Pioneer & Waterfront Development Principles & Guidelines

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The City of Winnipeg and The Forks Renewal Corporation



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

The City of Winnipeg (City), in partnership with The Forks Renewal Corporation (FRC) and other key stakeholders, undertook to prepare a plan for the area surrounding the intersection of Pioneer Avenue and Waterfront Drive. Referred to as the Pioneer & Waterfront Development Principles and Guidelines, its aim is to establish a policy and design framework that will be utilized by the City and the FRC as an important planning tool when evaluating and guiding future development proposals in this area. The timing of such a plan is appropriate, as it follows the completion and initiation of several significant projects within the downtown, including the recent construction of Waterfront Drive and Esplande Riel, the request for proposals along Waterfront Drive and the future Canadian Museum for Human Rights. The central objectives of the framework include:

- To serve as a predictable development guide that will provide the City and the FRC with a basis to assess the appropriateness and compatibility of new development on the Development Opportunity Sites encompassed by this plan;
- To provide guidance and advice to potential development proponents or future businesses in their preliminary development decision-making;
- To promote a consistent and integrated planning and design approach for a key area within Winnipeg's Downtown; and
- To build upon the FRC's *Focus On The Future: Concept and Financial Plan 2001-2010* which was completed and adopted by The Fork's Shareholders in the fall of 2001.

This document, which has been endorsed by The Forks Renewal Corporation Board and the City of Winnipeg's Standing Policy Committee on Downtown Development, will function as a flexible and practical blueprint for the future development of these lands.

1.2 Organization

The development principles and guidelines are organized around three principal planning elements that frame significant issues and strategies for the future development of this area. These elements include, preferred land uses, built form and transportation / parking. Following introductory information describing the planning process, vision and context, in addition to brief sections on the public realm and parking, the plan area is then divided up into five Development Opportunity Sites. For each of the five sites, individual report sections provide detailed assessments and redevelopment strategies, based upon the three aforementioned elements (preferred land uses, urban design and transportation/parking). The Development Opportunity Sites also incorporate illustrative redevelopment concepts that help to visualize how this area may develop, based upon the plan's recommended redevelopment strategies.

1.3 Partners and Process

The formation of this plan has been a collaborative effort between the City of Winnipeg and The Forks Renewal Corporation. Another important aspect to the planning process was the establishment of a Steering Committee involving stakeholder representatives from key downtown organizations and major land interests in the area. The role of the Steering Committee was to provide input and advice on the principles and guidelines within the plan. The Steering Committee consisted of representatives from the following organizations:

- The Downtown BIZ
- The Exchange District BIZ
- Parks Canada
- CentreVenture Development Corporation
- Canwest Global Park
- The Canadian Museum for Human Rights
- Entreprises Riel

To further assist the planning team, a Technical Advisory Committee (consisting mainly of representatives from various City Departments) was also formed to provide advice on detailed matters relating to real estate, infrastructure, transportation and transit, parking and public art.

The planning team and project partners began working on the development framework in early July 2004 and continued over a five-month period. Over this time, several meetings were conducted to discuss the scope and intent of the plan, as well as to help identify key issues, assets, opportunities and a vision for the future. Following these initial meetings, planning staff from the City and the FRC worked together to prepare a draft plan, which was then presented to the Steering Committee and Technical Advisory Committee for their review and comment. Based upon their feedback, a final draft was created and presented to The Forks Renewal Corporation Board and the City's Standing Policy Committee on Downtown Development.

1.4 Place and Possibilities

The geographic scope of the Pioneer & Waterfront Development Principles and Guidelines applies to those lands primarily fronting the intersection of Pioneer and Water Avenues and Waterfront Drive. Specifically, the area is bound by the CNR High Line, which extends along the west and north boundary of the site, the banks of the Red River to the east and a line to the south, which stretches from the Esplanade Riel west to Union Station. This site is both historically and culturally significant due to its strategic location at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine rivers and its continuous use over time for transportation, trade and settlement. The unique historical and cultural qualities of the plan area have resulted in a portion of it being included as part of The Forks National Historic Site.

The area also represents a vital link to key districts within and surrounding Winnipeg's downtown. The site not only acts as a major entrance to the commercial heart of Winnipeg from the east, but also, as one departs the downtown, it represents a gateway to the new Provencher Bridge and Esplanade Riel that connect to St. Boniface. Directly to the north of the site, the newly created Waterfront Drive establishes a critical connection to The Exchange District National Historic Site for vehicles and pedestrians alike. Finally, for The Forks, this area represents new and exciting development opportunities that, once established, will further enhance the vitality and overall attractiveness of this already unique mixed-use site.



Figure 1:
Plan area boundaries

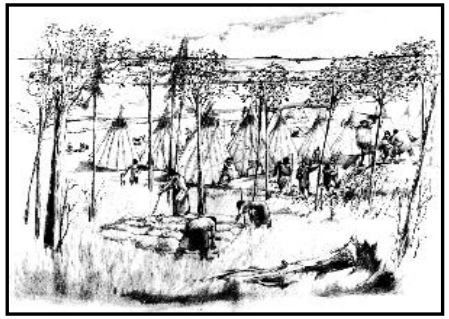
2.0 PLANNING CONTEXT

2.1 Sense of History

The history and development of the lands within and surrounding the plan area have always been guided by its close proximity to the rivers. Long before the imprint of modern society, the junction of the Red and Assiniboine rivers, known today as The Forks, has been a meeting place. Aboriginal peoples from across the North American plains and eastern forests came to this spot to hunt and fish, trade and celebrate. Based upon objects unearthed during archeological digs, Native camps flourished here throughout early history, and up until the point of contact with European explorers.

By the 1700s, as explorers ventured westward across the country, the area became a strategic location for trading forts and a major centre for the flourishing fur and pemmican trade. More settlers and pioneers followed, beginning what was to be more than 150 years of immigration.

By 1860, steamboats were plying the Red River, earning the nickname "Mississippi of the North". With the arrival of the first steam locomotive on the prairies in 1877 and the subsequent railway building, the area near the junction of the rivers soon became a major rail terminus and a critical link between east, south and west, and remained so into the mid 1900s.



Native settlements flourished at The Forks

When modernized rail facilities were built on the outskirts of the city in the 1960s, the marshalling yards at The Forks became obsolete and the site remained abandoned and inactive for over 20 years.

In 1981, the tri-level Core Area Initiative was established to revitalize the inner city of Winnipeg. One area of focus was the CN East Yards site at The Forks. The Core Area Initiative ultimately led to the creation of the Forks Renewal Corporation (FRC) in 1987. FRC was established by the municipal, provincial and federal governments to "own…and to coordinate redevelopment of the East Yards Area."

Through a separate funding agreement, work was also underway on the initial redevelopment project at the site. In 1986, $3.5 million was made available to Parks Canada through the Canada-Manitoba Agreements for Recreation and Culture (A.R.C.) program. This led to the development of The Forks National Historic Site, a nine acre parcel of land located at the confluence of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers. The purpose of the site was to "commemorate the junction as a place of national historic significance in the development…of the West". Work began the following year in 1987, and the park was officially opened in 1989.



The Forks National Historic Site

Today, there are approximately six separate parcels of land located within the plan area boundaries. The ownership of these lands is divided between the City and the FRC, with a significant portion being leased by the City to Riverside Management Ltd. (Canwest Global Park), under various agreements.

The majority of the land within the plan area is currently undeveloped and is primarily being used as surface parking by customers of The Forks, Canwest Global Park and employees of Union Station and surrounding downtown offices.



Canwest Global Park

Directly to the south of the plan area is the already developed portion of The Forks site. The Forks, since its inception in 1988, has become a major destination for tourist and residents of Winnipeg with an annual visitation of over five million persons. The 38-acre site consists of commercial, institutional and leisure facilities within a park or festival-like setting. Already established facilities at The Forks include The Forks Market, The Johnston Terminal, The Manitoba Theatre for Young People, The Manitoba Children's Museum, The Inn at the Forks Hotel and the A-Channel television studio. Another major attraction, for visitors and Winnipegers alike is the extensive Riverwalk that extends from the Legislative grounds to the Alexander Dock.

The last few years have witnessed the completion of several significant development projects in this area, including Canwest Global Park, the new Provencher Bridge and Esplanade Riel, and the new walkway/bicycle path that links The Forks site with Stephen Juba Park. Perhaps, one of the most important recent developments is the construction of Waterfront Drive. This $9 million dollar capital project has established a critical transportation link between The Forks and The Exchange District while also creating significant new mixed-use development opportunities in the area.



The new Esplanade Riel

A substantial parcel within the plan area already has a major development proposal planned for the near future. To be located at the southeast corner of Pioneer Avenue and Waterfront Drive, The Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR) is a joint project sponsored by the Friends of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights Inc., The Forks North Portage Partnership, the Government of Canada, the Province of Manitoba and the City of Winnipeg. This unique museum will attract a global audience, including tourists, scholars, and program participants. Once completed, it is anticipated that over 250,000 visitors a year will visit this major attraction.

2.2 Supporting Documents

In the process of developing this document, the planning team consulted an extensive body of literature. Several of the documents within that library were of importance due to their statutory significance. In developing this framework it was necessary to recognize and be consistent with key policy documents currently in place and utilized by the City as well as relevant documents recently adopted and used by The Forks Renewal Corporation Board. The following is a compendium of documents utilized during the formation of this plan:

- Plan Winnipeg 2020 Vision (*City of Winnipeg, December 2001*);
- CentrePlan Vision and Strategies (*City of Winnipeg, December 1994*);
- CentrePlan Action Plan 1995 – 1996 (*City of Winnipeg*);
- CentrePlan Action Plan 1997 – 1999 *(City of Winnipeg)*;
- CentrePlan Development Framework (*City of Winnipeg, June 1999*);
- The Forks Development Guidelines (*The Forks Renewal Corporation, 2003*);
- The Focus On The Future: Concept and Financial Plan 2001 – 2010 (*The Forks North Portage Partnership, October 2001*);
- The Forks Strategic Parking Management Plan (*ND Lea, May, 2003*);
- The Forks Parking Study (*Stantec, 2002*);
- Feasibility Study of Alternative Transportation Systems to Link the Forks with the Downtown and the Exchange District (*McCormick Rankin Corporation, August 2003*);
- "The Results are In": Summary of the Public Consultation Program (*The Forks North Portage Partnership, April 2001*);
- The Forks North Portage Partnership Public Art Program (*Phoenix 45; Hilderman, Thomas, Frank, Cram Landscape Architecture – Planning, December 2002*); and
- The Forks Heritage Interpretation Plan *(The Forks Renewal Corporation, 1993)*

3.0 VISION AND PRINCIPLES

3.1 Vision for the Future

In establishing a vision for the development framework, the planning team sought to articulate a set of commonly held values and aspirations for the area. In doing so, the Stakeholder Committee found that many of the objectives being identified for the area had already been established by the FRC in their 1996 Business Plan in the form of a

mission statement. The Fork's Mission Statement, which was more recently reflected in their 2001 *Focus On The Future: Concept and Financial Plan 2001-2010*, reads:

"The Forks shall be developed as a "Meeting Place", a special and distinct all season gathering and recreational place at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, through a mixed use approach including recreational, historical and cultural, residential and supportive commercial uses…"

Based upon the relevancy of the goals articulated in The Fork's Mission Statement, it has been determined that it shall also apply as the vision for the Pioneer & Waterfront Development Principles and Guidelines.

3.2 Planning Principles

The major impetus for developing this plan was to create a framework that would guide development so as to establish a high quality of urban design and built form within the area. In doing so, it is hoped that the redevelopment of this site will contribute significantly to the already unique and dynamic atmosphere found within The Forks. Prior, however, to focusing on the more prescriptive policy strategies that would be articulated within the *Public Realm* and *Development Opportunity Site* sections, it was necessary for the planning team to identify the broad, yet fundamental planning principles that could be applied throughout the entire framework area. The key planning principles guiding the Pioneer & Waterfront Development Principles and Guidelines are as follows:

3.2.1. Encourage diversity in terms of land use, activities and built form

Achieving this goal will require balancing the existing uses within the plan area with additional uses that the area lacks. Diversity should encourage retail, commercial, office, residential, entertainment, cultural and both active and passive recreational uses.

3.2.2. Foster physical continuity and connectivity

Physical continuity speaks to the freedom of movement in pedestrian, transit and vehicular environments, but in this area it is most important in the pedestrian circumstance.

3.2.3 Avoid residential exclusivity by encouraging public accessibility

The unrestricted nature of The Forks is paramount – a principle that has been established in the design and public accessibility of open space (i.e. plazas, parks and walkways), as well as within buildings at street level. Continuing this principle is key within the plan area, especially where residential is identified as a preferred land use.

3.2.4 Reinforce the unique character already established within The Forks

Past developments within The Forks have acknowledged the historical and cultural significance of this site. As future development must also provide for long-term enhancement of the area it is important that its unique character be reinforced and not diluted by corporate standard designs and architectural "fads".

3.2.5 Create a hierarchy of transportation that begins with pedestrians

The hierarchy in order of priority is:

- Pedestrians
- Public Transit Systems (i.e., bus, water taxi, etc.)
- Bicycles
- Vehicles

3.2.6 Encourage intense street level activity

The street is a place for public activity, including sidewalk, seating, vendors, buskers and waiting for a bus. Development that accommodates intense street level activity should be encouraged.

3.2.7 Encourage a vibrant cultural atmosphere

Arts, entertainment, and other cultural activities add richness and vitality to our everyday lives. Such activities are encouraged because they promote economic development, tourism, international prestige and an improved quality of life for Winnipeggers.

3.2.8 Recognize meaningful heritage

It is important that meaningful heritage references be incorporated into project design. Equally important, however, is to avoid elements of historical imagery ("Fake Old") within projects, whereby a proposed building actually mimics a heritage building.

3.2.9 Encourage public art

Public art reflects the identity of a city, gives voice to community and builds relationships between diverse groups. Public art within the plan area can create a civic splendor that expresses its history, identity, myth and culture.

3.2.10 Maintain a sense of connection to the natural environment

The prominence of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers are primary attributes. Every effort should be made to sustain, enhance and preserve access to them, both physically and visually.

3.2.11 Encourage the preservation of important view corridors

Within and surrounding the development framework area are several significant views and vistas, including the river, downtown skyline, St. Boniface Basilica and Esplanade Riel. The preservation of important view corridors and vistas is encouraged.

3.2.12 Parking should be viewed as a collective issue

Parking should be developed in a collaborative manner between the FRC, the City of Winnipeg, Canwest Global Park and the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (refer to Section 5.0). In doing so, it is recognized that vehicular parking must be sensitive to pedestrian-friendly and active streetscapes, while discouraging the creation of structures with little pedestrian interest or protection at the sidewalk level.

4.0 PUBLIC REALM

The treatment of the public realm is key to the overall development of the framework area. It provides important linkages between and through the development, while also providing connections beyond the plan area, to the intersection of Portage and Main, St. Boniface and The Exchange District. The scale of blocks, the width of the street, paving materials, street furniture, planting, shelter, lighting and other physical characteristics will ultimately determine the quality of the spaces and how well they collectively create a welcoming, exciting, safe and accessible environment.

The following are guidelines relating to various elements of the public realm, including streets and plazas, signage and public art:

4.1 Streets and Plazas

- Encourage a balance between efficient vehicular movement and safe, comfortable and convenient pedestrian and bicycle circulation on the streets and through private open spaces;
- Streets should have an urban character that emphasizes the comfort and convenience of pedestrians and invites visitors to park and explore The Forks on foot. The pedestrian environment should radiate from transit stops and parking facilities to promote pedestrian activity. The public realm should emphasize elements that are pedestrian-oriented, not auto-dominated;
- Promote active use of streets and public space by providing or encouraging: street furniture; outdoor cafes and dining; venues for festivals and community events. Streets and plazas should provide a public focus and gathering space for the neighbourhood. The integration and accessibility of walking trails should accommodate and encourage healthy lifestyles for walkers, joggers and cyclists;
- Designs should incorporate Universal Design principles;
- Public spaces should be defined with trees to create a buffer from traffic while providing shade and comfortable gathering places;
- Promote a safe evening environment with pedestrian-scale lighting that contributes to an attractive neighbourhood character and image; and
- Encourage developments that build to property line to create a consistent edge or “street wall” that defines public space.

4.2 Signage

- Signage should reflect the surrounding context and enhance the pedestrian environment. Signage should avoid visual clutter and the obstruction of important vistas;
- Signs should clearly and simply identify buildings or services, while efficiently directing pedestrian and vehicle traffic to a destination; and
- The design, location, size and character of signs should:
  a) be visually integrated with the architectural components of the built form;
  b) be compatible, in scale and character, with the buildings and context of the site; and
  c) be located on the building or site to which the sign relates.

4.3 Public Art

- Public art should be a key element in creating a rich pedestrian environment and in defining this area as a destination and gateway to The Forks, The Exchange District, Downtown and St. Boniface; and
- Public art should be encouraged in a number of applications, including:
  a) artwork created for specific locations reflecting a variety of media, scale and style; and
  b) through the collaboration of artists with architects, landscape architects, engineers, urban designers and property owners to integrate art into the urban fabric of the City. Examples may include glass or water features, landscape elements, earthworks, paving, furniture and parts of buildings, and sound and light works.

5.0 PARKING

Parking is one component of a multifaceted transportation strategy for improving access to the plan area for visitors, whether by car, bus, bike, boat or on foot. Parking in The Forks neighbourhood had originally been supplied on unimproved surface lots, at minimal or no cost to visitors. As the site became more popular and development pressure increased, a parking strategy was required to balance the needs of all users. In 2003, consultant ND Lea, developed *The Forks Strategic Parking Management Plan* for The Forks Renewal Corporation which provided a decision-making framework regarding parking issues at The Forks.

ND Lea recommended adopting an 'area-shared parking model', as defined by the Institute of Transportation Engineers. An area-shared model suggests that shared parking will be provided for a number of uses within a reasonable walking distance of between 3 ½ and 5 minutes (during periods of peak usage). An area-shared model is preferred as it:

- Is most closely in alignment with the Mission Statement of The Forks;
- Encourages pedestrian activity;
- Leads to less vehicle congestion and associated environmental issues;
- Minimizes the probability of vehicle/pedestrian conflict;
- Enables parking to be added only when it is required in response to a new demand generator;
- Ensures that the existing parking supply is used effectively and efficiently; and
- Ensures that the asset inventory is sustainable from all perspectives (such as financial and operational).

As well, the area-shared model is compatible with the needs of Canwest Global Park and the proposed Canadian Museum for Human Rights.

In developing *Focus on the Future*, parking and transportation issues were incorporated into the vision of each precinct or Opportunity Site. This vision became the starting point for discussions with neighbouring Pioneer Avenue landowners and stakeholders, and was updated to reflect current opportunities and requirements.

In regard to the Pioneer & Waterfront Development Principles and Guidelines, it is recommended that the area-shared parking model be employed to ensure that adequate parking is provided as development occurs on the site. Further, that parking, both at surface level and within a structure does not detract from vibrant pedestrian and street level activity.

6.0 DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY SITES

The area contained within the plan is large and diverse. The character of the site varies throughout, depending on influences such as the natural environment, existing buildings and adjacent land uses. In order to adequately reflect the size and diversity of the site within the framework plan, five Development Opportunity Sites have been identified. Following a brief outline of the underlying context and character of each of the respective opportunity sites, policy recommendations are then provided regarding preferred land uses, built form and transportation / parking. Illustrative redevelopment concepts are also included to provide visual clues as to how a potential site may redevelop based upon the policy recommendations being proposed.

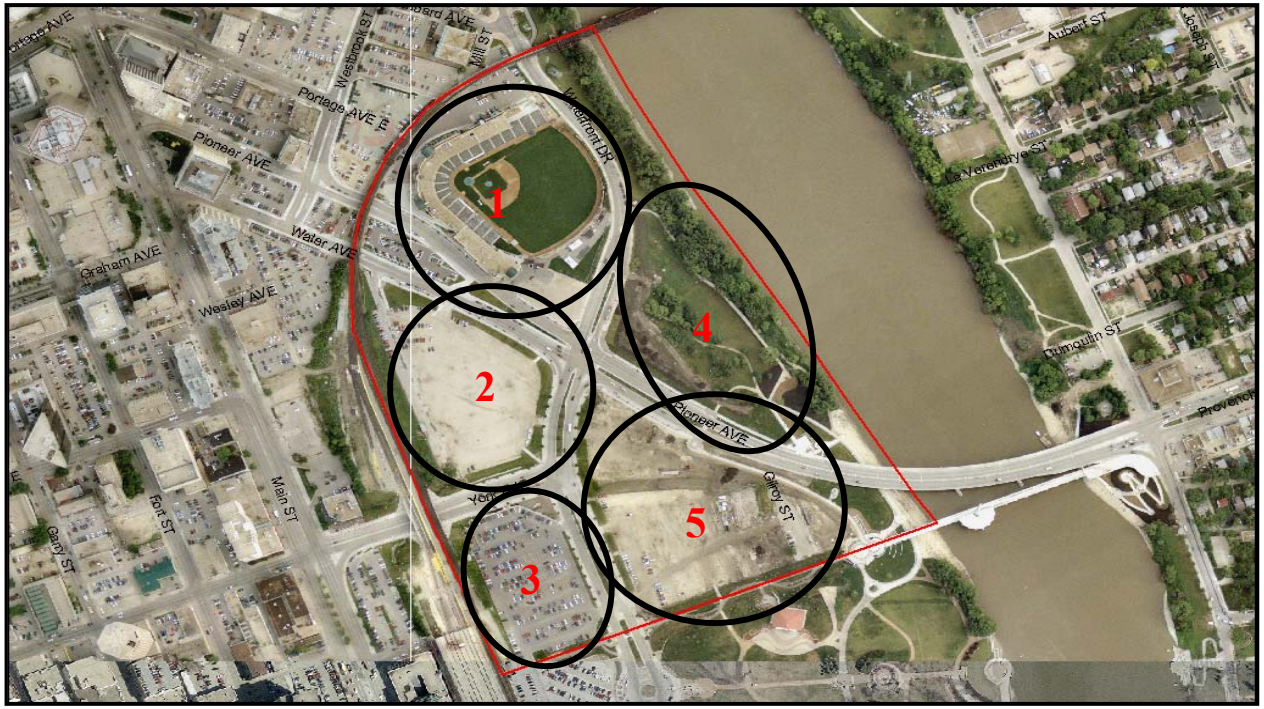


Figure 2:
The Development Principles and Guidelines divide the plan area into five (5) Development Opportunity Sites

6.1 OPPORTUNITY SITE 1 (Canwest Global Park)

6.1.1 Context and Character:

Opportunity Site 1, located in the north quadrant of the plan area, is bound by the CNR High Line, Waterfront Drive and Pioneer and Water Avenues. This site is currently owned by the City of Winnipeg and is encumbered by a long-term lease agreement with Canwest Global Park. Included in this site is the landscaped surface parking island that is located in the block between Pioneer and Water Avenues. The majority of this six-acre site has already been developed as Canwest Global Park and accessory surface parking. The ballpark is an established destination within the plan area. It uses its setting, while drawing from rail traffic on the high line, high visibility along Pioneer Avenue and Waterfront Drive and great vistas of the river and St. Boniface skyline, to create a unique atmosphere for its patrons. As new development occurs around the ballpark it should endeavor to preserve this atmosphere. Directly adjacent to the ballpark, to the north, is a permanent surface parking lot. South of the ballpark, at the northwest intersection of Waterfront Drive and Pioneer Avenue is an approximately 3/4-acre undeveloped parcel.

The potential redevelopment of this undeveloped parcel presents an opportunity to introduce a built form that would define this key intersection and provide a distinctive gateway into the downtown and The Exchange District.

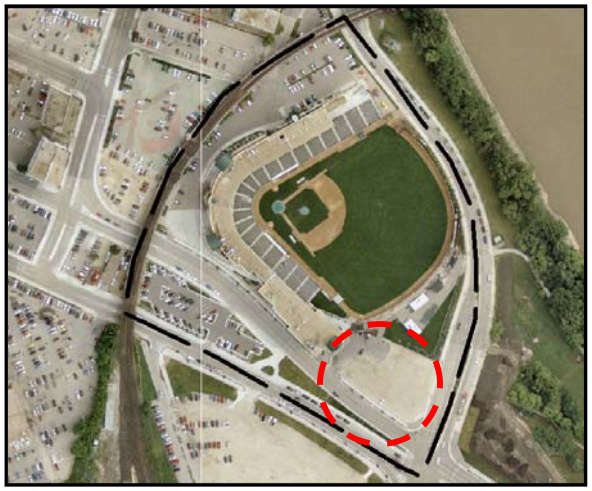


Figure 3:
Opportunity Site 1 presents an opportunity to develop the vacant parcel south of Canwest Global Park

6.1.2 Preferred Land Uses:

- Retail / Services
- Restaurant
- Office
- Recreational
- Cultural

6.1.3 Built Form:

- Building height(s) should be compatible with those of surrounding buildings, including Canwest Global Park, and buildings within The Forks and The Exchange District;
- Building height, location and massing should respect views and vistas from the viewpoint of Canwest Global Park, when looking towards the east and south;
- A substantial building mass should be encouraged on the vacant parcel with minimal setbacks from Waterfront Drive and Pioneer Avenue to define built edge;

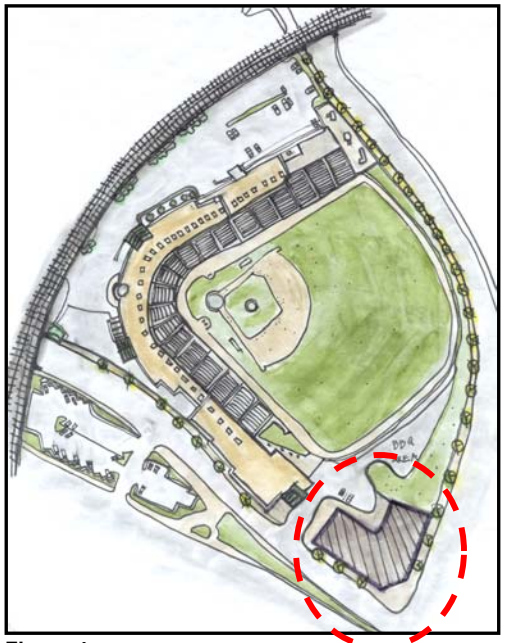


Figure 4:
Potential development concept for Opportunity Site 1

- Surface parking should be located behind the building(s), adjacent to the ballpark. Parking should be integrated with landscape features and walkways that will enhance the pedestrian experience and safety within the parking lot;
- Building architecture, form and siting should establish this site as a prominent gateway into the downtown to the west and The Exchange District to the north;
- Architecture of the highest quality and standard should encourage the integration of design detail and massing interest, combined with a strong orientation to the Pioneer Avenue/Waterfront Drive intersection;
- Commercial related uses such as retail and restaurant should be encouraged on the ground floor with office functions located above;
- Pedestrian activity and flow should principally occur on the wide sidewalks fronting Pioneer Avenue and Waterfront Drive;
- The placement and installation of Public Art between the building and street, should reinforce the site's significance as an entry portal to the downtown; and
- Signage should be incorporated on the site in a manner that respects (i.e. location, height, massing, materials and design quality) the architectural integrity of the surrounding built form and site context. In addition, the thoughtful integration of creative signage forms on or directly adjacent to existing or proposed buildings is also encouraged.



A defined built edge encourages street level activity and the creation of a gateway



6.1.4 Transportation / Parking:

- Vehicular access to the site may occur from either Waterfront Drive or Pioneer Avenue, however, a sufficient distance from the intersection must be maintained;
- Pedestrian circulation should enhance linkages between the site and The Forks, The Exchange District, and Portage and Main;
- A functional design study is currently being undertaken for the Eastern Transit Corridor which is proposed to extend along the west and north sides of the CNR High Line; and
- Currently, surface parking is provided for the ballpark on an improved lot to the north, an improved lot in the block between Pioneer and Water Avenues, and an unimproved lot located on Opportunity Site 2, south of Water Avenue. Eventually, when Opportunity Site 2 develops, shared parking will likely occur within a multi-level structure adjacent to the CNR High Line.

6.2 OPPORTUNITY SITE 2 (North of York Street – Adjacent to High Line)

6.2.1 Context and Character:

Opportunity Site 2, located north of York Avenue and east of the CNR High Line is approximately 5-acres in area. The site is owned by the City of Winnipeg and is currently under a short-term lease agreement with Canwest Global Park. The site is primarily being used as an unimproved surface parking lot for people attending baseball games at Canwest Global Park. The site is significant in that it presents an opportunity to introduce uses that will provide a transition between the dense urban qualities of the downtown area to the west and the more open, campus-like setting of The Forks.

Buildings adjacent to the CNR High Line should take into account potential noise and vibration issues when considering land use and building construction issues.



Figure 5:
Opportunity Site 2 will provide a transition between downtown area to the west and The Forks

6.2.2 Preferred Land Uses:

- Retail / Services
- Restaurant
- Office
- Residential
- Recreational
- Cultural
- Institutional
- Parking Structures
- Public Open Space

6.2.3 Built Form:

- Pedestrian-scale building(s) shall be densely clustered around an outdoor plaza space. The physical form created by this integration of buildings and structures will be that of a vibrant, pedestrian oriented mixed-use urban village;
- Building mass/bulk should appear substantial when viewed from the street and outdoor plaza area, however, building elevations should be broken-up to give the appearance of several different buildings;
- Buildings fronting Waterfront Drive and York Avenue should have a dual orientation – they should present a strong and active face on the street as well as having a strong inward orientation to the outdoor plaza space;
- The ground floor of the buildings should be predominantly commercial (i.e. retail, services and restaurant), with office functions located on the upper storeys;



Figure 6:
Potential development scenario for Opportunity Development Site 2

- A multi-level parking structure should be located internal to the development, directly adjacent to the CNR High Line;
- The multi-level parking structure shall act as a buffer to the CNR High Line, while also complementing the architecture of the surrounding buildings;
- The front portion of the ground floor of the parking structure should consist of active commercial uses;
- Within the site, the outdoor retail plaza space should function to circulate pedestrian traffic both through and around the perimeter of the site;
- Building forms, architectural detail and landscape elements should provide shelter for all-season activities and pedestrian travel;
- Public realm activity along the street should also be encouraged and complement the village concept;
- Pedestrian linkages from the site to the Portage and Main intersection and York Avenue will be encouraged;
- Individual building projects should take into consideration future development proposals so as to encourage a fine-grained urban built form. A series of detached small-scale projects would detract from the urban pedestrian experience; and
- Signage should be integrated on the site in a manner that respects the architectural integrity of the surrounding built form and site context.



Building architecture, form and siting will create a comfortable, pedestrian-scaled environment



6.2.4 Transportation / Parking:

- Vehicular access to the site should be encouraged off of Water Avenue or Waterfront Drive, while maintaining a sufficient distance from intersections;
- The development of a pedestrian connection from this site to the Portage and Main intersection as well as across York Avenue to the site to the south (Opportunity Site 3) should be encouraged; and
- The site currently functions as an unimproved surface parking lot, primarily serving patrons of Canwest Global Park. Due to its central location in the plan area, the site presents a prime opportunity to provide area shared parking. An above or below-ground structure would provide the most efficient parking arrangement while at the same time providing the greatest opportunity to enhance the pedestrian environment. An above ground structure should be situated in close proximity to the High line in order to encourage more active uses at grade along Waterfront Drive. Vehicular access to the structure would likely occur from Water Avenue. A below grade structure could be located adjacent to Waterfront Drive with access at Water Avenue or Waterfront Drive with little impact on the pedestrian environment.

6.3 OPPORTUNITY SITE 3 (South of York Avenue – Adjacent to High Line)

6.3.1 Context and Character:

Located to the south of York Avenue and east of the CNR High Line is Opportunity Site 3. This 3-acre site currently functions as an improved surface parking lot for customers of The Forks as well as providing day parking for office workers within the downtown. A landscaped pathway extends almost the entire length of the site's southern boundary, between Union Station and the Esplanade Riel. A key section of this important pedestrian connection has yet to be completed east of Union Station.

This site offers an opportunity to establish development that will ensure a unique and comfortable entrance for visitors, by connecting The Forks with Broadway and Main Street. Another key element to this site's development is the creation of an active and pleasant pedestrian environment along Waterfront Drive.



Figure 7:
Opportunity Site 3 will establish a connection between Main Street, Broadway Avenue and The Forks

6.3.2 Preferred Land Uses:

- Retail / Services
- Restaurant
- Light Manufacturing
- Office
- Recreational
- Cultural
- Institutional
- Parking Structure
- Public Open Space

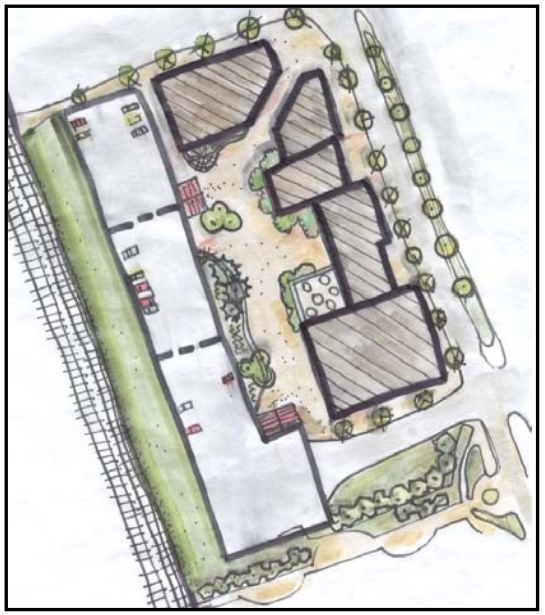


Figure 8:
Potential development scenario for Opportunity Site No. 3

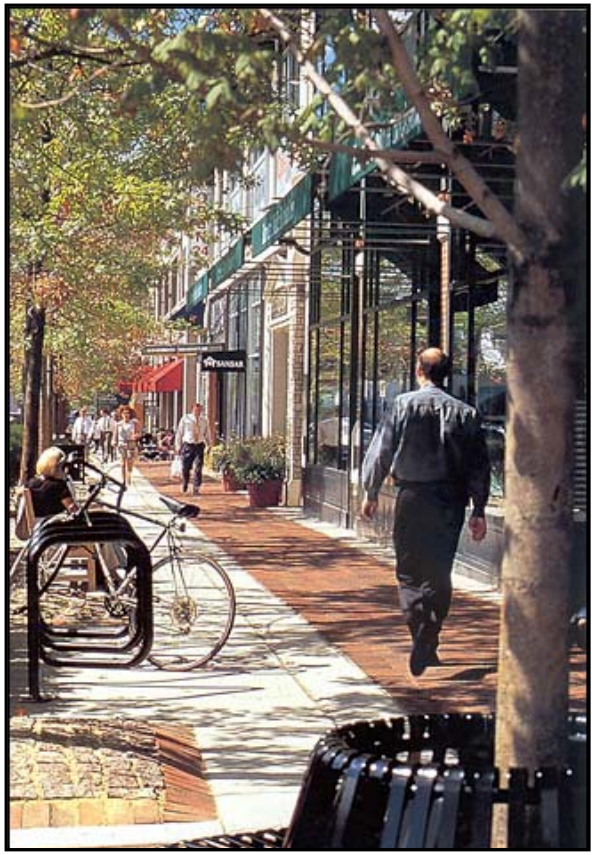
6.3.3 Built Form:

- Building heights should be compatible with the height of surrounding buildings and structures, including Union Station, the CNR High Line and other existing buildings within The Forks;
- Substantial site coverage should be encouraged with minimal building setback from Waterfront Drive and York Avenue;
- Buildings fronting Waterfront Drive, York Avenue and the Union Station / Esplanade Riel pedestrian connection should create an active and pleasant pedestrian environment;

- The ground floor of buildings should be predominantly commercial and light manufacturing, with office functions located on the upper storeys;
- If required, a multi-level parking structure should be located directly adjacent to the CNR High Line;
- The development of a pedestrian connection through the site, linking Union Station, Festival Park and the Canadian Museum for Human Rights will be encouraged;
- Building form, architectural details and landscape elements should provide shelter for all-season activities and pedestrian travel;
- Individual buildings should be constructed in a manner that is considerate of future development opportunities; and
- Signage should be integrated on the site in a manner that respects the architectural integrity of the surrounding built form and site context.

6.3.4 Transportation / Parking:

- Vehicular access to the site should occur off of Waterfront Drive;
- Completion of the landscaped pathway that links Union Station, Festival Park and The Forks National Historic Site should be encouraged; and
- Over the longer term, parking should be provided in a multi-level structure integrated with the new development. A recessed structure would meet the business needs of the site tenants while improving the pedestrian environment along Waterfront Drive. The structure and associated development should be designed to protect existing view corridors such as Union Station and the High Line itself.



Building architecture, form and siting will create a comfortable, pedestrian-scaled environment

6.4 OPPORTUNITY SITE 4 (North of Pioneer Avenue – Adjacent to Red River)

6.4.1 Context and Character:

At approximately 2.5-acres, Opportunity Site No. 4 is situated along the Red River, across from Canwest Global Park on Waterfront Drive. Important to the development of this site will be the incorporation of the pedestrian and cycling network that extends south from The Forks, under the Provencher Bridge and north through Stephen Juba Park. Of equal significance will be the thoughtful integration of development while maintaining the public nature of the river walk and surrounding park and river environment.



Figure 9:
Opportunity Site 4 will thoughtfully integrate development while respecting the public realm and natural environment

6.4.2 Preferred Land Uses:

- Residential
- Retail / Services
- Restaurant
- Cultural
- Recreational
- Institutional
- Public Open Space

6.4.3 Built Form:

- Medium density townhomes and low-level condo/apartments units should be the predominant use on this site;
- Residential buildings should be clustered in a park-like setting that is open, inviting and accessible to the public;
- High quality landscaping and well defined walkways should both frame and unify the various architectural, landscape and natural elements within the site;
- Taller mixed-use buildings should be situated closer to the street, with building heights decreasing as they approach the river;
- Building form should not be dense or fine-grained, but rather buildings will be spatially separated so as to maintain and enhance prominent views and pedestrian linkages to the river;
- The future development of this site will involve overcoming challenges associated with flood protection and riverbank stability. Development proponents should be aware of these issues, including Flood Protection Standards;
- On-site parking should be enclosed within buildings or, if feasible, below grade;



Figure 10:
Potential development scenario for Opportunity Site 4

- The integration of public art within the site should be encouraged so as to reinforce the concept of public realm;
- The establishment of compatible commercial uses should be encouraged; and
- Compatible recreational, residential and commercial uses would complement the new commercial/residential developments occurring to the north along Waterfront Drive.

6.4.4 Transportation / Parking:

- Vehicular access to the site should occur off of Waterfront Drive;
- Pedestrian walkways should be integrated with the Riverwalk and Stephen Juba Park; and
- Currently, this site is vacant and no parking is provided. Due to the limited size of the site, future parking will have to be carefully integrated into any development in order to ensure public access to the waterfront and high-quality pedestrian environment. Parking should be provided within enclosed buildings, or if feasible, below-grade.



Mixed-use commercial/residential uses would provide definition along the street, while providing a transition to lower density residential, situated closer to the river





6.5 OPPORTUNITY SITE 5 (East of Waterfront Drive and South of Pioneer Ave.)

6.5.1 Context and Character:

At approximately 7.7-acres, it is anticipated that a major attraction will establish the form, function and character of this site. While the opportunity for distinctive world-class architecture exists, equally important will be the attention given to the treatment of the public realm surrounding the built form. Here, the focus will be on the creation of comfortable and easy pedestrian movement, high quality landscape elements and the thoughtful integration of meaningful public art.



Figure 11:
Opportunity Site 5 is the proposed site for The Canadian Museum for Human Rights

6.5.2 Preferred Land Uses:

- Institutional
- Cultural
- Recreational
- Restaurant
- Retail / Services
- Office
- Public Open Space

6.5.3 Built Form:

- A major attraction (i.e., Canadian Museum for Human Rights) shall define the character of this site;
- Distinctive, world-class architecture of the highest quality will incorporate prominent skyline features and should be a model for sustainable design;
- Public art should be installed in prominent exterior locations, being both highly visible and accessible from the public realm;
- Open space features on this site shall be prominent. These features should be accessible and highly visible.
- Comfortable and easy pedestrian movement should occur throughout the site, with identifiable connections to Festival Park to the south and the Esplanade Riel to the east; and
- Signage should be integrated on the site in a manner that respects the architectural integrity of the surrounding built form and site context.



Figure 12:
Potential development scenario for Opportunity Site 5

6.5.4 Transportation / Parking:

- Future vehicular access to the site should occur off of Waterfront Drive and should be co-ordinated with the servicing and delivery requirements of Parks Canada and Festival Park;
- A major transit stop or bus pull-out should occur off of Waterfront Drive;
- Pedestrian connections should occur between the site and the existing internal walkway system; and
- This site currently provides overflow parking for visitors to The Forks as well as patrons visiting Canwest Global Park. The lot is currently unimproved. The Canadian Museum for Human Rights is expected to use most, if not all, of the available land for building. Should parking ultimately be located within this site, it must be located below ground or within the building structure. It is further noted, that parking on this site could also be utilized by patrons of the Esplanade Riel facility.



A major attraction and signature architecture will define the site's built typology

