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# ASPECTS OF A CHANGING RURAL LANDSCAPE

*A Study of Possibilities  
for  
Retirement Community Development  
in Winnipeg Beach*

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June 1989

DEPARTMENT OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

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ASPECTS OF A CHANGING RURAL LANDSCAPE  
A STUDY OF POSSIBILITIES FOR RETIREMENT COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT IN WINNIPEG BEACH

BY

DOUGLAS C. BACKHOUSE

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of  
the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
of the degree of

MASTER OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

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*Winnipeg Beach c. 1989*

## ABSTRACT

Rural retirement communities are becoming an increasingly popular lifestyle option for many elderly Canadians. The recreational opportunities and leisurely lifestyle associated with these communities will be attractive to a new generation of younger and more active retired people.

This study examines the general characteristics of retirement communities with a discussion of Canada's changing demographic circumstance and a description of the physical and social attributes of these communities. As well the implications of an aging population on ex-urban development is considered. From this background a series of design principles for retirement communities is formulated.

This overview is then considered as it applies to the Town of Winnipeg Beach on the west shore of Lake Winnipeg. This small resort community is currently encountering the conversion of seasonal homes for use as retirement accommodation. This condition establishes the basis for a naturally evolving retirement community. To build upon this existing trend, specific design recommendations are included which suggest how the development of a retirement community might be undertaken within this existing context.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# PART I

## INTRODUCTION

*Here's the bottom line for rural Manitoba communities, a senior federal official says: only the fittest will survive and it will be up to the towns themselves to remain on the map. (Winnipeg Free Press )*<sup>1</sup>

*The crisis of the countryside is one of its functional purpose - and of its existence in our imagination ... Eventually, if the future history of the countryside is not to be one of slow disintegration, it will be necessary to harness change. (Architectural Review)*<sup>2</sup>

These two statements identify an era of transition for Manitoba's rural landscape. Within the first comment there is the realization that many rural communities which have prospered for decades may now contemplate a substantial decline. In the second quotation there is the more general implication that the economic and cultural forces which have defined our image of the countryside are now substantially changing. In effect, a new status quo is evolving. The agricultural economy which has traditionally been the engine of growth and prosperity for rural residents is waning. As well, and only partly in response to economic changes, the composition of the rural population is being transformed. These changes have been subtle, at times almost imperceptible, however their cumulative effects over the long term have been profound.

In Manitoba, in the last half century, more than 30,000 family farms have disappeared.<sup>3</sup>

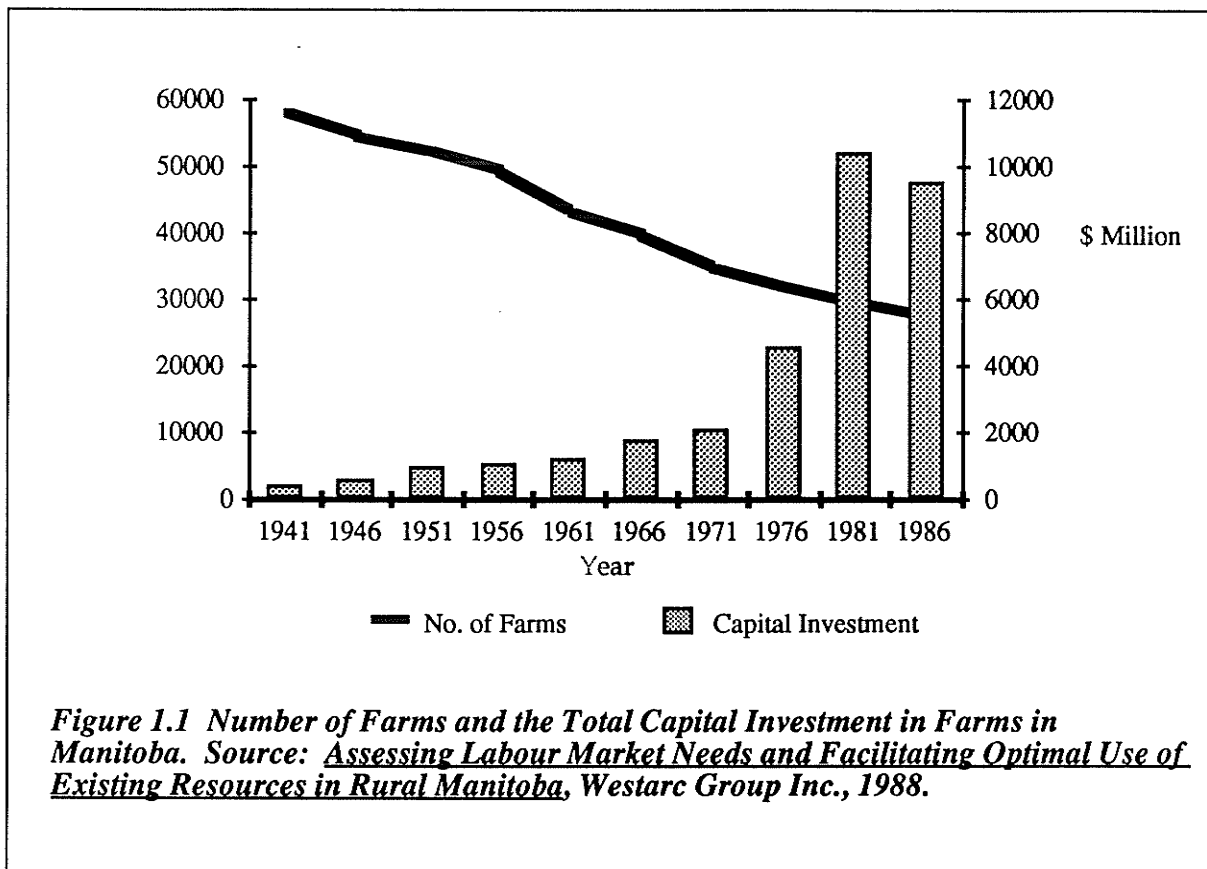
1. Randy Turner, "Rural Communities told to shape up", Winnipeg Free Press, December 1, 1988, p. 2.

2. Rowan Moore, 'Crisis in the Countryside', *Architectural Review*, February 1988, p. 25.

As a result of the steady decline shown in Figure 1.1 there are now only about 27,000 farms in this province, fewer than half as many as in 1941. This reduction in farm operations is recognizable as the result of highly mechanized, and capital intensive agricultural techniques. As the trend toward larger and more efficient farms has continued there has been a corresponding need to develop alternative sources of employment for those displaced from the agricultural process. In recent years, the demand for additional employment opportunities has been augmented by a reduction in farm profitability. Increasingly the remaining farm operators are seeking off-farm work as a supplement to their agricultural incomes. These changes in Manitoba's farm infrastructure will be the catalyst for the creation of a more diversified rural economy.

The difficulty in providing alternative work opportunities has contributed, over the past number of years, to changes in the composition of Manitoba's rural population. Where employment opportunities are not available in local communities, young rural residents are forced to migrate to urban centres. In Manitoba the magnitude of this movement is evident in rural dependency ratios for some communities which are in excess of 100%, five times the national average. This statistic indicates that in some places there are more dependents (those people less than 15 years old and over 65 years of age) than people of working age (between 15-64).

3. James L. Walker, *Assessing Labour Market Needs and Facilitating Optimal Use of Existing Resources in Rural Manitoba*, Brandon: Westarc Group Inc., 1988. p.32.



As Manitoba's rural culture absorbs the changes which are the inevitable result of the migration of young people into the city, it is also affected by the reverse migration of city people who seek rural housing options. Especially on the periphery of larger centres, ex-urban living has become established as a viable lifestyle option for many people. While these two opposite migrations yield a roughly stable rural population, their cumulative effect on the character of rural life, and on the 'functional purpose' of the countryside will be dramatic.

### New Age Demographics

In addition to the changes which have been identified in the population of rural

Manitoba, there are general trends with implications for the population of the province overall. Significant among these is the tendency toward an aging population. During the next twenty years, as the baby boom population grows older, this province's elderly population will increase at a rate three times faster than for the population overall. By the end of the century it is estimated that one out of every five people will be over the age of 65.<sup>4</sup> As this unprecedented number of people approaches the age of retirement, stresses on the social and economic fabric of the province can be expected.

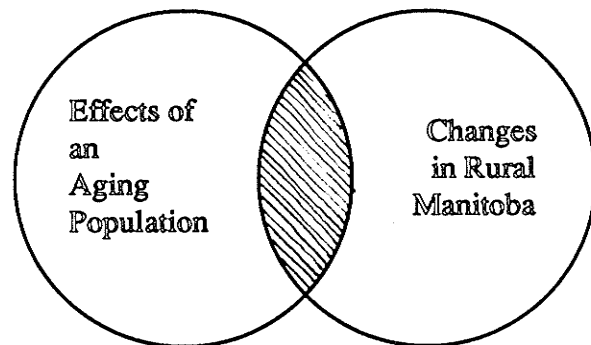
4. Leroy O. Stone and Susan Fletcher, *A Profile of Canada's Older Population*, Montreal: The Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1980 p. 8.

Indications of this tension can already be identified in concerns about the ability of our society to provide adequate pension income and health services for increasing numbers of seniors. It will be important to keep in mind, in contemplating the implications of an aging population, that the needs of this group are changing not only in size, but also in kind. As the baby boom population ages they are certain to redefine the role of the elderly in our society. Lifestyle choices made among this group will probably be quite unlike the choices of the previous generation of retired people.

Of particular interest in the context of this study are the housing choices made by this new generation of elderly. Among the choices available, retirement communities have evolved as a specialized housing type which is receiving attention as a desirable housing option for the elderly. Traditionally retirement communities have been associated with the warm climates of Florida and California. As the retired population has grown in size they have more recently been developed in Canada. Today age segregated developments are evident in almost every province. As retirement communities continue to respond to the needs of people making the transition into retirement, they will become an increasingly significant housing option for seniors.

Throughout the course of this introduction two broad sets of issues are identified. In the first part an evolving economic and cultural character of the countryside is outlined. In the second, the effects of unprecedented increases in the population of the elderly are highlighted. Each of these themes incorpo-

rates an extensive web of interrelated issues and the study which follows is not intended as an exhaustive examination of either topic. Rather, as Figure 1.2 illustrates, this study refers to these issues only to the extent that they influence the evolution of a particular community.



*Figure 1.2 The Intersection of Two Sets of Issues Forming the Basis for this Study.*

By focusing on the development of a particular community it will be possible to examine how general pressures for change can affect the physical form of the rural landscape. The effects of changing populations and new forms of employment are reflected in decisions made about physical surroundings. Changing needs yield new landscapes. The following study is an exploration of changes which may be anticipated for the Town of Winnipeg Beach in the face of an evolving economic and cultural context. From this unique case study it is hoped that insights may be gained which will be appropriate in a more general application.

## 1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine how an increasing demand for retirement community living might affect the future of the Town of Winnipeg Beach.

Winnipeg Beach has been influenced over the past number of years by the demands for an ex-urban lifestyle. As the relocation of retired people becomes an increasingly important aspect of this migration, the characteristics of an evolving retirement community will become significant. To understand the implications of this trend for the future of this community, this study examines both the general characteristics of the development of retirement communities, and the site specific potentials and liabilities of this concept.

## 1.3 Methodology

This study examines the possibilities for retirement community development in Winnipeg Beach using the methodology illustrated in Figure 1.3. The findings of this research are presented in a five part document described below.

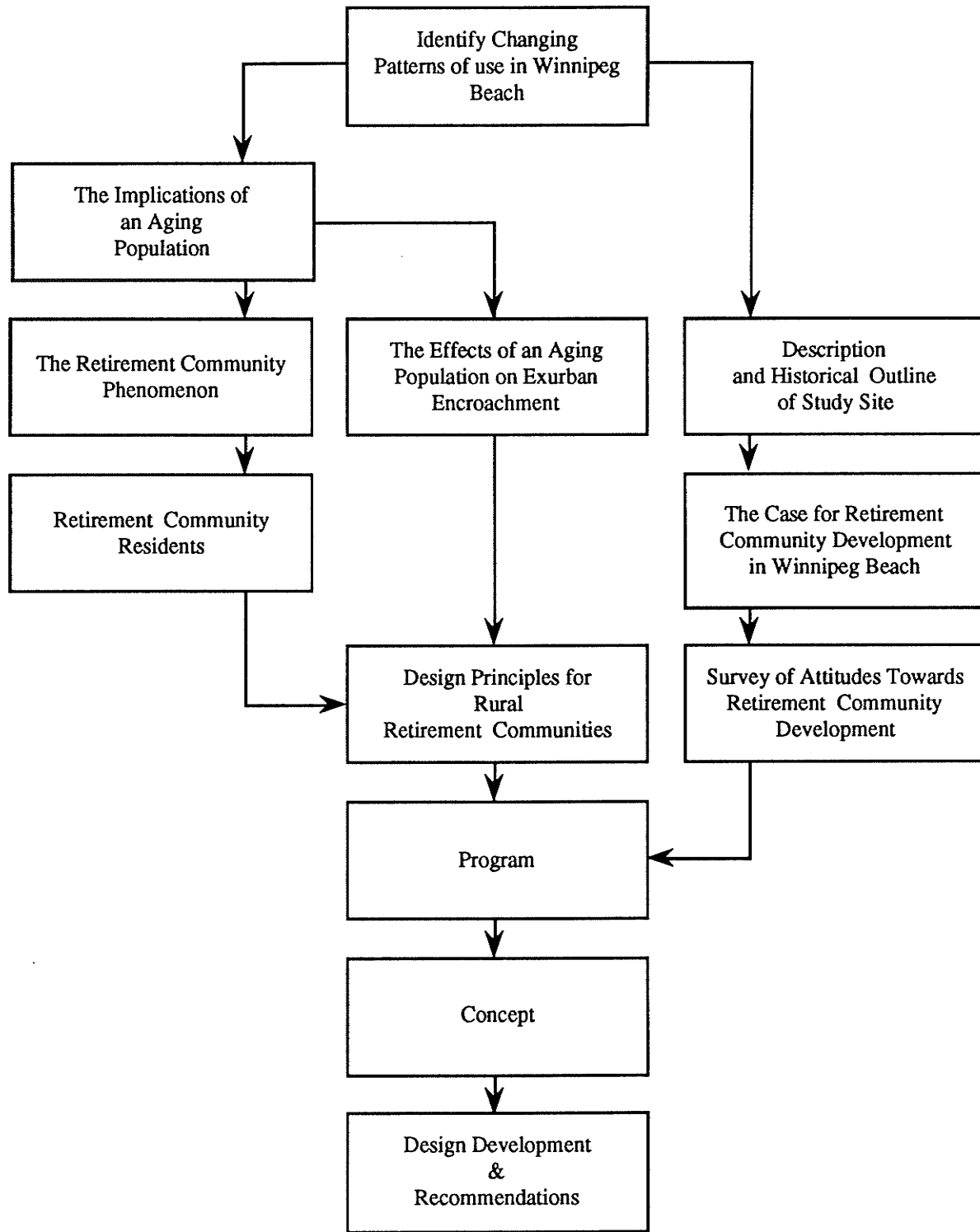
The introductory segment of the study provides an overview of the contemporary situation which defines the context for the subsequent research. Included in this first part is a statement of the purpose and a description of the methodology used in completing this work.

Part Two of the study outlines the general issues which influence the trend towards rural retirement community development in

Manitoba. This discussion begins with a focus on the effects of an aging population. Further information is provided to describe a population changing not only in terms of its demographic characteristics, but also as a result of a wide range of new lifestyle options. Having identified this new demographic context, attention is given to the implications of an aging population and to the chronic problems of ex-urban encroachment.

Also in Part Two a series of design principles is proposed for the development of rural retirement communities. These principles describe appropriate patterns for the physical form of retirement communities in terms of: overall community structure, site design, and detail design. This section on design principles also describes the organizational development of rural retirement communities. The importance of the development of both the physical and organizational aspects of retirement communities in order to achieve a complete and comfortable living environment is stressed throughout this study.

The third part introduces and describes the study site at Winnipeg Beach. A description of the main physical attributes of the town is given and an account of the history over the past eighty-five years is provided. Also included in this section is a discussion of the opportunities and liabilities for Winnipeg Beach in the face of the growing trend toward retirement community development. As well a survey of residents of the community was undertaken by the author and responses to questions about the desirability of retirement community development in their town are presented.



**Figure 1.3** *Flowchart Illustrating the Methodology used for this Study*



Part four of the study is a design exploration of how the Town of Winnipeg Beach might be developed as a retirement community. Models for various housing types are proposed and shown as they might be developed within the community. Further suggestions are provided in consideration of how the Town might be modified in order to better support this new development. Together these suggestions present an image of how a retirement community at Winnipeg Beach might evolve.

The final part of the study is a summary of the of the issues raised and discussed throughout the study. As well, a list of recommendations indicates what actions might be taken by the people of Winnipeg Beach to initiate the development of a retirement community.

# PART II

## BACKGROUND ISSUES

## 2.1 New Age Demographics

### Increases in the Numbers of Older People

During the next several decades the population of Canada's oldest people will experience a period of unprecedented growth. The population over 65 years of age is expected to grow at a rate three times faster than for the population overall. With this growth it is anticipated that by the year 2031, 18% of Canadians will be senior citizens.<sup>5</sup> This figure represents a growth in actual numbers of three times Canada's current senior population up to an estimated 7.5 million people within the next 45 years.<sup>6</sup>

Within Manitoba there were 121,820 people over 65 years of age in 1981.<sup>7</sup> This number represented 11.9% of Manitoba's total population in that year. Figure 2.1 indicates that Manitoba has the third highest percentage of seniors in Canada. Only Prince Edward Island and Saskatchewan have a higher proportion of their population aged 65 or older. These trends are expected to continue into the next century with Manitoba showing continued substantial growth in the size of its senior population. Projections suggest that this province can expect to have 146,000 people over the age of 65 by the end of this century for a real increase of 25,000 seniors.<sup>8</sup>

5. Leroy O. Stone and Susan Fletcher, *A Profile of Canada's Older Population*, Montreal: The Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1980 p. 8.

6. Leroy O. Stone and Susan Fletcher, *The Seniors Boom: Dramatic Increases in Longevity and Prospects for Better Health*, Minister of Supply and Services, 1986.

7. *Provincial Fact Book on Aging - Manitoba*, Prepared for the Fourth Manitoba Conference on Aging, May 21-24 1985, Winnipeg, Manitoba. p. 12.

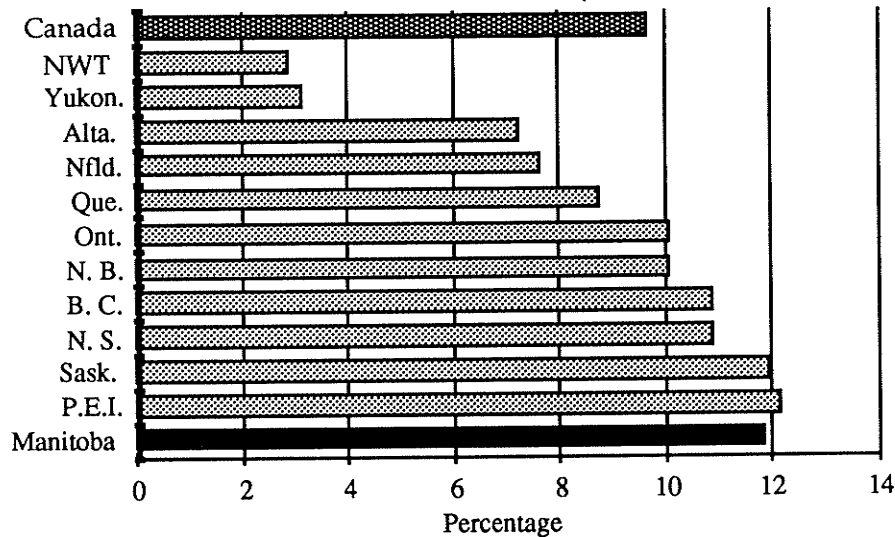
8. Leroy O. Stone and Susan Fletcher, *A Profile of*

In the years since the second world war the structure of Canada's population and the character of our society have been dominated by the collective special interests of the 'baby boomers'. Born between 1946 and 1966 baby boomers will begin to swell the senior population around the end of this century. The current concern about the effects of an exploding senior population are largely a result of the aging of this population cohort. Figure 2.2 is a projection for the population 55 years and older over the next several decades. In particular this figure highlights the advancing age of the baby boom population. For the subgroup aged 55-59 the population explosion begins around 1996 and continues to grow until 2016 after which it will begin to taper off. The subgroup aged 60-64, begins to expand five years later, around 2001. In the oldest group, aged 65-69, the sudden increase in numbers begins around 2006 and continues until 2026. The timing of the "explosion" in each of these age groups will have an enormous significance on community design and planning strategies in the future.

While the impending growth in the senior population is largely fueled by the advancing age of the baby boomers, other demographic trends also conspire to exaggerate the effect of increasing numbers of older people. Most important among these trends is the change in mortality rates which have, since the 1950's, declined steadily.<sup>9</sup> By the seventies very substantial progress had been made in extending longevity among the

*Canada's Older Population*, p. 20.

9. Leroy O. Stone and Susan Fletcher, *The Seniors Boom*.



**Figure 2.1 Percentage of Seniors by Province**  
**Source: *Provincial Fact Book on Aging - Manitoba***

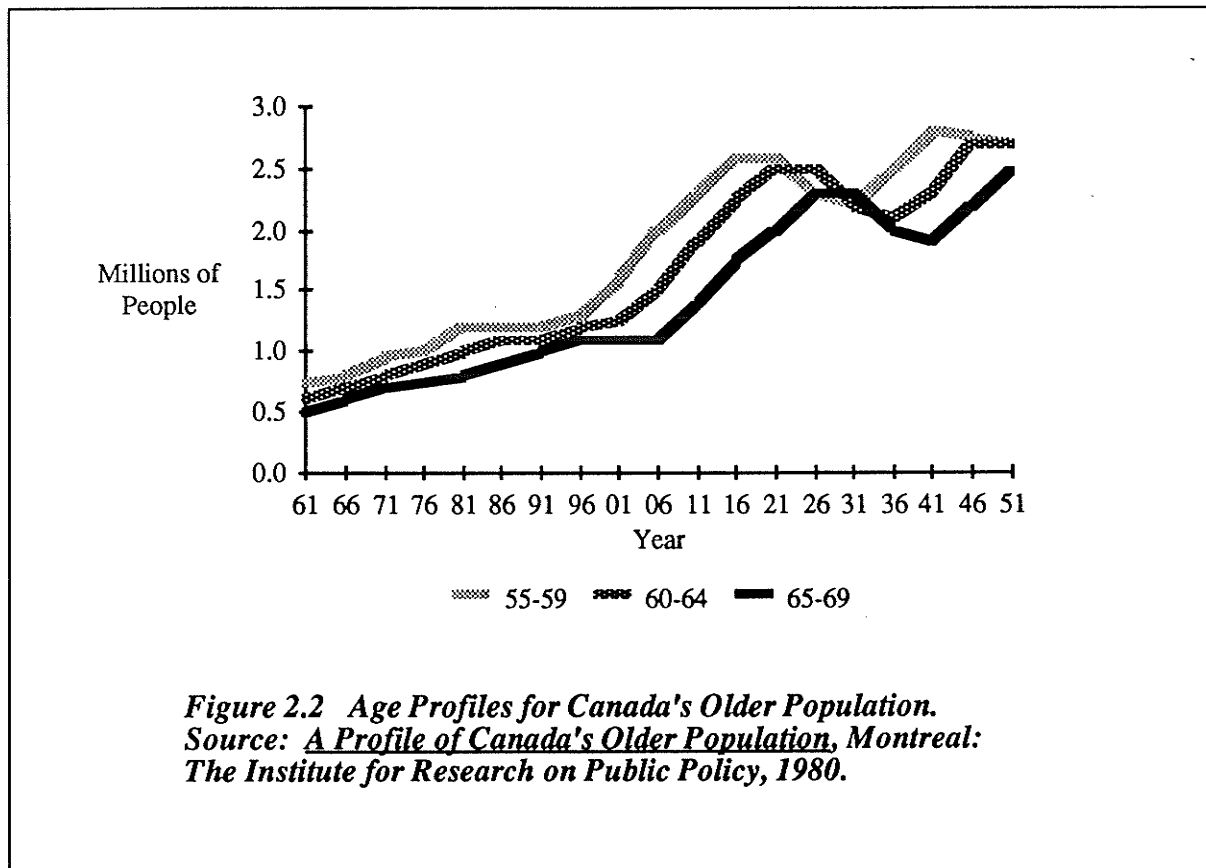
very old. The implications of this increased survivability are that a greater percentage of future senior citizens can expect to live into their eighties and nineties.

In addition to a declining rate of mortality, Canada's population is aging as a result of a declining birth rate. In the years since the baby boom, when fertility rates ranged between 3.5 and 4.0, relatively fewer children have been born. This fertility rate has continued to decline to the extent that in 1986 it had fallen to 1.6 children per woman. At this low rate the size of the younger population is actually shrinking which further exaggerates the top heavy structure of the Canadian age pyramid. The implications of this decline are expressed as an increase in

dependency ratios.<sup>10</sup> It is projected that by the beginning of the next century dependency ratios in Canada will reach as high as 29%. In communities in rural Manitoba the dependency ratio has recently been measured at over 100%.<sup>11</sup>

10. Dependency ratios refer to the ratio between those people 0-14, and over 65 years of age, to those in the 15-64 age group.

11. James L. Walker, *Assessing Labour Market Needs and Facilitating Optimal Use of Existing Resources in Rural Manitoba*, Brandon: Westarc Group Inc., 1988, p. 4.



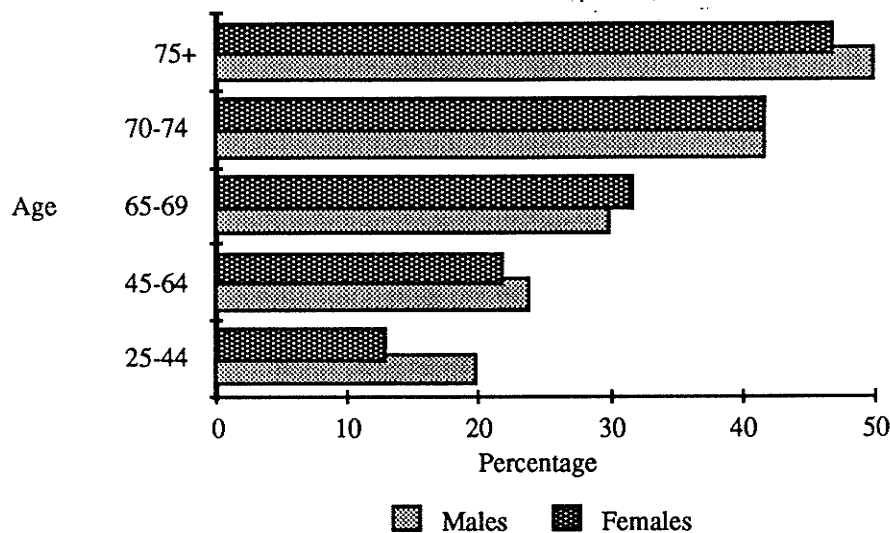
**Figure 2.2 Age Profiles for Canada's Older Population.**  
 Source: *A Profile of Canada's Older Population, Montreal: The Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1980.*

### Better Prospects for Older People

As a result of the combined effects of these demographic changes one can expect a dramatic increase in the numbers of people in Manitoba over the age of 65. Another significant change worth noting is that this older population is changing not only in size, but also in personality. Attitudes towards old age are evolving and people are approaching old age with an increasing sense of optimism. Retirement is more often recognized as an opportunity for new growth, rather than as the termination of a productive life. These changes in attitude will affect the needs and opportunities of the over 65 age group every bit as much as their increased numbers.

Contributing to this new attitude toward aging is the growth in numbers among the 'young-old'. The subgroup of people 55 to 75 years of age is the most active and dynamic among the senior population. It is this group which will experience the most dramatic growth between now and the end of this century.<sup>12</sup> This fact is significant because the needs and expectations of people approaching retirement will be very different from the requirements of the very old. Whereas the provision of health care inevitably becomes important among the very old, opportunities for recreation and leisure are more likely to prevail in lifestyle decisions made by younger seniors.

12. Leroy O. Stone and Susan Fletcher, *A Profile of Canada's Older Population*.



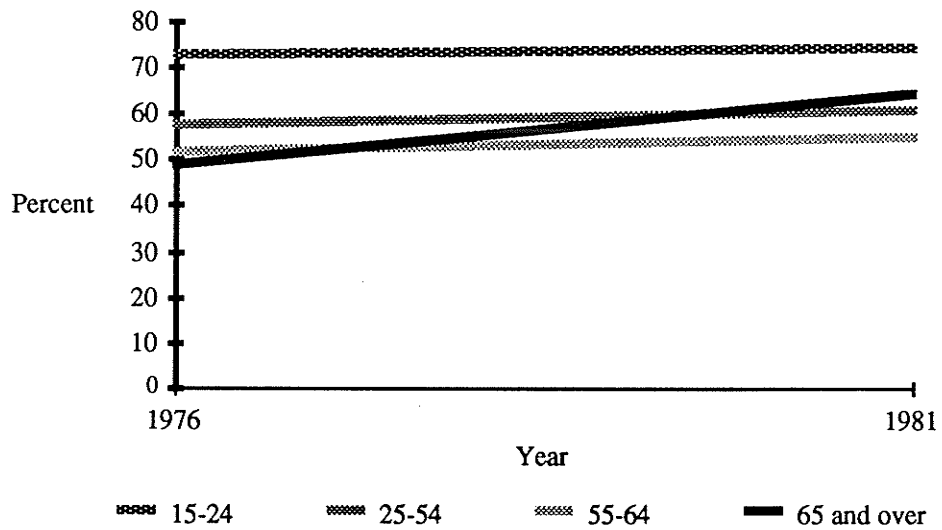
**Figure 2.3 Percentage of People Feeling Fit or Fitter than Others the Same Age. Source: *Canada Fitness Survey, 1981.***

The impact of an increasing number of people at, or approaching, retirement age is augmented by the emergence of options for early, and partial retirement. In a 1983 study undertaken in Manitoba 24.1% of people over 60 years of age listed their major reason for retiring as a desire not to continue working; an additional 6.2% cited the need for time to pursue other interests.<sup>13</sup> Taken together these results indicate that a third of Manitobans are presently choosing to finish working in advance of the 65 year compulsory retirement age. In the future the inevitably higher profile and increased public acceptance of retirement lifestyles would suggest that the option for early or semi-retirement will be seriously considered by a greater number of people.

13. *Provincial Fact Book on Aging*, p. 66.

Perhaps the most obvious indication of a new attitude towards old age is expressed in the increased awareness of personal health. Older people are eating better, smoking less, and getting more exercise. Figure 2.3 illustrates the impact of these new attitudes as older people are more likely to feel that they are as fit or fitter than their peers. This perception of good health among seniors is backed up by research done in Manitoba where 41% of those 60-69 years of age participated in sports as part of their leisure activities.<sup>14</sup> From information collected in Canada fitness surveys, Figure 2.4, it is apparent that people over the age of 65 have shown the greatest increase in their frequency of physical exercise. This desire to participate in physical activity by older people is an important characteristic of the new senior community.

14. *Provincial Fact Book on Aging*, p. 75.



**Figure 2.4 Percentage of People Exercising on a Regular Basis**  
**Source: Canada Fitness Survey, 1982.**

## 2.1.2 The Retirement Community Phenomenon

### Historical Outline

One of the implications of the enormous growth among older Canadians has been an increase in the number of retirement communities established throughout Canada. The choice to live in communities created specifically with the needs of seniors in mind is now a firmly entrenched option for Canadians. The following discussion gives a brief history of the development of the retirement community concept and outlines the major characteristics which help to define this housing type.

Although retirement communities appear to have become popular only in recent years, the idea in fact has a very long heritage. In classical Rome, the government built retirement villages for military officers with distinguished service records. These communities were frequently located on the outskirts of large cities and "were equipped with gymnasia, baths, and other recreational facilities."<sup>15</sup> Later, during the medieval period, crafts guilds created similar accommodations for their retired journeymen.

This practice of providing for retired individuals has been continued in the United States beginning in the 1920's. During this time church and labor groups established communities in Florida "with the intent of creating a supportive living environment for

their retiring members."<sup>16</sup> These communities were typically small in size, and their development tapered off during the depression in the 1930's. The next important phase in the development of American retirement communities began after the second world war. In the 1950's new retirement villages were created by private interests in Florida and throughout the States. By the 1970's the size and style of these communities had changed dramatically. The largest communities, Sun City in Arizona and Leisure World in California, had populations of 47,500 and 22,000 respectively. These large communities are run by professionals and provide an overwhelming array of services designed specifically for the elderly.<sup>17</sup> Since the peak in popularity of these very large retirement developments in Florida, Arizona, and California, there has been a more recent trend towards the establishment of retirement communities throughout the United States which do not rely upon the amenity of a mild climate for their success.

The Canadian experience with retirement communities corresponds with this later phase of development in the United States. Within the last decade privately and publicly sponsored projects designed specifically for the elderly have been created in most provinces. In Ontario, for example, twenty-three new retirement communities have been de-

15. Bruce W. Anderson, *Planning and Design of the Ontario Retirement Community: A Recommended Implementation Approach*, Unpublished Master of Arts Thesis, University of Waterloo, 1988. p. 6.

16. Michael E. Hunt, Allan G. Feldt, Robert W. Marans, Leon A. Pastalan, Kathleen L. Vakalo, *Retirement Communities: An American Original*, New York: the Haworth Press, 1984. p.1.

17. Maran, R. W., et al. , "Retirement Communities: Present and Future", *Housing for a Maturing Population*, 1983



veloped since 1970.<sup>18</sup> Given this steady growth in the past, and allowing for the substantial population explosion expected among seniors in the next several decades, one can assume that retirement communities will continue to gain importance as a housing option for elderly Canadians.

### Definition and Classification

In spite of the fact that retirement communities have been continuously evolving in North America since the 1920's, the most widely accepted definition was offered over twenty-five years ago by Webber and Osterbind in 1961. It defines a retirement community as:

*. . . a small community, relatively independent, segregated, and non-institutional, whose residents are mainly older people separated more or less completely from their regular or career occupation in gainful or non-paid employment. It is non-institutional in the sense that the population is largely free of the regimen imposed by common food, common rules, common quarters, and common authority.*

Within this definition Webber and Osterbind have included most of the attributes which are currently considered to define this housing type<sup>19</sup>. Only the reference to small size in this definition would need to be reconsidered to include more recent experience. Since the Osterbind definition many attempts have been made to describe the retirement community phenomenon precisely. Depending upon which criteria are used to describe these communities the definitions

18. Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs, *Planned Retirement Communities*, July 1986.

19. Nancy J. Osgood, *Senior Settlers: Social Intergration in Retirement Communities*, New York: Prager Publishers, 1982. p. 1.

can be very general or very exclusive. While some definitions consider attributes such as size, sponsorship, levels of service, tenure arrangements and location, others ignore these attributes as part of their description.<sup>20</sup> Faced with the difficulty of providing a precise definition, it has been appropriate to consider new ways of classifying retirement communities which could take into account a greater diversity of form.

Responding to this difficulty in describing the retirement communities accurately, a group of American researchers, headed by Michael Hunt, have proposed a typology of form which encompasses a broad range of community types.<sup>21</sup> This research is based on an extensive inventory of 2400 communities with a population of over one million people. This classification system circumvents many of the shortcomings of previous definitions by organizing communities along a multi-dimensional continuum. Within this structure it is possible to accommodate changes in the size and makeup of these communities. As this system is frequently cited in contemporary literature on retirement communities, and appears to be at least a temporary standard for discussion, it is described briefly below.

The classification begins with a very broad definition of retirement communities intended not to exclude any potentially significant retirement housing options. The proposed definition is based upon the three criteria of: housing, services, and residents. With re-

20. Michael E. Hunt, et. al, *Retirement Communities: An American Original*, p.3.

21. Hunt, et. al.

← RANGE OF POSSIBILITIES →

1	large		medium		small
2	young predominantly healthy		old predominantly healthy		old mixed healthy and frail
3	Extensive health, outdoor recreation & other	Limited /no health, extensive outdoor recreation & other	Limited /no health, extensive outdoor recreation & other	Limited/no health, extensive outdoor recreation, extensive other	Extensive health, limited outdoor recreation, extensive other
4	profit			non-profit	

1. Scale      2. Resident Characteristics      3. Level of Services      4. Sponsorship

**Figure 2.5 The Hunt Typology of Retirement Housing Types.**  
**Source: Retirement Communities an Americal Original.**

spect to housing, no restrictions have been placed on housing design or tenure arrangements. To be included within this definition of community, however, these researchers require at least some common service to be shared among the residents. Without this, the researchers feel that the community can only be described as an aggregation of individual units. The final component of the definition describes the residents themselves. Their definition stipulates that over one half of the residents must be over the age of 50, and that no more than one half of the people can be in need of nursing care. This is significant in that it will include age integrated communities while excluding nursing homes.<sup>22</sup>

To differentiate between communities which fall within this definition the researchers adopted four major descriptive attributes. The **first attribute** describes the community on the basis of its size. Large communities are those with populations over 5000 people, whereas medium sized communities are considered to have between 1000 and 5000 residents. Small communities, which made up 96% of the 2400 sampled, are those with less than 1000 people. The **second attribute** categorizes the retirement community population in terms of age and health. The first grouping includes those people who are younger than 75 years of age and generally healthy. Those people over 75 and in good health form the second group. The final group includes a mix of healthy and frail people over 75 years of age. The **third attribute** considers the level of services provided. The range of services considered in-

22. Hunt, et. al, p. 5

cludes: health services, recreation/ leisure, and commercial services. The **fourth attribute** considered in the construction of this typology was the type of sponsorship. Retirement communities may be developed as private, profit-making ventures, or by public interests such as church groups, fraternal orders, or unions.

On the basis of these four attributes the authors were able to describe a full range of retirement community options. In Figure 2.5 these attributes are organized into a multi-dimensional typology. With this typology Hunt et. al. have identified five types of retirement communities.

### Retirement New Towns

1	large		medium		small
2	young predom in early healthy		old predom in early healthy		old mixed healthy and frail
3	Extensive health, outdoor recreation & other	Limited /no health, extensive outdoor recreation & other	Limited /no health, extensive outdoor recreation & other	Limited/no health, extensive outdoor recreation, extensive other	Extensive health, limited outdoor recreation, extensive other
4	profit			non-profit	

1. Scale 2. Resident Characteristics 3. Level of Services 4. Sponsorship

A New Town is a large retirement community having an extensive range of health and recreation services. It will also have a moderate amount of commercial and business infrastructure, all designed primarily for retirees. For the most part, the towns are the creation of private developers and are marketed for young active retirees. Although only one percent of retirement communities are of this type, they accommodate 30% of the retirement population.<sup>23</sup>

23. Hunt, et. al, p. 13.

### Retirement Villages

1	large		medium		small
2	young predom in early healthy		old predom in early healthy		old mixed healthy and frail
3	Extensive health, outdoor recreation & other	Limited /no health, extensive outdoor recreation & other	Limited /no health, extensive outdoor recreation & other	Limited/no health, extensive outdoor recreation, extensive other	Extensive health, limited outdoor recreation, extensive other
4	profit			non-profit	

1. Scale 2. Resident Characteristics 3. Level of Services 4. Sponsorship

Retirement Villages are medium sized communities and typically offer a wide range of outdoor recreation and leisure activities. Commercial infrastructure and health services are limited or non-existent. The retirement village is usually located near an urban area and as such is not intended to be self-sufficient. As is the case with the retirement new town these communities are marketed for the young healthy retiree.

### Retirement Subdivision

1	large		medium		small
2	young predom in early healthy		old predom in early healthy		old mixed healthy and frail
3	Extensive health, outdoor recreation & other	Limited /no health, extensive outdoor recreation & other	Limited /no health, extensive outdoor recreation & other	Limited/no health, extensive outdoor recreation, extensive other	Extensive health, limited outdoor recreation, extensive other
4	profit			non-profit	

1. Scale 2. Resident Characteristics 3. Level of Services 4. Sponsorship

Retirement subdivisions vary in size. They are usually built by private developers and although they are marketed for retired people over 50 years of age, they may frequently be age integrated. These communities are distinct from the previous two types in that retirement subdivisions do not attempt to provide recreation or health services internally. While there may be a meeting room or recreation center included in the development, services will usually be supplied from the surrounding environment.

## Retirement Residence

1	large	medium		small
2	young predominantly healthy	old predominantly healthy		old mixed healthy and frail
3	Extensive health, outdoor recreation & other	Limited /no health, extensive outdoor recreation & other	Limited /no health, extensive outdoor recreation & other	Limited/no health, extensive outdoor recreation, extensive other
4	profit		non-profit	

1. Scale    2. Resident Characteristics    3. Level of Services    4. Sponsorship

The retirement residence is a small community usually consisting of a single building or building complex, and frequently located within an urban context. Facilities are provided which allow residents to participate in a number of non-active individual or group activities. Health care services are limited and no commercial infrastructure exists. Residents are typically older, though with no serious health restrictions. These communities are frequently sponsored publicly and provide rental assistance for low and middle income residents.

## Continuing Care Retirement Center

1	large	medium		small
2	young predominantly healthy	old predominantly healthy		old mixed healthy and frail
3	Extensive health, outdoor recreation & other	Limited /no health, extensive outdoor recreation & other	Limited /no health, extensive outdoor recreation & other	Limited/no health, extensive outdoor recreation, extensive other
4	profit		non-profit	

1. Scale    2. Resident Characteristics    3. Level of Services    4. Sponsorship

Continuing Care Retirement Communities are small and are usually developed by a non-profit sponsor. They are distinguished from the previous types by a comprehensive internal health care system. Residents are older and less physically active. Recreation programs offer a few opportunities for outdoor activity, and concentrate on passive leisure.

This classification provides an encompassing framework which describes the physical range of retirement housing options currently available. The definition, based upon the three criteria of: housing, services, and residents, is inclusive enough to cover a diversity of retirement community options. The typological structure of the model describes communities according to a continuum subdivided into a range of identifiable sub-types. This framework is useful in providing the opportunity for subsequent studies to be considered within the context of a recognized typological framework.

## Social Integration and Community Structure

To understand the retirement community phenomenon it is necessary to consider more than just the physical parameters of the development. The Hunt typology outlined above describes a wide range of retirement communities, from new towns with populations in excess of many thousand people, to single residences with only a few dozen individuals. This classification system does not, however, consider the social and cultural implications of this specialized housing type. Much research has been undertaken which indicates that retirement communities sustain a social fabric which provides support and companionship for community members. In opposition to this point of view, however, there are strong arguments to suggest that retirement communities create unhealthy and unnatural environments.

In presenting the case against age-segregated communities Nancy Osgood refers to social critics have been concerned with the

isolation of the aged from the rest of society. She points out that retirement communities have been described as "golden ghettos" by Margaret Mead and have also been referred to as "playpens for the elderly" by Maggie Kuhn.<sup>24</sup> For a more complete presentation of this point of view Osgood cites the writings of Lewis Mumford.<sup>25</sup> In an article entitled "For Older People Not Segregation But Integration" Mumford makes the assertion that the elderly must have the opportunity for a continuity of life which fosters sociability and prevents a narrowing of interests. He considers that:

*the worst possible attitude toward old age is to regard the aged as a segregated group, who are to be removed, . . . to live in desolate idleness, relieved only by the presence of others in a similar plight.*

In addition to the quality of life argument against age-segregated communities Mumford's writing is also concerned with the rejection of the elderly by society at large. This negative impression, Osgood points out, is supported by research undertaken at two retirement communities where residents are described as "lonely detached individuals living in what may appear to be communities but which are merely physical locations."<sup>26</sup>

On the other hand, Osgood points out that those who defend the concept of age-segregated communities suggest that the rejection of the elderly by society at large, and the isolation of seniors can, and frequently does, occur outside of an age segregated setting. Our society does not actually support age in-

tegration, instead people tend to cluster according to age by virtue of similar needs and interests. In this context retirement communities offer an attractive choice allowing seniors to live in close proximity to, and with the common interests and support of age peers. Osgood cites case studies undertaken by: Hoyt (1954), Hamovitch and Larson (1968), Bultena and Wood (1969), Lawton and Nahemow (1975), and Burby and Wiess (1976), in which it has been found repeatedly that residents of age-segregated communities have a higher morale, and are generally more satisfied with their living situations, than are the population of elderly in general.<sup>27</sup>

Osgood also indicates that the presence of higher morale among seniors living in retirement communities has been supported by research undertaken by Irving Rosow.<sup>28</sup> Rosow examined living environments which he classified according to the density of elderly residents. He found that in situations where a large number of elderly lived together there was a greater potential for meeting new friends, for developing a mutual support structure, and for developing a new framework of age specific activities. In subsequent studies by: Swartout (1965), Johnson (1971), Hochchild (1973), Ross (1977), and Jacobs (1974,1975) age segregated communities have been portrayed: as tight-knit communities offering residents a source of friends, as mutual aid societies, sanctuaries, and as sub-cultures with distinct customs, gossip, and humor.<sup>29</sup>

24. Osgood, p. 3.

25. Osgood, p. 3.

26. Osgood, p. 6.

27. Osgood, p. 5.

28. Osgood, p. 3.

29. Osgood, p. 5.

In the book, *Senior Settlers*, Nancy Osgood explores the notion that age-segregated living is supportive of socially integrated communities. To initiate this discussion she provides an extensive background to the related concepts of 'community' and 'social integration'. Community, she summarizes, is based upon the three major themes of territory, social organization, and "we-feeling". That is, for a community to exist, its members must identify with a particular geographical location. In addition, members should have some form of patterned social contacts, and mutual expectations. Finally, the notion of "we-feelings" refers to the identification of a social group. To describe the possibility for social integration, Osgood refers to the work of Irving Rosow in which he suggests that the loss of former work roles and an informal age-grading in society work against the possibility of an integrated community. Instead Rosow suggests that the best option for the integration of elderly is within age-segregated communities where a ready source of age peers and role models exists.

In case study analyses of three different retirement developments Osgood discovered a very strong sense of community and social integration. The sites chosen for this study differed in size and in geographical location. The type of dwelling units were different, and residents were from different social and cultural backgrounds in each case. Her conclusion from this study is that "age segregation per se, forms the basis of social integration and communityness in these three communities."<sup>30</sup> She suggests, furthermore, that in age-segregated communities the elderly

30. Osgood, p. 273.

have the opportunity to become involved in meaningful social roles. These communities foster the evolution of new norms of behavior, with "value placed on leisure, sociability, and neighborliness"<sup>31</sup>, which are different from those of society at large.

To this point an outline of the physical and cultural qualities of the retirement community phenomenon has been presented. This image of a specialized social structure, as presented by Osgood, Rosow, and others, helps to define the cultural characteristics which evolve within age-segregated retirement communities. The typology formulated by Michael Hunt and his group begins to define the physical and spatial characteristics of this specialized housing type. All of this research, however, is directed at communities which have been developed specifically for retirement housing. The following section describes an equally prevalent situation, wherein an existing community evolves over time into a retirement community.

### **Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities**

Naturally occurring retirement communities are perhaps the most common type of seniors' housing. They are defined as communities not specifically developed for older people which, over time, begin to accommodate large numbers of seniors.<sup>32</sup> These communities are distinct from their planned counterparts in that they are age-integrated

31. Osgood, p. 277.

32. Michael E. Hunt, Gail Gunter-Hunt, "Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities", *Journal of Housing for the Elderly*, Vol. 3, No.3-4, Fall/Winter 1985. p. 4.

communities where seniors have come to out-number younger residents. In addition to this difference, it is significant to note that naturally occurring retirement communities are not marketed directly for seniors and are therefore frequently not recognized as such by non-residents. The development of these communities for the elderly in the absence of a pre-conceived plan makes them a valuable model for the development of retirement housing within an existing community structure.

In an article describing the characteristics of naturally occurring retirement communities Michael Hunt suggests that as a neighborhood begins to age in place it comes to resemble the retirement subdivision identified in his typology.<sup>33</sup> In both cases the developments provide few services, relying instead on the surrounding environment for these. As well, each has a relatively small population and is developed for profit by private developers. In the situation where the naturally occurring retirement community is located within a single building, Hunt makes the comparison to the retirement residence type.

Identifying the process by which these communities evolve is essential to understanding their particular character. Hunt proposes two methods by which this evolution toward retirement housing can take place.<sup>34</sup> The first method occurs where residents move into a community at a young age and reside there until they become elderly. The alter-

33. Hunt, "Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities", p. 8.

34. Hunt, "Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities", p. 9.

native to this "aging in place" process occurs in situations where occupants relocate at an advanced age. While the alternative of aging in place is common, it is those situations which involve relocation which offer more insight into the development of planned retirement communities.

Using information collected in a case study analysis in Wisconsin, Hunt develops the idea that it is the provision of services which creates the opportunity for the development of naturally occurring and planned retirement communities. In situations where planned retirement communities are being developed it is necessary to provide an established service infrastructure, including recreational opportunities, shopping, and health services. In the study of naturally occurring retirement communities Hunt found that although the housing in the area had not been initially designed as retirement housing, the area was attractive to seniors because of the easy access to a variety of services.

This discussion identifies some of the salient differences, and similarities, between planned and naturally occurring retirement communities. In both cases the provision of an existing service infrastructure has been shown to be a significant attraction for retired people choosing to move into these communities. In addition, the proximity of people of a similar age is an important factor in the decisions of elderly relocating to planned and unplanned retirement communities. It appears that naturally occurring retirement communities offer a housing alternative somewhere between remaining in a pre-retirement home, and moving into a

planned, entirely age-segregated, retirement community. In the unplanned retirement community there is the possibility of frequent interactions with age peers, while still living independently in an age-integrated neighborhood.<sup>35</sup>

35. Hunt, "Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities".  
p. 20.



## 2.1.3 Motivating Factors for Relocation at Retirement

### Demand for Retirement Community Living

It is apparent that retirement communities offer an appealing alternative for many older people. Their existence throughout in the last century, and their proliferation recently confirms their viability as a retirement housing option. In spite of this seeming popularity it is important to note that only a small percentage of seniors will relocate to age-segregated communities. Mathieu (1976: p. 165) suggests that only 8% of senior citizens will leave the homes they spent the middle years of their lives in. In the study undertaken by Hunt et al. (1984: p. 5) they expect that less than 5% of elderly people will relocate to some sort of retirement community. Using the lower rate of demand at 5%, there could be a demand for this specialized housing type, in Manitoba, of seven to ten thousand people by the year 2001. Allowing for the emergence of younger and more active retirees, it will be possible to assume that the demand for retirement communities could easily increase well beyond this conservative estimate.

### Empty Nester Households

An important component of the demand for age-segregated lifestyles will come from "Empty Nester's". The term "empty nester" describes that group of people who find themselves living in large empty homes after

their grown children have moved away. While there have always been empty nester households, the peculiar demographic circumstances of the baby boom have highlighted their predicament. The popular image of empty nesters is that they are relatively young, in good health, and financially well off. Given that the homes that they have raised their families in are no longer appropriate, it is assumed that they will choose accommodations which provide a greater degree of comfort and amenity. The equity built up in their existing home creates the opportunity to relocate to a smaller, more luxurious home.

In fact, the circumstances of this group are not as straight-forward as they first appear. In a study by Miron and Schiff a more complex image of empty nesters is developed.<sup>36</sup> This research suggests that only about 18% of households ever go through a discrete period of empty nesterhood. For the remaining families there are always children remaining in the home. This may be the result of children born over a large number of years where the youngest child does not leave before the couple retires. In other situations an older child may return to live with his/her parents for a period, later in life. In all cases the process of child leaving occurs over such an extended period of time that for many, no discrete sensation of empty nesterhood may be experienced.

The demographic profiles and income levels of empty nester households suggest that a great deal of variability exists among mem-

36. J. Miron and Mira Schiff, *A Profile of the Emerging Empty Nester Household*, Research Paper No. 130, Center for Urban and Community Studies, 1982.

bers of this group.<sup>37</sup> The image of the empty nester family as affluent and comfortable is not entirely accurate. Many empty nester families have only one, or occasionally no members in the labor force. Furthermore, of the group identified as empty nester families, 39% rented and did not own their accommodations. For those without accumulated home equity the opportunity to make changes to their living arrangement will be limited.

In spite of this variability among empty nester families the housing choices made by this group are surprisingly consistent. The public perception is that empty nesters will relocate to smaller but more elaborate and comfortable homes. In fact, the housing needs of this group are likely to be quite modest. Whether they choose to relocate to larger homes or smaller homes their choice most frequently is to move into accommodations having five rooms. In this way there will be at least one extra room which may accommodate overnight guests, or be used as a study or hobby area.<sup>38</sup> Another important attribute of housing choices identified in this report was the desire to live close to friends possibly in a neighborhood with which they were already familiar. This group profile can guide and inform decisions made by those involved in planning and developing housing for empty nesters.

In identifying the potential for future growth in numbers of empty nesters Miron and Schiff identified several trends which can influence the future tendency toward empty

nest households. Not all of the trends they have outlined will lead to an increase in the future incidence of empty nester households. The overall tendency, however, appears to support an increase in the numbers of these families by the end of this century. The most important factor influencing empty nester households will be the shrinking in completed family size. Related to this is the falling age at birth of the last child. In modern families with only two children, where the last child is born at a relatively younger age, there will be an increased likelihood of all children leaving the home of their parents while the parents are still at a young age. These families established in the post 1960 'baby bust' can be expected to swell the ranks of empty nest families by 1991.<sup>39</sup>

### **Other Factors Influencing Decisions to Relocate**

The motivation to relocate among seniors is founded largely on the changes in lifestyle imposed by retirement. Frequently the desire to move can arise out of a need to escape a pre-retirement community. Retirees are likely to sense that the loss of income that corresponds with retirement leads to a loss of status within their present environment. Comparisons between themselves and more active and 'productive' younger people can lead to additional mental stress. This change in values, where job and family are no longer the most immediate concerns can develop into emotional stresses sufficient to motivate a change in living situations. In this case it will be reasonable to expect that the environmental aspects of a new living

37. Miron and Schiff.

38. Miron and Schiff, p. 45.

39. Miron and Schiff, p. 57.

environment will be as important as the housing unit itself.<sup>40</sup>

For others approaching old age, value changes associated with retirement provide opportunities to enhance their situation and enjoy life more fully. For these people in particular the different expectations of retirement which develop within age-segregated communities will be particularly attractive. Leisure can be an unstigmatized activity enjoyed among others in similar circumstances. This positive response to retirement will be a strong motivating factor in decisions to relocate made by those of retirement age.

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40. Katherine McMillan Heintz, *Retirement Communities: For Adults Only*, The Center for Urban Policy Research, Rutgers-The State University of New Jersey, 1976. p. 6.

## 2.2 An Aging Population & Exurban Encroachment

### Introduction

The changing demographic circumstance described in the previous chapter creates a situation in which large numbers of people will be seeking specialized retirement lifestyles. For many seniors the release from a daily routine will provide the opportunity to seek 'exurban' housing options which take advantage of a more relaxed rural lifestyle. The incentives of scenic beauty and recreational amenity will combine with lower land prices to attract retired people to live outside the city in increasing numbers. Thus as the population ages the decisions of this group can be expected to have significant implications for the trend towards rural residential development. The following chapter describes how the development of rural residential housing will be affected by the increasing population aged 65 and over.

### The Exurban Phenomenon

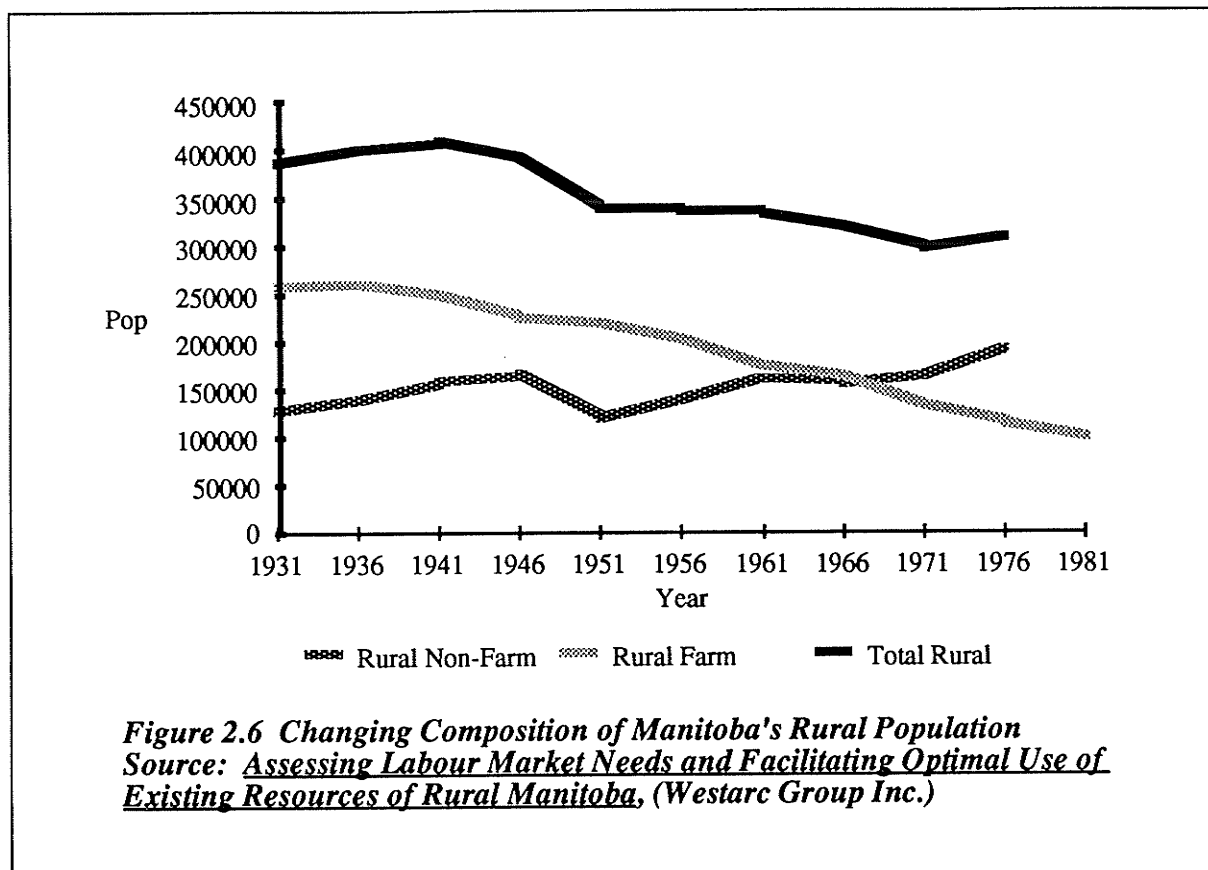
The migration of urban dwellers from the city to the countryside presently represents a significant aspect of an evolving urban form which combines built up areas and dispersed areas.<sup>41</sup> Most Canadian cities already support a web of exurban housing where residents live outside the city in small rural communities, but commute frequently to and from the city. In fact, Figure 2.6 illustrates that whereas rural farm populations in Manitoba have decreased steadily over the

last 30 years, the total rural population has remained approximately stable. This redeployment of farmland as residential property can be expected to continue as it props up a flagging farm economy, and provides a valuable commodity for the urban housing market.

For urban residents the opportunity to live outside the city offers several advantages. Significant among these is the availability of rural residential properties at prices substantially lower than in the city. As the cost of urban housing escalates, as a function of urban growth, the alternative of exurban living becomes proportionally more attractive. For some the option of purchasing a home in a less expensive community adjacent to the city is the only way to enter an inflated housing market. For others the motivation to reside outside the city is based on the perception that rural community life offers a more intimate, and complete community experience. For this group exurban dwelling provides an alternative to the anonymous presence of city life. For still others, the exurban alternative provides the flexibility for lifestyle options which might not be appropriate in suburban communities. Whatever the combination of these or other reasons, it is apparent that there is a strong outward thrust from cities which sustains the exurban lifestyle.

At the same time as the pressure for exurban development increases, the ability of the rural economy to resist this encroachment is severely curtailed. For many rural landholders who have previously relied on agricultural operations, it is increasingly necessary to search out additional sources of income.

41. Lorne H. Russwurm, *The Surroundings of Our Cities: Problems And Planning Implications on Urban Fringe Landscapes*, Ottawa: Community Planning Press, 1977.



Indeed, in a recent census, 35.5% of Manitoba farmers are already supplementing their agricultural income with off-farm work.<sup>42</sup> In the context of this stagnant agricultural economy farm landholders are attracted to the financial gains that are available through land subdivision for residential use. Figure 2.7 illustrates a typical relationship between the size of land subdivisions and the subsequent increase in land values. While this increase in land value represents a considerable economic incentive for farmers, it is significant to note, that in a study of exurban resettlement undertaken in the Ottawa-Montreal corridor, only 11.8% of farm land divisions were stimulated by land

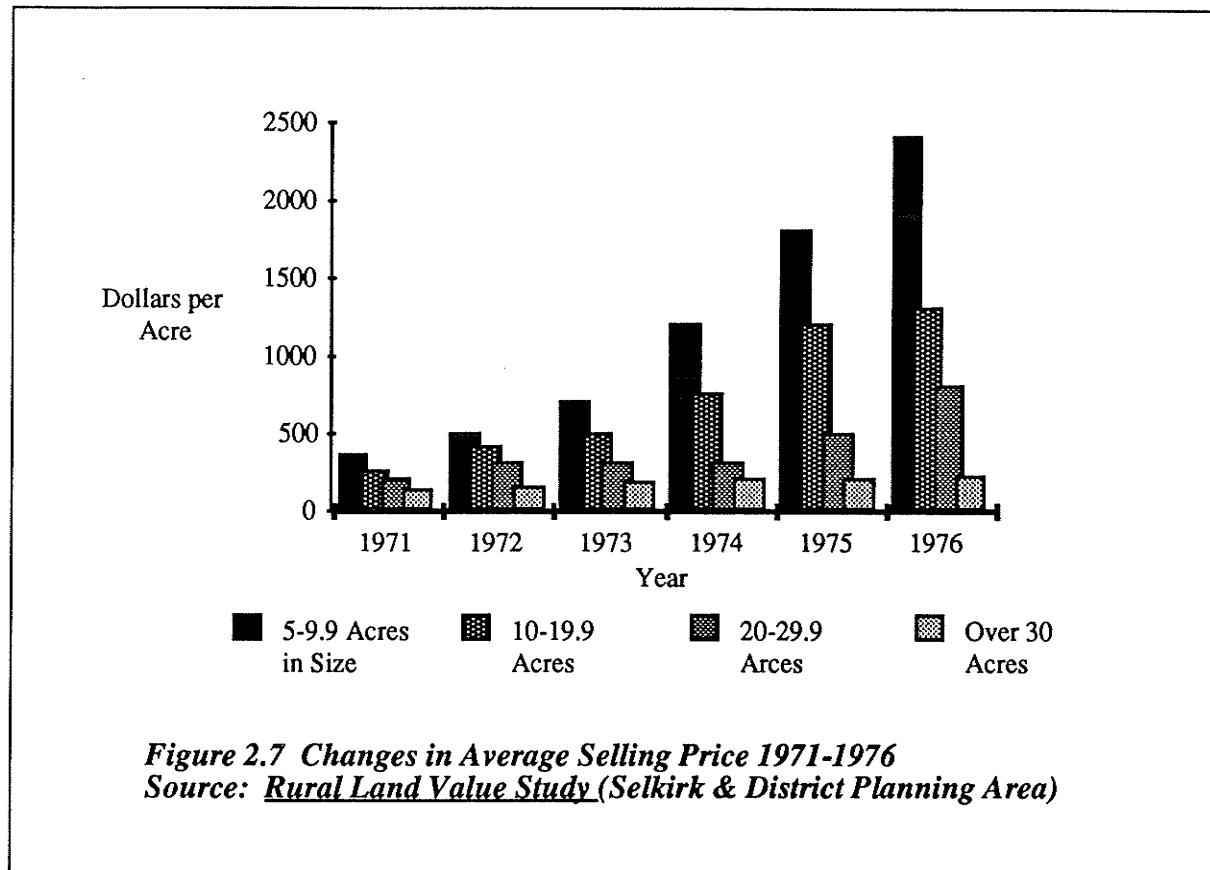
42. Walker, p. 5.

speculation. By contrast, the same study found that over 50% of these transactions were motivated by some combination of age, health and financial problems.<sup>43</sup> The implications of these statistics are that regardless of the attitudes of farm residents toward exurban encroachment, this development is frequently accommodated out of economic necessity.

### The Impact of an Aging Population

The tendency towards exurban development can be expected to increase as Manitoba's

43. James D. McRae, *The Impact of Exurbanite Settlement on Rural Areas: A Case Study in the Ottawa-Montreal Axis*, Lands Directorate, Environment Canada, Working Paper no. 22, April 1981.



population continues to age over the next several decades. In the previous chapter it has been shown that in addition to an increase in the absolute numbers of people approaching retirement age, there are also significant trends toward better health and greater longevity among this group. It has further been shown that retirement communities offer an attractive housing alternative for seniors. While retirement communities are not an exclusively exurban phenomenon they are most frequently located outside of the city in areas of scenic and recreation amenity. These trends would indicate that the need for rural retirement communities can be expected to grow over the next several decades in response to the demands of an aging population.

While the extent of rural residential development will be affected by an increase in the absolute numbers of retired people, a more far-reaching impact will be leveled by the changing expectations of the next generation of retirees. Since its birth the baby boom generation has amended its context to create new social norms. The common interests of this population have tended to focus public attention and initiate a redefinition of accepted needs and values. On the basis of this experience it will be reasonable to project that attitudes towards retirement living will also be influenced by this process. With this more intense scrutiny, a broader range of retirement housing options should become commonly acceptable. As these changes occur, the current estimate of 5 to

8% of retired people who relocate to retirement communities can be altered substantially. The future demand for rural retirement community housing, therefore, is potentially affected more substantially by this shift in attitude, than by the direct increase in Manitoba's retired population.

### **Liabilities of Exurban Development**

In light of the potential for a sustained demand for exurban development it will be necessary to consider the problems associated with this phenomenon. While it is beyond the scope of this study to provide a comprehensive discussion of the conflicts which arise as a result of exurban residential development, three general areas of concern are outlined below.

The environmental implications of exurban development have warranted serious consideration in developments of this type. In particular the demand for land in close proximity to urban centres can create conflicts when that land has high agricultural productivity. This problem has been recognized in Manitoba, and is addressed in the Provincial Land Use Policies.<sup>44</sup> These planning directives expressly restrict development in areas of prime agricultural land and afford protection for other areas which may have a lower agricultural classification. It is essential, that these clear policies not be eventually compromised in the face of political or economic pressure for development.

Another aspect of the exurban phenomenon which demands consideration is the archi-

tectural image of these developments. Too frequently existing development can be accurately identified as 'exurban sprawl'. Rural residential communities, developed using similar design criteria as suburban communities ultimately end up looking and functioning alike. It is this similarity between the suburban and exurban situation that yields the impression that the city extends endlessly across the countryside. While provincial land use policies recommend that lands for rural residential development only be designated "provided that the siting and design of such development reflects its role as an alternative to the urban life-style"<sup>45</sup> in practice there is little differentiation between urban and exurban housing. To improve this situation it will be necessary to take greater care to develop distinct and appropriate housing for rural locations. Designs must take account of their rural context, and be flexible enough to incorporate the unique characteristics of each site. Without this care and attention to detail little improvement can be expected in the quality of exurban development.

The final area of concern refers to the changing composition of the rural population. It has already been mentioned that in spite of the fact that the rural farm population in Manitoba has decreased steadily over the past fifty years, an increase in the non-farm population has resulted in an approximately stable rural population overall. This transformation has been so significant that since the late 1960's less than half of Manitoba's rural population is directly occupied with farming. As the composition of

44. *Manitoba Provincial Land Use Policies*, The Manitoba Gazette, Nov. 1980. Policy no. 1.

45. *Manitoba Provincial Land Use Policies*, Policy no. 3.

the rural population continues to change there are profound implications for social characteristics of rural communities. Stable local communities, with personal and unique histories are being eroded as young rural residents migrate to urban centres. Additionally, as exurban residents move into rural situations they transplant urban values and inadvertently assist in a transformation of Manitoba's rural culture. The results of this transformation are complex and difficult to quantify and yet they are potentially the most profound effect of the exurban phenomenon.

### **Rural Residential Subdivisions**

In the following section several mechanisms of exurban development are identified and described. The most formalized aspect of this development occurs as new rural residential subdivisions are developed and occupied. In Manitoba, however, a significant additional component of this trend occurs as the result of seasonal residential conversions. In this case people are purchasing existing summer homes and renovating them for more permanent use. For each of these processes, the implications of an aging population are considered and the problems associated with each type of development are outlined.

Rural residential subdivisions represent a significant proportion of the total subdivision activity in Manitoba. The 640 lots approved in the year ending March 1988 accounted for 25% of the total number of lots approved in that year.<sup>46</sup> This sustained activity would suggest that the demand for ex-

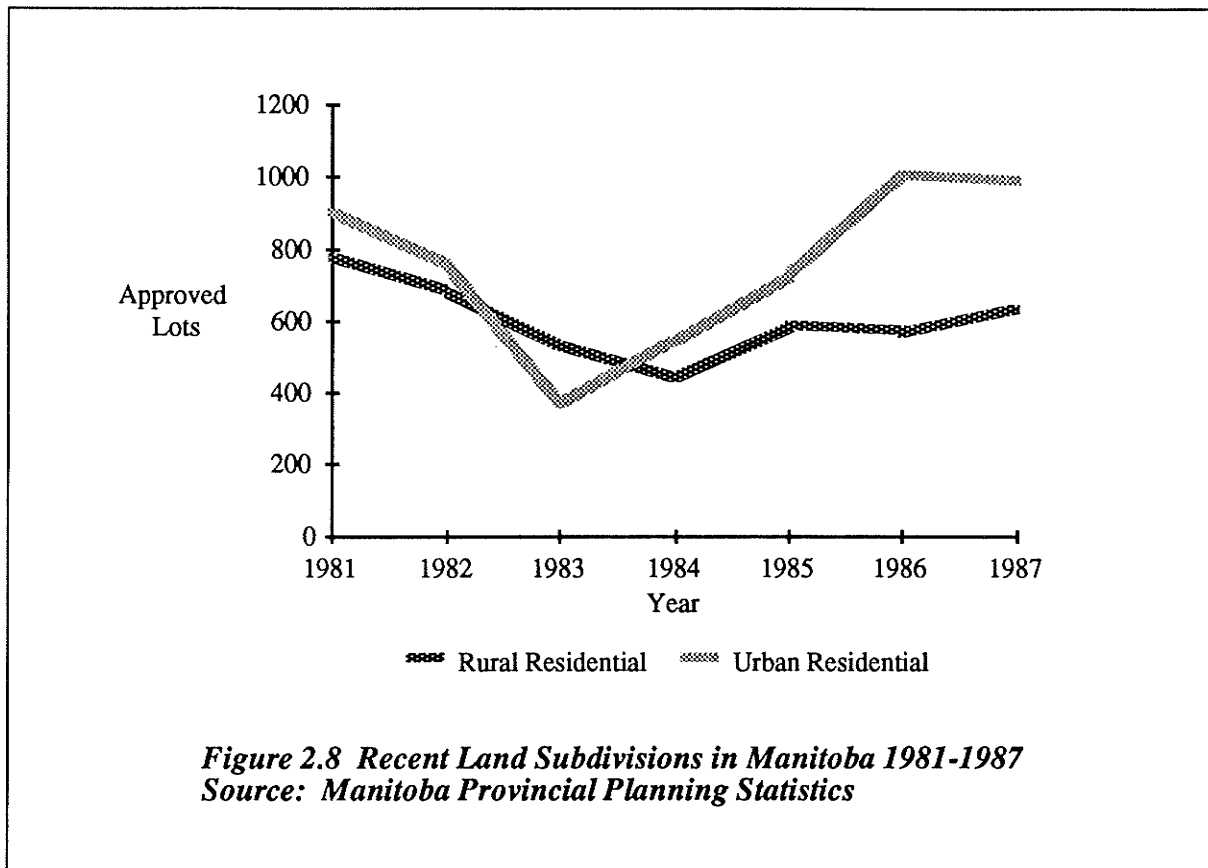
urban living has not diminished in recent years, and that rural landholders are still being motivated to subdivide their properties in order to take advantage of increased resale values. These new rural residential properties may have been created in small scale subdivisions, where an agricultural landholder has created a small number of new lots to be sold directly to the residential consumer. In other situations, larger subdivisions have been designed and developed by intermediate landholders, in which case the developer will be responsible for the planning and construction of internal roads and services providing a package of land and services comparable to suburban properties.

In the circumstance of the smaller subdivisions, the implications of new residential development must be considered with great care. Because each of these properties is purchased and developed individually the deflection of the character and quality of the rural environment occurs almost imperceptibly over an extended period of time. These gradual, and often qualitative changes in rural landscape character are difficult to recognize in the context of the subdivision approval process. While the provincial land use policy is an effective tool for controlling the general direction of this type of rural residential development, it does not adequately support decisions based upon qualitative assessments of these incremental changes to the rural environment.

For larger developments which result in coarser changes to the rural environment the provincial land use policies provide a more effective control mechanism. With the more

46. Provincial Planning Department Records.

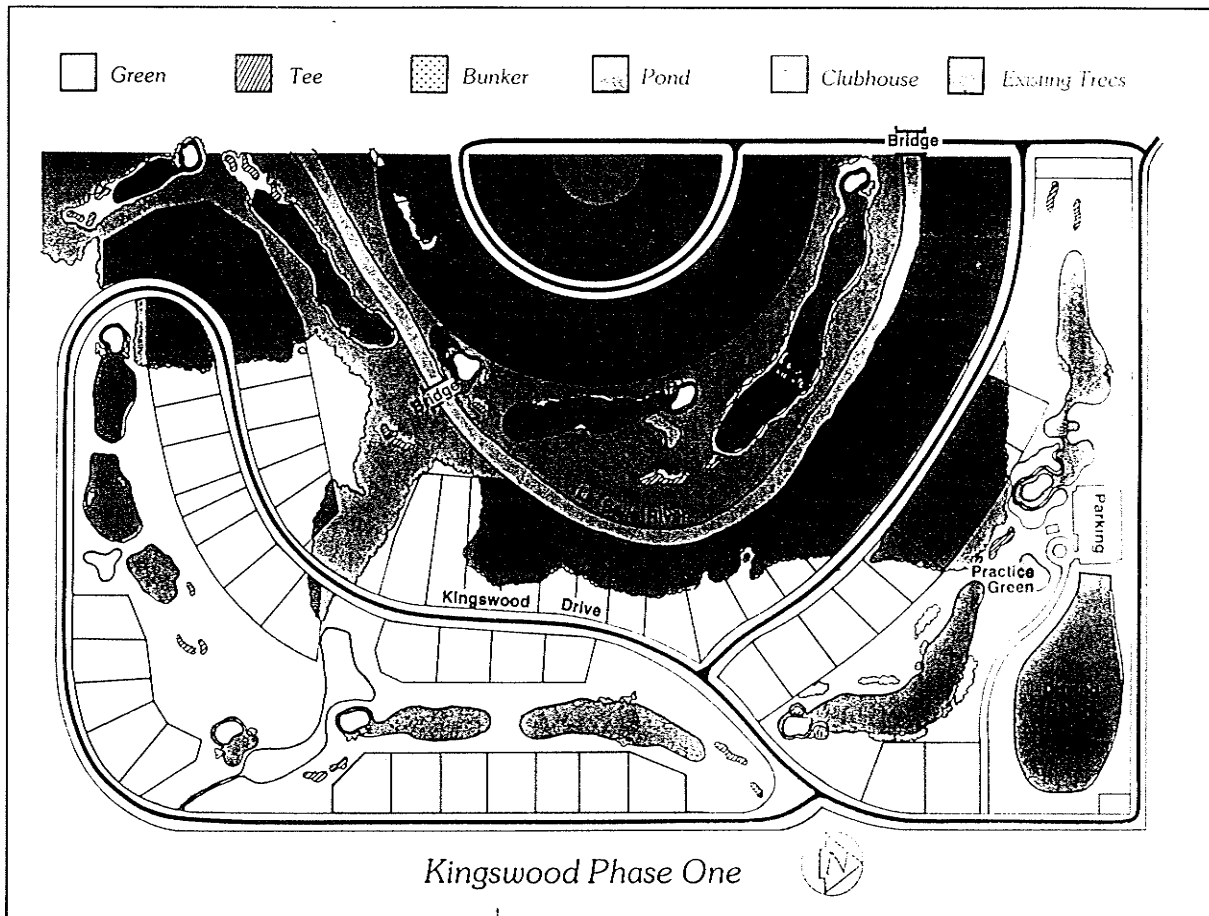




elaborate development process involved in the creation of larger rural subdivisions there is input from planning and design professionals. As a result of this input, these subdivisions can be expected to be well resolved in their internal functional relationships and of a high visual quality. A significant shortcoming is apparent, however, as the development process does not provide adequate incentives to ensure an appropriate resolution between the subdivision and its surroundings. If the image and quality of exurban development is to be improved greater attention must be paid to the resolution between new development and their existing contexts. Land use policies should make specific reference to need for new rural residential developments to retain the

visual integrity of the surrounding landscape.

As Manitoba's population ages there will be a demand for rural residential housing created by an increase in the numbers of older people. The desirability of exurban housing for retirement living has been identified and described in this study. In light of this inevitable growth in the demand for exurban housing it will be necessary to develop specific design and planning mechanisms which can respond to this changing rural context. Through the application of existing Land Use Policies, and by encouraging the involvement of design professionals it will be possible to take the advantage of these new forces shaping the rural landscape.



*Figure 2.9 Plan of Kingswood Subdivision and Golfcourse*

While there have as yet been no exurban community developments designed and marketed directly for seniors in Manitoba, there are examples of projects of this type throughout Ontario, and in several western provinces.<sup>47</sup> In spite of the absence of specific retirement community developments in Manitoba, there are a number of recent developments which, because of their character and design, are attractive to retired residents. The Kingswood golf course in La Salle, and the Sandy Hook Golf Course north of Winnipeg Beach are two examples

where residential properties have been developed in conjunction with internal golf courses to create highly attractive communities. Neither of these developments have been marketed exclusively as retirement accommodation but each will be attractive to the growing constituency of retiring homebuyers.

47. Refer to Appendix A. for listing of retirement communities in Ontario.

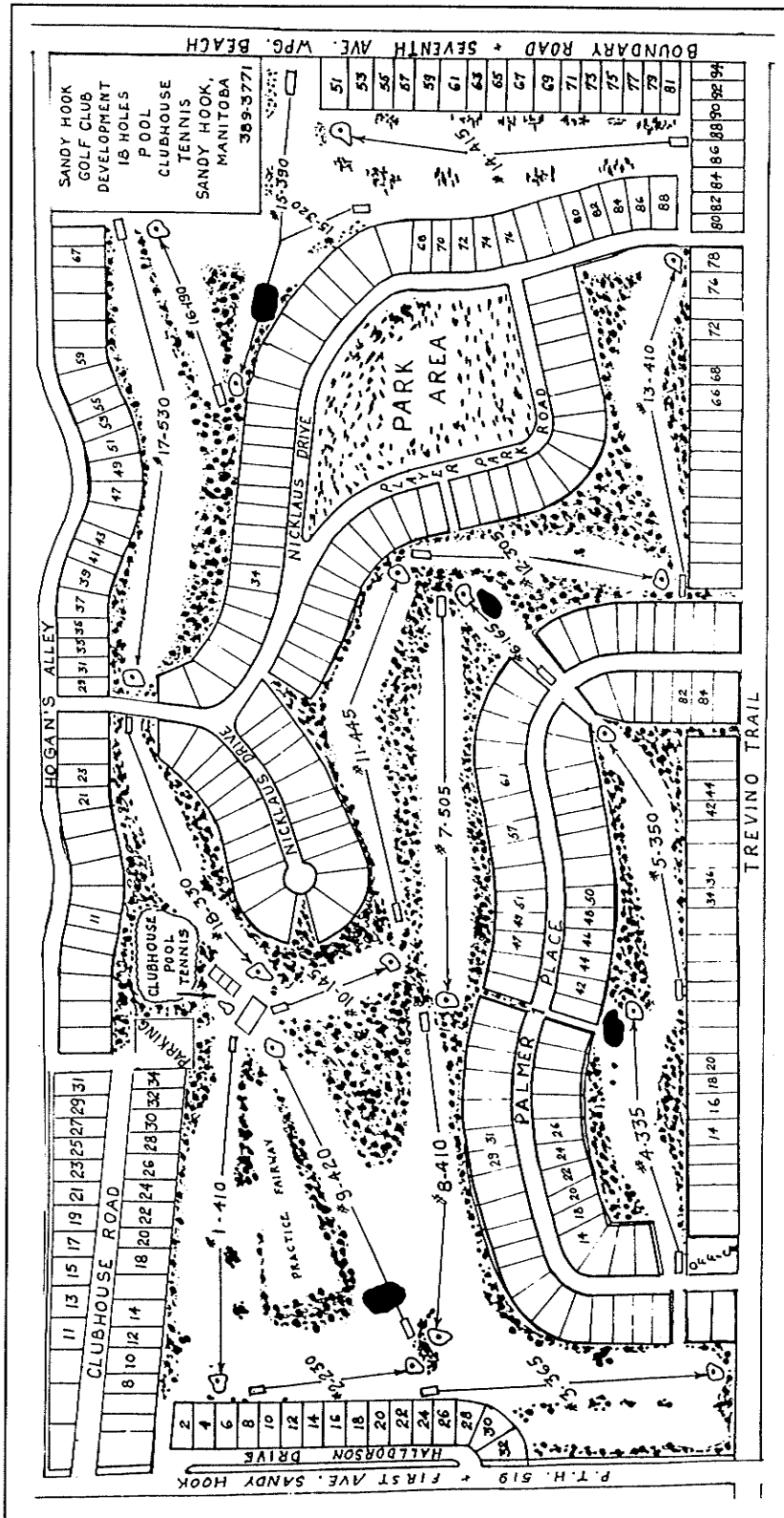


Figure 2.10 Plan of Sandy Hook Subdivision and Golf Course

## Seasonal Residential Conversions

It is probable that the absence of specifically designed rural retirement housing in Manitoba is due in part to the conversion of seasonal residences for permanent use. Within Manitoba the renovation of summer cottages has been established as a popular alternative to other types of exurban living. The large numbers of seasonal homes in resort areas around Winnipeg have made this a particularly important source of exurban housing for Manitobans. The advantages of seasonal home conversion for retirement living have potentially softened the demand for newly developed retirement housing. A discussion of issues arising out of this conversion process, and a description of the implications of the aging Manitoba population are given below.

The motivation to adapt seasonal residences for permanent use has been maintained over the past several decades. In a discussion paper prepared by the Ontario Ministry of Housing the following list of reasons motivating cottage conversions have been proposed:

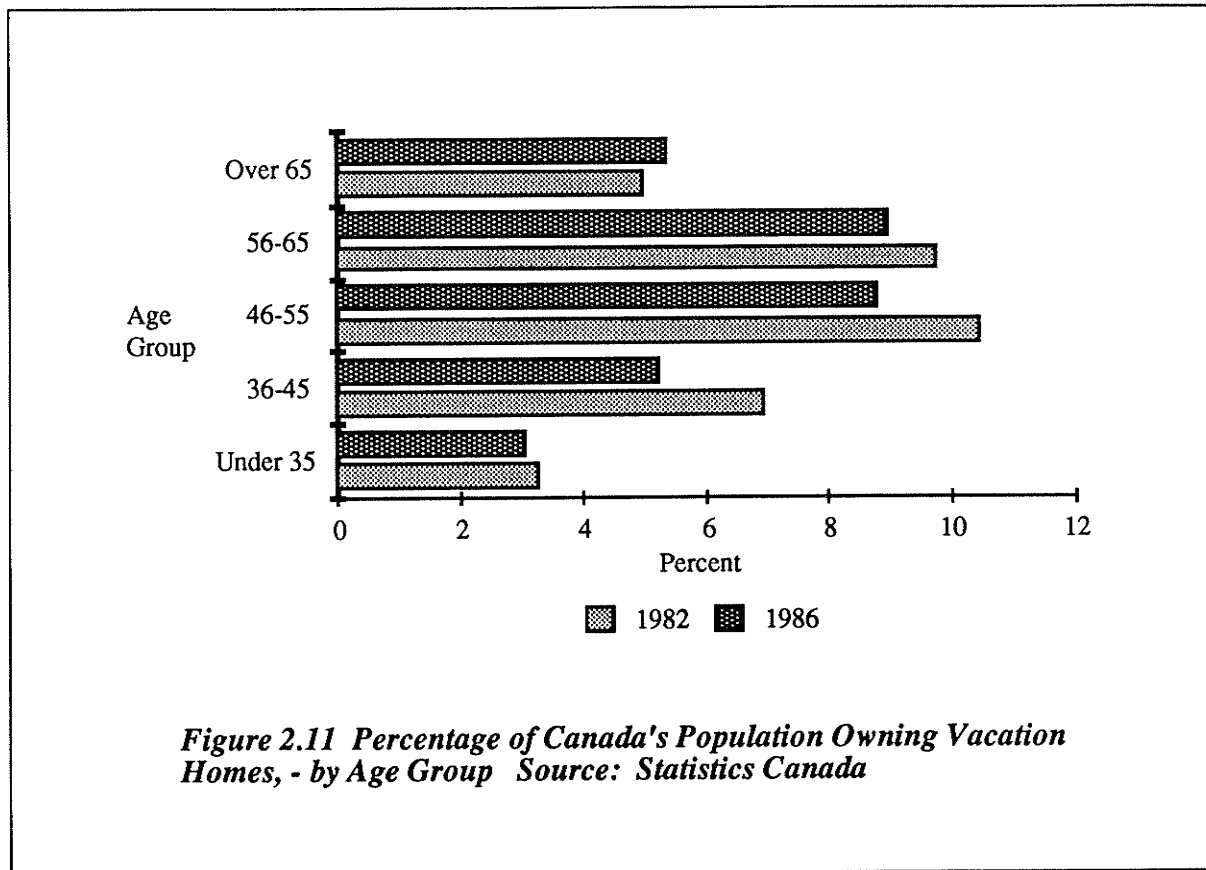
- a desire by some people to live in a non-urban environment or in an environment with recreational amenities
- a willingness to commute long distances
- a demand for retirement accommodation which need not be close to an employment center
- a demand for cheap housing
- a housing shortage
- a lack of rural residential lots
- a demand for housing where substantial employment is introduced for a limited period of time<sup>48</sup>

Since the date of that publication, the relative importance of some of these factors has diminished but the demand overall has been sustained. In particular the disincentive created by the requirement to commute long distances has been reduced by more stable fossil fuel prices. More importantly, the demand for retirement housing has grown and can be expected to support the interest in cottage conversions into the future.

The ad hoc nature of this conversion process can create problems for municipalities in the efficient distribution of services. One such problem is the expense of providing adequate road access on a year round basis. Permanent residency requires snow clearing to allow for access on a daily basis. Particularly high road maintenance costs are incurred in situations where roads which have been designed and developed for infrequent use under favorable conditions. Data collected for seasonal residential areas in Ontario indicates that road maintenance costs have grown faster than assessment, population, or road mileage, and that winter control costs have grown considerably more than general road maintenance costs.<sup>49</sup> Additional costs associated with cottage conversion are created as sewer and water services need to be upgraded to accommodate year round use. These costs are not seen to be substantial in situations where only a small number of conversions are expected. The costs rise dramatically however as the tolerances of existing systems to ab-

48. Ontario Ministry of Housing, *Discussion Paper on Seasonal Residential Conversions*, February 1978.

49. Ontario Ministry of Housing, *Discussion Paper on Seasonal Residential Conversions*.



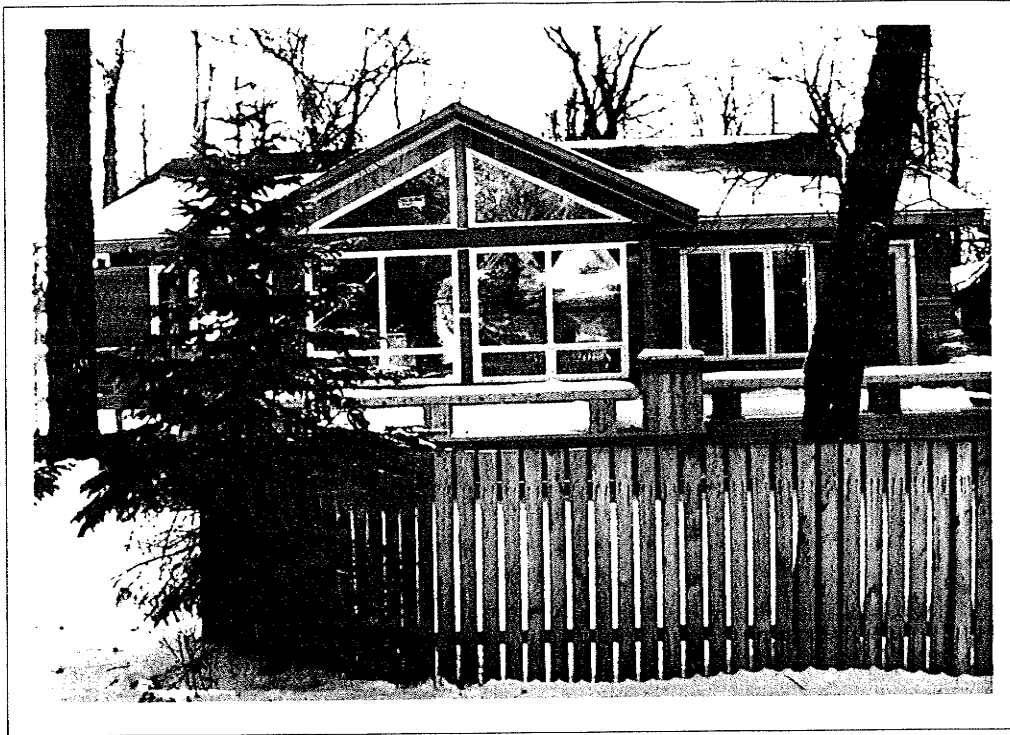
sorb pollution are reached. In high density areas the cost of providing for adequate sewer and water can be enormous. Thus it was been found that while an increase in density provides the opportunity to deliver general services more efficiently, the costs for sewer and water servicing rapidly become prohibitive.

The qualitative problems which occur as a result of seasonal residential conversions are similar to those encountered during the development of small rural residential subdivisions. In each case the incremental changes to the quality and character of the area are difficult to recognize and control. In an examination of cottage conversions in Manitoba L. R. Legal suggests that perma-

nent residency is responsible for "altered or destroyed cottage recreational environments."<sup>50</sup> In Ontario it was been found that extensive conversions may create situations where an area "may be totally lost as a recreational resource for vacation purposes and simply be added to the general housing stock."<sup>51</sup> These issues of environmental quality must be given careful attention in the face of a sustained demand for cottage conversions in the future.

50. Louis Roger Legal, *The Implications of the Use of Park and Crown Land Cottages as Permanent Residences*, unpublished Master of Natural Resource Management Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1977.

51. Ontario Ministry of Housing, *Discussion Paper on Seasonal Residential Conversions*.

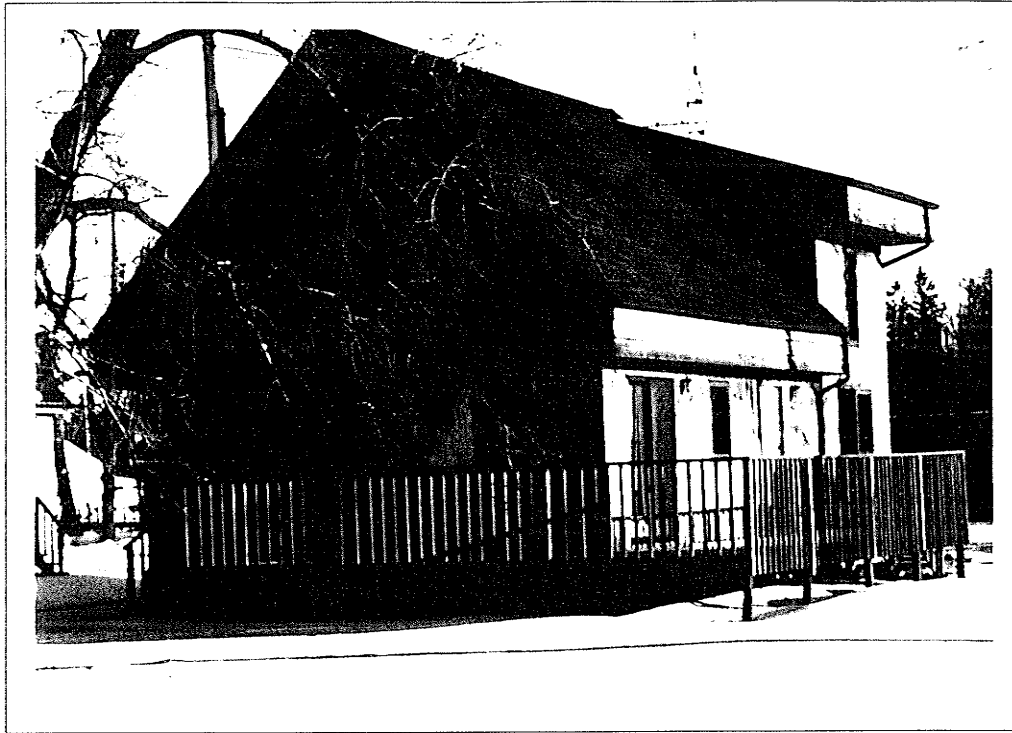


*Figure 2.12 Summer Home at Winnipeg Beach Adapted for Extended or Year-Round Use*

The continuing demand for seasonal residential conversions will come in large measure from the requirements of an aging population for retirement housing. The adaptation of seasonal homes provides a uniquely flexible housing option for that segment of the retiring population who will choose to live in an exurban setting. Figure 2.11 indicates that the largest number of seasonal homes are currently held by those people between the ages of 45-65. Furthermore, it is significant to note from this graph that while the level of cottage ownership has dropped off in the last few years, ownership among those people over 65 has increased. For people who own, or purchase cottages as retirement homes, the transition from urban to rural living is facilitated by the opportunity to vary the amount of time spent in the rural context - for the summer, or for extended

periods in the spring and fall. This flexibility allows even those who might otherwise not be interested in rural retirement living, to take advantage during the more favorable summer months.

The flexibility of summer cottages for use as permanent homes has made it difficult to maintain accurate records of cottage conversions. In spite of the absence of statistical data it is apparent that the use of summer homes is common in many resort areas in this province. In a survey of resort areas under provincial parks jurisdiction R. L. Legal found that 1.8% of cottages were being used as permanent homes in 1976. In a similar study undertaken as part of this report, 35% of cottages in Winnipeg Beach had been upgraded in the last five years. Figures 2.12 and 2.13 show examples of



*Figure 2.13 Summer Home at Winnipeg Beach Adapted for Extended or Year-Round Use*

summer homes which have recently been renovated or reconstructed in the Winnipeg Beach area. These examples are illustrative of a more general trend province wide.

## 2.3 Design Principles for Rural Retirement Communities

### Introduction

In the previous two sections it has been shown that a very significant demand is evolving for rural retirement housing. In response to the changing needs and expectations of an aging population it will become necessary to plan and design communities which can specifically respond to the needs of elderly residents.

Community planning and design have in recent decades become specialized in the ability to respond to the needs of children and young families. The location of schools and open space, and the circulation of young children have been a primary determinant of the form of residential developments over the past several decades. Increasingly, planners and designers will be required to shift their focus in response to changing demographic characteristics. The needs and limitations of elderly residents will become a pre-eminent consideration in many future housing designs. This will be particularly important consideration for retirement subdivisions which seek to attract a senior clientele.

While it is important to create communities which can respond to the demands of an aging population, it is also necessary to recognize that the stereotype of seniors who are frail and handicapped is frequently incorrect. More often retired people have the same level of physical mobility as the population at large. Because of this general similarity,

design and planning principles which apply to residential development in its broad context are also appropriate for rural retirement communities. Specific differences from a general planning outline which can be applied to the development of specialized rural retirement housing are considered below. The three sections of: community structure, site design, and detail design refer to progressive design stages.

### Community Structure

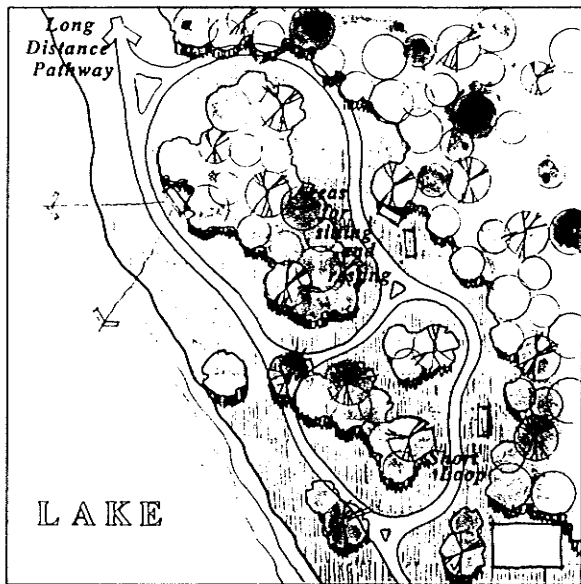
The scale of a retirement community will be an important determinant of its overall character. Larger communities will tend to be less intimate, and the potential for close personal interaction among residents will be diminished. This contact among neighbors is important, in the absence of workplace contacts, or pre-retirement peer group friendships. On the other hand, smaller retirement developments can be limited in their ability to deliver a range of specialized services. While the lower limit in the size of these communities may be restricted by the economic viability of servicing, a smaller and more compact development is preferred.

Community design for the elderly must endeavour to create an environment which is both **challenging and supportive**.<sup>52</sup> In doing so, retirement communities should be able to respond to the various ability levels of seniors. For those individuals who are able to function without impairment, designs should provide situations which can stimulate residents to use and in doing so retain,

52. Diane Y. Carstens, *Site Planning and Design for the Elderly: Issues, Guidelines, and Alternatives*, New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company Inc., 1985. p. 15.



their physical abilities. At the same time it is necessary to provide a supportive environment for residents who are no longer able to move about with complete freedom. An example of how this principle might be implemented is indicated in Figure 2.14 where circulation systems encourage the movement of bicycles and pedestrians, for those who are able to move about freely, while at the same time giving places to sit and rest en route for people with limited mobility.



**Figure 2.14** *Circulation Systems Should Support Various Levels of Ability*

In communities designed for retired residents it is important that services and housing areas be located in **close proximity**. The nearness of required services can help to compensate for a diminishing home range among seniors. The theory of diminishing home range describes the tendency for an individual's territory to "develop and reach a maximum in adulthood ... and then with old age gradually diminish"<sup>53</sup> This decreased mobility is caused by a variety of physical

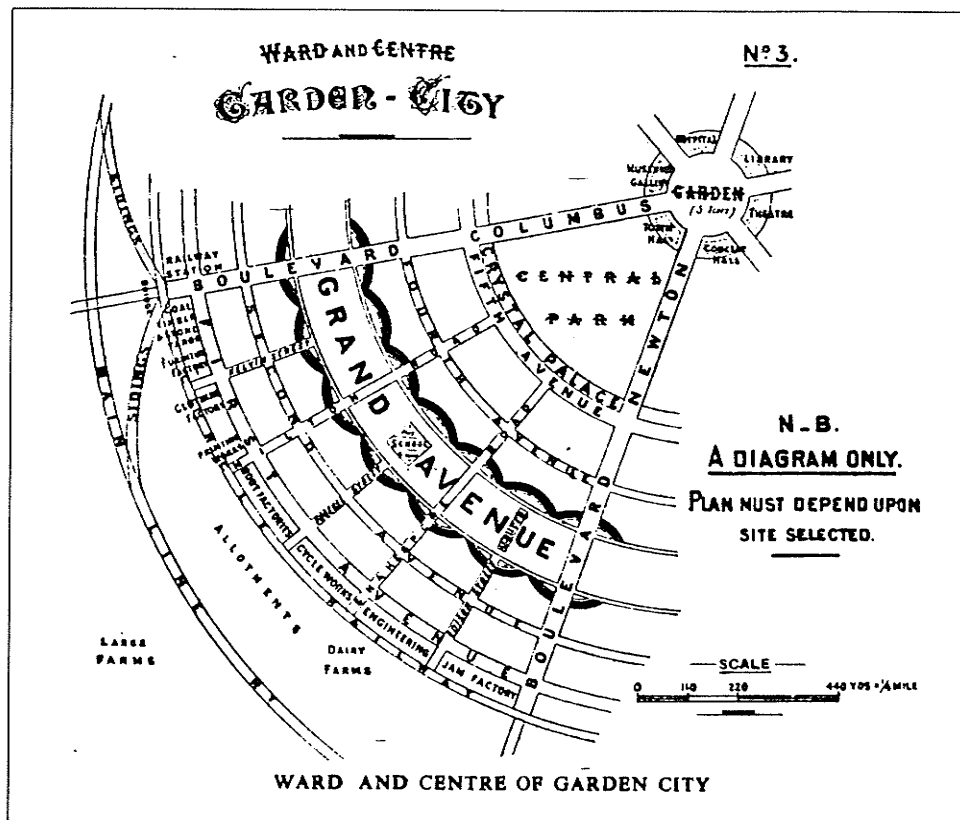
and psychological changes associated with the aging process. Physical impairments such as a loss of visual acuity or a reduction in muscular strength will make it difficult to move about easily. As well, psychological barriers of fear and anxiety can reduce the tendency of older people to get out. These difficulties of distance will be reduced in communities designed at higher densities, with priorities given to pedestrian rather than automobile transportation.

Retirement communities should be **simple in their spatial organization** so as to facilitate a resident's ability to orient themselves.<sup>54</sup> Most of these communities are new developments and have attracted new residents. Seniors in this situation are required to create a new mental concept of their neighborhood and surroundings. Complex site planning, combined with age-related sensory losses, can make it difficult for residents to find their way in this less familiar environment. Readily understandable organizations, such as a radial, or linear plan, are most appropriate for new retirement developments. Orientation within these communities can be assisted by providing a strong focal point about which other spaces have been hierarchically arranged.

The search for a safe and secure environment can be a significant motivating factor in decisions to move away from a pre-retirement neighborhood. This migration illus-

53. Leon Pastalan, "How the Elderly Negotiate their Environment", *Housing for the Elderly*, Washington, Department of Health Education and Welfare, 1973. p. 28.

54. Carstens, p. 20.



**Figure 2.15** *Communities which are Simple in Their Spatial Organization Facilitate a Resident's Ability to Orient Themselves*  
 Source: E. B. Howard, *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*.

trates the importance of planning for **security** in retirement community design. The feeling of security can be affected by both physical and emotional perceptions and designs must respond to each. Physical security can be established by creating strong delineations between private and public spaces. Obvious boundaries to a community assist in the defense of private spaces and discourage outsiders from entering. Spaces which also accommodate visual surveillance from within the home will also assist in creating a secure and defensible community.

Another important principle in the design of retirement communities is the provision of

opportunities for residents to **control and change** their own surroundings.<sup>55</sup> One of the most frequent difficulties associated with retirement is the loss of social status. Living environments which are repetitive, or impersonal may compound the loss of independence and autonomy which occurs at retirement. On the other hand, housing which encourages the expression of individual personality and allows residents to adapt their homes to suit their own needs can be an important stimulus for greater self esteem and living satisfaction.

55. Carstens, p. 16.

## Site Design

The specific needs of an elderly population, addressed at the scale of site specific design, can be an important form determinant of successful retirement community solutions. One such issue is the need to respond to losses in sensory acuity which occur as part of the physiological aging process. To compensate for losses in visual, audile, tactile and olfactory sensory ability, spaces designed for the elderly should be overloaded with strong and various sensory messages. This technique of **reundant cuing** can help older people to orient themselves in unfamiliar situations.<sup>56</sup> Environments which provide the opportunity for people to check sensory messages will be reassuring and easier to use.

**Adaptibility** must be accommodated at all levels of design for the elderly.<sup>57</sup> Designs should be able to accommodate changes in needs, preferences, and abilities among residents. The opportunity to manipulate their environment in this way is a strong incentive to maintain an independent lifestyle. In particular, housing which responds to changes occurring as part of the aging process will make it possible for retired people to live in their homes for the longest possible time.

Another principle of site design establishes the need to create situations where it will be possible for seniors who are not physically active to **participate through observation**. Figure 2.15 illustrates this problem as the lawn bowling green has no provision for spectators, or even participants, to sit and

observe during matches.<sup>58</sup> Problems of this type can be alleviated where recreation spaces are organized such that activity zones provide the focus of visual interest for passive spaces.<sup>59</sup> In this way it is possible to encourage physical activity among all seniors and to provide a meaningful involvement for those who are no longer able to participate directly.

Site design for retirement living should minimize large expanses of undefined area. Rather it is important that the intended use of spaces be **predictable**, and that control and a sense of ownership be assigned.<sup>60</sup> Large multi-use spaces are frequently underused because they are ambiguous and difficult to control. More effective design will create smaller spaces intended for specific activities. In this way residents can feel comfortable and secure in a separate and distinct outdoor environment. Separation, however, should not create total isolation, sight lines should be maintained to assist in visual surveillance, and connections should be made through clearly articulated transitions between spaces.

## Detail Design

At the level of detail design many possibilities exist to develop solutions which respond in a practical and sensitive way to the needs of elderly residents. The most obvious re-

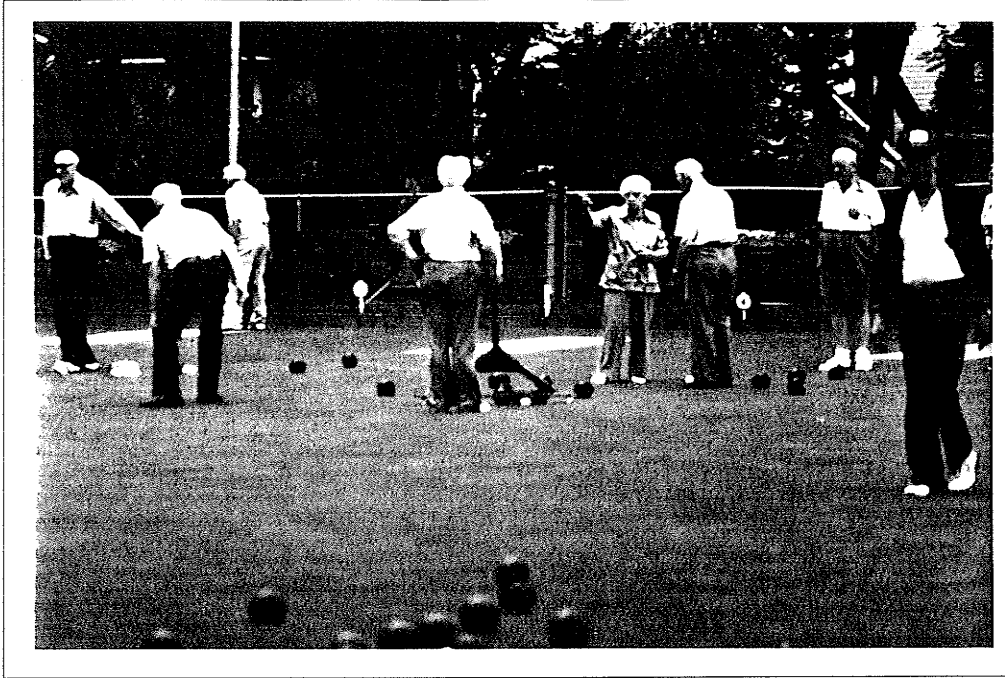
56. Pastalan, p. 28.

57. Carstens, p. 17.

58. Ingrid Thiessen, *Problems and Needs of the Elderly in the Urban Landscape*, Unpublished paper, University of Manitoba, 1982. p. 25.

59. I. Green, B. E. Fedewa, C. A. Johnston, W. M. Jackson, H. L. Deardroff, *Housing for the Elderly: The Development and Design Process*, Toronto: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1975, p. 55.

60. Carstens, p. 21.



*Figure 2.16 Spaces Designed for Seniors Should Encourage Participation in Group Activities Through Observation*

quirement of design at this level is to create an environment which is **barrier free**. Barrier free refers not only to provisions for wheelchair access, but also assistance for vision or hearing impairment.<sup>61</sup> Additional attention should be given to details which can assist those with no obvious disability. Exterior seating, for example, should provide comfortable seats and backs, and give a kick space underneath the seat to assist in getting up. Such details can make it easier for residents to move about easily and maintain an independent lifestyle.

The other important aspect of detail design is to enrich the **quality and character** of retirement living.<sup>62</sup> In this context detail can draw upon past architectural styles and make

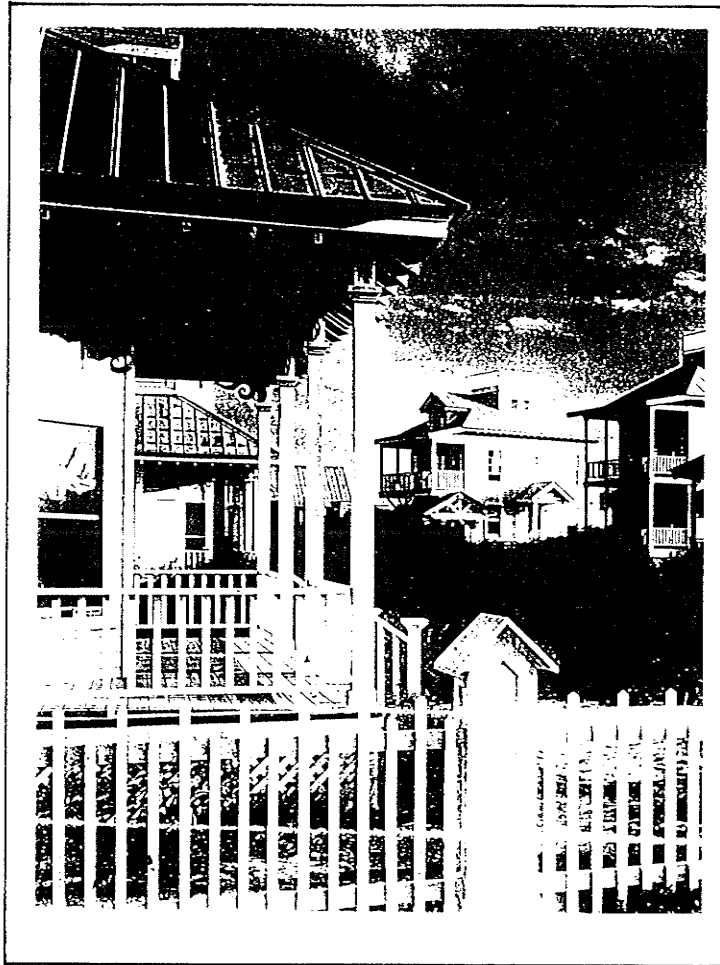
references to associations with meaning for individual retired residents. Small details which access strong memories can be important factors in creating delightful living environments.

### **Delivery of Services**

The delivery of services appropriate to the needs of an elderly population is an important aspect of a complete retirement community environment. Suitable housing, within a well organized community structure creates a physical framework for a well functioning community, but a supportive range of services can enrich and animate the community. In general, the service infrastructure required by retired people matches quite closely with the services demanded by the population overall. Particular additional

61. Green, et. al., p. 126.

62. Green, et. al., p. 126.



*Figure 2.17 Details Which Recall Past Associations  
for Residents can Enrich Environmental Quality  
Source: 'A Good Place to Live', The Atlantic  
Monthly, March 1988.*

needs can occur however in the provision of health and support services. The service requirements of rural retirement communities are considered below, under the categories of: commercial, recreational, community, health, and support services.

The infrastructure of **commercial services** may be very similar to the delivery network established for the population overall. In spite of these similarities it may be expected

that purchases among seniors will concentrate more heavily on consumable merchandise because this market group will already have accumulated household artifacts. As well, the geographical catchment areas of individual stores may be reduced as the home range of the retired population decreases. As these small changes are accommodated, a healthy commercial infrastructure can be expected to serve the residents of a retirement community, and the residents of the

surrounding region equally well.

More than other types of retirement housing, rural retirement communities are attractive because of the range of **recreational options** they provide. Recreation is an important activity in the lives of seniors. Younger and more active retirees will have a broad range of recreational interests. Recreation provides an increased level of physical well being which can enhance the ability of seniors to continue living independently. Furthermore, these activities are an important form of social contact among retired people. Retirement communities should provide opportunities for all residents to participate in physical activity. This can be done by providing a complete range of passive and active recreation. Additionally, facilities in a retirement community setting should be careful to encourage those who may no longer have the physical ability to participate to be involved through observation.

The creation of a community infrastructure is particularly important within age segregated settings. This **social network** may include church organizations, sports leagues, special interest clubs, or resident's associations. The contacts developed through these activities can be substitutes for workplace and pre-retirement friendships. An active community network will allow individuals to fit into groups of particular interest when and as they desire. It is this aspect of a retirement community structure which can make the difference between the creation of a cohesive unit as opposed to a collection of individual homes.

Rural retirement communities, because of their remote location and young active clientele, are unlikely to support a comprehensive system of **medical services**. In a province where fewer than 15% of the retired population requires supplemental healthcare, and less than half of one percent need full hospital care, this does not arise as a significant shortcoming.<sup>63</sup> The ability to support healthcare will be related to the level of service available in the surrounding region, and to the size of the retirement development itself. Figure 2.17 below describes a range of healthcare services, and indicates the likelihood that they will be present in the retirement community setting in Manitoba.

	Unlikely	Likely	Existing
Pharmacy			•
Visiting Doctor			•
Permanent Clinic		•	
Home Visiting Nurse		•	
Nursing Home		•	
Full Hospital Care	•		

**Figure 2.18** *Availability of Health Care*

Whereas healthcare is required by a relatively small proportion of the retirement community population, the provision of **support services** can greatly extend the ability of many retired people to live independently. These services offer help with a variety of domestic responsibilities and may be re-

63. Manitoba Provincial Gerontologist

quired during short periods, or over the longer term. A complete service system can be provided through the cooperative efforts of public and private organizations and individuals. Examples of the types of services which can be provided are:

- MEALS provided on a permanent or occasional basis, meals on wheels or congregate food services
- EMERGENCY RESPONSE SYSTEMS established to link people in their homes to a central monitoring agency, providing emergency assistance and peace of mind for seniors living in isolated locations.
- SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION arranged to allow people to get around as desired
- HOMECARE arranged to assist in the upkeep and maintenance of private homes
- COUNSELLING SERVICES to help keep people up to date about available programs, etc.

## Conclusion

The principles outlined in this section provide a framework for the development of retirement communities which will respond to the needs of an elderly population. These general characteristics provide a starting point from which decisions about specific site developments can be made. Successful retirement community design will incorporate these principles with a sensitive manipulation of the factors affecting each particular site. In this way these principles can be used encourage choice and variety in the development of this specialized housing type. This process is illustrated in this paper as the following sections begin to identify the particular characteristics of a site on the west shore of Lake Winnipeg.

PART III  
SITE ANALYSIS AND SURVEY



### 3.1 Description of Study Site & Historical Outline

#### Description of Study Site

Winnipeg Beach's development over the years as a recreational destination provides special opportunities for the creation of a rural retirement community. Many of the attributes which have been identified throughout this paper as part of successful retirement communities are already present at Winnipeg Beach. In many ways the evolution of a naturally occurring retirement community is already underway.

The Town of Winnipeg Beach has a unique history. Its initial development by the Canadian Pacific Railway as a recreational resort has influenced subsequent development throughout the town's history. While the CPR prospered, Winnipeg Beach also prospered, when the railway pulled out, the resort fell upon more difficult times. The legacy of the CPR in Winnipeg Beach provides many opportunities to develop a retirement community prototype based upon the issues presented throughout this paper.

In spite of its unique history, however, Winnipeg Beach is typical in many ways of summer cottage development which occurs all along the shores of the southern part of Lake Winnipeg. The southern basin of the Lake is one of the most highly developed recreation areas in Manitoba. Cottage development occurs in a virtually uninterrupted line along the west shore of the Lake from Matlock to Hecla Island. On the opposite shore Wanasing, Victoria, and Grand Beaches support additional intensive cottage

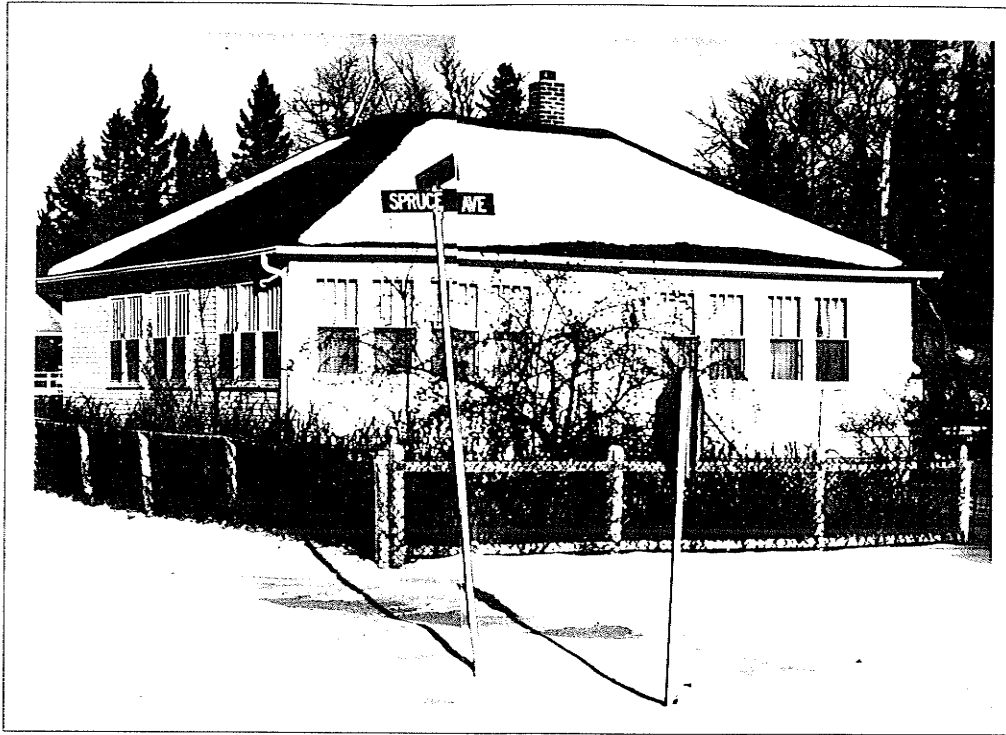
development. This study will focus on Winnipeg Beach as a case study example of how the influences of exurban retirement development can affect the development of resort communities.

Winnipeg Beach is located less than an hour north of Winnipeg and is readily accessible from the city on Highways 8 and 9. The town has a permanent population of 548<sup>64</sup>, and a summer seasonal population of approximately ten times that amount. In addition to the residential population, the town receives in excess of 31,000 day visitors during the summer months at the Winnipeg Beach Provincial Recreation Park.<sup>65</sup> The provincial park is prominent within the town, comprising 38.6 hectares and including a 1 1/2 kilometer waterfront. The park lands are now owned by the provincial parks branch, and have been acquired from the original CPR holdings. Adjacent to this park, along Main Street, is the downtown commercial core of the community. The remainder of the town, north of Elm Avenue and west of Highway 9, has been subdivided and developed with private cottages.

The land to the west of Winnipeg Beach is predominantly agricultural. Grain farming accounts for most of the land under cultivation, but livestock and dairy operations are also present. The topography of the area is gently undulating and the resulting imper-

64. Manitoba Department of Municipal Affairs, *Statistical Information: Municipalities of the Province of Manitoba*, 1986.

65. Ken Schykulski, *A Proposal for Redevelopment of Winnipeg Beach Provincial Recreation Park*, Parks Branch, Department of Natural Resources, January 1984. p. 5. (Average for the ten year period ending 1983).



*Figure 3.1 Typical Seasonal Residence in Winnipeg Beach*

fect drainage has resulted in poor soil conditions. Additionally, these soils have problems with high lime content and stoniness. In areas not under cultivation, the native vegetation is predominantly aspen woodland with some stands of bur oak. Closer to the Lake Winnipeg shoreline elm, green ash, and birch also grow in association with the aspen.<sup>66</sup>

The cottages in Winnipeg Beach were built very early, relative to other resorts in the province. The 75 ft. x 150 ft. cottage lots which are common in Winnipeg Beach are much smaller than in more recent developments. In addition, the cottages tend to be

small and quite simple in their design and construction. The character of these buildings, and their relationship to the street is shown in Figures 3.1 and 3.2. This particular combination of building lot and cottage gives rise to a rather more intimate and collegial atmosphere than is apparent in many newer resort communities.

### **H**istorical Outline

In order to develop appropriate alternatives for the future of a community it is necessary to understand the historical development of the place. In Winnipeg Beach this is particularly true as the forces which have shaped the community in the past are plainly evident in the community as it exists today. Winnipeg Beach has through the years absorbed the stresses of a boom and bust cycle

66. L. E. Pratt, W. A. Ehrlich, F. P. Leclaire, and J. A. Barr, *Report of Detailed Reconnaissance Soil Survey of Fisher and Teulon Map Aheet Areas*, Manitoba Department of Agriculture and Conservation, 1961.



*Figure 3.2 Typical Streetscape in Winnipeg Beach*

of development. The effects of the enormous popularity in the 1920's and 30's, and the dramatic decline leading up to the closure of the boardwalk in 1964 are visible in the character of the town and its residents. Also visible are the effects of the period of urban renewal and landscape beautification which followed in the 1960's and early 1970's.

The following historical outline describes the evolution of Winnipeg Beach during several periods of development. The first three sections describe the evolution of the town up until 1965. These subdivisions in the history of the town have been adopted from a paper written in 1966.<sup>67</sup> The fourth section provides a description of the devel-

opment of the community from the 1960's up until the present. The final segment is not strictly historical, and is rather a discussion of the present circumstances and extrapolation of future possibilities for Winnipeg Beach. The writer acknowledges that in describing the history of a community within this framework of thematically distinct segments that the potential for distortion arises. In this sense, what follows might be understood, not so much a record of historical fact, but as an interpretation of the effects of the forces at work shaping this community through time.

67. Joan Bowman, *The Recreational Function and Related Problems of the Winnipeg Beach-Sandy Hook Section of the Lake Winnipeg Shoreline*, Master of Arts Thesis, University of Manitoba, March 1966.

## Integration

The beginning of the history of Winnipeg Beach as a resort community corresponds exactly with the arrival of the Canadian Pacific Railway on June 6, 1903. In 1901 the present location was scouted by a party of officials from the CPR. This group was looking for a resort location which would compete with the CNR development at Grand Beach on the east shore of the lake. Approaching the site by motorboat, the group selected the present site including the 1.5 km. section of sand beach from Stevenson's Point to Boundary Creek. Having recognized the recreation potential of this location, the railway purchased 330 acres of property from Donald Arquet for \$1000.00.<sup>68</sup>

By the end of 1902 the rail line to Winnipeg Beach had been completed. The construction of the line was difficult, requiring extensive brushing and construction through swamp in some places three and four feet deep. The completion of the line brought the first visitors up to Winnipeg Beach and the commercial infrastructure grew rapidly. In 1902 the CPR also constructed the first station and a dance hall. The railway laid out roads and boulevards and the first businesses were located along Main Street and Center Avenue.<sup>69</sup> By 1907, W. J. Woods records that the King Edward and the Waldorf Hotels had been constructed. In addition Woods mentions, "three small stores, snack bars, a restaurant, one livery stable, as well as a rooming house run by the late Mr. Robert Stacey."<sup>70</sup>

68. W. J. Woods, "A Brief History of Winnipeg Beach, 1901-55". Unpublished Paper, 1955. p. 2.

69. Bowman, p. 21.

In addition to the construction of commercial facilities, the period from 1903 to 1906 saw the construction of the first cottages at Winnipeg Beach. These cottages were built east of Highway 9 between Ash Avenue and Boundary Creek on land leased to cottage owners from the CPR for twenty years.<sup>71</sup> A Winnipeg contractor by the name of S. B. Ritchie was responsible for most of the cottage construction in Winnipeg Beach. Ritchie leased about twenty lots a year and built and sold over 300 cottages in all.<sup>72</sup> Eventually cottage development extended northward past Boundary Creek and into what is now Sandy Hook. The last main period of cottage construction occurred between 1919-20 when summer homes were built in West Beach, on the other side of the highway.<sup>73</sup>

Even since this early stage Winnipeg Beach served not only as a resort community, but also as a small rural service center. The arrival of the railroad gave Winnipeg Beach some importance as a shipping point. The permanent residents at that time were Ukrainian and Icelandic settlers who had arrived in the area around 1875. Ukrainians were involved in mixed farming in the summer and cutting poplar cordwood during the winter. The Icelandic settlers were more likely to be involved in commercial fishing. The railway provided them the opportunity

70. Woods, p. 1.

71. Bowman, p. 23.

72. "Winnipeg Beach, Now and Then", Winnipeg Free Press, June 1, 1968

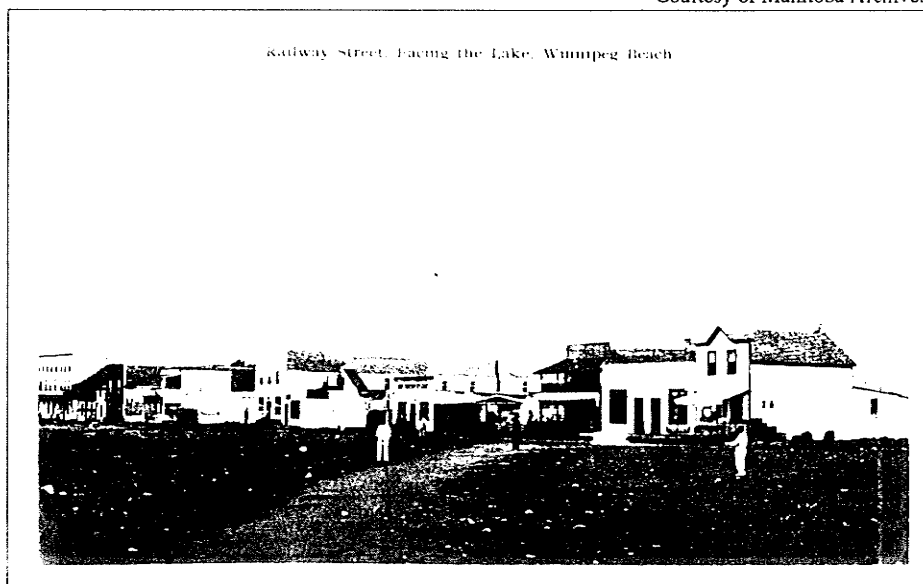
73. Bowman p. 23.

to ship fish and cordwood south to Winnipeg and Selkirk.

In 1906 the rail line was extended from Winnipeg Beach to Gimli. This reduced the importance of Winnipeg Beach as a trans-shipment point but did not diminish the popularity of the resort. By 1910 the resort was sufficiently well established to be incorporated as the Village of Winnipeg

community, but many of the attractions as well. The railroad provided and maintained picnic grounds and operated free dances. The company kept their property "in impeccable condition with charming flower gardens, good street lighting, and a park warden to maintain order."<sup>75</sup> Beach Attractions Limited operated the first concessions on land leased from the CPR. The original amusements included a gas powered

Courtesy of Manitoba Archives



*Figure 3.3 Early Buildings on Railway Street c.1908*

Beach. The boundary of the village at that time included Boundary Park and most of the town east of Highway 9. The area west of the highway was incorporated into the town in the 1950's.<sup>74</sup>

Thus, in the space of less than twenty years, Winnipeg Beach had become an established recreation destination. The CPR had supplied not only the transportation into the

merry-go-round as there was no electricity in the community at that time. Ultimately the amusement park was expanded to include the famous Winnipeg Beach roller coaster and boardwalk.

<sup>75</sup>. "Winnipeg Beach, Now and Then"

<sup>74</sup>. Bowman p. 23.

### Stability 1920-1939

By the beginning of the 1920's much of the initial development at Winnipeg Beach was complete. During the next two decades the community enjoyed a period of great prosperity. During this period Winnipeg Beach supported three hotels, including the spacious Empress Hotel operated by the CPR. New recreational attractions were developed as well including the Winnipeg Beach Golf

Dancing was the center of the Winnipeg Beach phenomenon. The original dance hall has built by the CPR in 1902. Free dances were held every night except Sunday. The 'Moonlight' train ran especially to bring couples up from Winnipeg for these dances. The train left the city at 6:30 each evening, carrying as many as 1600 passengers, and returned the same night for a return fare of 50 cents. On Wednesday and Saturday two

Courtesy of Manitoba Archives

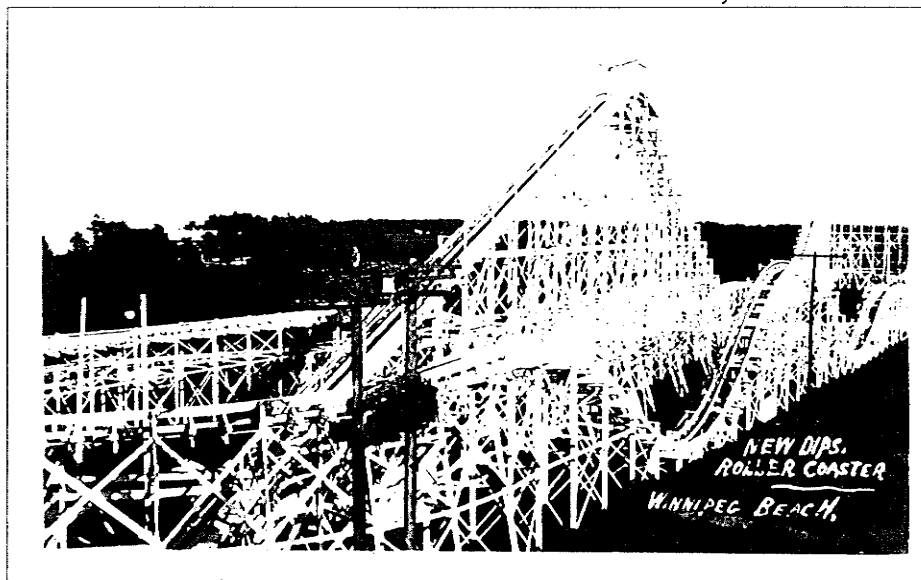


Figure 3.4 Winnipeg Beach's Famous Roller Coaster

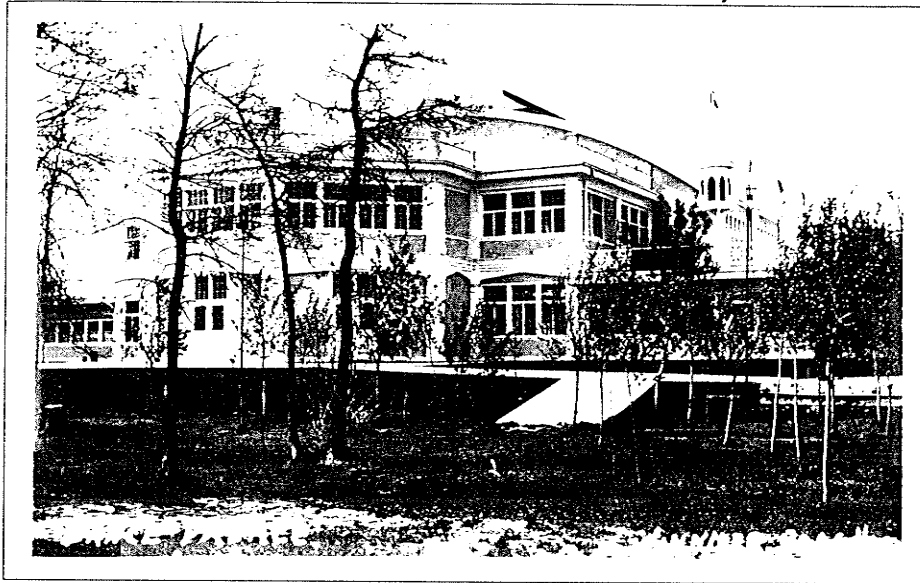
Course which opened in 1925. Lawn bowling and tennis courts were popular during this time, and were conspicuous by the presence of white flannels on the courts. Throughout this period social activity at The Beach prospered and W. J. Woods characterized the atmosphere as that of "a large happy family."<sup>76</sup>

dances were held. The second dance was for cottagers, beginning only after the last train had departed for Winnipeg. A new dance hall was constructed in 1926 by Beach Attractions Limited, and was advertised as the largest and finest dance floor in Canada.<sup>77</sup>

The role of the train service from the city was crucial to establishing and maintaining

76. Woods, p. 8.

77. Bob Noble, "Winnipeg Beach, Memories of Yesteryear", Winnipeg Free Press, May 20, 1967



*Figure 3.5 Dance Pavillion c.1915*

the popularity of Winnipeg Beach. During the busiest days as many as thirteen trains might arrive from Winnipeg each day. Frequently these trains would have to unload half of the passengers, and then move forward on the platform to disembark the rest. The 'Daddy's Train' left the city each evening at 5:20 bringing workers up to the beach each evening. A return train provided transportation back to the city each morning in time for work.<sup>78</sup> For many years Winnipeg Beach was well served by the trains which carried cottagers and day trippers to and from the beach all summer long.

### **Disintegration 1940-1965**

About the time of the second world war a number of changes had begun to unfold which diminished the immense popularity that Winnipeg Beach had enjoyed since the beginning of the century. The monopoly on

transportation held by the railroad began to subside by the 1940's, and difficulties for the resort closely parallel the decline of the CPR.

Competition from the private automobile severely eroded the demand for passenger rail service in the 1940's and 50's. The increasing number of private cars and the improvement of the highway system within Manitoba, jointly undermined the rail service to the town. While the first car had arrived in Winnipeg Beach in 1913, it was still impractical to travel by automobile at that time. Shortly afterwards, in 1915 a "direct highway by way of the range line to Winnipeg"<sup>79</sup> was constructed as a reward to the residents of Winnipeg Beach for their prudent voting habits. With this new road, Winnipeg Beach was easily accessible by automobile on Highways 8 and 9. Gradually

78. "Moonlight Trains"

79. Woods, p. 9.

the frequency of trains diminished and in 1961 the Moonlight service ended completely. Faced with this declining demand for rail service the CPR was compelled to withdraw from the community completely.

The withdrawal of the Canadian Pacific Railway, however, meant much more than just the cessation of rail service. The CPR began to divest itself of its interests by sell-

established by CPR were not sustained by the subsequent owners. Secondly, and more importantly, with the property under private ownership, it was not possible to ensure that this important recreational resource would not be subdivided, and lost to public use.

As a result of these changes, the character of Winnipeg Beach began to evolve throughout this period. With declining popularity it be-

Courtesy of Manitoba Archives



*Figure 3.6 Meeting the Train from Winnipeg c. 1915*

ing off cottage lots between 1940-1945. Later, the company sold "the picnic grounds, boardwalk, boathouses, dance and picnic pavilions, and all the land along the lakeshore on which the concessions were located"<sup>80</sup> to Beach Attractions Limited in 1952. These changes are important in several ways. Firstly, the high standards of maintenance

came increasingly difficult to operate concessions profitably. The economic base of the community had been so eroded that reinvestment was not forthcoming and the boardwalk and concessions fell into disrepair. This neglect ultimately progressed to the point that Winnipeg Beach no longer provided satisfactory recreation amenities.

80. Bowman, p. 27.



Corresponding with these commercial changes, a gradual evolution of the socio-cultural makeup of the Winnipeg Beach cottage community also occurred. Falling cottage prices provided many more Winnipeggers with the opportunity to purchase summer cottages. As cottages changed ownership during this period Winnipeg Beach evolved into a community which accommodated a wide range of economic and cultural diversity among its constituents. In particular the town has developed a substantial Jewish community.

Another factor associated with the decline of Winnipeg Beach was the increasing competition from other resort areas. This competition was supported by the availability of private transportation and the development of an elaborate highway network. The trend was also encouraged by the provincial governments of the day in their initiatives to develop cottage properties in the Whiteshell, Grand Beach, and Clear Lake. Finally, the success of other resort communities during this period was partially enhanced by the derelict state of Winnipeg Beach itself. Whatever the blend of reasons, the growth of other resort destinations compounded the difficulties experienced in Winnipeg Beach and diluted its role as "the Grand Old Lady of Manitoba Resorts"<sup>81</sup>

### Introspection

By the summer of 1964 much of Winnipeg Beach had fallen into a state of advanced disrepair. The boardwalk, concessions, and roller coaster had all been allowed to deteriorate considerably. As well many of the

81. "Winnipeg Beach, Now and Then"

cottages, which had been built prior to 1910, were in poor shape. The community in general had advanced to the verge of becoming a recreational slum.<sup>82</sup> This slide in the fortunes of Winnipeg Beach culminated in October 1964 when Beach Attractions Limited shut down its operations completely.

While the closing of the boardwalk marked the end of an era, it also indicated the start of a new phase in Winnipeg Beach's development. Beginning in 1965 a number of studies were commissioned by the provincial government in an effort to determine what might be done to rejuvenate this recreational resort. Comprehensive studies were undertaken to determine the nature and extent of the demand for recreation facilities, for the province in general, and for the west shore of Lake Winnipeg in particular.<sup>83</sup> The most comprehensive of these studies was completed in 1966 by Project Planning Associates of Toronto.<sup>84</sup> This report proposed a comprehensive master plan for the west shore of Lake Winnipeg from Matlock to Riverton. An examination of these proposals, with the advantage of hindsight, now provides clues to the planning attitudes which have shaped Winnipeg Beach since that report's publication.

The proposals which had been developed for Winnipeg Beach are based upon several overly optimistic predictions. Figure 3.7

82. Bowman, p.142.

83. P. M. Associates, *Lake Winnipeg Recreational Demand Study*, 1972.

84. Project Planning Associates, *Recreational Study: West shore of Lake Winnipeg*, 1966.

shows that the permanent population of Winnipeg Beach was expected to increase to 5,000 by 1985. In fact this population has actually declined over the last twenty years.

Furthermore, the writers anticipated a substantial growth in the population of Winnipeg as they suggest that the "suburban areas (of Winnipeg), in the next 10-15 years,

a wide ranging concept for the entire west shore. They proposed four major recreation centers at: Winnipeg Beach, Gimli, Riverton, and at a New Town, each organized along a specific recreational theme. The report further identifies the need for a "high speed vehicular circulation network . . . which ties each center directly to Winnipeg."<sup>86</sup> A tertiary system described as

Location	1966	1970	1975	1980	1985	(actual) 1986
Winnipeg Beach	807	1,000	1,500	2,500	5,000	548
Gimli	1841	3,000	4,000	5,000	7,000	2458
Riverton	808	2,000	2,500	3,500	5,500	635
Dunnotar	232	500	700	800	900	262
Gull Harbour	100	150	400	1,000	2,000	n/a
New Town	0	0	1,200	1,500	5,000	n/a
Region	8,500	10,000	14,500	18,500	30,000+	

**Figure 3.7 Population Projections for Communities on the West Shore of Lake Winnipeg Source: *Recreational Study: West Shore of Lake Winnipeg, Project Planning Associates, 1966.***

will be encroaching the town limits of Winnipeg Beach."<sup>85</sup> While substantial growth has occurred since the report was published, it would not be accurate to suggest the Winnipeg Beach has been engulfed by the City of Winnipeg.

Based on this understanding of the future of Winnipeg Beach and the adjacent communities, Project Planning Associates developed

"The Great Lake Winnipeg Road . . . helps to control and preserve the shoreline resources."<sup>87</sup> These proposals are extraordinarily ambitious and are reminiscent of the 'urban renewal' philosophy of urban planners of the day. Ultimately, very little of this scheme has been implemented over the course of the past twenty years. The presence of this planning philosophy however is

85. Project Planning Associates, p. 72.

86. Project Planning Associates, p. 72.

87. Project Planning Associates, p. 72.

apparent in the decisions which led to the creation of the Winnipeg Beach Recreation Park.

Recognizing that something must be done at Winnipeg Beach the provincial government acquired 33 acres of waterfront property in the downtown of Winnipeg Beach through the Federal Rural Economic Development Program.<sup>88</sup> A master plan was developed for the site by the firm of Man Taylor Landscape Architects. This design included an extensive clean up of the property including substantial earthworks and the construction of a concrete retaining wall separating the grass park from the sand beach. As a result of this construction all of the remaining carnival structures were removed so that "when the dust cleared nothing in that area across the main street of Winnipeg Beach will be left except the old water tower."<sup>89</sup>

As a result of this redevelopment, the Winnipeg Beach Recreational Park has been successful as part of a program which has arrested the decline of Winnipeg Beach since the late 1960's. The large gently rolling grassed areas have provided comfortable picnic areas and playing fields. Today many thousands of day visitors make the trip from Winnipeg to enjoy the sun and sand at Winnipeg Beach. At the present time, Parks Branch is in the process of consolidating their land holdings in the park and refining the existing facilities to accommodate evolving patterns of use in the park.<sup>90</sup>

88. Schykulski, p. 1.

89. "Winnipeg Beach, Memories of Yesteryear"

90. Schykulski, p. 1.

## Prospects

Building upon the support provided by the Manitoba government, Winnipeg Beach has re-established itself as a stable and comfortable seasonal resort community. Many of the original cottages which had fallen into such a severe state of disrepair have been removed or repaired. In many places reinvestment in the community is occurring as newer and more permanent cottages are built. In general, the environment throughout the town has been improved over the past twenty years as the town has rebounded from the difficulties of the 1960's.

In spite of this apparently successful redevelopment of the CPR lands at Winnipeg Beach there is still an impression that the full vitality of the community has never been revived. Many people still fondly recall the romance of the 'Moonlight' trains and the summer dances. Even those who never experienced the Winnipeg Beach of the 1920's recognize that something quite unique had occurred there. It is apparent now, that during the process of removing the physical remains of the old amusement park, many of the memories and associations with the past were also lost. This 'lack of spirit' is a characteristic shortcoming of renewal projects of the sixties. The attitude - that in order to revitalize a community it was necessary to start with a clean slate, has lost much of its credibility today. Instead, contemporary developments are more likely to recognize the potential of existing historic artifacts. Attention to Winnipeg Beach's heritage as Manitoba's original resort community should be incorporated in further attempts to restore the Town's popularity.

## 3.2 Potential for Retirement Community Development in Winnipeg Beach

### Introduction

Many opportunities will become available for those who acknowledge the trend towards retirement community development. It has already been shown that Manitoba's population will continue to age over the next two decades and that there will be a sharp increase in the demand for specialized retirement accommodation. Winnipeg Beach has a unique opportunity to take advantage of these circumstances. The town will be attractive to seniors because it is well located, within an hour's drive of Winnipeg, and offers a charming setting with many recreational pastimes. The community also has a pleasant and romantic image in the minds of Manitobans by virtue of the ebullient history of the CPR and the boardwalk. For the Town of Winnipeg Beach the arrival of retired residents in greater numbers can provide a strong incentive for economic rejuvenation.

### Economic Opportunities

Since the demise of the boardwalk and concessions over twenty years ago, Winnipeg Beach has struggled to regain a viable economic foundation. The town presently supports a fragile commercial infrastructure which relies heavily on the influx of seasonal residents over the summer months. With this underdeveloped local economy the Town must rely heavily upon the taxation of residential property owners to generate its

revenue. Winnipeg Beach currently has one of the highest rates of taxation in the province. By encouraging year round retirement community development the town will be able to support a stronger and more diversified local economy. The following section describes some additional economic advantages which can be achieved through retirement community development.

Seasonal homes adapted for use by retired residents are frequently upgraded through renovation or reconstruction. At a minimum these improvements are likely to include: more permanent building foundations, completed indoor plumbing systems, and the installation of insulation and heating systems suitable for off season use. As well as these functional improvements, retirement homes are likely to be more elaborate, and more comfortable than existing summer cottages. As the conversion of existing summer cottages increases the Town of Winnipeg Beach will benefit through increased revenue from property tax assessments.

In the case of retired residents, this increased tax base is not offset by a corresponding demand for increased services. This fact has been supported by evidence from case study examinations of the financial impact of retirement communities undertaken in the northern United States.<sup>91</sup> For Winnipeg Beach, where a certain level of municipal services are already provided to seasonal residents, the increase in services required to accommodate retired residents would be

91. Katherine McMillan Heintz, *Retirement Communities: For Adults Only*, The Center for Urban Policy Research, Rutgers-The State University of New Jersey, 1976, p. 100.

minimal as compared to the increase in revenues from this group. In particular it should be noted that retired residents do not place any increased burden on the local school system. As a result, their contributions through education taxes provide increased resources to the local school board at no cost to the town. These increased revenues represent financial advantages available to the town of Winnipeg Beach by supporting retirement community development.

In 1985 Winnipeg Beach installed a low pressure sewer and water system. These recent improvements make it easier for the town to accommodate more permanent residents. In research undertaken to identify problems associated with seasonal residential conversions, the Ontario Ministry of Housing found that the cost of providing most services for permanent residents rose in a linear fashion.<sup>92</sup> For the provision of sewer and water services however, they noted that generally no increased service costs were incurred as the first residents began to use their summer cottages more permanently. At some point however it becomes necessary to install a sewage system which, because of the low densities of resort communities, can be prohibitively expensive. As Winnipeg Beach is presently involved in the provision of these services, this deterrent to future development does not apply.

In addition to tax revenues provided directly to the town, retirement community development will benefit local businesses. As se-

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92. "Discussion Paper on Seasonal Residential Conversions", Ontario Ministry of Housing, February 1978.

niors begin to stay at their cottages for longer periods in the spring and fall they will expand the seasonal market, upon which Winnipeg Beach businesspeople rely, in several ways. Firstly, the increased numbers of people will provide an enlarged market base which local merchants can build upon. In addition to this growth in numbers of people, merchants can anticipate a change in purchasing habits as well. As retired people begin to settle into their summer homes they will be less inclined to import goods and services from Winnipeg, and to look first to local businesses for the supply of goods and services.

New commercial development can also be expected in response to the demands of an active retirement community. The particular needs of seniors will augment existing market demands to produce new opportunities which can be exploited by the business community of Winnipeg Beach. The promotion of new recreational opportunities is one area where future potential exists. Certainly, businesses which cater to the day to day activities of retired people will prosper: hairdressers, grocery stores and banking services are examples of businesses which will benefit from a larger retirement community in Winnipeg Beach.

For communities that encourage retirement development there are opportunities for commercial success in the provision of support services. While rural retirement communities are more attractive to the younger and more physically active segment of the retired population, there will be increased employment for local residents in health care occupations. For some Manitoba

towns, hospitals and personal care homes are already the largest employers in the community. In addition to the delivery of health services, home maintenance, yard care, and cleaning services are examples of additional employment spin-offs associated with this kind of development.

### **Planning and Design Opportunities**

In addition to the economic case to be made for the development of a retirement community at Winnipeg Beach, there are many physical attributes of the town that recommend this concept. In providing an economic base for development, retirement communities can also support a more well defined functional identity for the town. Over the past several decades Winnipeg Beach has been unable to re-establish the tangible community spirit it enjoyed during its earlier history. An active community of retired residents, however, involved in a network of mutual support and interaction will help to synthesize a new identity for the community. In this way Winnipeg Beach will be returning to the social human resources that fueled its great success in the past.

Winnipeg Beach's proximity to the city has always been one of its greatest assets as a resort community. Now, as the town considers the option of retirement development this fact again becomes an important attribute. For retired people thinking about rural retirement living the ability to commute into the city on an occasional basis will be an important factor. Winnipeg Beach is less than a one hour drive from Winnipeg with two major highways connecting. Furthermore, Selkirk and Gimli are both easily accessible

from Winnipeg Beach for goods and services which may not be available locally.

Winnipeg Beach will also be attractive to those retiring from urban centres because of the relatively low cost of property. It is possible for people who have lived and worked in Winnipeg to purchase a comfortable retirement home in a rural setting for less than the cost of their present city home. This allows them to withdraw some of their home equity to support themselves throughout their retirement. For those who already own seasonal homes in Winnipeg Beach the opportunity to withdraw accumulated home equity will be even greater.

The variety of recreational opportunities available in and around Winnipeg Beach will help to make it an appealing retirement destination. Certainly the waterfront has always been the major recreational focus of the town. As always the lake provides opportunities for swimming, sailing, boating and fishing. In addition to this however, the town offers many other activities throughout the summer and winter. During the winter there is skiing, ice fishing, and curling. In the summer, residents can participate in golf, tennis, and take walks along streets or the shoreline. In addition, the development of a cycling path from Matlock to Hecla Island along the lakeshore, will provide the opportunity for extended bike trips during the summer and winter. Considering these activities, as well as enterprises in and around the home, there can be no shortage of opportunities for recreation among retired residents of Winnipeg Beach.

It will be natural for Winnipeg Beach to develop as the focus of a retirement community since it has traditionally been the meeting place for the neighboring residential developments in Matlock, Whytewold, Ponemah, and Sandy Hook. During the era of the CPR in Winnipeg Beach, people from these communities would congregate in Winnipeg Beach for dances and other social events. As Winnipeg Beach re-establishes itself as the centre for seniors activities, it would be reasonable to expect that events and facilities will be patronized by a community of retired people extending beyond the corporate limits of the town itself. On the basis of this premise it will be possible to develop more elaborate services which could not be supported by the retired population of Winnipeg Beach alone.

The physical form of Winnipeg Beach is one which could comfortably embrace the concept of a retirement community. The homes are on small lots and consequently the community is compact and easy to move around in. The residential streets as well are generally of an intimate scale and support interaction among neighbors. Furthermore, the building typology is quite consistent throughout with cottages being of simple design and construction. Most are one storey buildings and are fairly small in size. These characteristics are quite unique among resort communities and they provide a particularly appropriate form for the development of retirement accommodation. The physical characteristics of Winnipeg Beach, and their impact upon the form of retirement development is considered in more detail in Part 4.

### **Liabilities**

While the many advantages available to Winnipeg Beach in supporting retirement community development have been outlined above, it should be noted that there are strong disincentives to such action as well. Among these are the town's limited ability to provide a complete range of services to an aging population, at least during the initial stages of development. The delivery of health care services is an example of a situation where additional effort and resources would have to be allocated in order to support a substantial retired population. For a community with a minimum of leeway in municipal budgets, this alone could represent a prohibitive challenge.

A further difficulty is encountered as family cottages are renovated and occupied as retirement homes. Under these circumstances, the summer cottage is likely to become less available to the subsequent generation for extended use as a vacation destination. Adapting cottages as retirement homes would affect a traditional pattern of use among cottage dwellers at Manitoba resorts. Because the summer cottage is traditionally vacant, it has been possible for adult sons and daughters of cottage owners to bring their own families and to reside in the family cottage throughout the course of their vacations. This cyclical re-use of recreational properties will likely be adversely affected if seasonal homes become the principal residence of a retired population.

Throughout this discussion the point has been made that a cohesive retirement community could recreate a tangible identity for

Winnipeg Beach. While this has been described as advantageous, in many ways it can also be problematic for the community. The assertion of a community identity based upon the will of a constituency of retired residents is bound to deflect the present status quo at Winnipeg Beach. There will be some residents of the town who do not wish to see Winnipeg Beach identified as a retirement destination. Some conflict among residents can be expected to occur as the town considers the option of retirement community development.

In this chapter the advantages and disadvantages of retirement community development in Winnipeg Beach have been discussed. The problems of community image and of changes to the traditional use of family summer cottages have been identified. On the other hand the significant potential for economic benefit to the community has also been outlined. The ability of retirement communities to support existing businesses and to create the opportunities for new commercial development is seen as an important incentive for this type of development. Finally, the aspects of Winnipeg Beach's history and physical character which made it particularly suitable for retirement community development have been outlined. Having presented these points, the following chapter describes the responses of residents of Winnipeg Beach to a concept of seniors' community within their town.



### **3.3 Survey of Attitudes Toward Retirement Dwelling**

#### **Introduction**

This study presents an argument which identifies benefits which can accrue from the establishment of a community of retired residents within the Town of Winnipeg Beach. It has been suggested that the creation of this community can be understood as the formalization of an already existing trend. The presence of such a trend, toward more permanent use of summer cottages, has been identified through observations and supported in discussions with others familiar with Winnipeg Beach. To provide a more substantial basis for the argument for such a community it is necessary to develop a more complete understanding of the patterns of use of cottages and homes in Winnipeg Beach. If retirement oriented development is to be an appropriate alternative for this community one would expect to find support for the concept in the actions and attitudes of the current residents.

The tendency toward more permanent use of cottages in Winnipeg Beach occurs in several ways. The most visible changes happen when cottages are altered or rebuilt substantially to provide accommodation throughout the summer and winter. Another more subtle mechanism of change is at work as people alter their cottages incrementally creating the opportunity to stay out longer in the spring and fall. In each case the upgrading of cottages, making them more suitable for use beyond the summer months, will supplement the physical infrastructure, which can

support the development of a retirement community.

In addition to the positive inclination among cottage owners to improve and upgrade their properties, the viability of the retirement community concept will depend upon the attitudes of Winnipeg Beach residents with respect to the use to their cottages as retirement homes. These attitudes are important in several ways. Firstly, developing a sense of the numbers of cottage owners who may be considering the option of spending part or all of their retirement years in Winnipeg Beach is important. Those people, who currently own cottages and are considering the possibility of retiring to Winnipeg Beach will provide the base for subsequent retirement development. In addition to the opinions of these people, it will be essential to also consider the attitudes of those who may not choose to retire in Winnipeg Beach. The success of the retirement community concept will depend upon a broad base of support from both of these groups.

#### **Objective**

The objective of the study presented in this chapter is to test the hypothesis that residents of Winnipeg Beach are currently adapting their cottages to accommodate a more permanent use. In addition the study seeks to question residents about their attitudes towards the development of a community of retired people within the Town of Winnipeg Beach regardless of whether or not they themselves would consider this option.

## Related Research

Several studies have been identified which can supplement this research. A study by Bowman in 1966 provides data on the frequency of use of cottages in Winnipeg Beach during the summer of 1964.<sup>93</sup> This information can be compared with responses obtained from the present survey to help to identify changes in patterns of use of cottages over time. Other data describing the use of summer cottages during the off-season is contained in research undertaken by Legal in 1977.<sup>94</sup> This province wide study of the off-season use of cottages in provincial parks provides additional information about the changes that are inherent in the increased use of summer cottages during the off season.

Another related study was commissioned and completed by the Boundary Creek Development Corporation during the summer of 1988.<sup>95</sup> This research focuses on the need for future economic development within Winnipeg Beach. The extensive sampling done for this survey and its recent completion make it a useful additional source of information. A comparison between permanent and seasonal residents in Winnipeg Beach provides an insight into the changes that may occur as a result of the more per-

manent use of summer cottages. Information is also collected in the Boundary Creek study about the adequacy of the existing town infrastructure to support future development. All of this knowledge supplements the research undertaken by the author in the present study.

## Method

Information for this study was collected from property owners of the Town of Winnipeg Beach. The list of property owners, representing the total possible sample, was taken from the 1987 Tax Assessment Roll of the Department of Municipal Affairs. From this source it was established that there is a total of 1599 private property owners in the study area. Three hundred and twenty nine of the people listed addresses in Winnipeg Beach. This 20.6% of the population represents the permanent population of the town. The remaining 1270 names or 79.4% indicated return addresses outside of the town and will be considered as seasonal residents.

The sample used in this study was prepared by selecting names from the total list. Because of the comparatively small sample size being used for this study it was decided that it would be difficult to obtain a representative sample from the subgroups of permanent or seasonal residents. Instead a uniform geographical sample was obtained by selecting names at regular intervals from the assessment roll. By selecting every fortieth name a survey sample of 47 potential respondents was obtained.

93. Joan Bowman, *The Recreational Function and Related Problems of the Winnipeg Beach-Sandy Hook Section of the Lake Winnipeg Shoreline*, Master of Arts Thesis, University of Manitoba, March 1966.

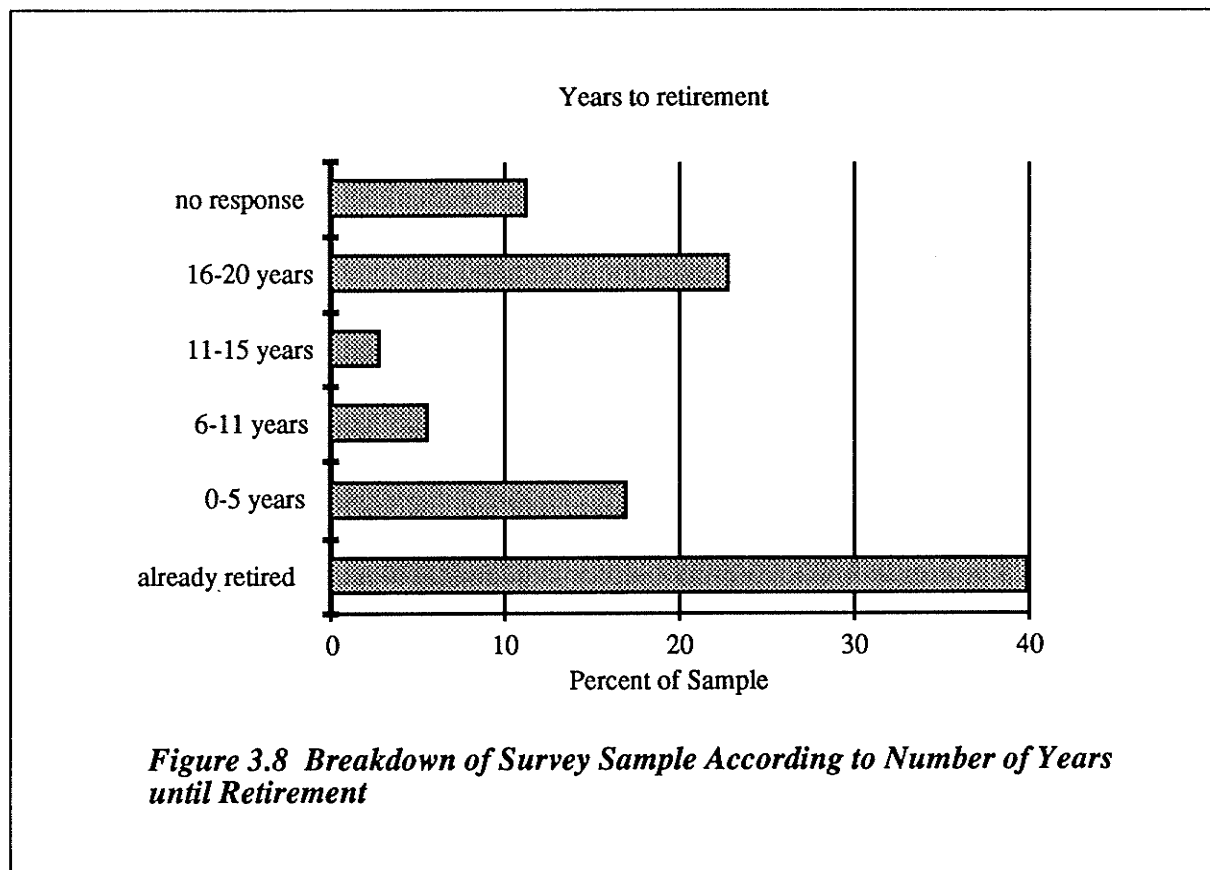
94. Louis Roger Legal, *The Implications of the Use of Park and Crown Land Cottages as Permanent Residences*, unpublished Master of Natural Resource Management Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1977.

95. Boundary Creek Development Corporation, "Winnipeg Beach Business and Community Survey", 1988.

Responses for this study were obtained from telephone interviews. During these interviews answers were sought which incorporated several open ended questions to encourage respondents to discuss their particular concerns about the future development of Winnipeg Beach. The telephone interview format was chosen because the opportunity to enter into discussions with respondents provided more detailed answers and was therefore seen to take better advantage of the small sample used in this survey. As well, the high rate of response available using this technique helped to maintain the geographic uniformity of the sample.

Introductory letter was mailed to each of the potential respondents. The letter explained the purpose of the study and indicated that they would be contacted for an interview. Interviews were conducted during the last week of October and in the first week of November, 1988. From the original list of 47 respondents, five were impossible to contact because their telephone numbers were not listed. Of the remaining 42, twenty-four were contacted on the first try. Four additional callbacks yielded 11 more interviews. In all, responses were received from 35 property owners, representing 2.2% of the total population.

In the two weeks prior to this survey, an in-



## **Results and Discussion**

The breakdown between permanent and seasonal residents obtained in this survey was approximately the same as for Winnipeg Beach as a whole. Twenty seven seasonal residents were interviewed representing 77.2% of the sample. Eight responses from permanent residents made up the remaining 22.8% of the sample. When asked how many years remained until they retired, fourteen respondents indicated that they were presently retired. An additional six people said that they had less than five years of employment remaining. These groups together indicate that 57.1% of of this sample are less than five years from retirement. While this very high proportion of older people cannot be considered as an accurate predictor of the demographic breakdown of the Winnipeg Beach population, see Figure 3.8, one can infer that a large number of people in this community will be retired or approaching retirement.

## **Factors Attracting Residents to Winnipeg Beach**

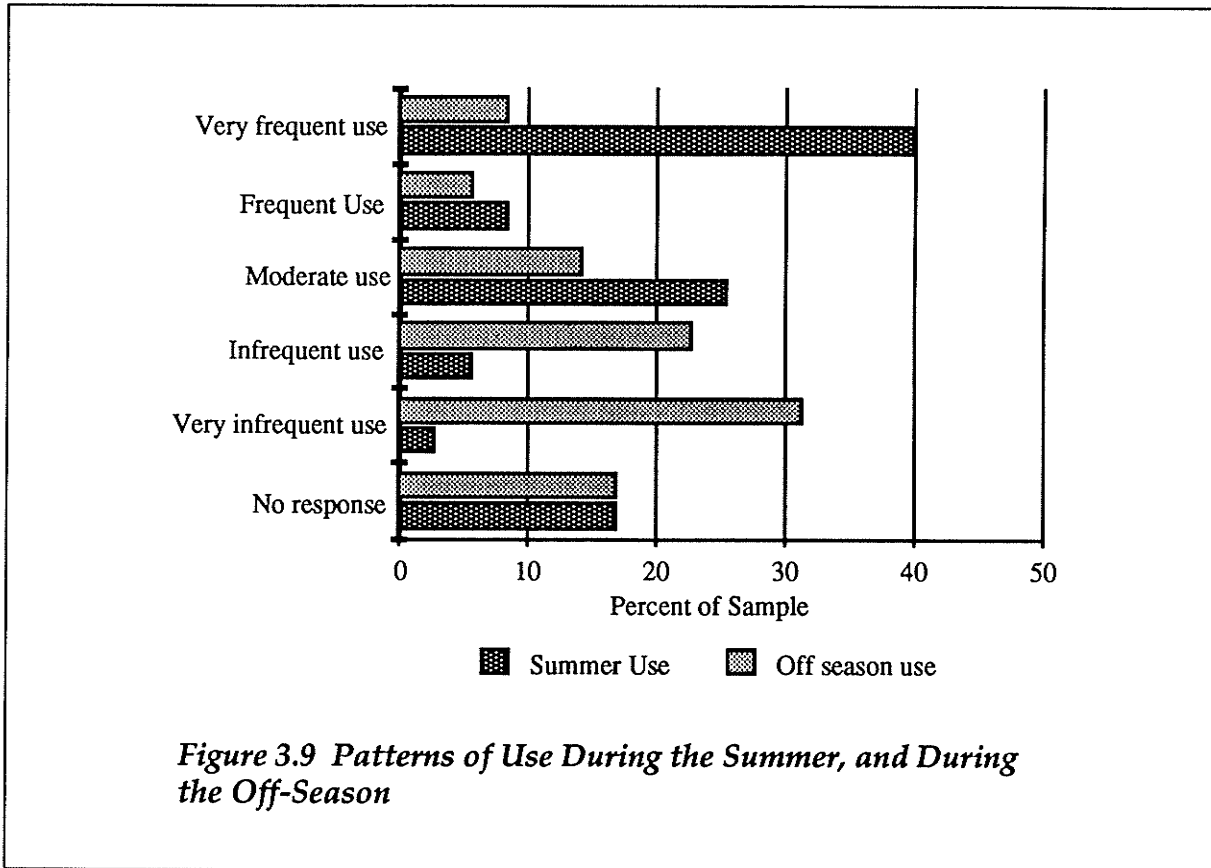
Results from this survey indicate that the proximity of Winnipeg Beach to the city is an important factor in the decision to purchase property. Just over half of the people suggested that the ease of access to the Beach was an important factor in their decision to locate there. Thirty-seven percent of respondents mentioned that their family had lived or cottaged in the area for many years. These family associations were given as the second most important factor for residents in choosing Winnipeg Beach as a recreation area. Several other responses cited the pleasant character of the Beach, referring to

it as "a nice place to get away", and "just a nice quiet place".

## **Patterns of Cottage Use**

To help to develop an understanding about how cottages are used in Winnipeg Beach, questions were asked about how often cottages were used in the summer, and during the off-season. The responses to these questions are illustrated in Figure 7.3 below. Of the 27 seasonal residents interviewed, 13 indicated that they live at the cottage throughout the summer. An additional eleven people said that they spend most of their summer weekends at the cottage and frequently stay for several weeks during their holidays. When asked about off season use of their cottage, two thirds of the seasonal residents indicated that they do not go to the cottage except for day trips to inspect the property.

Residents were also asked about changes they have made, or anticipated making, to their cottages. In response to the question "have you upgraded your cottage in the last five years?" 40% indicated that they had made some form of renovations. These changes most often included some combination of adding insulation, upgrading plumbing and/or heating. In addition to these invisible changes, a number of people indicated that they had enlarged their cottages by adding extra rooms, decks, and garages. When asked about alterations to be undertaken in the next five years, only four individuals indicated that they had plans to do so.

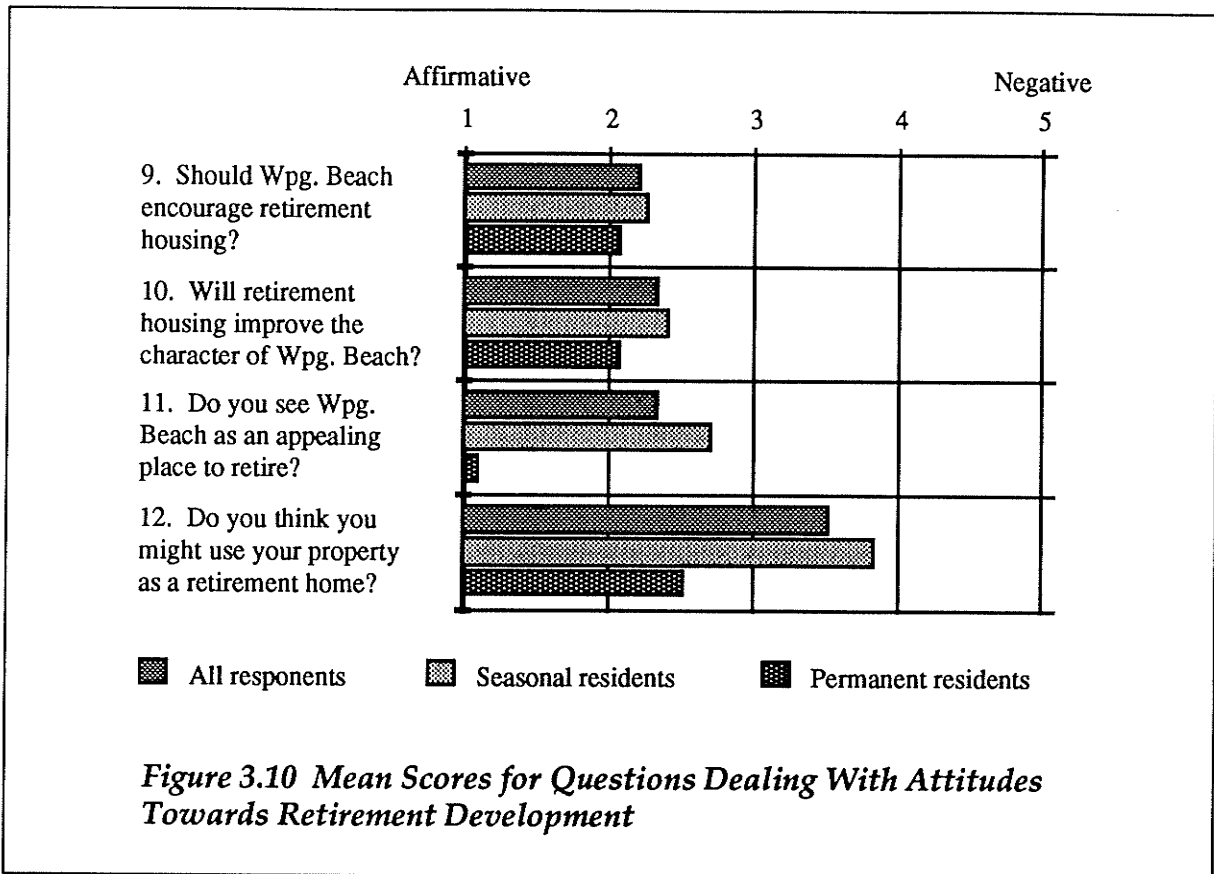


### Attitudes Towards Retirement Development

During the final segment of each interview a series of questions was asked about respondent's attitudes toward retirement development. Responses to each question were recorded on 5 point bi-polar scales. The mean scores for these questions are plotted in Figure 3.10 below. Questions nine and ten ask about the general phenomenon of retirement living at the Beach. Responses to these questions were generally positive, suggesting that most respondents felt that the town could benefit from an increased population of retired people. As well, it is apparent from these results that many felt that the

character of the Beach could be enhanced by the building and cottage renovations associated with retirement living.

In the responses to questions eleven and twelve the variability among seasonal and permanent residents is more apparent. Without exception the permanent residents interviewed felt that Winnipeg Beach was a very appealing place to retire. The mean score of 2.63 indicates that many seasonal residents do not feel as comfortable with this idea. The disinterest that some seasonal residents expressed about retiring at the Beach is clear as 54.3% indicated that they would be unlikely to use their present cottage as a retirement home.



The final question in each interview asked respondents to identify their most important concern about the future development of Winnipeg Beach. For those people who were able to identify particular concerns, the most frequently mentioned issues were the need to maintain, at a very high standard, the waterfront and beach area. The need to create an economic base which could support the rejuvenation of the downtown area was also mentioned as a second critical area of concern for the community. Other responses cited the need to continue to upgrade the road and sewer systems. Answers to this question identified particular areas of concern and initiated more free ranging discussion with respondents.

During the course of the telephone discussions, several respondents indicated that they felt that Winnipeg Beach had lost some of its original charm. This sentiment was described by one person who had "seen the change from Metropolis to Ghost town", another remembered how "the Beach used to be incredible", and "a fun place to go". The remembrance of this vigor can be seen in comments which encourage "a return to the boardwalk" and the development of something for the young people. This nostalgia is an important aspect of Winnipeg Beach.

### Implications for Design

From the responses obtained during the course of this survey it is apparent that the

development of retirement homes within this community are favorably received. The majority interviewed felt that retirement housing should be encouraged by the Town and that the process would improve the character of the community and develop a stronger economic base for local business. This general support from residents of Winnipeg Beach is an essential prerequisite to development designed for retired people.

A particular concern expressed in a number of responses alludes to the need to nurture a core community of retired people from which subsequent retirement development can prosper. This 'critical mass' of people is important in two ways. Firstly, the presence of neighbors in similar circumstances will allay concerns about "staying up there by myself". The community of seniors will provide an internal, self-sustaining support network. Secondly, an increased number of residents living in the town for extended periods will provide the foundation for the development of a more complete network of services.

Although this study has been general in nature, and does not deal specifically with the form of individual retirement homes, some suggestions for the development of appropriate forms have arisen throughout the course of the survey. While it was recognized that summer homes would require additional insulation, improved heating and more substantial plumbing systems to make them suitable for more extended use, it was not anticipated that these cottages would need to be enlarged. This tendency to develop larger homes through addition or reconstruction has been recorded in this study.

The development of larger homes will have a significant effect on the intimate scale of small buildings, small lots, and narrow roads which characterize this community.

### **Implications for Further Research**

The research undertaken in the context of this study was limited in the reliability of the results. In order to obtain a more reliable sample, subsequent research would need to survey a larger proportion of the property owners. As well, questions asked during the interviews were designed to inquire about general attitudes towards retirement development. As such, the responses to the questions may have tended to be overly positive. The validity of this information might be tested in future research which focuses on the merits of a particular development proposal.

Future studies undertaken to consider the potential for retirement development in this community would productively focus on the identification of the specific housing needs of the elderly in resort communities. In particular, this research might focus on providing for these needs, within a housing type which matches the existing community fabric. Additional market research which can encourage the development of new businesses to accommodate increased numbers of retired residents in Winnipeg Beach is also necessary.

# PART IV

## DESIGN DEVELOPMENT



## 4.1 Introduction

Part four of this study outlines a proposal for the development of a retirement community at Winnipeg Beach.

This designation as a retirement community has been shown to include many different kinds of development. In part two of this study five distinct retirement community types were discussed as they have been outlined in the work of Michael Hunt and others. Hunt's research identifies four basic attributes of: *i.* scale, *ii.* resident characteristics, *iii.* level of service, and *iv.* sponsorship, and uses these to construct a typology of retirement communities.

First among these community types is the **Retirement New Town** which is identified as being a very large retirement community with an extensive range of health and recreation services. These towns are generally created by private developers and marketed for younger, active retirees.

**Retirement Villages** differ from new towns in that they are smaller, and are likely to rely upon neighboring communities for health and commercial services. As with the retirement new town these villages are developed privately and are directed to the market of young healthy seniors.

**Retirement Subdivisions** will vary in size, but are characterized by the fact that little or no attempt is made to provide health and commercial services internally. Instead, these developments rely heavily upon their surrounding environment for services.

The fourth type of retirement community is the **Retirement Residence** which is distinct from the preceding models in that it consists of a single building or complex. These buildings may be sponsored publicly, and are attractive to older, less physically mobile individuals.

**Continuing Care Retirement Centres** are distinct because of the provision of a comprehensive internal health care system. These developments cater to elderly retirees who require a higher degree of medical attention.

These five community types are similar in that they are all designed and developed specifically to accommodate retired residents. In subsequent research Michael Hunt recognizes that in addition to people who live in such communities there are many people who reside in **Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities**. These naturally occurring communities are age-integrated, but have a population of seniors that has come to outnumber the younger residents. This transformation can occur as existing residents age in place, or as the result of the migration of retired residents into an existing community. Such communities provide a housing alternative somewhere between remaining in a pre-retirement home, and moving into a planned, entirely age-segregated retirement community.

This last type of community is the one that matches most closely with the existing circumstances at Winnipeg Beach. Summer cottages which are converted for use as retirement accommodation already provide the basis of a naturally evolving retirement com-

munity there. The design proposals which follow are directed at reinforcing this existing tendency towards retirement living, as well as supplementing it with suggestions for alternative housing options.

**T**hroughout this study many factors have been identified which support the development of such a community of retired people within the Town of Winnipeg Beach. In the second part of this study, attention has been given to the changing demographic structure of Canada's population. From this discussion it can be seen that:

- the absolute numbers of older people are rising
- the baby boom population is rapidly approaching retirement age
- people are retiring younger and living longer
- retirement is seen as a more positive stage in the life-cycle
- and seniors are healthier and more physically active.

In addition to a general increase in the demand for rural retirement housing, many specific advantages for the Town of Winnipeg Beach have been identified, including:

- its proximity to the city
- its excellent recreational opportunities
- its traditional role as the center for surrounding seasonal residential development
- a physical character which is well adapted for retirement living
- and inexpensive property values relative to urban alternatives.

Furthermore, there are many economic advantages to the Town for encouraging retirement development including:

- a stronger residential tax base
- a demand for services from this group less than tax contributions
- more efficient use of an existing sewer and water system
- additional markets for local businesses
- markets for additional new business
- and local employment opportunities generated through the demand for support services.

**T**his design strategy for a naturally evolving retirement community is presented under the headings of:

- Program
- Concept
- Design Development

The first part of the proposal identifies basic parameters of a naturally evolving retirement community as they will be established by the needs of retired residents and by the constraints of an existing site. From these parameters a conceptual framework for subsequent development is recommended. The final component of the proposal includes specific alternatives for design and planning changes which might be considered in the development of a retirement community at Winnipeg Beach.

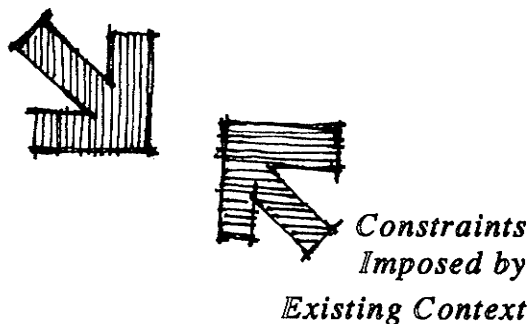
## 4.2 Program

### The Needs of a Retired Population

In response to an changing demographic reality it has become necessary to plan and design communities which respond more directly to the needs of an aging population.

The demands of this group considered in the context of a specific site provide the elements of a program for the development of appropriate retirement housing.

#### *Needs of Retired Residents*



*Figure 4.1 The Parameters Influencing Design Program Development.*

An important aspect of this design program will be the establishment of living environments in Winnipeg Beach which encourage independent living for the longest possible time. As seniors begin to retire younger and live longer, the proportion of the life cycle spent in retirement has been greatly extended. As a result, the sensory losses which occur in association with aging may diminish the ability to live independently over a period of thirty or forty years. While these losses do not occur at the same stage in life

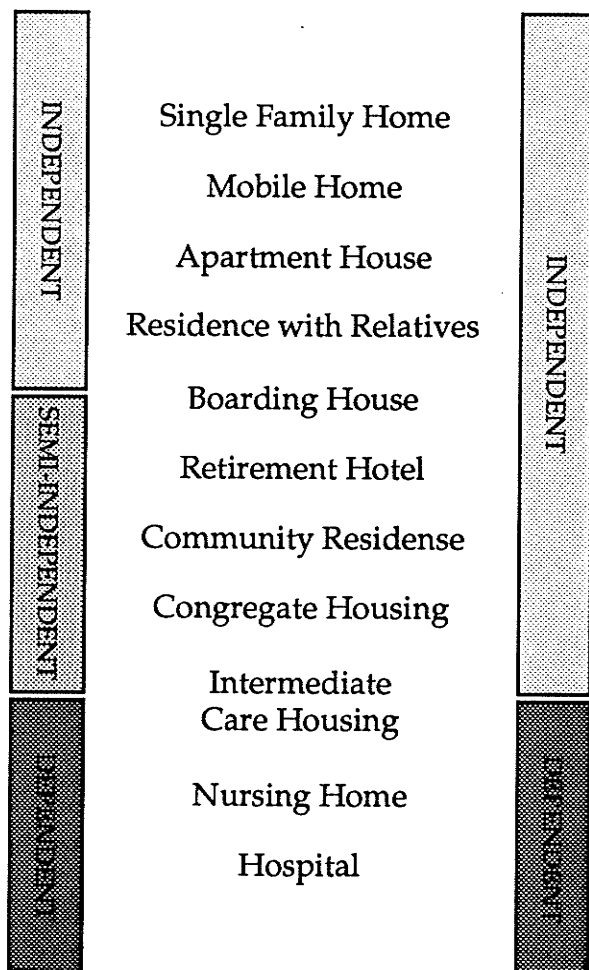
for every individual, the following table indicates a general pattern.

AGE	30	40	50	60	70	80	90
Separation of Children						•	
Death of Peers							•
Loss of Spouse							•
Motor Output Deterioration							•
Sensory Acuity Losses						•	
Age Related Health Problems							•
Reduced Physical Mobility							•

### *Figure 4.2 Sensory Losses Associated With Aging*

In response to these losses, and in order to provide a dignified lifestyle for retired people, it will be a primary design objective to provide a physical infrastructure and a blend of support services which will enhance the ability of elderly people to live independently for the longest possible time.

In addition to extending the opportunity for independent living, it is particularly important for retirement development in Winnipeg Beach to support a blend of social and community services which encourages interaction and communication among residents. Rural retirement communities which by their nature are comprised of people who have relocated from pre-retirement neighborhoods, require special measures to ensure the establishment of a vibrant and active community. The involvement of residents in community initiatives is the essential difference between communities which: "(are



**Figure 4.3 The Ability to Live Independently in Various Housing Types**

made up of) lonely detached individuals living in what . . . are merely physical locations." and "tight-knit communities . . . with distinct customs, gossip, and humor."























































The creation of this social fabric, because it cannot occur until after a group of residents are in place, frequently falls outside the attentions of community planning and design. The special importance of this aspect of community development to the overall suc-

cess of retirement communities suggests that attention should be given, throughout the entire development process, to physical forms which can support this type of interaction.

The final component of this design program identifies the need to provide for flexibility and choice in living arrangements. In Winnipeg Beach this need can be accommodated in a number of ways. Firstly, there is the ability to supplement a range of housing types from private retirement residences, to nursing care facilities as they are presently available within this community.

Furthermore, Winnipeg Beach's history as a seasonal resort provides unique opportunities for the development of part time retirement accommodation. There exists in this province a well established pattern of migration, for retired people, between Manitoba in the summer, and warmer climates during the winter. For this group in particular, and for many other Manitobans who do not travel during the winter, there is a opportunity to provide a seasonal retirement lifestyle which takes advantage of the excellent recreational opportunities available at Winnipeg Beach during the summer months.

The matrix shown in Figure 4.4 presents a summary of the design principles identified in part two of this study. As well, the matrix indicates how each of these principles might be applied to achieve the objectives outlined in this program.

	 Very Important  Important  Not Important	Extending The Opportunity For Independent Living	Support Social and Community Services	Provide For Housing Choice and Flexibility
COMMUNITY STRUCTURE	The scale of a retirement community will be an important determinant of its overall character			
	Designs should endeavour to create an environment which is both <b>challenging and supportive</b>			
	Housing and services should be located in close <b>proximity</b>			
	Communities should be <b>simple in their spatial organization</b>			
	Communities should be planned to create a <b>safe and secure</b> environment			
	Communities should allow residents to <b>change and control</b> their own surroundings			
SITE DESIGN	<b>Redundant Cuing</b> can help people to orient themselves in unfamiliar surroundings			
	Sites should be <b>adaptable</b> to accommodate individual needs and preferences			
	Spaces should encourage less able people to <b>participate in activities through observation</b>			
	Spaces should be <b>predictable</b> with control and a sense of ownership assigned			
DETAIL DESIGN	Detail design should create a <b>barrier free</b> environment			
	Detail design should enrich the <b>quality and character</b> of retirement living environments			
DELIVERY OF SERVICES	<b>Commercial services</b> should respond to the specific needs of retired people			
	A range of <b>recreational opportunities</b> will appeal to the various ability levels of a retired population			
	Retirement communities should encourage an <b>active social network</b>			
	A remote location, and young active clientele reduce the likelihood of <b>medical services</b>			
	Communities should offer a broad range of <b>support services</b>			

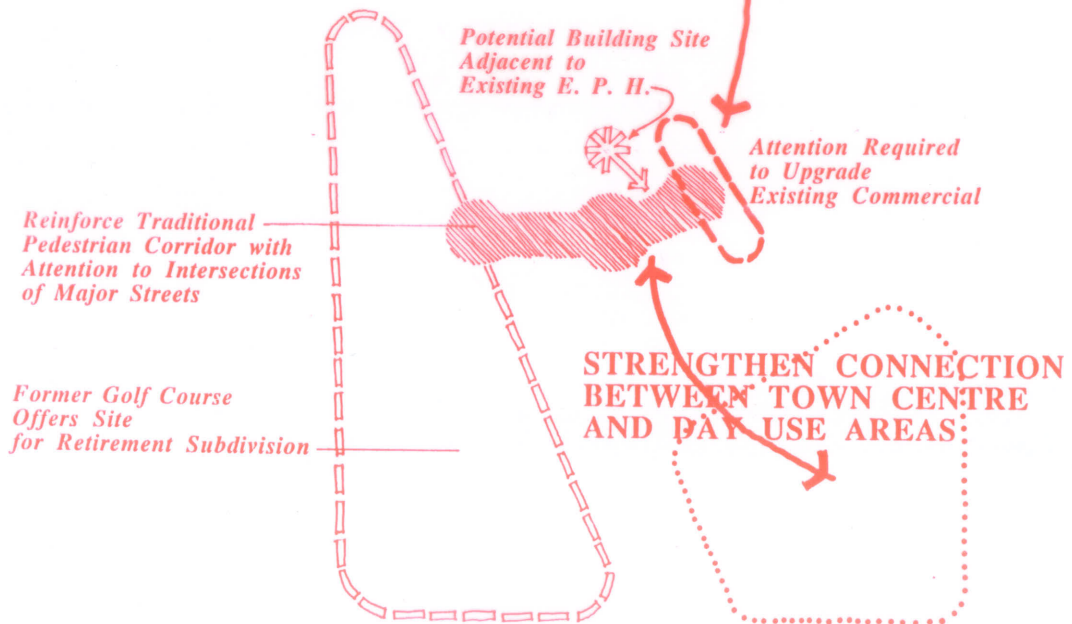
**Figure 4.4 Design Principles Can Be Applied To Achieve The Design Objectives Of This Naturally Evolving Retirement Community.**

### Existing Site Conditions

In examining the potential for retirement community development in Winnipeg Beach many aspects of the existing situation will

influence the form of any subsequent development. Figure 4.5 on the following page identifies some of the opportunities and constraints presented by this site.

**STRENGTHEN CONNECTION  
BETWEEN TOWN CENTRE  
AND MAIN RESIDENTIAL  
AREAS**





*Figure 4.5 Existing Site Conditions*



Figure 4.5 Existing Site Conditions

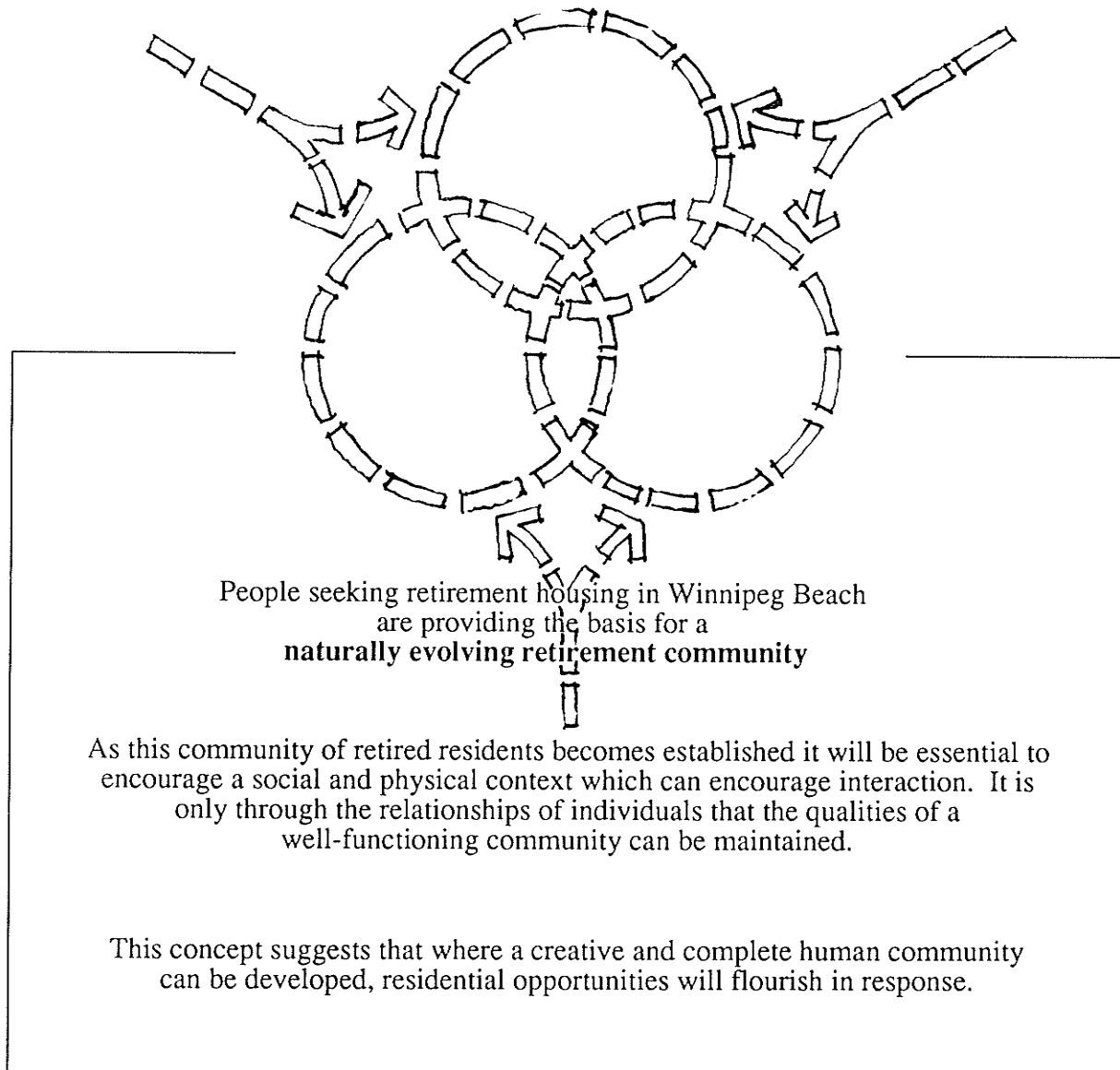


### 4.3 Concept

Proposals for retirement community development in this report are based upon two conceptual images.

In the first, shown in Figure 4.6, the interlocking circles refer to the importance of initiatives that incorporate the development of

an appropriate physical environment with the creation of a sustainable social structure. In this idea there is the recognition that for retirement communities the development of new housing should correspond with the provision of services which supplement an-existing community structure.



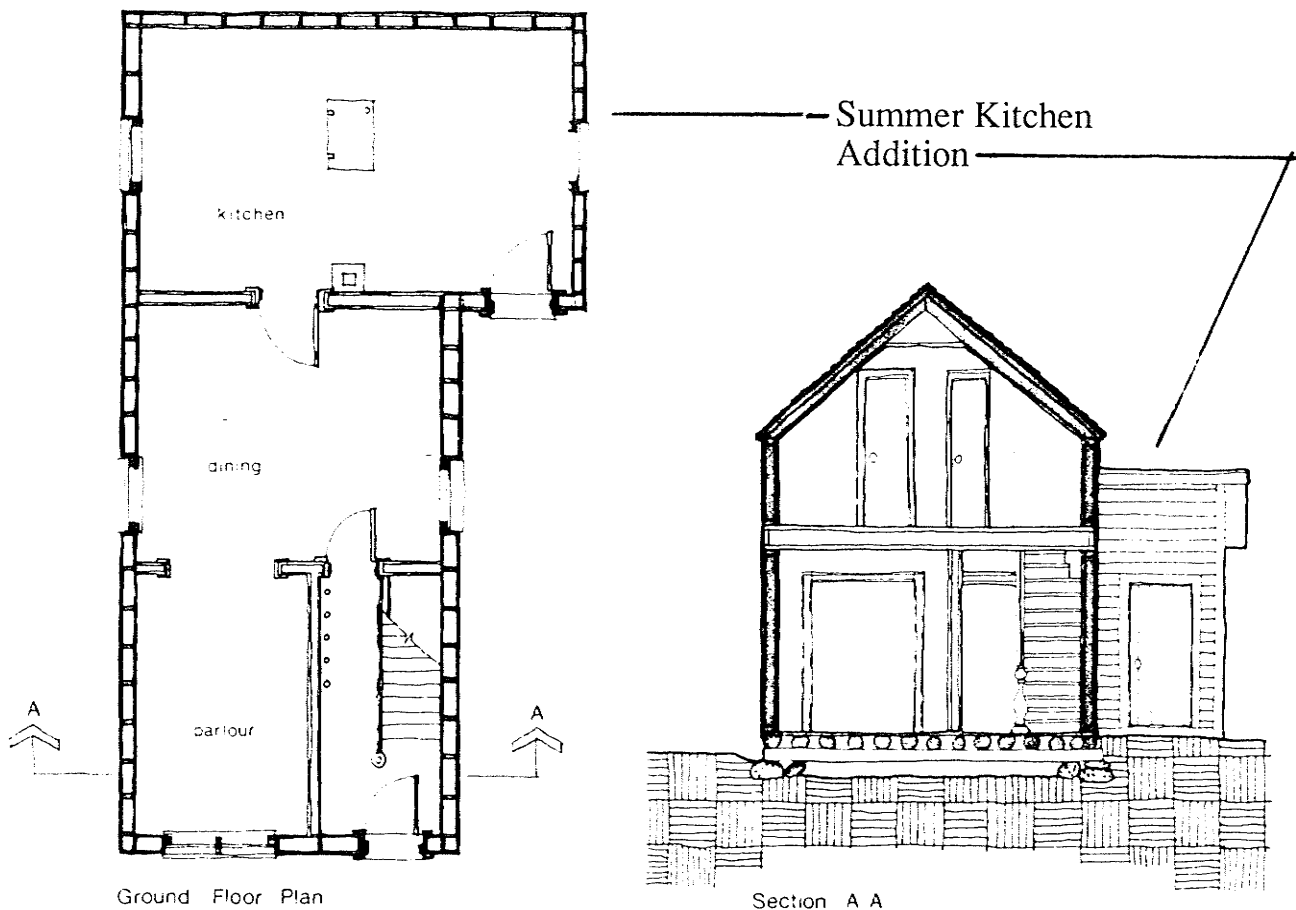
*Figure 4.6 Organizational Concept*

In the second image there is the recognition of the severity of the Canadian prairie climate. Retirement communities designed for the prairies will have to acknowledge and adapt to this reality. This adaptation is already evident in the trend among retired Manitoban's to spend winter months in more favorable southern locations.

Dealing with the harshness of prairie winters, however, is not a new problem.

Figure 4.7 illustrates how prairie houses were adapted to harsh winters by consolidating living space. During the summer, additions were provided and living space expanded to include a summer kitchen.

This simple technique is incorporated into the following design proposals which depict a community which will be compact and snug in winter, but generous and expansive in summer.



**Figure 4.7 Summer Kitchens were Used by Prairie Settlers to Extend Livable Space During the More Favorable Summer Months. Source: *Architectural Heritage: The Eastern Interlake Planning District, 1983.***

## 4.4 Design Development

The following proposals provide a series of examples which illustrate how a retirement community might evolve at Winnipeg Beach. These ideas have been developed with particular attention given to realizing the program objectives outlined in Part 4.3. To this end, suggestions have been made:

- which provide for greater choice in housing options
- which create a physical infrastructure appropriate for retirement living
- which encourage additional commercial development for a retired population
- and which provide a context which supports the development of an active social network.

Together these suggestions provide the foundation for a progressive and prosperous community for retired people.

The realization of these proposals will clearly necessitate investments of capital and human resources from private investors, and from all levels of government. Although a detailed estimate of these commitments has not been undertaken as part of this study, the requirement for substantial expenditures should not be allowed to become a deterrent to action and further study.

The potential for rural retirement communities is an idea which is consistent with many of the policy initiatives of the provincial government. The Manitoba government currently recognizes as a priority the need to develop a more diversified rural economy which will provide employment opportunities and encourage a repopulation of rural centres. As well, both the federal and pro-

vincial governments recognize the impact of an aging population, and are looking for developments which can accommodate the needs of this group.

Private funding for new retirement communities will also be available as developers respond to changing market demands. There are presently companies which specialize in retirement housing and others which have moved to take advantage of this increasingly important aspect of the residential market. The advantages of Winnipeg Beach as a site for retirement community development will attract the interest and commitment of this private funding.

In addition to the availability of external funding it should be noted that many resources exist within the community of Winnipeg Beach. In fact it has been shown that a naturally evolving retirement community has already begun in advance of external funding. Further, the commercial benefits for local businesspeople will encourage action and investment from within this group. Taken together, the initiatives of individuals and local businesses can provide a source of ongoing support for the concept of retirement community development.

The proposals for retirement community development are illustrated in the Concept Plan shown in Figure 4.8. The major components of this scheme have been elaborated and are considered under the headings of:

**i. Retirement Living Centre**

Located across the street from the existing seniors residence, this building would accommodate residential apartments as well as a range of commercial and community services. It is intended that this multi-use facility will contribute a focus for the activities of seniors living throughout the Winnipeg Beach area as well as provide a self-contained living environment for those residing within the building.

**ii. Beach Boulevard**

Beginning from the entrance to the Winnipeg Beach Recreational Park, a divided boulevard is proposed which extends through the main parts of the town centre and continues along Stitt Street of the beginning the main residential areas. This boulevard builds upon the existing divided boulevard at the entrance to the Recreational Park and helps to redress the existing poor relationship between the commercial part of Winnipeg Beach, the recreational park, and the residential areas of Winnipeg Beach.

**iii. Summer Mall**

Recommendations for changes to the commercial development along Railway Street have been made to provide an extension of the commercial and recreational services provided within the proposed retirement living centre. These modifications embrace the

reality of seasonal fluxuations in the Winnipeg Beach community. The pedestrian mall shown between Arundel and Murray Ave. is designed to let retired residents and others take advantage of the kind summer climate.

**iv. Retirement Subdivision**

Additional retirement housing is proposed for the area of open space located west of Hwy 9. The subdivision allows for the development of new homes for people who will require a lower level of support services to maintain an independent lifestyle. Included within this development is a recreational complex complete with a swimming pool and indoor recreational facilities.

**v. Seasonal Recreational Conversions**

The conversion of summer homes represents an important component in the development of a complete retirement community. In particular the conversion of these homes provides a source of retirement housing which is adaptable and flexible, and which can be intergrated easily into the existing community fabric.

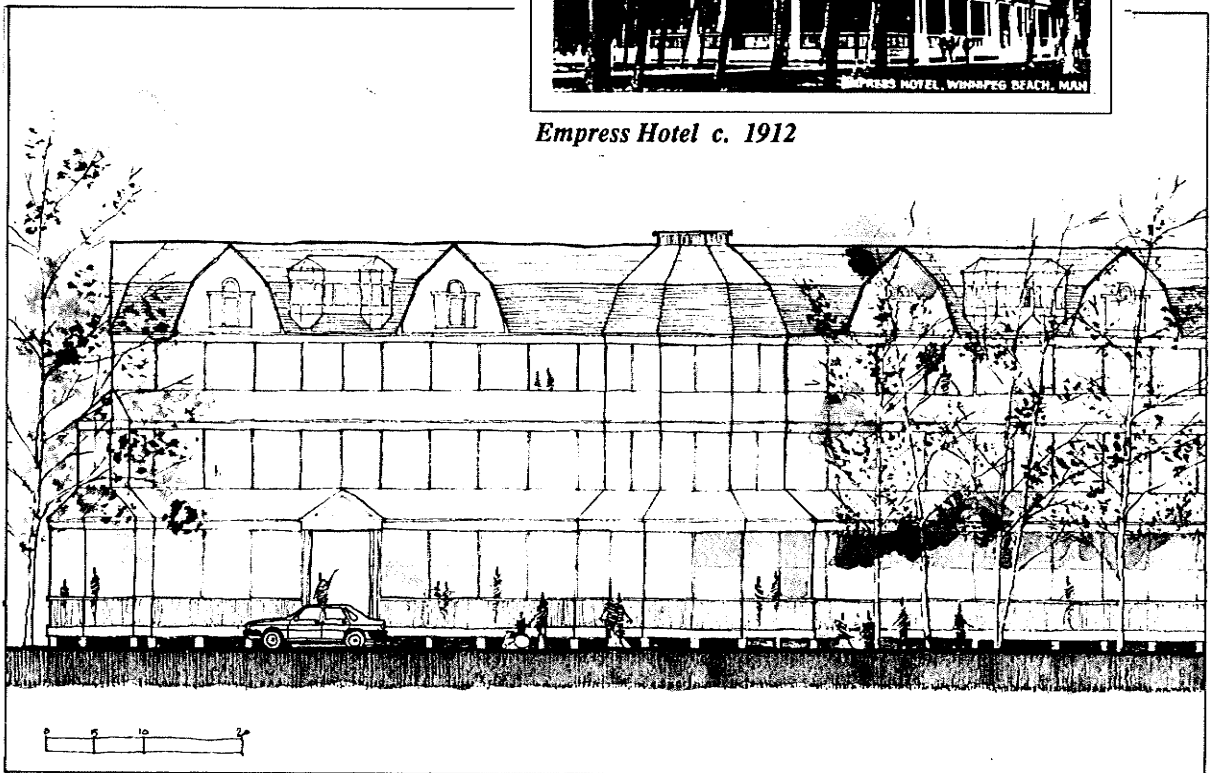


Figure 4.8 Concept Plan

Courtesy of Manitoba Archives



*Empress Hotel c. 1912*



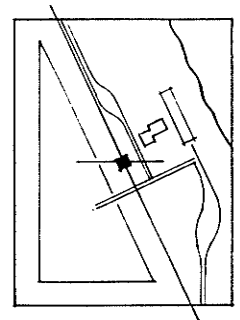
*Figure 4.9 South Elevation of the Proposed Retirement Living Center*

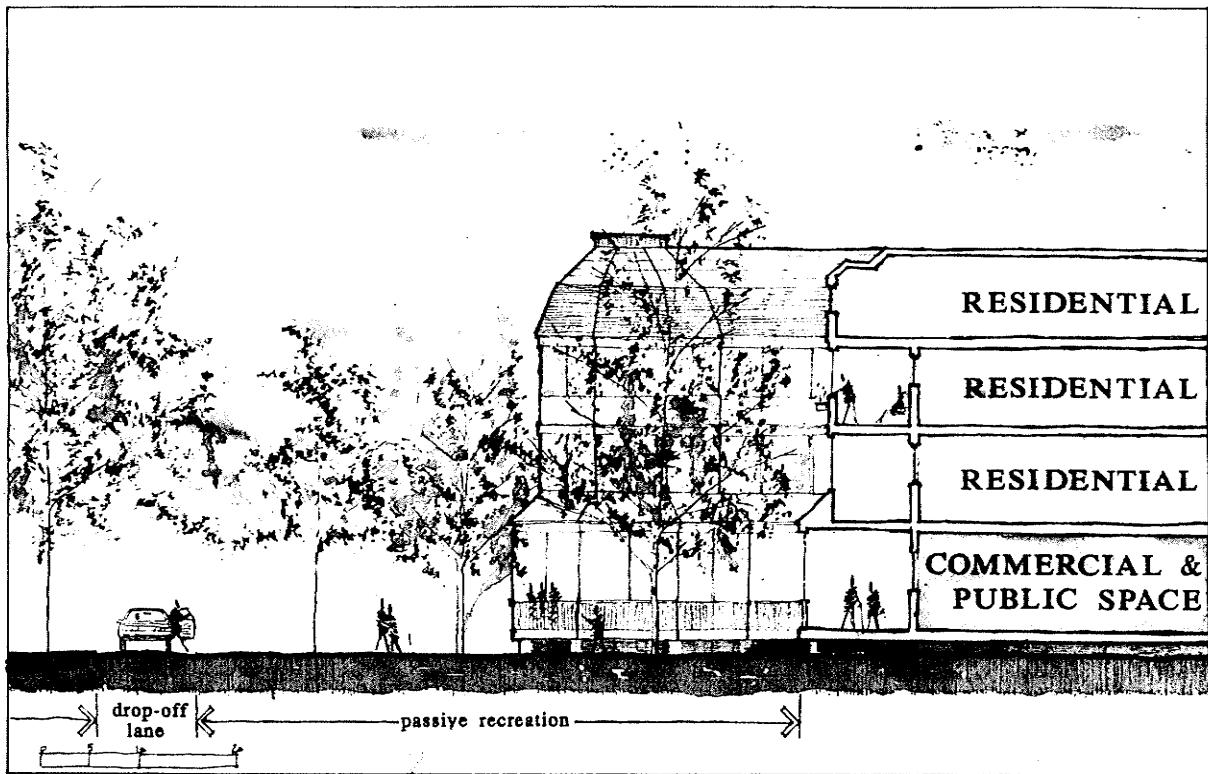
### **i. Retirement Living Centre**

The retirement residence illustrated in this drawing is designed to support the development of a Winnipeg Beach retirement community:

- by providing additional retirement apartments
- by providing space for commercial development related to seniors
- and by providing a community space habitable during the winter.

Design references drawn from the Empress Hotel are intended to elicit associations from the prestigious past of Winnipeg Beach. As well, the use of this imagery is consistent with the principle of providing environmental quality through the use of details laden with cultural associations.





*Figure 4.10 Section Through the Proposed Retirement Living Centre*

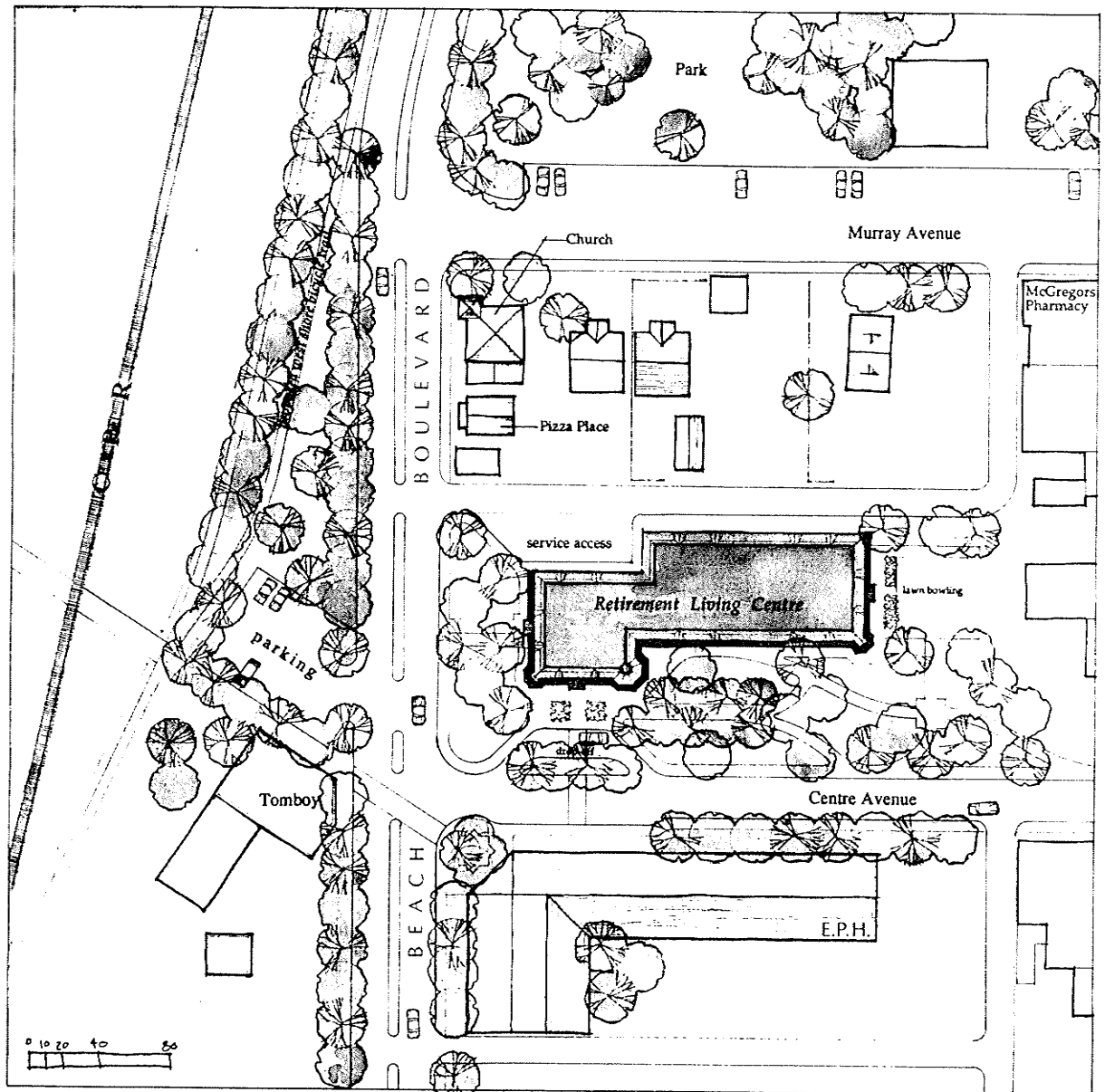
Within this Retirement Centre there is the opportunity to provide a range of services for elderly residents. Examples of the services which may be included in this complex are:

- a coffee shop
- restaurant
- a hair dresser/barber
- a medical clinic
- library
- post office
- a hobby/ games room,
- and a multi-purpose meeting room

These services will supplement the existing facilities for retired residents available within the immediate area including:

- a grocery store
- restaurant
- pharmacy
- and bank

By supplementing the availability of existing services in this way a complete package of services can be provided within a very compact area. This situation is consistent with the design principles outlined in this study and will create an attractive incentive for retired residents.

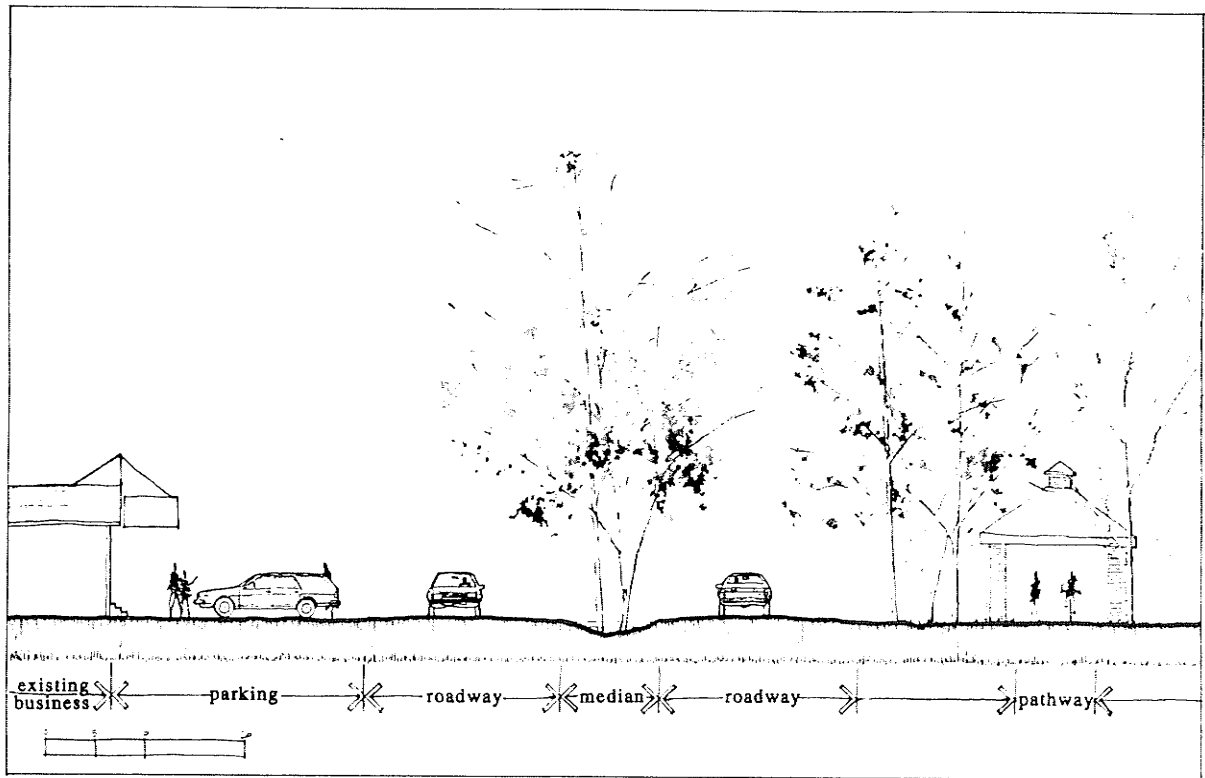


*Figure 4.11 Retirement Centre Site Plan*

Grounds in front of the Retirement Centre have been created by narrowing Centre Avenue and stepping the building back on the site. This area provides space for passive, casual recreation.

A lawn bowling green at the east end of the site encourages more active recreation. The ability to view games from the open veranda allows less physically able people to be, and more importantly to feel, a part of games and tournaments.





*Figure 4.12 Section Through Beach Boulevard*

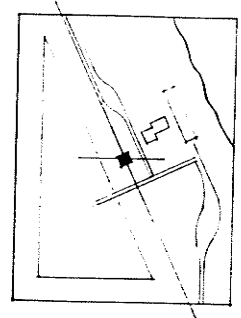
## ii. Beach Boulevard

The concept for the Beach Boulevard proposal is to develop a recognizable design image which can establish a stronger relationship between the Winnipeg Beach Recreational Park, the central business area, and the main residential part of the community. Presently these three areas are physically distinct, and quite unrelated in character. This proposal provides the opportunity to develop a more consistent image suitable for the community overall.

The divided boulevard is an extension from the existing boulevard at the entrance to the recreation park. Building upon this feature it is possible to develop a grand boulevard which is distinct and appropriate for the Town of Winnipeg Beach. The swaled me-

dian with wooden bridges across shown in Figure 4.10 reinforce the resort image of the Town. Plantings for this centre median of single and multi-stemmed Ash, Birch, and Willow will also reinforce the resort character of the community

In addition this development can incorporate the creation of pedestrian and bicycle routes through the community which will provide opportunities for greater physical activity. The provision of this well defined walking and cycling network will be an important asset for a community seeking to promote itself as retirement destination.



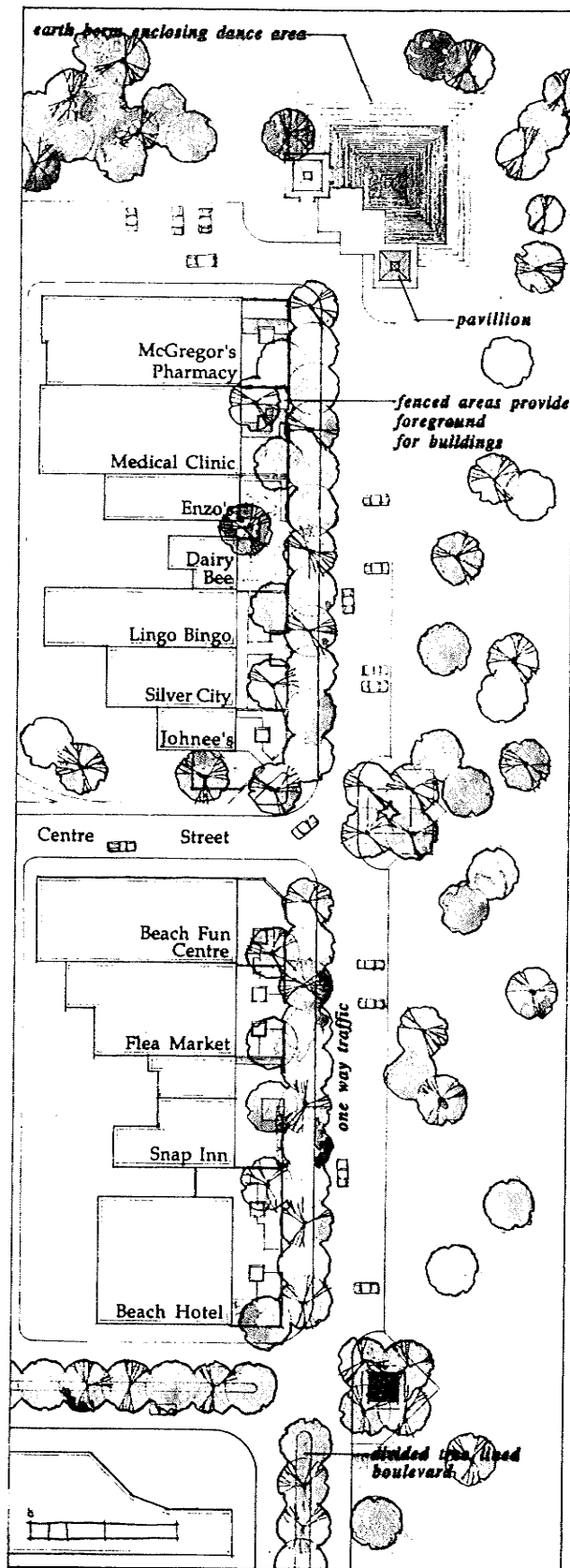
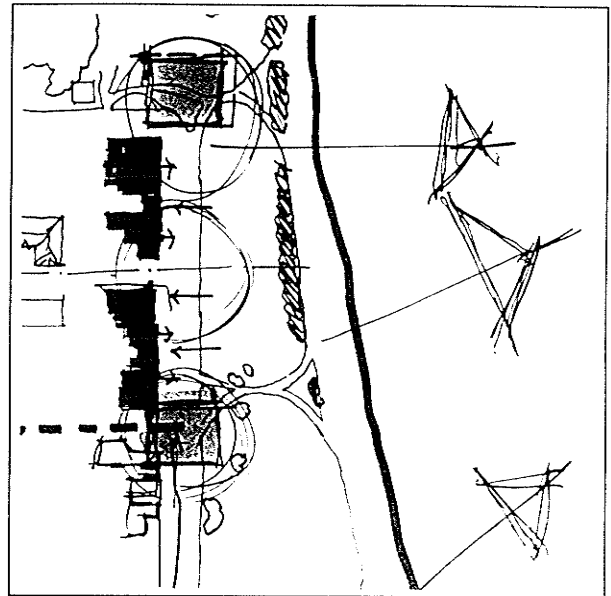


Figure 4.13 Plan of Summer Mall

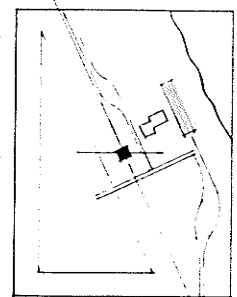


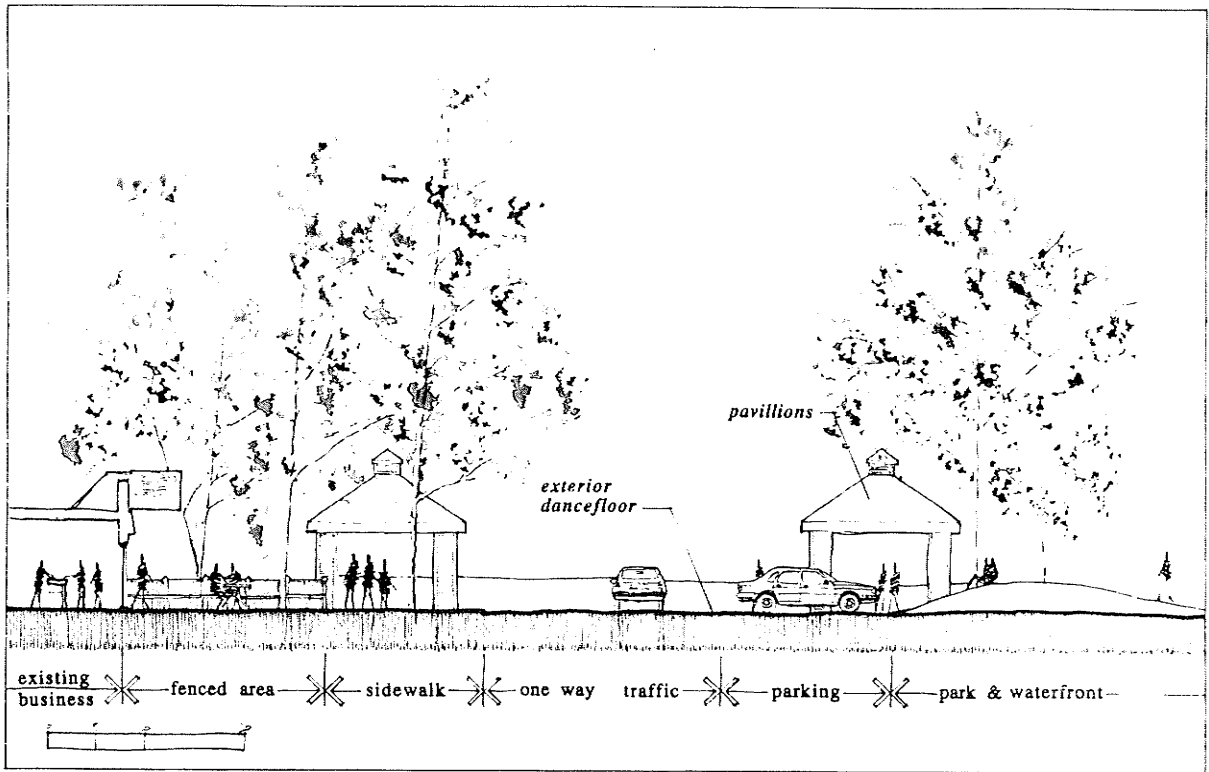
### iii. Summer Mall

This concept of a summer mall provides a framework for modifications to the existing commercial strip along Railway Street. In the context of an evolving retirement community there is the potential for the character of this street to change in response to the changing needs and tastes of seniors.

In this proposal development is concentrated in a two block area between Robinsnson and Murray Streets. For this section traffic would be allowed travelling north with parking provided along the full distance. Adjacent to each building a 24' deep, fenced courtyard is developed to suit the requirements of individual businesses. A 16' wide sidewalk allows for casual walks and places to sit and rest, and watch.

The terminus for the mall at the north end is an exterior dance floor.





*Figure 4.14 Section Through Summer Mall*

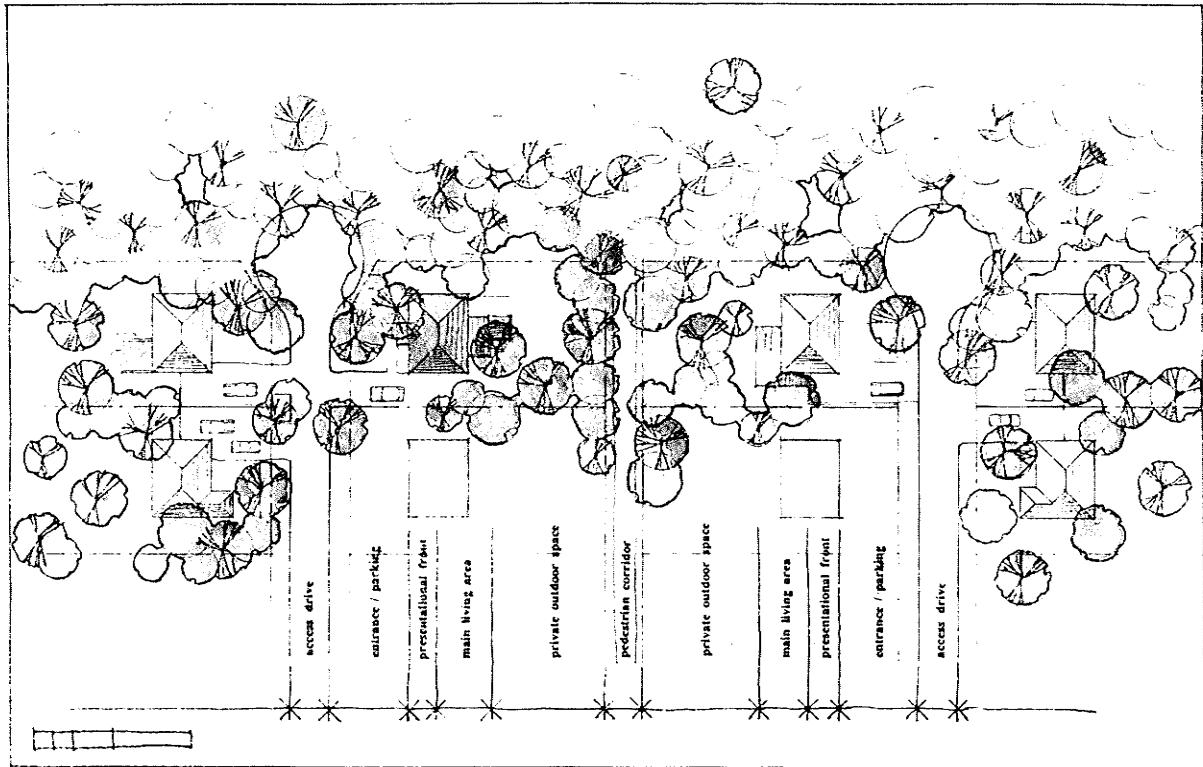
This drawing illustrates the relationship between the parts of the Summer Mall, and gives a sense of the character of this new street.

The roadway shown is narrower than the existing street, allowing for one way traffic and parking. It is intended that such an arrangement will allow for easy access, while at the same time, reducing the predominance of the automobile. This will encourage a greater freedom of movement between the businesses and the open space across the street. This change, along in addition to the development of courtyards in front of each building, will create an impression that the buildings are a built up area within the park - and not just an area adjacent to it.

In this proposal the landscape character of the park is brought up to the front of the existing buildings. The low open fences and use of multi-stem trees create a character that is similar to the rest of the Winnipeg Beach area.

These courtyards can be developed to encourage outdoor seating for restaurants and take out food, as well as providing opportunities for outdoor sales of crafts, etc.

The broad sidewalk serves as the central corridor of this mall with people entering from either businesses or from the park.



*Figure 4.15 Plan Detail of Retirement Subdivision*

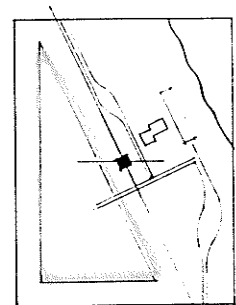
#### **iv. Retirement Subdivision**

The subdivision shown above and in Figure 4.16, develops a living environment suitable for elderly residents which is at the same time appropriate in the Winnipeg Beach context.

The proposal is suitable for retired residents in that it suggests a linear arrangement of streets which will allow residents to orient themselves easily within the development. Further, the site is organized to minimize ambiguous or uncontrolled space. Much of the area is given over to private yards which can be modified according to the individual taste and need. Public space is provided, but the extent of this area is defined by the road layout.

This subdivision is a reflection of the surrounding context in that the size and spacing of lots is modelled after the existing residential areas of Winnipeg Beach. As well, the proposal responds to, and incorporates the Harbour Village Condominium development which has begun on this site.

The indication of a Fitness Centre with swimming pool and racquet courts will supplement existing recreational facilities and provide an attraction for new senior residents.



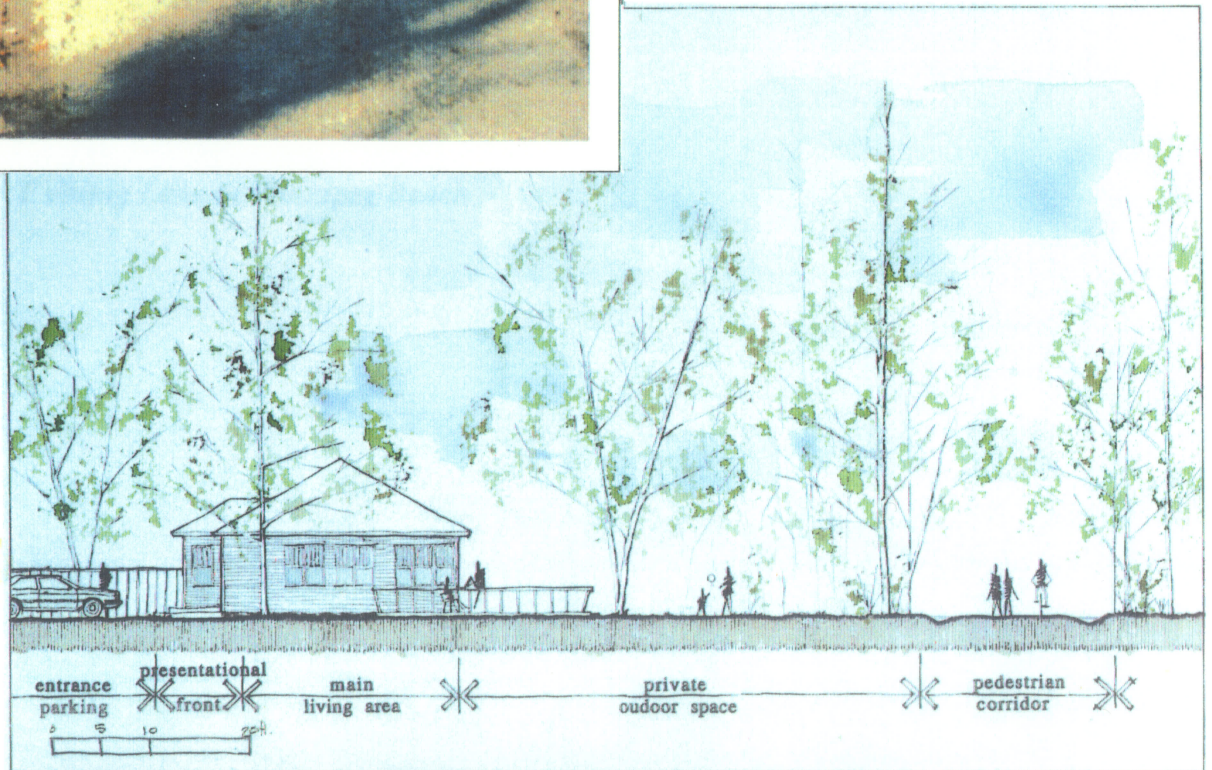


*Figure 4.16 Proposed Retirement Subdivision*



A feature of this proposal is the provision of private outdoor spaces accessing directly onto a network of pedestrian walkways. This arrangement provides a pleasant and readily available form of recreation, and physical activity. Further, there will be an image of generous open space as views include the open spaces associated with individual residences.

This type of subdivision can be created through minor transformations to the existing community layout at Winnipeg Beach. The existing lanes such as the one shown opposite will be transformed as delightful and useful pedestrian corridors. Examples of a similar subdivision can be seen in Winnipeg in the community of Wildwood Park.

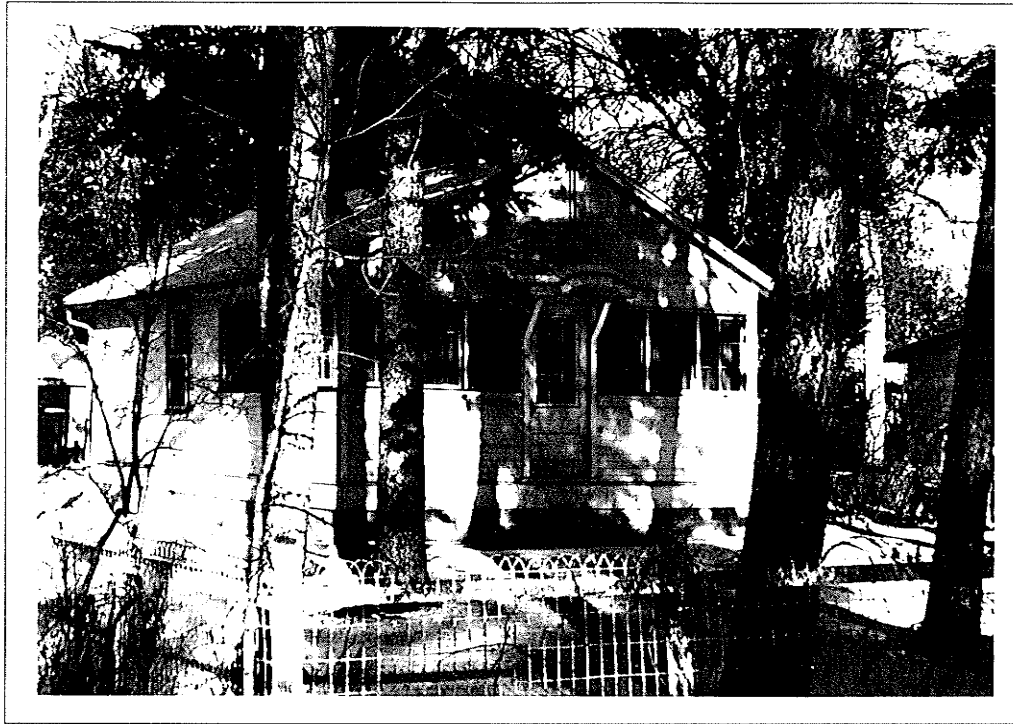


*Figure 4.17 Section Through Retirement Subdivision*

## v. Seasonal Residential Conversions

The adaptation of summer cottages for use as retirement accommodation will develop as an immediate and significant aspect of the overall retirement community phenomenon in Winnipeg Beach.

Although it will be difficult to direct the content and style of individual conversions it will be important to discourage changes which rely upon ubiquitous suburban housing types. Winnipeg Beach has a strong and distinct architectural heritage and modern

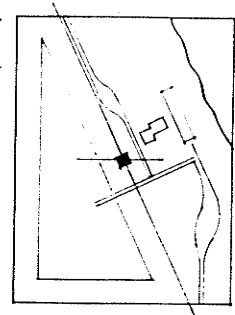


*Figure 4.18 This Cottage Ungraded with a Permanent Foundation is an Example of Conversions Which Do Not Alter the Unique Architectural Character of Winnipeg Beach*

This type of accommodation is a flexible and affordable lifestyle option in that it allows people to:

- vary the amount of time spend at the Beach according to personal preference and physical ability
- take advantage of lower property values and existing cottage equity
- make a gradual transition away from pre-retirement neighborhoods into an existing social network.

conversions must respect and build from traditional building images. Renovations which provide for permanent building foundations, efficient plumbing and heating systems, and substantial additions can all be undertaken without disrupting the existing resort character.



# PART V

## SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS



## 5.1 Summary

Rural retirement communities are increasingly being recognized as an appropriate and desirable housing option by many Manitobans. Communities of this type have been established in many Canadian provinces and as the popularity of the idea spreads it can be expected that the demand for this specialized housing type will give rise to initiatives for similar new developments within this province.

The increasing demand for this specialized housing type is related to the aging of Canada's population. It has been shown that aging 'baby-boomers' are now causing the population of retired people to grow at a rate much faster than the population overall. As well, increasing longevity among the very old and a steadily declining birth rate have meant that the proportion of seniors has changed even more rapidly. These substantially increasing numbers, coupled with the fact that many more people are deciding to take earlier and more active retirements mean that lifestyle decisions made by this group are becoming increasingly important.

In examining these changes in the population at retirement age it is apparent that future prospects for retirement will be quite unlike the stereotypes presently recognized. Already the image of retired people has begun to change. Attitudes encouraging healthier and more active lifestyles are prevalent. Further, new sentiments are emerging which recognize retirement as a more meaningful and enjoyable stage in life. The measure of these changes can be taken in the strengthening political and social voice of this group.

In response to these cultural changes retirement communities have developed as a recent lifestyle alternative in the Canadian context. These communities range in size and character but are typically: small, segregated, and comprised mainly of healthy and active people who have relocated from their pre-retirement neighborhoods. Such communities promote casual, leisurely lifestyles with emphasis on the provision of a range of recreational activities. It has been noted that retirement community living is considered by a relatively small part of the senior population. The frequent lack of extensive support services, and the need to move away from existing social contacts means that fewer than 10% of retired people will consider this housing alternative.

In spite of this small percentage, retirement communities will continue to develop as an important alternative to other seniors' housing types. These communities will become attractive not only because of the physical amenities they provide, but also because of the social fabric they sustain which provides support and companionship for retired residents. Retirement communities encourage the natural tendency toward clustering according to similar needs and interests, and allows people to live in close proximity to, and with the common interests and support of age peers. This human community is an essential consideration in the planning and design, and in the ultimate success of retirement communities.

On the basis of this examination, a series of design principles have been suggested. these principles are grouped under the head-

ings of: community structure, site design, and detail design, and refer to successive stages in the design process. The recommendations identify the need to create physical environments which respond to the needs of older people. Such guidelines are intended to inform decisions made during the development of new retirement communities. The development of individual communities would include a sensitive manipulation of the context presented with each individual site. An application of these principles is considered as the potential for retirement community development in Winnipeg Beach is explored.

**W**innipeg Beach, by virtue of its history as a C.P.R. resort holds a special place in the psyche of many Manitobans. It is "the grand old lady of Manitoba Resorts." This rich history provides unique opportunities for the creation of a retirement community at this location. Many of the attributes associated with retirement communities, such as extensive recreational facilities, are already present at Winnipeg Beach. In fact, the conversion of summer homes for use as retirement accommodation suggests that the evolution of a naturally occurring retirement community is already underway.

For the Town of Winnipeg Beach the opportunities available from retirement community development can be substantial. It has been noted that retired residents offer an increased tax base the Town which is not offset by a corresponding demand for services. As well, such a constituency of people can be expected to support the existing commercial infrastructure of the community as well

as providing incentives for new commercial enterprises.

In addition to these economic considerations, there are many other factors which suggest that Winnipeg Beach is an appropriate location for retirement community development. Significant among these will be Winnipeg Beach's proximity to the city which allows for easy access to services not available within the community itself. Furthermore, the traditional role of Winnipeg Beach as a meeting place for the surrounding residential districts provides an important base for an extended service network. Finally, it has been noted that the physical characteristics of this resort are particularly well adapted to retirement community development.

**I**t can be seen that retirement community lifestyles will continue to develop as an option for seniors living in this province. Further, it is apparent that the Town of Winnipeg Beach is uniquely well suited to receive this sort of development. The challenge which remains is to determine how this trend might be most advantageously incorporated into an existing community.

Winnipeg Beach's original success as a resort is founded upon the foresight which identified a recreational need among Manitobans. It would seem that such success may again be available in the acknowledgment of the present desire for rural retirement accommodation.

## 5.2 Recommendations

From the information presented throughout this study it has been shown that Winnipeg Beach is in a position to take advantage of an increasing demand for retirement community lifestyles. In part four, design alternatives have been proposed which indicate how additional development of this type might be fitted into the existing community framework. The following recommendations provide an outline for the process of attracting and supporting this new development.

To follow up on these recommendations, and to realize the potential for retirement community development in Winnipeg Beach it will be necessary to demonstrate a commitment to act from within the existing community. To focus this action a steering committee of interested groups and individuals can be established. This committee should include representation from local businesses and from town council. As well, input should be sought from community groups, churches, and private citizens. Such a group can be effective in starting up and coordinating the initiatives that will be required to implement these recommendations.

### Community Organization

The develop the organizational network associated with a successful retirement community the steering committee should:

- seek feedback from Winnipeg Beach residents, through a combination of public meetings and questionnaires, about their attitudes towards increased retirement development

- identify and organize a group of people presently living in retirement at Winnipeg Beach
- solicit support from the extended community of cottagers and visitors, who are not retired at Winnipeg Beach, but who through prior association will be interested to promoting and participating in a retirement community
- advertise the concept of a retirement community within the local community to promote potential commercial opportunities, and to create a positive and progressive image of what a retirement community can offer:
- advertise outside of the community to develop an image for Winnipeg Beach as an attractive retirement address
- provide a tangible and recognizable expression of these efforts in the form of a meeting place for seniors, or local publication for seniors, etc.
- encourage small individual initiatives which can accumulate to contribute to a more substantial retirement community.

### Housing Alternatives

Much of the stimulus for residential development will come from individuals and private interests. A steering committee can ensure a more general benefit from such development by considering the following recommendations.

The conversion of summer cottages for use as retirement homes can contribute to the development of a retirement community if:

- the existing trend towards this type of use is recognized and managed
- guidelines are developed controlling the size and style of these homes so that the

quality and character of the existing resort community is not compromised

- the opportunity for and benefits of seasonal and part time retirement living is promoted

The Retirement Living Centre proposed in part four of this study can provide an important nucleus for subsequent retirement community development if:

- the building provides additional retirement apartments within a setting where moderate levels of care can be obtained as required
- this complex provides a self-contained environment suitable for year round accommodation
- the development includes a range of services which will supplement the existing service network

The proposed Retirement Subdivision will add to the development of a retirement community if:

- the development is designed in response to the needs and expectations of elderly people
- the development blends in its architectural style and layout with the surrounding areas
- services are developed at the same time which will supplement but not duplicate services presently available within Winnipeg Beach

### **Physical Infrastructure**

As a community of retired people is established in Winnipeg Beach it will be desirable for the steering committee to consider community improvements which respond to the changing needs of the community.

Examples of this type of development include:

- changes to business facades and to the streetscaping along Railway Street to create a summer mall which will be attractive to an elderly clientele
- the extension of the divided boulevard at the entrance to the Winnipeg Beach Recreational Park to provide a clear and consistent image for the Town, and to draw together the distinct areas as they now exist
- the provision of a pedestrian and bicycle network which encourages physical activity and offers a number of resting points to accommodate various ability levels
- the provision of enclosed sidewalks which facilitate easy access between areas throughout the year.

### **Public Image**

Winnipeg Beach has traditionally been a centre of activity for surrounding residential areas. The steering committee can rekindle this important role within the regional context:

- by re-establishing a 'Moonlight Shuttle' running between Matlock and Gimli to bring people into Winnipeg Beach for, dances, and similar social events
- by supporting the existing proposal to develop of a high quality bicycle trail along the west shore of the lake
- by promoting an environment which is attractive to retired people living in other communities outside of Winnipeg Beach
- by taking these initiatives right away so that future developments by and for retired people can tie into an existing community infrastructure at Winnipeg Beach

## **F**urther Investigation

The establishment of a creative and comfortable retirement living environment at Winnipeg Beach will involve additional study not undertaken as part of this research. The steering committee should immediately seek out the information which will be required including:

- an identification and cataloging of existing resources within the community such as businesses, community services, and individuals who can support future initiatives
- a market assessment of the demand for retirement community living to determine to best blend of housing types, and services
- an identification and commitment of financial resources for new residential development
- and an identification and commitment of financial resources from public sources for additional health care and support services.

### 5.3 Conclusion

The effects of an aging population are evident for many people in their day to day living. The demands of a growing senior population, even at the beginning of an anticipated explosion in numbers, is changing the cultural and physical landscapes in which everyone lives. The rural retirement community concept examined in this study represents a small but significant part of these more universal changes.

Rural retirement communities are an increasingly popular lifestyle option among seniors. Interest in this specialized housing type has developed in response to the many advantages these communities provide. For retired people who are healthy and active the recreational opportunities and casual lifestyle are important incentives for retirement community living. Equally important are the social interaction and sense of belonging which have been shown to prosper in such age segregated settings. Together these advantages suggest that the popularity of this lifestyle option will continue to grow over the next several decades.

The acceptance of this new lifestyle option coincides with a period when rural communities are faced with problems of underemployment and depopulation created by a deteriorating agricultural economy. Against this backdrop, the additional economic activity available through the provision of services to seniors provides an attractive incentive for rural communities struggling for survival. The trend towards the development of rural retirement communities is encouraged in this situation, not only by the demands of

new and varied lifestyle options from seniors, but also by the economic imperatives of a struggling rural economy.

Under these circumstances it is difficult to imagine that retirement communities will not become more evident as part of this province's rural fabric. In light of this new reality, this study has sought to explore the cultural and physical implications of these communities and to suggest ways in which they may be incorporated as part of a changing rural landscape.

## Appendix A.

### Retirement Communities in Ontario

RETIREMENT COMMUNITY	LOCATION	YEAR ESTABLISHED
Sandycove Arces	Stroud	1970
Twin Elm Estates	Strathroy	1970
Big Cedar Estates	Hawkstone	1971
The Hometown	Stayner	1972
Cookstown Estates	Cookstown	1972
The Village	Listowel	1974
Victoria Place	Bobcaygeon	1975
Turnberry Estates	Wingham	1975-1976
Grand Cove Estates	Grand Bend	1976
Georgian Glen	Wasaga Beach	1976-1977
Joy Vsita Estates	Lindsay	1976-1978
Amberwood Village	Stittsville	1978
Sutton-on-the-Lake	Sutton	1980
St. Elizabeth Village	Hamilton	1980
The Edgewater	Bobcaygeon	1983
Wilmot Creek	Newcastle	1984
Tecumseth Pines	Alliston	1984
Hickory Hills	Tillsonburg	1985
Greenbriar Community	Alliston	1986
Heritage Village	Vineland	1986
Morningside	New Hamburg	1987
Wellington Bay Estates	Wellington	1987

*Source: Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs (1986).*

## Appendix B.

### Sample Survey Questionnaire

#### Survey of Winnipeg Beach Property Owners

Hello my name is Doug Backhouse. I am a student in Landscape Architecture at the University of Manitoba. I am working on a study in the Winnipeg Beach area. You may have received a letter from me describing this project. I wonder if you would be able to take five or ten minutes to answer a few questions.

1. In the following list which best describes your Winnipeg Beach property?
  - \_\_\_\_\_ cottage suitable for use in the summer only
  - \_\_\_\_\_ cottage suitable for use year round
  - \_\_\_\_\_ permanent residence built for year round use
  - \_\_\_\_\_ mobile home
  - \_\_\_\_\_ other
2. Do you currently live in:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Winnipeg Beach
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Winnipeg
  - \_\_\_\_\_ other

#### If residing in Winnipeg Beach

3. Which of the following best describes your situation? Are you:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ working in the community?
  - \_\_\_\_\_ working out of your home?
  - \_\_\_\_\_ commuting into Winnipeg daily?
  - \_\_\_\_\_ commuting into Winnipeg occasionally?
  - \_\_\_\_\_ retired?
  - \_\_\_\_\_ unemployed

#### If residing outside of Winnipeg Beach

For what reasons has Winnipeg Beach attracted you as a cottage owner? In the list below please rate the importance of each item on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is a very important reason, and 5 is not important at all.

4. I am attracted to the Winnipeg Beach area because:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ the cottage was passed on to me by my family
  - \_\_\_\_\_ my friends and neighbors own cottages in the area
  - \_\_\_\_\_ the area has a swimming beach
  - \_\_\_\_\_ there are boating facilities
  - \_\_\_\_\_ there are golfing facilities
  - \_\_\_\_\_ there are opportunities for fishing
  - \_\_\_\_\_ the scenery in general
  - \_\_\_\_\_ the area is within easy driving distance of Winnipeg
  - \_\_\_\_\_ other, please specify

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5. Approximately how often is your cottage used during the summer season (from the Victoria Day weekend to the Labour Day weekend)?

- \_\_\_\_\_ rarely (0-9 days)
- \_\_\_\_\_ occasional weekends (10-39 days)
- \_\_\_\_\_ most weekends (40-59 days)
- \_\_\_\_\_ every weekend and vacations (60-110 days)
- \_\_\_\_\_ all summer (more than 110 days)



6. Approximately how often is your cottage used during the off season (after the Labour Day weekend and before the Victoria Day weekend)?

- \_\_\_\_\_ never
- \_\_\_\_\_ for day trips
- \_\_\_\_\_ occasional weekends
- \_\_\_\_\_ frequent weekends
- \_\_\_\_\_ for extended periods in the spring and fall

7. In the last five years have you upgraded your cottage to allow more frequent use in the off season

- If yes, have you
- \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no
  - \_\_\_\_\_ added more insulation
  - \_\_\_\_\_ upgraded your heating system
  - \_\_\_\_\_ upgraded you plumbing
  - \_\_\_\_\_ other, please specify
- 

8. Do you anticipate making changes to your cottage in the next five years which would allow you to use your cottage more frequently during the off season?

- If yes, would you be
- \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no
  - \_\_\_\_\_ adding more insulation
  - \_\_\_\_\_ upgrading the heating system
  - \_\_\_\_\_ upgrading the plumbing
  - \_\_\_\_\_ other, please specify
- 

For all respondents

9. Do you feel that adapting cottages for more permanent use will make Winnipeg Beach a more attractive place? 1 very attractive, or 5 not attractive at all.

- a great deal not at all
- 1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_\_\_
- Do you think this change will be an improvement \_\_\_\_\_
- 

10. More and more retirement housing is being developed in rural locations throughout Manitoba. Do you think the Town of Winnipeg Beach should, 1 strongly encourage retirement housing, or 5 strongly discourage retirement housing.

- strongly encourage strongly discourage  
retirement housing retirement housing
- 1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_\_\_
- comments \_\_\_\_\_
- 

11. Do you see Winnipeg Beach as an appealing place to retire? 1 would be very appealing, and 5 would be not appealing at all.

- very appealing very unappealing
- 1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_\_\_
- comments \_\_\_\_\_
-



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