, on the strength of a similar argument, densities were further increased to allow for a total of 10,000 units (Bula, 1995B). Future plans include 3.5 million square feet of retail and commercial space and two 400-room hotels. One-quarter of

the site will be given over to park space and 20% of the housing is set aside for low-income households. The total package, in short, bears much more resemblance to the BC Place proposals of the early 1980s than to the vision held by community activists and advocates for the poor.

Chapter V

Changes to Vancouver's Urban Form Spurred by Expo 86

Now that we have shown how the idea for Expo 86 and BC Place emerged and evolved, and described what has happened in the subsequent decade, we can return to where we left off at the end of Chapter II. We shall proceed to show how Vancouver's form was affected by the 1986 World's Fair and the redevelopment which followed, and how these changes were facilitated by the quasi-public urban development corporations established to implement Expo and oversee the revitalization of the False Creek waterfront.

SOCIAL AND AESTHETIC IMPACTS

The redevelopment of north False Creek following Expo 86 has led to significant changes in the city's form. On the site itself, a post-industrial landscape is well on its way to completion. Manufacturing jobs have been replaced by office employment for white-collar workers. Banking, financial service and information handling firms are much sought after tenants. Residential accommodations are aimed at the professional groups which presumably earn their pay from the advanced service sector opportunities available in central Vancouver. Less attention is paid to providing

housing for low-income groups or, most importantly, ensuring that jobs suiting their skills will be readily accessible should they choose to live downtown.

Surrounding the towers of the Expo lands are structures and facilities aptly termed a landscape of consumption. The domed BC Place stadium and the new ice hockey arena (GM Place) offer high-priced luxury boxes for the favoured few to observe sporting spectacles. New hotels and expensive restaurants cater to the tourist crowd. Sailboats and yachts have replaced the barges which plied False Creek when it was a working industrial waterfront.

The effects of this urban restructuring are felt well beyond the Expo lands. The spillover gentrification feared by advocates for the poor and marginalized appears to have taken place. Yaletown, which in the 1970s was a run-down and marginal neighbourhood, has become one of Vancouver's newly fashionable districts. Chic boutiques and specialty stores occupy rehabilitated or converted warehouses. These are intermixed with loft apartments and artists' studios.

Many hotels and rooming houses in the downtown area were upgraded to serve tourists during Expo. Long-time tenants were summarily evicted. Attempts by the city to protect or help those displaced were blocked by provincial interference (Wachtel, 1986). And in the years since Expo, hotel and rooming house conversions have continued, further depleting the stock of low-cost accommodation in the

downtown core. Meanwhile, as formerly unattractive areas adjacent to False Creek gain new prestige, pressure mounts for zoning changes which give precedence to high-density residential and retail developments over existing low-income lodging (Gerecke, 1991).

On the south side of False Creek, the improved access to downtown allowed by the rebuilt Cambie Street bridge has spurred the redevelopment of housing in the Mount Pleasant area. Old homes have been rehabilitated or replaced by new developments aimed at a higher-income market. Again, those most affected by this change were lower-income and working class populations; 54% of the community's 1981 working population held industrial jobs (Vancouver Planning Department, 1982). They have witnessed the erosion both of affordable housing and accessible employment opportunities in the central city spaces which once served their needs.

False Creek's new landscape would have pleased the BC Place design advisors who raised such controversy in the 1980s. These advisors had vetted each BC Place master plan and dismissed early proposals by local architects which sought to create distinct neighbourhoods and character areas; instead, they continually pressed for denser, larger, "bolder" development despite the concerns of Vancouver citizens (Boddy, 1984). They eschewed local history and vernacular character as architectural models, looking instead to the high-rise style of international corporate

centres like Manhattan; they argued "that Vancouver had grown up and that the BC Place development should reflect the next century" (Bocking, 1982B, A8). The results are exactly those which Edwards (1992) identified in London's Docklands: "by appealing to an international audience ... and by wooing transatlantic finance and urban designers, the LDDC deliberately eschewed Englishness" (158).

Edwards also argues that in the case of London, local character was lost through the redevelopment process because the existing industrial landscape was undervalued. I believe this is true of Vancouver as well: despite the historical significance of False Creek industries to the city of Vancouver, only limited cultural or aesthetic importance was attached to them. In London's Docklands, preservation efforts concentrated upon individual structures, like churches, which were seen as important by the middle- and upper-class philanthropists of the National Trust. In Vancouver, preservationist campaigners were largely unsuccessful in their attempt to save the CPR Roundhouse (one of the oldest existing structures in the Vancouver area) and its surrounding buildings. Opponents dismissed the building as an impediment to the efficient clearing and reuse of the Expo lands (Calder et al, 1981); a BC Place vice-president suggested to city council that preserving the Roundhouse would "severely restrict" more profitable land use (quoted in Ley, 1987, 52). He proposed

relocating the building to a suburban railroad museum, an idea which clearly disavows any concern for the context of this historic structure.

Context was also no concern of a provincial committee appointed to study the preservation issue. It recommended saving only the centrepiece Roundhouse. BC Place promptly demolished the surrounding outbuildings, in the face of a Council report which favoured preserving the ensemble (Vancouver Sun, 1981B). Throughout 1982, rumours persisted that BC Place still planned to demolish the Roundhouse itself. Council and preservationist groups pressed for a conservation agreement (Hossie, 1982). In May, 1983, BC Place and the EXPO 86 corporation announced plans to renovate and restore the Roundhouse, but two months later BC Place knocked down sections of the building, leaving only the oldest original portions. City planner Dan Cornejo later said, regretfully, "I'm glad there's something saved, but we're saving only a little bit. Its relationship to its original use is going to be pretty obscure" (quoted in Johnson, 1984, D5).

What remained of the Roundhouse served as a display pavilion for Expo and is now being converted by Concord Pacific to a community centre for the north shore. However, it is an out-of-place remnant in an area where the traces of past industrial use have been totally obliterated. Like the Granville Island market, the Roundhouse now represents an

industrial past appropriated for post-industrial, middle-class leisure in an almost patronizing manner (Ley, 1987).

EXPO 86 AS A CATALYST TO RESTRUCTURING

The framework presented in Chapter II contends that World's Fairs or other hallmark events facilitate urban restructuring; they lead to the redevelopment of undervalued industrial land near urban cores. Evidence from past expositions indicates that fairs consolidate derelict land under a single ownership, making it suitable to large, comprehensive development proposals; they offer a chance to lay infrastructure necessary for future redevelopment; and they focus public attention upon the designated site and set up the expectation that permanent improvements will follow once the temporary glitter of the event passes. We can identify these factors at work in Vancouver.

Land consolidation was not a major problem on north False Creek, as the bulk of the waterfront was previously under a single title, held by Marathon Realty. This land was transferred as a block to the BC Place crown corporation. However, the value to the fair of having concentrated ownership was demonstrated when the need was felt to expand the site in 1984. Adjacent lands held by BC Place but not initially intended for Expo use were absorbed into the fair site (Banks, 1984A). If those parcels had

been held by another owner, there could have been delays potentially disastrous for the fair's strict deadlines.

The belief that single ownership of the land would expedite redevelopment encouraged the province, when it made the decision to privatize BC Place in 1987, to seek a single purchaser for the entire Expo parcel. According to provincial officials, this would allow for consistent planning which addressed site-wide issues like roads, walkways and open space, and would ensure that the Expo lands were integrated with surrounding neighbourhoods (Constantineau, 1987). The provincial decision was backed by top city planners, who felt it would be easier to negotiate with a single developer: "A developer of this magnitude would have a high level of sophistication and understand the concerns of the city" (Stainsby, 1987, B5). Political opposition was led by Mike Harcourt, mayor at the time, who "said the government should have offered long-term leases on small parcels ... to enable local entrepreneurs to get involved" (N. Hall, 1988, A2). He received support from the Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver, which also believed that the way the sale was handled limited the ability of local developers (and Real Estate Board members) to participate in redevelopment.

The city's position reflects a belief that in return for some concessions on heights, densities, or other economic issues, a large developer would be more willing or

able to provide planning gains (Chapter II), that is, "huge public benefits that the city couldn't otherwise afford" (Councillor Gordon Price, quoted in Thomas, 1994, C18). I would suggest, however, that the single developer choice made more likely some of the problems raised in Chapter II, such as the loss of bargaining power for the city vis a vis the developer and the loss of economic benefits to local businesses. This was a fear certainly voiced by Peter Toigo in his efforts to compete with Li Ka-shing's bid for the Expo site. Toigo publicly expressed his "concerns that a powerful, outside investor might take over the Expo site and force Vancouver to accept a development with high density" (Hume, 1988, A2). Densities in Pacific Place have indeed crept upward. Concord parlayed its initial permission for 7500 units into 8500 and then to 10,000. One councillor compared Concord to "a kid who keeps asking for candy;" and, perhaps because the city is so committed to this developer, council "keep[s] giving it to them" (McNaughton, 1995, B1).

Infrastructure related to Expo 86 included the ALRT line from the outer suburbs to the core and the expansion of the Cambie street bridge, as well as sewer and water connections and other physical improvements. These features affected the pattern followed by later urban development.

Expo made possible the construction of an LRT system connecting downtown Vancouver with suburban areas because it provided access to federal funding not otherwise available.

However, decisions about LRT again brought the city and the province into conflict. Provincial politicians backed an advanced, fully-automated system which would travel along an elevated track. The appeal of this emerging technology was undoubtedly that it would position Vancouver as an urban innovator, worthy of international attention and respect. Local leaders balanced this attraction with the consequences for citizens and ratepayers, and argued that a more traditional LRT system would be the most cost-efficient and sensible approach. The desire to have its preferences prevail certainly figured among the reasons why the province stripped all local governments in British Columbia of their authority over transit at this time, centralizing it in a provincial agency, BC Transit. ALRT was however, despite the way it came about, one of the positive effects of Expo on urban form in Vancouver. Its implementation made the Expo site more transit-accessible and also reinforced potential growth nodes in suburban cities like Burnaby and New Westminster. In this way, it contributed to some of the objectives of the Liveable Region program and reduced the severe commuting impacts that BC Place would have otherwise caused.

To serve traffic destined for the BC Place stadium and the expected north False Creek development, the 75-year old Cambie Street bridge was realigned and expanded in 1985. BC Place offered to pay half the anticipated costs of this

construction, which they had no legal requirement to do; in return, the UDC wanted the city to approve its development plans. The city did not accept these conditions, and proceeded with the construction work on its own after receiving approval in a city-wide plebiscite. The new Cambie Street Bridge increased the accessibility of south-shore neighbourhoods like Mount Pleasant to the downtown core. This attracted the gentrifiers. According to Gutstein (1986),

On virtually every block between Main and Cambie, Broadway and 16th, during 1984 and 1985, older houses were being renovated as strata suites or torn down and replaced with town houses (81).

In 1985, property values in Mount Pleasant rose by 15%, while they were flat across the rest of the city (Gutstein, 1986).

Laying the infrastructure necessary for development was an important part of BC Place Ltd.'s plans. Before the deal to buy CP's holdings had even been concluded, BC Place chairman Alvin Narod described to council how the corporation would make serviced lots available to residential and commercial builders after Expo (Lindsay, 1980). Though little development actually occurred over the next six years, infrastructure work was carried out by Expo: "it cleared the site, prepared it for development, constructed the sea wall on the site, and did other work that benefitted BC Place" (Baldrey, 1987). The existence of

sewer and water lines served to direct the redevelopment which followed; infrastructure was a major consideration in Concord Pacific's staging proposals and the selection of Parkview-Yaletown as the first neighbourhood to be constructed.

Finally, Expo served to focus the attention of Vancouver residents on the north shore of False Creek. For most of Vancouver's history, the Expo lands were inaccessible and out of sight to ordinary citizens. However, the world's fair opened the north shore up to public use. The importance of this recreational opportunity was demonstrated by the city's determination to ensure an uninterrupted waterfront path as a necessary condition for development approval, and by the pressure it put on BC Place and its successors to keep open a temporary walkway along the waterfront while construction was ongoing (Cox, 1987B).

The media, too, helped build the public's expectations. Articles painted a lyrical picture of how the city might look in 1996, after Expo and downtown revitalization (Sagi, 1982). By the time Expo was near opening, its success was presumed: "Expo 86 has served its purpose in focusing the energies and financial resources of the federal, provincial and municipal governments as well as the private sector into development in Vancouver" (Cruickshank, 1986, A8). This article leaves the impression that a new city will spring up immediately upon Expo's closing. Yet nothing happened.

One year later, the media's tone was more critical: "[Expo's] drawbacks are most vividly portrayed to the whole city in the crumbling buildings and desolation of the False Creek site" (Hamilton, 1987, A1). In 1991, the same journalist wrote, "the Expo site has become Vancouver's own barren lands, home only to a few Canada geese;" he described it as "a desolate scar of cracked and faded blacktop, a junkyard of old tires and concrete culverts" (Hamilton, 1991, A1). By producing follow-up stories such as these, the media kept alive the public's expectations for redevelopment of the Expo site.

It is not clear that the public shared the developers' view as to what the most desirable form of redevelopment should be, however. Informative in this regard is a survey conducted by the Vancouver Sun in 1986, asking readers to describe what they considered to be the best features of Expo. The answers stressed the waterfront setting, the colours, the green spaces and public art. These are the aspects of Expo which the public most desired to see preserved: "I wish we could keep more of [Expo] intact ... I hate the thought of more high-rises going up on our beloved Expo site" (anonymous respondent, cited in Ley and Olds, 1988, 207).

The subsequent redevelopment, of course, did not capture these diffuse feelings. The corporate style office and residential redevelopment destined for the site offers

little of the same public value that Expo did. This parallels the aftermath of other World's exhibitions. For instance, Brechin (1983) says the following of the 1915 San Francisco fair: "The Panama Pacific International Exhibition proved so popular (and profitable) that long before its closing, proposals were being made to save all or part of it Speculative forces proved far stronger than the dream, however" (107). It appears that public sentiment for improvement, not focussed upon any specific plan or proposal, is too weak to be an effective constraint upon corporate redevelopment.

EFFECTS OF EXPO EXPEDITED BY UDCs

Quasi-public development corporations, as indicated in Chapter II, possess features which serve to speed along redevelopment. They emphasize market efficiency, they promise speedy action, albeit to the detriment of public participation, and they encourage cooperation and participation on the part of private business. We find all of these arguments being made by and for BC Place in favour of the redevelopment schemes it put forward for False Creek.

One of the chief arguments in favour of UDC-led development is that it is more efficient. It is able to cut through the city's red tape. This is why BC Place balked at going through the city's usual permit process and stressed

its prerogative to override planning regulations should it so wish. From a business point of view, a dragged-out approval process is economically inefficient; it leads to higher costs as on-going expenses continue while revenue-generating properties are slow in coming on stream. Some city leaders, like Councillor George Puil, shared this view; Puil expressed his sympathy for the crown corporation's position and criticized the city's development approval process for slowing down builders (Lindsay, 1980).

Another way in which UDCs are supposedly more efficient is that they do not make decisions on political criteria but are guided solely by technical considerations. This is clearly untrue, but nonetheless an argument made by UDC supporters. For instance, when transportation plans for the False Creek site were prepared by BC Place in 1981, the corporation's planning director "said public consultation on the roads system is not necessary because the needs of the area are straightforward" (Wheelwright, 1981, A3).

Similarly, after Expo was concluded, the head of BCEC, Peter Murphy, described the World's Fair as a perfect example of "how you can achieve great things by ignoring nay-sayers and getting on with the job" (Constantineau, 1987, F5). The emphasis upon efficiency leads to a rejection of mechanisms of democratic participation and accountability. It reduces development to the pursuit of proper technical criteria by acknowledged experts.

Several times over the history of BC Place and Expo 86, the need for swift action to meet impending deadlines was voiced by key players. For instance, when council dealt with the transportation plans for BC Place, many residents expressed concerns about potential traffic impacts and asked for the opportunity to address council on the issue. BC Place, however, resisted public input. One reporter characterized the corporation's position this way: "Hearing all sides takes time and delays are just what BC Place officials want to avoid. Timing is critical if roads and services are to be ready for the 1983 opening of the new False Creek stadium" (Inwood, 1981).

In 1983, BC Place asked Council to relax the development approval process for its plans. Saving time was the expressed justification for this request (Krangle, 1983A). If BC Place could gain city consent to an approval process which removed much of the detailed scrutiny and potential for delay, its objective of expediting redevelopment could be achieved without the bad publicity from pitched battle. BC Place invoked the spectre of time in an attempt to get city officials to go along with its plans; the threat was that if time became too short, the corporation would simply bypass city regulations. The implementation of the fast-track process for North Park in 1985 and in the first stages of the Concord Pacific project was another way of sidestepping normal approval methods. By

working directly with city staff in formulating their proposals, the builders ensured that the city would have its own reputation and prestige at stake. Plans would be more likely to obtain swift approval and, perhaps, more likely to escape serious questioning.

UDC speed and flexibility are exercised in a willing response to market forces, pursuing whatever has the support of bankers, private builders and contractors. This results in an inherently reactive mode of planning, driven by short-term priorities rather than by any long-term goal. Both with BC Place and Concord Pacific, the city of Vancouver fell into the position of responding to what the developers wished to see, rather than setting out a community-centered development design and then seeking ways and partners to realize this. The attitude which prevailed is expressed well by Councillor Puil, who said in 1988, "I think it would be complete foolishness to listen to 50 groups about what they want down there before we know what is proposed" (Lee, 1988A).

BC Place also employed private sector management standards in its initiatives. Secrecy was particularly important; minutes of Board deliberations were not kept and important documents were gathered up and shredded after each meeting (Mulgrew, 1986), presumably to prevent protesters from finding out information around which they might rally. In addition, BC Place was oriented towards profit-making

rather than public service. This mandate was given to it by the province, which expected that its dealings run in the black. The province hoped to generate a surplus from Vancouver which could be redistributed to projects elsewhere in the province. However, the costs of carrying projects like the domed stadium meant that BC Place had to pursue high-density development and geared-to-market rents at the expense of social housing, family housing and public amenities desired by councillors and community groups.

BC Place and Expo also worked closely with the private sector. Corporation directors Alvin Narod, Gil Hardman, Jim Pattison, and others had all been successful entrepreneurs. After BC Place was wound down, key figures like President Stanley Kwok moved to Concord Pacific, the company which took up the redevelopment standard. They undoubtedly brought both their past plans and their experience in dealing with council and community opposition.

CONCLUSIONS

The evidence gathered so far seems to justify the arguments made in Chapter I. Expo 86 was staged by political and business interests in order to push forward False Creek redevelopment. Expo consolidated ownership of the north shore lands, cleared the site of existing uses, laid down important infrastructure, and built up a public

expectation that permanent change would follow the 1986 World's Fair. This False Creek redevelopment was facilitated between 1980 and 1986 by the BC Place Ltd. UDC. Many of the operating methods established in the early 1980s were carried on into the 1990s by the private sector successor to this UDC, Concord Pacific Ltd. The end result has been the transformation of the north shore of False Creek from an industrial waterfront to a post-industrial, high-technology commercial and residential enclave. In the process, community concerns and local democratic control have been set aside in favour of economic efficiency, a flexible response to market signals, and close co-operation with large off-shore private developers.

The UDC-led approach to north shore redevelopment contrasts with that taken on the south shore during the 1970s. A similar corporate structure was advocated then too by prominent business leaders and planning experts like Hans Blumenfeld (Hulchanski, 1984). The reasons advanced were the same: the issue was a technical one, not a political one, and city processes would be slow, time-consuming and not responsive to the marketplace. "If council becomes too involved in the False Creek redevelopment," said the citizen chair of the Vancouver City Planning Commission, "nothing will ever get done" (quoted in Hulchanski, 1984, 174).

Opponents of a south False Creek UDC also put forward arguments we have seen in the Expo and B.C. Place case.

According to Rodger (1976),

aldermen recognized that such an agency would not necessarily be responsive to policies established by Council, would dilute Council's power and authority, and be a basically unnecessary and possibly self-perpetuating agency (15-16).

Because Council was the ultimate deciding body in this instance, the UDC approach was rejected. Instead, a distinct department of the city administration, reporting directly to Council, was set up to handle south False Creek redevelopment. Such a system leaves decision-making in the hands of those amenable, at least in theory, to public input and responsive to citizen pressure. It is also specialized enough to acquire the expertise in project management which many city bureaucracies lack, which lack often persuades governments to turn development control over to arm's length bodies and the private sector.

In Hulchanski's opinion, "the choice of an internal but separate agency of the municipal government [proved] to be the right one" (1984, 183). The interests of Vancouver citizens, particularly the working class and lower-income inner city residents, would have been better served if redevelopment of the Expo lands had been handled in like fashion.

Chapter VI Alternatives and Prescriptions

INTRODUCTION

We've seen thus far how Vancouver business and political leaders won the 1986 World's Fair for Vancouver, and how, as was intended, this hallmark event proved to be a catalyst for the redevelopment of the False Creek waterfront. We've explored, in addition, how the UDC form of management implemented by the Expo 86 and BC Place corporations restricted the amount of public input into and local control over planning decisions affecting False Creek during the 1980s. We've seen how Expo, BC Place, and the subsequent Concord Pacific developments have affected the urban form of the city.

Despite the physical renewal they brought about, Expo 86 and the False Creek redevelopment process have had generally pernicious effects upon local politics and the local planning process in Vancouver. These arise from the very nature of both hallmark events and the quasi-public development corporation management to which they are so amenable. The changes wrought upon Vancouver since the mid-1980s have benefitted offshore developers, corporate city employers, and middle-class homeseekers, largely at the

expense of blue-collar workers and the downtown urban poor. Expo 86 and the high-rise office and condominium developments which succeeded it eliminated any possibility of preserving industrial uses in the False Creek basin. While this change in the economic base of the area was generally supported by city residents, it has important consequences which have been largely overlooked. In this chapter, we will look at a development alternative which the World's Fair/corporate city redevelopment strategy foreclosed. We will conclude with some recommendations about how the process could have been improved to better acknowledge public concerns and take more account of the needs of those groups which were negatively affected by the False Creek redevelopment.

THE IMPACT OF EXPO AND THE CORPORATE CITY STRATEGY

Coping with Expo 86 and the BC Place redevelopment plans impacted the local political process in Vancouver in significant ways. To begin with, Expo and BC Place imposed the provincial government's agenda upon a metropolitan area whose dominant politics (both provincially and locally) differed from the ideology of the Social Credit government. By pushing forward and bringing to completion a major urban redevelopment project, the province could demonstrate that its pro-business, anti-regulation philosophy produced

concrete results benefitting the city (such as an expanded tax base and new jobs). This could undercut its opposition and increase the government's support in a traditionally weak area. Expo, in particular, as a popular project, was key to this. Several contemporary commentators accused the government of backing Expo for principally political reasons -- ensuring its own reelection. Despite misgivings, local opponents (and the provincial NDP opposition) eventually gave their backing to Expo. They did not wish to be on the wrong side of an event with widespread popular support and which was thought to promise tangible benefits to the people.

Expo was also used by the provincial government as a wedge to weaken BC's powerful construction unions by forcing them to work alongside non-union contractors. This was a further attack upon the institutions through which the working classes express their interests. Terrain controlled by quasi-public pro-development agencies proves to be infertile ground for organized labour.

The dispute over ALRT and Expo was similarly resolved by the province imposing its agenda. Control of transit was stripped from all regional districts in BC and centralized in Victoria. Provincial officials then dictated where Vancouver's rapid transit lines would go and whom they would serve. The province could place its own priority -- economic efficiency -- over the desires of community groups

to protect their neighbourhoods from disruptive change (Hassan, 1984; Edelson, 1986).

Overall, to the extent that Expo and BC Place succeeded in advancing the province's ends, local planning procedures were discredited and local control over decisions diminished. Precedents were set that made it more likely for people in the future to look to the province, rather than the city, for leadership in urban development.

Expo was also used as an excuse to depoliticize debate over redevelopment. After 1986, provincial ministers and business leaders pointed to the successes of Expo -- attendance which exceeded that forecast, increased international attention to the city -- as examples of what could be achieved by ignoring "nay-sayers" and "negative doubting people." They argued that similar success would come from False Creek redevelopment if critics would just trust the judgement of the experts. So long as this attitude is held by Vancouver residents, it will be more difficult for marginalized groups and people with interests counter to those of the redevelopment coalition to have influence over the urban policy agenda.

Expo 86 and redevelopment of the False Creek site also required the city to redirect its resources to addressing spillover effects. Reconstruction of the Cambie Street bridge, for instance, was only required in the 1980s because of the additional traffic generated by the domed B.C. Place

stadium (Banks, 1983C). Even if it had wished to do so, Council had no power to prevent the stadium's construction so long as it was undertaken through the crown UDC. Yet it was forced to readjust its other plans in order to accommodate the effects, or else take political blame for the traffic congestion which would otherwise result. Replacing the bridge consumed resources which might otherwise, as some on Council urged, have been used for other roadwork, libraries, parks, waterworks, and other capital projects (Krangle, 1984).

Standing planning directions which were affected by the Expo/Pacific Place developments included the GVRD Liveable Region strategy for decentralizing growth, and city policies regarding suitable and healthy densities for family housing. The Liveable Region strategy was adopted by the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) in the mid-1970s. Its intention was to attract office growth away from the CBD and concentrate it in designated regional centres. This was supposed to address commuting problems and could both eliminate the need for freeway construction and improve the air quality in the metropolitan area. As Chapter III noted, GVRD planners strongly opposed the initial BC Place proposals on the grounds that they would bring a disproportionate amount of growth to a single downtown area in too short a period of time. The new office space would compete with regional centres, and would serve as a magnet

for downtown-bound commuters. This would undercut the intent of the Liveable Region initiative.

Proponents of False Creek redevelopment attacked the GVRD's plans as unrealistic and out of touch with the discipline of the market. For example, BC Place Planning Director David Podmore said, "I have seen no evidence that the market, the public, support the liveable region program, at least on the decentralization of offices" (Austin, 1981, A12). Pro-development forces pushed ahead and, in the form of Pacific Place, realized their proposals for high-density redevelopment. It appears now that the GVRD has been compelled to accommodate itself to the change and adjust the Liveable Region strategy to acknowledge the new reality. Analysis carried out by Alan Artibise et al (1990) for the GVRD made the point that "Vancouver still has room for development and, therefore, GVRD policies must be sensitive to maintaining a vibrant, dynamic, accessible, and growing central core" (42). With the redevelopment of False Creek, growth in the city of Vancouver -- now an office centre for the post-industrial economy -- will continue to dominate the regional economy.

The city's struggles with BC Place also led to significant changes in its policy regarding suitable and healthy densities for family living. In 1978, city staff had prepared a document entitled Housing Families at High Densities. This set out 30-80 units per acre as the desired

figure for family housing. Throughout early negotiations with BC Place, city demands (40-50 units per acre) stayed within this range. Joint negotiations on North Park, however, ended with the city approving family densities of an average 110 units per acre. This became the new baseline. Council's False Creek policy adopted in 1988 stated that "where site conditions are particularly advantageous, [family housing] density could range up to 110 units per acre" (Vancouver Planning Department, 1989, 9). The city's administration termed the higher figure a "**real change**" from past policy, resulting from "the substantial liveability analyses done in North Park" (Vancouver Planning Department 1987, 3; emphasis in original). This is another instance in which the BC Place initiative led to changes in local planning policy. The new standards have important long-term ramifications for future urban development.

There is also some evidence that community attitudes in Vancouver have been changed due to Expo. More residents now consider Vancouver to be a "world-class" city and adopt what they see as appropriately cosmopolitan attitudes. In Cernetig's words,

History in Vancouver is now usually seen in two phases: Before Expo, when Vancouver truly was a laid-back place on the ocean's edge. And after Expo ... the city is [now] a faster-paced and architecturally transformed place, with probably a little more edge than a lot of people had in mind (1996, A2).

ALTERNATIVES FORECLOSED

The key decision to transform False Creek from an industrial precinct to a residential/commercial enclave of the corporate city was taken by political and business leaders in the late 1960s. As chapter III described, opinion on the five alternative development concepts circulated in 1970 rejected continued industrial use of the False Creek basin. Citizen groups envisioned parkland and other recreational amenities. Business groups, however, anticipated high-density redevelopment; Marathon Realty, owners of the North shore properties, saw substantial profit potential in turning over its lands to intensive commercial and office uses.

No strong voice was ever raised in defense of False Creek industry; thus the full consequences of Vancouver's urban restructuring have never been carefully considered. Proponents of restructuring clearly have an interest in playing up the decline and decay of areas they covet. Media reports convey much a similar depiction. Yet in many cases, the extent of decay is exaggerated. Dodd (1988) argues that the river valley land designated for the 1982 Knoxville Exposition "was far from the industrial slum area portrayed by the promoters" (11). He notes that 62 businesses and two modern medical clinics were operating on the designated fair grounds before clearance began. All of these enterprises

had to be displaced.

Likewise, despite the high-profile relocations of sawmills and heavy industry noted by Hardwick (1974), up to the very end, False Creek remained a viable industrial area. Creek industries like freight-forwarding, manufacturing, distributing and wholesaling were stable and well-established. Over half of the firms forced out by Expo had been in their locations for more than 30 years (Vancouver Planning Department, 1982). Firms which had departed were being replaced by new businesses. The GVRD reported in 1971 that while 60 businesses had left the False Creek area in the preceding decade, 47 new firms had been started (GVRD Planning Department, 1971). The GVRD concluded that "the industrial role of the inner city is changing to that of a focus for smaller, more specialized firms which can benefit from central location and afford its higher ground rents" (GVRD, 1971, 14). Areas like False Creek can provide space for fledgling firms to begin the process of establishing themselves in the local economy. Schmenner (1980) argues that cities must protect such spaces by "refraining from quick demolition or rezoning of old manufacturing districts" (465).

This indicates that the survival of central city industry depends not only on market forces but upon public policy decisions. We see it clearly as well in a GVRD report responding to the first BC Place master plan, which

ask[ed] whether it is in the public interest ... to pursue conversion of industrial land to commercial and residential use when government and other analyses have shown there is a severe shortage of industrial land, but no shortage of land for commercial and high-density residential development (Odam, 1981, A2).

Other cities, too, have faced the dilemma of inner-city deindustrialization. In Toronto, background documents prepared for the Crombie commission on the waterfront emphasized the importance of industrial employment for the city and concluded that "it is neither inevitable nor desirable to remove all industrial activity from Toronto's waterfront" (Work Group, 1989; 30). The Work Group on Jobs, Opportunities and Economic Growth further argued that tourism-based activities on the waterfront, while also valuable to the local economy, should not be the sole focus of redevelopment.

The implication is that key government interventions can overcome the pull of the suburbs and make central city areas more attractive for industrial use. Selective improvements, environmental upgrading, and increased accessibility all serve this purpose. However, despite years of professed interest in a downtown industrial base, the city's treatment of False Creek in the years following the 1928 Bartholomew Report demonstrates a consistent pattern of neglect (Chapter III).

Ten years after Expo Vancouver is coming to grips with the consequences of its False Creek decisions. Council now

worries about the loss of industrial land within city limits. As of 1995, there were 1700 acres of zoned industrial land inside the city of Vancouver. 700 acres has been lost over the past 20 years. Public hearings on the issue of industrial land heard from dozens of citizens and groups, all "saying Vancouver needs to save the land that provides almost 50,000 jobs in the city and acts as an industry incubator for the region" (Bula, 1995, B1).

The major impacts of the deindustrialization which accompanied BC Place development fell upon the workers who held those jobs. Vancouver planners found that 3757 of 4681 employees on the BC Place site in 1982 would be affected immediately (Vancouver Planning Department, 1982). Their employers were most likely to move to either New Westminister or Coquitlam. Since the employees lived largely in east and south Vancouver proper, they faced longer commuter trips, into areas with less adequate public transportation. There was little likelihood that jobs in the BC Place development would be available to people of their skill level and training; such jobs as they might be able to hold would be lower paying service sector positions.

Movement among such residents in the wake of redevelopment would in all likelihood be into suburban areas, closer to their former jobs. They would have little inducement to occupy the new housing built on False Creek, nor would other working class individuals have much reason

to inconvenience themselves by moving to the centre city while their job opportunities were going in the opposite direction. In other words, without considering the question of access to employment, the city's policy of ensuring access to affordable housing in new city centre development is only half assured of attracting the target market.

The loss of industrial space was not confined to the Expo lands either. Redevelopment on False Creek revalorized adjacent areas such as Yaletown for purposes of the new economy. Yaletown was an area of warehouses, wholesalers, and small manufacturers which had changed little since the 1940s. Its substantial stock of vintage buildings proved greatly attractive to middle class artists and design professionals. By the early 1990s, Yaletown had become "a mecca for upscale furniture and kitchen stores, chic restaurants, a scattering of clothing wholesalers and ... fashion boutiques" (Leeming, 1995, C1). Its promoters drew comparisons with New York: "Yaletown offers Vancouver shoppers a neighbourhood with atmosphere and character ... not unlike that of SoHo" (Leeming, 1995, C1). New York style lofts in converted buildings were selling for upwards of \$205,000 (Fitterman, 1993).

The SoHo parallel is an informative one. Sharon Zukin (1982) has analyzed the emergence of loft living in Manhattan, and she emphasizes the loss of viable industrial space which resulted. She noted a stability in the

ownership and tenancy of downtown industrial spaces prior to the changes imposed by redevelopment, a stability which, as in Knoxville and Vancouver, at least calls into question the assertion that central city areas were in unmitigated decline. The events in Yaletown, sparked by the BC Place redevelopment, have had the same consequences for urban form and the spatial allocation of activities within the city as those seen by Zukin in SoHo. The attempt to restructure the central city along executive city lines and to turn land use over to middle and upper class housing and employment purposes, in Vancouver as in New York City, has produced

painful dislocations in the work force, the expansion of offices and middle-class housing into former working-class and manufacturing milieux, and political realignments that are based on which social classes, and which economic activities, have the right to use the city's space (Zukin, 1982, 18-19).

Put succinctly by Kent Gerecke (1991), corporate city redevelopment schemes like BC Place, like Concord Pacific, "do not revitalize, they just colonize" (19).

Hallmark events like Expo 86 serve to speed along such transformations. They abruptly displace competing land uses as a prelude to the expansion of the post-industrial urban landscape. We can contrast this strategy with the opposition to the proposed 2000 Toronto Olympics voiced by the Crombie commission's Work Group on Jobs, Opportunities and Economic Growth. The Work Group felt that the short term economic benefits of the Olympics would be outweighed

by the long term costs. Where the Olympics would displace industrial activity, the Work Group favoured a redevelopment approach of "incremental growth that develops from an appreciation of the past" (1989; 117) and would maintain a viable working waterfront. Vancouver chose the path of complete redevelopment and restructuring over the path of incremental change, with all of the drawbacks detailed here.

PRESCRIPTIONS

Based upon the observed effects of False Creek redevelopment since 1980 on local planning process and the city's urban form, three clear issues emerge that ought to have been more carefully considered. These are the question of local control over decisions, the class bias of urban restructuring, and the aesthetic and cultural impacts of corporate city redevelopment. More attention to these issues during development planning should result in a more transparent and more democratic process.

Local accountability was deliberately sacrificed during the redevelopment of False Creek. Expo and B.C. Place were initiated by the provincial government as "a method of wresting control of ... development from City Council" (Ritchie, 1982, 51). Once BC Place was discredited by its failure to bring about quick redevelopment and hobbled by its debt load, the north shore of False Creek was sold to

private developers by the province. It was determined that this course would still likely accomplish the province's aim of bringing about business-friendly inner city redevelopment. To be certain, the province put continued pressure on the city after the sale to approve conditions favourable to the developer.

Provincial control over such important urban development decisions is defended on the grounds that there is a province-wide interest at stake. This was variously described as the province's international reputation, the re-establishment of a favourable climate for business investment, and the generation of a surplus which could be redistributed to interior (and Social Credit voting) regions. However the impacts fell heavily upon disadvantaged inner city residents and working class communities and institutions. I do not find the province's objectives, or the benefits of corporate city redevelopment, urgent or compelling enough to justify the circumvention of established local planning procedures.

Leaving decisions at the local level and in the hands of democratically elected officials, rather than with an appointed UDC, maximizes the ability of citizen protest to influence decisions which threaten their well-being. In cases like BC Place, citizen opposition is effective only to the extent that protests interfere with the corporation's goals by scaring off private investors. Influencing the

decisions of transnational enterprises is a feat demanding much organization and strong finances. Resource-poor community organizations are much better matched against local politicians. If visible public anger can be directed against the high-density, corporate city redevelopment strategy, politicians may realize that association with such a project potentially endangers their reelection.

Whether or not the ultimate shape taken by False Creek redevelopment was good for Vancouver (a judgement I suspend), it is clear that the class bias it manifested was not adequately acknowledged by decision-makers. Since the late 1960s all Vancouver administrations have agreed upon the desirability of turning downtown Vancouver and False Creek into an executive city. Differences between reform-minded TEAM councils and conservative NPA ones have been more cosmetic than anything; both spoke for segments of the middle-class, not the working class or the urban poor. The early efforts to replace Creek industry with middle-class housing were spearheaded by TEAM. According to Gutstein (1976), its design proposals were shaped by input from middle-class "developers, academics and professionals" (121), not ordinary citizens.

Those who would not benefit from corporate city restructuring were unable to make themselves heard by the political leaders. For example, in the case of Fairview Slopes, a working class area opened to gentrification after

the initial south False Creek development (as in the case of Expo, BC Place, and Pacific Place), "attempts by [local] residents -- those who would be most affected by development -- to participate in planning [were] consistently diverted" (Gutstein, 1976, 121).

Decisions about False Creek since the end of the 1960s have been made on the grounds that the market favoured office and commercial uses, rather than industry. Such projects would generate the greatest return to capital. Because ready buyers could be found for market-priced housing on the Creek, business leaders opposed even limited provision of social housing in the area as an inefficient use of land and capital: "creation of low income housing in this area would replace some downtown workers with people who would not benefit as much from living close to the Central Business District" (Calder et al, 1981). Redevelopment driven by such opinions is segregational; it limits the housing and employment options of lower-income families and manual workers. They are excluded from access to downtown, and thus driven to the periphery, where public services are fewer and less accessible.

Aesthetically and culturally, the elimination of historic industrial uses on False Creek and their replacement by an internationalized corporate landscape of consumption has diminished the diversity of Vancouver's urban experience. High rise towers designed by

international architects and occupied by international corporations appear the same from one city to the next. The preservation of single landmark structures like the CPR Roundhouse, or the post-modernistic reuse of industrial building forms in shopping markets and hotels fail to preserve the spirit of working landscapes which embody the unique experiences of local people. These may be largely unappreciated now, but they represent a segment of history which should have some protection.

Large scale redevelopment of extensive sites, undertaken on the Expo lands by Concord Pacific, has a homogenizing effect. Local builders are prevented from participating in the redevelopment process. The reduced number of players is a missed opportunity to take advantage of the creative abilities of many minds. A mingling of industrial, commercial, recreational and residential uses -- and the juxtaposition of different ages and styles of building -- challenges the perceptions of urban residents. The transformation of the north shore of False Creek has reduced the ability of the city to reflect the diversity of uses, desires and demands placed upon it by all classes of inhabitants.

The prescription above is not guaranteed of success -- it would not necessarily prevent False Creek-style redevelopment. There are a number of potential ways in which it might falter. We must acknowledge that business

and political leaders often have close personal links. They share mutual interests and see the world in the same way -- as noted above, Vancouver council has been dominated by middle-class professionals, who presumably hold middle class views about what is most socially and aesthetically desirable for the city. We have also noted the city of Vancouver's expressed preference for dealing with a large developer on a total overhaul of the Expo site. This reflects the belief that such large-scale redevelopment maximizes the city's chance of obtaining planning gains. There is also the popularity of boosterism and the prevailing belief that Vancouver should emulate the style and systems of Manhattan and other international financial centres if it wants to become a world class city. All of these conditions lead to the kind of redevelopment which has resulted from the BC Place/Expo 86 experience. However, the use of these urban development corporations made such an outcome more likely.

Planning which is based upon equity and democracy would therefore reject such instruments. It would work instead to provide the public with full information about redevelopment proposals, information which UDCs by their nature keep hidden. It would create opportunities for public debate about the most desirable urban form, debate which the time pressures of a hallmark event pre-empt. Above all, progressive and equity-based planning would help citizens

acquire the skills and capacities to critique the restructuring proposals of business and political elites, and would work to establish structures within which such public critiques could be heard and acknowledged.

By subjecting redevelopment decisions to a political process under local control, there is at least more chance that industrial workers and others adversely affected by the post-industrial restructuring of Vancouver's landscape and economy could mobilize to defend their interests. Whether this chance amounts to anything depends upon the ability of affected social groups to mobilize what power they do possess. Planning can complement and support such efforts, but it cannot substitute for "broader political organizing to address [issues like] urban poverty, community needs, and public policy" (Krumholz and Forester, 1990, 211). The promise of democratic planning and decision-making institutions can only be realized by an engaged citizenry which sees participation as a welcome responsibility, one which produces real and meaningful results.

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