

Art, Culture, and Urban Revitalization:

A Case Study of *The Edge Artist Village*

By

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Abstract

This research explores culture-led regeneration; specifically, *how* and *why* small, community-based culture-led regeneration projects potentially affect their respective communities. Methodology is founded on an in-depth case study of The Edge Artist Village in Winnipeg, supported by a literature review, quantitative research examining property values, and archival research. The practicum shows that The Edge Artist Village has had a tremendous impact on the community of North Main Street. While various stakeholders interpreted The Edge's impact in different ways, perceptions of safety in the community have improved, and long vacant buildings in the neighbourhood are finding new tenants. This study makes recommendations as to how planners can potentially play a role in encouraging culture-led regeneration projects such as The Edge Artist Village, and suggests ways in which private developers and municipal government can collaborate more effectively to support their communities.

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

This research explores culture-led regeneration; specifically, *how* and *why* small, community-based culture-led regeneration projects potentially affect their respective communities and neighborhoods. This is answered through a comprehensive literature review as well as an in-depth case study of The Edge Artist Village, in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The findings from this study are then applied to current planning thought regarding the efficacy of culture-led regeneration strategies for addressing urban decline. The findings are also explored for their relevance to cultural policy and planning decisions within the Winnipeg and the larger Canadian context, providing recommendations for the potential role planning professionals can play in culture-led regeneration projects.

The Edge Artist Village was developed as a result of the leadership and investment of one individual, making it a unique case study for this research. The project began with The Edge Gallery, a community art space and live/work apartments located at 611 Main Street, in Winnipeg's North Main Street community. According to the developer, "The Edge Artist Village" represents the entire block, which now includes The Red Road Lodge (a former single-room occupancy hotel now used for transitional housing), The Tallest Poppy restaurant, and MAWA (Mentoring Artists for Women's Art).

Increasingly, urban policy has looked to culture and the arts to drive urban regeneration (Garcia, 2004; Evans and Shaw, 2006). For the purposes of this study, "culture-led regeneration" is defined as "the use of arts and culture as a means of

bringing about the regeneration of declining urban areas” (McCarthy, 1998, p. 271).

While the focus on culture’s role in urban regeneration in the planning field has grown significantly in the last two decades, there appears to be a lack of solid evidence to prove its efficacy. As a result, policy makers are “unable to draw an evidence base upon which to make key decisions in the application of culture-led regeneration strategies” (Bailey, Miles, and Stark, 2004, p. 47).

In addition to the methodological difficulties in studying culture-led regeneration, past research has focused mainly on larger, “flagship” culture-based projects, such as museums, symphony orchestras, and large art galleries (Markuson and Schrock, 2006; Miles, 2005). There is a need for further research into smaller, community-based projects, such as The Edge Artist Village.

1.2 Research Questions

Given the apparent lack of evidence in the academic literature concerning the efficacy of culture-led regeneration strategies, this research hopes to answer:

- 1) What effects (social, economic, and quality of life) do North American culture-led regeneration projects similar to The Edge Artist Village have on their surrounding communities?*

The questions that will be addressed by the in-depth case study are:

- 2) What effect has The Edge Artist Village had on the surrounding community of North Main Street in Winnipeg?*
- 3) What potential roles can culture-led regeneration projects such as The Edge play in the revitalization and cultural health of the city?*
- 4) How can planners and planning policy shape and support these types of initiatives in Winnipeg (i.e. small-scale, independent culture-led regeneration projects)?*

1.3 Aims and Objectives

This research aims to understand the growing movement of arts-led regeneration – the practice of showing, teaching, sharing, and engaging in community-based art as a tool to address urban decline. Why and how is this practice occurring, specifically in Winnipeg, and why is it important? What is the role of the city planner in arts-led regeneration, and arts-led regeneration projects?

To answer these questions, this study explores how one culture-led regeneration project, The Edge Artist Village in Winnipeg, has affected its surrounding community. As the urban population grows, issues of poverty, health, safety, and the dwindling supply of available resources are growing in urgency. The downtown areas of many North American cities are in decline. In a local context, Winnipeg's own inner city is challenged by an aging housing stock, low socioeconomic conditions, and high crime rates (Kuly, Stewart, and Dudley, 2005). Focusing on an arts organization located within Winnipeg's inner city offers a way for understanding how art and culture are being used as a tool to reverse these negative trends and move towards a healthier city for all residents.

Lessons learned from this research will have the potential to inform models of government cooperation and planning policy relating to community-based culture-led regeneration strategies in Winnipeg and, more broadly, in Canada, and to formalize the potential structure and role of planning in this area.

1.4 Biases, Assumptions and Limitations

There are several biases, assumptions and limitations attached to this research.

They are as follows:

Biases

1. Because the researcher lives in Winnipeg and is somewhat familiar with the community where the case study is located, the study is likely affected by certain researcher bias. My involvement in City Planning education and my general interest in arts-led regeneration practices have exposed me to substantial anecdotal confirmation that The Edge Artist Village has affected the North Main Street community, and that the effects have generally been positive. This research seeks to identify, quantify, qualify, and otherwise describe these effects.

Assumptions

1. This research assumes that a case study of The Edge Artist Village has the potential to inform the broader topic of arts-led regeneration. Because all community-based arts organizations differ in terms of programming, client group, mission, budget, and medium, results are not likely to be easily generalized to other organizations in the city, province, or county.
2. Because the outcomes of the research are intended to be used to inform planning practice and the role of planners in arts-led regeneration strategies, there is an assumption that planners, and cities, are interested and would consider playing a role in this type of development.

Limitations

1. The greatest limitation associated with this case study relates to the fact that there has been a great deal of development in the North Main Street community in the last few years. It is extremely difficult to identify the effects of one organization when several other initiatives and projects have been at play during the same time frame. To address this, interviews will focus on *perceptions* of change, and differences noticed in the community since The Edge Artist Village was established.
2. The arts community in Winnipeg tends to be a small and close-knit group. Individuals working in the arts community often know one another, and are likely have had personal or professional relationships in the past. It can be difficult to maintain a subject's anonymity in such conditions. In terms of The Edge Artist Village specifically, the organization is small, there are not many staff members, and most community members are aware of who works where and what role they play within an organization. A similar challenge exists with discussing the development and funding of The Edge Artist Village, as the project has been fairly well covered in the local media, and many people within Winnipeg are familiar with the players involved.
3. One limitation to the research that was not anticipated was the fact that The Edge Artist Village is a relatively new initiative. The project is still somewhat "under development" in that it is still developing programming and seeking permanent funding. Some members of the community were not as familiar with the project now as they might be in five or ten years.

4. Time and scope are a final limitation to the research. Time permitted the completion of eleven interviews. While this allowed a good sample of individuals involved in the community in various ways, more interviews would have provided a wider sample of opinions and experiences. Similarly, while several precedents for art organizations in other cities were explored, limitations on time and funding did not permit in-depth study of these projects.

1.5 Outline of Document

The first chapter of this thesis includes an introduction to the research topic and the scope of the project. A brief background of culture-led regeneration is provided, followed by the research questions. The purpose and scope of the project is explained, as well as any assumptions and limitations included in the study.

The second chapter outlines the research methods used in the study. Justification for choosing the methods in question is provided, and the ethics process for the project is also outlined. Methods explained in detail include a literature review of all research relevant to arts-led regeneration, a review of the case study documentation, semi-structured interviews, quantitative research, and archival research.

Chapter three offers an in-depth description of The Edge Artist Village. This chapter provides historical background for the case study, current funding and programming/operational structures, as well as background information about the Exchange District, the North Main Street community, and the South Point Douglas neighbourhood.

The fourth chapter features a literature review on the topic of culture-led regeneration, including the history of culture-led regeneration and cultural planning, definitions and understandings of culture, the economic benefits of culture-led regeneration, the challenges of measuring culture-led regeneration, the role of flagship cultural projects, cultural clustering, gentrification, art and social inclusion, and the intrinsic versus instrumental value of art and culture. In addition, three precedents for organizations involved in arts-led regeneration are explored to provide a larger context for The Edge Artist Village initiative: Artscape (Toronto, Ontario), the Youngstown Cultural Arts Center (Seattle, Washington), and Project Row Houses (Houston, Texas).

Chapter five includes an explanation of the process used for coding interviews, as well as for reporting results. The interview results are grouped according to seven major themes that emerged during the coding process. Results are reported using a fictionalized narrative, where composite characters are created to convey the “story” of the community and the case study. Findings from the quantitative and archival research are also included.

The sixth and final chapter provides an overview of the conclusions reached from each of the research methods, as well as a synthesis of all conclusions, and the implications these have for planning practice. Finally, recommendations and directions for further study are provided.

CHAPTER 2: Research Methods

It can be difficult to extricate the effects of one particular organization on a community when several initiatives are underway simultaneously within the neighbourhood. Since funding for The Edge Artist Village was announced in 2005,

several other businesses, organizations, and individuals have invested in the North Main Street strip, on many different scales. Perhaps most notably, in March of 2008, the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority announced it would be relocating to the neighbourhood, constructing an 80,000-square-foot building at the northwest corner of Main Street and Logan Avenue. Other large-scale projects include the re-development of the former Union Bank Tower on the corner of Main Street and William Avenue as the future home of Red River College's culinary arts program. Other organizations, such as The Graffiti Gallery at 109 Higgins Avenue, have been in operation in the area since the 1990s.

To address this issue, the research does not attempt to attribute specific changes in the community to The Edge Artist Village. Instead, the study investigates what quantitative and qualitative changes have occurred in the community since The Edge Artist Village opened. As well, *perceptions* of change in the community are explored. This information is then related back to the planning literature on the recorded results of culture-led regeneration projects. The four methods used to complete this study included a literature review, case study documentation, quantitative research involving changes in property values for the community in question, and a section exploring archival photographs for The Edge Artist Village and the North Main Street community.

2.1 Literature Review

The literature review serves two purposes. First, it provides an overview of research to date on the topic of arts-led regeneration and related topics. The review includes research from several disciplines, including city planning, economics, and the

visual arts. This serves to provide context for the study, as well as to provide the reader with the necessary background to interpret the research to follow. It also establishes that there is a significant gap in the literature concerning the efficacy of culture-led regeneration strategies, how to measure such efficacy, and the role of smaller, community-led projects in culture-led regeneration.

Secondly, the literature review is used to answer the first research question of the study, which is: *What effects (social, economic, and quality of life) do culture-led regeneration projects similar to The Edge Artist Village have on their surrounding communities?*

2.2 Case Study Documentation

“Detailed case studies are useful as windows onto local governance, helping to illuminate deeper aspects of local politics and power structures” (Bassett et al., 2002, p. 1773).

Case study methodology can be defined as “the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances” (Strom, quoted in Simons, 2009, p. 19). This type of research values the experiences of the individual within a larger context, and is characterized by its “singularity”, and not by whether the methods used are qualitative or quantitative (Simons, 2009, p. 20). Case studies have several strengths as a research methodology. They are useful in documenting contesting viewpoints and multiple perspectives on an issue. They are also effective in documenting the process of change, by “describing, documenting and interpreting events as they unfold in the ‘real life’ setting” (p. 23). Case studies have weaknesses as well. Most notably, that the subjectivity of the researcher is

threatened by his or her direct involvement, and that inferences drawn from a single case may not be valid.

Simons (2009) explains that there are three types of case study: *intrinsic*, *instrumental*, and *collective*. An intrinsic case study is chosen for intrinsic interest in that particular case. *Instrumental* case studies are when a specific case is chosen in order to gain understanding of something else, and *collective* case studies describe the study of several cases in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of an issue (p. 21). A case study of The Edge Artist Village is an *instrumental* case study. The Edge Artist Village has been chosen as an example of arts-led regeneration, and by examining The Edge, this study hopes to gain an understanding of how community-based arts-led regeneration projects can address urban decline.

When completing a case study, the researcher may choose to document the case from any number of points of view. These ‘roles’ can include historian, impartial observer, collaborator, or teller of stories, and different roles may be used at different stages of the research (Simons, 2009). This study was carried out largely from the point of view of an impartial observer, though the role of historian was also adopted to place the case of The Edge Artist Village in the larger context of arts-led regeneration research.

Yin (2003) states, “in general, case studies are the preferred strategy when ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context” (p. 1). This research attempts to determine to what degree The Edge Artist Village is impacting the community in which it exists. The methods of analysis used in the case study of The Edge Artist Village are largely qualitative in nature. This research employed a “deep vs.

broad” methodology (Gerring, 2007, p. 48) to examine The Edge Artist Village in-depth. While other examples of culture-led regeneration projects (both Canadian and international) are discussed, the main focus of this research is on the case of The Edge, and its surrounding neighbourhood.

The Edge was initiated as part of a directed strategy to address urban decline; the mission is explicit in its focus on the economic and social benefits of arts and culture, as well as the increase in community security and stability due to the presence of full-time residents in the eight live/work spaces (The Edge, 2009). Because of this, The Edge is a particularly relevant case study for a discussion of culture-led regeneration.

As described by Hamel (1993), the case study is a particularly relevant method when considering the three words characterizing any qualitative method “describing, understanding, and explaining”. Hamel continues to note that the case study is a “superior method of description”, and that it ensures the ability of lessons learned to be transformed from local to global (p. 39).

Lessons learned from this case study have been applied to assess the validity of claims that culture-led regeneration has an impact on its community, and is useful as a strategy for urban regeneration.

2.3 Semi-structured Interviews

Data was collected in the form of individual, semi-structured, qualitative interviews, which were approximately forty-five minutes in length. Eleven interviews were completed in total, with members of three distinct groups: staff members and residents of The Edge Artist Village, those who work and/or live in the community

surrounding The Edge Artist Village, and municipal and provincial government employees playing a role in the development or having knowledge of The Edge Artist Village project. The interviews followed a list of pre-determined topics, but phrasing remained open, and the order of topics presented for discussion was generally fluid (Fielding and Thomas, 2001). The flexibility of this type of interview made it particularly suitable for this research project. The objective of the semi-structured interview has been described as “to elicit rich, detailed materials that can be used in qualitative analysis. Its object is to find out what kinds of things are happening rather than to determine the frequency of predetermined kinds of things that the research already believes can happen” (Lofland, 1971, cited in Fielding and Thomas, 2001, p. 125).

Subject matter for discussion during interviews was guided by an interview topic guide, or agenda. The interview topic guide allowed the interview to be flexible, while still providing consistency across interview sessions. Three separate agendas were followed; one for staff members of The Edge and other businesses or organizations in the 611 block of Main Street, including MAWA and The Red Road Lodge (see appendix A), a second for community residents and those not directly associated with The Edge Artist Village (see appendix B), and a third for city and provincial government employees who played a role in the development or have knowledge of The Edge Artist Village project (see appendix C).

Interviews were recorded for later transcription and analysis, and were carried out in a “private, neutral, and distraction-free location to increase the comfort of the interviewee and the likelihood of attaining high-quality information” (Hancock and Algozzine, 2006, p. 40).

2.4 Quantitative Research

A quantitative component to the research was also completed. This included the analysis of assessed property values of buildings in the neighborhood of North Main Street to determine what, if any, changes in these indicators have occurred since the establishment of The Edge in 2005, and how these changes compare to those occurring in the rest of the city. The City of Winnipeg completed its most recent assessment based on 2008 market values. These numbers were compared with the previous assessment, based on 2003 market values. The analysis included all buildings, 20 addresses total, located on north Main Street between Alexander Avenue and Higgins Avenue.

2.5 Archival Research

Archival research was completed to identify media articles, historical photographs, and other items pertaining to the North Main Street community and The Edge Artist Village project in particular. Additionally, a series of photographs were taken to document the North Main Street community as it looks currently, and to provide a comparison with historical photographs of the same area. Media items, including press releases and newspaper articles, are incorporated into the research in either the case study section (chapter 3), or the literature review (chapter 4) and are not presented explicitly in the results section (chapter 5).

2.6 Ethics

Interviews were completed only with voluntary, adult subjects, and participation occurred only after informed consent had been obtained (see Appendix D for a copy of

the consent form). Potential interview subjects were identified with help from staff at The Edge, as well as through contacting the organization or individual directly. As the North Main Street community is fairly small and interconnected, snowball sampling was also relied upon. Snowball sampling is a method of identifying subjects who belong to the same network (Neuman, 2000). Neuman describes snowball sampling as particularly useful when “the crucial feature is that each person or unit is connected with another through a direct or indirect linkage” (p. 199). Confidentiality and anonymity was maintained as indicated on the consent form. Subject names were removed from interview transcriptions, as well as any details that would make identifying the subject a possibility. Interviews were labeled generically so as not to reveal location, time, or with whom the interview was completed. All audio files and any other material collected during the research process will be destroyed at study’s end.

Because of the small size and unique nature of many businesses in the North Main Street community, it may be possible to identify individuals, despite the fact their names have not been used. To address this risk, subjects were informed that their participation in the project might be identifiable to some readers who are familiar with The Edge Artist Village. Additionally, the use of fictionalized narrative to report the interview results further protected subject anonymity. Fictionalized narrative is the use of composite characters derived from interview results to convey the “story” of a case study (Elliott, 2005; Dawson, 2007).

There were no perceivable risks or harm to the research subjects. The owner and director of The Edge provided a letter noting his consent to use The Edge as a case study, and to use the name of the organization in the dissemination of the research.

CHAPTER 3: Case Study

Winnipeg's Edge Artist Village is located on the 600 block of Main Street, north of Portage Avenue, and was the first new organization of several which re-located or opened on that particular block during the period 2004 to 2008. The surrounding inner-city neighborhood of North Main Street has experienced significant urban decline over the past several decades, with many commercial spaces closing and the area increasingly becoming characterized by issues of homelessness and substance abuse (Shultz and Walls, 2007).

The Edge is positioned on the boundaries of several downtown districts. The block sits just outside the southwestern boundary of the South Point Douglas neighbourhood, and several blocks northeast of the Exchange District National Historic Site. Also surrounding The Edge is Chinatown to the east, and the Cultural Precinct directly to the south (see Figure 1). The Edge is located such that it does not belong directly to any of the precincts noted above. In a pre-plan assessment of Downtown North completed by the City of Winnipeg in 2008, the area north-east of the Exchange District National Historic Site is described as having a character that is largely undefined (UrbanEdge Consulting Inc., 2008). The area is often included as part of the Cultural Precinct, though it is ultimately located within several areas with overlapping boundaries.

The Downtown North Pre-Plan Assessment recommended that future planning for the area be pursued “through a series of planning initiatives rather than through a single comprehensive planning process” (UrbanEdge Consulting Inc., 2008, p. 6). However, it was also suggested that a single framework be created for the northern half of downtown to provide general guidelines for the area's future development.

The City of Winnipeg began preparing a comprehensive secondary plan for the South Point Douglas neighbourhood in 2008. The 611 block of Main Street falls just inside the boundaries for the plan, and because of this, stakeholders from The Edge, MAWA, and The Tallest Poppy have been included in the planning process.

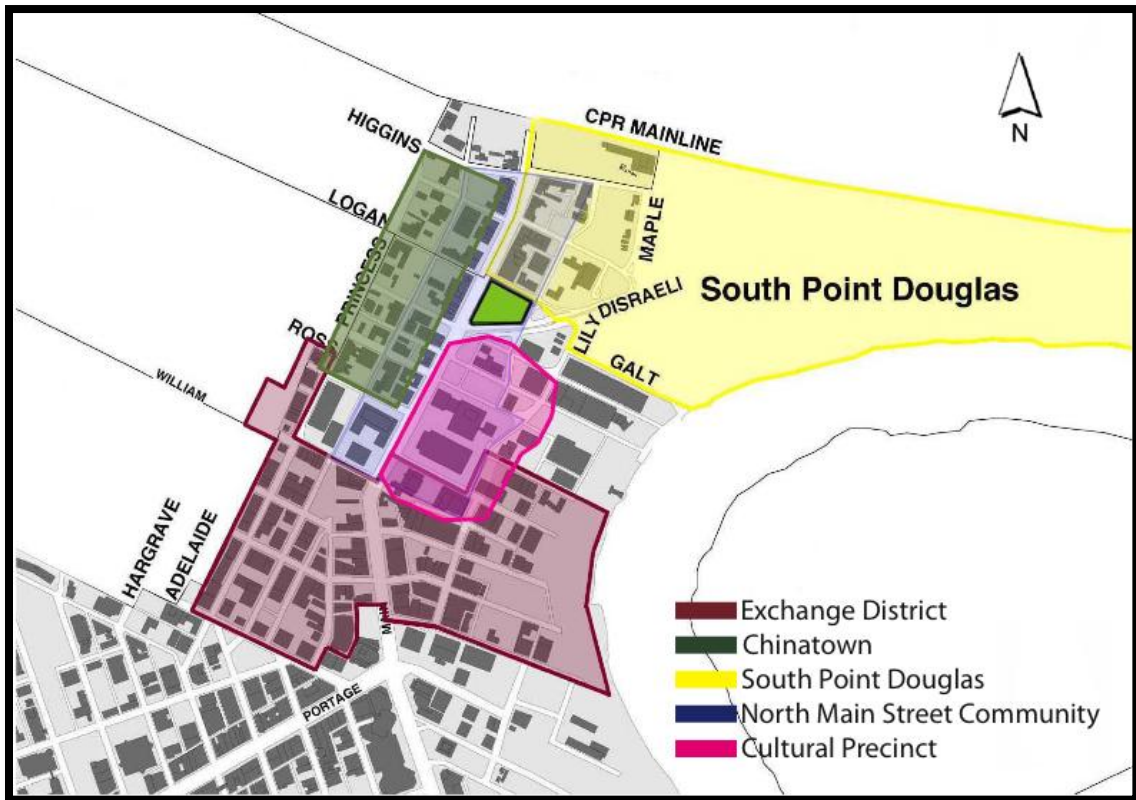


Figure 1. The Edge Artist Village (shown in green) within five downtown Winnipeg districts. (Map adapted from CentrePlan-Action Plan 1995-1996, 1996).

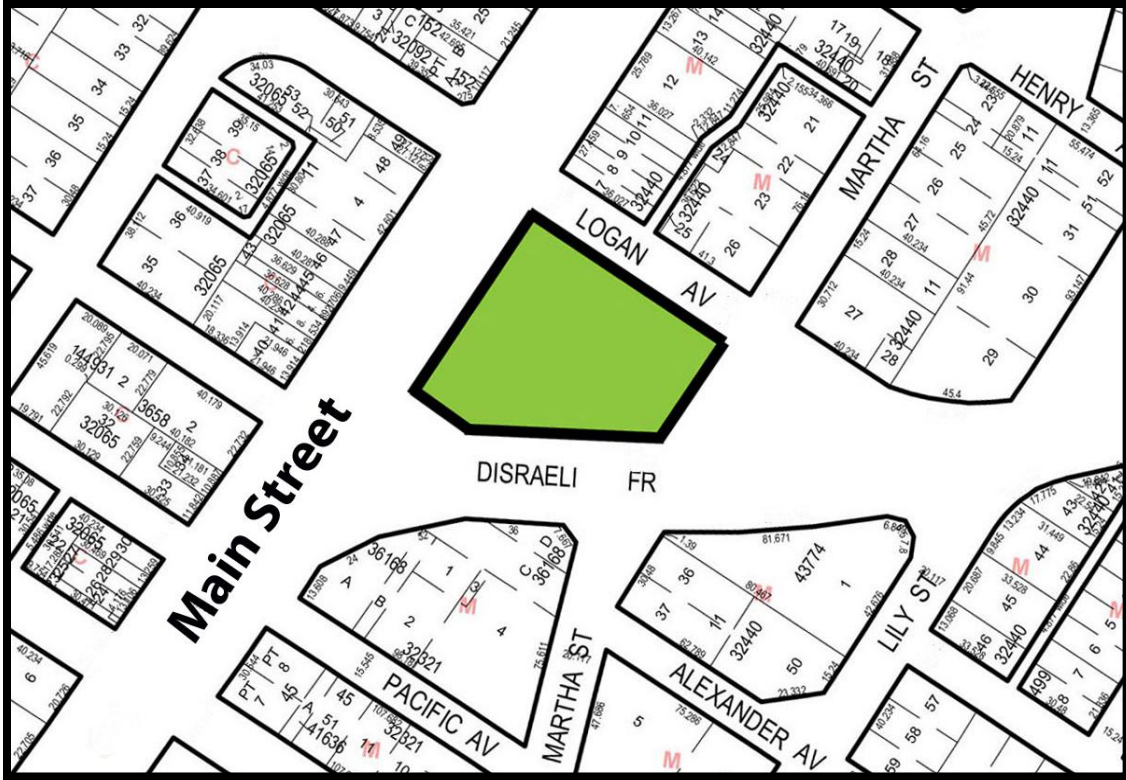


Figure 2. Immediate context of The Edge Artist Village (shown in green). (Map adapted from City of Winnipeg Planning, Property and Development Department Land Information Services, Winnipeg Zoning Bylaw no. 200/2006, zoning maps 8 and 13, 2006).



Figure 3. The 611 block of Main Street, 2009. The Edge and MAWA are located in the portion of the building under the green sign. Immediately to the left of The Edge is the parking lot owned by Mitchell Fabrics.

History of The Edge Artist Village

The Edge Artist Village, as a concept, encompasses the majority of the 611 block of Main Street, including The Edge Gallery, MAWA (Mentoring Artists for Women's Art), and The Tallest Poppy restaurant. The term "The Edge Artist Village" also includes the Red Road Lodge, located at 631 Main Street.

In 2002, Winnipeg developer and interior designer Richard Walls approached Winnipeg's CentureVenture Development Corporation with an idea for the revitalization of the North Main Street community, using arts and culture "as a catalyst for change" (Walls, Personal Communication, May 27, 2009). He proposed that CentureVenture, an arms-length agency of the City of Winnipeg, purchase several buildings in the community and start a land bank. Walls suggested that as funds became available, he or other like-minded investors would buy the buildings and develop them. CentureVenture declined, but did offer Walls a loan to purchase the buildings. Walls was not willing to borrow the large amount of money it would take to develop several buildings simultaneously. Instead, he decided to start the project with one building. He subsequently bought the building at 611 Main Street, the Corbett block and former Norman's Meats, and began plans to develop it as "affordable artist studio space" (Walls, Personal Communication, May 2, 2009). The plans called for gallery space on the main floor, and eight artist live/work spaces above.

During the time The Edge Gallery and artist live/work spaces were being developed, another prominent arts organization, Mentoring Artists for Women's Art (MAWA), was looking for a new space. Having been evicted from its previous location in the Exchange District, MAWA was looking for affordable space with a stronger

geographical tie to the Aboriginal community. The organization had recently formed an Aboriginal women artists' task force, and had started its Aboriginal Women Artists and Mentors Program (AWAM). The building at 611 Main Street seemed a good fit; Walls was happy to see a strong and established arts organization in the space, and MAWA had a larger and more affordable home-base in a community with a strong Aboriginal presence.

In collaboration with a working group consisting of Main Street's five primary service providers for the homeless (the Salvation Army, the Siloam Mission, the Main Street Project, Neeginan, and the Red Road Lodge) (Schultz and Walls, 2007), Walls began to consider how the entire community functioned, and came to the conclusion that the hotels on Main Street were a negative presence. When the New Occidental Hotel, a single room occupancy hotel (SRO) at 631 Main Street, came up for sale, Walls purchased it. Initially, Walls planned to continue operating the space as a hotel and bar, and kept the previous owner on as manager for one year. When the year had passed, Walls came to the realization that the establishment could not continue to operate responsibly as a beverage room. He gave up the liquor and gaming licenses and began to transform the 50 guest rooms in the building into transitional housing for those suffering from drug and alcohol abuse (Walls, Personal Communication, May 27, 2009). Alongside the plans for transitional housing, Walls began planning an "arts and culture community resource, education, and wellness centre" on the main floor of the hotel for all area residents (Schultz and Walls, 2007). Walls owns and manages 611 Main Street and 631 Main Street, however the Red Road Lodge and The Edge Gallery are governed by the same volunteer board.

Programming

The Edge Artist Village is a good example of a deliberate effort to use culture-led regeneration to address issues of urban decline. Within The Edge Gallery itself are eight affordable live/work spaces for artists, a pottery studio, and gallery space. The Edge also offers community workshop facilities and a rental venue. The vision of The Edge is explicit in stating that urban revitalization is part of the organization's goal:

We believe that a healthy arts presence is a vital part of our community's growth and development. Investment in arts and culture can help reverse urban decline and support the revitalization of Winnipeg's downtown neighbourhoods. Art and culture are not only economic development tools, but also beautification resources. This expression is essential in effecting deep and lasting social change and improving our community's morale (The Edge, 2009, para 1).

While there are numerous community-based arts organizations that are relevant to a study on culture-led regeneration, importantly, few include culture-led regeneration directly within their vision. The Edge Gallery also includes youth-based programming as part of its mandate:

By working with our young adults, we strongly believe that the opportunity for creative expression will provide them with self confidence, a better appreciation and respect for themselves and others, social skills and a wider outlook of life's bigger picture. Our intent is to provide our youth with access to a larger variety of resources and supports to rely upon as they face the challenges and circumstances of their lives (The Edge, 2009, para 3).

Originally, The Edge Gallery was run as a volunteer-based artist's collective. Walls and staff of The Edge both reported problems with the model. While the collective's artists were successful at creating and showing their own work, they were unable to meet the gallery's administrative needs. Little progress was made in terms of programming or community engagement. The Edge is now run with the help of one full-time staff member who is responsible for writing grant applications, organizing and facilitating

workshops, and generally managing gallery space and events.

Because The Edge Gallery is still a relatively new organization, its programming often depends on the revenue gained by renting the space for events or holding exhibits. While the Red Road Lodge's art programming is open to anyone in the community, the focus is on adults-at-risk. The Edge's programs are typically more youth-oriented. The Edge offers adult programming as well, but any program geared towards youth is offered at The Edge as opposed to the Red Road Lodge, to avoid any safety issues.

Currently, The Edge operates under the volunteer board governing the Red Road Lodge, although The Edge is hoping to develop its own active board in the near future. Potential tenants for the live/work spaces above the gallery apply directly through the caretaker of the building, and are not vetted by staff of The Edge. A potential weakness to this approach is that tenants may not be as involved in the gallery's activities as staff of The Edge would like. Tenants must be part of the arts community, and while they are encouraged to participate in The Edge Gallery programming and events, it is not required of them. The rent is not subsidized, but is fixed for ten years.

Current programming at the Red Road Lodge primarily consists of a free community drop-in art program. Art supplies are provided free-of-charge, and two facilitators are available to guide participants. The program runs two days a week from one pm to nine pm.

The "downtown coffee ground" also occurs at The Red Road Lodge, on the first Monday of each month. This program offers an open mic for singer/songwriters, poets, spoken words artists, and also features a different guest artist each month. While the open

mic is happening, those present can participate in a “community collaborative art piece” (The Edge, 2009a).

The Edge Gallery hosts Edge-YA!, an open mic and songwriting circle for young artists (between the ages of 15-25). At the time of my study, further programming was currently under development (The Edge, 2009a). The Edge is also home to the Main Street Clay Centre, a pottery program developed by Point Douglas City Councilor Mike Pagtakhan. The Centre was to open its doors autumn 2009, and be available on a drop-in basis to youth in the community.

Funding Structure

Government funding for The Edge Artist Village was announced in 2005. The total costs for the project were estimated at \$816,800. Of this, \$280,000 was provided through the Canada-Manitoba Affordable Housing Initiative New Rental Supply Program, and \$80,000 from CentureVenture Development Corporation. A portion was provided by The Edge itself (\$116,800) with the remainder obtained through mortgage financing (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2005). The Canada-Manitoba Affordable Housing Initiative is a multi-level government program, and provides funding in exchange for keeping rents at a relatively low fixed rate for 10 years (Department of Family Services and Housing, 2005). In order to receive the funding, the units developed at 611 Main Street were required to be affordable for people of low income (having a total gross income of no more than \$24,500 for a 1-bedroom apartment) (Manitoba Family Services and Consumer Affairs, 2009). At the time of the research, The Edge Gallery was in the process of applying for charitable status, in order to increase the organization’s

fundraising capabilities.

The Edge Gallery does not receive funding directly, but rather is leased by the Red Road Lodge. The main floor of the Red Road Lodge is funded as an “urban arts centre.” This funding is used for the arts programming, which is run on a drop-in basis. Participants can participate in workshops, and have access to free materials. The housing portion of the Red Road Lodge is funded under two separate programs, one being social services. Because the Red Road Lodge provides a safe, alcohol-free environment, it receives more funding than it would if the hotel were run as a rooming house (with no controls over alcohol or drug abuse by tenants). The hotel has also received annual funding, recently extended for three years under the Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative (WHHI). Such funding provides skills development, (e.g., basic cooking skills, computer skills, or interpersonal skills). Once residents complete the program, they can then attend the art drop-in program.

The Red Road Lodge contains approximately 45 rooms. Residents are almost exclusively referred through social services or the justice department. Generally, residents suffer from substance abuse issues that they are in the process of addressing. Most residents also suffer from mental health issues. Almost all residents are long-term; there are no nightly or weekly tenants. Residents stay by the month, or ideally for longer periods of time. The Red Road Lodge is considered transitional housing as opposed to emergency shelter; this means most residents stay at the facility on a long-term basis (Walls, Personal Communication, May 27, 2009).

Context: The North Main Street Community

The Edge Artist Village is located on the 600 block of Main Street, north of Portage Avenue, and sits on the southwestern boundary of the South Point Douglas neighbourhood. The community is known as “North Main”, and is defined as the area on Main Street between William Avenue (present day City Hall) and the underpass at Higgins Avenue (Lyon, 1998).

In a walking tour document created for the City of Winnipeg Historical Buildings Committee in 1998, Lyon explains that as early as the 1870s, the bulk of commercial development occurred on the eastern section of Main Street, and the North Main Street strip was “of a low-density residential character” (p. 3). The increasing reliance on CPR’s transcontinental line prompted more business and industry to move near the line, at present day Higgins Avenue. Lyon describes North Main’s defining characteristics as:

- The diversity of its people, languages and business;
- The lure and dynamism which that diversity sparked; and yet also
- The image of a place that was different, full of ‘strangers’, somewhat makeshift or impermanent, and that sometimes functioned on the very margins of economic security and propriety (p. 4)

In the 1900s, the Main Street underpass was constructed under the CPR main line, prompting even more new construction in the surrounding areas. While much of the development at this time was commercial, including several main bank branches, there was still a strong “upper-story” residential presence. North Main peaked in 1900 through 1915, and then fell victim to wars, depressions, and the prohibition era (1916-1928).

The thirties and forties saw property assessment values fall on both sides of Main Street, and signs of decline begin to set in. “The area’s physical fabric, while intact, became increasingly worn and dated” (Lyon, 1998, p.6). Despite the beginnings of

decline seen in the area however, Lyon notes that the hotels, billiard halls and movie theatres of north Main Street continued to be a draw, and the street-front remained full of local businesses, many of them family-run (p. 6).

While the 1950s brought increased prosperity to the city as a whole, investments were directed to areas such as Broadway and Osborne, and not to downtown (Lyon, 1998). Planning recommendations made at this time included the “zoning out” of residential uses in the central business district (Stelman, 1997, p. 57). The Disraeli Freeway was built between 1958 and 1960, and ultimately “disrupted the East Main streetscape between Pacific and Alexander, and caused the displacement of business and residents along its route through Point Douglas” (Lyon, 1998, p. 7).

The 1960s and 1970s continued to see businesses closing, dependence on the railway lessening, and property values falling. Rapid development was occurring in suburban municipalities as opposed to downtown (Stelman, 1997). Typical of the ‘urban renewal’ philosophy of the time, the approach to planning in downtown Winnipeg focused on large-scale demolition and the construction of new mega-projects. Large stretches of Main Street were cleared to make way for new buildings in the modern style; many of the buildings demolished were replaced with surface parking lots (Stelman, 1997). The Centennial Complex was one of the largest projects to emerge from this mass demolition. Stelman (1997) notes that, “This project...removed many historic buildings but was unfortunately unsuccessful in meeting its goal of attracting private investment into the historic central business area” (p. 60).

By the 1990s, “the predominant active uses of North Main, other than the City Hall and Manitoba Centennial Centre, were the surviving hotels and their bars, soup

kitchens, church missions, a new Salvation Army complex, Jack's residence for pensioners, and a few shops and services (including the stalwart Mitchell Fabric store and a new Royal Bank branch at Main and James)" (p. 7).

The late 1980s saw governments assembling various tripartite agreements to address some of the issues plaguing Winnipeg's core area. The purpose of the agreements was to "stimulate investment and employment, which would revitalize inner city areas" (Western Economic Diversification Canada, 2009). Funds were invested in physical improvements, social programs, and the delivery of education and training initiatives. The Winnipeg Core Area Initiative 1 (1981-1986) spent \$96 million, the Winnipeg Core Area Initiative 2 (1986-1991) \$100 million, the Winnipeg Development Agreement (1995-2001) \$75 million, and the Winnipeg Partnership Agreement (2004-present) \$75 million to date. The last Winnipeg Partnership Agreement was signed in 2004, and expired in 2009. The Agreement funded projects in four strategic programs: Aboriginal participation, building sustainable neighbourhoods, downtown renewal, and supporting innovation and technology (Winnipeg Partnership Agreement, 2010).

In her research report *A Public Policy Problem: Re-Framing the Social and Economic Reality of Winnipeg's Main Street to Restore its Symbolic Value for the City*, Stelman (1997) explains why plans for revitalizing Main Street have been unsuccessful.

The problem with 'the Winnipeg Main Street problem' is that it is perceived differently, depending on which stakeholder group is defining it. No distinct articulation of these differences has been formalized in an analytic process for influencing policy direction. As a result, efforts in revitalization have been very unfocused...In essence, the desire for a comprehensive response has resulted in relative inaction or ironically superficial action in addressing the many complex social and economic problems (p. 74).

Stelman concluded her report by making several policy recommendations to address Main Street's decline. For the portion of Main Street between the CP tracks and City Hall (Market Avenue), Stelman recommended developing the stretch into a centre for Aboriginal culture, and inviting all stakeholders to jointly develop an 'Action Strategy' for the community (p. 122).

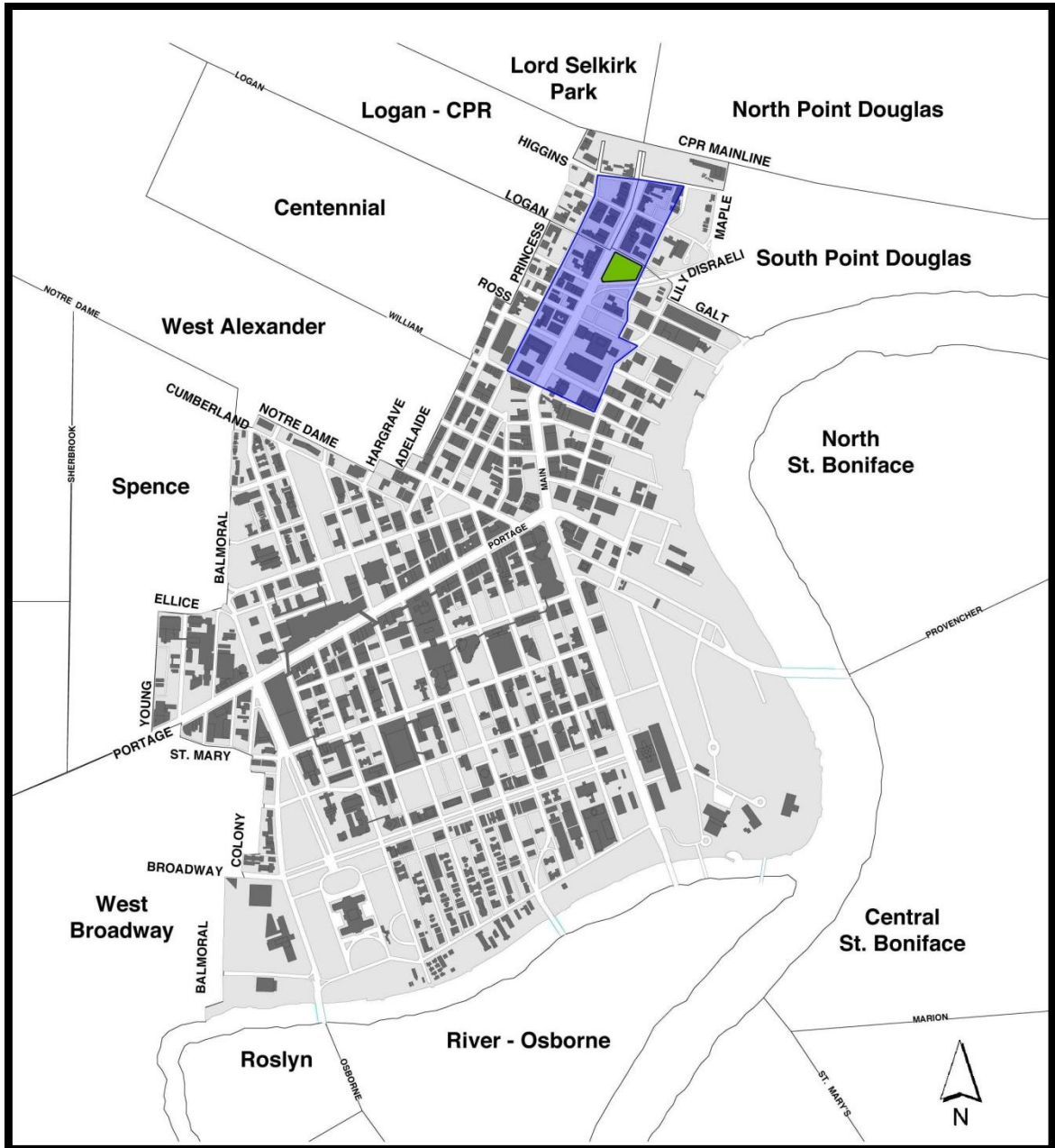


Figure 4. Location of the North Main Community within downtown Winnipeg (highlighted in blue). (Map adapted from CentrePlan-Action Plan 1995-1996, 1996).



Figure 5. The North Main Street community (shown in blue). (Map adapted from City of Winnipeg Planning, Property and Development Department Land Information Services, Winnipeg Zoning Bylaw no. 200/2006, zoning maps 8 and 13, 2006).

Context: The Exchange District

The Exchange District is Winnipeg’s historic precinct and encompasses approximately a 20-block area located north of the corner of Portage and Main Street in downtown Winnipeg. Recent years have seen the area become a cultural hub for the city due to its downtown location and considerable collection of heritage buildings. The

1970s saw a general decline in the Exchange District, caused by “financial obstacles” to preserving the heritage architecture in the area (Exchange District BIZ, 2006).

Due to the efforts of citizen groups, heritage groups, and other stakeholder groups, “creative partnerships were established that set in motion a renewal of the district” (Exchange District BIZ, 2006, p. iii). The area was designated a National Historic Site in 1997.

2006 Census Data indicates the total population of the Exchange District is currently 420. Population increased 43.8 percent from 1996 to 2001, and another 21.7 percent from 2001 to 2006. While this is a significant increase, it represents a relatively small number of new residents due to the small overall population of the area. The city of Winnipeg’s total population increased only 2.2 percent in the same period (2001 to 2006). The majority of residents in the Exchange District are single, and average family income in 2005 was \$155,130, compared to \$75,664 for Winnipeg as a whole. 26.5 percent of residents in the Exchange District rent their residence, while the majority, 73.5 percent, own (City of Winnipeg, 2006).

Census data confirms anecdotal evidence that the Exchange District is gentrifying. The area has become a popular location for new condominium development and rents, along with property values, are becoming less and less affordable. Non-residential properties in the Exchange District have risen 142 percent since 1998, while Winnipeg saw only a 40 percent increase (UrbanEdge Consulting Inc., 2008). As a result, many organizations originally located in the Exchange have been forced to re-locate. As the North Main community is adjacent to the Exchange District, there has been a natural migration there for organizations who wish to remain downtown but need more

affordable space. As a result, North Main is becoming a popular home for architects, interior designers, and various other art or design-based organizations. MAWA is one example of this migration – when they were evicted from their space in the Exchange District in late 2005, they were able to find a larger, less expensive space in the 611 block of Main Street.

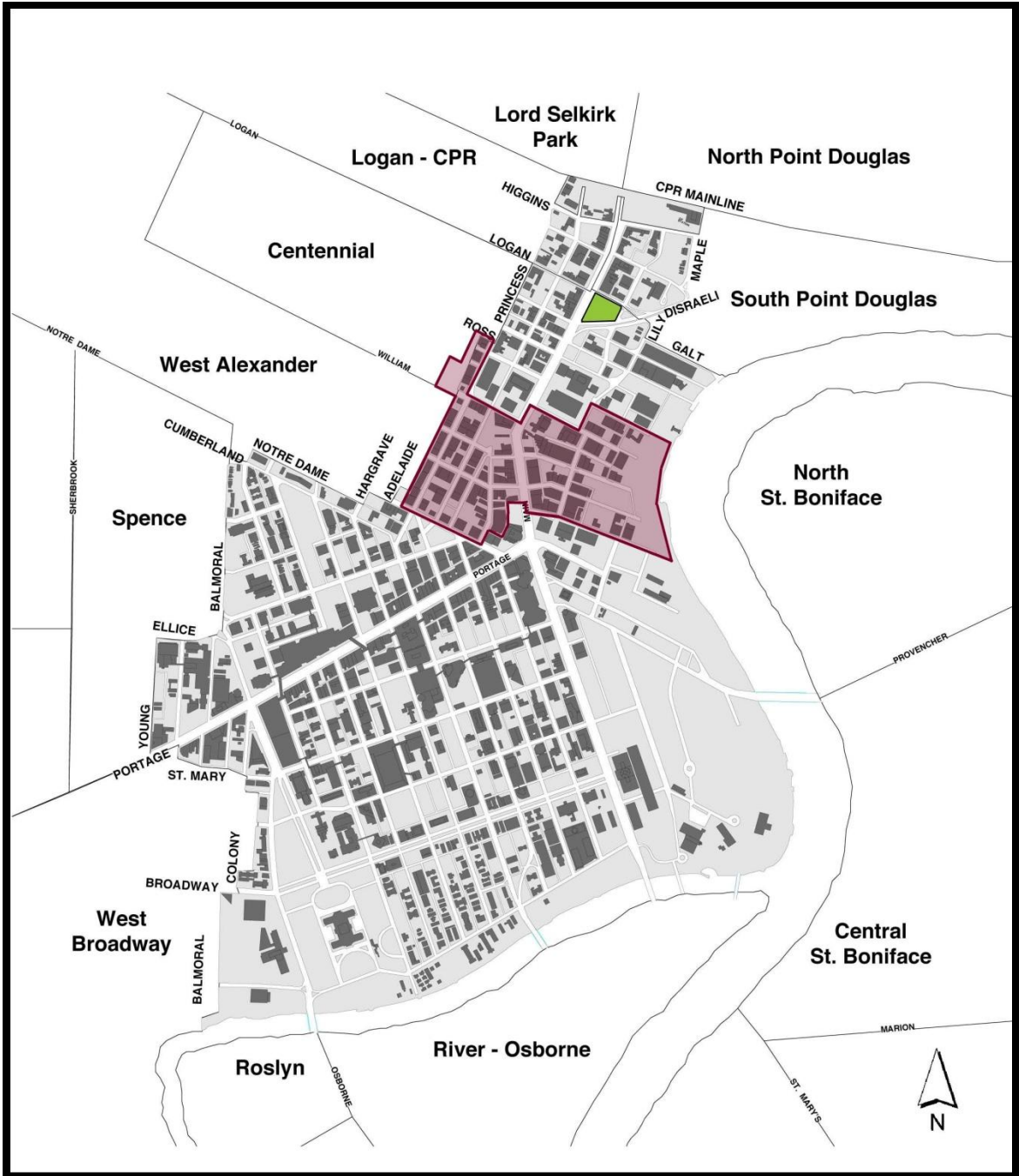


Figure 6. Location of the Exchange District National Historic Site within downtown Winnipeg (highlighted in red). (Map adapted from CentrePlan-Action Plan 1995-1996, 1996)

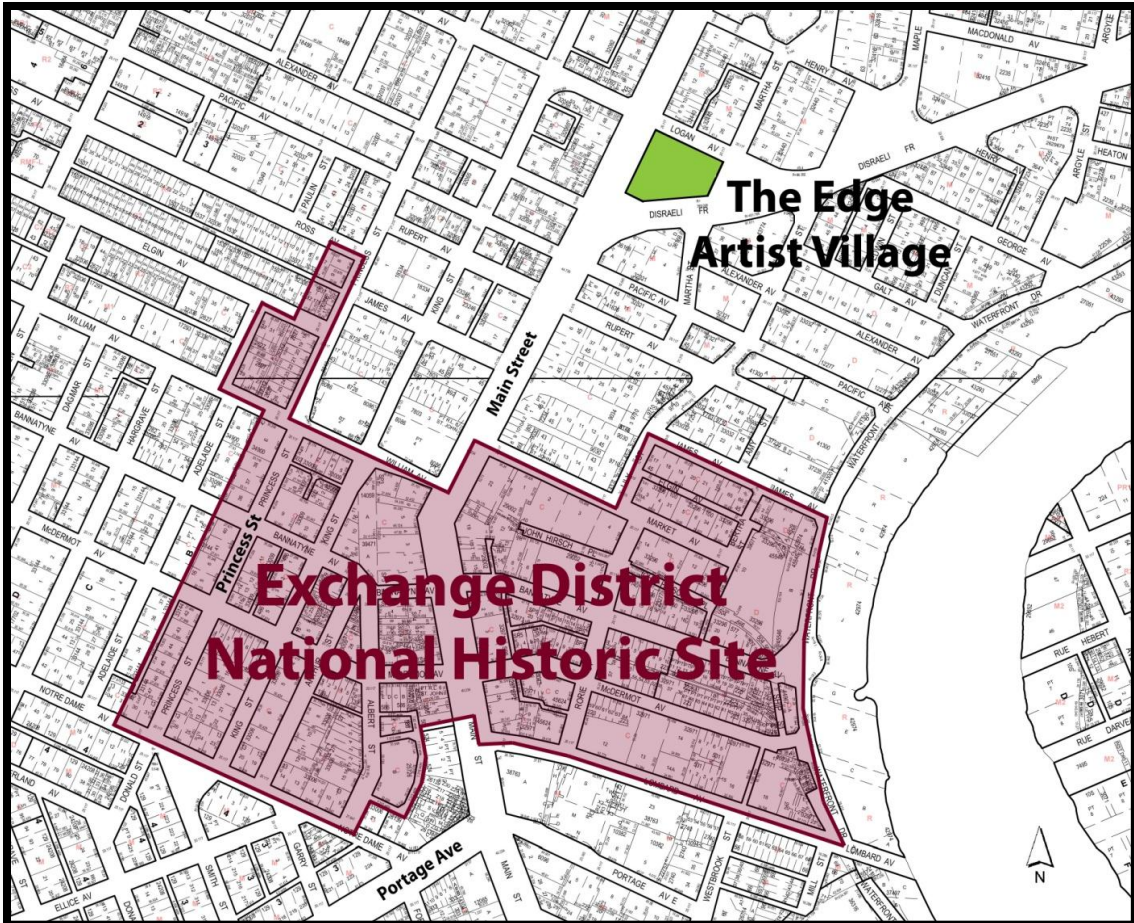


Figure 7. The Exchange District National Historic Site boundaries (shown in red). (Map adapted from City of Winnipeg Planning, Property and Development Department Land Information Services, Winnipeg Zoning Bylaw no. 200/2006, zoning maps 8 and 13, 2006).

Context: South Point Douglas

South Point Douglas is bounded by Main Street on the west, the Red River on the east, Galt Avenue on the south, and Sutherland Avenue on the north. Point Douglas began as a farming district, and developed into a desirable residential district in the second half of the 19th Century. The area was divided by railway tracks in the late 1800s, causing the southern half of the neighbourhood to become mostly industrial, while the northern portion remained predominantly residential (City of Winnipeg Planning Property and Development, 2008, p. 8). At present, South Point Douglas is zoned

industrial, and Plan Winnipeg identifies it as an “Industrial Policy Area” (City of Winnipeg Planning Property and Development, 2008, p. 7). The current Zoning By-Law (No. 100/2004) expands the boundaries of downtown Winnipeg to include South Point Douglas, and changes the southeastern section of South Point Douglas from an Industrial Use Sector to a Multiple Use Sector (M). Winnipeg’s downtown zoning bylaw states that Multiple Use Sector Zoning is “intended to encourage the range of uses, activities, and buildings typical to a diverse and vibrant downtown” and can be put to a variety of uses, including “office, retail, services, restaurants, entertainment opportunities, public institutions, multiple-family residential, and off street parking facilities” (City of Winnipeg, 2004).

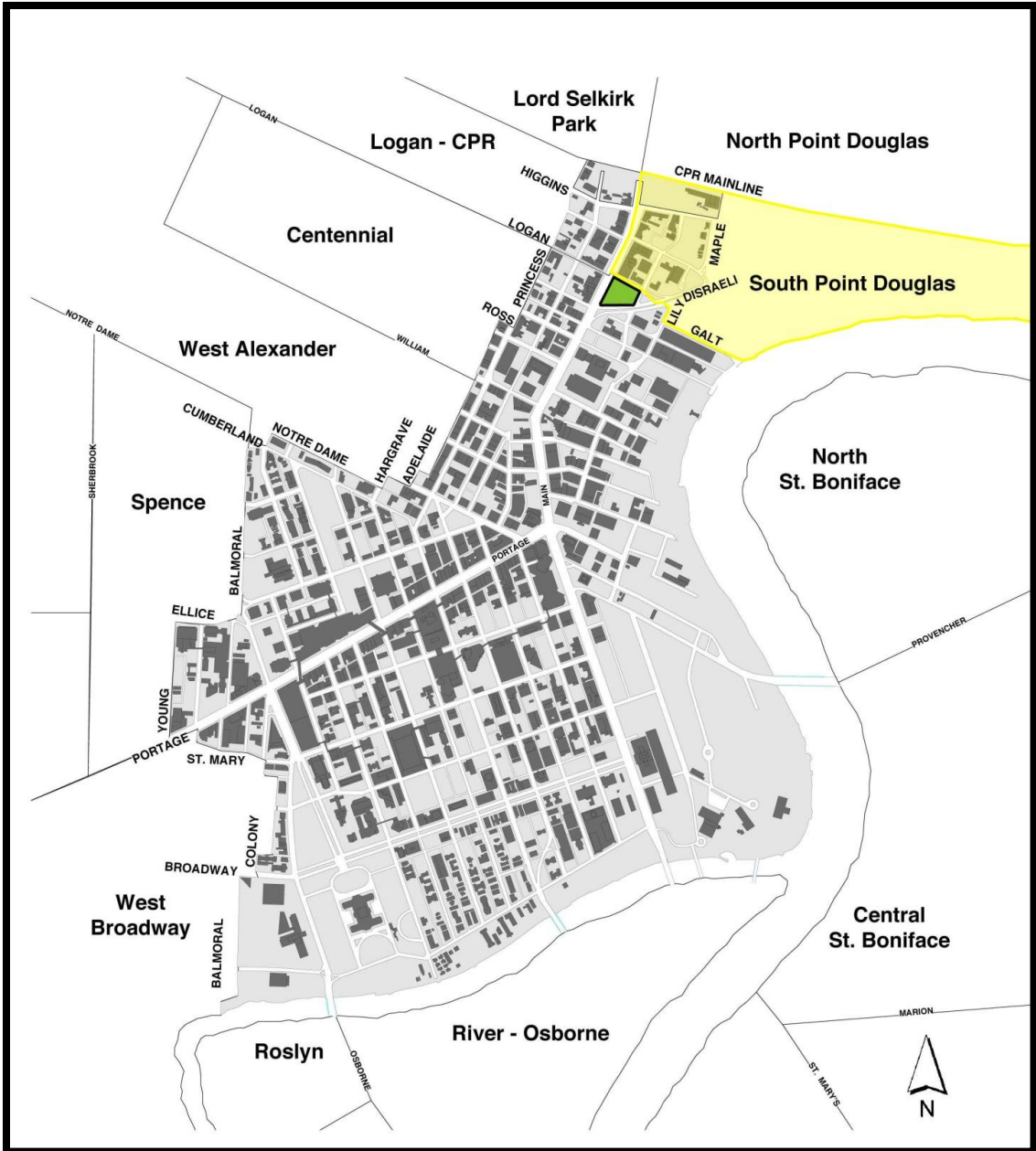


Figure 8. Location of the South Point Douglas neighbourhood within downtown Winnipeg (highlighted in yellow). (Map adapted from CentrePlan-Action Plan 1995-1996,1996).

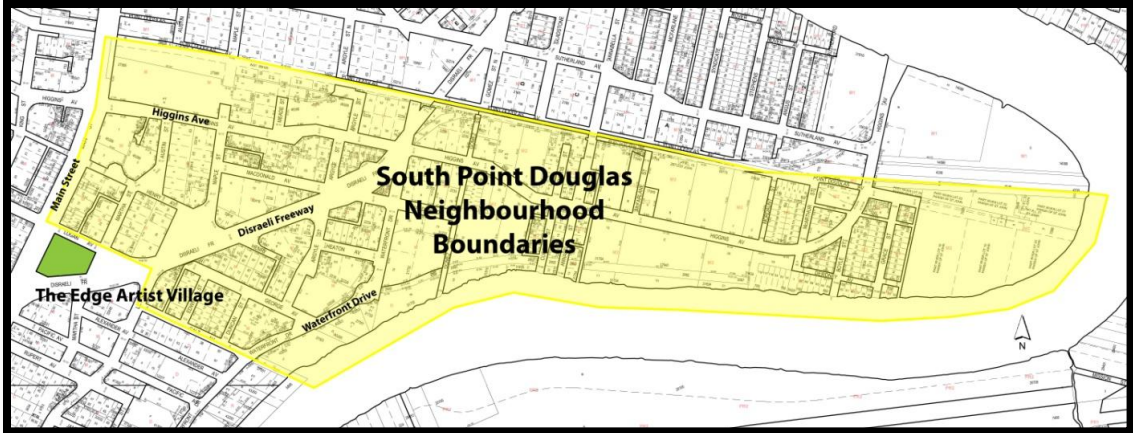


Figure 9. South Point Douglas neighbourhood boundaries (shown in yellow) (Map adapted from City of Winnipeg Planning, Property and Development Department Land Information Services, Winnipeg Zoning Bylaw no. 200/2006, zoning maps 8 and 13, 2006).



Figure 10. Point Douglas Aerial View, 1960 (Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg-Views 126).

2006 Census data indicates the population of South Point Douglas is currently 230. The majority of residents in the area are between the ages of 40 and 74, and there are few children and young people in the immediate neighbourhood. Approximately 21.7 percent of neighbourhood residents are of Aboriginal ancestry, compared with 11.2 percent of people in Winnipeg. Approximately half of residents in South Point Douglas have not completed grade 12 (City of Winnipeg, 2006a). The unemployment rate in South Point Douglas is 23.1 percent, compared to 5.2 percent in Winnipeg and 7.7 percent in the Exchange District, and the majority of residents in the area live below the poverty line (City of Winnipeg Planning, Property and Development, 2008, p. 7)

A neighbourhood inventory completed by the City of Winnipeg in April of 2008 describes the South Point Douglas area as suffering from “a high concentration of poverty, aged and unkempt housing, and existing and former industrial sites” (City of Winnipeg Planning, Property and Development, 2008, p. 7). There are currently 65 houses and three apartment buildings within the boundaries of South Point Douglas (City of Winnipeg, 2008, p. 6).

Table 1: *Demographic Data for South Point Douglas, The Exchange District, and Winnipeg* (City of Winnipeg, 2006 and 2006a).

	SOUTH POINT DOUGLAS	THE EXCHANGE DISTRICT	WINNIPEG
Total Population	230	420	633,451
Land Area (km ²)	.7	.3	475.2
Residents of Aboriginal Descent (%)	21.7%	14.3%	11.2%
Have Not Completed Grade 12 (%)	47.8%	21.5%	23.1%
Completed Certificate, Diploma or Degree (%)	47.7%	79.7%	76.9%
Unemployment Rate 15 and Over (%)	23.1%	13.2%	5.2%
Primary Mode of Transportation is Car, Truck, or Van as Driver (%)	35%	39%	68.0%

The last decade has seen considerable development in South Point Douglas, particularly along Main Street. In addition to 611 Main Street and the former New Occidental Hotel at 631 Main Street, Walls has also purchased the building on the corner of Main Street and Alexander, and relocated the offices of his interior design company there, renting the main floor to an architectural firm. The largest investment in the community, financially, has been the construction of the new Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA) regional head office and community health and social services facility at the northwest corner of Logan Avenue and Main Street. The 80,000 square-foot, four-storey building has brought approximately 200 workers to the North Main Street community since construction was completed in the summer of 2009 (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 2008).

A South Point Douglas Pre-Consultation Study commissioned by the City of Winnipeg in April of 2008 held meetings to “determine the needs and views of the various stakeholders and to identify current issues in the neighbourhood” (BridgmanCollaborative and McKay Finnigan and Associates, 2008, p.1). Stakeholder groups included area residents, artists, business owners, and Aboriginal organizations. All four groups spoke of housing challenges in the area. Artists cited concerns about gentrification and a “fear that the City will expropriate existing residents/artists” (p. 15). When asked what they wanted South Point Douglas to look like in ten years, artists indicated they would like to see housing as the predominant land use in the area, mixed-income housing, and the retention of older buildings (BridgmanCollaborative and McKay Finnigan and Associates, 2008, p. 15). “Derelict buildings” and “slum landlords not maintaining numerous properties” were among the concerns cited by area residents (p.

18). Residents' ten-year vision for the area included mixed-use development, mixed-income housing, and a "complete artists' colony" (p. 19).

Among the pre-consultation study's conclusions were that stakeholders appreciated the community for its affordability, ease of access, view of the river and downtown, and the diversity of people living and working within it (BridgmanCollaborative and McKay Finnigan and Associates, 2008, p.22). Stakeholders cited concerns about derelict properties, poor pedestrian and bike access to the river, and existing land use regulations/zoning, among others. The two recommendations of the study were to amend Plan Winnipeg to address the large proportion of land currently designated as industrial, and to initiate a Secondary Planning process for the area (BridgmanCollaborative and McKay Finnigan and Associates, 2008).

The City of Winnipeg is currently in the process of developing a secondary plan for South Point Douglas. Reasons for beginning the planning process include a decline in industrial activity, a declining population, and growing interest in developing the waterfront property that runs through the neighbourhood (City of Winnipeg, 2008).

Secondary Plan objectives are to "facilitate changes in land use in a manner sensitive to those living and working in the area and sensitive to the unique character of the neighbourhood" (City of Winnipeg, 2009, para. 4). Consistent with the Pre-Plan Assessment's recommendations, South Point Douglas will also undergo a change from its current *Industrial designation* to a *Neighbourhood designation*. Recommendations from the first round of consultations completed by the City emphasized the importance of considering all aspects of the neighbourhood in tandem, including transportation systems.

At the time of this study, the City was waiting for technical and engineering studies to be completed before continuing with the planning process in the spring of 2010.

Images of The Edge Artist Village

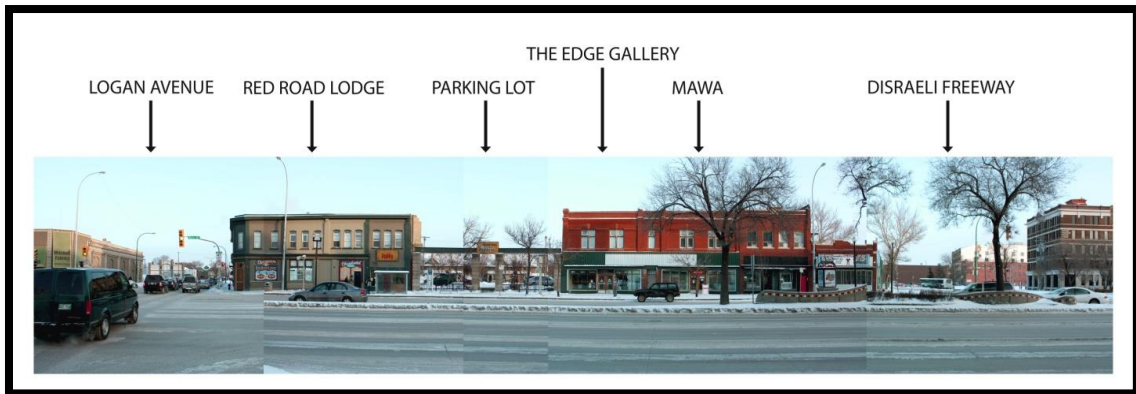


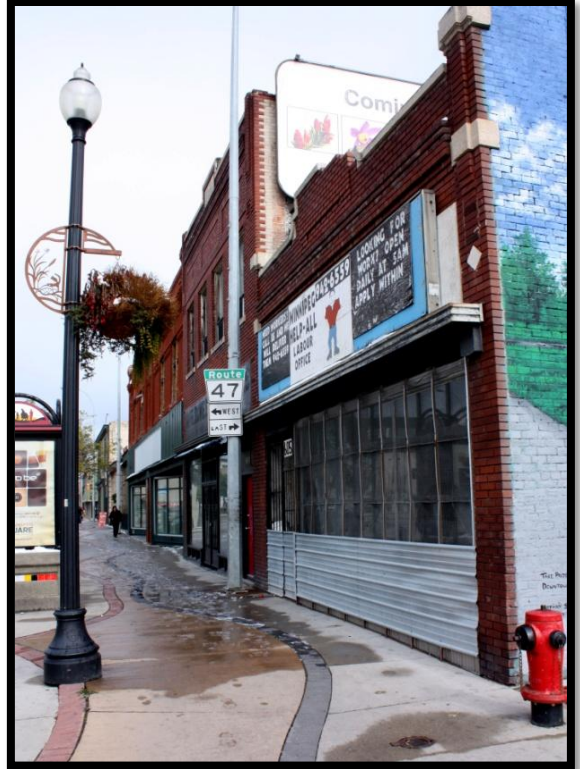
Figure 11. The east side of Main Street from Logan (left) to Disraeli (right), 2009. From left to right, Mitchell Fabrics, The Red Road Lodge, The Edge Gallery and MAWA can be seen.



Figure 12. The 611 block of Main Street, 2009. A closer look at Mitchell Fabrics (from left), the Red Road Lodge, The Tallest Poppy restaurant (with yellow and red sign), and The Edge Gallery. The space between buildings is the parking lot owned by Mitchell Fabrics and used by patrons of 611 Main Street.



Figure 13. North side of the Red Road Lodge, 2009. As of fall 2009, plans were in place to cover the entire northern façade of the Red Road Lodge with a mosaic of glass, tile, and paintings, with the theme of “restoration”.



(Clockwise from top left)

Figure 14. The 611 block of Main Street, facing south, 2009. The entrance to The Edge Gallery.

Figure 15. The 611 block of Main Street looking north, 2009. The Winnipeg Help-All Labour office, located at the southern end of 611 Main Street.

Figure 16. The Edge Gallery entrance, 611 Main Street, 2009. The Edge's one full-time staff member tries to keep the doors open as much as possible, and community members are welcome to drop-in.



Figure 17. Parking lot of 611 Main Street, 2009. Mitchell Fabrics owns the lot, and allows staff and patrons of 611 Main Street to use it free of charge.

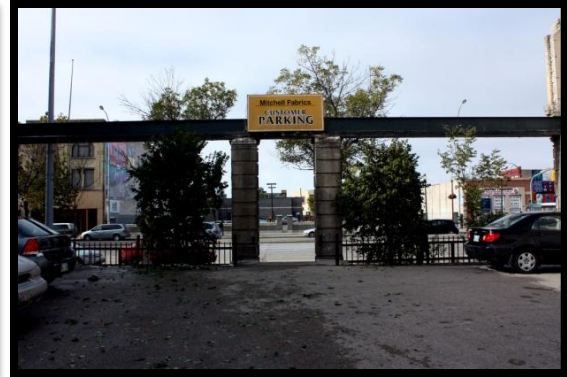


Figure 18. Mitchell Fabrics parking lot, view facing Main Street



Figure 19. The Bike Dump, behind the Red Road Lodge, 2009. The Bike Dump is a community bicycle shop that is completely volunteer-run. They offer tools and space to fix bicycles, a supply of recycled bike parts, and volunteer bike mechanics to help patrons with their projects. They also provide monthly bike repair workshops (The Bike Dump, 2008, <http://bike-dump.ca/>).



Figure 20. Mural on the east side of the 611 Main Street block, 2009. Supported by a grant from the Manitoba Arts Council, 19 artists were given a small honorarium to create the paintings seen here, following a theme of “transformation”. The Red Road Lodge hosted an arts night every Thursday for the artists to work on the paintings over the course of eight months.

In purely physical terms, The Edge Artist Village has made considerable changes to North Main Street. The east side of Main Street between Logan and Disraeli has changed considerably since The Edge opened in 2006. The former Occidental Hotel has been renovated, as has the 611 block of Main Street. Murals and the location of the bike dump behind The Edge Gallery and The Red Road Lodge contribute to the perception of well-cared for buildings. The parking lot located between The Edge and The Red Road Lodge is now well-used. Paintings and clear signage give the impression the lot is regularly maintained.

MAWA in particular has been successful at drawing members city-wide, regularly holding large events, meetings, and workshops in their space. The Tallest

Poppy restaurant has provided a space for local residents and patrons/staff of The Edge Artist Village to meet, and has greatly contributed to increased foot traffic on the block.

Definition of Success

Because this study aims to identify whether arts-led regeneration efforts similar to The Edge are successful in addressing urban decline, it is important to define what constitutes “success”. The Edge Artist Village was chosen as a case study because it includes the goal of community revitalization in its organizational vision. Therefore, based on this vision, the definition of “success”, for the purposes of this study, include:

- The project has resulted in the reversal of urban decline and has supported downtown revitalization
- The project has increased community pride in the North Main Street area
- The project has increased public interest in the arts, and improved the economic status of artists
- The project has provided creative opportunities to under-served communities

It is difficult to assess whether these benchmarks have been met, particularly because The Edge Artist Village is a relatively new project. The points do provide a framework, however, for how The Edge has impacted the North Main Street community and its residents. This study will include qualitative and quantitative means to evaluate The Edge Artist Village according to the above criteria.

CHAPTER 4: A Literature Review of Culture-Led Regeneration

4.1 Introduction

This study aims to explore the degree to which culture-led regeneration is an effective strategy for addressing urban decline. To provide a larger context for this research and to address the first research question (*What effects do culture-led*

regeneration projects similar to The Edge Artist Village have on their surrounding communities?), my literature review explores the major academic opinions related to culture-led regeneration, and identifies and categorizes the potential advantages and disadvantages of using culture as a strategy for urban regeneration. Additionally, a broader look at the long and varied relationship between culture, the arts, and the field of city planning is included.

Major themes include: the history of culture-led regeneration (*why focus on culture?*), definitions and understandings of culture (*what is culture?*), the economic benefits of culture-led regeneration (*the economic perspective*), the challenges of measuring culture-led regeneration (*methodological difficulties*), the role of flagship projects (*a matter of scale: flagship projects vs. community-based projects*), cultural clustering, gentrification, art and social inclusion, and the intrinsic versus instrumental value of art and culture. Finally, several precedents of culture-led regeneration projects are explored to provide a further context for The Edge Artist Village initiative.

Terms such as “culture”, “art”, and “regeneration” are used in countless contexts. For the purposes of this study, the term “culture” refers to “the arts, libraries, archives, architecture, museums, heritage and cultural tourism” (Evans and Shaw, 2006, p. 5). While the concept of culture encompasses an immense range of activities, organizations, and disciplines, The Edge Artist Village represents only a small portion of this variety. The Edge Artist Village is largely representative of “the arts” in that it consists of a gallery, living space for artists, and an arts-based program in the Red Road Lodge. Because the term “culture” is so expansive, it is not useful in terms of comparability across categories. Lessons learned from a case study of The Edge Artist Village are

therefore not necessarily applicable in all instances of culture-led regeneration. However, the case study offers insights into which aspects of the project have worked, and which have not. Regeneration is defined as “the renewal, revival, revitalization or transformation of a place or community. It is a response to decline, or *degeneration*. Regeneration is both a process and an outcome. It can have physical, economic and social dimensions, and the three commonly coexist” (Evans and Shaw, 2006, p. 5).

4.2 Literature Review and Media Search

Why Focus on Culture?

“In many Western democracies – most notably the United Kingdom, Australia, the United States and Canada – city-based cultural planning has emerged to be one of the most significant local cultural policy initiatives of the last two decades” (Stevenson, 2004, p. 119).

Jacobs (1961) called creativity and diversity the engines of city growth. She was one of the first writers in the realm of urban research to bring culture and creativity to the forefront of planning concerns. Cultural policy emerged in the late 1970s, as a response to the decline of the industrial era. “City decision-makers prioritized economic development and turned to the arts and culture as one area with considerable potential” (Bayliss, 2004, p. 498). Since that time, the role of arts and culture in urban policy has grown considerably, and is now a mainstay of many municipal policy structures. “Over the last twenty years, one of the central developments in the local governance of urban spaces and populations is the general acceptance of the notion that provision of access to, and consumption of, ‘cultural’ resources is a central plank in successful urban development strategies” (Gibson and Stevenson, 2004, p. 1).

The term *cultural planning* first appeared in print in 1979; planner Harvey Perloff described cultural planning as “a way for communities to identify their cultural resources for the achievement of artistic excellence and community development” (Perloff, quoted in Sirayi, 2008, p. 333). Sirayi (2008) explains that the term was “conceptualized as a field of public inquiry, scholarship, discovery, and intellectual cross-fertilization” (p. 334).

One reason the idea of cultural planning has become so widespread is its ability to bridge the many seemingly disparate areas of planning practice. Stevenson (2004) claims that cultural planning is “a way of achieving a range of social, economic and urban, as well as creative, outcomes” and that it spans social planning, urban planning, arts planning, and economic planning simultaneously (p. 120). Sirayi notes “The cultural-planning process should be understood as a process that considers the issues of community relationships, shared memories, experiences, identity, history, and sense of place. It also considers the value and significance of the cultural backgrounds of all communities, whether large or small, rich or poor” (2008, p. 335).

The term “cultural planning” is not used, or understood, universally. Stevenson maintains that despite the loose definition of cultural planning, however, practices worldwide are strikingly similar in their approach.

While it would be misleading to represent cultural planning as a cohesive body of thought or policy intervention (in fact, the term “cultural planning” is not used universally), similar blueprints are being developed world wide and intersecting claims made for integrated, locally focused and coordinated cultural planning/creative city approaches to a range of urban “problems.” Indeed, in spite of varying political configurations, local histories and the idiosyncrasies of place, there is a striking sameness to the discourses and practices of cultural planning everywhere... (Stevenson, 2004, p. 121).

In a comprehensive literature review, Evans (2005) explains why cities are so

eager to rely on culture for their revitalization hopes. “This panacea is viewed as one of the few remaining strategies for urban revitalization which can resist (or embrace) the effects of globalization and capture the twin goals of competitive advantage and quality of life which culture, somewhat optimistically, might offer” (p. 960). Also reinforcing the current preoccupation with culture is the prominence of the creative city argument, made popular by Richard Florida’s recent work (see Florida 2002; 2005).

The growing trust in culture-led regeneration strategies has already begun to be questioned by many scholars. Gibson and Stevenson (2004), in the introduction to a special issue of the *International Journal of Cultural Policy* dedicated to the discussion of arts-led regeneration strategies, illustrate this growing skepticism by referring to culture-led generation strategies as “just add culture and stir” (p. 1). Atkinson and Easthope (2009) describe the problem in the following way:

“The creativity paradigm can be used, rather pointlessly, to encompass so many aspects of economic development and urban governance. There is then, as many theorists and practitioner recognize, a dangerous vacuity or catch-all nature to the creative cities formulae advanced either by Florida or Landry that has been used as a kind of ‘tape’ that can be applied to address any concerns around economic development or to legitimate unpalatable or contentious actions that exclude those who are already marginal to the life of the urban economy.” (p. 76).

The concept of culture has become so popular *because* it is so easily manipulated to fit a range of purposes. “Culture” is almost universally acknowledged to be positive for our cities. Because of the current climate around culture-led regeneration, strategies involving culture tend to be a “safe” approach for policy-makers. Because of this, there is a risk that the strategies themselves will not ultimately be supportive of the communities they are created to help.

What is Culture?

Evans suggests there are three models for regeneration where culture is involved. These include *culture-led regeneration*, *cultural regeneration* and *culture and regeneration* (2005, p. 967). *Culture-led regeneration* involves activity where culture is “the catalyst and engine of regeneration” (Evans, 2005, p. 968). Evans (2005) warns that the term culture-led regeneration is often misused. Flagship projects are often dubbed culture-led regeneration, when in fact “a feature of many flagship developments has been resistance by, or bypassing of, local communities” (p. 968). The Manitoba Centennial Centre, located on Main Street several blocks south of The Edge Gallery, could be offered as an example of a culture-led regeneration project in Winnipeg. The Centennial Centre (including the Manitoba Concert Hall) was built in the late 1960s as a Canadian Centennial project (Centennial Concert Hall, 2004). At the time of its construction, the Centre was a high profile project and was viewed as a symbol of regeneration, both characteristics cited by Evans as indicative of a culture-led regeneration project (p. 968).

Cultural regeneration is a strategy wherein “cultural activity is more integrated into an area strategy alongside other activities in the environmental, social and economic sphere” (Evans, 2005, p. 968). Winnipeg’s Exchange District is an example of cultural regeneration. When the area was declared a National Historic Site in 1997, future development for the District was shaped to include a cultural perspective, and the area is now referred to as Winnipeg’s “cultural epicenter” (The Exchange District BIZ, 2009).

Finally, *culture and regeneration* refers to projects where culture is not included at the master planning stage. An example of culture and regeneration might include “a heritage interpretation or local history museum tucked away in the corner of a reclaimed

industrial site” (p. 969). Referred to by Evans (2005) as a “model by default” (p. 969), Winnipeg’s Art City is an example of culture and regeneration. The community art mandate was not implemented because of a neighbourhood master plan, but rather as a result of local intervention. “Residents (individuals or businesses) and cultural organizations may respond to the vacuum and make their own interventions – commissioning artist to make signs or street furniture, recording the history of their area, setting up a regular music night and so on” (Evans, 2005, p. 969).

The case of The Edge Artist Village is most closely in line with Evan’s definition of *culture and regeneration*, although it also shares some characteristics with *culture-led regeneration* projects, (particularly in terms of The Edge’s own self-described mission). The Edge is not a flagship development or complex, but it does, as Evans describes, involve “the design and construction (or reuse) of a building or buildings for public or mixed use” (p. 968). Additionally, The Edge fulfills the requirement for a “unique” effort that non arts-based regeneration projects lack; what Evans calls “a means for creating (or rediscovering) distinctiveness and for raising awareness and excitement in regeneration programmes as a whole.” (p. 968).

The Edge also fits with the term *cultural regeneration*, particularly in light of the many recent development projects that have begun on the neighbouring strip of North Main Street. A funding announcement from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Association in March of 2005 described The Edge project as “the first of a multi-phase urban renewal project intended to create an arts-friendly environment that focuses on providing affordable housing, employment opportunities for the current residents, as well as attracting newcomers to the North Main area” (CMHC Funding Announcement,

2005). At the time of this study, the creation of a South Point Douglas secondary plan was underway by the City of Winnipeg. This may be the beginning of a cultural mandate at the strategic planning level, if stakeholders' opinions are incorporated into the plan as promised.

While this description emphasizes The Edge as one of several revitalization efforts, others involved in the project spoke of it as *the catalyst* for change in the area. "Converting a vacant space into a commercial arts centre with a residential component is not only a very creative way to adapt a heritage building for modern, relevant use, but it is also a unique approach to revitalizing an inner-city neighbourhood" (Deputy Mayor Pagtakhan, CMHC Funding Announcement, 2005). In the same funding announcement (2005) Richard Walls himself described the project as follows:

Our multi-cultural Artists Village will be on the leading edge of creative solutions to the issue of urban poverty, and the financial contributions made by the Winnipeg Housing and Homeless Initiative and CentreVenture are an important first step. The Edge will bring together the mainstream arts community and the emerging Aboriginal arts and cultural community, and through the cultural cluster, build upon the economic engine of cultural tourism and serve as a catalyst to help redevelop this long neglected strip of Main Street.

The Economic Perspective

"As cities find themselves engulfed in inter-urban competition, they concentrate on developing a broad range of cultural activities to catalyze private development, increase consumption by residents and tourists, improve the city image, and enhance the local quality of life" (Grodach and Loukaitou-Sideris, 2007, p. 350).

Researchers examining culture-led regeneration strategies often refer to the economic benefits that can result from their implementation. Few authors have had more impact on the topic of cultural economics than Richard Florida. In 2002, Florida

published “The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life”, a book which almost immediately elicited a great deal of criticism from a broad range of fields. Florida’s work is based on the premise that “human creativity is the ultimate source of economic growth” (Florida, 2005, p. 22). The Creative Class, according to Florida’s Creative Capital theory, describes the approximately one third of the United States population who are paid to use their inherent creativity regularly in their work. While this may include someone working in a field traditionally considered creative, such as a musician or painter, Florida maintains that software engineers, lawyers, doctors and the like are also part of this group of workers. In other words, Florida’s use of the term “creative” refers only to the creation of “meaningful new forms” (Florida, 2005, p. 34). According to Florida, a “meaningful new form” could be an accounting software program or a new mathematical equation, as well as a painting or song. The Creative Class is composed of professionals who draw on a significant body of knowledge (presumably learned in institutions of higher education) to creatively solve problems in their work. At the other end of the spectrum is the “Service Class”, a group of workers who follow a strict, repetitive set of actions in the workplace, and use little, if any, of the creativity Florida believes all human beings possess (Florida, 2002).

In 2005, Florida published his equally controversial follow-up book, “Cities and the Creative Class.” Here Florida speaks of “the geography of creativity” (p. 35), linking his creative class theories directly to the economic success of an urban area. Using his previous work, he attempts to explain why members of his Creative Class choose to live where they do, and why they are drawn to certain cities, and not others.

The Creative Class is moving away from traditional corporate communities, working-class centers, and even many Sunbelt regions to a set of places I call Creative Centers. The Creative Centers tend to be the economic winners of our age. Not only do they have high concentrations of Creative Class people, but they boast high concentrations of creative economic outcomes, in the form of innovations and high-tech industry growth. They also show strong signs of overall regional vitality, such as increases in regional employment and population (p. 35).

Florida bases his geographical theories on what he calls “the three T’s of economic growth.” These are *technology* (“a function of both innovation and high technology concentrations in a region”), *talent* (“those with a bachelor’s degree and above”) and *tolerance* (“openness, inclusiveness, and diversity to all ethnicities, races, and walks of life”). Cities which possess all three of Florida’s T’s are “truly creative places” (p. 38). Members of the creative class are attracted to these cities because they are looking for “abundant high-quality experiences, an openness to diversity of all kinds, and above all else the opportunity to validate their identities as creative people” (Florida, 2005, p. 36). In addition, Florida includes several sub-scales. Among these are the “Bohemian Index”, which measures the number of traditional artists in a geographical location (writers, designers, musicians, directors, actors, etc), and the “Gay Index”, which measures where gay couples locate geographically. Florida claims these are both very good predictors of high-tech industry, and the Bohemian Index in particular is a strong predictor of high-technology base, employment growth, and overall population growth in an urban centre (Florida, 2005, p. 41).

Florida’s theories describe attained levels of higher education much more frequently than they describe an actual measure of “creativity.” While the traditional occupations associated with the arts (visual artist, performance artist, sculptor, musician, etc.) make a small appearance in Florida’s Bohemian Index, the larger discussion of the

Creative Class is ultimately one of higher education and white-collar professions, and not one of the artistic or “creative” contributions to an urban centre’s economy and overall health.

Ann Markusen, a researcher of urban economics at the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota, has written extensively on Florida’s work. Markusen disputes the notion of the Creative Class, arguing Florida’s occupational groupings are inaccurate and misleading. Of Florida’s organizational methods, Markusen notes: “Occupations that exhibit distinctive spatial and political proclivities are bunched together, purely on the basis of educational attainment” (Markusen, 2006, p. 1921). Markusen also takes issue with Florida’s assumption of causality. Creative Capital theory holds that the Creative Class is drawn to cities with diversity, which in turn encourages growth in high-tech industry and the urban environment in general. In other words, human capital leads to urban development (Florida, 2002). Markusen suggests it is entirely possible that causality is working in the opposite direction; that “healthy” geographies exist first as a result of other forces, and this attracts human capital (Markusen, 2006).

Most damaging to Florida’s theories, however, is Markusen’s argument concerning his use of the term “creativity.” “Human creativity cannot be conflated with years of schooling. People at all levels of education exercise considerable inventiveness. Home-care workers figure out ingenious way of dealing with testy and disabled clients. People schooled on the streets can orchestrate brilliant petty crimes...” (Markusen, 2006, p. 1924). Florida’s method of occupational grouping is simply wrong, Markusen claims; many workers in the service industry, supposedly members of the two thirds of the

United States population who are not using their “creativity” on the job, are continuously finding ways to innovate in their work. In order to look more closely and accurately at the effects of creativity on the urban landscape, Markusen focuses on the occupation of artist, evaluating their impact on community building and economic health.

The term “artist”, for Markusen’s purposes, encompasses writers, musicians, visual artists and performing artists. Markusen discusses how artists living in a particular geographical location contribute to the area’s economic development by directly exporting their work, as well as providing an alternative for residents to imported artistic work and/or activities (Markusen, 2006). Partly because of this, artists play a major role in stabilizing and upgrading neighbourhoods. She argues that lawyers, doctors, and other members of Florida’s Creative Class make a very different contribution than artists do. This is precisely why it is important to distinguish artists from the rest of Florida’s occupational grouping, and be much clearer on the definition of “creativity.”

Stevenson (2004), agrees with Markusen, and also expresses concern over the potential for gentrification and middle-class bias in Florida’s work. “Indeed, Florida’s formula for measuring and developing the “creative class” as the basis of city re-imaging and cultural industry development clearly has a middle-class bias, and can be read as a prescription for gentrification and displacement” (p. 123).

Some researchers go further still, suggesting Florida’s work does not relate to cultural policy at all:

It is perhaps surprising that Florida's work should have been taken so seriously by some cultural policy scholars, especially considering the fact that he is not much if at all interested in cultural policy itself... Florida's ideas - or, rather, buzzwords - make little in the way of an original contribution to such questionable thought and the specious arguments he repeats constantly are either seriously flawed or merely trite” (McGuigan, 2009, p. 292).

Nivin and Plettner (2009), agreeing with Florida that the United States is now in the “Creative Age”, argue the cultural economy, and more specifically, innovation, will play an increasingly important role in future economies. “The development of a vibrant arts and cultural infrastructure is critical to the success of the development of any region” (p. 31). Creativity and innovation are the benchmarks of success in the current economy.

Nivin and Plettner (2009) believe a vibrant arts community serves to draw new businesses, recruit new employees to the region, and encourage loyalty of current residents and businesses (Nivin and Plettner, 2009, p. 32). They also argue those with training in the arts are the new “key players” in innovation, and are essential for success in the marketplace. “This is an era where emotions, experiences, and aesthetics drive consumer demand” (p. 32). Jobs that once required trained personnel, Nivin and Plettner explain, are now being outsourced to countries with lower costs, or replaced by more sophisticated automation techniques. This leaves the United States economy reliant on those jobs that “are not routine – jobs that require creativity” (p. 32). Additionally, because North Americans’ lives are “defined” (p. 32) by wealth and abundance, we have come to desire goods and services that are aesthetically pleasing and satisfy our “emotional needs.”

Cities are competing, not only for tourist dollars, but to attract new residents and retain existing ones. To become a key player in the cultural landscape, city governments have “subsidized a diverse assortment of cultural facilities ranging from the experimental, such as the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco, to more mainstream flagship museum such as the Art Gallery of Ontario” (Grodach and Loukaitou-Sideris, 2007, p. 350). Many North American cities have now created agencies, departments, or

organizations within the municipal structure to manage the city's cultural "growth." Grodach and Loukaitou-Sideris (2007) maintain the economic reliance on cultural industry, infrastructure, and activity is not limited to large cities, but is occurring in cities of all shapes and sizes (p. 351). Reasons for this reliance range from garnering tourist revenue, to providing employment for local artists and improving a city's image.

Grodach and Loukaitou-Sideris place all cultural development strategies into three types: *Entrepreneurial Strategies*, *Creative Class Strategies*, and *Progressive Strategies*. Entrepreneurial Strategies are led by purely economic objectives, and "most clearly pursue a proactive, market-driven approach." Creative Class Strategies "seek economic development through the provision of quality of life and recreational amenities," and Progressive Strategies are the most grassroots and "local" approach, looking to the needs of local communities and arts organizations as a guide (2007, p. 352). Grodach and Loukaitou-Sideris note that cultural regeneration projects often borrow from more than one type of strategy, and rarely fit one specific model.

Within this typology, The Edge Artist Village represents a Progressive Strategy. Goals for Progressive Strategy projects are to raise the overall standard of living, and not solely to result in economic growth. Grodach and Loukaitou-Sideris note that these projects can sometimes face difficulties because "in a capitalist economy, the private sector has the upper hand in development decisions" (p. 355). This is interesting in the context of The Edge Artist Village, which is ultimately a private developer-initiated project, but with a social mission.

Methodological Difficulties

Unfortunately, the methodological difficulties in measuring the supposed benefits of culture-led regeneration have resulted in a significant lack of evidence (Evans and Shaw, 2006; Evans, 2005). Because of the increasing popularity of culture-led regeneration strategies, there has been a “growing call for evidence to support the claims which are made by city and cultural organisations in the pursuit of substantial capital funding and leverage” (Evans, 2005, p. 959). In a comprehensive review of the evaluation methods of culture and regeneration projects, Evans (2005) concludes evidence of “the sustained impacts” of regeneration using major cultural projects is limited (p. 975). However, while earlier attention on culture-led regeneration typically focused on larger, flagship projects, there has been a shift back towards more socially based research and smaller, community-based arts projects. “A conclusion seems to be that the flagship and major city-centre and waterfront cultural schemes are less about regeneration than the conventional wisdom portrays them. The expectation that they will produce sustained social and distributive economic benefits alone is arguably an unreasonable one” (Evans, 2005, p. 975).

Evans stresses the importance of community ownership in any culture and regeneration strategy, and notes, “the criteria (for success) should be set by those benefitting and participating in the cultural activity itself” (p. 976). Evans also maintains reasons for a lack of evidence in the field may be due to several reasons: “evidence may exist but not be published or made public; or may exist in general form - via regeneration assessments - but not specifically analysed in cultural terms. More often, however, the rationale for measuring cultural impacts in relation to regeneration is not sufficiently

understood or valued by stakeholders” (p. 977). Most importantly, he notes, “despite a mixed experience of flagship and iconic buildings and mega-events, and the regenerative effects of these costly *grands projets*, these formulas and strategies continue to be emulated...” (p. 978).

Strom (1999) agrees evaluating the success of culture-led regeneration strategies is difficult. Even the task of evaluating the impact of a business subsidy is a challenge, given the difficulty in separating the effects from one strategy from any other “influences on business activity” (Strom, 1999, p. 432). Evaluating a new cultural organization is even more complicated, given that typically, multiple stakeholders are involved. Strom (1999) notes that city officials, business owners and patrons, and arts institutions may have differing interests. While stakeholder interests may not necessarily be in competition with each other, they nevertheless complicate the process of evaluation. “Given these disparate and largely intangible goals, how does one measure a project’s success?” (Strom, 1999, p. 432).

A Matter of Scale: Flagship Projects vs. Community-Based Projects

“I accept that cultural flagships can contribute to more confident perceptions of a city, including by some of its publics as well as investors or tourists...But, as the arts have moved in the UK from being administered as a public service to being managed as businesses paying their way in increased property values, job creation and tourism, so what is sometimes called urban regeneration (with an implication of community benefit) has become urban redevelopment.” (Miles, 2005, p. 894).

Research in this area has typically focused on large-scale projects as opposed to community-based ones. Because many arts-impact studies calculate the economic significance of arts-related industry by tabulating the earned income of these larger arts

venues, the contribution of local artists to the regional economy can be grossly underrepresented. “Restricting itself to arts organizations and the impact of events associated with them, (such an approach) fails to trace the many ways in which a region’s artistic talent contributes to regional productivity and output” (Markusen and Schrock, 2006, p. 1662).

Looking only at large arts venues/events fails to take into consideration several factors. Significant economic impact results from activities such as artists directly exporting their goods via the internet or other methods, the human capital derived from artists teaching others their craft in the community, and countless other avenues not related to the programming of major arts organizations. Not only do artists add to the economic base of a region by selling goods and ordering supplies and products for their work, but they also in turn tend to spend a good deal of their earned income on other local industry (Markusen and Schrock, 2006). Dubbed the “artistic dividend” (Markusen and Schrock, 2006), this benefit can be observed most readily in large urban centres with an artist-rich base. To capitalize on this potential, cities in decline can attempt to reverse this trend by “building an artistic component to the local economy” (p. 1683). Markusen (2006) notes:

Many artists in the region do not have a stake in the large arts portals. Actors and entire performances are often brought in from outside the region, and the work that the museums showcase is rarely local. Some artists appreciate that such exposure helps to raise the quality bar for aspirants who cannot afford to travel to see work done elsewhere. But for the most part, artists are adamant in their support for more decentralized, neighborhood-based theaters, galleries, and other artist-centered spaces (p. 1936).

In recent years, cities have clamored to invest in high profile, large-scale cultural buildings to draw tourist dollars and raise their national and international profile. A

growing body of research, however, is questioning the assertion that large, flagship cultural projects are positive for a city's cultural economy and social health (Miles, 2005; Grodach, 2008). Examples of such projects are the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, designed by architect Frank Gehry, and, in a local context, the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, in Winnipeg. Many cities justify the investment with claims that cultural flagships will encourage other "arts-related activity," as well as providing a space for local artists to meet and exchange ideas, supporting their own individual practice. "Alternatively, cultural flagships may negatively affect local arts development and exacerbate the already uneven distribution of resources to cultural producers by pricing out that which does not cater to a mainstream, tourist audience—typically smaller and lower budget artistic activity" (Grodach, 2008, p. 496).

In a study examining the success of several flagship cultural projects to encourage regeneration, Grodach concluded, "the flagship cultural projects have mixed success in generating arts-based revitalization" (p. 496). He attributed the failure of projects to several factors: the local context, facility characteristics, the needs and priorities of the cultural institution itself, and the level of involvement and financing strategies of the redevelopment agencies (Grodach, 2008, p. 496).

Most critics of what Grodach and Loukaitou-Sideris would call *Entrepreneurial Strategies*, (those led by purely economic objectives) are concerned "an urban development strategy whose primary goal is to attract outsiders to privatized entertainment spaces can be undemocratic and exclusionary, diverting public funds from projects of more direct benefit to most urban residents" (Strom, 2002, p. 18). Rodriguez et al. (2001), examining the role of the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, note that while

the museum has been successful in attracting tourist dollars and stimulating the economy in Bilbao, the ability of the museum to act as a catalyst for the formation of a cultural district has been less clear. The “lack of a coherent strategy and the *ad hoc* way in which decisions have been made without any clear strategic framework,” combined with the duplication of such projects in other cities, have acted to lessen the novelty and long-term impact of the museum (p. 175). Unfortunately, Grodach and Loukaitou-Sideris (2007), claim, “the data indicate agencies and cities overwhelmingly favor the entrepreneurial strategy” (p. 358). Stevenson (2004) agrees, claiming cultural planning is “deeply implicated in creating spaces of middle-class consumption and enclaves of exclusivity” (p. 123).

While it could be argued that the North Main Street community would certainly benefit from an increase in economic activity, the goal of the Edge Artist Village is not solely to create revenue. Projects such as The Edge Artist Village focus primarily on social change, and only secondarily on attracting dollars to the neighbourhood. This is evident in The Edge’s vision, which states that The Edge exists to “Increase public interest in the arts, improve the economic status of artists, provide creative opportunities to under-served communities, and empower our youth through creative expression” (The Edge, 2009).

Cultural Clustering

Strategies for culture-led regeneration are often tied to a larger plan to encourage the formation of cultural clusters; “geographically-defined networks created by the presence of a density of cultural assets in particular neighbourhoods” (Stern and Seifert,

2007, p.1). Winnipeg exhibits cultural clustering in the Exchange District; The Edge Artist Village is now trying to create a cultural cluster around the 600 block of Main Street as well.

Montgomery (2004) explains that cultural quarters, or clusters, must have certain characteristics in order to be successful. They will be places where artists and designers create *new* work, and they will offer a variety of places for artistic work to be consumed (movie theatres, theatres, galleries, etc.). They may have ties to formal educational institutions, providing “education and training, a flow of new artists and entrepreneurs, (and) research and development” (p. 4). Finally, they tend to be places of mixed use. “Cultural quarters are places where art and creative activity are produced and consumed, where people (artists and customers) may be educated and entertained, and where the ambience is such that people come simply to hang out and be seen” (Montgomery, 2004, p. 4).

The desirability of cultural clustering remains controversial. Although culture-led regeneration strategies do show potential for the revitalization of urban areas in decline, there is debate on whether cultural clustering is the best method through which to implement them. McCarthy (2005) notes there is a risk of counter-productive effects resulting from “the derivative nature of strategies, the priority for image enhancement and the homogenization of cultural milieus” (p. 291).

Sustainability remains one of the key issues in cultural quarters. Sustainability has been found to be less likely where there has been less mixed use, and more dependency on public intervention (Evans and Shaw, 2006). The success of a cultural quarter depends on “the sense of local ownership” (p.11) as well as if the historic context of the site has

been taken into account. Finally, “cultural and creative industries quarters that are home to a range of creative businesses and activities are more likely to thrive than those that are more narrowly focused” (Evans and Shaw, 2006, p.11).

In CentureVenture Development Corporation’s 2008 Annual Business Plan, cluster development was named as one key initiative to be carried out over the next three years. At the time of this study, four major clusters of development/activity were underway in downtown Winnipeg, as identified by the Downtown North Pre-Plan Assessment completed in late 2008 (UrbanEdge Consulting Inc., 2008). The Old Market Square Cluster includes the redevelopment of Old Market Square at the corner of King Street and William Avenue, as well as the Royal Bank Building at William Avenue and Main Street. The Royal Bank Building is slated to become the new home of Red River College’s Culinary Arts Program and student housing. The Waterfront Drive Cluster includes several upscale condominium projects and potentially the historic pumping station on James Avenue.

The two remaining clusters, the Main Street Cluster and the Disraeli Bridges Reconstruction, are particularly relevant to the North Main Street community. The Main Street Cluster involves the new Winnipeg Regional Health Authority building, located on the west side of Main Street north of Logan Avenue. In addition, the new head office of the United Way is currently under construction just two blocks south of the WRHA. The Disraeli Bridges Reconstruction, set to begin in 2010, could have a significant impact on the traffic and future development that occurs around The Edge Artist Village (UrbanEdge Consulting Inc., 2008).

There is a small portion of the Exchange District Historic Site currently known as the “cultural precinct”. This primarily consists of the Centennial Centre on Main Street (the Centennial Concert Hall, Planetarium, and Manitoba Museum), as well as The Manitoba Theatre Centre Mainstage and Warehouse, located on Market Avenue and Lily Street respectively. Pantages Playhouse Theatre, the Martha Street Studio, and the Ukrainian Cultural Centre are also located within the cultural precinct. The Martha Street Studio and the Ukrainian Cultural Centre are particularly significant, as they begin to bridge the 611 block of Main Street with the larger Centennial Centre. The Edge Artist Village and the North Main Street community are well positioned to become part of the cultural district, as its northern border is currently the Disraeli Freeway (UrbanEdge Consulting Inc, 2008). Richard Walls is aware of this potential, and spoke of eventually merging the north Main Street strip with the already recognized cultural precinct. If the success of a cultural district does rely on mixed use and a strong sense of local ownership, as Evans and Shaw (2006) suggest, the North Main community has the potential to become a sustainable cultural hub in downtown Winnipeg.

Gentrification

“Gentrification involves the transition of inner-city neighbourhoods from a status of relative poverty and limited property investment to a state of commodification and reinvestment” (Ley, 2003, p. 2527).

Gentrification can be described simply as “The movement of money into older, core area neighbourhoods” (Silver, 2006, p. 7). Other elements of gentrification include the movement of new people into core area neighbourhoods, and the movement of (usually lower-income) people out of such neighbourhoods. Silver (2006) describes two

theories concerning the “agent” of gentrification: *the economic explanation*, and *the cultural explanation*. The economic explanation claims that developers in search of profits are the driving force in gentrification. The cultural explanation believes people, and not capital, are the leading cause of gentrification. Specifically, that the responsible parties are “‘pioneering’ urbanites in search of a different, non-suburban, urban living experience” (Silver, 2006, p. 8).

Researchers have found that certain neighbourhoods have characteristics that make them more likely to gentrify. They have “architecturally interesting” housing capable of renovation, are located close to public transit, and are close to the central business district (Silver, 2006, p. 11). Despite these predictors, however, researchers also claim there is no one predictor of gentrification, and each case of gentrification differs from the next. In his 2006 study of gentrification in Winnipeg’s West Broadway neighbourhood, Silver notes that recent developments in Winnipeg’s downtown have caused, and will continue to cause, an increasing number of people to work, study, and live downtown. This trend will cause downtown neighbourhoods to become more and more attractive to those looking for a central place to re-locate. In addition, Silver claims the provincial government has been steadily investing in “new economy” (p. 16) businesses. These industries are, as Silver explains, “[those] that the literature argues are most likely to produce the kinds of people likely to be gentrifiers” (p. 16).

Artists have a particularly important role in the history of gentrification, as they are often viewed as playing a “key role in the process” (Silver, 2006, p. 16). It is argued that places valued by artists are often quickly valued by others as well, due to the great importance society places on “culture”. It is for this precise reason (a thriving artistic

presence) that Winnipeg's Exchange District has gentrified over the last decade. If this argument holds true, North Main is perfectly positioned to suffer the same fate.

Ironically, artists typically settle in neighbourhoods because they prefer to live and work on the fringe, and low-income neighbourhoods are often attractive to artists because of their low rents. "The anti-bourgeois, anti-conformist dispositions of the artist sit uneasily with the servant of a mass society. Life on the edge, the preferred social location of the artist, undercuts the disciplined convention of the organization man" (Ley, 2003, p. 2530). Ley (2003) reports that many artists are not interested in "artist spaces" created by municipal governments trying to capitalize on a cultural trend. "The live-work spaces, frequently marketed as artists' lofts, are rarely popular (or affordable) with many artists" (p. 2534). Ley also notes that there is a "new cultural class" or "new middle class" of professionals in the media, higher education, and design. This group of people is very close to the artist in terms of values, and are thus the most likely to gentrify the inner city neighbourhoods often favoured by artists (Cameron and Coaffee, 2005, p. 41). This finding is relevant to The Edge Artist Village, and suggests that the North Main Street community would be better served by small, locally led development than by city intervention, particularly for Walls' concept of live/work spaces.

Silver continues by explaining that the inner city of Winnipeg has a high rate of poverty, and poverty tends to erode the tax base (due to the decay of the housing stock, for example). Because Winnipeg relies on property taxes for a good deal of its revenue, it is in the City's best interest to encourage gentrification in inner city neighbourhoods.

Many researchers would agree that the main danger of gentrification is the risk of displacing the community's lower-income residents. This would be particularly

destructive in the North Main community, as many of the neighbourhood's residents are in need of the services that exist there.

Cameron and Coaffee (2005) claim that the recent attention on culture-led regeneration has created a *new* model of gentrification. One “where the main driver of gentrification is ‘public policy’ which seeks to use ‘positive’ gentrification as an engine of urban renaissance. This involves the use of public art and cultural facilities as a promoter of regeneration and associated gentrification” (p. 39). The authors argue that artists are now creating a milieu for the “public consumption” of art, through public art, physical infrastructure, and artistic events (p. 46). As an example of this new model of gentrification, however, Cameron and Coaffee use the example of the new Guggenheim museum in Bilbao, Spain - once again a “flagship” cultural project as opposed to a smaller, community-based one.

The Intrinsic Versus Instrumental Value of Art and Culture

Due to the growing public and political profile of culture-led regeneration, some claim the intrinsic value of art has become overlooked in the search for urban renewal strategies.

Author and researcher Joni Maya Cherbo argues the instrumentalization of art does not detract from its intrinsic value. She believes it is because we find art so intrinsically valuable that we have turned to instrumentalizing it. “Because empiricism is the holy grail of our times, we measure the arts to show various stakeholders the manifest ways art is important to individuals and society. It is our contemporary way of showing the contours of something, its validity, its impact, its utility, and its worth” (Cherbo,

2007, p. 171). According to Cherbo, if we were not reminded of the importance of art, we would perhaps overlook it. Instrumentalization is simply a method of appreciation and a reminder to pay attention.

Marc Vogl (2007) feels that while cities do not hesitate to support cultural institutions such as museums and theatres, policy makers do not appreciate art itself as thoroughly as they should. Recognizing the instrumental as well as the intrinsic value of art is crucial, Vogl maintains, for sound public policy. “Those currently engaged in public service, and those preparing to join them, must recognize the intrinsic and instrumental potential of arts and of the creative process and unleash this potential in the service of more enlightened, and more effective, public policy” (p. 43).

In a study of outcomes arts policy should be trying to attain in the United Kingdom, there a wide range of opinions were expressed. From the artists, “there was a perception that in order to receive public money, artists and arts organizations were required to demonstrate that they could contribute to broad social and economic agendas, potentially at the expense of the ‘intrinsic’ value of the arts in their own right” (Holden, 2005, in Bunting, 2008, p. 323).

When the process of exploring the desired outcomes of arts policy had been completed, it was found that it was possible to strike a balance between the intrinsic and instrumental values of art. “The process of deliberation resulted in a balanced view, where the arts were seen to make a positive contribution to society providing the experience is enriching and enjoyed by large and diverse numbers of people” (Bunting, 2008, p. 323).

Other researchers believe the instrumentalization of art de-values the concept of

creativity itself. “By taking this approach the arts sector has arguably been diminished, divided and confused. Equating the making of the art with the selling of art undermines the process of the doing. The unique value of art as a tool for interpreting the world in which we live and as a means for providing transformational experiences needs to be nurtured rather than reduced to a set of figures” (Caust, 2003, p. 61). Caust also argues governments are trying to “control, manage and rationalize the arts sector”, and by doing so, they are “*perverting* [emphasis added] the very practise of art itself” (p. 62). To address this problem, Caust suggests non-profit arts organizations should be run with the expectation that “aesthetic and cultural considerations” are of more importance than financial return (p. 60). Caust also cautions relying on government funding could dilute the intention of the art. “There is a real danger that this approach will lead to the production of safe, consumer-orientated arts product which, in the end, may not be what the audience either wants or needs” (Caust, 2003, p. 58).

Malcolm Miles also points out “voices of dissent” from artists themselves, quoting one British artist as saying: “The ‘art pill’ is now dished out by New Labour in an attempt to empower and effect change through the participatory values of art” (Hope, quoted in Miles, 2005, p. 890). Other artists worry art dedicated to an economic goal will not retain “a radical edge” (p. 891).

The Edge seems to be balancing successfully the intrinsic value of culture with potentially negative effects of instrumentalization. While culture is being used explicitly as a strategy for urban regeneration, The Edge remains steadfastly community-based; it focuses on providing opportunities for artists to produce, and for others to enjoy the results. This ongoing tension is explored throughout the case study.

Fitting In: Art and Social Inclusion

It is also worth looking more specifically at the subject of how the process by which art is created plays a significant role in the life of an urban community. While most of the literature on this topic focuses on public art, the basic theme of social inclusion vs. exclusion is important for all forms of community-based art and arts organizations. Art displayed in the public sphere is uniquely capable of engaging the community in which it is placed. While this can often be used to increase the sense of social cohesion in an urban area, public art can also have the opposite effect, acting as an exclusionary force. “For public art (matters of taste and preference) become magnified precisely because of its visibility and hence its ‘inescapability’, although reactions to it can vary from the highly vocal and oppositional to the unaffected” (Sharp, Pollock and Paddison, 2005, p. 1001).

Because of the visible nature of public art, the decision-making process used to select the final installation is extremely important. If the “public” for whom the art is created feels they had no input into its conception, or worse feel their needs or interests have been misrepresented, the art itself can be rejected and the effect on a community (exclusion) will be the opposite of that which was originally intended. Sharp, Pollock and Paddison (2005) warn that though overt political symbolism (generally embodied as monumentalism in the 19th century) is generally not used today, public art has not yet become politically neutral.

In today’s context, public art is generally used as a method of urban beautification. The danger, presumably for the planning of public art as well as all other forms of urban planning today, is this: if we are planning “culturally”, for whom are we

doing so (Sharp, Pollock and Paddison, 2005)? Frequently, artists working on participatory projects are working with marginalized populations. Public art, because it is highly visible and accessible, offers a prime vehicle for asserting the history and the presence of these marginalized populations within the city. When this is done in a collaborative environment, social cohesion can be a positive outcome of the process. The process an artist goes through working with the community may span years, and can result in the forging of strong relationships and increased communication amongst community members. The process can become complicated, however, when a project is attempting to work within the framework of a diverse neighbourhood. Whose opinions are likely to be heard and realized? “In such circumstances, one solution has been to facilitate a space for cultural exchange rather than impose an artificial, fixed vision of a community through a singular representation” (Sharp, Pollock and Paddison, 2005, p. 1010).

In this sense, public art embodies many of the problems encountered in the participatory planning realm in general. The issue of inclusiveness vs. exclusiveness, particularly when planning for diverse neighbourhoods, continues to elicit a wide range of differing opinions from planners, citizens, and politicians alike.

Further research calls attention to the important difference between a top-down vs. a bottom-up approach to public art projects. Diane Grams speaks about the art production network, defined as “the social relationships involved in producing art” (Grams, 2006, p. 225). These relationships are created through “repeated and enduring interactions involving trust, reciprocity, or shared interests” (Grams, 2006, p. 225). Grams maintains *locally produced* public art provides physical and public evidence of a

community. Public art produced in a top-down approach (through provincial/state government, for example), has quite a different effect. This type of public art is more geared towards attracting tourism and providing markers for the city's "cultural" position within a citywide, national and even international framework. Shared interest among a community's residents can be the catalyst for a positive process by which public art is used as a vehicle for further social cohesion and benefits to the community, and the city, at large.

Precedents for Culture-Led Regeneration

Below are three organizations sharing The Edge Artist Village's unique objective to use cultural facilities and programming to regenerate a declining urban neighbourhood. These provide a larger context for the study of the case study.

Project Row Houses, Houston, Texas:

"Art and social activism is used to reclaim an inner city neighbourhood in Houston" (Project Row Houses, 2008).

Project Row Houses (PRH) is a community-based arts and cultural organization located in Houston's Northern Third Ward. Approximately 50% of children in the area are living under the poverty line. Begun in 1992, PRH was begun by a group of neighbourhood artists who "wanted to establish a positive, creative presence in their own community" (Project Row Houses, projectrowhouses.org, About section, 2008). The organization now owns 40 properties spanning six blocks of the neighbourhood. The properties are used for artist exhibition and/or residency, houses for young mothers, artist residencies, office space, a community gallery, a park, and low-income residential and

commercial space (Project Row Houses, projectrowhouses.org, About section, 2008). As described in the Kennedy School Review, “The value added by (the founder’s) approach to rehabilitating housing is manifest in the community’s pride in its physical landscape, its connection to its history by way of reimagined traditional architectural forms, and unique sense of place that walking by, and living in, works of art provides” (Vogl, 2007, p. 45).

Project Row Houses shares some unique aspects with The Edge Artist Village. Particularly relevant is its location in a declining inner city community. Project Row Houses is particularly relevant to The Edge Artist Village because of its location in a declining urban community. Houston’s third ward faces many of the same challenges as the North Main Street community, including a shortage of low-income housing, homelessness, and a declining local economy.

Like The Edge Artist Village, Project Row Houses was founded on the principle that art and culture can be a catalyst for revitalizing a community. Also like The Edge, the mission of Project Row Houses mission includes social capital and community service. In order to expand its reach within the community, Project Row Houses established the Row House Community Development Corporation (RHCDC) in 2003 (Project Row Houses, projectrowhouses.org, About section, 2008). The RHCDC focuses on providing more opportunities for low-income housing, and supporting community economic development within the neighbourhood. While The Edge is still expanding its capacity for programming, a community development corporation would be an interesting goal for the organization to consider in the future.

Youngstown Cultural Arts Center, Seattle, Washington:

Located in the West Seattle neighbourhood of Delridge, the Youngstown Cultural Arts Center has become an integral part of the Seattle arts scene, providing facilities and programs for neighbourhood residents as well as those of the greater Seattle area. It is a project of the Delridge Neighbourhoods Development Association, a local non-profit with a mandate of engaging local residents and improving the neighbourhood of Delridge.

The building now housing the arts center was initially constructed in 1917 as the Youngstown Elementary School, later renamed the Frank B. Cooper School. The school sat vacant for nearly ten years, when the Delridge Neighbourhoods Development Association stepped in and held a series of meetings with local residents to determine the best use for the building. Through community consultation, it became clear there was a large demand, and need, for a local arts centre. In 2006, after having sat vacant for nearly twenty years, the Frank B. Cooper School was reopened as the Youngstown Cultural Arts Center.

When the Frank B. Cooper School was renovated, spaces were included for 36 live/work lofts for low-income artists. The resident artists are very much a part of the community, often collaborating with other artists living in the center, and holding open houses so the neighbourhood residents have the opportunity to view and engage with their work (Youngstown Cultural Arts Center, 2009).

The Youngstown Cultural Arts Center is a good example of an arts organization that is dedicated to engaging its community. The Center was developed with input from the community, and designs programming according to the needs of the Delridge

neighbourhood's needs. Given the strong voice of members of the North Main Street community, The Edge Artist Village will likely find increasing support there as its public profile grows. The Edge is deeply committed to serving and engaging its local community, and is poised to play a significant role in the neighbourhood in the coming years.

Artscape, Toronto, Ontario:

Artscape is committed to building a world that engages art, culture and creativity as catalysts for community transformation, sustainability, prosperity and liveability (Artscape, 2009).

Located in Toronto, Artscape describes themselves as a “not-for-profit enterprise engaged in culture-led regeneration” (Artscape, 2009). Artscape was initially founded to respond to low vacancy rates in Toronto's arts community following the real estate boom of the 1980's. Now acting as a property developer, Artscape provides affordable artist live/work spaces, studios, rehearsal and performance space, and storage facilities for non-profits.

“At the beginning of the new millennium, new understanding was emerging about the importance of creativity to the new economy and the role of the arts in city-building. Toronto was experiencing a renaissance led by its major cultural institutions. Artscape played a catalytic role in the rebirth of the Distillery Historic District as an arts and entertainment destination” (Artscape, 2009).

Artscape is one example of an organization focused largely on the economic end of culture-led regeneration. This organization is particularly relevant to the case of The Edge because Artscape is, in essence, a developer. Like Richard Walls has been doing on

an individual scale, Artscape approaches culture-led regeneration from the private perspective. Artscape is an excellent example of how private enterprise can work towards responsible community building, and is a business model that could make a significant impact in Winnipeg.

4.3 Chapter Summary

This literature review has discussed various themes related to culture-led regeneration, including the history of culture-led regeneration, definitions and understandings of culture, the economic benefits of culture-led regeneration, the challenges of measuring culture-led regeneration, the controversy surrounding flagship cultural projects, cultural clustering, art and social inclusion, and the intrinsic versus instrumental value of art and culture. Several precedents of culture-led regeneration projects have also been explored to provide further context for The Edge Artist Village.

The literature review has identified several gaps in research concerning culture-led regeneration. Most notably, there is a tendency in past research to focus on flagship cultural projects as opposed to smaller, community-based projects. This is crucial to this study, as the community of The Edge Artist Village identifies itself as one being very interested in pursuing further grassroots, community-based projects. Second, there is a significant gap in the literature concerning how to report evidence of success in projects including culture-led regeneration. This has been a major challenge for organizations when seeking funding, as well as for government bodies when justifying investments or trying to formalize strategies to encourage culturally-based projects.

CHAPTER 5: Analysis and Results

5.1 Coding and Analysis Process

Eleven semi-structured interviews were completed for this project. The interview subject chose the place and time of the interview, and interviews were recorded if the subject consented. Ten of the interviews were conducted in person, and one by telephone. All interviews followed topic guides (see Appendices A, B, and C). The interviews were transcribed and subsequently coded using thematic analysis. The process for coding interviews followed the process as described by Marshall and Rossman (1999), whereby the interview texts were read several times, and a preliminary system of classification was determined based on “regularities” found in the transcriptions. Through further readings, subcategories emerged for each initial category. These are referred to as “analyst-constructed typologies,” and are defined as “those created by the researcher that are grounded in the data but not necessarily used explicitly by participants” (Marshall and Rossman, 1999, p. 154-155). Seven independent themes emerged during analysis. Further analysis led to subcategories within most of the seven themes. Categories were colour-coded and subsequently grouped with other passages of the same category. These groupings were then analyzed for noteworthy quotes and organized according to the subcategories that had already been identified. The seven themes are:

1. *The Role of The Edge Artist Village in the Community*
2. *Gentrification Concerns*
3. *The Role of Private Development*
4. *The South Point Douglas Community*
5. *The Role of Government*
6. *The Role of the City/Planning Concerns*
7. *Future Visions for the Community*

5.2 The Use of Fictionalized Narrative

“A narrative can be understood to organize a sequence of events into a whole so that the significance of each event can be understood through its relations to that whole. In this way a narrative conveys the meaning of events” (Elliott, 2005, p. 3).

According to Barbara Elliott (2005), the use of narrative in qualitative research began in the early 1980s, and became increasingly popular throughout the 1990s (p. 5). The methodology is used in various disciplines, but is seen particularly often in the sociology of health, education, and criminology, and often in research involving the “experiences of individuals” (p. 6).

Analysis for this project uses something referred to by Richardson (1990) as a collective story. “The collective story displays an individual’s story by narrating the experiences of the social category to which the individual belongs, rather than by telling the particular individual’s story” (Richardson, 1990, p. 25).

Analysis techniques for this study were modeled on Dawson’s (2007) work “Exploring students’ learning experiences through narrative tales.” In this study, Dawson examined several students’ abilities to resolve bioethical dilemmas, and fictionalized two characters in order to represent the experiences of the various students. Dawson combined data from several students in order to create each of his two characters, and to report a narrative he felt was “cohesive and representative” of the students he had interviewed (p. 86).

Interviews for this study were completed with three “types” of subject: staff of The Edge Artist Village, local residents and business owners, and members of municipal and provincial government. Because all subjects from the same interview type (municipal and provincial government employees, for example), did not necessarily share the same

views, composite characters have been created based on similar views on the seven themes identified through the coding process, and a collective story has been created for each character. This methodology allowed the results to be presented in a way that tells a story about the community, rather than simply reporting individual comments on a particular subject. Due to the small and intimate nature of the arts community in Winnipeg and the North Main Street community in particular, the use of composite characters provides a greater level of anonymity for the interview subjects than if results were to be reported based on individual interviews. From the eleven interviews, five composite characters were created, and are described below.

The Artist: The artist, 43, female, is a current homeowner in South Point Douglas. She is an independent, professional artist not directly associated with The Edge Gallery. She has lived in the neighbourhood for approximately 15 years. Working mostly in paint, she works out of a rented studio space, also in South Point Douglas. The artist has taken an active role in developments occurring in the community; she is a member of the residents committee, and has been heavily involved in the Secondary Plan process.

The Arts Administrator: The arts administrator, 33, male, is the executive director of a longstanding community-based arts organization in the North Main Street community. His organization has a large and loyal membership, which includes citywide, province-wide, and nation-wide members. He does not currently live in the North Main Street community, however he has worked there

for close to ten years, and is heavily involved as a stakeholder in any plans for development in the area.

The Business Owner: The business owner, 52, male, runs a local, independent, design-based business that has been in the same location for 20 years, directly on Main Street. The business owner does not live in the area, and is not actively involved in the Secondary Planning process, though he does have strong relationships with other business owners in the area, and is a well-respected member of the community.

The Community Worker: The community worker, 37, female, has been involved in the North Main Street community for many years, and was present for the evolution of the Edge Artist Village from before the building was purchased to its current form. She has been involved in The Edge Artist Village in many capacities, including but not limited to volunteer, arts programmer, construction worker, building manager, artistic director, and workshop facilitator. The community worker is directly involved in working with residents of the neighbourhood, and feels strongly about addressing the issues facing the North Main Street community from the grassroots level. The community worker has personal relationships with many of the residents of the North Main Street community, and is the most “front line” member of the staff at The Edge Artist Village.

The Public Servant: The public servant, 56, female, is a former employee of the City of Winnipeg department of planning and property development. She has experience in both the municipal and provincial governments, and has significant knowledge of inner city planning issues and provincial funding frameworks.

5.3 Narrative Analysis

The results below are reported from the perspectives of the five composite characters described above, and are discussed according to the seven themes identified during the coding process. They are: the role of The Edge Artist Village in the community, gentrification concerns, the role of private development, the South Point Douglas community, the role of government, the role of the city/planning concerns, and future visions for the community.

5.3.1 The Role of The Edge Artist Village in the Community

Changes in the Community

Many subjects acknowledged the difficulty of attributing changes in the community to one organization. Subjects were able to discuss perceptions of change, however, in terms of safety, community involvement, the physical environment, and the overall economic and social health of the community. The community worker noted her perception of change might simply be due to her changed perspective from working in the North Main Street community.

“Personally speaking, my perspective has changed so much from spending the time down here. And meeting with the people and really learning how to listen...so I think that I’m seeing these great changes happening, but maybe these things were happening all along and now I’m just looking, and maybe now I’m

just accessing, and really paying attention to some really fantastic things. I haven't seen the streets get cleaner. I mean, you want to put a dollar amount on it, I can't."

The artist felt strongly The Edge has been positive for the community because it provides another option for community members.

"For anybody who just wants to drop in and get kind of another experience that you would get in the neighborhood, you know what I mean? And it's really great...how well it's organized, and clean, and people are really serious. These are people off the street...who found a bit of a thing there where they are welcome to do. Because all those people on the streets, everybody's got a talent. And it's so easy to lose...and even people who are completely despondent and forgotten, they find a little something."

The business owner was in a particularly good position to speak about changes in the community, as he has inhabited the same space on the strip for several decades. He admitted that while he does not hear very often from customers about The Edge Gallery itself, "people are delighted with The Tallest Poppy." He also felt positively about the Main Street Festival, in which The Edge played a leadership role. *"It was fantastic. It was a real different block. It was a real different feel to this part of Main Street...it was exciting. It was my sense that there were people coming from the core, and from close around here, and from other places to come together for a celebration. And young people...but mixed. So that was great progress."* He spoke of the psychological changes that can be prompted by physical change in the neighbourhood. *"There's a sense of life just in a new building, and then there's a wonderful sense of life because the building is inhabited by people doing things. It's been slow but steady...so I feel really optimistic about what might be here in ten years."*

He acknowledged the role the arts have played in the revitalization of neighbourhoods in other cities, and noted that The Edge has the potential to be *"a very significant part of this community turning around...so I think that it's sort of a huge part*

of a foundation for change. Positive change.” He also spoke about how far the neighbourhood has come, recalling a day several years ago when the decline of the streetscape had become very apparent.

“I remember walking...like it was February, it was freezing. And I went to go across the crosswalk, and I was so unusual on the street, that cars stopped on both sides, you know, well before I got there. It was like it was an abandoned area, really. And that's the worst I've ever seen it. I crossed, and there was garbage in the recesses of the buildings, in the front, where the windows come out, like in front of the doorways.”

The community worker emphasized the importance of perseverance and forming personal relationships in making positive change. She also noted that at the beginning, there was an effort to simply introduce new activities and a new energy to the space.

“We've never had even a yell or shout in this space. That's pretty good, all this time; no one's been mad or screaming. So it's gotta be something about what we're doing, and the energy of us and the people around.”

While The Edge Gallery's programming is focused on youth and emerging artists, the community worker explained the Red Road Lodge's art programming is open to absolutely anyone in the community.

“Because the community here is not young people. The majority is people who have never been out of a house or apartment outside of this neighborhood. And they're never going to have a full-time job. Not all, but most. And they have nothing to do. They're just left to kind of hang out on a park bench, to go begging to get drunk. So we long ago identified the main problem to being poor is being bored. If you're sitting in a hotel, or a rooming house, or the Siloam Mission, and your whole day is sitting in front of a TV...well you're going to get depressed. You're going to do anything you can not to be by yourself in this little room.”

The community worker noted that some of the drop-in art program participants at the Red Road Lodge have gone on to do casual work for the hotel itself, or to get employment elsewhere. One of the art program participants went on to run the bike dump

behind the building. *“We have a couple people like that; who started here doing art and started doing something else. And whether they keep their jobs, I have no idea, but they’ve come a far way.”* She emphasized that it is often simply about providing an alternative and asking nothing in return. She spoke of one patron who had recovered from a drug addiction. *“She was living under the bridge when we first met her, and she came and hung out and did art with us, and just felt some kind of comfort in that, that we didn’t want anything, we just wanted to hang out, and she took that as her strength, and went on. And lots of this has gone on over the years. And we find that it’s something that we excel at.”*

The community worker points to the fact that she and others working in the area have been successful at obtaining grants for projects within the building as proof that people are beginning to understand what they are trying to accomplish. *“The fact that we’re successful with the grants, because they’re hard to get, and to get \$10,000, \$20,000 is a huge amount for individual artists...so this is the kind of art projects we do out of this space and we’re finding more support for us, you know.”*

The year the Occidental Hotel was purchased and operated as a bar, the fire service, police service, or ambulance service would be called “every second day.”

“Without fail. There would be someone hurt, there would be someone sick, there would be some disturbance, there would be a warrant for someone. There would be something. So every second day, there would be a fire truck outside, a police car, an ambulance. And not only once. Now, maybe once a month. If. So, for fifteen days a month for the last five years, we haven’t been calling the services that we were before, like traditionally. And how much does it cost for a fire truck, a police car and an ambulance to stop here for an hour? Thousands of dollars.”

The public servant agreed the perception of the area has changed, noting, *“The Edge has contributed to the notion that the area is not bad, it’s not skid row. There are*

people coming from all over the city for workshops and loving it, and feeling safe.” She also spoke to the importance of the Red Road Lodge in the grander scheme of addictions recovery in Manitoba. “So it’s different and unique, but fits really well into [the] overall system. I think it also serves a population that they’ve been dealing with these issues for multiple years, and you know, have been homeless, and sometimes it’s hard for them to integrate into some of the other programs, such as Addictions Foundation of Manitoba.”

The arts administrator noted that because The Edge provides more space for art activities in the community, it is useful for his members as well. *“It broadens the range of services available to young people who come here to use our place...it really broadens the range of services for a young person who is that way engaged.”*

The arts administrator felt strongly that youth from the South Point Douglas and North Main Street communities were particularly vulnerable, and were often singled out unfairly as likely to get into trouble.

“For some reason, society looks at a 14-year-old from our neighbourhood, and labels that 14-year-old with the most nasty and terrible label, this ‘at-risk youth’ label. And it’s just an automatic thing, right? We don’t look at a child, at a 14-year-old from Charleswood and call them an at-risk youth. We look at them and say, ‘You are so full of potential, so many opportunities for you, the world is your oyster’, and on and on and on, but we turn around and look at a 14-year-old Point Douglas youth and say ‘You’re at risk. You’ve got nothing going for you, and you’re at risk of either doing something really bad, or having something really bad done to you’.”

He went on to explain how art has a unique ability to reach people, and can serve as a much more productive “label.”

“And you can do that; you can call a young person an artist. You can’t call them a teacher, a lawyer, or whatever. But you can call them an artist. And you tell them that, you call them that enough, they start to internalize THAT. And they start to believe that they’re an artist. And they start to explore, discover about what it means to be an artist. Puts them on a much, much different path.”

Relationship with the Business Community

All subjects reported relationships among business owners in the community are generally positive. In terms of new organizations such as The Edge Gallery and the Red Road Lodge, subjects noted it took some time to build relationships and gain the trust of longstanding businesses. Some storeowners were concerned, especially after witnessing the gentrification that had occurred over the last decade in the Exchange District.

Mitchell Fabrics, a business that has been directly across from the former Occidental Hotel for 25 years, now allows The Edge Artist Village to use a parking lot it owns in the 611 block of Main Street. The community worker notes the relationship has been mutually beneficial. *“Mitchell’s customers have become much more comfortable with what’s going on.”* She believes the change has resulted from many groups working hard to improve the community. Among them she notes the Thunderbird House, The Aboriginal Centre, and other new businesses that have opened in the last few years along Main Street. The arts administrator agrees that relationships with business owners are positive, and adds that local shop owners and employees often frequent each other’s businesses.

The community worker identified communication and dialogue as the most crucial element of forming relationships with local business owners, and noted that so far, these relationships have been generally positive.

“Everybody’s really receptive, and I think they see a lot of positivity happening, like they see people coming and going, and it being a really healthy thing, so the businesses around here, they’re not feeling like this is anything toxic. I always feel like a broken record - engagement, eye contact, and making it personal for everybody. Letting them know. The communication is the biggest part of it.”

The community worker also acknowledged there can sometimes be a tension between new organizations in the area, such as The Edge, and other local hotel owners, if the owner feels his business is being threatened by the changes occurring in the neighbourhood.

“Well the owner I understand, he’s had that building...it’s probably his retirement, so he wants to sell it, so I guess you’ve got to buy him out, change the use. Other than that, everybody else in the neighborhood that I’ve seen is very positive about what’s happening. Most had just given up and said, ‘this is lost’. So they’re happy. What they are not happy about, of course, is increased taxes. Everybody’s taxes are going to go up.”

Challenges of Being a New Organization

Many subjects reported there were particular challenges associated with the fact that The Edge and the Red Road Lodge are still fairly new presences in the neighbourhood. The business owner noted that because MAWA is an older organization with a more established membership, his perception is that it tends to draw more people to the neighbourhood than The Edge.

“And if anything I would say MAWA has had, from my viewpoint, more of an impact. I might be wrong on that, but just in terms of attracting a lot of people to events, very mainstream. And a dynamic, women based, strong arts organization, very mainstream, is a huge contributor to my sense of the area. The Edge, I have a little less confidence in what it does. I don't know exactly what it does. I'm hopeful that it does really good things for young people.”

He also explained his perception might be due to the fact that The Edge is still evolving as an organization, and he is simply not as familiar with The Edge’s programming. *“I know about Graffiti art programming, I know a great deal there, and the kind of funding it gets, the kind of work it does, the kind of successes it has, the way it's grown. I don't know that that's the case with The Edge.”*

The community worker explains that because The Edge is based on a very broad vision, it is often difficult to decide where energy is to be focused. As a result of this, the community is still getting to know the gallery and its programs. This is a particular challenge for establishing partnerships with other local businesses and securing private funding.

“But I think the more success that comes from the programming; the more people are inspired by what is going on, the more people are going to come in. I think slowly you just have to find other businesses or organizations, find the right people that have the money recognizing that you don’t have charitable status yet. But that still see it, regardless, they’re not going to get anything back by way of taxes, but that they know they’re making an investment in something positive and they hope that that helps to make it sustainable. Because we’re so limited with the funding, it’s hard for me to have the time to access all of these things.”

Despite these challenges, the community worker notes that a positive impact is being made. *“I cry on such a regular basis because I’m so overwhelmed and moved, going, well this is exactly why I’m doing it, because these young people are benefitting from it, they’re excited, they’re from the Main Street area [and] they are seeing it...they’re not being polluted with all of what we grew up thinking what the Main Street area is about.”*

She also hopes the youth she is working with now will remain involved with The Edge in other capacities, and help the organization to grow. *“Because they are passionate, they believe it, they are seeing changes happen, and so they’re going to help propel this, as volunteers, or potentially mentors down the line. And they take it personal...the more time they spend down here, the more they have a sense of ownership.”* She also notes getting youth through the door to take advantage of their programs can sometimes be a challenge. *“(It’s) a trust thing. There has not been a lot of consistency. You get to know people, and especially working with people who are really,*

really struggling with a variety of different reasons. They don't want to be let down; they don't want to let their guard down." She stresses that when doing outreach work, she is quick to suggest other organizations if they have programs or equipment the Edge does not. *"Even if we don't have it here, we know of other places, and it shouldn't just be about getting your own place going."* Most importantly, she notes they don't have the capacity to grow any bigger at the present time. *"I would love to see there be more, and more of a variety, but right now, I can't take on the whole entire city, we don't have the infrastructure for it."*

It's Only One Part of the Solution...

Many subjects thought that while projects such as The Edge are one part of the solution for the area, they are not *the only* solution. In particular, the artist cited the artist's live/work spaces at The Edge, and noted that while they are designated "affordable", the rent is still too expensive for many artists living in the community. She emphasized it is important to have a diversity of organizations and projects.

"Sometimes people that are not that familiar with the art scene, when they see something like The Edge, they think that is the way to go. And I think that is one of the things that has to happen, I think it is a great contributor to ensuring artists have a space in the community, but it's not the only way. I think there has to be a variety of spaces available, and a variety of price ranges, a variety of, you know, community-led programs."

Additionally, because The Edge Gallery puts some of its focus on emerging artists as opposed to more established artists, many of the professional artists living in South Point Douglas do not use the facilities on a regular basis. The artist pointed out, however, that it is important for emerging artists to have a space in the community, and in that way, The Edge is making an impact.

The artist also noted that of the changes she has seen in the community, they have mostly been localized to the portion of Main Street on which The Edge Artist Village is located. The changes have not traveled as far as the surrounding areas such as South Point Douglas.

Drawing People From Other Areas

“I was at a reception at MAWA, and then walked by there, and I went in. And I wouldn’t have, and it was great. And there were a lot of people coming, and there were a lot of cars. And it was partly the reception at MAWA, but it was also the Edge. And I realized, ‘Whoa’. So they’ve been doing events too...that don’t just appeal to their peers, but where the general population is partaking.” (the business owner)

One positive outcome of The Edge is that people are coming to North Main Street from other areas of Winnipeg. *“This is a good opportunity to have people from farther away from downtown, and educate them and realize that it’s not just a place for people who are living off the street, and beggars, and that there’s a lot more humanness.”* While the programming is largely focused on serving people from the North Main Street community, the gallery is open to youth from all areas of the city. Funding requirements mandate that 80% of programming be focused on Aboriginal youth, but The Edge tries to include anyone who is interested.

“And I know that we need to be sensitive to cultural issues, but I think that all kids are at-risk, you know, if you have idle hands...there might be kids coming from Tuxedo. They’ve got a lot of money in their homes, but what’s the level of affection, what’s the nurturing and attention that they’re getting, and kids need that. They need to be empowered, and they need to feel good about who they are. So I personally don’t look at it just as a financial and social status thing, but it’s a mental and psychological issue as well.”

In addition, for programs with an admission fee, neighbourhood residents, including those living at the Red Road Lodge, are given tokens for admission to

encourage their participation. The community worker emphasizes it is not necessarily the art that is important, but rather the connection to others. *“So you see people that you might not normally sit down next to, and you’re painting together. And you’re not artists, it’s just the doing. It’s not for some great poetic piece of art at the end of it; it’s for the exchange.”*

The community worker insists the “revitalization” of the neighbourhood is not related as much to the physical renovation of the buildings as it is to the process of reaching out to community residents. *“I want them to feel welcome to come in. Because certainly in the interest of revitalization, I don’t think the building’s have...I mean they have something to do with it of course, but I think it has to do with more personal engagements. And I want them to feel that this isn’t something only for people that have money, but this is a positive place to come have a positive experience and to be inspired.”*

Perceptions Of Safety

“When we have events here, there’s people coming...depending on the artist, they’re going to bring their own network of people in. And usually, across the board, people are like ‘Wow, I didn’t know...I didn’t want to park down here’ and people email, or they’ll come back again going, ‘You know this is really terrific, you know I used to lock my doors when I drove through here’ but...so that’s kind of changing.” (Arts administrator)

Many subjects reported a change in the feeling of safety in the neighbourhood, particularly on the 611 block itself. The business owner spoke of the corner of Logan Avenue and Main Street, and the difference in the way it now feels; in particular, the parking lot owned by Mitchell Fabrics and used by patrons of 611 Main Street. *“I know what went on in the parking lot before, I know how it felt...and definitely there is a*

greater energy and an actual physical presence...people doing positive things as opposed to otherwise at that corner. It definitely felt like an unsafe place and that's changed.” He notes the parking lot is now well used and it is populated for most of the day. As well, the fact that The Edge and The Red Road Lodge have completed various murals on the exterior of the building helps to create a sense of ownership of the space. *“The Edge itself, you know it's done some murals...I don't know that I would say they add...they add...I'm thinking of physical now...they sort of announce a presence, which is good. But in general, just that physical presence makes a great deal of difference.”*

The arts administrator acknowledged the increased visibility and recognizability of the block since The Edge Artist Village was developed.

“[It] has created a block that people now know, like ‘oh where is it’, ‘oh it’s on this block’ ...that means something to people now, it’s not just part of a big uninhabited stretch of Main Street. And I think it has contributed to safety in this area.”

He also mentioned that he rarely hears complaints from the *membership* of his organization, who visit the strip often, but does sometimes from those who have not been to the area in many years. *“Our membership is used to coming here, but we hear other people say, ‘Oh I would never go down there’, or ‘I would never park my car there, it’s just not safe’.”*

The community worker recalled that customers of Mitchell Fabrics used to park their car in front of the store and run in to grab something. *“Well, now they don’t run so much. They go to the restaurant and have lunch...so it’s been a huge change in the dynamics of this neighborhood.”*

The Role of Alcohol

“In terms of cleaning up this neighborhood, a valuable start is getting rid of the handicaps, which is the liquor abuse.” (Community worker)

Many subjects spoke of the impact removing alcohol from the Red Road Lodge has had on the community. The community worker feels it was necessary, and is a major contributor to the changes that have occurred on north Main Street. *“Taking the alcohol away from this hotel is really what changed this whole neighborhood. There’s no doubt that the WRHA would not have built so soon into the Main Street if this were still a hotel.”* He noted the initial plans for the hotel included retaining the alcohol and VLTs, and it became clear very quickly it simply was not working. *“The big pivot was taking the alcohol out of this bar. Because what it did was it stopped any sort of migration from the rest of Main Street into this block, because they had no reason to come here, really.”*

Others are not as confident removing access to alcohol is the best solution for the neighbourhood. The artist argued that for many Main Street residents, overcoming the daily realities of being homeless, poor, or mentally ill is a much more complicated issue than not having access to alcohol. She also acknowledged the issue is not alcohol itself, but rather the irresponsible business practices at many hotels on Main Street.

“A lot of the establishments on that stretch serve alcohol in a way that is actually illegal, and that is something that should be looked down on, or at least if there are laws that are covering that kind of service, then why not apply them. I think it’s probably good thing that there is one place where there is no alcohol, and for some people that might be the right thing but again I lean more toward diversity.”

The artist also noted that while the topic of restricting alcohol sales has been raised at Secondary Plan meetings, some residents felt alcohol should not be prohibited for all members of the community. *“There were some others who felt that, ‘I don’t have a*

substance abuse problem, and I like to go and have a drink with my buddies, so why'...I get there's different sides to it."

The Instrumentalization of Art

"And you know, we're not trying to make every 14-year-old in the neighborhood a professional artist, but we are trying to help them develop their own inner creativity, and we are trying to help them cope with their everyday lives. Because goodness knows, a 14-year-old living in this neighborhood has to be very, very creative to navigate their daily life. So that's one of the powerful ways that we use art as a tool. And other communities across the country and in North America are finding out the same thing. It's more than a trend, it's a methodology, that youth serving agencies and community development agencies are adopting very quickly." (Arts administrator)

The arts administrator felt the view of art being "instrumentalized" was extremely limiting and shortsighted.

"I see that as so bloody limiting. And yeah, there are arts institutions that look down their nose at us. That's the way art used to be. And, you know, in a lot of circles it still is. They like to celebrate art for arts sake. And that's fine, that's important. As a cultured society, that's important. But don't look down your nose at us when we discover, that 'Oh my god, art can be used for community development, art can be used to change a 12-year-old's life, art can be used to save lives'. You know, don't look down at that."

He emphasized that artists play various roles in society, and while traditional art mediums and flagship art institutions have their place in a community, it is important to recognize other uses for art, and other responsibilities of artists. In terms of artists and arts organizations being manipulated by developers or municipalities, he noted that while there are artists in Winnipeg who fear the instrumentalization of art, he doesn't feel Winnipeg has the size or critical mass for it to become a big issue. *"In Toronto, in Montreal, in Vancouver, yes. But I don't think...there's not the same kind of flipping of real estate here. The potential for making scads of money isn't here."*

The community worker agreed the notion of art only for art's sake can work at the expense of a community.

“Maybe we shouldn't be calling it art. Maybe it would make it more accessible. Maybe it's the tool for filters for our own emotional and spiritual well-being. Because I think sometimes we get caught up in that art is something for...it's an elite group of people...or its people who have studied, and only they are entitled or able to create.”

She also noted there are some artists in Winnipeg who do not appreciate the kind of work The Edge is involved in.

“There are some artists, more in the exchange area, that kind of roll their eyes, and I feel sorry for them, because I think the more you know in one area, the more you un-know so many other things. And I think we forget that the bottom line is humanness. And we should all have access to it. And if it's a tool, and it's going to help situations, then why not?”

5.3.2 Gentrification Concerns

Given the number of new developments in the North Main Street community, the threat of gentrification was a particularly timely concern for most subjects. While all subjects were aware of the issue, opinions differed on how the North Main Street community would ultimately be affected by gentrification, if at all. Given the gentrification that has been occurring in the Exchange District, some worry the North Main Street community is poised for a similar fate. The artist explained, *“It's incredible that the Exchange District currently has the highest average income level of the entire city, and then right next door...and I mean that is a huge worry, the idea that developers will swoop down into this area, and that's not what we want.”*

The community worker expressed concern over the encroaching development on Waterfront Drive.

“This huge glacier wall of ice and development is coming, can’t be stopped, and it’s already happened. You hope you have a little bit of say in slowing it down, or letting areas like this develop...you’ve got multi-million dollar and multi-million dollar on both sides of you, that are crouching down on you, and they can only end at the railway tracks, they can’t go much farther than that. So at some point they may engulf the neighborhood.”

The community worker also noted that because of the relatively recent changes occurring in adjacent areas, The Edge Artist Village has been met with some skepticism. *“There’s a lot of eye-rolling going, ‘Oh right, gentrification. And it’s like, let’s not focus on what’s not working, and all the bulls**t lingo, and let’s just use what we have right here, and work with it. I find it really sad because where’s the hope, and where’s the intention?”*

While the arts administrator acknowledged gentrification was a concern, he also pointed out it is a slow process, and the threat is not necessarily immediate. *“We don’t feel like we’re about to be forced out, or that our neighbors who might be drinking down the street might be forced out either. We don’t see that in the foreseeable future.”*

The business owner emphasized the need for balance. *“I think it’s a mistake to look at the two theatres that came down and say, we’ve taken down some old heritage buildings, we’ve put up some new ones, and that’s gentrification. Because those theatres had gone past any reasonable return to use by the public sector or the private sector.”*

While heritage buildings should be saved when possible, he stressed that having something happen is more important than keeping around some old buildings that will continue to sit in disrepair. He also noted it is important to have several different types of development occurring in the community. *“I think it’s hugely important that the area accommodate a mix...so that it accommodate business, and it accommodate arts groups and individual artists. And that at the same time it recognize the social problems that are*

manifest on the street here. Taking responsibility...and not just accommodating, but attempting to contribute to solutions.”

The business owner shares the artist’s frustration with the overuse of the word gentrification as well. *“And so, you know, gentrification is kind of a catchall phrase, you have to know what you mean by it. I think people throw it around, and say “Well it’s going to look way too nice, or way too new’.”*

Property Values

Most subjects spoke of the threat of rising property values as a result of the *perception* there is a potential for future development in the area. The artist has recently been evicted from her studio space in South Point Douglas, and cannot find another quality space for a comparable price. She noted that with the recent attention South Point Douglas received when there was a proposal to build a new football stadium in the area, building owners and developers are anticipating something will happen, though nothing is actually occurring at the moment.

“It’s changed a great deal not so much in that you would actually see development yet, but like you know even just the fact that we can’t find a studio at the rate we have right now, that everything is double price right now, and that it’s not based on any development that has happened already, but just the idea that there is going to be development. So that is a big change, and we are very concerned, especially after last summer with that stadium fiasco...that development will happen in a way that we don’t want.”

The community worker pointed out some building owners in the area have been sitting on their properties for many years, waiting for values to increase. If and when this occurs, the buildings can be sold for a profit. For non-profit organizations like the Red Road Lodge, however, she anticipates it becoming harder and harder to make ends meet.

“Because the building comes up in value, so does the tax base, but your income doesn’t come up. So it’s always a bit of a struggle.”

The Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA)

Almost every interview subject mentioned the impending opening of the new Winnipeg Regional Health Authority building, and the impact it could have on the community. The business owner was one of only a few subjects who responded to the development in a positive way. *“...of course people are very positive on the WRHA development, because it’s so strong. And because there was such decay there for so long, and it was clearly an impediment to anything going forward.”*

Some subjects saw the project as benign, while others felt it was indisputably negative. The community worker expresses frustration at the challenge of operating a grassroots initiative in the face of large-scale municipal development. *“We’ve struggled five years to bring this community to this point, and overnight they spend 40 million dollars, with no struggle.”* In particular, there has been controversy over the community consultation process, and the final design of the building. Many subjects mentioned that although the initial design process was inclusive and amenable to the residents’ opinions, the final constructed building is much different than was promised. *“We do this grassroots, with little restaurants, we want a good stand on this, and you say ‘yeah we’re going to do this, invite us in your neighborhood’, and everyone kind of goes ‘oh, ok...it’s, ok’. And then you turn around a put up a brick wall.”*

The artist agreed, and noted frustration with the City the buildings demolished to build the WRHA were not saved. *“All those spaces that were lined up like books in a*

bookshelf, you know that's how close they were - there were cinemas, stores, pool halls. But they were all built together. They all had different interesting facades. So save those facades, then go crazy behind it, and it would have been so beautiful. But that doesn't happen in Winnipeg, unfortunately."

The community worker also wondered why the WRHA chose the location in the first place. *"No one who works at WRHA wants to work there, no one wants to be in that building, they don't like it, the neighbors don't like it. So why force this into a community? Because they don't recognize the community here, they really don't."*

There is concern over how the WRHA employees will integrate with those in the community who are homeless or very low-income.

"Of course they are going to change this neighborhood, just by sheer numbers. But they are not...these people have nowhere left to go. The river is there now. You know, they've run out of places to push the people. So they are going to have to integrate somehow. And they don't think of this. There's nothing to integrate them. They're going to come, they get on their bus, and walk around, and they're going to come and look down on the people begging and the poor."

The public servant acknowledged that until recently, there has not been a strong municipal interest in the area, and activity there has generally been left for developers to determine. *"Who determines what the activity is, well, whoever wants to pick up the property and is comfortable on moving in. It's rather haphazard."*

The arts administrator explained the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, as well as the United Way, which is moving in further down Main Street to the North, is not the type of development the community needs. *"So I don't think the Regional Health authority building does anything for the neighborhood, and the United Way moving in...it's not the kind of business that the street needs. These are basically closed shops*

that have people. And those people will be great for the restaurants, but not good for attracting people down to the neighborhood.”

5.3.3 The Role of Private Development

A surprising result of the study was discovering the large role private development played in the establishment of The Edge Artist Village. All subjects indicated the largest determining factor in the initiation of the project was private interest. The re-development of the 611 block of Main Street was not in any way handled by the City; the public servant acknowledged that private initiative and investment was almost entirely responsible for beginning the physical changes to the block.

While all interview subjects acknowledged the sizeable role of private investment, not all were in agreement as to whether this was the optimal way to change the neighborhood. While the developer in question made a decisive decision to emphasize arts and culture in the development, subjects had differing opinions as to how large a role that push has played in the current state of the community being an arts hub.

While private funds played a large part in getting the project going, the developer also spent a great deal of time and energy seeking out funding. *“I think with Red Road Lodge specifically, it was Richard Walls himself who ran around himself and decided and did his research, and decided that these were specific departments and government, or different levels of government.”* She also noted:

“When you think about the funding for the Red Road Lodge, Richard pours in lots of his own money into it...like he really showed his own personal commitment to working with that population, and providing them safe, sustainable housing. And it really came together because of his advocacy, and improving himself. Like he, really, like, I don’t know how many years he’s been at this, for a while, I think.

He's really worked really hard to build up his credibility and show his dedication."

Others had concerns a developer will always have the bottom line as a priority, and this caused a great deal of mistrust among community members. When the artist was asked if she would like to see other organizations similar to The Edge open in the area, she replied, *"If it's just a developer driven initiative, then no."* She stressed that although The Edge Artist Village is positive for the community, the artist live/work spaces are still overpriced for most artists in the area, and projects such as The Edge are simply one aspect of what the community needs to move forward.

The arts administrator, while admitting he was skeptical the developer's motives were purely selfless, also acknowledged, *"He did make something happen. And the city is not making anything happen. So, developers like him, and there's maybe only a couple in the city, are all we've got."* He also noted the developer's history in the Exchange District contributed to a rise in property values, and the same could occur in North Main.

"He's not so much trying to make it a cultural or arts district as he is trying to boost the price of his properties...while he does reach into his own pocket, and pays for a lot of the activities at The Edge and at the Red Road Lodge himself, he's got his eye on the prize, and the prize is property values, and rents, and that kind of thing."

5.3.4 The South Point Douglas Community

Several subjects described the South Point Douglas community as being artist-based even before the development of the 611 block of Main Street. The artist noted, *"Well this area is full of artists. You know, we've been here for a long time."* The business owner felt the area being recognized as an arts district was more or less a natural progression from the neighboring Exchange District. While private development

provided some need momentum, the community was already known as an artist-friendly area.

The Secondary Plan Process

Because the South Point Douglas Secondary Plan has the potential to play a major role in the future development of the North Main Street community, subjects were asked to describe their experiences with the planning process so far, and if they were optimistic the plan would ultimately be positive for the neighbourhood.

Several subjects noted that during Secondary Plan meetings, residents were careful to make clear they did not want to “get rid” of any of the social services in the area. The community worker noted, *“They don’t want to get rid of the soup kitchens, the missions. Everybody thought that was part of the community. Whereas if that was any other community in town, people would say ‘get rid of that’.”*

The arts administrator agreed, and also emphasized that artists must still have a home in the community. *“Because too often, as in the Exchange, the artists get booted out.”* He also stressed the importance of creating a welcoming atmosphere so potential patrons of the organizations in the area will be encouraged to participate. *“And just in the way that you place buildings, and you limit how high they can be and streetscapes and on and on and on, really can create a sense of community, and a sense of welcomeness and openness, where people who come and work and use our services will feel very welcome and engaged in the broader community.”*

While the business owner admitted not being very involved in the Secondary Plan process, he expressed his support for the exercise, and added, *“it is always positive to involve the community...good things come from people being heard.”*

Several subjects were skeptical the City would follow through on their promises, given disappointments in the past. When the arts administrator was asked if he was optimistic the City would guide the community in the direction the residents desired, he responded, *“No, I'm not optimistic at all, if we just left it up to the City. It would be a mess.”* He noted, however, that the city planners as individuals have been *“amazing”*, and he was impressed with the involvement from area residents and the level of discussion that has occurred at meetings.

Particularly frustrating to the arts administrator and the artist was the fact that the City is developing a plan for the Disraeli Bridge simultaneously with the Secondary Plan, with no connection between the two.

“Of course we're all skeptical that this will go nowhere, or that the City won't listen. And especially frustrating that the redevelopment of the Disraeli Bridge is being done simultaneously, because they are so intrinsically linked, I mean you can't develop South Point Douglas and do some wacky bridge plan without considering the impact of that. So although it seems like definitely the city planners are entering into a consulting process in good faith, we've got many precedents of this happening before, and then this being disregarded, or Plan Winnipeg, even, being completely disregarded. But, you know, we're in a democracy, this is the mechanism we have for participation, you have to hope despite disappointments in the past.” (Arts administrator)

The artist expressed the same concern, noting if the two plans are not coupled, it could turn the Secondary Plan process into *“a silly exercise.”* This was the cause of great frustration for the artist, as she believes the Secondary Plan has the potential to be good for the community. *“The Secondary Plan is a very good thing, I think. But what I don't agree with, and what I think they are coming at it from the wrong side, is that it doesn't*

seem that the other plans they have, like the bridge plans, for example, tie in with the Secondary Plan. So instead of making sure the Secondary Plan is there first, and informs all other decisions on bridges, traffic, etc, they are sort of deciding things in isolation, and so that I have found really bad.”

The arts administrator also noted that while neighborhood residents were concerned their voices would not be heard, he also understands the City’s role as well, and he felt the two priorities could co-exist peacefully, if done correctly.

“So the neighborhood is really going to change a lot, and we're looking forward to it, and we understand that the City of Winnipeg needs to create more properties that they can charge property taxes on, and we understand that the riverfront properties are quite desirable and people will want to live there. And it's just natural, so we're not standing in the way of that, but we certainly want our concerns to be heard.”

5.3.5 The Role of Government

Securing funding is an ongoing challenge for both the Red Road Lodge and The Edge Gallery. While some subjects reported the government has generally been supportive of the project, it was difficult to initially find the right combination of program grants to make The Edge Artist Village viable.

While the provincial government was fairly receptive to the idea of The Edge Gallery and the Red Road Lodge, it was not initially clear from which department the project should receive funding. The community worker noted funding was initially sought from up to five different government departments.

At roughly the same time the project was seeking funding, the provincial government began the cross-departmental coordination initiative, which allows members from various provincial departments to meet on a regular basis and try to coordinate time,

concepts, and budgets. The result was that The Red Road Lodge was funded by arts and culture, as an urban arts centre. For The Edge, the original vision of artist's housing was not supported. Instead, funding was granted for low-income housing. The housing can be designated as artist's housing, but the tenants must fall into the low-income category.

The community worker noted the work of other arts-based organizations in the area, the Graffiti Gallery in particular, helped to smooth the way when it came to funders acknowledging the potential link between community development and art programming. She also believes the decision of the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority to relocate to the North Main Street community is an indication of increased government awareness of the area.

"I still have to go put in an application, there's no fast track...you don't know you're if going to get funded. But, given the number of grants we've been able to get, our success record has been high. So someone there must be saying, 'Hey, you fit into the funding paradigm, and we'll give you the money because it meets our criteria and it will be good for the community, good for the people'." (Public servant)

For The Edge, the fact that it is a relatively new organization with limited staff and resources can be difficult.

"Through the Winnipeg and Manitoba Arts Councils, there are project and program grants. So that's really helpful. Now the thing is that if you don't have staff, and you can't pay the administration, how can you develop programming? You can't. So you have to really, really rely on people who are passionate, believe in the vision and support the vision, and at a grassroots level just go at it as hard as you can." (Community worker)

While goals for initial funding were met, securing operational funding continues to be a challenge. Support services for residents of the Red Road Lodge as well as artists and mentors for The Edge Gallery are difficult to offer. *"So the challenges are kind of to*

get the respect and the funding that is deserved, so that we can move the project ahead”
(the community worker).

One reported difficulty with the model the Red Road Lodge has adopted (as transitional housing), is where to send residents once they are stabilized. The current shortage of social housing units for males means many residents stay at the Red Road Lodge for long periods of time. *“There’s a slow turnover rate, you can’t put them anywhere”* (the community worker). Additionally, the funding the Red Road Lodge receives simply is not sufficient to provide adequate psychological services.

“A lot of these people need psychologists, psychiatrists, those kinds of support services, who are kind of non-existent in our system now. Not to say they can’t go to a medical clinic and access those, but we don’t deal with those...we know they have special needs, and that’s about it. Which is not the proper way of running it, but...” (Community worker)

The public servant emphasized funding for the Red Road Lodge is important because it fills a gap in the community. *“It’s identifying that gap and filling that gap, it’s providing a service...and a service that we can measure. I think that’s really important. We have to be able to account for our money and make sure that it’s providing what it needs to provide.”*

Residents of the Red Road Lodge are required to be on welfare, and also tend to have a disability, which means the welfare amount paid for the room is slightly higher. The community worker explained this is necessary to carry the costs of the aging hotel. *“The water bill is \$4000 a month. Huge costs for this big building. You have to chase people for their welfare cheque; it’s lots of work. And to get cash from anybody...we stopped that a long time ago. Nobody pays on time, and we were knocking on doors.*

Good or bad we're part of the system, the mechanics of the welfare system, and they pay for the rooms."

Because funding for programs is minimal, any counseling residents have access to at the Red Road Lodge is done on a volunteer basis. Trying to run an art program with funding for only 25 hours a week, with no funds for supplies, is difficult. One of the stipulations of the funding is that activities done in the art program must be skills development, and ultimately something that will make a participant more employable. The community worker worries this lets many individuals who could benefit from art programming fall through the cracks.

"Art organizations don't get any support from the province. The province wants to see people are going to be employable. Why does that exclude everybody that isn't going to be? People with schizophrenia...they're great, they're on their medication, but that doesn't mean they can work in a job that the government is going to find appropriate. And they should still have something positive to look forward to on a daily basis. And these art programs, these music programs, helps them to learn social skills, helps them to team build and to be more comfortable in a social setting where they are not so awkward. Placed where they can feel safe. Because if you don't feel safe, how are you going to start working towards being employable?"

There are those who feel these requirements make funding unattainable, and are not beneficial to the community. *"It has to stop being looked at as, 'what are we going to get back from this?' I get really upset about it, because I just look at the people who are so...have nowhere to turn to, nobody to lean on, and these resources are in place, but they're so impossible to access"* (the community worker).

5.3.6 The Role of the City/Planning Concerns

"Arts is key to Winnipeg, key to the city, it's what we're about. It's in the best interest of the City to encourage these things, but there is so much political red tape there is little in place to encourage it." (Public servant)

There were particularly strong opinions voiced when subjects were asked about the role of the City in the past, present, and future evolution of the neighbourhood. Many spoke of the relative lack of involvement of any sort, while others emphasized the negative influence of the City's policies on heritage buildings and the actions they have taken in the past to address issues of homelessness and substance abuse in the area.

Lack of Involvement

While several initiatives were begun by the City of Winnipeg in the 1980s to reverse the decline occurring in the North Main Street area, little was achieved in the long term. The North Main Development Corporation as well as the Core Area Initiative were both efforts by the City to address the issue. Since that time, many subjects felt the City's attention has been focused on Waterfront Drive. The public servant emphasized the City's actions depend entirely upon the administration that happens to be in office at the time. *"But each ED, council and mayor, have their own focus on what it is they (want) to fund. I guess the most amount of energy has been spent on housing and then doing stuff along Waterfront Drive."* She also noted there has been a certain amount of ambivalence about the area, both from the City and the rest of Winnipeg. *"It's an area most people of Winnipeg don't kind of, recognize. They drive by. They drive down Main Street, they close their eyes; they don't see what's going on. So it's kind of a forgotten area."*

The community worker confirmed that while individuals within the City administration have been supportive, particularly during the Secondary Plan Process, the City did not play a particularly large role in the concept or development of The Edge Artist Village. *"There's obviously some interest there, but there's no champions."* She

also acknowledged the role of CentureVenture in the neighbourhood, and that they have made *“an awful lot happen.”*

Loss of Heritage Buildings

The arts administrator spoke about the change he has noticed in the downtown area since he first moved to Winnipeg.

“There was tremendous numbers of old buildings that hadn’t been torn down, and it was fabulous, and in those 20 years, a lot have been left empty to the point where they had to be torn down. And in the block like this, there are two empty spaces right across the street, and they can be left empty for years without repercussion. And they become sort of black holes in a neighborhood. And people say, ‘Oh well I’m not going down to North Main because there’s nothing going on, or because it’s not safe, or because there’s no one on the street’, and well, that’s the reason why.”

The artist agrees, noting many heritage buildings have been lost that she believes should have been preserved. *“The City should build them and invest in them as treasures.”* The community worker expressed frustration at the action of the City during the Pan Am games in 1998. She described the effect closing several single room occupancy hotels had on the community at the time.

“Well, they got rid of the alcohol on the street...but they also tore down the rooms in each one of these hotels. So eight times 50 is 400 beds that people slept in before. The lowest of the lowest income, and now those beds are gone. So it had the opposite effect, in a way, because it brought everybody out in the street. You shook up this foundation and the structure that was in place that was not good, but could have been changed with patience. So now the City kind of steps back and realized ‘oh wow, we better not tear down these buildings’.

Development and Waterfront Drive

“It seems like the planning dept is sort of in the headlock of developers. Who’s that guy that’s the head of planning, he’s a friend of the mayor, and he’s a

developer. I mean how shameful that is. It's like putting a fox in the chicken coop." (The artist)

The arts administrator spoke to how betrayed many members of the community felt when the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority building was constructed, and how that has ultimately damaged the trust many have for the City.

"Even, you know, the community was involved, heavily involved, with the Health Authority building. We went to meetings, we looked at designs, we looked at drawings, and it looked great. Then all of a sudden, boom, we all go, ok, it's being built, we don't have to pay attention anymore. And we basically have let them do what they wanted. So, we gotta really, really be vigilant. And we gotta be involved, and we gotta go to these meetings, and we have to demand to be heard."

Many subjects are wary of the neighbourhood eventually being dominated by development similar to Waterfront Drive. The arts administrator noted, *"Because certainly if we don't get involved and we don't fight, and we don't watch, high rise condos end to end just like we have on Waterfront Drive."* He stressed that with community involvement, positive progress can be made. The artist acknowledged that though current Secondary Plan processes are going well and she feels the planners involved in the project have been excellent, there is still some hesitation about those who make the decisions.

"I do not trust the City - I think the City has shown over and over and over again that they will let themselves be pushed into things by developers. Because, that is who they associate themselves with and who they feel brings the best solutions. So in that regard I'm not particularly hopeful. It also has not been a city lately, at least in the last fifteen years, that has shown any sort of visionary initiative, so a lot of things have to happen for that to change. I'm hoping that it will, and I think that of any area, this is the area it could happen in."

The community worker stressed any improvements that have occurred in the North Main Street community have been due to grassroots efforts, and not the actions of the City. *"No matter what anybody says, it's got nothing to do with the 40 million dollars*

they spent on that building across the street, or anything to do with the millions they spent on Waterfront Drive, or now the Sports Federation. This [The Edge Artist Village] has been the catalyst to all this stuff, it's happened quite quickly now. And it will continue now to be a catalyst for things."

The community worker also noted there is some trepidation about the Museum of Human Rights, and the effect it may have on the businesses in the North Main Street community. In addition, she worries the more improvements are made to the area, the more attractive it becomes for City developments, putting organizations like The Edge at risk for losing funding due to competition.

5.3.7 Future Visions for the Community

All subjects were asked to describe their future vision for the community. Several common themes emerged, including the need for community involvement at the grassroots level, and the importance of the Aboriginal Centre. *"And I just think what needs to happen is an evolution that's controlled by a community that is involved in its own progress...and progression. And part of that progression needs to take into account the social conditions of, not just of Main St., but Main St. as it represents a social problem."* (the business owner).

The Importance Of Grassroots Development

Many subjects were adamant that any future development in the area be driven by community initiative, rather than private investment. *"What I see is the evolution to some extent guided by a community will...so that the history and the community itself evolves*

from the grassroots up, rather than a...sort of a patina of something else gets plunked down on top."

The business owner also stressed that while social agencies have played a role in the community for a long time, and should continue to do so, they should not "*dominate the landscape.*" He noted that change takes time, and the eventual transformation of the neighborhood is an evolutionary process. He also acknowledged the arts are a particularly important part of the community's identity, though "*whether it will remain that beyond...ten years remains to be seen.*"

The artist spoke of the residents association and the desire to move the community in a direction where issues such as environmentalism are at the forefront. She also stressed the residents association feels very strongly that no residents, be they artists or people of a lower income, be displaced. As well, "*that the development that does happen is a mixed kind of development, where there is a diversity.*"

Perhaps most importantly, there is a hope the City will take a "*visionary lead*" in the community, allowing small business to remain viable, for example. The artist stressed that whatever development occurs, it should not occur in a rushed way, but rather in slow, measured steps.

The arts administrator mirrored the artist's desire for a diversity of development options and the significance of arts and culture to the community. "*And we want things like multiple-cost housing, so that it's not just low income and it's not just \$500,000 condos, but it's a whole range in between, mixed housing. So everybody can kind of live together. We want artist villages and we want artists markets.*"

Role of The Aboriginal Centre

The business owner stressed the role of the Aboriginal Centre in the evolution of the North Main Street community, and expressed optimism about the work the centre is already doing.

“...Because people are moving off reserves in large numbers, and I guess something that I left out in terms of presence and stakeholders is really the Aboriginal community itself. And that would include the Aboriginal Centre where they do social programming and job training and education and health and wellness, and all of those things. They're really a big part of this stakeholder community. I'd love to see the Aboriginal community take a stronger position in terms of reflecting their own culture on the street. Very few Winnipeggers know what goes on behind, in that building in the Aboriginal centre.”

Many subjects spoke of the importance of having strong Aboriginal role models within the community, as a visible part of the Main Street community. *“Mainstream activities, and then also, an actual reflection of culture. That is not being done by outsiders, but rather coming from within the Aboriginal community themselves”* (the business owner).

The artist agreed the Aboriginal Centre has been a strong identity in the community. *“I mean I have to say, actually, one thing I think is really excellent...is the way that the Aboriginal centre has started to develop the surrounding area, and their vision for the area, I think that's a great way to go. They have a lot of good plans, and they have started their plans already.”*

The community worker spoke about the possibility of having all the cultural facilities in the community work more closely together:

“You've got the small residential committee that buy in you've got the service providers for the homeless focused in this area. You've got government coming with the WRHA and the United Way, these kind of main stream, either service provider or funders, coming into the neighborhood. And now it's, to me, really taking the arts and culture component, even the fact the sports federation is moving in just down the street, you've got this situation of linking the four

waterfront drive, Chinatown, and this really into a nice little pocket that has sort of this arts...The Edge Artist Village can really sort of come to life.”

5.4 Quantitative Results

The quantitative component of the research involved an analysis of assessed property values of buildings on north Main Street to determine what, if any, changes in these indicators have occurred since the establishment of The Edge Artist Village in 2005, and how these changes compare to those occurring in the rest of the city.

Property Value information was obtained from the City of Winnipeg for every Main Street address located between Logan Avenue and Higgins Avenue. Address numbers ranged from 586 Main Street to 715 Main Street, for a total of 22 addresses. Two of the addresses, 640 Main Street and 692 Main Street, did not have current property values listed, as they were not yet available. 640 Main Street is the new Winnipeg Regional Health Authority building, and 692 Main Street is the former Manor Hotel, now classified as vacant industrial.

For each address in question, property values were found based on 2003 market values, and compared the City of Winnipeg’s following and most recent assessment, based on 2008 market values. Percent change in property value was calculated, and compared to the City of Winnipeg overall percent change in property values based on building class.

Properties are classified “to determine what percentage of the market value assessment the municipality will tax.” The City of Winnipeg lists nine separate classifications on the assessment and taxation website. They are: Residential 1 (1-4 dwelling units per building), residential 2 (5 or more dwelling units per building),

institutional, designated higher education property, pipeline, railway, other, designated recreational property, and residential 3 (owner occupied Condominium and co-operative housing) (City of Winnipeg Assessment and Taxation Department, 2009).

The City of Winnipeg has reported in the period from 2003 to April 1, 2008 (when current property values were re-assessed), values have risen by the following amounts, city-wide: residential properties (four dwelling units and under) by **78%**, multi-family housing by **106%**, condominiums and cooperative housing by **77%**, office/retail properties by **69%**, and industrial properties by **57%** (City of Winnipeg Assessment and Taxation Department, 2009). Results are presented in Table 2, below.

Table 2: Property Assessment Analysis

Address	Building Name	Current Business/Occupant	Building Class	Property Use Code and Zoning	Market Value 2003	Market Value 2008	% Change	% Change City-Wide
586	Maycock Building		Other	CMOFF-C	\$75,800.00	\$196,000.00	158.58%	69%
590	Singer Building	Olschewski & Feuer Barristors and Solicitors	Other	CMOFF-C	\$85,000.00	\$168,000.00	97.65%	69%
594	Allman Block	Neon Factory	Other	RESAM-C	\$39,800.00	\$82,500.00	107.29%	106%
598	Guest Block		Other	RESAM-C	\$28,000.00	\$50,100.00	78.93%	106%
600	McKerchar Block		Other	RESAM-C	\$23,700.00	\$43,500.00	83.54%	106%
605		Winnipeg Help All	Other	CMRST-M	\$90,800.00	\$134,000.00	47.58%	69%
607/609	Mindell Block		Residential1	n/a	\$40,700.00	\$90,500.00	122.36%	78%
611/613/615/617	Corbett Block	The Edge	Residential2/Other/Other	CMCMU-M	\$228,300.00	\$347,800.00	52.34%	69%
618		Royal Trading	Other	CMRST-C	\$103,200.00	\$276,000.00	167.44%	69%
627/631	Occidental Hotel	Red Road Lodge/The Tallest Poppy	Other	CMHBH-M	\$153,000.00	\$104,000.00	-32.03%	69%
637		Mitchell Fabrics	Other	CMRST-M	\$173,900.00	\$327,000.00	88.04%	69%
640/650		WRHA	Not Yet Avail.	VCOMM	No Value Found	\$691,000.00	Not Yet Avail.	unknown
649/653/655	National Hotel	Manwin Hotel	Other	CMHBH-M	\$311,000.00	\$311,000.00	0.00%	69%
661/663/665	Kaplan Building	Main Meats and Groceteria	Other	CMRST-M	\$162,000.00	\$291,000.00	79.63%	69%
662	Bell Hotel	Bell Hotel	Other	CMHBH-M	\$270,000.00	\$85,000.00	-68.52%	69%
666	Weir Block		Other	CMCMU-M	\$11,500.00	\$22,200.00	93.04%	69%
667	Alloway and Champion Building		Institutional	CMRST-M	\$32,400.00	\$113,000.00	248.77%	69%
669	Lighthouse Mission	Lighthouse Mission	Institutional	PIICH-M	\$116,000.00	\$194,000.00	67.24%	unknown
676		Our Place Chez Nous Drop-In Centre	Institutional	PIEBM-M	\$67,400.00	\$82,400.00	22.26%	unknown
678	Dominion Bank	Bridgman Collaborative	Other	CMOFF-M	\$404,000.00	\$516,000.00	27.72%	69%
713/715	Thunderbird House	Thunderbird House	Institutional	PIRCC-M	\$1,517,700.00	\$1,531,700.00	0.92%	unknown

Abbreviations:

Zoning:

Property Use Codes:

C-Character
M-Multiple Use

PIEBM-Banquet/Meeting Hall
PIRCC-Community Centre
RESAM-Apartments Multi Use
VCOMM-Vacant Commercial
CMCMU-Commercial Multi-Use

CMRST-Store
CMHBH-Beverage Hotel
PIICH-Church
CMOFF-Office

While almost all property values in the study area have increased significantly since the last market value assessment, only eight have increased at a higher proportion than the city of Winnipeg in general. For example, the value of 611 Main Street (known as the Corbett Block) increased from \$228,300.00 in 2003 to \$347,800.00 in 2008. This increase represents a 52% change over that five-year period, whereas residential 2 buildings in Winnipeg saw a 69% change overall in that same period. Across the street, the value of 618 Main Street (known as Royal Trading) jumped 167%, compared to the 69% increase seen in commercial buildings in Winnipeg.

City of Winnipeg building permit statistics were searched to ascertain if any addresses among those listed in Table 2 had undergone major renovations between 2003 and 2008. Of those addresses that showed a proportionally large increase in property value, none were issued permits which might explain the escalation. Only two addresses were listed as major projects in Winnipeg Building Permit Summaries for the years in question: 650 Main Street (the location of the new Winnipeg Regional Health Authority building), and The Edge, at 611 Main Street (City of Winnipeg Planning, Property and Development, Statistics/Information, 2010 and Destination Winnipeg, Major Developments, 2010).

The data does not support the conclusion that property values in the North Main Street community are increasing at an unusually fast rate. However, given that many of the physical changes to the north section of Main Street began only in the past four years, it is perhaps not surprising that property values are not yet reflective of the activity occurring in the neighbourhood.

However, the data does reflect the fact that North Main seems to be in a period of change. The Winnipeg Regional Health Authority Building at 650 Main Street was so new at the time of my study there was no property value information available. Similarly, many heritage buildings demolished for the WRHA project are no longer in the City of Winnipeg assessment index (most notably the Starland Theatre).

It will likely take several years for more noticeable changes in property values to take effect. It is also important to note that while market value information prior to 2003 was not available, a longer historical look at property values would most likely show a general increase in value over the past ten years.

5.5 Archival Results

Archival research was completed to identify media articles, archival photographs, and other items pertaining to the North Main Street community and The Edge Artist Village in particular. Media items are not discussed here, as they have been incorporated into both the literature review (chapter 4) and case study (chapter 3).

Research for archival photos was completed at The Archives of Manitoba, and the slide collection at the University of Manitoba Architecture/Fine Arts library. Photographs of the North Main Street community, particularly those of Main Street itself between the cross streets of Alexander and Higgins, were collected from various time frames. The researcher took current photographs from similar angles and positions, allowing a comparative history in photographs of the North Main Street community from as early as 1910 to the present.

Historical photographs from the early 1900s tend to show a vibrant and lively streetscape, with thriving businesses and considerable foot traffic. There is a sense that Main Street was very much the center of activity for the city. Particularly noticeable is the presence of active storefronts and occupied buildings. The street itself is occupied by pedestrians, horses, early model automobiles, and streetcars.

Archival photographs from the 1950s, 60s, and 70s show many historical buildings still intact, though the streetscape appears to be somehow less dynamic. The increase of automobile use has transformed North Main Street into a thoroughfare as opposed to a destination. The historical trend of Main Street as home to bank branches and hotels has remained, though the larger and grander main branches seem to have made way for smaller and more modest ventures.

Current photographs of North Main Street show the beginnings of revitalization efforts, as well as the transitional nature of the neighbourhood. The corner of Alexander Avenue and Main Street is now a large construction site, and the median contains concrete dividers for decoration and safety. Many buildings show physical signs of improvement from the 1970s, notably the Dominion Bank Building (currently BridgmanCollaborative Architecture, the Corbett Block (currently The Edge Gallery and MAWA), and the Occidental Hotel (currently the Red Road Lodge and The Tallest Poppy). Many storefronts remain closed, however, and there is the noticeable absence of many heritage buildings dating from the early 20th century. The street still has the feeling of a thoroughfare rather than a pedestrian destination, and there is an imbalance between the sidewalk activity and the heavy car traffic traveling both north and south between Portage and the Higgins underpass.

Also evident is the presence of the many social institutions that now line Main Street between Disraeli and Higgins. The Salvation Army, Lighthouse Mission, Red Road Lodge and others announce north Main Street as a place for those who have nowhere else to go. In this way, the street has lost much of its identity as a commercial street and has taken on an institutional feel.



Figure 21. Main Street looking north towards Higgins Avenue, 1910. The Dominion Bank building is visible in the left of the picture. (Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg-Streets-Main c1910 1 (N10918)).



Figure 22. West side of Main Street between Logan Avenue and Higgins Avenue, 1976. The original Dominion Bank building remains, as does the former Bank of Montreal building (Architecture/Fine Arts Slide Collection: Wpg, Mb, Wpg's Central Area, Main Street SS.CP.WPG.1976 CA-61).

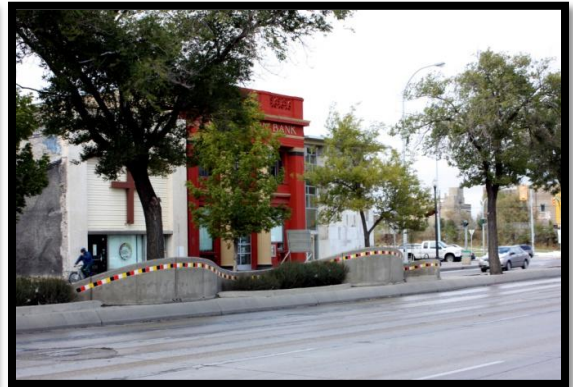


Figure 23. West Side of Main Street between Logan Avenue and Higgins Avenue, 2009. The Dominion Bank building has been refurbished and is now home to an architecture firm.



Figure 24. East side of Main Street between Henry and Logan Avenues, 1918. A post office and other storefronts line the street (Archives of Manitoba Winnipeg-Streets-Main 1918 1 (N17272)).



Figure 25. East side of Main Street between Henry and Logan Avenues, 2009. Many of the original building outlines can still be seen. The Salvation Army and Lighthouse Mission are now located on this block.



Figure 26. Alexander Avenue looking east from Main Street, 1918. A few sparsely developed blocks can be seen in the distance (Archives of Manitoba, Outside 549 (N23436)).



Figure 27. Alexander Avenue looking west from Main Street, 2009. The southwest corner is now a construction site.

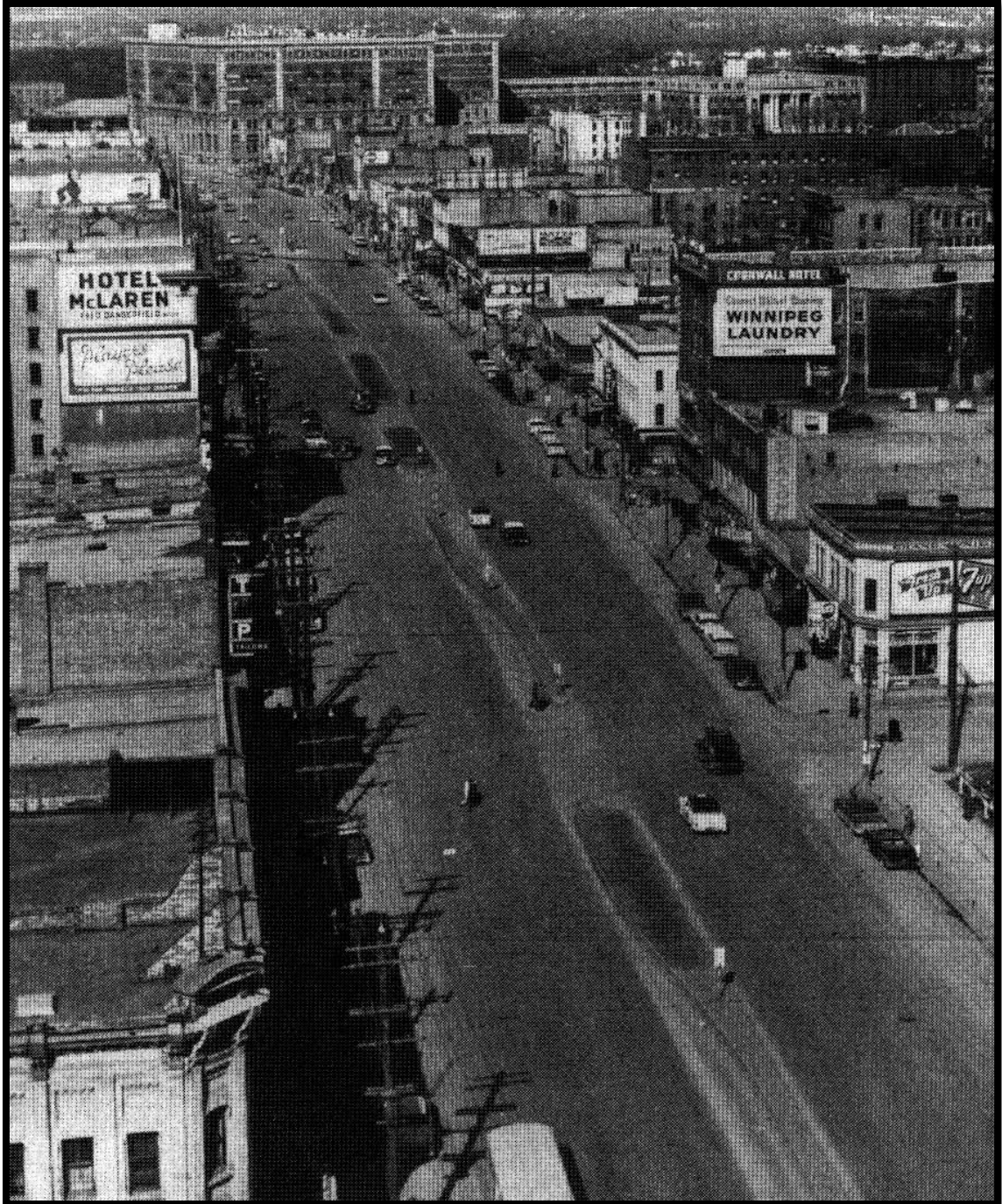


Figure 28. Main Street looking north from Market Avenue, 1958. The McLaren Hotel can be seen clearly on the west side of the street, as can the Canadian Pacific Railway Building (which now houses the Aboriginal Centre) in the upper right-hand corner (Archives of Manitoba, Jones, J.G. 34 (N21008)).

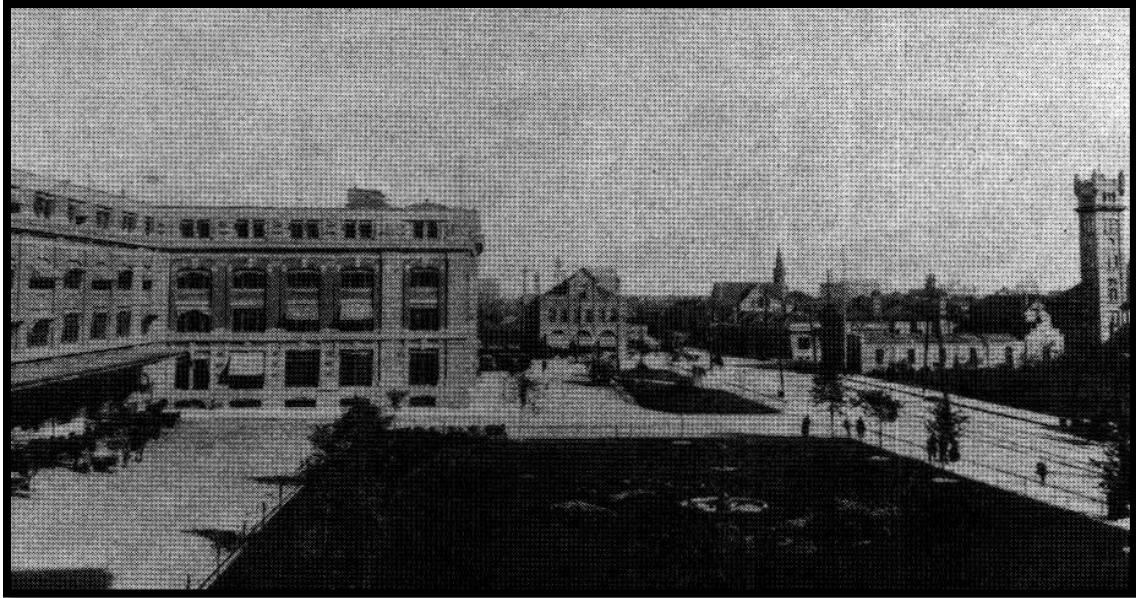


Figure 29. Higgins Avenue looking east from Main Street, 1913. The Canadian Pacific Railway Building, now the Aboriginal Centre (Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg-Streets-Higgins 1 (N19976)).



Figure 30. Higgins Avenue looking east from Main Street, 1976. The Aboriginal Centre can be seen in the distance (Architecture/Fine Arts Slide Collection: Wpg, Mb, Wpg Central Area, Higgins Ave SS.CP.WPG.1976 CA-59).



Figure 31. Higgins Avenue looking east from Main Street, 2009.



Figure 32. Logan Avenue looking east from Main Street, 1918. The former Occidental Hotel and a public washroom on the sidewalk (Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg-Streets-Logan 7 (N19291)).



Figure 33. Logan Avenue looking east from Main Street, 2009. The refurbished Red Road Lodge front entrance.



Figure 34. Southeast corner of Main Street and Logan Avenue, 1918. The sign for the Occidental Hotel can be seen attached to the building, (Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg-Streets-Logan 2 (N19287)).



Figure 35. Southeast corner of Main Street and Logan Avenue, year unknown. The Occidental Hotel is still in operation (Architecture/Fine Arts Slide Collection: Anonymous, Wpg, Mb MB W5 03-50 CANADA).

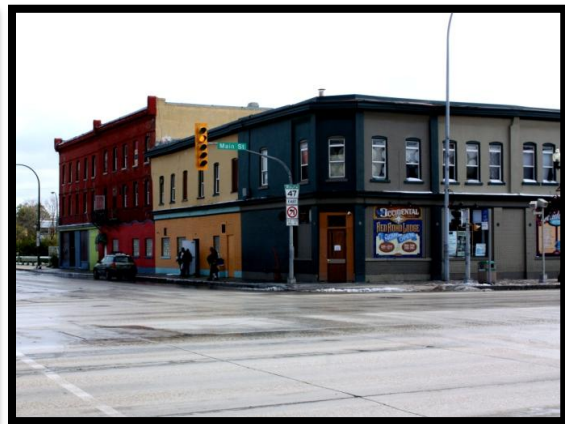


Figure 36. Southeast corner of Main Street and Logan Avenue, 2009. Plans are underway for the entire southeast wall of the building to be covered with a mural designed according to the theme “restoration”.



Figure 37. The west side of Main Street between Logan Avenue and Higgins Avenue, 1976. The Starland Theatre has since been demolished (Architecture/Fine Arts Slide Collection: Wpg, Mb, Wpg's Central Area, Main Street SS.CP.WPG.1976 CA-61).



Figure 38. The west side of Main Street looking north from Logan Avenue. The Winnipeg Regional Health Authority building, 2009. The building opened in the summer of 2009.



Figure 39. Main Street looking north from Disraeli, 1976 (Architecture/Fine Arts Slide Collection: Wpg, Mb, Wpg's Central Area, Main Street SS.CP.WPG.1976 CA-55).



Figure 40. Main Street looking north from Disraeli, 2009. The Winnipeg Regional Health Authority is now a prominent presence in the streetscape.



Figure 41. Main Street looking north from Alexander Avenue, 2009. The Edge Gallery and Mitchell Fabrics can be seen on the right (building with green awning), and the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority building can be seen on the left.



Figure 42. West side of Main Street from Alexander Avenue to Logan Avenue, 2009. Directly across the street from The Edge Gallery. Richard Walls' interior design company is located on the second floor of the building on the left, and he owns the "Neon Factory" building as well.



Figure 43. The Bell Hotel, 2009. Built in 1905, the Bell hotel had many long-term occupants until it was closed in August of 2007. 50 people were living at the hotel at the time of its closure.

5.6 Chapter Summary

Semi-Structured interviews, an analysis of property values, and archival research were used to explore how and why how and why small, community-based culture-led regeneration projects potentially affect their respective communities and neighborhoods. Specifically, I wanted to find out how one such project, The Edge Artist Village, has affected the community of North Main Street in Winnipeg.

Interviews were completed with staff of The Edge, local residents and business owners, and members of provincial and municipal government. Seven themes ultimately emerged from the interviews: The role of The Edge Artist Village in the community, gentrification concerns, the role of private development, the South Point Douglas community, the role of government, the role of the City/planning concerns, and future visions for the community. Subjects spoke of the physical changes they have seen occur in the community, but also of the significant change in people's *perceptions* of the area since The Edge Artist Village opened. Many subjects were concerned that North Main Street would soon gentrify, causing property values and rents to rise. Others were adamant that future development in the area be grassroots-led. Almost all subjects reported that the City of Winnipeg has had little involvement with the community in the past twenty years, and that the Secondary Planning process underway at the time of this study was welcome and, for the most part, a positive experience.

Quantitative analysis provided inconclusive evidence that property values in North Main Street were increasing at a rate far greater than Winnipeg at large. However, the analysis did reveal that the neighbourhood is currently experiencing a great deal of change. Archival analysis revealed that North Main Street has undergone a considerable

transformation from the early 1900s through to the present. While once the center of activity and the foundation of Winnipeg's commercial and industrial scenes, North Main Street has now experienced close to 70 years of decline. The last three or four years, however, has seen new investment in the community, and the physical transformation of many of its buildings.

CHAPTER 6: Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

This research initially set out to determine the degree to which culture-led regeneration is an effective strategy for addressing urban decline. Methods used were an extensive literature review, a case study of The Edge Artist Village, and limited quantitative and archival research. In this chapter, the results of the research are summarized, and conclusions are presented according to the four initial research questions. Following this, a synthesis of the study's final conclusions are presented, as well as several avenues for possible future research.

6.2 Literature Review

The literature review explored the use of art as a tool to address urban decline. In addition, the literature review was used to answer the first research question:

- 1) What effects (social, economic, and quality of life) do culture-led regeneration projects similar to The Edge Artist Village have on their surrounding communities?*

The literature is divided on the effects culture-led regeneration projects have on their immediate surroundings. While past research outlines numerous economic and

social benefits of culture-led regeneration strategies, more recent work claims this research typically only applies to large, flagship projects and neglects smaller, community-led projects similar to The Edge Artist Village.

The appearance of the relatively new field of *cultural planning* provides some insight into the supposed benefits of using cultural-led regeneration as a new approach to planning concerns. Most notably, researchers explain a cultural viewpoint is intrinsically multi-faceted and holistic. Sirayi (2008) and Stevenson (2004) emphasize cultural planning encompasses the disciplines of social and economic planning as well as arts and urban planning, and the process of cultural planning must consider “community relationships, shared memories, experiences, identity, history, and sense of place” (Sirayi, 2008, p, 335). This emphasis on the all-encompassing capacity of the cultural perspective is reflective of the wide range of reported benefits an artistic or cultural presence can bring to a neighbourhood.

Markusen and Schrock (2006) speak of the “artistic dividend,” defined as the economic and social impacts resulting from the presence of individual artists in a community. The artistic dividend can range from the human capital derived from local artists taking on teaching roles within the community, to the economic impact of artists ordering supplies and selling their goods, or spending their income on other local industry. Markusen claims that because of the artistic dividend, artists play a major role in stabilizing and upgrading neighbourhoods (2006).

From a purely economic perspective, the majority of research on the benefits of culture-led regeneration focuses on flagship cultural projects, as mentioned above. The most commonly stated benefits of this sort of culture-led regeneration for cities are the

increased ability to attract tourist dollars and the potential for a larger profile on the international scene (Nivin and Plettner, 2009). In terms of the local community, research has suggested that jobs are created, and new employees are attracted to the community (Nivin and Plettner, 2009).

While research on culture-led regeneration strategies typically focus on the economic benefits of using a cultural scheme in regeneration efforts, this study focuses equally on the social and economic outcomes of such a strategy. The following section discusses the conclusions drawn from the case study and semi-structured interviews completed over the course of the research.

6.3 Semi-Structured Interviews

An in-depth case study of The Edge Artist Village was completed as part of this study, including eleven semi-structured interviews. The interviews followed topic guides designed to explore the second, third, and fourth interview questions identified in the first chapter of this study. These questions are:

- 2) *What effect has The Edge Artist Village had on the surrounding community of North Main Street?*
- 3) *What role do culture-led regeneration projects such as The Edge play in the revitalization and cultural health of the city?*
- 4) *How can planners and planning policy shape and support these types of initiatives in Winnipeg (i.e. small-scale, independent culture-led regeneration projects)?*

What effect has The Edge Artist Village had on the surrounding community of North Main Street?

Addressing the above research question was more difficult than anticipated, largely due to the fact the term “The Edge Artist Village” is not easily defined. Initially, the study singled out The Edge Gallery as the central piece of the project. As the study progressed, however, it became clear this was not the case. While The Edge Gallery is a large part of what Richard Walls refers to as “The Edge Artist Village,” the Village itself consists of several organizations and businesses that have contributed to the changes seen in the North Main Street community. The Red Road Lodge plays a particularly large part in the Artist Village, as it is the organization that has received the majority of the funding, and in effect, “carries” The Edge Gallery. Because The Edge and The Red Road Lodge share funding, programming, staff, and sometimes clients, and are both owned by Walls, it became clear early on in the case study process that these two organizations should be treated as a single entity. Other businesses located within the 611 block of Main Street, such as MAWA, The Tallest Poppy, and The Bike Dump, have all played an integral role in the transformation that has occurred there, though these businesses are not owned by Richard Walls, and are not necessarily directly associated with Walls’ vision for the neighbourhood.

It is clear the evolution of The Edge Artist Village has had a tremendous impact on North Main, though the various stakeholders in the community interpret this impact in different ways. Virtually all stakeholders agree that The Edge Artist Village has had a significant *physical* impact on the stretch of Main Street between the Disraeli freeway and Logan Avenue. The Corbett block is now clean, cared for, and occupied. For local

business owners and their customers, The Edge Artist Village has provided an important change in the perception of safety in the community. Not only are customers more comfortable shopping on Main Street, but they now have a restaurant to frequent, The Tallest Poppy, and cultural events to attend at The Edge Gallery and MAWA. While the physical changes to buildings have contributed to this, the social aspects of people living and working in the community have been equally, if not more, effective in changing perceptions of safety.

Arts administrators working in the North Main Street community appreciate that The Edge Gallery provides additional space for arts-based programming in the neighbourhood, and an additional resource for local youth. Residents of South Point Douglas, while acknowledging that The Edge Gallery and Red Road Lodge are positive additions to the community, do not feel that any physical changes have occurred outside of Main Street itself.

Interestingly, nearly all stakeholders were concerned about the fact that The Edge Artist Village was initiated by a private developer. While most acknowledged that the project was pursued out of sincere concern for the well-being of the community, there was nevertheless an inherent distrust of any private development. Government stakeholders were the few to view the role of private development in the project as completely positive.

All stakeholders expressed concern about the direction of future development in the community. Business owners and government officials viewed new construction and rising property values as positive. Most other stakeholders cited concerns of

gentrification, and expressed a desire to limit future development to smaller, grassroots-based initiatives.

Overall, most stakeholders would agree that one of the most important benefits resulting from The Edge Artist Village has simply been spaces (and individuals) that are open and available to members of the community. Formally, by providing programming, supplies, and space, and informally, by providing encouragement and an open and engaging attitude.

When evaluating the project from an economic perspective, The Edge Artist Village has resulted in many of the benefits the literature anticipates from a culture-led regeneration project. There are several new businesses in the area, creating employment opportunities. Property values appear poised to rise, and gentrification of the community has already begun, to some extent. Some tenants of the Red Road Lodge who have participated in the programming have moved into employment. The eight live/work spaces above The Edge Gallery provide housing for low-income tenants, with fixed rent for the next six years. As some area residents have pointed out, however, the rents for these spaces are quite high compared to other comparable apartments in the community.

A significant challenge encountered during the process of this research was the realization The Edge Artist Village is still a relatively new presence in the community. While many residents, business owners, municipal and provincial employees were aware of the project, knowledge of its operations were not particularly widespread or detailed. Though many reported there have been changes in the community since the Artist Village began, there was a sense of curiosity about the future, and what role The Artist Village would play in the community over the next five or ten years. There is certainly a sense of

momentum, and a feeling that, “something is happening” – the street no longer feels abandoned, as it did several years ago.

What role do culture-led regeneration projects such as The Edge Artist Village play in the revitalization and cultural health of the city?

Many subjects noted The Edge Artist Village has played a significant role in changing the city’s perception of the North Main Street community. Interview subjects noted that patrons from other areas of the city who used to believe the area was unsafe now believe otherwise. Events held by MAWA, The Edge Gallery, and the Red Road Lodge, as well as the opening of The Tallest Poppy restaurant, has also made the area a destination, during the day as well as in the evenings. Events held at The Edge have been particularly successful at drawing those from outside the community, as artists showing their work there or musicians having a CD launch often bring their own networks of fans and supporters to the venue. The reputation of North Main Street is slowly changing from “dangerous and deserted” to an “arts hub;” this is certainly attributable, at least in part, to The Artist Village. At the moment, The Edge Gallery seems to be used mostly as a rental venue for city-wide events, while programming is generally focused on the immediate community. As funding becomes more stable and The Edge and Red Road Lodge become more well-known, their programming will most likely expand and increase their potential for a city-wide draw even further.

Many would point to the development of the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority building on Main Street at Logan as a major coup for the community. Unfortunately, this seems to be one of the major points of contention among area residents. Many feel this

type of development is not beneficial, and will not contribute anything to the community. The Edge Artist Village is seemingly following the documented process of gentrification: new businesses are being drawn to the area – the problem being they are not the “right” kind of business. Undoubtedly, as the profile of the North Main Street neighbourhood grows and becomes more recognizable, developer interest will only increase. While this may be desirable for the City, as it represents an increased tax base, area residents are concerned. It appears the gentrification experienced by the Exchange District will most likely also eventually make its way to North Main Street. Residents are aware of the threat, and are already taking steps to prevent this from occurring. A vocal residents committee and a strong desire to encourage further grassroots development in the community may serve to mitigate some of the negative effects of gentrification, should it begin to occur more substantially in the coming years. It is unclear how successful these efforts will be if and when North Main becomes a target for further development.

In terms of a culture-led regeneration project as a strategy for the overall revitalization of the city, it should be noted that in the case of The Edge Artist Village, Winnipeg’s planning department had very little to do with the evolution of the project. In other words, The Edge was not a strategy for urban regeneration implemented by the City. Instead, it was a strategy for urban regeneration implemented by a private citizen. There are undoubtedly differences between how a private developer went about initiating a culture-led regeneration project and how a municipality would manage such a project.

In the case of The Edge, the greatest challenge for Walls was securing the capital to purchase the necessary buildings. Initially, Walls wanted to implement his vision of an arts district on a much grander scale, however he was unable to find the funding to

purchase more than one building (the Corbett block). While he was able to secure a loan from CentureVenture to pay for more property, he did not want to take on unmanageable debt as an individual. This is perhaps where municipal support could have played a role, allowing Walls' concept to come to life more quickly and on a larger scale.

How can planners and planning policy shape and support these types of initiatives in Winnipeg (i.e. small-scale, independent culture-led regeneration projects)?

One of the most surprising results discovered in the process of this project was the minimal role the City of Winnipeg played in the recent developments in the North Main Street community. While many subjects were complimentary about the individual planners working with the community during the secondary planning process, it bears mentioning that the majority of interview subjects spoke about the lack of involvement the City has had with their community in the past. Comments suggested the framework was simply not in place at the City to encourage the involvement of the planners in the development of The Edge Artist Village. There was a great deal of mistrust among residents about the City's intentions, given the recent proposal to expropriate many of the homes in South Point Douglas for the development of a then proposed football stadium. The stadium plans did not materialize. Additionally, many subjects felt even when there was an attempt to include community residents in the decision making process, their opinions ultimately went unheard, as with the design of the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority building.

There are several ways the planning department could play a role in future projects similar to The Edge Artist Village. While these recommendations are derived

from a case-study of a culture-led regeneration project, they could be applied to any type of community development initiative, and can therefore be generalized to other projects throughout Winnipeg and Canada:

1. The planning department should give attention to smaller and more grassroots-oriented projects, and not simply large flagship initiatives. While the City may not be directly involved in the development of a project, more involvement and awareness of smaller projects would be an effective way to smooth relations and keep all parties informed of the process. More importantly, there should be open communication between local community groups or members and the planning department, and in particular the community's district planner. In the case of The Edge Artist Village, while the City did not have a large role to play in funding or designing the project, it would have been helpful for the developer had a planner from the City been involved from the beginning of the process. The planning department would then have a better understanding of the forces at work in the community, and this in turn would make processes, such as secondary planning, smoother and better informed.

This increase in communication could be facilitated in a number of ways. The municipality could create a staff position dedicated to liaising with cultural regeneration projects, serving to smooth and strengthen the relationship between private and public interest. If a staff position is not feasible, the role of liaison officer could be taken on by the district planner. Admittedly, the re-orientation of

the planning department to focus on smaller, community-based projects would need the support of council. If the council at any given time did not support this change in focus, a greater effort on the part of the private developer to make connections and gain support within the City would be necessary.

2. A more holistic view of planning processes in the city would be beneficial for all communities, and particularly for those undergoing secondary planning processes. In South Point Douglas, a secondary plan and a plan for the Disraeli Bridge are being developed at the same time, though neither plan is necessarily being written with an awareness of the other. This leads to frustration among residents and a neighbourhood plan that is not completely cohesive.
3. Additionally, departments within the city and province should adopt a method of coordination when evaluating projects for potential funding. While this has begun to occur with the cross-departmental coordination initiative, it is still cumbersome to seek support when a project falls under the umbrella of several different departments. Individual departments do not make independent decisions regarding funding. However, more frequent communication would ensure all relevant departments were well-informed and “in the loop” concerning any new projects.
4. Both in terms of funding and city planning strategies, desired outcomes of projects should be re-evaluated to include improvements to quality of life and not simply a financial gain. The provincial government funds the Red Road Lodge as

an urban arts centre on the condition they make their participants more employable. While this may be possible for many participants, others suffering from severe mental health issues are not necessarily in the position to become employable after the completion of a program such as that found at the Red Road Lodge. Asking programs to adhere to this requirement leaves many potential participants at risk of losing the opportunity to participate, and also prevents organizations from receiving funding for programs that do not increase employability but may address other important issues, such as mental health and social capacity.

6.4 Quantitative and Archival Research

Quantitative Research

The quantitative portion of this study examined changes in property values in the North Main Street community (particularly those on Main Street between Alexander Avenue and Higgins Avenue) and compared them with overall changes for the City of Winnipeg.

The results for the property value assessment were inconclusive. While the property values in question on Main Street did increase a great deal for the most part, it is difficult to tell whether they have increased significantly more than the City of Winnipeg in general for similarly classed buildings. For example, while the Maycock building at 586 Main Street increased 159% compared to a 69% city-wide average increase for a similarly classed building, the Red Road Lodge's assessment actually decreased by 32%. It is particularly difficult to draw conclusions from this data as property value

information could only be obtained for the last assessment date, based on 2003 market values. In addition, because The Edge Artist Village is a relatively new project, changes in property values may not yet be reflected in current assessment rates.

While it does not appear that property values have noticeably increased since The Edge was established, quantitative data does show a pattern of transition in the community. Many heritage buildings lining the west side of Main Street have been demolished to make way for the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority building, and several properties close to The Edge are currently under construction.

Archival Research

Archival photographs of the North Main Street community were obtained and compared with current photographs of the same area. Dates of archival photographs ranged from the early 1900s to the present, and showed an interesting evolution of the North Main Street community through the past century. While the area certainly played a more prominent role in Winnipeg in its earlier days, particularly due to the importance of the railway at the time, photographs from the 1970s portray a Main Street already in decline, although certainly there was a more lively business presence then than in the last decade.

Current photographs, while revealing promising new signs of life in many of the buildings, also show the growing dominance of social institutions. The new Winnipeg Regional Health Authority building now occupies a good portion of the north Main strip, and only a block away, there is a vast construction site marking the future home of the United Way. Photographs were taken on a weekend morning, and reveal very little

pedestrian traffic, possibly another negative outcome of the introduction of several new tenants with Monday to Friday operating hours. Admittedly, photographs taken on a weekday during business hours, particularly once the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority building was in operation, might reveal more of a pedestrian presence on the street. The Red Road Lodge's exterior is particularly vibrant, boasting colourful murals on three sides of the building, and a veritable blank canvas on the north side of the building, where plans for a new mural are already underway. New signage and fresh paint provide reassurance and visual cues that the building is occupied and cared for.

Overall, the trend revealed in the photographs is cyclical. Historical images represent Main Street's transformation from the early hub of activity within the city to its eventual decline through the mid to late 1900s. Current images depict the North Main Street strip's slow return to vitality, and the continual process of change the community is currently undergoing.

6.5 Summary of Conclusions

Synthesis

This study set out to explore how and why small, community-based culture-led regeneration projects affect their respective communities and neighborhoods. Methods used to explore the research questions included a literature review, an in-depth case study of The Edge Artist Village in Winnipeg, quantitative research examining property values, and archival research.

The literature review identified several ways culture-led regeneration projects supposedly contribute to their communities. These include economic benefits (e.g. new

business and tourism potential), social benefits (e.g. mentorship possibilities), and physical benefits (renovated buildings, perceptions of increased safety).

The case study confirmed many of the outcomes reported in the literature. In the few years since The Edge Artist Village has been open, community residents are participating in various art programs, and residents from all over the city are rediscovering the North Main Street community as a destination for arts and culture venues and events. The neighbourhood feels safer to residents, business owners, and city residents in general, and long vacant buildings are finding new tenants.

Programming at The Edge Gallery is providing an artistic outlet for community and city-wide youth, and The Red Road Lodge has opened its doors as a safe place for community members to go and participate in art or simply to have meaningful social interaction. Artist live/work spaces above The Edge Gallery have increased the residential population of Main Street, and provided more of a permanent pedestrian presence to the strip.

While the planning department played little to no role in the development of this particular case study, recommendations for planners include re-organizing the structure of the planning department to allow planners to have a more intensive role in community-led initiatives, or projects spearheaded by a motivated individual in collaboration with other community members. Recommendations also include greater inter-departmental coordination in both city and provincial governments, and looking to more socially-based outcomes for funded projects.

Like many culture-rich communities elsewhere, gentrification is a concern in the North Main Street community. While the neighbourhood is still developing, residents and

business-owners alike are aware of the future threat to the community should property values rise too sharply. The changes to the North Main Street strip have been too recent to show any conclusive evidence of property value changes at this time. Archival research illustrates the many evolutions north Main Street has undergone in the last hundred years. While the last ten to twenty years have perhaps been the most depressed in the street's history, there is now a renewed sense of life that seems to be gaining momentum.

6.6 Directions for Further Study

There are several possibilities for future research on the topic of culture-led regeneration that would expand the findings of this study and provide more insight into community-based culture-led regeneration projects. The first would involve examining a similar project (a small, community-based development such as The Edge Artist Village) initiated, or at least strongly supported, by a municipal planning department. The Edge Artist Village is unique in that it was initiated entirely by the actions of private investment. How would the process of acquiring space, securing funding, and offering programming differ for a project that had full municipal support, and was initiated as part of a directed strategy on behalf of a city to address urban decline?

It would be particularly helpful to examine what formal structures might be in place in the planning department of such a city. Looking at city planning departments in general, how do planning departments balance financial interests with what is best for the community and the city as a whole? What systems are in place to assess community

needs, and perhaps to introduce a novel idea such as a small arts-based organization as a strategy?

A second possibility for future research would be to look more closely at the differing needs and roles of flagship cultural institutions distinct from smaller community-based projects. How does municipal support differ for these two types of project? More importantly, however, how are the projects' surrounding communities affected by their presence? How are artists affected, both in terms of professional opportunities and quality of life? To what extent do flagship projects actually result in the social and economic benefits research claims?

A third avenue would be to explore what role, if any, the *medium* of art practiced or taught plays in the project's ultimate success as a force of urban revitalization. Do projects focused on music have different outcomes than those based on visual art? The Edge Artist Village is also a unique case study because of the inclusion of such issues as mental health, addictions, and low-income housing. Would a project that did not address such issues have the same impact on an inner city neighbourhood struggling with these problems? In short, can the results found in this study be generalized to other kinds of arts organizations?

Further study on the topic of gentrification would also be relevant. There is a good deal of existing research on the relationship between artists/the arts and gentrification. However, it would be of value to examine how arts-led regeneration can be achieved without accelerating the process of gentrification, and whether or not this would be a desirable outcome.

The literature has identified that it is difficult to measure the effects of culture-led regeneration. It would be helpful to design a study to address this specific issue. My research dealt with the problem of measuring success by focusing on people's *perceptions* of change. Future research could establish a framework for evaluating the impact of culture-led projects on the surrounding community.

Finally, it would be interesting to complete a longitudinal study of The Edge Artist Village. What will the community look and feel like in five years? In ten years? Because The Edge Artist Village is still in its infancy of terms of establishing itself in the community and running at full capacity, it would be extremely informative to revisit the neighbourhood and track changes in the community over the longer term. Specifically, a study with a more quantitative focus may reveal some interesting trends, particularly in terms of property values.

6.7 Final Remarks

The Edge Artist Village began as the vision of one motivated individual with a unique mission – to use arts and culture as a strategy in an inner city community to address longstanding issues of homelessness, addictions, mental health, poverty, and urban decline. Despite many challenges, a private developer was able to accomplish a great deal with limited municipal support. This research set out to explore how and why The Edge Artist Village was affecting the community of North Main Street. While the community is somewhat divided on the desirability and the effectiveness of using arts and culture as a strategy to begin the process of urban revitalization, it is clear the neighbourhood has undergone the beginnings of a genuine transformation in the last

several years. It is impossible to attribute all of these changes to the efforts of The Edge Artist Village; however, since the organization was established, businesses have opened, perceptions of safety have increased, and physical changes have been made to a section of Main Street many felt had been neglected and largely abandoned for years.

Ultimately, this research has found that culture-led regeneration is a viable option for addressing communities in urban decline. Combined with other local initiatives and the proper municipal support, projects based in arts and culture have tremendous potential for the regeneration and sustained health of our cities.

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Appendix A: Topic Guide for Staff of The Edge Artist Village

Objectives:

- To explore what, if any, effects The Edge Artist Village has had on its surrounding community/neighbourhood in terms of **social effects, economic effects, and quality of life.**

Introduction:

- Introduce self; explain purpose of research, review ethics forms and length/nature of interview.

Major Topics for Discussion:

- **Patronship:**
 - Area-specific, or citywide use?
 - Artist-specific, or other groups as well?
- **Community:**
 - Changes noticed in the area since the establishment of The Edge
 - Social changes
 - Economic changes
 - Change in quality of life
 - Relationship with surrounding community
 - Any opposition?
 - Interactions with community
 - New artists vs. established artists
 - Gentrification concerns?
- **Operational:**
 - History of The Edge and staff's involvement in the area
 - Challenges of operating The Edge
 - Funding challenges
 - Encouraging participation
 - Decision-making processes re: programming and studio residents
- **Relationship with Government, City of Winnipeg**
 - Challenges?
 - Level of support
- **Future Plans**
 - Monitoring success?
 - Plans for expansion, etc?
 - Plans for increased presence in neighbourhood?

Appendix B: Topic Guide for Area Residents and Businesses

Objectives:

- To explore what, if any, effects The Edge Artist Village has had on its surrounding community/neighbourhood in terms of **social effects, economic effects, and quality of life.**

Introduction:

- Introduce self; explain purpose of research, review ethics forms and length/nature of interview.

Major Topics for Discussion:

- **Community and Patronship:**
 - Changes noticed in the area since the establishment of The Edge
 - Social changes
 - Economic changes
 - Change in quality of life
 - Frequency and nature of interaction with The Edge
 - Gentrification concerns?
- **Social:**
 - Feelings about The Edge opening in the neighbourhood?
 - Made relationships with other artists/residents, etc?
- **Quality of Life:**
 - Like working/living here?
 - Changes in quality of everyday life in the neighbourhood?
- **Economic:**
 - Has The Edge had an effect on your mission, business, or work?
 - More professional development opportunities? (Particularly for artists)
- **Future Outlook:**
 - Has perception of the neighbourhood changed?
 - Perception of Winnipeg changed?
 - Future vision for neighbourhood and city?

Appendix C: Topic Guide for Municipal and Provincial Employees

Objectives:

- To explore what, if any, effects The Edge Artist Village has had on its surrounding community/neighbourhood in terms of **social effects, economic effects, and quality of life.**

Introduction:

- Introduce self; explain purpose of research, review ethics forms and length/nature of interview.

Major Topics for Discussion:

- **Role of Planning in the Establishment of The Edge**
 - History of the project
 - Roles in the project
 - Funding/Application process
 - Current partnerships/interactions with city?
 - Current role of city/planning in the community?
- **Community and Patronship:**
 - Changes noticed in the area since the establishment of The Edge
 - Social changes
 - Economic changes
 - Change in quality of life
 - Frequency and nature of interaction with The Edge
 - Gentrification concerns?
- **Social:**
 - Feelings about The Edge opening in the neighbourhood?
 - Social interactions in the neighborhood changed?
- **Quality of Life:**
 - Changes in quality of everyday life in the neighbourhood?
- **Economic:**
 - Has The Edge had an effect on your mission, business, or work?
 - More professional development opportunities? (Particularly for artists)
- **Future Outlook:**
 - Has perception of the neighbourhood changed?
 - Perception of Winnipeg changed?
 - Future vision for neighbourhood and city?

Appendix D: Statement of Informed Consent

Statement of Informed Consent

Research Project Title: Art, Culture, and Urban Revitalization: A Case Study of *The Edge Artist Village*

Researcher: Barbara Besner

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

1. The Purpose of the Research: This research is being undertaken as part of my major degree project at the University of Manitoba in the department of City Planning. The purpose of the research is to explore culture-led regeneration; specifically, how and why small, community-based culture-led regeneration projects affect their respective communities and neighborhoods.

2. Procedures: This research includes approximately ten interviews with people who work and/or live in the community The Edge is located in, and planners from the City of Winnipeg who have knowledge of The Edge project. The purpose of the interviews is to establish the history of The Edge project, and to explore how and why The Edge has affected its surrounding community as a small, community-based arts organization.

These interviews will be analyzed and incorporated into my Master's thesis as well as any articles or presentations that may result from this project. I will leave my contact information at the bottom of this page, and you can email me or call me if you would like to read these documents.

3. Risk: Risks associated with this research are equal to everyday risks associated with crossing the street, consuming food and/or drink in a restaurant, etc.

4. Recording Devices: This one-time interview will take approximately 45 minutes of your time and, with your permission, I will record it with a tape recorder and transcribe it after our conversation. After the project is complete, the tape will then be destroyed. If you do not wish for the conversation to be recorded, I will take hand-written notes.

5. Confidentiality: Your confidentiality is important. When writing my Major Degree Project, I will not use your name or title, and at no point will I tell anyone that you were one of the people interviewed. Whether or not you choose to tell anyone about the interview, and/or whom you choose to tell is strictly your decision.

No reference will be made to specific individuals in the reporting of the data, however, given the small number of potential respondents, you may be identifiable to your colleagues. If you feel that a question asks you to reveal confidential or undisclosed information, you may decline to answer the question.

Information collected from participants will be incorporated into a final report. All information, including recordings and hand-written notes will be treated as confidential and stored in a private and secure place (a locked filing cabinet in the home office of the researcher), and subsequently destroyed once the project has been completed (including all data stored on the researcher's computer). The researcher is responsible for destroying the data.

6. Feedback: The final project will be made available at the request of the participant, and is expected to be available in December 2009. You may contact the researcher to receive a copy of the final report if you so desire. Contact information is provided at the end of this consent form.

7. Credit or Remuneration: There is no credit, remuneration, or compensation for participant involvement in this study.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the course project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

My name is Barbara Besner. I can be reached by email at [REDACTED], or by phone at [REDACTED]. My advisor is Rae Bridgman. She can be reached by email at [REDACTED], by phone at [REDACTED], or by fax at [REDACTED].

This research has been approved by the Joint Faculty Research Ethics Board (JFREB) of the University of Manitoba. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Thank you for participating in this project. Your cooperation and insights are very valuable and are greatly appreciated.

Participant's Signature Date

Researcher and/or Delegate's Signature Date

Permission to use a recording device during the interview:

Participant's Signature Date