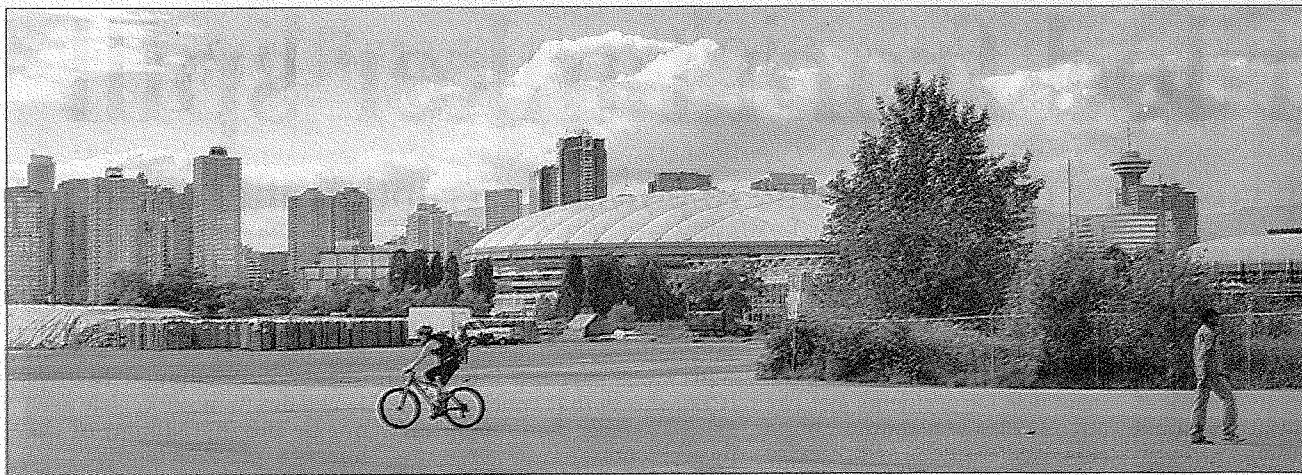


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MARK VAN MANEN/VANCOUVER SUN

A former industrial area on the south side of False Creek will see less social housing than was previously planned.

# Council reduces land for social housing on False Creek parcel

BY FRANCES BULA  
VANCOUVER SUN

**VANCOUVER** | The city's Non-Partisan Association council hasn't given up on the idea of trying to create affordable housing.

But it will take a few years of working with creative developers and planners to come up with some options that the city could try, NPA Coun. Suzanne Anton said Wednesday.

"I'm really optimistic we can do something in the future," Anton said following council's final decision in the small hours of Wednesday morning to reduce the land available for social housing on its major parcel in Southeast False Creek and to eliminate mid-range affordable housing for at least the first half of the land developed.

But opposition Coun. Raymond Louie says the NPA had a chance to translate good intentions into action this week but chose not to do it.

"We lost this early opportunity for the private sector to use their ingenuity. We'll never see that again," said Louie of Vision Vancouver, who claimed that the vote showed the NPA cares only about money, not people.

The vote came at the end of a six-hour

meeting that started at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, where about 30 advocates, including former MLA Tom Perry, First United Church minister Philip Cable and Ahavat Olam Synagogue representative Penny Goldsmith, begged NPA councillors to invest in housing now.

Quoting Martin Luther King Jr., Cable told councillors: "Poverty anywhere undermines prosperity everywhere. To try and hold onto all of the property endowment fund at this time and not address the poverty will undermine the prosperity of the city in the long run."

The NPA campaigned during last fall's election against the plan for Southeast False Creek developed by the previous COPE/Vision council, which aimed to create a model community that would emphasize environmental sustainability and housing diversity. Mayor Sam Sullivan and others said the city was setting a dangerous precedent by using the \$1.2-billion property endowment fund.

The plan had been to dedicate about one-third of the planned 2,000 units on the site to social housing and one-third to some undefined form of "affordable" housing that wouldn't need continuing subsidies, with one-third left for regular market housing. That, along with a requirement for five day-care centres, a

full community centre and substantial park space along the waterfront, meant the city would not have earned enough profit from selling its land to earn back the \$50 million of PEF money invested in the 30-hectare site.

Instead, NPA councillors voted to scale it back. The community centre, three day-care centres, and all the park space will remain, which will mean the city gets back only \$24 million of its original investment.

The first half of the development, the Olympic village, will have about 25-per cent social housing, since the city and province committed as part of their 2010 bid to providing 250 social-housing units in the approximately 1,000-unit development.

Anton said the \$24-million savings will be invested in future sites for social housing, although she acknowledges she has no idea at this point how the city will get any social housing actually built.

But, said Anton, something that is within the city's reach is to work with developers interested in building the post-Olympic housing on ways to create affordable, non-subsidized housing. She said she's had developers calling her talking about how it could be done.

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