Agenda - Executive Policy Committee - September 17, 2008

REPORTS

Item No. 3 **CentreVenture Development Corporation – CentrePlan Development Framework**
File EP-1.2.3

CentreVenture Development Corporation submitted the CentrePlan Development Framework 2008.

CentrePlan Development Framework

2008

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1. Introduction, Background and Purpose

CentrePlan is the City of Winnipeg's plan for our downtown. CentrePlan was originally adopted by City Council in 1994 after extensive public consultations, workshops and public forums. In total, over a thousand citizens participated in the creation of the plan. CentrePlan builds upon the foundation established in the "Downtown" section of Plan Winnipeg – the City's long-term planning document. It was originally comprised of two documents: *Vision and Strategies* and an *Action Plan.* The *Vision and Strategies* document articulates the long-term vision for the downtown together with strategies intended to see the vision realized over the long-term. The *Action Plan* was intended to be rewritten annually in order to assess progress and to reflect future priorities.

The *CentrePlan Development Framework* was approved by Council in 1999 as a companion document to CentrePlan, in order to act as a guideline for development in downtown Winnipeg. The Development Framework is intended to provide physical direction and illustrate in a graphic format the vision articulated in CentrePlan. Given the many positive changes taking place downtown today it is important to revisit the Framework to ensure that it reflects the current environment and offers appropriate guidance for planning and development initiatives.

CentrePlan continues to remain a relevant planning document despite the fact that it was originally developed over a decade ago. Although our downtown has seen many positive improvements since CentrePlan was established, the context in which CentrePlan was created has remained relatively consistent. The objectives of the Plan are sound, and remain valid today.

Background

Since CentrePlan was produced in 1999, the face of downtown Winnipeg has changed considerably. There is a sense of optimism and a feeling of momentum. Projects both large and small have contributed to the ongoing revitalization that downtown Winnipeg is experiencing. Waterfront Drive has opened up new opportunities for residential and commercial development along the Red River. The MTS Centre and Manitoba Hydro projects will bring thousands of people to Portage Avenue during throughout the day for employment, commerce and entertainment. The Exchange District's role as the cultural hub of downtown Winnipeg is enhanced through new retail and housing opportunities, and hundreds of students at Red River College's Princess Street Campus brings new life to the neighbourhood.

These are but a few of the many positive changes that are changing the way we think about our downtown. This update is intended to reflect changes that have taken place over the last few years, and provide context for changes to come. The Development Framework will continue to reinforce the visions identified in the original CentrePlan document, and provide a physical framework for planning and development to take place.

Purpose

The CentrePlan Development Framework is a coordinated plan based primarily on the physical environment, incorporating social and economic dimensions. Its purpose is to convey with maps, graphics and explanatory text the broad vision articulated in CentrePlan, the actions implemented, development directions and opportunities. The Framework affirms the work accomplished by CentrePlan and takes it to the next stage in a form more easily understood with pictorial and graphic images. Principles for future development based on CentrePlan's progress are aligned with specific yet flexible development directions. Concepts for future growth are layered over current developments and short term plans. Together, the past, present and future of downtown design, planning and development converge.

Implementation

In order to achieve the goals identified in this Framework it is important to establish an implementation strategy. Although this document reflects the vision for Downtown as identified by the City of Winnipeg, it is incumbent upon all stakeholders in the downtown revitalization process to work cooperatively in implementing the strategy. An Action Plan will be developed every two years as a companion document to the Framework which will identify specific goals and actions to be undertaken, complete with targets and indicators.

Recommendations

In 1999, the CentrePlan Development Framework identified the following Primary Recommendations. These guidelines continue to be relevant and frame the content of this document.

Primary Recommendation: Plan, Develop, Operate and Manage the Downtown as a Single and Special Entity

Neighbourhoods, Districts and Character Areas

- Identify, define, enhance and create unique and distinctive Neighbourhoods, Districts and Character Areas

Residential Neighbourhoods

- Protect, preserve and enhance four Neighbourhoods for residential development

Transportation

- Link downtown Neighbourhoods, Districts and Character Areas together with transportation systems, bicycle routes, a streetcar system, a boat/bus system, the Downtown Spirit and quality pedestrian ways

Heritage

- Preserve, protect and enhance downtown's natural and built heritage

Public Spaces

- Invest in the public realm

Private/Public Partnerships

- Support and encourage private sector investment and public/private partnerships

2. The CentrePlan Vision

The purpose of CentrePlan is to "bring about positive change in Winnipeg's downtown." As change often brings conflict due to differing priorities and perspectives, it is important that all citizens have a say in determining shared values that shape a community's vision. The CentrePlan process offered a wide range of opportunities for citizens to participate. The process recognized that our community as a whole is becoming increasingly diverse, and that acknowledging, responding and planning for diversity will be critical to the success of the downtown revitalization process. Out of the CentrePlan process came five key visions:

a. A Vision of Community and Belonging

In our vision of the future, the downtown exhibits a strong sense of community and belonging. People are safe, secure and welcome. The downtown prides itself in the strength of its neighbourhoods providing them with stability and opportunities for personal enrichment. Strong networks are in place to facilitate interaction and support among citizens, the business community, and local government. The downtown is a compassionate, caring, humane place characterized by tolerance and social harmony. People are valued, included, accepted, and treated with dignity. The downtown welcomes new Canadians. It is proud of its ethnic diversity. It respects and honours its aboriginal ancestry recognizing their pivotal role in the success of the downtown. The downtown is a place for everyone, where opportunities are shared equally.

b. A Vision of Prosperity and Innovation

In our vision of the future, the downtown is characterized by prosperity and a spirit of innovation. It offers a range of opportunities for commerce, culture, and living all integrated to form a rich and diverse environment. It is the centre of employment, new technology, life-long learning and education. New ideas are continuously explored and developed in a manner that is interlocked with the environment, the economy, and the social fabric – sustainability. The downtown offers optimism for future generations.

c. A Vision of Effectiveness and Efficiency

In our vision of the future, the downtown is a model of effectiveness and efficiency. It provides appropriate services to residents, workers, and visitors, and provides them in a way that demonstrates a commitment to excellence. All downtown uses are well integrated to create a very livable, comfortable, clean, and aesthetically pleasing environment. The downtown is very accessible from all parts of the city and provides good orientation and convenient linkages to activity centres within its boundaries. The downtown works well for everyone.

d. A Vision of Soul and Personality

In our vision of the future, the downtown has a soul and personality all its own, one that is vibrant and energetic, yet warm and caring. It reflects Winnipeg's status as a capital city and the heart of government, law, and commerce for the province. The downtown embraces its unique landmarks – Portage and Main, the Forks, the Golden Boy, the Red and Assiniboine Rivers. It exhibits pride in its special qualities – the clean air, the trees, the climate. It cherishes its ethnic and cultural diversity and its reputation of friendliness. It honours its heritage and tradition and builds upon them as a legacy and inspiration for future generations. The downtown encompasses all that is good about Winnipeg.

e. A Vision of Direction and Commitment

In our vision of the future, clear direction and commitment cultivate ongoing development of the downtown as a vibrant, welcome, and secure place where people want to be and stay. Direction is made clear through the pursuit of a defined purpose agreed upon collectively by the community. Leaders work to realize the direction and express commitment through consistent and coordinated action. Building upon past experiences, cooperation through partnerships is an operating principle. Resources are sufficient and expended wisely to obtain maximum benefit. The entire downtown community understands and acts upon its shared responsibilities.

The Development Framework will incorporate these key visions through focusing attention in the following areas:

1. Encourage High Quality Urban Design
2. Urban Structure: Define Neighbourhoods, Districts and Character Areas
3. Enhance Public Open Space and the Waterfront
4. Expand Transportation Options

5. Encourage Residential Development
6. Encourage Retail and Commercial Development
7. Encourage Entertainment, Arts and Culture
8. Encourage Public Art
9. Preserve Heritage

3. Encourage High Quality Urban Design

Good urban design is vital to improving the livability of a community and an important component of the downtown revitalization process. In 2005, the City of Winnipeg prepared guidelines for urban design and established the Urban Design Advisory Committee to support the Downtown Design Review process as part of the downtown zoning bylaw review. The urban design guidelines note that "the obligation of all projects in downtown Winnipeg is to contribute to the life of all who pass through and participate within the built environment."

The guidelines provide eleven principles, namely:

1. Enhance pedestrian comfort, safety and accessibility
2. Create identifiable places where appropriate to the context of the urban fabric
3. Respect the urban tradition of streets and blocks
4. Celebrate and build on the best features of the surrounding context
5. Contribute to important vistas and linkages
6. Animate the interface between interior and exterior space
7. Strive for quality and character (with regard to architectural design)
8. Integrate public art
9. Practice heritage conservation
10. Design for refinement and integration
11. Practice sustainable design

Good urban design in the downtown is encouraged through the Urban Design review process. The intent is to promote the development of places that have their own identity, are easy to get to and move through, have a clear image and are easy to understand, are attractive, safe, uncluttered and work effectively for everyone.

Goal: Celebrate Urban Design

Strategy:

- **Celebrate Urban Design through introduction of the Mayor's Award in Urban Design**
- **Ensure that all City projects reflect exemplary urban design and maintenance**
- **Encourage private landowners to incorporate public spaces and landscaping of high visual and functional quality into new developments**
- **Encourage the integration of public art and aesthetics into the downtown landscape**

4. Urban Structure: Define Neighbourhoods, Districts and Character Areas

Downtown Winnipeg encompasses approximately 780 acres, or 3.1 square kilometers (1.2 square miles). This is a relatively large land area for a city of our population. Having a relatively large land area presents both opportunities and challenges in terms of urban development. A large downtown land area can provide a sufficient land base to support mixed-use, pedestrian friendly development that help make downtown distinct from suburban neighbourhoods. However, a large, homogenous downtown is not friendly to pedestrians and does not provide a variety of experiences to the visitor. Downtown Winnipeg is fortunate to contain a number of districts and character areas, including:

a. The Exchange District and Waterfront Drive
b. Portage and Main
c. Central Park
d. The Forks
e. North Portage
f. Chinatown
g. University of Winnipeg
h. Neeginan and North Main
i. Graham Avenue
j. Portage Avenue
k. Broadway/Assiniboine
l. Central Business District
m. Provincial Legislature and Memorial Park

In order to increase the variety of experiences and opportunities within downtown Winnipeg, it is important to treat downtown as a series of complementary neighbourhoods rather than as a homogenous region. Good secondary planning will help ensure that coordinated, efficient and creative development occurs.

Goal: Develop and enhance distinct neighbourhoods within downtown Winnipeg

Strategies:

- **Create unique, distinctive districts and character areas**
- **Define boundaries, entrances, and develop landmark sites as focal points**
- **Protect, enhance and develop character areas and focal points such as Portage and Main, landmark buildings, Broadway, Portage Avenue and waterfront access**
- **Examine opportunities to introduce 'lightscaping' in strategic downtown locations**
- **Enhance legibility in the Downtown through implementation of the City of Winnipeg Pedestrian Wayfinding Signage Plan**
- **Enhance a sense of place through streetscape design that contributes to a district's character and identity**
- **Develop secondary plans for downtown districts and character areas that reinforce a district's particular character and encourage creative development**

5. Enhance Public Open Space and the Waterfront

Downtown Winnipeg is bounded on two sides by perhaps our most significant natural features: the Red and Assiniboine Rivers. Many public spaces take advantage of these features by providing recreational opportunities or perhaps just taking advantage of their aesthetic qualities. Many more public spaces are found away from the waterfront and closer to residential neighbourhoods and the central business district.

The last few years have seen a significant investment made in public spaces along the Red River, including The Forks, Waterfront Drive, the Provencher Bridge and Esplanade Riel. These investments have improved the physical environment, provided recreational and commercial opportunities, and leveraged private investment in the downtown.

One of the earliest investments in Winnipeg's downtown waterfront resulted from the establishment of the Forks Renewal Corporation. This tri-level initiative has been responsible for revitalizing approximately 60 acres of land at the confluence of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers. Today, The Forks is Manitoba's most popular tourist destination. This position will be reinforced with the establishment of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, dedicated to celebrating and educating the world about the issue of human rights. This dramatic piece of architecture will house Canada's first national museum outside the national capital region.

More recently, the Broadway Promenade was developed to provide a connection between the Esplanade Riel and Via Rail's Union Station through Festival Park at The Forks. It now provides an important pedestrian link between Broadway and St. Boniface, following the original alignment of Broadway before the construction of the East Yards at The Forks. Continued improvements to the public realm along Broadway – and in particular protection of the stately elms – will increase the desirability of the neighbourhood for both residential and commercial purposes.

Plans are underway to upgrade a number of other public spaces downtown. CentreVenture's Heart of Gold plan makes reference to strategic investments in a number of properties including Central Park, Old Market Square, McFadyen Park and Memorial Park. Already the City of Winnipeg is investing in Central Park's historic Waddell Fountain and the redevelopment of Old Market Square and Millennium Library Park. The University of Winnipeg is in the process of developing Portage Commons as a public recreational space in front of Wesley Hall with commercial space along a pedestrianized Spence Street. The City has recently entertained interest in the former Harbourmaster Building as well as the land adjacent to the Alexander

Docks, which could provide complementary commercial opportunities while at the same time enhancing access to the waterfront.

Primary parks and open spaces located downtown are:

a. Stephen Juba Park and Alexander Docks
b. The Forks
c. Central Park
d. Window Park
e. Memorial Park and Manitoba Legislature grounds
f. Bonnycastle Park
g. Portage Commons (University of Winnipeg)
h. Old Market Square
i. McFadyen Park
j. Millennium Library
k. Upper Fort Garry Gate Park
l. Riverwalk

Winnipeg's waterfront is our most important natural asset downtown. In order to improve recreational opportunities for residents and visitors to our downtown, it is important to enhance access and provide quality connections between public open spaces.

Goal: Enhance safety and accessibility to the waterfront, provide connections between public open spaces, and provide opportunities for complementary cultural and commercial uses.

Strategies:

- **Encourage strategic investments in public spaces and improve linkages between them**
- **Invest in public spaces that support residential development (such as Central Park and McFadyen Park) as well as regional destinations that attract audiences city-wide (such as Old Market Square)**
- **Consider opportunities for complementary commercial development in public spaces, in order to increase activity (and by extension natural surveillance) and potentially provide additional revenues**
- **Encourage third parties to adopt public spaces and take 'ownership' of them, in order to increase activities, improve programming opportunities, and provide appropriate commercial development (e.g. Old Market Square and the Exchange District BIZ, Air Canada Park and the Downtown Winnipeg BIZ, Knox United Church/International Centre and Central Park, Millennium Library/Millennium Park, etc.)**

- **Undertake improvements to Memorial Park and Memorial Boulevard which help to integrate the University of Winnipeg and the Winnipeg Art Gallery into the downtown fabric, through minimizing vehicular roadways and expanding public spaces, pedestrian and cycling corridors**

6. Expand Transportation Options

An efficient transportation system is a key component of a healthy downtown. A good transportation network, both within downtown and between downtown and adjacent neighbourhoods is an important tool for economic development. As well, a good transportation system will have positive effects on urban form and encourage a walkable, pedestrian friendly neighbourhood. Most of all, downtown neighbourhoods are well-equipped to support environmentally friendly transportation solutions.

A vibrant downtown possesses an efficient and effective transportation system that encourages all modes of transportation: walking, cycling, transit and the automobile. Commuters who bring their automobile downtown are well served through existing infrastructure. However, the key to developing a pedestrian-friendly downtown environment in Winnipeg is to develop a balanced downtown transportation system through expanding transportation options.

In particular, emphasis must be given to providing a quality pedestrian experience downtown. The urban form of downtown is well suited to provide an efficient pedestrian experience. However, steps can be taken to ensure that pedestrians receive priority downtown over other methods of transportation. This approach is not only environmentally and socially responsible, but helps to differentiate downtown from suburban, auto-oriented neighbourhoods. Quality pedestrian routes can also contribute to the sense of place exhibited by a neighbourhood or district.

Over the years, the character of downtown has changed as pedestrian-oriented, residential streets were converted to high-volume commercial thoroughfares. Almost all downtown streets were widened and converted to one-way streets in order to enhance automobile traffic flow. Good urban design solutions can help re-establish that pedestrian-friendly character through encouraging mixed-use developments.

Given that Winnipeg has a relatively large downtown land area, good transportation between downtown districts becomes even more important. Good transportation options between downtown and adjacent shoulder neighbourhoods will also increase the popularity of non-vehicular transportation. In particular, some form of rapid transit, connecting downtown Winnipeg with

adjacent neighbourhoods must be adopted. Rapid transit will help encourage citizens to make the shift from the personal automobile to public transportation which will have positive effects on land use, urban form and the environment. Rapid transit is a key component of healthy, vibrant downtowns in cities around the world.

For a number of years, Winnipeg Transit has operated a free shuttle system within downtown. This service, known as the Downtown Spirit, operates three different routes and carried just under 400,000 passengers in 2007. The service is particularly popular with downtown residents and tourists, but would benefit through increased frequency and longer hours of service.

In many cities, a comfortable and efficient downtown streetcar system has proven to be an effective tool for economic development. Urban development trends across North America have enabled cities to extend streetcar systems into underutilized and reclaimed former industrial areas. Today these neighbourhoods are bustling with new residents as condominium and mixed-use projects spring up in clusters around the streetcar line. There is demonstrated appeal in being able to jump on a streetcar and arrive at work only minutes later, without the cost and inconvenience of driving (and parking) a car.

Goal: Improve transportation opportunities/choices within the downtown neighbourhood, and between downtown and adjacent neighbourhoods.

Strategies:

- **Encourage construction of a rapid transit system connecting downtown with adjacent neighbourhoods**
- **Improve support for the Downtown Spirit, allowing it to operate with increased frequency and longer hours of service**
- **Create functional linkages that encourage people to walk between centres of activity using direct, attractive and convenient routes both within downtown as well as shoulder neighbourhoods**
- **Ensure completion of the Weather Protected Walkway System**
- **Encourage operation of the "River Spirit" water taxi service along the Red and Assiniboine Rivers**
- **Provide dedicated cycling lanes on existing roadways downtown**
- **Ensure downtown bikeway networks link with networks in shoulder neighbourhoods and beyond**
- **Ensure all future roadway and sidewalk reconstruction projects provide a quality pedestrian experience**

- **Link downtown and the rest of the city with rapid transit corridors**
- **Consider creating a downtown streetcar system that**
    - **encourages development to occur in nodes**
    - **provides efficient and comfortable transportation between downtown districts for downtown residents, employees, and tourists.**
- **Examine opportunities to increase the availability of on-street parking**
- **Facilitate the construction of underground parkades and above-ground parking structures in order to facilitate the redevelopment of strategic sites and decrease demand for surface parking**
- **Ensure existing surface parking lots meet the highest standards of urban design**
- **Implement recommendations from the Winnipeg Active Transportation Action Plan (2008)**

7. Encourage Residential Development

Successful downtowns throughout North America are encouraging a transition from 'employment centre' to 'lifestyle centre' through enhancing the residential component of the neighbourhood. People living downtown not only contribute to activity on the street, but they stimulate economic development through their spending on goods, services, entertainment, and other activities. New residential developments take advantage of existing land and infrastructure, which is good for both the environment and the economy.

Downtown housing does not simply 'happen.' Developing residential neighbourhoods downtown must be approached in a holistic manner that considers the needs of all residents, both new and existing, from a neighbourhood perspective. Consideration must be given to the provision of community services, investment in public infrastructure, and other community amenities and supports.

Plan Winnipeg encourages downtown housing by:

- "Supporting . . . the stability of existing downtown neighbourhoods;
- Providing incentives . . . that encourage the provision of housing including warehouse conversions and new construction throughout the downtown;
- Encouraging mixed-use residential development that integrates retail, service businesses, and institutions needed by downtown residents; and
- Supporting the creation of a pedestrian-friendly downtown environment."

Historically, residential development in Winnipeg has tended to be located in clusters around Central Park and Broadway. More recently, rental units, life leases and condominiums have been constructed at North Portage, and the Exchange District has become popular with those looking for hip accommodations. The construction of Waterfront Drive has opened up prime new land for development, with the result that by 2008 approximately 250 high-quality units will be constructed. As well, warehouse conversions in the Exchange District – particularly along Princess Street and Old Market Square – have proven popular. These projects in the Exchange District have helped to provide more variety in the downtown housing market, broadening the mix both in terms of residents and housing types and tenure.

Downtown housing often works best when it is developed in clusters. These clusters provide a critical mass of residents who are then able to provide sufficient demand for services to exist. They also help to create more of a residential atmosphere downtown, which is attractive for many.

Increased activity and enrolment at post-secondary educational institutions downtown will help drive the demand for housing. For example, the University of Winnipeg brings thousands of students downtown every day and their impact is felt throughout the neighbourhood. They support shops and services and provide activity on the street. A cluster of housing, tailored to the student market, will help the University attract students from outside their traditional recruitment area. A cluster of student-oriented housing should be developed in close proximity to the University in order to provide activity and encourage economic development downtown. Housing could also be developed to accommodate students enrolled at Red River College's Princess Street Campus in the Exchange District. The University of Manitoba should also be encouraged to expand their programming downtown, with the resulting increase in demand for housing and supportive commercial activities.

In addition to the new housing clusters found along Waterfront Drive and Princess Street/Old Market Square, traditional housing clusters around Central Park and Broadway require reinvestment to ensure their desirability and respond to the changing housing market. It is important that resources be devoted to maintaining our existing downtown residential neighbourhoods in addition to developing new ones.

The City of Winnipeg has been particularly supportive in encouraging housing downtown. In 2004, the new Downtown Zoning By-law streamlined the approval process by including residential development as a permitted use throughout all downtown sectors (except the Riverbank Sector which is intended to provide public access to the waterfront).

Over the last few years, new housing units have been added at:

- 228 Notre Dame Avenue
- 181 Bannatyne Ave
- 110 Princess Street
- 123 Princess Street
- 87-89 Princess Street
- 283 Bannatyne Avenue
- 443 Webb Place

- 520 Portage Avenue
- Ship Street Village
- The Excelsior
- The Strand
- Sky

While these units represent a significant investment in the downtown housing market and a broadening in terms of housing type and tenure, many more units are needed to lever supportive commercial development. The public sector can help make downtown a more attractive residential neighbourhood through developing community amenities and infrastructure that appeal to the residential user.

Goal: Increase the number of downtown residential units of all types and tenures

Strategies:

- **Identify and implement strategies that will result in the construction of new housing units downtown, as indicated in the Downtown Housing Strategy**
- **Promote awareness of the City of Winnipeg's Downtown Multiple Family / Mixed-Use Building Grant Program to housing developers, providers and realtors**
- **Encourage the development of public infrastructure that supports residential living in neighbourhood clusters e.g. green spaces and recreational amenities**
- **Encourage the development of commercial shops and services that promote residential living**
- **Facilitate land assembly that supports the development of residential clusters**
- **Ensure housing is available to support a mix of income levels, housing types and tenures**
    - **Work with community-based housing developers to provide non-profit or affordable housing**
    - **Encouraging housing developers to provide both condominium and rental units**
    - **Encourage the development of live/work spaces for artists and other communities**

8. Encourage Retail and Commercial Development

A vibrant retail element is a vital component of a healthy downtown. Retailers encourage pedestrian activity throughout the neighbourhood and serve a variety of clients including those who work, live or visit downtown. The vibrancy of the retail sector can best be seen in the quality and variety of the retail mix available in the neighbourhood.

Historically, downtown has functioned as a retail destination, attracting shoppers from across the city. Today that function has diminished with the establishment of shopping centres, both enclosed and large-format, outside the city centre. Downtown retailing today tends to focus on those who work downtown, those who live downtown or in neighbourhoods adjacent to downtown, and those looking for specialty retail experiences.

Downtown retail activity is currently focused in shopping centres such as Portage Place, cityplace, and Winnipeg Square. The Bay Downtown anchors the west end of Portage Avenue, with significant at-grade retail opportunities along Portage and Graham Avenues. In the Exchange District, independent retailers at street level have been expanding recently with a focus along McDermot and Bannatyne Avenues, and Waterfront Drive.

Retail and commercial development downtown can be encouraged through coordinated economic development initiatives. These initiatives should focus on encouraging business attraction, retention and expansion downtown. Demand from new businesses and the employees they bring will drive demand for retail and increase demand for office and commercial space.

Goal: Encourage retail activity that services downtown residents and employees, particularly at street level.

Strategies:

- **Develop a Downtown Retail Strategy, in conjunction with downtown retailers, to identify strategies, obstacles and opportunities for further downtown retail development**
- **Encourage economic development initiatives that will focus on business attraction, retention and expansion in order to support demand for new retail and commercial services downtown**

- **Consider the City of Winnipeg's Downtown Employment Study when identifying economic development initiatives**
- **Work with the Hudson's Bay Company to facilitate the redevelopment of their flagship building in order that they are able to maintain a significant retail presence downtown**
- **Encourage the establishment of retail that supports residential development in residentially-oriented districts, including the attraction of a national grocery retailer**
- **Encourage the establishment of retail in existing clusters**
- **Encourage retail, particularly at street level within a high-quality environment that creates a distinctive market identity**
- **Ensure that parking policies and urban development guidelines facilitate pedestrian-oriented retail throughout downtown but in particular along Portage, Graham, Bannatyne, McDermot and Waterfront Drive**
- **Work with downtown property owners and leasing agents to raise awareness of downtown retail opportunities**

9. Encourage Entertainment, Arts and Culture

Downtown should be the cultural and entertainment centre of the city. A variety of cultural and entertainment institutions have been located downtown for many years, and new projects have helped reinforce our downtown as an entertainment destination. Appealing entertainment, arts and cultural opportunities are critical activity generators and play a significant role in the downtown revitalization process.

The MTS Centre opened on Portage Avenue in 2004, and since then has brought hundreds of thousands of people downtown every year for sporting events, concerts and other performances. Soon afterwards the Tavern United restaurant and lounge opened in the refurbished Powerhouse Building next door along with CTV's television studios. In the next few years the former Metropolitan Theatre will open across the street with an exciting new restaurant and entertainment concept. As the success of each of these projects increase, they will attract similar venues and reinforce the emerging character of this neighbourhood as an entertainment destination.

Destination Winnipeg and the Winnipeg Convention Centre work together through marketing and sales initiatives to bring thousands of visitors to our downtown every year. These visitors become customers for our cultural and entertainment events. A future expansion of the Winnipeg Convention Centre will enhance our capacity to attract more and larger conventions, increasing the opportunity for new and expanded entertainment options.

The Exchange District is well known as the cultural hub of downtown Winnipeg. The District is home to a large proportion of theatres, galleries, and cultural organizations. Artspace Inc. alone, located in the Gault Block, houses 23 arts organizations including a movie theatre, art galleries, publishing houses and other organizations. Together the Manitoba Theatre Centre, Warehouse Theatre, Pantages and Burton Cummings Theatres all draw thousands of patrons downtown every year. Portage Place offers a variety of entertainment options including the Prairie Theatre Exchange, IMAX Theatre and Globe Cinemas, each drawing thousands of visitors every year with their unique programming.

More recently, Main Street in the Exchange District has experienced new life as The Edge Artist's Village and Gallery, MAWA (Mentoring Artists for Women's Art), and the Neon Factory have all taken residency.

Main Street has traditionally been the focus of activity in the Exchange District and North Main neighbourhoods. Cultural facilities such as the Centennial Concert Hall, Manitoba Museum and Planetarium, Ukrainian Cultural and Educational Centre (Oseredok), and most recently the Costume Museum of Canada are located either on or in close proximity to Main Street.

More recently however Main Street has acted as a physical barrier and divided the neighbourhood, causing activity tending to take place away from the street. By encouraging cultural organizations, theatres, and nightclubs to locate along Main, the street can unite the neighbourhood rather than divide.

In addition to the many facilities offering entertainment and cultural programming, many concerts, festivals, and other events take place in public spaces located throughout downtown. Offering programmed entertainment is a critical strategy in encouraging downtown revitalization, as it offers entertainment and recreational opportunities for downtown residents as well as business development opportunities for downtown businesses. For example, the Winnipeg Fringe Theatre Festival, Jazz Winnipeg Festival and Winnipeg International Children's Festival each attract thousands of patrons to their performances and events. Because these programmed events often take place outside of traditional entertainment venues in public places like Old Market Square or The Forks, they add visible activity to the streetscape. These events will also bring people downtown who may not normally visit the neighbourhood.

Programming in downtown Winnipeg is undertaken primarily by The Forks North Portage Partnership, the Downtown Winnipeg BIZ and the Exchange District BIZ. These three groups, along with their community-based partners, are responsible for bringing people downtown for events as diverse as musical concerts at Old Market Square, fireworks at The Forks, and recreational programming along the rivers.

Goal: Enhance downtown Winnipeg as the entertainment and cultural hub of the city.

Strategies:

- Encourage Main Street, in the Exchange District, to evolve as the cultural and entertainment anchor of the neighbourhood
- Build upon the success of the MTS Centre by facilitating the development of new restaurants, night clubs, and other complementary entertainment activities on Portage Avenue and adjacent streets
- Encourage the primary providers (The Forks, Downtown Winnipeg and Exchange District BIZs) to work collaboratively to continue to provide a wide range of quality programming for both visitors to downtown as well as programming targeted for downtown residents and employees

10. Encourage Public Art

Public art "refers to works of art in any media that has been planned and executed with the specific intention of being sited or staged in the public domain, usually outside and accessible to all." Public art is generally recognized as an innovative and democratic way in which to positively impact the public realm.

In 2004, Winnipeg City Council adopted a Public Art Policy as developed by the Winnipeg Arts Council. The policy was established to direct the integration of artwork into public spaces and public works projects. The public art program is funded by the City of Winnipeg through an annual grant. This funding mechanism differs from the approach taken in many other cities which require public art as part of the development approval process. This approach ensures that Winnipeg has the flexibility to take advantage of opportunities to install public art at a variety of locations that are not directly tied to a development project.

Plan Winnipeg suggests that Public Art be encouraged throughout the city by:

i) establishing requirements for public art, drawing on artistic expertise and community involvement, and introducing a funding mechanism to meet these requirements;
ii) committing to the incorporation of public art in major public work initiatives; and
iii) developing programs to exhibit temporary art in existing public spaces.

Goal: Encourage the installation of public art throughout downtown

Strategies:

- **Encourage the City of Winnipeg to maintain its commitment to public art, as identified in Plan Winnipeg**
- **Encourage public art be incorporated in all major downtown projects, including projects addressing both the natural and built environment**
- **Encourage the Winnipeg Arts Council to partner with the private sector, community organizations and philanthropists to expand opportunities for public art downtown**

11. Preserve Heritage

Downtown Winnipeg is remarkably rich in heritage resources. Historic development patterns, along with the conservation initiatives of heritage advocates from all walks of life have left the downtown with a tremendous inventory of heritage buildings.

Preserving heritage buildings and streetscapes are important for a variety of reasons. Heritage buildings and streetscapes contribute to the character of a community. They help to define a community's 'sense of place' and make it distinct. Preserving heritage is environmentally sound, as it encourages the reuse of existing resources. Preserving heritage has a positive impact on economic development, as historic districts are popular destinations for tourists. Historic districts also find their economic niche with cultural industries such as filmmaking.

In addition to the literally hundreds of historic buildings, downtown Winnipeg has two nationally designated historic districts – The Forks National Historic Site and the Exchange District National Historic Site. The Forks NHS was established by Parks Canada in 1989 and today The Forks proper, which includes destinations such as The Forks Market, Johnston Terminal, Manitoba Children's Museum and Manitoba Theatre for Young People has become Manitoba's most popular tourism destination.

The Exchange District, a twenty block area representing over 150 heritage buildings, was designated a National Historic Site in 1997. Seventy-nine buildings within the Exchange District NHS are also protected through municipal legislation. The District has evolved from its traditional role as a financial and warehousing centre to become the creative hub of downtown. Today, the District is home to a large proportion of Winnipeg's cultural organizations and is becoming an increasingly sought-after destination for residents, creative industries and boutique retailers.

The City of Winnipeg has supported the preservation of heritage buildings through a variety of programs over the years. Currently, the City offers financial incentives in the form of the Heritage Conservation Tax Credit to developers who make significant investments in a designated building. As well, CentreVenture operates the Gail Parvin Hammerquist fund (established by the City of Winnipeg in 2000) to encourage investment in heritage buildings downtown.

Goal: Encourage the conservation and adaptive reuse of heritage buildings, streetscapes and districts throughout downtown.

Strategies:

- **Ensure that a competitive package of incentives is available to facilitate the conservation and/or adaptive reuse of designated heritage buildings**
- **Ensure that the City of Winnipeg and CentreVenture work collaboratively to administer their financial incentive programs to accomplish strategic goals**