

Sea2City Design Challenge

2100+ Vision for South False Creek

A NEW ADAPTATION FRAMEWORK



Cedar Forest Berm and Clam Garden Restoration



Restored Estuary and Canoe House



First Nations 'Host District' Development



Decolonizing Design

The Mithun+One team worked with the City of Vancouver, First Nations Cultural Advisor Cory Douglas and Tsleil-Waututh Knowledge Keeper Charlene Aleck, on the Sea2City Design Challenge to explore exciting and pragmatic design concepts that respond to the challenges posed by sea level rise and coastal flooding along False Creek in downtown Vancouver. From 2020 to 2023, the City engaged in community conversations, facilitated a Youth Adaptation Lab, co-hosted decolonization and indigenous perspectives workshops with Host Nations and brought together designers to co-create a long-term vision for False Creek. This work highlights a collaborative and decolonized approach to coastal adaptation planning, defining a vision that intentionally responds to the stories, knowledge and values that were shared with the team from xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətəl (Tsleil-Waututh) perspectives. Through this process, the team had the opportunity to explore what it means to decolonize a design and planning process and reflect on those learnings along the way.

Design is About Listening

Instead of listening to validate ideas, listening is about letting the conversations, stories and learnings guide the outcomes. Often, cultural and traditional knowledge is used to inform predetermined design outcomes. Shifting that process to allow the design outcomes to be shaped by centering traditional knowledge and values creates a different set of outcomes.

Understanding Reciprocity

The importance of reciprocity emerged through building relationships and learning from First Nations Knowledge Keepers. Reciprocity is often seen in the context of achieving balance or compromise, but when it is put into the context of time immemorial and the ongoing impacts of colonization on First Nations Peoples the consideration of those impacts magnify how critical it is to find a new path forward towards decolonized outcomes.

Working Towards Decolonized Outcomes

Alongside cultural advisors, the team imagined a place where the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh

Nations can practice, celebrate, share their cultures, and co-manage the landscape as a part of an ongoing conversation with the City of Vancouver. In this landscape that they have stewarded since time immemorial, False Creek can once again be a place where they can see themselves and their values and knowledge represented. The future of False Creek is a place for all people, creatures and diverse plant species to cohabitate. It represents a place of shared values, natural abundance, and optimism about the human role in helping heal the land and water for future generations.

PROJECT—

False Creek Shoreline
City of Vancouver, BC, Canada

TEAM—

Mithun
ONE Architecture + Planning
Cory Douglas / Modern Formline / Squamish Nation
Charlene Aleck / Tsleil-Waututh Nation
Herrera Environmental Consultants
Moffatt & Nichol